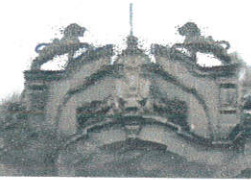


Addis Ababa
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**A Study on Social Media Usage among Ethiopian University Undergraduate Students:
Impacts and Opportunities**

By

Mebratu Worku

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Journalism and Communication
Presented In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Journalism and Communication**



Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

June, 2014

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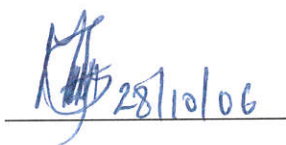
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

June, 2014

DECLARATION

I, Mebratu Worku, declare that this Thesis entitled *A Study on Social Media Usage among Ethiopian University Undergraduate Students: Impacts and Opportunities* is my own original work. I have carried it out independently with the guidance and suggestions of the research advisor. And it has not been presented in any other University, at least to my knowledge. All the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Mebratu Worku

A handwritten signature in blue ink, followed by the date '28/10/06' written in blue ink. The signature is stylized and partially obscured by a horizontal line.

(The Researcher)

Signature

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Mebratu Worku, entitled *A Study on Social Media Usage among Ethiopian University Undergraduate Students: Impacts and Opportunities* and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University. The work is original in its nature and is eligible to earn masters degree in journalism and communication.

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ABSTRACT

The advance and popularity of the social media is increasing rapidly since the last few years. These social media have been noted for some benefits. This is especially in the socialization process by giving access to communicate with old friends, new friends and family. Social media/Facebook has also been used as a source of news and as a vehicle for political and humanitarian causes too. However, these benefits do not erase the fears associated with the usage of these forms of media. These fears range from privacy issues to waste of time, addiction, Loss of educational achievements, eliminating interpersonal communication in its most original form and many others. However, the aforementioned social media impacts remains hazy when it comes to the case of Ethiopia, especially of the young students. This study, therefore, examines the usage and related impacts of Facebook, one of the most popular social media, among young University Undergraduate students in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, using the uses and gratifications, media dependency and the network society theories as a theoretical guide, the study investigated 'why for' and 'how' HE students in the country use Facebook. Observation and questionnaire has been used to collect data from 300 respondents studying at four different HE institutions. Hence, the finding shows that many students in the HE institutions are heavy users of Facebook with many already tending toward excessive usage and over dependency. Many undergraduates access their Facebook account several times a day and spend an average of 1-2 hours per day. Furthermore the study provide consistent evidence that chatting and messaging as well as posting and viewing photos as the most frequent activities of these undergraduate students on Facebook. They use the site mainly for personal and socialization purposes, but lower for academic purposes. However, the study, of course, does not find any relationship with academic achievement of the sample students.

Moreover, Facebook has created an opportunity for students to easily communicate with their existing friends, to enjoy leisure time, to date online and to keep them up-to-date. However, the finding also detected some sort of negative Facebook impacts including time wastage, addiction and loss of privacy. Hence, the study recommends that students and any user should be careful in their social media use and should exert targeted efforts to counter Facebook risks and thereby achieve maximum benefit the site offers.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FB	Facebook
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
SM	Social Media
SN	Social Networks
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SMT	Social Media Technology
GPA	Grade Point Average
PUT	Problematic Internet Use
FAD	Facebook Addiction Disorder
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MW	Medium Wave
SW	Short Wave

CHAPTER ONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Over the last decade, and particularly in the last five or six years, social mediated technology has transformed our thinking about our relationships, our connections with and affinity to others, and the influence and persuasive power of online communities on how we think, organize and act socially and politically. Since the foundation of the Internet and integration of email technology into our personal work and lives, our ways of communicating began to change. However, it was not until the creation of social media interfaces like Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter and other similar applications that have we seen such a massive connecting of the potential of the now-pervasive online connectivity in our everyday lives.

According to the social mediabaker, currently, there are 902, 180 Facebook users in Ethiopia, which makes it 86 in the ranking of all Facebook statistics by Country, Socialbakers, (2012). In addition to this, Social Media backer has notified that the Facebook penetration of online population in Ethiopia is 141.96%. The number of people going on Facebook is much higher than the internet penetration. In other words, this indicates that there are people who use Facebook but not the internet, Socialbakers, (2012).

Despite the consistent connection problem and expensive internet access, users of facebook.com, is highly increasing in Ethiopia. This growth suggests that there exists some form of value or meaning derived by the users, most of them youths and students. Many higher education students in Ethiopia who do not have access to internet via computer now do so through mobile phones, and do have Facebook accounts and are active users. With this development and benefits however, tendencies toward problematic use of Facebook is being observed in varying degrees among Ethiopian youths. Therefore, this research could be used as a foundation to develop conceptual frameworks that allow us to better capture the usage, opportunities and impact of Social Media, mainly Facebook among youth in general and Ethiopian HE students in particular.

1.2. Background of the study

Social media has become a growing phenomenon with many and varied definitions in public and academic use. Social media generally refer to media used to enable social interaction. For this study purposes, the term social media (SM) refers to web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication.

As described by Boyd and Ellison (2007), social network site is an online service for users to create a public or semi-public profile, build a network with other users with whom they share a common links, and navigate other users' profiles and networks. With the social network sites, we have communities and groups of people with shared interests who stay more 'connected'. There is no doubt that social medium such as Facebook has a great ability to instantaneously spread messages to the masses, unrestricted by time and space (Harlow, 2012). Hanson (2011:804-805) cites the following example to demonstrate how social media have significantly changed the speed and manner of communication.

In 1481, a letter reporting the death of a Turkish sultan took two years to reach England, and in 1841, it took three months and 20 days to get information about President Harrison's death in the eastern part of USA to Los Angeles. However, in 2009, within seconds of the US Airways Flight 1549's emergency landing in the Hudson River, a passenger was able to send a text message and photo over his Twitter stream.

Social networking sites, Facebook in particular, has proved to be a tool for social activism and a potent instrument for sparking, inspiring and setting in motion social movements throughout the world in the recent times. From a political perspective, social media has the power to influence millions of people. The "Arab Spring" such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya as well as the Middle East revolutions like Syria, Yemen and Bahrain serves as the best examples of the powerful effect and impact that social media platforms can have. However, with the ability to mobilize many people, leaders in Africa are starting to take steps to control it, especially during election time. Ethiopia's government, for example, blocked the use of SMS services in 2005. Similarly, Kenya's last elections saw voters influenced by SMS and in the 2013 election, it is believed that social media played a pivotal role.

In terms of Social networking site (SNS) history, the first social networking site (*Six Degrees*) was launched in 1997, based on the idea that everybody is linked with everybody else via six degrees of separation and initially referred to as the “small world problem”. In 2004, the most successful current SNS, Facebook, was established as a closed virtual community for Harvard students. The site expanded very quickly and Facebook currently has more than 500 million users, of whom fifty percent log on to it every day, Kuss and Griffiths, (2011).

On the other hand, according to the latest Zephoria’s 2013 Social Media Infographic regarding Facebook Statistics (Updated October 2013), Worldwide, there are over 1.5 billion active Facebook users. This is a 23 percent increase from March 2012. 699 million people log onto Facebook daily, which represents a 26% increase from 2012. The Implication: A huge and vastly growing number of Facebook users are active and consistent in their visits to the site. There are 819 million mobile active users which is a 54 percent increase from 2012. Five new profiles are created every second (Facebook).

The social media represents both risks and opportunities for young people. Some of the general online risks facing youth are addiction, exposure to inappropriate material, cyber bullying and sexual solicitation. Regardless of the risks, the social media can be a positive tool for student learning as well as youth empowerment and well being. It provides a vehicle to promote cognitive, social, and physical development. According to Pew reports (2011), Social media platforms like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter became popular sites among adults. The use of social media interfaces through computer and mobile devices among Ethiopian youth too, has become quite widespread, and currently, the most prominent interface is Facebook. Each of social media sites fulfils different needs that other tools cannot facilitate completely (Quan- Haase & Young, 2010). There are several reasons that motivate users to adopt social media platforms. The major reasons of using it include staying in contact with the current friends, staying in touch with family members, and maintaining old friendships (Pew reports, 2011).

In particular, Facebook (FB), a social network site, has become popular platform among youth and university students (Valentine, 2011; Abdullahi, Said, & Ibrahim, 2011, Foregger, 2008). It allows users to create profiles; allows those user-operated profiles to interact with each other; allows for the expression of interests and the discovery of commonalities between users; and allows users to build and maintain connections and invite others to join a

community. It was also used to have a fun and keeping in connection with social activities, compared with instant messaging which was adopted by university students to maintain and develop the old and new relationships (Quan- Haase & Young, 2010).

Currently, it is common to observe many (almost the majority) youngsters in Ethiopia using Facebook whether at internet cafes or on their own mobile phones. This Social networking site has become extremely and increasingly popular among youths and professional individuals all over the country. It became even a fashion to use facebook among Ethiopian youth. They are spending lots of time on it. Its Pervasive influence is almost irresistible. Now a day, particularly, the young adults are more concerned with chatting, posting and watching on facebook rather than focusing on their own safety and education. In short, a condition that can be described as social media problem is resulted from the rapidly growing popularity of social networks and the benefits it brings.

According to Deragon (2011), Social media maladies (problems) are conditions affecting productivity of human networks. It is often interpreted to be a social condition associated with specific symptoms and signs. It may be caused by external factors such as influence of technology (simply using technology) and social media in the wrong way and for wrong purposes. The internal factors include: a lack of knowledge and (or wisdom) by individuals or groups in the use of social media. The pandemic is all about the production and consumption of meaningless and insignificant things that do not enhance progressive continuation of human network.

With so many social network sites displayed on the internet, Ethiopian youth, specially students are attracted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends and many are already getting addicted to the online chat of the moment-Facebook. This is most probably because Facebook is particularly an attractive option for them. It can cost-effectively bridge the important services providing a potentially effective and exciting mechanism for strengthening connections for students.

On one hand, this can broadly implies that moving beyond paradigms revolving around improving student success; we should also be thinking more broadly about incorporating social media dynamics into our understandings of social relationships within our societies,

communities, and institutions. This could likely be a critical component of our future understandings of social realities in general.

On the other hand, it is a known fact that the whole world revolves on the pivot of technological advancement, particularly, information and communication technology. Well, Ethiopia is not lagging behind these global changes and its citizens should make use of the new technologies. However, we have to take into consideration that every technological advance comes with its negative side, most especially when misused or abused. This is the case with the interactive media, facebook in particular. Although the advent of social media has increased the level of international connectivity and social interaction, it has also engendered social upheavals in many countries, the so called 'Arab spring' for example.

Problematic internet use, generically referred to as 'Internet Spectrum Addiction' has been recognized by social media researchers as a growing global problem that requires proactive measure to tackle. As such, there is the need to act fast in the direction of fighting and preventing social network addiction the same way we confront substance addiction.

Lakshmi (2011) observed that some features of Facebook have become so addictive that sometimes students forget that it is just a virtual world and that they have actual life waiting for them where lots of tasks are yet to be accomplished.

In Ethiopia, irrespective of age, most youth, especially university students now start the day by checking their Facebook accounts. This trend, if left unchecked can cause serious academic problem because given the high-volume usage of SM, an obvious and popular concern is that students spend far too much time on non academic activities related to the internet and social media. The most salient concern among scholars, educators, and the public however is related to the effects of social networking sites such as Facebook on the time dedicated to studying and offline activities. As most media is regarded as a source of entertainment, popular opinion believes it serves only as a distraction and yet another impediment to academic achievement.

According to Davis et'al (2012), researches related to the effects of social media use on college students academic performance, outcomes, and attainment is quite scarce. However, a few studies have focused on the impact of SM use on academic performance and engagement.

The studies have shown mixed results, possibly due to weakness of the self reported measures, but the findings from a wider range of studies suggest that outcomes can vary depending on the ways in which students engage with the social media. But, numerous other studies contradict this fear. In particular, findings point to the idea that how social media are used may matter more than how much it is used (Davis et'al 2012).

Whatever the case, however, the Ethiopian youths' passion towards social media is gradually developing to addiction as it is observed that some students cannot do any academic activities without accessing their Facebook accounts within every passing hour. They like to stay up-to-date with the current trends and events in the virtual world of Facebook. The time and attention that students are giving to this social network site is becoming increasingly alarming because students can access their Facebook accounts on their mobile phones. It was learned from this study that wherever they are, students still find time to chat with friends online or respond to Facebook notifications.

According to Larkshmi (2011), the situation described above can be located within the non-medical term called Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD). The term was introduced by a U.S psychologist for those who are addicted to Facebook and their lives are really affected by their uncontrolled activities on Facebook.

The advancement in information technology and the existence of interactive social media have created research interest in the area of usages and related impacts (both positive and negative) of the new forms of communication and media. Therefore, this study examines why and how Ethiopian HE students make use of social media mainly Facebook, together with its impacts and opportunities.

1.3. Statement of the problem

The future of communication is more likely to depend on electronic modes. Academics, business men and professionals in various fields propose various uses of social media and new media in general. These and many more propositions will be made based only on available data concerning these media. It is true that researchers have begun to pay attention to the growth and relevance of social media. For instance, Tadesse (2013) in his MA thesis have examined how the social media are serving as an alternative political forum in Ethiopia and the strengths and shortcomings of the social media. However, studies that directly

explores the usage and impacts of social media among university students in Ethiopia remains unclear as there is shortage of empirical investigations in this area in the country.

As it has been mentioned in the background part of the study, it is possible to predict that large amount of people use social media especially facebook in Ethiopia with a good number of them being young. The current sudden spread of social media usage in the country's socio-cultural environment, particularly, among young adults is indisputable. The use of this social network sites is an ever growing phenomenon among higher education students of the country too. Especially, Facebook is achieving its growing popularity among young adults in the country. Its users keep rising daily along with growing concern over youths' over-dependence tendencies. But important questions such as, how and why Ethiopian youngsters use social media, what are the risks and opportunities of these media for young students, were not well addressed yet. Hence these were the questions that constitute the focal point of this research effort.

It has been observed that many of these young students often use social media. They also seem unselective and keen users of social network sites with many already tending toward excessive usage or are already entrapped in the web of addiction. However, this fact remains unclear because as there is lack of empirical investigations in this area in Ethiopia. There is no comprehensive knowledge of their activities, their dependency level as well as how this form of media can impact on various aspects of life, at least to the researcher's knowledge. Therefore, this study examines how and why Ethiopian youngsters use social media for. As a corollary to this, the study also intends to investigate the risks and opportunities of social media usage among university undergraduates in Ethiopia.

1.4. Objectives of the study

1.4.1. General objective

The general aim of this study is finding out how and why Ethiopian university undergraduates use social media for and its related impacts.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

Specifically, the study intends to:

- Identify the frequency of Ethiopian University undergraduates to access their Facebook account
- Find out why Ethiopian HE students mainly use facebook for
- Explore the relevance and opportunities of social media specially Facebook for Ethiopian HE students
- Investigate any impact or risk of this form of media on the education and social skills of HE students

1.5. Research Questions

Based on the above mentioned purposes, the study addresses five research questions

- How often do Ethiopian HE students access their Facebook account?
- Why do Ethiopian HE students mainly use facebook for?
- What activities do HE students of Ethiopia undertake on Facebook?
- How does social media use affect student learning or academic achievement?
- What are the risks and opportunities of Facebook on the social skills and lives of young HE students?

1.6. Significance of the study

Throughout history, developments in technology and communications have gone hand-in-hand, and the latest technological developments such as the internet have resulted in the advancement of the science of communication to a new level. Basically, the media is a tool and its uses are a reflection of the people who use it. So understanding the media itself and its dynamics will help in using it and in justifying its downsides. Communication experts argue that the rapid growth of social media sites, their popularity among young people and their relative success in catching users, has ensured that social media is never far from the news. It is clear from the development of social media to date that further evolution is unknown territory for stakeholders and it is difficult to accurately predict what impact this will have on communications, ICT skills and social issues. As users, policy makers, businesses, educators and parents seek to understand many-to-many communication such as social media, it is

essential we understand current usage and benefits as well as identify possible risks so that they can be addressed. This can be seen in the amount of academic studies on social media usage in a certain country.

However, currently there are very few researches on social media in Ethiopia. But still there exists no research, at least to the researcher's knowledge that addresses why, how and to what extent these social media is used in the country especially by young. This can clearly show lack of research concerning the usage of social media and its related impacts among the country's citizen especially young HE students by whom this form of media is greatly used. Therefore, the overall motivation for conducting this study is to contribute to the very few academic researches about social media usage in Ethiopia. This research would also be a blueprint for further research in this field and how it affects students' academic as well as other sphere of life. Hence, it could also be used by students, HEI administrators, families and policy makers of the country by simply providing relevant information regarding the usage and related impact of social media mainly Facebook. In addition to these, the study would provide useful data regarding the usage of Facebook for the country's market researchers, marketing and product development professionals, students as well as educators as to how they can maximize social media for best possible benefit in their various fields.

1.7. Scope of the study

This investigation focuses specifically on Facebook using habits, associated risks and opportunities for University undergraduates in Ethiopia. Hence it does not focus on other types of social media platforms.

1.8. Limitations of the study

The limitation of this thesis is that the study was made on a limited number of respondents, three hundred in number which are recruited from four academic institutions. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this limited sample size may not fully represent and tell us the whole story about Ethiopian University undergraduate students. However, it does show the trend & pattern of social media/Facebook use among HE students of the country.

CHAPTER TWO

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Overview of Ethiopian Media development

The history of the media sector in Ethiopia dates back nearly a century. The rise of a 'modernized' empire-state with all its attendant consequences contributed a great deal to the expansion of the printing enterprise in Ethiopia, Shimelis (2000). Hence, the first medium was the weekly, *La Se-maine d'Ethiopie*, in 1890. Later the name changed to *Le Semaine d'Ethiopie* in 1905. It was the first in the history of Ethiopia print media and circulated in Harar. The main language of the publication was French, and occasionally Amharic, Fackler, (2012); Shimelis, (2000). The first Amharic newspaper was issued in 1895—a four page weekly newspaper named *Aemero* ('Intelligence') which appeared in the relatively newfound capital Addis Ababa, Fackler (2012). It was marked by a degree of government control, underlined by the fact that the name was chosen by the Emperor Menelik II himself. However, there are reports that Blatta Gebre Egziabher wrote satirical poems on sheets that were duplicated around 50 times and circulated in the Emperor's courtyard every Sunday, before the year 1900; it resembled a newspaper in a format.

According to Skjerdal, (2011), the year 1921 is the benchmark in Ethiopian print media, i.e., the opening of *Berehanena Selam*. It started *Berehanena Selam*, an Amharic weekly, conceived by Ras (prince) Tafari Mekonnen himself (Haile Silase I). The lasting journalism tradition in Ethiopia has been formed during this period and it was an era when loyalty to the Emperor paid off.

After the various emancipation of the country from Italian occupation in 1941, a new era had started in the history of the Ethiopian print media. According to the MOI's 1966 release, influential and long-lasting weekly papers as *Addis Zemen* and the *Ethiopian Herald* came on to the scene in 1941 and 1943, respectively. Both became dailies after December 1958. In 1952, *Yezareyitu Etyopia* was added Shimelis (2000).

The broadcast media started almost more than half a century ago. The Ethiopian Radio was the primary one in the broadcasting sector, Aside, (2011) cited in Tesfaye (2013). It was established in 1935 in short wave (SW), which the transition nowadays adds the medium wave (MW) and covers all parts of the country, Tesfaye, (2013).

Skjerdal, (2011) noted that Ethiopia was among the first nations in Africa to establish a television service. The only television station, the Ethiopia Television, was established in May 1963 in Africa Hall in Addis Ababa on the important occasion of the first meeting of the Organization of African Unity. It began permanent broadcasting on 2 November 1964, coinciding with the 33rd coronation of Haile Selassie.

The real circulation for the newspaper enterprise came in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa (1958) and the Organization of African Unity (1963). There was, in this period, a larger number of both daily and weekly newspapers and other press products, all, with the exception of a few, being government-owned and catering to a limited circle of an elite readership- mostly top bureaucrats and members of the urban-based intelligentsia (Shimelis 2000). Following the overthrow of the monarchy by the military junta, in 1974, mass media institutions were recognized as instruments of propaganda under the centralized control of the party and ministry of information. The military government imposed and implemented harsh censorship rule. During the military dictatorship from 1974 to 1991, the government had a total control over the media and the flow of information. Therefore, the years of the Derg regime have unequivocally been portrayed as a dark chapter in the history of the Ethiopian media and journalism, Shimelis, (2000); Terje S. Skjerdal, (2012).

2.2. The current state of the Ethiopian media landscape

The media landscape in Ethiopia has changed dramatically in the past two decades. A country that had a few governmental media outlets has come to provide its population diverse print and electronic outlets. Today, there are 6 television services, of which four transmitted by regional governments from their capitals. The national television provides news and programmes at half a dozen local languages, while providing air time for privately-owned shows and transmissions from regions which are yet to launch their own TV. Authorities are repeatedly declaring that Private-owned television stations are expected to start once Ethiopia completes the on-going technology transition from analogue to digital broadcast technology.

According to Meserach (2012), the growth in radio services is even more dazzling. Today, there are 3 MW radio services and 31 (thirty-one) FM radio services, almost half of which are privately owned. This is in addition to the 16 community radios. No less importantly, about

half of the radio services serve so far neglected areas and marginalized communities. The total number of the languages of transmissions has reached about 50!

The surge in the number of languages of transmission is expected to be replicated in Television transmission in the next three years when the plan to launch about 10 more TV channels and 5 regional TV stations is completed. In addition to, several publicly-owned, private and community radio services currently in the process of licensing and launching.

The print media also has shown robust growth. These days, there are a number of privately-owned newspapers and magazines currently in circulation at national level, weekly or monthly, including publications by the public media and those registered and circulated at regional level.

Masresha (2012) adds that Freedom of expression has also benefitted from relevant government policies. Government-owned media outlets are re-established under a legal framework that gives them the character of a mass media. Today, these outlets consider themselves as a public media and effort to provide a people-centered service, under the guidance of a Supervisory Board directly appointed by the parliament.

The government's socio-economic policies have seen an exponential growth of in the number of households owning Television and radio receivers. While the number of internet subscribers stood at 2.5 million in June 2012, Masresha (2012 p. 5).

Masresha concludes that the main measure of Ethiopia's media landscape is its ability to serve and reflect the diverse faces, issues and opinions of dreams of the population and add value to their daily challenges and aspirations. While that goal is far from achieved, the journey covered thus far is encouraging given the shortness of the period and the infancy of the democratic order (p.6)

On the other hand, Skjerdal (in his 2011 published article) counter argues the above argument. He noted that the media scene in Ethiopia is largely state-dominated, though less than it used to be. Most journalists, estimated at 80%, work for state media institutions (p. 5).

Private newspapers have been on the market since the overthrow of the military Dergue regime in 1991, but the industry has been challenged by frequent establishments and closings. Journalistically speaking, the press has been characterized by sensational reporting, political

leanings and uneven quality, Shimelis (2002); Skjerdal and Hallelujah, (2009). Though the period since 2005 has seen tendencies towards a more steady newspaper market structure and sober reporting – largely as a result of the government’s successful efforts to get rid of what it regards as disturbing voices, one must add.

The limited opportunity for independent voices (i.e. non-government affiliated ones) to get access to the Ethiopian public arena has been duly noted in reports and research literature. After a few years of the newspaper industry blooming following the democratic governments takeover in 1991, the authorities began to clamp down on journalistic activity. By 1996, Ethiopia had become the country in Africa with the most frequent imprisonments of media workers, Kerina, (1996) cited in Skjerda (2011). Journalists began to flee the country. Many did however remain in the country and continued to produce publications that annoyed the authorities to varying degrees. During the national election campaign in 2005, there was a feeling of newfound openness in the media with a variety of voices and publications on the scene, boldly supporting the causes of various opposition groups. The post-election period ended in violent turmoil, however, and many actors, including 14 editors and publishers, were arrested. In reality, this forced the closing of a range of publications, and the number of newspapers dropped from 85 to 51 in less than a year, Mekuria (2005); Kibnesh (2006).

The latest developments in the Ethiopian media situation include a new media law (2008) and a new broadcasting law (2007), both of which – despite rumours of the contrary – represent a formal liberalization of media opportunities in the country. For example, the media law repeals licensing statutes of newspapers and introduces an access to information bill only third in Africa after Uganda and South Africa. Moreover, the government has started with weekly press briefings for all sections of the media and bi-monthly press conferences with the prime minister – indeed a rare phenomenon in Africa; and the country saw in 2010 the formal beginnings of a media council initiated by the media organizations themselves. Despite these tendencies towards professionalization and liberalization, the government continues to have a firm grip on most aspects of media communication in Ethiopia. Television broadcasting is state-run and is characterized by a nation-building agenda and uncontroversial protocol news. Journalists both in the private and state media execute habitual self-censorship in place of official censorship, which has been prohibited since 1992, Skjerdal, (2008).

Continuing his argument, Skjerdal (2011) stated that the impact of alternative voices through private radio is limited as these stations primarily serve about the four million inhabitants of Addis Ababa up against the total of over 80-million populations in the country. He cited the following to further demonstrate his arguments.

The population has nevertheless had a media alternative for many years in the shortwave services of Voice of America (VOA) and Deutsche Welle (DW) much to the dismay of the Ethiopian government, which asserts that the stations, particularly VOA and its Amharic service, are staffed with oppositional Ethiopians in the Diaspora. VOA reported that their Amharic transmissions were interrupted on Ethiopian land during the 2005 national elections; during the 2008 local elections; and again in March 2010 during the campaigning for the latest national elections in May 2010. Ethiopian authorities, however, consistently denied that they had anything to do with the interruption. „This is a baseless allegation. The government doesn't espouse a policy of restricting media outlets from disseminating their messages to Ethiopian audiences,” said state minister Shimelis Kemal in the Office for Government Communication Affairs, Heinlein, 4th (2010). Two weeks after, however, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi admitted in his bi-monthly press conference that the government had „for some time □ been testing jamming equipment with the view to interrupt shortwave broadcasts if deemed necessary, McLure, 19th March (2010). That the Ethiopian government went open with its censoring tactics served to confirm the suspicion of many that there existed one official media policy on paper and another one under the table (p. 6).

Ethiopian authorities have also been accused of blocking websites. In May 2006, one year after the national elections, reports came from various sources that specific websites were inaccessible in the country. The websites concerned were all critical news channels edited by Ethiopians in the diaspora, plus Blogspot.com, a host site which contains a number of critical blogs on Ethiopian politics. Skjerdal (2011) citing (Faris and Villeneuve, 2008; Klement, 2009), noted that the government once again denied any censoring, but government-critical sites continued to be inaccessible and further investigation put in doubt the official explanation. Tests by the Open Net Initiative pointed towards centralized IP filtering by the

national and only Internet service provider Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation. In the report, Ethiopia came out as the only Sub-Saharan country besides Sudan to use Internet filtering together with a number of Middle East and Asian countries. The filtering in Ethiopia was found to have political rather than social and security motivations. The government's refusal to accept responsibility for the Internet blocking paralleled the response of the late information minister Bereket Simon to the interruption of the SMS service in the post-election period in June 2005. Skjerdal (2011) concludes that these cases indicate a government ready to step in and interfere with the media, when necessary, as well as a national leadership which prefers informal rather than formal means of controlling media communication.

2.3. New Media

New technologies can lead to new types of media and the ability to use a given form of media is related to the ability to use its related technology. Today, technology has made more universal, the ability to produce media. Printing, radio and television are some examples of mass media in that they are intended to reach vast audiences. But these forms of media previously could not be produced readily by the average person. The advent of relatively inexpensive, personal media technologies like blogging, podcasting and Internet video allowed the average literate person to do what was theretofore restricted to media companies.

These forms of media are still referred to as new but they have become part of society even as much as the traditional media in some parts of the world. In a few years, the term "new media" might not be very suitable because these forms are becoming part of our daily lives and the fusion with traditional media might dilute the fact that it is new. They are also referred to as "alternative media", but if compared to the roles of the media as defined by Walter Lippmann, John Dewey and James Agee, they satisfy the definition of any other kind of media and some theories which apply to traditional media might apply to new media as well.

Humanity has always lived through times of great change. Every age it has passed through has been based on beliefs and (new) technologies, responding to the needs of individuals' anxious to adjust to new forms of socialization. A time of great change is a period in which society looks for meaning. Information is already a tool, the principal tool, which people use

to perceive and understand their environment. Language and culture help people filter this information, while communication tools help them process it.

Whenever a group of individuals have to process a larger quantity of information, they invent a communication tool to assist with the transition from one period to another. When a great change occurs, a society swings between innovation, which keeps its systems in motion, and stability, which, in turn, prevents a descent into anarchy. Sociologists call this the “edge of chaos”; psychologists use the term “homeostasis”. This function ensures that the system remains stable by preserving what exists, while also incorporating the information likely to threaten its equilibrium. There is also the issue of self-regulation, in which the system transforms itself to adapt and remain stable. At various periods in the past, a technical or technological innovation has contributed to the evolution of society. We have thus passed from the printing age to the energy age, and then to the digital age. Means of communication are also means of speeding up access to knowledge. Our communication tools (engraving, slate, print, television, computer, etc.) and our behaviours when faced with these tools have not only modified time and space, but also the culture of societies. Each stage in the use of tools has modified the filters of our perception and the imagination of human beings.

2.3.1 Social Media

Social media is a form of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics. Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogues. They support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers. Social media are elements of the new media and according to Danny Shea in *The Huffington Post* accessed 20th June 2010 have become the highest activity on the internet. The rapid growth of social media activities that has been observed over the last two to three years is indicative of its entry into mainstream culture and its integration into the daily lives of many people. In parallel with this, social media have also gained considerable attention from the academic and business worlds.

2.4. History of Social Media

"Social media isn't really “new.” While it has only recently become part of mainstream culture and the business world, people have been using digital media for networking,

socializing and information gathering – almost exactly like now – for over 30 years:"-Sean Carton (2009) cited in Lami Idakwo (2011).

Social media started as a concept many years ago but has evolved into sophisticated technology. The concept of social media can be dated back to the use of the analogue telephone for social interaction. The most recognizable use of social media was through innovative application, an online dialogue framework, created by Ward Christensen, a former IBM employee and Randy Suss. Initially, they envisioned a place where they could immediately contact their co-employees for announcements, i.e. meetings, reports, and other affairs, rather than making multiple phone calls, distributing memos, and the like. They were looking into creating a computerized bulletin board, which is why they named the program CBBS (Computerized Bulletin Board System). Soon enough, more and more employees contributed their ideas and comments in the said online community. That event was a momentous episode in the history of computer and internet. It was the birth of online social networking.

According to Idakwo (2011, p.4), the CBBS platform was made known to other companies and has been used for specific purposes. The Bulletin Board System expanded largely and began breaking into the mainstream much sooner than it was planned to. It was during the rise of the Internet Service Providers in the early 1990s when social networking sites began to flourish. Along with the availability of internet service to people, many people rummaged to have themselves acquainted with this new Technology. With the fast response of people to the budding internet community, the bulletin boards which were usually used by companies have started to expand their roles by offering their service to more people around the globe. More and more people joined the online community with the innate goal of creating an identity in this space and at the same time exploring the vast place that is the internet. Because of this, many internet-savvy companies gave what people wanted- getting to know more people and sharing common interests and points of view; that is through websites where they can socialize, websites which are now referred to as social networking sites.

Social media attained a great measure of success with the launch of the then very popular friendster.com. Creator of Friendster, Jonathan Abrams concocted a perfect mix of popular features from earlier social networking predecessors. Friendster became an instant

success and gathered about three million members who signed up in its early months of launch, Idakwo (2011).

As years passed, Friendster reached an overwhelming hundred million users from all over the globe. With much demand from its users, Friendster unfortunately got out of hand and suffered from too many glitches in the server. Today, Friendster has been announced as a newly owned entity of a Malaysian Company, and outshone by present social networking sites but still remains to be patronized most especially in Asia.

The conception of myspace.com opened the internet users to vast opportunities of self-expression which include wide control over a user's profile content. Practically different people from all walks of life have dedicated pages in MySpace. In MySpace, users experienced the best of creating unique identities to show to the online world. MySpace remained as the uncontested favourite among all the social networking sites until 2005 when it met its future competitor in the market. Soon enough, MySpace created additional features like mobile applications in order to keep up with the latest trends in the online community; and at the same time be at par with the growing popularity of contemporary social networking sites, more specifically Facebook, Ibid (2011).

2.4.1 Internet in Ethiopia

Although Tesfaye, (2005) noted that there is a contradicting information about the exact time in which the internet technology was introduced to Ethiopia, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) declared that less than one percent of Ethiopia's population had access to the internet in 2010. While the information from the Ministry of Transport and Communication and Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency 2005/06 Annual Statistics Bulletin indicates that the Internet service has started in Ethiopia since 1997, Another release by the ITU (2002) stated that the use of the Internet in Ethiopia began in 1993 by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (whose headquarter is in Addis Ababa). At the time, the number of internet subscribers was not more than 1000. One year later, the number of subscribers rose by 98.5% and reached 2,068 subscribers (Worku, 2005).

Since there was no service in Ethiopia during that time, it was connected to Green Net's Internet gateway in London. The users were mainly international organizations and NGOs as well as some academics, individuals and private companies. However, Internet coverage has

been improving in recent years. In June 2010, the number of mobile plus internet as well as the number of data subscriber was 6, 677,903 and 189,185, respectively. But, this figure has increased dramatically to 22.4 million mobile subscribers and 43.8 million internet and data, including GPRS subscribers by March 2013, which is more than 25% mobile penetration rate and 5.18% internet and data penetration rate.

There is several news websites about Ethiopia run from abroad. These mainly serve the Diasporas. Some of them include:

- ♣ www.ethiopianreview.com
- ♣ www.nazret.com
- ♣ www.ethiomediamedia.com
- ♣ www.ethioforum.com
- ♣ www.jimmatimes.com

However, access to websites that are sympathetic to the political opposition or which are deemed hostile to the government, may be blocked from inside Ethiopia. For example, the US-based press freedom organization Committee to Protect Journalists said in August 2008 that its website www.cpj.org was inaccessible from inside the country.

“Opponents of Ethiopia’s current political regime have increasingly used online media to criticize the government, and the country has responded by implementing a filtering regime that blocks access to popular blogs and the Web sites of many news organizations, dissident political parties, and human rights groups,” the Canada-based Open Net Initiative said in a 2009 report, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/ethiopia>.

“However, filtering is not comprehensive, and much of the media content that the government is attempting to censor can be found on sites that are not banned,” the report added.

One pro-government news website that is widely available in Ethiopia is www.waltainfo.com.

It is widely believed in Ethiopia that the government monitors internet usage by individuals on security grounds. According to the Open Internet Initiative, cyber cafes provide the main means of web access for urban Ethiopians. Mobile internet connections are widely used by

the elite in Addis Ababa. They access in the web on smart phones and via modem sticks linked to computers. The Open Internet Initiative notes that Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone calls are banned in Ethiopia and may not be made from internet cafes. Nevertheless street vendors in Addis Ababa openly sell CDs for installing Skype and similar VOIP services, Ethiopia Media and telecoms landscape guide (2011; p. 53).

According to Lishan (2010) cited in Tesfaye (2005), the diffusion of the Internet is partly hampered by the monopoly on its market. However, in August 2005, the government issued a directive that allows private companies to provide Internet service; in spite of this, there is no private service provider until now. Consequently, Internet services remained a monopoly of the government, often resulting in frustratingly slow connections and sometimes complete disconnection from the global network altogether

2.5. The Rise of Social Media in Ethiopia

The internet has become the integral part of our economic, political, and social life. It alters the way we purchase goods, the way we bank, and the way we communicate with one another Ali (2012). Since the Internet has revolutionized the way most people in the world live, its reflection and extension has reached to Ethiopia because Ethiopia is part of the world communities. As it is mentioned in the earlier discussion, Internet service exists in the country even though it is completely monopolized by the only state owned telecom service provider, i.e., Ethio-Telecom.

Thus, the emergence of internet not only changes the way we live, it also offers the platform for the rising of different social media and social networking sites. The emergence of social media changes many aspects of relationships and communication. The phenomenon of the social media and social networking has been happening in Ethiopia. From the young to adult, from scholar to ordinary public has engaged in the social media and social networking activity.

2.5.1. Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site which was launched on February 2004 by some college students Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes as a site for Harvard students. It was actually made by hacking Harvard's data base containing identification images of students. The initial idea was actually to compare the faces of students with images of animals, for entertainment purposes. However, due to the potentially damaging contents of

the site, the creators decided to put it down before it caught the attention of school authorities. The application was shut down, but the idea of creating an online community of students came to existence. The platform was then improved and sooner than they expected, Facebook was released in campuses other than Harvard. Thereafter, high schools were already starting to get attracted to the idea of having online communities, thus opening the website to the younger population. In 2006, facebook.com ultimately offered the opportunity to the rest of the world. As 2007 approached, the registrants reached an overwhelming digit- roughly a million dozen. Facebook has grown to become the biggest and most popular social networking site. According to the latest Zephoria's 2013 Social Media Infographic regarding Facebook Statistics (Updated October 2013), Worldwide, there are over 1.5 billion active Facebook users. This is a 23 percent increase from March 2012, facebook statistics (2013).

Nowadays, Facebook is the most effective means of communication. Similar to other social networking websites, people create their own account of Facebook where they give their personal information like gender, birth date, hometown, religion, political views, contact numbers, activities, interest, relationship status and profile pictures. After completing their profile users add their friends, family, colleagues or random people whom they would like to be friends with to their friend list. Through Facebook people who have never met each other in person can communicate and make new relationships and friendships. It is just another element of society that is interested in sharing information with the intimacy of a close, personal relationship, Marklein (2009).

2.6. Facebook and the Ethiopian youth

The engagement in the social networking sites has changed many aspects of citizens' communication and relationship. According to the social mediabaker, currently, there are 902, 180 Facebook users in the Ethiopia, which makes it 86 in the ranking of all Facebook statistics by Country, Socialbakers, (2012).

In addition to this, Social Media backer has notified that the Facebook penetration of online population in Ethiopia is 141.96%. The number of people going on Facebook is much higher than the internet penetration. In other words, this indicates that there are people who use Facebook but not the internet, Socialbakers, (2012).

These days, the internet offers a great platform to reach millions of Ethiopians with possibilities including age, gender, interest and behavioural targeting. Despite the consistent

connection problem and expensive internet access, users of facebook.com, is highly increasing in Ethiopia. This growth suggests that there exists some form of value or meaning derived by the users, most of them youths and students.

So far, general issues regarding the new media- worldwide and the case of Ethiopia has been discussed though in a very precise way. The relationship between the social media and the processes of socialization and its related impacts are discussed under the following part of the literature.

2.7. Socialization

The Longman advanced American dictionary defines socialization as the processes by which people are made to behave in a way that is acceptable in their society. It can also be defined as the process by which children and adults learn from others. On the other hand, Weidman, Twale and Stein (2001) cited in Idakwo (2011), define socialization in a broad sense as “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills and disposition that make them more or less effective members of the society”. People begin learning from others during the early days of life; and most people continue their social learning all through life, unless some mental or physical disability slows or stops the learning process.

John Baldwin and Janice Baldwin (2000) in the book, behavior principles in everyday life say natural socialization occurs when infants and youngsters explore, play and discover the social world around them. Planned socialization occurs when other people take actions designed to teach or train others -- from infancy on. Natural socialization is easily seen when looking at the young of almost any mammalian species (and some birds). Planned socialization is mostly a human phenomenon; and all through history, people have been making plans for teaching or training others. Both natural and planned socialization can have good and bad features: It is wise to learn the best features of both natural and planned socialization and weave them into our lives.

The authors define positive socialization as the type of social learning that is based on pleasurable and exciting experiences. “We tend to like the people who fill our social learning processes with positive motivation, loving care, and rewarding opportunities. Negative socialization occurs when others use punishment, harsh criticisms or anger to try to "teach us

a lesson;" and often we come to dislike both negative socialization and the people who impose it on us.

In addition to this, the above idea can be strengthened by Idakwo's (2011) statement. He stated that;

"There are all types of mixes of positive and negative socialization; and the more positive social learning experiences we have, the happier we tend to be -- especially if we learn useful information that helps us cope well with the challenges of life. A high ratio of negative to positive socialization can make a person unhappy, defeated or pessimistic about life. The socialization type can also have an effect, in turn, on the person's ability to fit into the society and perform optimally as a member of the society," (p. 13).

Therefore, it can be said that Socialization also plays a significant role in the development of our lives, personally and professionally, generally as citizens.

2.7.1 Becoming Social in the technological world

It may seem obvious that people change their habits with age, experience, social status and more importantly with the technology they use on a daily basis.

As the technology evolves, so do people – trying to be as much up-to-date with what's going on in their fields of interests, valuing peers recommendations and discussing what's new. In the "real world", but now more than ever before – online through various platforms: e-mails, forums, chat, via messengers and of course in social media.

Mankind made a huge progress in the last 20 years, almost everything is a few clicks away and this ease of access definitively altered our perspective on how we search for information and how users' social behavior changed during this time period, Debra Ellis (2013).

Over the last decade, and particularly in the last five or six years, SMT has transformed our thinking about our relationships, our connections with and affinity to others, and the influence and persuasive power of online communities on how we think, organize, and act politically. Since the inception of the Internet and integration of email technology into our personal and work lives, our ways of communicating began to change. However, it was not until the creation of social media interfaces like Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, LinkedIn,

YouTube, Twitter and other similar applications that have we seen such a massive harnessing of the potential of the now-pervasive online connectivity in our everyday lives, Davis et'al (2012).

Unlike the communication functions of other online technologies, SMT in particular has provided a virtual landscape mirroring familiar elements of community as we understood and experienced it prior to the existence of such technologies. Social media technology links people together in ways that resemble traditional feelings of connection, belonging, loosely defined memberships, exchange of feelings and ideas, and the reporting of experiences and actions. Indeed, some suggest SMT has suddenly lowered the costs of collaborating, sharing, and producing, thus providing revolutionary new forms of interaction and problem-solving, Shirky (2010). We can now create, maintain, and access both well-defined and amorphously defined communities online, while also using the social media technology as a tool to fluidly transition between online and face-to-face contact via friendships, planned activities, and other more formal organizational affiliations.

One of the most powerful social media platforms is Facebook. As it has been discussed earlier under, Facebook was initially privately conceived within and navigated through the social networks of students at Harvard, and subsequently at other elite universities—Princeton, Yale, and Stanford. If we consider the birth of this particular social media interface at Harvard, we can recognize it as a telling example of how components of a university's social “community” were rapidly transferred onto this online platform. Since its inception, this interface has expanded across multiple college communities and then quickly encompassed a wider range of connected networks of individuals and groups around the world. Today, the adoption of social media technology now stretches across the globe, integrating into the lives of individuals of diverse social, national, racial and ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

According to Davis et'al (2012), traditional-aged college students have embraced social media technology; it has become a major part of their everyday lives. In this way, the boundaries between online and “real-world” communities are rapidly stretching if not completely deteriorating. Particularly, as we consider the generation for whom such social media technology exchanges have existed their entire lives, there is a fluid interchange between digital and physical experiences. For this generation, SMT is a primary means of

communication and information seeking, and possibly, a central component of their identity and community building. Prensky (2001) suggests that these “digital natives”— young people born into a world of laptops and cell phones, text messaging and tweeting — spend, on average, more than eight hours a day exposed to digital technology. As result, digital natives may experience fundamentally different brain development that favours constant communication and multitasking.

Given this insight, it is worth to note that SMTs are reshaping the way students communicate generally and within their college communities. There are different research results that pointed out how students’ use of social networking tools for academic purposes increases their engagement in college.

Therefore, similar to other technologically developed countries, Ethiopian HE institutions should consider more opportunities to seek creative ways to use SMT in effort to reach out to students and strengthen their ties to the institution. More than ever, educators need to know how to skilfully negotiate these technologies to develop academic college-based networks that can help students succeed. In that regard, understanding the types and extent of use of SMT in our country’s higher education may be helpful.

2.8. Social media and socialization

When one thinks about socialization and social media, the first question that comes to mind could be, “Does social networking affect socialization?”

Well, it is known that in modern day social networking has rapidly scaled up to become one of the most common ways for people to exchange messages, dialogue and share information. As a result, social media has played a large role in shaping the transformation of ways people communicate with one another. For instance, in Ethiopia, just a mere decade ago people used to either meet for coffee, stop by one another’s house or pick up the phone and call, but the current modern society of this country is changing; it is becoming a fast paced world.

In a world dominated by technology, and many individuals possessing an innate need for continuous streams of information, social networking effectively fulfils the desire for both the ability to send and receive quick, if not immediate, responses.

While people may still interact with one another in more 'traditional ways' such as coffee or phone calls, today many people are more quick to learn or receive the latest news about one another through Facebook rather than from a personal inform. How many people learn about the happenings of family and friends online? Even of those who live nearby? Is this a negative evolution?

Perhaps, but in some ways the ability to globally socialize can be a positive. Here, Leigh Goessel in her 2010 Published article put some of the ways in which social networking has affected socialization, for better or worse:

- Less Phone Calls

While many people becoming attached and dependent upon their cell phones, this has more increasingly evolved from calling to communicating through text messaging. However, with smart phones becoming increasingly popular, web capabilities and apps to allow people to easily indulge in social networking through their mobile devices is perhaps slowly, but steadily scaling back the need to actually talk to others. Today much communication takes place via electronic text and a high percentage likely occurs through social networks.

- Decreased Face to Face Interaction

Being so many people spend an inordinate amount of time on social network sites, there must be benefits or else people would not indulge. It is likely the sheer convenience of online socialization makes this option of connecting with others very popular and attractive.

However in an age where time often feels to be at a premium, many people are likely to connect with friends and family on social networks rather than spend time socializing in person. As a result this ends up with less face to face interaction, which can eventually significantly impact personal relationships.

- Less One on One Interaction

Social networks are rooted in the philosophy of shared information. One person sends a message; there is an option to send to everyone in the network. Facebook and Twitter are two of the most current popular networks in 2010 and each offers a way of sending out a singular message where it can be streamed to all connections.

In this respect people are receiving large amounts of information, but do not necessarily reply and 'speak' one on one. If this trend continues it will be interesting to see how the dynamics of relationships evolve. Relationships that have lowered levels of individual interaction may suffer or become distant.

- More Information Shared

One fascinating aspect of social networking is the ability to share and receive information. The larger the network, the more information will be spread. In this respect people are exposed to many different lives and obtain a keen insight as to how others live and what they are thinking, both near and far. Expanding on familiar knowledge and learning new information is a terrific opportunity.

- Diversity

Through social networks people who never would have had the opportunity to interact can share thoughts, knowledge and ideas. The diversity of people and information located on the web is nothing short of amazing.

People today can learn so much more using the technological platform social networks provide in order to interact. Knowledge and insight can be gained through varying perceptions and perspectives of the many people who can now socialize locally in a global network. "The world is certainly becoming a smaller place thanks to technologies such as social networks," Goessl concludes.

From the above points, we can clearly understand that Social networking has had a significant impact on socialization. Some of these changes are for the better, some for the worse. With every new development in any society there are always going to be some transactions in order to obtain the benefits. Each member of society has to individually decide whether or not these transactions are worth the costs.

In general, how social networking eventually impacts socialization as a whole remains to be seen, however, if current trends continue, it seems to be that a world a few decades from now will barely recognize familiar over the fence conversations between neighbours and picking up the phone to make a call.

2.8.1. Social media and communication

Social media has drastically changed how we communicate. Not too long ago, we communicated through the mail, on a land-line telephone, and in person. Today, we send text messages; leave voice messages; use instant messenger; send emails; talk through headphones, cell phones, and online video phones; and, of course, interact through the Internet where excess of social media tools has redefined communication.

Rich Maggiani (2014) says such a redefinition has had an enormous effect. According to him, the entire paradigm of social media has altered the basic rules of communication, especially between business and their audiences. The one-way communication methods of the recent past—business-to-customer and business-to-business—have been replaced by a more robust multidimensional communication model. That model is collectively called social media.

2.8.2. Social Media and Interpersonal Communication

These days, Glance around in cafes, restaurants, in the taxis, even in classrooms or many places in Ethiopia and you'll be hard-pressed to find people (especially youth) who don't have their heads- down using their cell phones to text, or update their Facebook statuses—though most of them being with others. On one hand, this may show that our country's people actually are becoming more social and more interactive with others, but the style of that communication has changed so that we're not meeting face-to-face as often as we used to. On the other hand, it also implies that Social media's effect on our ability to interact and communicate is visible throughout all areas of society. So what does this mean for interpersonal communication?

According to Maura Keller a Minneapolis-based writer and editor, social media certainly affects how we engage with one another across all venues and ages. "There has been a shift in the way we communicate; rather than face-to-face interaction, we're tending to prefer mediated communication," he says. "We'd rather e-mail than meet; we'd rather text than talk on the phone," he adds.

Keller (2013) explanations, three key issues are surfacing regarding the role social media now plays in people's communication styles, First, when we communicate through social media, we tend to trust the people on the other end of the communication, so our messages tend to be more open. Second, our social connections are not strengthened as much through social media as they are face-to-face, so we don't tend to deepen our relationships—they tend to

exist in the status quo. Last, we tend to follow and interact with people who agree with our points of view, so we aren't getting the same diversity of viewpoints as we've gotten in the past.

"Certainly, with every new communication technology comes, changes in the style and type of interpersonal communication follows," Keller says. "Obviously the bigger the influence of the technology, the more changes we see in communication styles," (p. 3).

Nicholas David Bowman cited in Keller noted that "One big concern surrounding social media's impact is communication overload"—learning how to handle and make sense of this "more" information we now have.

As Bowman explains, we're getting more information about more people than ever before, and we feel a need to process and perhaps even respond to it all. "In fact, there has been some very early recent data suggesting that teens are perhaps pulling away from Facebook because it's just too much for them to handle," he says.

Another potentially negative consequence of social media is a lack of privacy. "Because interpersonal communication is changing, we're finding ourselves more apt to share on social media the sort of information we might have previously shared privately face-to-face," Keller says. "We always have to keep in mind that our social networks are searchable—even when privacy settings are set extremely high, it's always possible to find out personal information."

Of course, the negativity surrounding social media is countered by positive influences, including the ability to communicate with more people across greater distances and with increased speed. Keller believes that message can be shared and spread farther and faster than at any other time in human history, hence can do a lot of good by spreading positive messages in this way.

What does the future hold for social media and its potential continuous effect on interpersonal communication within society? Bowman believes social media likely will continue to become increasingly integrated into the normal human experience like most of the communication technologies that preceded it. "They will continue to increase the volume of the human communication process, and we will continue to learn how to use them for good and for bad," he says.

“We must remember that social media is really only a decade old. That’s very young in the history of communication technology,” Paul Booth, PhD, an assistant professor of media and cinema, adds. He further noted that “It’s been influential, but it hasn’t really settled into a routine yet. As social media becomes more normalized, we’ll stop seeing it as changing things and start seeing it as the way things are. As a society we’ll be OK—we’ve always adjusted to new technology. So whether it’s wearable communication media, such as Google glasses, or more cloud computing, we’ll change and adapt.” He remarks.

2.8.3. Social media and behaviour

We all know that everyone is a product of their environment. Circumstantial life events, influences, and surroundings can further change our behaviour. Social media already highly influences our shopping, relationships, and education. But how large of a role does networking through social media play into our lives? Maybe more than any of us realize.

Although exceptions exist, research suggests that most social networks primarily support pre-existing social relations. For the most part, Facebook is used to maintain existing offline relationships or solidify offline connections, as opposed to meeting new people. These relationships may be weak ties, but typically there is some common offline element among individuals who friend one another, such as a shared class at school. This is one of the chief dimensions that differentiate social media from earlier forms of public communication. Research in this vein has investigated how online interactions interface with offline ones. Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler’s research is one of this. According to them, Facebook users engage in “searching” for people with whom they have an offline connection more than they “browse” for complete strangers to meet.

While social networks are often designed to be widely accessible, many attract homogeneous populations initially, so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society, even if that was not the intention of the developers.

Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler (2007) in their book entitled the surprising power of our social networks and how they shape our lives, have tried to look at the relationship between individuals and their networks of people that either directly or indirectly influence their lives. In their account of the pervasive and often bizarre qualities of social networks, the authors explain why obesity is contagious, why the

rich get richer, and even how we find and choose our partners. Hence, they suggested that;

“We like to think that we are largely in control of our day-to-day lives, yet most of what we do, from what we eat to who we sleep with, and even the way we feel, is significantly influenced by those around us’ and those around them, and those around them. Our actions can change the behaviours, the beliefs, and even the basic health of people we’ve never met. In a subtle fashion, social networks help spread contagions; create “epidemics” of obesity, smoking and substance abuse, disseminate fads and markets, alter voting patterns, and more.”

Additionally, they noted that Social networks can harbor a flow of generally undesirable things such as anger and sadness, unhappiness, but good things also flow like happiness, love, altruism, and valuable information. “It is the spread of the good things that vindicates the whole reason we live our lives in networks,” Christakis says. “If I was always violent to you ...you would cut the ties to me and the network would disintegrate. In a deep and fundamental way, networks are connected to goodness, and goodness is required for networks to emerge and spread.”

The authors suggests that our happiness is connected with the happiness of people three degrees removed from us; whether we’re happy or not depends in part on our friends’ friends’ friends.

Christakis’ paper on obesity revealed that if someone became clinically obese; their friends were 57% more likely also to become obese. A friend of a friend of that obese person was about 20% more likely to become obese, and this was the case even if the weight of the linking friend remained unaltered.

The notion that one’s behaviour and actions can influence connections a step removed is pretty mind boggling to think about. And to add to that, our own behaviour, actions, and habits are likely to be largely more influence and impacted by social media than we ever could have imagined. Christakis concludes with strong suggestion as follows;

“What we update our online status to say has more of an effect on our audience than we think. From a marketing perspective, think how to positively influence your already existing customers, clients, or brand advocates online. If you can successfully create positive emotions around your campaign or

brand in any way, the ripple effect can be more pervasive and influential than you might think.”

Debra Ellis (2012) also strengthens the above suggestion. He says, even with all the good in social media, there is a dark side. It is addictive. Once you get started, you have to use self-control to keep from staying online continuously. It is that call to tweet or post that creates anti-social behavior. Social media, like everything, is better in moderation. Use it wisely to start and nurture relationships. Don't let it replace personal interactions or foster bad behavior, Ellis wraps up.

2.8.4. Social Media and Politics

As anyone with experience of online communities will testify, political discussions are generally off limits due to the devastating role they can have on general community harmony. Despite that, the last few years have seen a range of initiatives aiming to use social platforms to greater engage citizens in the political process, whether that's crowd funding civic projects or soliciting ideas for improvements to public operations.

The internet based communication networks are promoting freedom of speech. People are no longer passive readers, but rather engaging in news as a conversation at local, national and international stage. As Solutions (2010) cited in Tesfaye (2005), Social Media is an evolutionary development that has transformed the way that individuals, organizations and political campaigns are able to communicate (p. 25).

Rita Safranek (2012) also stated that, social media has given the opportunity to any ordinary citizen to participate actively in any affair on the online forum. One is not expected to be a politician or famous person or an activists or someone else to engage in public debate. The only thing that is required from anyone to engage in the social media is basics of computer and idea or content. An average person, with little or no advanced computer skills, can do social media participation and independent blogging. Citizens can create content and can have access to it with as little as a smart phone, and this can easily be integrated, Safranek, (2012).

For Shirky (2011), the communications landscape gets denser, more complex, and more participatory; the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective

action. Egyptian born columnist, Mona Eltahawy, (as cited in Suopis, 2010), writes about Middle East political affairs for international newspapers. She says social media platforms are giving a voice to the most marginalized groups in the region. On the other hand, Khoury (2011) argues that the Arab blogosphere arose because young people were frustrated with the restrictions imposed by the state-regulated boundaries of the Arab public sphere, which is closed off to most modes of free expression and joint citizen action, Khoury (2011).

Furthermore, Safranek (2012, p 9) stresses that the emergence of social media has offered the opportunity for marginalized group of people. This is particularly applicable to Arab countries where religion and ethnic divides previously prevented networking. "Many Arab regimes banned the creation of political parties and limited the right to associate or create civil rights groups. This meant that there was little space where religious, ethnic, and cultural groups could meet and interact. ... But social media has helped such groups discover one another and break the psychological barrier of fear between them, Safranek (2012).

The general concepts of social media in relation to socialization, communication, behaviour and politics have been discussed so far. Hence, one can understand how social media is affecting our day to day life and interaction just by looking at the above discussions. In the next section of the literature, the controversial issues concerning the negative and positive impacts of internet, mainly social media is discussed. Social media has become all pervasive especially in the lives of young people. Hence, this part of the literature examines the risks and opportunities that it affords. Researches that investigate the more negative aspects of youth online behaviour such as addiction as well as online risks such as harassment/cyber bullying and sexual solicitation are examined in this section. In addition, positive aspects of Internet and social media use such as its potential for learning and enhancing social relations as well as delivering health interventions are also discussed as follows.

2.9. Positive and negative impacts of social media

Social media is growing rapidly throughout the world. More adults and teenagers are joining sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter to interact with friends, family, and strangers. The introduction of social media has changed the world in many ways. It affects each individual in different ways.

Is social media a good or a bad thing? That is the most frequently asked question today. Well, there are always two sides of everything; it depends on your perspective on how you perceive it. The same goes for social media, most people admire it as a revolutionary invention and some seem to take it as a negative impact on the society. Efforts have been made by different researchers to understand the use of social media and whether it has a positive or negative impact on the young people. Some of the literatures taken from those researches are presented as follows.

2.9.1. Negative aspects of social media use

In an effort to understand the effects of what has become arguably the fastest growing advancement in consumer-used computer-based technology, research about social media has crossed disciplines, tending to focus on the social dynamics of the interactions and their impact generally on our lives and ways of communicating. Generalized together, these research findings reveal two broad realities in which social media provides a rich data source for better understanding social dynamics more generally, and social media use has varied effects – effects that are highly dependent on the degrees of exactly how people use social media, in addition to how much they use it.

It has been mentioned under the background part of this study that the high-volume usage of SMT and far too much time spent on non academic activities became an obvious and popular concern among administrators, educational institutions and parents. As to Davis et'al (2012) Countless articles in popular newspapers, periodicals, and blogs have also raised these very same concerns.

However, Davis et'al noted that the most important concern among scholars, educators, and the public is related to the effects of these media such as Facebook on the time dedicated to studying and offline activities. In relation to this, you can refer the findings of Studies on Facebook usage and GPA, which is included under the sub title of this study, entitled; Social media use and its impacts on student learning or academic achievements under page 40. SMT has also been critiqued, especially by educators, for its limitations in providing useful information and resources for its users beyond entertainment value, (refer Davies et'al p. 17). However, numerous other studies incorporated in this study as well contradict this fear. In particular, findings point to the idea that how social media are used may matter more than how much it is used.

Putting different examples, Davies et al (2012) argues that challenges of SMT are also becoming more salient when we consider not just the technology itself, but also the dynamics of the users of the technology. For many administrators and faculty in higher education, understanding the phenomenon of social media technology, and the diverse uses therein, is a challenge in and of itself. For instance, to some, SMT represents a cure-all solution for some systemic issues and individual program and personnel shortcomings. He, noted, “The belief that social media technology can itself rectify pre-existing issues at a structural level is wrong.” For example, a university communications staff may decide to create a Twitter page to engage students with the expectation of students becoming followers – users connected to and receiving updates from a profile they “follow”. However, without giving students good reason for following the university’s account – by providing content that is relevant or useful to their collegiate experience – they may remain disengaged, he concludes.

In this way, SMT has expanded upon McLuhan’s (1964; 1967) aphorism of the medium is the message given how media have drastically changed over time. McLuhan espoused the idea that it is not just the content of a message that is important. The medium itself exists in symbiotic relationship with the content. The medium – the media technology and how it is used – shapes the social norms and expectations within a society. Therefore, the medium creates its own structural changes to a society that affect how messages are received and perceived, thereby fundamentally infusing the content with particular parameters of meaning.

Additional concerns exist regarding personal privacy on social networking sites. Lewis (2011), and Kaufman and Christakis (2008) have investigated the factors that predicted privacy settings and preferences among college students on Facebook. In addition, they examined the mechanisms of privacy mobilization. Their findings showed that users are significantly more likely to have private profiles if they are very active Facebook users, if their friends have private profiles, or if they are women.

To summarize, social ties between students are often clustered in accordance to students with similar privacy behaviors for their profiles. They also describe two different mechanisms that influence privacy preferences: (1) individuals, independently, make privacy decisions based on their perceptions of safety and of how they want to present themselves to others, and (2) privacy behaviour might spread from student to student. Finally, they argue that in order to

understand the privacy behaviours in SMT, we must consider the changing nature of the technology, the various users, and the diverse purposes and meaning each type of user attributes to technology. From this research emerges a very complex and potentially troubling panorama of privacy issues.

Furthermore, as Lewis et al. (2008) argue, when a new technology such as Facebook is released, there is a high degree of ambiguity over appropriate or desirable norms of conduct—the very definition of this space as public or private is contested. College students, faculty, staff, parents, and Facebook itself each have different and potentially conflicting interests in the way the technology is used. Students are certainly aware that the information they post is “public;” however, all may not recognize the full extent and possible consequences of this display. Slowly but surely, excitement turns into precaution. The technology spreads throughout the population, and users provide more data on their profiles—all the while maintaining the rather permissive default privacy settings, not yet having reason to do otherwise, Lewis et al., (2011).

Therefore, users move from excitement and ambiguity to self regulation. However, rather than the regulation being at once imposed by someone (e.g., institutions, faculty, or parents), it is implicit, normative, and internally negotiated, Lewis et al., (2011). The precautions and solutions to privacy issues in this context are not only unclear, but also continually shifting. Additional challenges may continue to emerge due to the ever-expanding technological divide between generations of students and university faculty and administrators. As digital natives flood colleges and universities, they bring with them an increasingly high demand for socially engaging information from their institutions. Actors within postsecondary institutions are challenged to not only understand the aforementioned perils of SMT, but also to consider its promise to affect change. Colleges and universities, then, are faced with either attempting to protect existing institutions by resisting these emerging technologies and the changes they foster among students or embracing the future to which they are leading.

2.91.1. Social Network Sites and Social Malady

Everywhere we turn in every form of media we are surrounded with this thing called social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) noted that a striking feature of social media is that it goes beyond users being able to retrieve information, but that users are able to create and consume information themselves. Social media applications such as Facebook (a network that

allows users create profile, add friends and exchange messages), Twitter (a social network and micro-blogging site that allows users to send and read text-based posts); YouTube (a video sharing website that allows users upload, share and view videos), LinkedIn (a business related social network site that allows users share pictures) and many others exist and have become popular among internet users. According to Botha, Farshid and Pitt (2012), every minute, 24 hours of video content are uploaded to YouTube servers and the number of Facebook users surpasses some of the world's population.

Online users engaging in social media interaction are generally motivated by similar factors which are both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature depending on their geographical location. These factors, as suggested by Amarasinghe (2010) include: altruism, curiosity, sense of efficacy, pleasure of sharing, reciprocity, affiliation, power, collaboration, reward and recognition.

According to Jay Deragon (2011), Social media maladies are conditions affecting productivity of the human network. It is often construed to be a social condition associated with specific symptoms and signs. It may be caused by external factors, such as influence of technology or simply using technology in the wrong way and for the wrong purposes. It may also be caused by the influence of media. The internal factors include a lack of knowledge or wisdom by individuals or groups, sometimes both. The lack of knowledge and/or wisdom in the use of this thing everyone calls "social media" has become a social media malady.

Social media maladies cause pain, dysfunction, distress, social problems, and lost productivity to the person(s) afflicted, or similar problems for those in contact with the person or organization. In this broader sense, it sometimes includes injuries, disabilities, disorders, syndromes and mental infections.

With so many social network sites displayed on the internet, many youth and students are tempted to abandon their time on Facebook and Twitter. On the other hand, German researchers revealed that witnessing friends' vacations, love lives and work successes on Facebook can cause envy and trigger feelings of misery and loneliness. The researchers found that one in three people felt worse after visiting the site and more dissatisfied with their lives, while people who browsed without contributing were affected the most. "We were surprised by how many people have a negative experience from Facebook with envy leaving them feeling lonely, frustrated or angry," says researcher Hanna Krasnova from Berlin Humboldt

University. "From our observations some of these people will then leave Facebook or at least reduce their use of the site," said Krasnova, adding to speculation that Facebook could be reaching saturation point in some markets.

Furthermore, researchers from Humboldt University and from Darmstadt's Technical University found vacation photos were the biggest cause of resentment with more than half of envy incidents triggered by holiday snaps on Facebook. Social interaction was the second most common cause of envy as users could compare how many birthday greetings they received to those of their Facebook friends and how many "likes" or comments were made on photos and postings.

Generally, the only cure for social media maladies is knowledge followed by wisdom. You are not likely to get cured by popular and influential Social Media Therapists because the reality is they are the ones spreading the epidemic with self centered promotional media disguised as knowledge and wisdom. Real knowledge and wisdom comes from the soul of the human network, concludes Deragon (2011).

2.9.1.2. Problematic Internet Use and Facebook Addiction

Excessive Internet use is emerging as one of the more negative aspects of young people's online activities. In different literatures, such extreme use is often synonymous with the terms 'compulsive Internet use', 'problematic Internet use', 'pathological Internet use', 'Internet dependence', 'computer addiction' and 'net addiction'. Internet addiction, the term we use here, has been defined in Guan and Subrahmanyam (2009 p. 352) as "The use of the Internet to escape from negative feelings, continued use of the Internet despite the desire to stop, experience of unpleasant emotions when Internet use is impossible, thinking about the Internet constantly, and the experience of any other conflicts or self-conflicts due to Internet use."

Actually, Internet Addiction was a coinage of Goldberg (1996) to describe the undesirable consequences emanating from excessive internet usage on individual lives. Internet addiction shares certain degree of similarity with substance addiction where addicts suffer mentally and physically. As observed by Kandell 1998, Griffiths, (2000), this non-substance addiction is however viewed as severe psychological dependency and behavioural addiction to internet.

The concept of addiction follows the medical model. Addiction, in the medical model relates with bodily and psychological dependence on a physical substance and not on behavioural pattern. Lemon (2002), Byun et al (2009) and Griffiths (1996) argued that addiction should be widened to cover a broader range of behaviour. These researchers proposed a subset of behavioural addiction- the concept of technological addiction. Young (1998) presented a definition of internet-related disorder called 'Problematic Internet Use (PIU) and noted that internet use interfered with addicts' academic work, social lives and professional performance. Probing further the researcher identified skipping sleep, ignoring family responsibilities, and showing up late for work as some attendant outcomes. These are evidences of psychological disorder which meet up with the criteria for impulse control disorder, mental illness characterized by an uncontrollable desire to perform behaviour, Louis Loung and Paul S.N. Lee (2012)

As to Guan and Subrahmanyam (2009), there is evidence that Internet addiction has a negative effect on academics (a drop in grades), family relations (having to hide their excessive Internet use from parents), physical health (sleep deprivation due to long hours of Internet use), mental health (depression), and finance (cost of accrued Internet expenses). They further noted that, interactive communication applications such as chat rooms, instant messaging, e-mail, and online games have most commonly been associated with Internet addiction among youth and students. In relation to this, assessing the relationship between Facebook usage and academic performance, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) discovered that Facebook users had lower grades and spent less time studying than students who did not use social network sites, (for further knowledge about the relationship between Facebook use and educational achievements, it is recommended to refer page 51 of this paper)

In addition to that, various dimensions of internet addiction have been investigated by different researchers. To mention some of those investigations taken from Guan and Subrahmanyam (2009); Griffiths (2000) studied five cases of excessive internet uses and hoped to find the cues for the existence of internet addiction. Young and Rodgers (1998) investigated personality traits of those considered dependent users of internet and discovered that self-reliant individual has the highest potential in developing problematic internet uses. Sung, Larose et al (2004) drew fresh conceptualization of gratification specific to problematic internet uses to uncovered seven gratification factors. Chen et al (2004) studied the possibility of the non-detrimental effects of internet dependency and suggested an instrument to measure

positive and negative internet dependency. Arguing with the cognitive –behavioural theory, Davis (2001) indicated that both cognitive and behavioural processes work together to develop negative consequences associated with problematic internet usage.

In a study, Echeburna and deCorral (2010) observed that those people addicted to using social media experience symptoms similar to those experienced by people suffering from addiction to substances or other behaviours. Investigating some aspects of the addictive potential of social networking sites, Pelling and White (2010) surveyed 233 teenage students and discovered that addictive tendencies with regard to social network site were significantly predicted by self-identity and belongingness. This means that teenagers who identified themselves as social network sites users and those who looked for a sense of belongingness on social sites appeared to be at risk of developing an addiction to social network sites. Wilson, Fornasier and White (2010) also indicated in their study that teenagers with high extroversion and low conscientiousness scores predicted addictive tendencies and frequencies in the time spend on social network sites. They suggested that using social network sites satisfies the extroverts' need to socialize.

Discussing how powerful the influence of Facebook can be on sub-consciousness of the users to the point that they don't even realize their behaviour and amount of time they are spending on it, Fenichel (2009) submitted that Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD) appears to have the most ingrained and self-reinforcing of all scenarios, reinforcing through immediacy, acclamation, intimacy, shared experience, shared creativity and the ability to be the complete and total captain of the ship of one's Facebook homepage.

To get a better handle on this problem, we need to understand the characteristics of youth who may be at risk for online addiction. For example, Among Canadian adolescents, Parker et al. found that emotional intelligence was a strong-to-moderate predictor of addiction-related behaviours like excessive Internet use, online gaming addiction, and online gambling problems; youth with deficiencies in the ability to read, express, and elicit desired emotions may be more prone to partake in online-addiction-behaviours. Emotional intelligence scores were significantly correlated with scores on the Internet Addiction Disorder Questionnaire (IADQ), Problem Video Game Playing Scale (PVGS), and South Oaks Gambling Screen – Revised for Adolescents (SOGSRA).

In addition to above discussions, Larkshmi (2011), put the following criteria as a checklist for Facebook addiction disorder:

- The first thing you do in the morning is to check your Facebook account.
- Whenever you are not online, you day-dream of the comments and status updates that have been received.
- You spend hours or waste a lot of precious time on Facebook.
- Your day ends only after a last check of your Facebook account and wishing everyone 'good night' as status update.

Furthermore, some other criteria which Thurs Hub (2011) regarded as "symptoms of Facebook addiction" are given below to help users in realizing whether they are really addicted to Facebook.

1. Users and their siblings communicate through Facebook wall and messages, even if they stay in same house.
2. Users check Facebook for updates and comments after every hour at their workstation or on their cell phone.
3. Users wake up in the morning, and log onto their Facebook account first.
4. Users' Facebook wall is full of status updates, comments, and applications that they just used.
5. Users give priority to Facebook over their commitments in professional and personal life.
6. Users spend over an hour on Facebook at a stretch or in short episodes over regular intervals.
7. Users look forward to get home in the evening so that they can see what is happening in cyberspace. (on Facebook to be precise)
8. Users can not go for a day without using Facebook, and even this thought makes them go into sort of depression.
9. Users' day ends with checking Facebook for that one last time bidding people 'good night' through their Facebook status update.

According to Thurs, if users are facing any of these activities, then they are suffering from Facebook addiction disorder. Facebook addiction disorder contains the tendency to affect some serious problem of mental health and social life. Therefore we need to throw away this habit as soon as possible, he concludes.

However, it is important here, to note that online gaming and chatting can be enjoyable leisure activities for youth that do not always lead to Internet addiction. Although there is some evidence that frequency of computer use can have a negative effect on academics and that using the Internet for playing games and general entertainment purposes decreases the quality of friendships and romantic relationships, there is also evidence that computer games can have positive effects on cognitive development. For detailed issues regarding the positive effects of social media, refer the section of this literature entitled as ‘positive impacts of social media use’ on page 55 of this chapter.

2.9.1.3. Issues Surrounding Social Networking Sites Effects and Youth

Discussions about adolescents today differ considerably from the past through the central role that technology plays in youth lives. Ito et al. (2009) observe that, “. . . Although today’s questions about ‘kids these days’ have a familiar ring to them, the contemporary version is somewhat unusual in how strongly it equates generational identity with technology identity”, (p. 2).

The technologies that youth utilize today are most definitely new and how teenagers use them to communicate with each other is clearly novel. Nevertheless, the technologically mediated activities that youth participate in are similar to past generations: Just as they have done in parking lots and shopping malls, teens gather in networked public spaces for a variety of purposes, including to negotiate identity, gossip, support one another, jockey for status, collaborate, share information, flirt, joke, and goof off. They go there to hang out, Ito et al, (2009, p. 79).

Not surprisingly, the apprehensions of parents and educators about SNS are also comparable to past questions about how youth spend their time. SNS represent a new environment through which to examine adolescent development and learning. Within this context, some areas of concerns that are particularly most important for adolescent populations such as youth privacy and safety, psychological well-being and learning are presented as follows.

2.9.1.4. Social Network Sites and Youth Relationships: Safety and privacy

Social Media and the youth are almost inseparable. The impact of social media on the youth of today has been massive. Being able to communicate instantly with anyone from any part of the world is something which is unbelievable. No matter what time of the day it is,

there is always going to be someone, with whom you can communicate with, exchange ideas and opinions with. Not only does it kill time, but one can also get a lot to learn from the views of other people.

Social Media has also become a huge platform for the youth to present their talents to the rest of the world. The impact of Social media on youth has no doubt, been tremendous, says Simon Abishek in his article posted on social media (Feb 9, 2014). But in his opinion, there is a bit of a downside to this phenomenon, as well. According to him, the interaction done by the youth on Social Media is slowly and gradually taking the place of real interactions. He argued that these day people, especially the younger lot, prefer to virtually connect with someone, rather than making an effort to go outside and meet new people. And the main reason for this is that, “when you are talking with someone online, you can pretend to be anyone. While you may be really shy, but virtually you may as well be the confident, laidback leader of a group. People find it easier to express themselves virtually than in reality” commented Abishek (2014).

However, according to Lemke et al., (2009), a major controversy surrounding SNS is youth safety and privacy. Approximately 70% of school districts worldwide block access to SNS, and the main reason for this trend centres on fears about student safety. However, initial research on SNS suggests that these online communities help individuals build social capital. Social capital refers to the idea that one derives benefits—i.e., advice, information, or social support—through their network of relationships, Portes, (1998). A critical theoretical concern for youth is whether and how SNS facilitate detrimental behaviours such as bullying and interacting with strangers, versus positive outcomes such as developing wider networks of relationships.

The early picture concerning youth and online privacy is mainly positive. Nearly every major SNS offers privacy controls. In fact, “These privacy measures have given adolescent users a great deal of control over who views their profiles, who views the content that they upload, and with whom they interact on these online forums”, Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, (2008, p. 123). Current research finds that teenagers disclose a variety of personal information on their profiles, but they also proactively use privacy features to manage who can view their content, Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Lenhart & Madden, (2007). A cross sectional study of a college student sample also reports that privacy concerns did not hinder users’ desire to share

personal information on their profiles. Rather, students used privacy features to control and limit who could view their information, Tufecki (2008).

A study by Lenhart & Madden, (2007) revealed that, approximately 91% of youth who use SNS report that they utilize the sites to communicate with already known friends. Some other studies also find that teenagers are less likely to experience unwanted sexual solicitations or harassment in SNS, while more likely to experience these dangers in instant messaging and chat room environments (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). Nevertheless, these and other detrimental behaviors such as cyberbullying are real concerns. Even if dangerous or negative experiences in SNS only account for a small percentage of online activity, each instance represents a significant concern for adults, parents, and educators, noted J. Ahn (2011 p. 140). Hence, it becomes worth to look at some research findings that deal with these concerns.

The first to look from such research is the finding in the study entitled, impact of social media on adolescent behavioural health in California (2011), available at <http://www.californiateenhealth.org>. According this study, there are a number of risks associated with social media use, specifically, negative effects on mental health, cyber bullying, texting/sexting, dangers of sexual solicitation, and exposure to problematic and illegal content and privacy violations. Berkman, (2010) further revealed that, the risks that especially youth face online are similar to those faced offline (P.3). However, the risk profile for the use of various types of social media depends on the type of risk, a teen's use of the media, and the psychological makeup of the teen using them. It is important to note that teens most at risk often engage in risky behaviors offline and also have difficulties in other parts of their lives.

According to Jenna Sweeny and Caroline Curtis, (2012), use of social media also creates an opportunity for emotional distress from receiving threatening, harassing, or humiliating communication from others, called cyber bullying. People have the ability to abuse instant communication to start a fight or bully over social networking sites. This is because they do not have to see the other side of a screen. Cyber bullying appears similar in prevalence to offline bullying (Lenhart, 2007). Cyber bullying has been shown to cause higher levels of depression and anxiety for victims than traditional bullying and has also been connected to cases of youth suicide with teens known to engage in reading hurtful comments days before their suicide attempts (Kowalski, 2009). The devastation of these online attacks can leave

deep mental scars. In several well-publicized cases, victims have even been driven to suicide, adds Brian Jung, (2013).

Social networking sites encourage people to be more public about their personal lives. However, one of the potentially negative consequences of social media is a lack of privacy. Jung, (2013) states, because intimate details of our lives can be posted so easily, users are prone to bypass the filters they might normally employ when talking about their private lives. What is more, the things they post remain available indefinitely. An article by Maura Keller 2013 says, "Because interpersonal communication is changing, we're finding ourselves more correct to share on social media the sort of information we might have previously shared privately face-to-face." However, Keller adds, "We always have to keep in mind that our social networks are searchable—even when privacy settings are set extremely high, it's always possible to find out personal information."

Similarly, Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe (2008) declare, "For SM users, there is a false sense of privacy." They further state the following idea.

Combined this false sense of privacy with the feeling of anonymity and lack of social responsibility that often develops from using text-centered telecommunications, we see that many students post embarrassing, humiliating, denigrating and hurtful content in both text, photos and videos. We need to teach them that nothing is private online, especially their social networks. We need to show them examples of the serious consequences that have occurred to those whose egregious online behavior has been made public. Students have been expelled from high schools and colleges. Students have been denied acceptances to intern programs, admission to independent high schools, colleges, and jobs at summer camps. Students, and their families, have been sued for slander and defamation of character. Students, and their parents, have been arrested. All because of the content they've posted in their "private" social network accounts. Hackers, scammers, reporters, police, high school and college admissions officers, employers, parents and summer camp directors....Adults are looking while some students don't get it! (P. 6).

Most probably, many youth and Students often ask how anyone can possibly get into their private Facebook pages. Here are the most common methods of getting into other's private pages, as set by Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe (2008).

- Security and software flaws are exposed. Software is hacked.
- Accounts are phished when users are tricked into clicking an email or IM link taking them to fake login pages. Once phished, scammers use various applications to suck out personal information from a user's entire network of friends. Scammers try using the phished information, including the login password, to access banks and credit card accounts because they know that most people have one password for all their accounts.
- Perhaps the most common reason that teens' private information is exposed is because they are easily tricked into accepting friend requests from strangers. Though there isn't a lot of research available on this point, some research and informal studies suggest that teens allow into their Facebook networks 44% - 87% of the strangers that knock on their door. This trick is best described as the "wolf in sheep's clothing." Many kids, especially girls, have a difficult time saying "no" to a friend request.
- Students' passwords are easily guessed or hacked with readily available "cracking" software.

The authors finally suggested that, Police, and other investigative authorities can have access to "private" Facebook pages. Also, they strongly suspect that Facebook itself sells access to information posted on private pages to third party marketers willing to pay the fees. At least, that was what one former employee in the social network industry who wished to remain anonymous described to us, they conclude.

According to Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe (2008), another concern of social media use for the youth is Texting/Sexting. While most teens use messaging responsibly, it is still an extremely powerful and private communication tool that can be used irresponsibly. With texting, teens cannot see the reaction of the person receiving the message, so their actions can be separated from the consequences, Common sense media, Parenting Tip Sheet, (2010). Texting can also be used to bully or humiliate people. An embarrassing or upsetting image or video can quickly be transmitted or uploaded to an online video sharing site like YouTube via

cell phones or the internet. Sexting is a form of texting where individuals send or receive sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images or messages.

As Clifford, (2009), Teens in relationships may also receive nude pictures or be pressured to send nude pictures of themselves to a partner. Relationship abuse can also include sending nonstop text messages or posting cruel comments on a boyfriend's or girlfriend's Facebook or MySpace page. Cell phones, instant messaging, and social networking websites are all increasingly being used to monitor, threaten, and harass relationship partners. One in three teens in relationships has been text messaged up to 30 times an hour by a partner to find out where they are, what they are doing, or who they are with, Liz Claiborne, (2008) in Fodeman and Monroe (2008).

In addition to all the above discussions, Online Sexual Solicitation and Predation is also seen as main concern of social media use among youngsters. Ybarra, (2007) defines unwanted online sexual solicitation as “the act of encouraging someone to talk about sex, to do something sexual, or to share personal sexual information even when that person does not want to”. As to him, online sexual predation occurs when an adult makes contact with a minor with intent to engage in sexual activities that would result in statutory rape. Youth are much more likely to receive sexual solicitation between same-age youth than sexual predation and most of these solicitations come from same-age peers who are known offline (Collins, 2011). In addition, 16% of teens using the internet said they have considered meeting someone they have only talked to online and 8% have actually done so (Cox, 2007).

Generally, as it has been discussed above, studies about adolescent privacy and safety mostly focus on the potential negative relationships that can be formed online. However, scholars also posit that the Internet widens our social networks and provides positive benefits in the form of social capital, *i.e.* in terms of relationship and group norms, Wellman et al., (1996). More positive impacts of SM are discussed in detail under page 55 of this study.

2.9.1.5. Participation in social networking sites and its impacts on Psychological Well-Being and Self Esteem

According to Ahn (2011), Self-esteem and psychological well-being are the two most common outcomes of interest in the Internet and SNS studies. Researchers typically measure self-esteem using established scales such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (used in Ellison

et al., 2007). Psychological well-being often refers to various measures that capture an individual's satisfaction with life. Scholars use a variety of scales that include measures of loneliness, depression, and overall life satisfaction (i.e., Kraut et al., 1998). A key debate among researchers considers whether higher use of the Internet affects one's self-esteem and psychological well-being, Kraut et al. (1998); Valkenburg & Peter (2009). Such Internet and technology based research informs how SNS; like Facebook researchers examine psychological well-being.

For instance, Dr. Larry Rosen, a professor of psychology at California State University, researched how technology impacts youth. His findings are based on survey responses from computer-based surveys distributed to 1,000 urban adolescents and his own 15-minute observations of 300 teenagers that were studying.

He noted that, as Facebook's dominance continues to grow, we are starting to realize the impact it is having on society, particularly on youth. "While nobody can deny that Facebook has altered the landscape of social interaction, particularly among young people, we are just now starting to see solid psychological research demonstrating both the positives and the negatives," adds Rosen (2011). His research found both negative and positive influences linked to social networking. According to him, the following are the potential negative psychological effects of Facebook:

- Teenagers who use Facebook more often show narcissistic tendencies, (If you are not already familiar with that term, dictionary.com describes narcissism as an, "inordinate fascination with oneself; excessive self-love; vanity.) while young adults who have a strong Facebook presence show more signs of other psychological disorders, including antisocial behaviors, mania, and aggressive tendencies.
- Daily overuse of media and technology has a negative effect on the health of all children, preteens, and teenagers by making them more prone to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders, as well as by making them more susceptible to future health problems.

In addition to these, the often-cited Home Net study by Kraut et al. (1998) recorded the number of hours individuals spent on the Internet (using tracking software on the participant's computers) and its relationship to future measures of social involvement and psychological well-being. The researchers found that longer use of the Internet was related to

increased depression, loneliness, and smaller social circles. The results suggest that Internet use isolates individuals from their friends and family, and has a negative impact on one's psychological well-being. This effect is known as the reduction hypothesis, Valkenburg & Peter (2009). After the HomeNet project, Internet studies exhibited a wide variety of findings concerning psychological wellbeing.

For example, a longitudinal follow-up to the original HomeNet study found no long-term effects of Internet use on loneliness or depression, Kraut et al., (2002). Valkenburg et al (2006), note a major shortcoming of previous Internet research. As to them, many of the studies treat Internet use as a one-dimensional activity. In reality, individuals use the Internet for many goals such as information gathering versus social interaction. In addition, prior studies often do not specify what activities might affect self-esteem and well-being, and why those specific activities might plausibly affect these outcomes.

However, contrary to these, current media studies that examine online interactions instead of broad Internet use generally find positive outcomes for youth. For example, Valkenburg et al. (2006) find that within a sample of over 800 Dutch adolescents, SNS use is related to self-esteem and psychological well-being. Adolescents who frequently use a SNS have more friends on the site and also more reactions on their profile (i.e., friends posted more comments and wall posts). In addition, the researchers report that having more positive reactions on one's SNS profile is correlated with higher self-esteem, and higher self esteem is significantly correlated with satisfaction with life. The results highlight the emerging sense that use of SNS itself does not cause feelings of well-being. Rather, the positive or negative reactions that youth experience within the site are a key mechanism for their social development.

To summarize with John Ahn's (2011), statement, future studies of SNS and youth must consider more detailed measurement of behaviours within the online community. These interactions— positive, negative, informative, or social—may then better predict outcomes of youth well-being.

2.9.1.6. Social media use and its impacts on student learning or academic achievements

The popularity of the social networking sites increased rapidly in the last decade. This is probably due to the reason that college and university students as well as teens used it extensively to get global access. These social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook

have become a raging craze for everyone nowadays, Sean MacEntee (2012). According to him, these sites have caused some potential harm to society. The students become victims of social networks more often than anyone else. This is because of the reason that when they are studying or searching their course material online, they get attracted to these sites to kill the boredom in their study time, diverting their attention from their work.

However, as to Ahn (2011), research on social networking sites and learning achievement is particularly slight when compared to studies of privacy, safety, and psychological well-being. But, it is worth to add two studies which are include in Ahn (2011 p. 142-43) that exemplify the debate surrounding SNS, youth, and educational achievement. He says, a conference paper by Karpinski (2009) received much media attention with findings that college Facebook users have lower GPAs than students who are not users of the site. Karpinski offers several hypotheses for these findings. For example, perhaps Facebook users spend too much time online and less time studying. However, the study did not rigorously examine counter hypotheses and remains a rather exploratory, basic attempt to understand the effect of SNS on learning. Pasek, more, and Hargittai (2009) note several clear limitations of the Karpinski study. The authors utilize more control variables including race, socioeconomic status, and previous academic achievement variables. From this analysis, the researchers find that Facebook usage has no significant relationship to GPA in any of their datasets.

The researchers in this debate suggest that the Facebook/ GPA relationship is an interesting avenue for future studies. However, aside from the fact that many youth use Facebook, there appear to be no substantive theoretical reasons why Facebook use might influence GPA. It is known that adolescents use the Internet for diverse communication and social goals. If perhaps a large percentage of youth interactions on Facebook were school-or academic-related, one might find a relationship to measures such as GPA. However, measurement of these communication patterns is lacking in the current literature and is a critical area for additional studies.

When we continue referring other research findings in relation to this controversial issue, a study in one school in Britain (available in <http://www.studymode.com>), has shown that Facebook has very negative impact on the performance of students in school. The school has conducted research and testing to determine whether social networks and Facebook affects in any way, the performance of students.

The testing was done so that for a period of three months, the first two months access to Facebook was denied and the third month access to Facebook was allowed. The results showed that a sample of three months was just enough to make a conclusion. In the third month, during the period of Facebook usage, it was noticed slight deterioration of grades, but what is even more important is lack of concentration and poor knowledge acceptance. In order to test the concentration level and the quality of teaching, at the last week, lesson was carried out to make summary of what was learned in every subject. In that summary students have participated and it turned out that the results were much worse in the third month. This test has shown that Facebook and other social networks have the most negative influence on quality of education.

According to this study, the problem does not occur only in case when students were actually logged on to Facebook and didn't pay attention to what teacher says. The problem is in the fact that "current events" on the Facebook distract them also in the time when they are not connected to it. Social networks are used by teenagers as a way to call the meeting with some person, to declare love and so on which in aspect of socialization is much easier to do than in actual world! In those situations, waiting for a response creates the need for constantly visiting Facebook. All this mentioned, and many other elements are the reason why the results of the test showed that the use of social networks in school has a negative impact on grades, monitoring of teaching and the concentration of students, adopted from <http://www.study mode.com>.

Strengthening the above finding, Rosen, (2011) also hypothesized that being connected to technology on an ongoing basis can seriously impact a teens' and young adults' education. The negative educational impacts of regularly checking Facebook during Rosen's 15-minute observation of students during study time revealed:

- ✓ Middle and high school students, as well as college students, who checked their Facebook once during the 15-minute study time, had lower test grades. Perhaps this is similar to being a distracted driver.
- ✓ During the 15-minute studying time research, those students who checked their Facebook most often also had the lowest rates of reading retention. This probably is not too surprising, but now it is a proven fact, in case you need to tell your children, he concludes.

Other negative side effects of social networking websites as cited in MacEntee (2012) include the following:

- Students have started relying more on the information accessible easily on these social networking sites and the web. This reduces their learning and research capabilities.
- Students who get involved in activities on social media sites while studying result in reduction in their focus of attention. This causes reduction in their academic performance, and concentration to study well.
- The more time the students spend on these social media sites, the less time they will spend socializing in person with others. This reduces their communication skills. They will not be able to communicate and socialize effectively in person with others. The employers are getting more and more unsatisfied with the communication skills of the fresh graduates due to this reason. The effective communication skills are keys to success in the real world.
- Students mostly use slang words or shortened forms of words on social networking sites. They start relying on the computer grammar and spelling check features. This reduces their command over the language and their creative writing skills.
- Students, while searching and studying online, get attracted to using social media sites and sometimes they forget why they are using internet. This wastes their time and sometimes students are not able to deliver their work in the specified time frame.
- Students get low grades in school due to lack of the desired information and writing skills.
- The student's motivational level reduces due to the use of these social networking sites. They rely on the virtual environment instead of gaining practical knowledge from the real world.

Contrary to the above discussions, other studies of social media use have focused strictly on its impact on dynamics that have been shown in prior scholarship to indirectly affect grades – college student engagement and involvement. These studies stop short of assessing the direct effect of social media use on grades, but prior research on traditional forms of academic engagement and involvement has emphasized the role of these dynamics in influencing GPA and other academic outcomes. For example, Heiberger and Harper (2008) produced findings that suggest that students who utilized social networking sites such as Facebook were more engaged in offline activities (i.e., studying, face-to-face

interaction, work), and they also reported greater life satisfaction and stronger connection to their institutions.

In another example cited in June Ahn (2011), a study of first-year students and social networking sites conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles revealed no relationship between time spent on social media and the amount of time spent on academic endeavours, particularly when they compared students who reported spending less than one hour on social networking sites daily and those who report spending more than six hours. However, the study did find a positive relationship between more social media use and higher levels of campus social involvement. Students who were spending more time using social media reported a stronger connection to their institution, felt better about their social life, and were also spending more time on real-life social activities such as interacting with friends and participating in student clubs or groups (p. 143).

Additional work by Junco (2011) highlights the fact that it is not just a question of if or how much students engage in social media that matters, but also, the ways in which students engage. He studied over 5000 students at a medium, 4-year, public, residential institution in the Northeast and measured real-world academic and co-curricular engagement using a scale generated from NSSE (National Study of Student Engagement) along with students' estimates of time they spent preparing for class and engaging in co-curricular activities such as involvement in campus clubs and organizations, student government, fraternities or sororities, campus publications, inter collegiate or intramural sports, etc. He found that more frequent Facebook use among students does have a negative relationship with such measures of engagement. However the types of activities students engage in while on social media matters.

Another major argument and hypothesis among education researchers is that youth participation in extracurricular and school activities increases their social connectedness with teachers and peers (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). This connectedness is related to increased engagement with school and academics. Engagement has also been related to a lesser likelihood to drop out of school (Fredericks et al., 2004). These hypotheses are still major questions for education research. SNS offer a new context within which to observe how relationships influence school engagement, grades, and student achievement.

Further Studies of students' extracurricular activities as well suggests that new media, such as Facebook, replace or enhance other leisure activities, but do not take away time from youth, Roberts & Foehr (2008). Therefore, it can be concluded that the critical question for future studies is not whether youth use one technology or another, but what kinds of interactions and content they experience in these virtual settings.

2.9.2. Positive aspects of social media use

Social media is growing rapidly throughout the world. More adults and teenagers are joining sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter to interact with friends, family, and strangers. The introduction of these media has changed the world in many ways. It affects each individual in different ways. As it has been deeply discussed in the above sub-topics of this chapter, social media is mainly associated with many negative impacts on youth and students. However, today it can also be used as a very helpful tool in changing these social groups' and any individual's life. It has made the world stronger and a better place to live in.

These websites serve as an important medium, keeping individuals socially active. For example Facebook, allows people to communicate with each other, comment on people's statuses, join different organizations, play games, and even instant message. This site allows for millions of people to keep in touch with each other, and ultimately acts as a source of entertainment. According to S. Noman Ali (2012), "Social media also allows contact with people from around the world." Using these websites can increase a person's computer abilities. Using social media can also help people who have difficulty of socializing in person. He also noted that sites like Facebook allow People who have difficulty of communicating in person to feel more comfortable interacting via the internet. He says, since there is a screen rather than an actual person, people feel more protected and relaxed. This allows people to develop more confidence, and communicate their thoughts over the internet rather than confronting the situation.

Furthermore, Social Networking is a nice form of entertainment, great for meeting people with similar interests, and can be a very effective business technique for entrepreneurs, writers, actors, musicians or artists. Most of us have hobbies, or things that we are keenly interested in such as books, television, video games or movies. Social networks allow us to reach out to others that have the same interests. Social media websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, have become nearly inescapable features of modern life, particularly for youth.

Social media can also be a huge help to a lot of teenagers and students. It helps them search careers and colleges that they could be interested in. Hence, different views and thoughts of knowledge about the positive aspects of social media mainly for youth and students are deeply discussed in the following section of the literature.

Research findings show that, despite the risks, the SM can also be a positive tool for student learning as well as youth empowerment and well being. Accordingly, Davis et' al (2012), argues that, for colleges and universities, using SMT as an engagement tool for students may be likely to yield more positive results for institutions that have pre-existing high-quality programs, services, and initiatives, supported by a sound engagement strategy, through which SMT can amplify their work.

Strengthening the above idea, Davies et'al (2012) states, "Despite the current insufficiency of an extensive research base on the effects of SMT on the academic and social outcomes of college students, long-standing theories in the field of higher education provide a foundation for viewing SMT as having potential to enhance student success." The authors also put the existence of many theoretical frameworks, specifically related to students, that were developed on the premise that increased engagement, involvement, connection and belonging with the academic and social realms of the campus community will lead to higher achievement, retention, and eventual degree attainment, (p.19).

According to them, most of these theories were developed prior to the emergence of SMT as a central player in the lives of students. Therefore, the rise of such platforms and students' use of them offer opportunities to explore how SMT may or may not function to support such student engagement and involvement.

These days, educators have also sought the inclusion of social media in their professional development curriculum to gain familiarity with the role such technology will perform in the future of higher education to inform instructional practices, noted Davies et'al, citing (Deng & Yuen, 2007; Greenhow, 2009; Loving, et al., 2007; Ray & Coulter, 2008; Stiler & Philleo, 2003; Williams, 2009). According to the author's example, in some cases such as in a two-year institutions, student involvement in a campus life and college community are often more limited. As commuters, community college students spend far less time on campus than their four-year counterparts. This means they have less opportunity to integrate into the college

environment. Given these conditions, social media may provide the opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to build community by interacting virtually, which might better enable students to gain a greater sense of belonging to, identity with, and investment in their college community. Therefore, they believe that social media technology holds the potential to enhance classroom learning and discussion by providing an extended socially-oriented forum for such engagements to continue if structured effectively.

Karp, Hughes, & O’Gara, (2010) also argued, integration is less characterized by participation in social organizations and clubs than through information networks that often originate in and develop from classroom-based structures. Clearly, social media technology has the potential to provide a forum for such networking and relationship-building opportunities. It can possibly be used as a tool for extending the engagement of classroom communities into the online medium. Examples include the formation of class groups on Facebook, hosting question and answer sessions via Twitter, and even watching class lectures and supplemental lectures on YouTube using the comment section to generate class discussion.

In another instance put in Davies (2012), a commuter student may highly value and benefit from the quite limited opportunities to meet and socialize with classmates outside of the classroom. Similarly, as many faculty at community colleges are also full-time professionals and serve in adjunct capacities, office hours may be more limited, if available at all, than on most college and university campuses. Given these limitations in light of research that emphasizes the benefits of such interactions, SMT provides a potential platform for students and faculty to engage in more socio-academic moments.

Overall, social media technology can provide crucial access to college peers for commuter students, who tend to have little time to spend on campus interacting with classmates and the idler college community. Staffs also has the opportunity to utilize SMT as a tool to better support the services needed by students who live at a distance and commute to college or enrol online.

Other studies have addressed other areas of interest and revealed SM to be a space where people explore, express, and reinforce aspects of their personal identity through the expression of self-interests, hobbies, interest groups, political views, and other user

preferences, Subrahmanyam, Lewis, & Currie, (2009). Studies on race and gender performance revealed similar dynamics. Findings show that profile attributes, preferences, and social group formation on Facebook facilitate student development in these identity areas. These identity-centred studies give credence to the semiprivate space of self-expression that social networking sites potentially provide for cultivating existing relationships that may validate or enhance identity development.

Taking the enactment of identity through relationships a step further, Martinez Aleman and Wartman's (2009) book, *Online social networking on campus*, has provided an ethnographic portrait of four residential college students that, they argue, illustrate the sociology of social networking among college students. More specifically, they described ways in which online campus culture is developed, enacted, and resisted. One of the most interesting findings of their study is that college students have found unique ways to use Facebook to craft their identity, to shape campus culture, and to improve communication within and beyond the college campus. Consequently, they urge student affairs practitioners to understand, recognize, accept, and even join students in this new online campus reality.

As a whole, studies of the social dynamics of social media use and their effects on particular outcomes reveals that such interactions do not necessarily remove people from their offline world but may indeed be compatible with traditional forms of engagement and involvement and potentially be used to support relationships, expand and maintain connections, and even enhance well-being and identity development. Many of the studies suggest the idea that particular forms of frequent social media interaction certainly do not limit social relationships. According to a finding consistent with early research on internet use more generally, such interactions have been found to enhance existing social relationships and perhaps even increase participation in other off-line realms, Wellman et al., (2001) quoted in Davies et al., (2012). However research on the relationship between social media use and academic outcomes, such as GPA or persistence or degree attainment, is nearly absent altogether or shows limited or mixed findings.

On the other hand, an article published by Valerie Tando (2012) says, Social networking sites stands as an educational aide as student can easily access information for their school projects, research and homework. They can also share and express their thoughts and ideas as a form of exercise to the freedom of speech, thus creating a positive outlook to the student's personal character.

Moreover, Lewis, et'al (2008) concluded their study of social ties and social networking sites stating such sites hold immense potential for data collection and mining given the excess of information available through online user profiles. Given the abundance of information provided and shared between users, as well as the relatively low costs for research, SMT proves to be a fertile site for data collection. The authors suggest this is in large part due to the integration of SMT into the everyday lives of society, especially college students. In addition, they note that data generated by SMT open a number of opportunities for practice, policy, and research to gain new insights with fewer barriers to accessing large quantities of potentially meaningful data.

Additionally, Reuben's (2008) report on the use of social media in higher education noted that Facebook has great potential for engaging students since the medium itself continues to have a dominating presence among 90% of all college goers. In addition, video sharing sites like YouTube and Vimeo provide substantial promise for communications and marketing offices aiming to increase their messaging efforts among the student population without increasing post-production and distribution costs. Mega-micro blog Twitter shows greater potential for the future as more institutions begin to adopt and find use for its service(s).

Beyond the educational purpose, SNS also have many other benefits for youth. For instance, according to Guan and Subrahmanyam (2009), there is also evidence that social media may help to empower youth, particularly those in disadvantaged circumstances. Barak and Sadovsky found that hearing-impaired youth took advantage of the heavily visual medium of the Internet to communicate. Doing so also had a positive effect on their health and well being.

Youth have not only been creating media to help promote health issues, they have also been using the Internet to look for information about health and in particular about sex. It is estimated that one in four adolescents have used the Internet to search for health information.

Young people are especially likely to seek this information online if it is not available from personal face-to-face sources like friends or family. They are also likely to turn to health websites when they are unable to confide in others. They can disclose certain information. They can fully communicate their concern, example ('I have a small lump in one of my breasts. . .I can't talk to my parents or sisters. . .I'm too embarrassed'). It is suggested that online contexts are an open, safe space in which youth can express themselves and promote healthy habits, Guan and Subrahmanyam (2009).

They further noted that, the Internet's growing popularity as a health resource for youth makes it an appealing vehicle for delivering interventions and it may be an economical and effective means for health promotion and prevention. As behaviours such as smoking, unhealthy eating habits, and risky sexual behaviour often start in adolescence, early intervention delivered through the Internet may serve as a preventive measure. The Internet has been used to provide free counselling, smoking prevention, obesity and eating disorder prevention, anger management and violence prevention, and substance abuse prevention, (p.354). Researchers have also explored online gaming formats as a means to carry out psychotherapeutic treatment.

Finally, SMT as a whole shows immense promise to enable connections with people, places, and things through the support of the most fundamental of human behaviours, sharing. When used correctly, SMT provides the opportunity to broadcast messages to a larger and more diverse audience than ever before. In effect, SMT has not only led the direction of how conversations between institutions and people alike occur, but also provided the tools to maximize the social connectivity of the broader world. This is evident in the ways in which SMT has been utilized in many grassroots efforts around the globe such as galvanizing support for injustices in Egypt or the large-scale involvement of young people in the election of President Barack Obama. Given this evolution, can it be argued that SMT will become essential to survival in a socially enabled world?

2.10. Theoretical Frameworks

The final part of the literature discusses the theoretical foundation of the current study. Hence, the main theoretical frameworks behind the current study idea come from the uses and

Gratifications, media dependency and the network society theories. These theories have been briefly discussed as follows.

2.10.1. The Uses and gratifications theory

The uses and gratifications theory was first introduced by Elihu Katz (1959) when he came up with the notion that people use the media to their benefit. The perspective emerged in the early 1970's as Katz and his two colleagues, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch continued to expand the idea. The theory places more focus on the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual message itself by asking "what people do with media" rather than "what media does to people" (Katz, 1959). It assumes that people are not passive receivers of media messages but take an active role in interpreting and integrating media messages into their own lives. That is, the consumers of media messages have the freewill to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them. According to Folaranmi (2013), the focus is thus, not on media production and transmission functions, but, on media consumption functions. Rather than asking "what kinds of effects occur, under what conditions?" the question becomes "who uses which content, from which media, under which condition, and; for what reasons?" in a 1973 study by Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, mass media was described as a means by which individuals connect or disconnect themselves with others. They developed 35 needs based on the social and psychological functions of the mass media, and placed them in five categories: (1) Cognitive needs -- Acquiring information, knowledge and understanding; (2) Affective needs -- Emotion, pleasure, feelings; (3) Personal integrative needs -- Credibility, stability, status; (4) Social integrative needs -- Family and friends; and (5) Tension release needs -- Escape and diversion.

On the other hand, Folaranmi (2013), noted that Uses and gratification theory indicates a positive relationship between social media usage and the level of gratification derived from such activity. Generally, according to Amarasinghe (2010), users of social media are motivated by similar intrinsic and extrinsic factors. What is more, Nyland et'al, (found in Folaranmi 2013), listed five motives of using social media as: meeting new people, entertainment, social events, maintaining relationships, and; media creation.

2.10.1.1. Criticism of uses and gratification theory

According to Jordan Cruickshank, many people have criticized this theory as they believe the public has no control over the media and what it produces. It can also be said to be too kind to the media, as they are being 'let off the hook' and do not need to take responsibility for

what they produce. The theory takes out the possibility that the media can have an unconscious influence over our lives and how we view the world. The idea that we simply use the media to satisfy a given need does not seem to fully recognize the power of the media in today's society. (e.g., 'Media consumers have a free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them.' This may be argued as media can be manipulative such as the news in its use of hegemony.

In addition to this, Williams (2002: 179) cited in Negash (2008), argues that the uses and gratifications theory heavily leans on the individual audience as the unit of any analysis. In a way it does not enquire in to the social dynamics of reception (listening to the radio or watching television or attending to any other medium). The approach does not concern itself with the discussions which arise as a result of consuming media contents together, and the act of exchanging of ideas. This marks the absence of such contexts of togetherness, hence depriving the uses and gratifications approach of the chance to get sight of the social dimension of reception. Williams also agrees that this approach is narrowly individualistic and "fails to locate the message and the audience in a wider social context".

2.10.1.2. Social media and the uses and gratifications theory

The U&G theory on social media literature is rapidly evolving. There are many studies conducted to explore the gratifications obtained by the different people from social media platforms (for instance, Raake & Bonds-Raake, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009, Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Valentine, 2011, can be mentioned. These studies focused specifically on one or two of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, etc. Anco & Cozma's (2009) study revealed that the social interaction, information seeking and guidance, and entertainment as the motives for visiting the candidates' profile on MySpace. Moreover, Raake & Bonds-Raake (2008) applied this approach to investigate the impact of social networking sites (SNS) on college students, through comparing the most two popular sites in SNS (Facebook and MySpace). The study discovered that the majority of students used SNS platforms for many different reasons like establishing new friendships and maintaining old friends. Social interaction, making and maintaining old friendships and information seeking were the motives for using Facebook and MySpace sites among college students.

Quan-Haase & Young (2010) investigated the needs for adopting many social media tools instead of adopting one form of communication through comparing Facebook and instant messaging (IM). Factor analysis showed six dimensions for using Facebook and IM: pastime, affection, fashion, share problem, sociability, and social information. Quan-Haase & Young's study revealed that Facebook was adopted by the undergraduate students to "have fun and knowing about the social activities occurring in one's social network, whereas instant messaging is geared more toward relationship maintenance and development" (p.350).

2.10.1.3. Facebook and the Uses & Gratifications theory

The popularity of Facebook has attracted many researchers such as Tesfaye (2005) (Raine, 2008; Foregger, 2008; Valentine, 2011; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011) to investigate the effects, uses, gratifications, attitudes, behaviours, identity, privacy, and involvement in Facebook. Specifically, there are several studies conducted on the uses and gratifications of Facebook among various populations. As the theory proposed, the gratifications obtained and sought from Facebook vary from one individual to another. Raine (2008) explored the uses and gratifications obtained from using Facebook generally, as well as seeking political information on Facebook among young adults. Raine's study found five basic motives for using Facebook generally among college students, namely social utility, entertainment, convenience, information seeking, and diversion. Similarly, Foregger (2008) adopted the U&G perspective to explore the undergraduate students' use of Facebook and its gratifications obtained. The students demonstrated different motives for engaging in Facebook including passing time, sexual attraction, utilities and upkeep, connection, accumulation, channel use, social comparison, networking, and establish/maintain old ties.

Therefore, by addressing these concerns, they applied U&G perspective to explore the motives for using certain features on Facebook among undergraduate students. Smock and his colleagues found that the students' motives for using Facebook is determined by their use of different features like wall posts, status updates, comments, private messages, groups, and chat. The results indicated different motives for different features. For instance, status updates is predicted by the expressing information-sharing motive, and writing on Facebook friends' walls is positively predicted by social interaction, habitual pass time, and professional advancement, taken from *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 3 No. 3; 2013.

2.10.2. Media dependency theory

Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur proposed the “Dependency theory” in 1976. The theory states that the more dependent an individual is on the media for having his or her needs fulfilled, the more important the media will be to that person. According to Grant et al., (1998), the theory has been explored as an extension of or an addition to the uses and gratifications approach, though there is a subtle difference between the two theories. As to him, however, both are in agreement that media use can lead to media dependency. This is because the Uses and Grats identify how people use and become dependent upon the media. People use the media for many reasons. Information, entertainment, and parasocial relationships are just a few of them. Whereas, the dependency theory says the more a person becomes dependent on the media to fulfill these needs, the media will become more important to that individual. The media will also have much more influence and power over that individual.

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1976) described dependency as the correlating relationship between media content, the nature of society, and the behavior of audiences. It examines both macro and micro factors influencing motives, information-seeking strategies, media and functional alternative use, and dependency on certain media, Rubin and Windahl (1982). Littlejohn (2002) also explained that people will become more dependent on media that meet a number of their needs than on media that provide only a few ones. “If a person finds a medium that provides them with several functions that are central to their desires, they will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future” , Rossi, (2002).

Dependency on a specific medium is influenced by the number of media sources available to an individual. Individuals should become more dependent on available media if their access to media alternatives is limited. The more alternatives there are for an individual, the lesser is the dependency on and influence of a specific medium, Sun et al., (1999).

So, it has been discussed above, the theory assumes that individuals in modern society become increasingly dependent upon mass media for many needs. Now that social media has become part of people’s daily life, addiction to it has become the resultant effect of over-dependency on it for information, sensation, entertainment, satisfaction etc. Moreover, there seems to be a relationship between the desire for gratification and dependency. As submitted

by Sung and LaRose et al (2004) internet addictions in general are “habits” that begin when the “gratification sought”, become a conditioned response to negative effect, then such behaviour then becomes a goal in itself, thus leading to preoccupation with it.

2.10.2.1. Critics of Media Dependency Theory

Similar to the uses and gratifications theory, scholars criticize media dependency theory as follows;

- ♥ It describes the media role during social changes and crisis.
- ♥ Theory is more flexible and descriptive.
- ♥ Power of media dependency is not clearly described.
- ♥ It's difficult to prove scientifically or experimentally.

2.11. Theory of the network society

The term network society describes several different phenomena related to the social, political, economic and cultural changes caused by the spread of networked, digital information and communications technologies. A number of academics are credited with coining the term since the 1980s and several competing definitions exist. However, the founder of the theory of the network society was Manuel Castells.

According to Castells, networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies. He believes there is a radical disconnectedness in contemporary society bringing about a greater sense of autonomy due to technology. Castells believes that "we are passing from the industrial age into the information age" (Castells, 2000, 5). He talks of how this historical change was brought about by the advent of new information technologies particularly those for communication and biological purposes. He noted how space and time are being transcended in social practises due to the ability to do everything from everywhere thanks to the capacity for ubiquitous perpetual contact in communication technologies. "A number of major social, technological, economic and cultural transformations came together to give rise to a new form of society" (Castells 2000, 17). He claimed, "The definition in terms of a network society is a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks. So it's not just about networks or social networks, because social networks have been very old forms of social organization, it's about social networks which process and manage information and are using micro-electronic

based technologies" (Castells, 1996, 34). Simply put a network society is a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronic based information and communication technologies. While he explains that networks are not a new form of social organization, they have become a key feature of social morphology, essentially they are new forms of old processes. He claims this is largely due to communication technologies, for example the internet or mobile telephones, which increase decentralization of operations and focusing of control which in turn increase the effectiveness of networks relative to hierarchical structures. "Communication networks are the patterns of contact that are created by flows of messages among communicators through time and space," (Monge and Contractor, 2003, 39).

According to the theory, the network society constitutes socialized communication beyond the mass media system that characterized the industrial society. But it does not represent the world of freedom sung by the libertarian ideology of Internet prophets. It is made up both of an oligopolistic business multimedia system controlling an increasingly inclusive hypertext, and of an explosion of horizontal Networks of autonomous local/global communication-and, naturally, of the interaction between the two systems in a complex pattern of connections and disconnections in different contexts. The network society is also manifested in the transformation of sociability. Yet, what we observe is not the fading away of face-to-face interaction or the increasing isolation of people in front of their computers. We know, from studies in different societies that in most instances Internet users are more social, have more friends and contacts and more socially and politically active than non users. Moreover, the more they use the Internet, the more they also engage in face to-face interaction in all domains of their lives. Similarly, new forms of wireless communication, from mobile phone voice communication to SMSs, WiFi and WiMax, substantially increase sociability, particularly for the younger groups of the population.

The network society is a hyper social society, not a society of isolation. People, by and large, do not face their identity in the Internet, except for some teenagers experimenting with their lives. People fold the technology into their lives, link up virtual reality and real virtuality; they live in various technological forms of communication, articulating them as they need it. However, there is a major change in sociability, not a consequence of Internet or new communication technologies but a change that is fully supported by the logic embedded in the communication networks. This is the emergence of networked individualism, as social structure and historical evolution induce the emergence of individualism as the dominant

culture of our societies, and the new communication Technologies perfectly fit into the mode of building sociability along self-selected communication networks, on or off depending on the needs and moods of each individual. So, the network society is a society of networked individuals.

What results from this evolution is that the culture of the network society is largely shaped by the messages exchanged in the composite electronic hypertext made by the technologically linked networks of different communication modes. In the network society, virtuality is the foundation of reality through the new forms of socialized communication. Society shapes technology according to the needs, values and interests of people who use the technology. Furthermore, information and communication technologies are particularly sensitive to the effects of social uses on technology itself. The history of the internet provides ample evidence that the users, particularly the first thousands of users, were, to a large extent, the producers of the technology. However, technology is a necessary, albeit not sufficient condition for the emergence of a new form of social organization based on networking, i.e., on the diffusion of networking in all realms of activity on the basis of digital communication networks.

Furthermore, the theory of the Network Society gives an account of the economic and social dynamics of the new age of information. It demonstrates research done in USA, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Castells talks of how the global economy is now characterized by the instantaneous flow and exchange of information, capital and cultural communication. These flows order and condition both consumption and production. The networks themselves reflect and create distinctive cultures. Both they and the information they carry are largely outside of national regulation. This means that society's dependence on these new modes of informational flow can give enormous power to those in a position to control them to control us, "Networks have become the predominant organizational form of every domain of human activity" (Castells, 1996, 101).

For Castells, networks have become the basic units of modern society and so the network society can be seen to be more than just the information society that was originally mentioned. Castells argues that it is not simply the technology that characterizes contemporary societies, but also cultural, economic and political aspects that when combined can create the network society, "Influences such as religion, cultural upbringing, political organizations, and social status all shape the network society" (Castells, 1990, 86). Societies can be shaped by these

aspects in a variety of ways. According to Castells, power now lies in various networks, "the logic of the network is more powerful than the powers of the network."

2.11.1. Critiques of the theory of the Network Society

Like most social theorists Castells has attracted various criticisms regarding aspects of his theory of the network society. The first and simplest critique of Castells is that his depiction of the contemporary world is so familiar, even derivative, Webster (2002). Its propositions about the character of contemporary society seem commonplaces: the increasing importance of information and knowledge, the increasing speed and of financial and other transactions and the consequent destabilization, the growing gap between the knowledge-rich and the knowledge-poor, the sense that we are indeed in a time of social and technological discontinuity. However, this can also be seen as a success in capturing contemporary life.

More serious criticisms target Castells' analysis of the role of information, of production, and of the relationship between informational labor and capitalism. These critiques call into question his claim that the present economic and social situation is a new age, rather than a continuation of industrial capitalism.

2.12. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has outlined the literature review of the study. In this chapter, it has been tried to develop broad ideas of what is already known in the study area, and what questions are still unanswered. In addition to this, the chapter also highlighted the theoretical basis of the study. It has been clearly shown that the researcher has looked at much literature and has tried to include the latest updates in the field of this study in order for the study to be convincing to readers. The researcher believes that this helps readers to be sure that this study is not just "a copy paste, plagiarized or reinventing." It is also believed that the foregoing chapter's discussions of the present understanding and/or state of knowledge concerning the impacts of social media on youth and students, has set the context for the researcher's investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter shifts attention from the review of related literature to media and communication research methodologies. As it is already mentioned in the objective part of the study, this study aims at finding out how and why Ethiopian university undergraduates use social media for and its related impacts. Even though there are many social media sites, the focus of this study was based only on users of Facebook.com due to its popularity at the moment and the presence of large number of Ethiopian youths and students on the site. Thus, it is not necessarily conclusive of other types of social media. Generally, the methods in which the study employed are discussed as follows.

The field of media and communication research is characterized by quite a variety of different research perspectives. As Jensen, K. B. (2002), this fact stems from the hybrid nature of this field of empirical inquiry, in which investigative approaches have been derived from longer established academic disciplines in the social sciences. Therefore, to answer the research questions and meet the intended objectives, this study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods or mixed method.

According to Kothari (2004), a quantitative research method involves the generation of data in quantitative form which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid fashion. More specifically, quantitative methods allow researchers to assign meaningful numerical values to variables and then to analyze those values using descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the data, infer population characteristics from sample attributes, and discover significant differences between groups/conditions and relationships between variables.

Whereas, a qualitative method is a composite of philosophy, concepts, data-gathering procedures, and statistical methods that provides perhaps the most thoroughly elaborated basis for the systematic examination of human subjectivity. According to Mack, N., et'al (2005), the strength of qualitative research method is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions,

emotions, and relationships of individuals. The Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent. The authors suggests that, When used along with quantitative methods, qualitative research can help to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation and the implications of quantitative data (p. 1-3). It is on the basis of these advantages that the researcher decided to use the mixed research method.

When we say mixed research method, it refers the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process. In other words, mixed methods research involves the mixing of qualitative and quantitative research methods or paradigm characteristics, Zoltan, (2007). Likewise, the quantitative data of this study provided unbiased, objective empirical data and was supported by a qualitative analysis of Facebook usage and its impacts.

3.2. Research design

According to Kothari, C.R., (2004), “A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.” In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data.

There are several types of research designs. However, this study employed a combination of the case study and survey approach. According to Aborisade (1997), a case study research design is a type of research where the researcher carries out an in depth study of a given social unit – an individual or group of individuals, a community or an institution. Thus, this study focused on a single social unit Students, more specifically on university undergraduates.

Whereas, Frey, L. R., and Cissna, K. N. (2009) define the survey research as a type of research in which the researcher is interested in studying certain characteristics, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, motivations, behavior, opinions etc of a population of interest from a sample

of respondents selected from that population. To accomplish that goal, survey researchers typically select a sample from the population of interest and ask respondents, via a questionnaire or an interview, questions designed to measure the variables of interest. The results obtained from the sample then are generalized back to the parent population.

One of the most important goals of survey research, therefore, is trying to obtain a representative sample that facilitates generalizations about the population of interest. The subjects of this study were young Ethiopian HE students studying in different academic institutions, which was very large population size. For that reason, survey was used as the most important method of this study to recruit and obtain representative samples.

3.3. Subjects of the study

The subjects of the investigation were University Undergraduate students taken from four higher education institutions in the country. The institutions were selected from two grouping- private and public universities. Public and Private Representative was needed so that no to be biased and help the study to represent HE students in Ethiopia. Based on this, Addis Ababa University and Kotebe University College from Public universities whereas, Unity University and Admas University Colleges from private HE institutions were purposively chosen to recruit respondents from. From these institutions a total of 300 (three hundred) respondents were selected using quota sampling technique.

According to Ministry of Education, Annual Statistical Abstract, 2005, in the year 2005 E.C. (2012/13) the total undergraduate enrolment in Ethiopia including (government and non-government; regular, evening, summer and distance programs) is 553,848 of which 474,198 i.e., (85.6%) of the total undergraduate enrolment is in government institutions Whereas, the Non-government enrolment accounts for 79,650 which means 14.4 in percent. Based on this, while majority of respondents (255) i.e., 85% were taken from the governmental universities, the rest 45 respondents i.e., 15% were included from the private ones. More specifically, 180 respondents from Addis Ababa University, 75 from Kotebe University College, 32 from Unity University and 23 from Admas University Colleges were participated in the study. This was intentionally done based on the population size of the institutions.

3.4. Research Instrument

A research instrument is a mechanism used in collecting data. Thus, this study employed questionnaire and unstructured observation which are under demographic differences based only on age and gender.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument conducted so that respondents answer questions about their opinions, attitudes, preferences, activities in a written form. A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. Questionnaire can be open –ended or close –ended or a combination of both. However, the close- ended and structured questionnaires were distributed for the respondents of this study. Structured questionnaires as to Kothari (2004, p.101) are those questionnaires in which there are definite, concrete and pre-determined questions. The questions were presented with exactly the same wording and in the same order to all respondents. Option was taken to this sort of standardization to ensure that all respondents reply to the same set of questions. Finally, the questions were distributed for the 300 respondents in person or offline.

Using questionnaire has many advantages. Kothari (2004) put the following advantages of employing questionnaires.

- ♣ low cost even when the universe is large and is widely spread geographically (through email);
- ♣ free from the bias of the interviewer; answers are in respondents' own words;
- ♣ respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers;
- ♣ respondents, who are not easily approachable, can also be reached conveniently;
- ♣ Large samples can be made use of and thus the results can be made more dependable and reliable

Therefore, this method was employed to collect information from the target population of the study by considering the above advantages.

3.4.2. Observation

Observation is the act of watching individuals, events or situations, behaviors, etc, the way they occur in nature in order to collect data. Hence, how usual the students at different places such as at internet cafes, in libraries, in classrooms, in cafeterias, in taxis and elsewhere use and/or depend on Facebook has been observed. In addition to these, Facebook posts, contents and comments on available Facebook group's and individual's profiles were also examined

through observation. Through this, the researcher was able to get some insights whether or not those posts and comments contain words such as sexually harassing, against individual's privacy and against societal norms. However, since the observation was unstructured in its nature, these were not the exclusive and predefined units observed by the researcher.

Kothari (2004) wrote, in case the observation is characterized by a careful definition of the units to be observed, the style of recording the observed information, standardized conditions of observation and the selection of pertinent data of observation, then the observation is called as structured observation. But when observation is to take place without these characteristics to be thought of in advance, the same is termed as unstructured observation, (p. 96). Therefore, the study had carried out unstructured observation on available and unlimited number of random users for a period of around five months.

Moreover, this method was employed in the study by considering the following main advantages it gives; which are found in Kothari (2004, p. 96).

- ♥ First subjective bias is eliminated, if observation is done accurately.
- ♥ Secondly, the information obtained under this method relates to what is currently happening; it is not complicated by either the past behavior or future intentions or attitudes.
- ♥ Thirdly, this method is independent of respondents' willingness to respond and as such is relatively less demanding of active cooperation on the part of respondents as happens to be the case in the interview or the questionnaire method.
- ♥ This method is particularly suitable in studies which deal with subjects (i.e., respondents) who are not capable of giving verbal reports of their feelings for one reason or the other

We often talk about participant and non-participant types of observation in the context of studies, particularly of social sciences. This distinction depends upon the observer's sharing or not sharing the life of the group he is observing. If the observer observes by making himself, more or less, a member of the group he is observing so that he can experience what the members of the group experience, the observation is called as the participant observation. But when the observer observes as a detached messenger without any attempt on his part to experience through participation what others feel, the observation of this type is often termed

as non-participant observation. When the observer is observing in such a manner that his presence may be unknown to the people he is observing, such an observation is described as disguised observation, (Ibid 2004).

However, the combination of both participant and disguised observations was employed in this study. This is because, the researcher has had a Facebook account with more than 300 Facebook friends and he is a member of many Facebook groups since 2010. The researcher has been using this Facebook account to express personal views and opinions as well as to participate in discussions. The researcher believes that this has helped him to observe the activities of Facebook friends, the groups and the pages he is evolved. This makes the researcher a participant observer. On the other hand, the researcher has randomly observed accessible anonymous Facebook profiles and activities of available Facebook users (individuals and groups). Furthermore, the researcher has communicated and researched on some individuals and groups secretly (for instance by chatting and following) without announcing that he is researching, which makes him a disguised observer. The combination of the two types of observation was in fact found very helpful in understanding multiple issues in relation to students Facebook use.

3.5. Validity and reliability of instruments

The instruments that have been employed were designed to cover the areas addressed by the research questions and objectives highlighted at the beginning of this study. The instruments were also designed to cover other areas which had supported the responses for the main issues. Moreover, data of this topic was reliable and valid because instruments used match with the principles of research.

3.6. Sampling techniques

According to Tayie (2005), a sample is a sub set of the population that is taken to be representative of the entire population. First of all, purposive sampling has been used to determine the organizations or sites of the study to be used as a case. Then, quota sampling method (based on the size of the population) has been employed to determine and select the amount of respondents from the four Universities so that to take fair and proportional representatives. After determining the quota for each university, a combination of purposive and snow ball sampling techniques has been employed to select the actual respondents from each university students.

In a qualitative study, purposive sampling is more appropriate. Creswell (2009) has well explained the data collection procedures that identify the purposefully selected sites or individuals for the proposed study. According to him, the idea behind qualitative research is purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual materials) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question.

Snowball sampling is a useful technique to pursue the goals of purposive sampling in many situations where there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of interest, but it does require that the participants are likely to know others who share the characteristics that make them eligible for inclusion in the study.

Snow ball technique is the one where by a researcher gets data from one respondent and that respondent names other respondents who can give the same data that the researcher is seeking for. The sample, like a rolling snowball, begins to build on itself and increase in size. In this study, therefore, the respondents who have been contacted first have been requested to suggest other available friend who could be very important for the study.

Any person who was a student in the four universities and has a Facebook account was given an opportunity to be included in the sampling frame and to participate in this study. However, since the study focuses on examining the usage and related impacts of Facebook on HE students in Ethiopia, individuals who have Facebook accounts and who has real experience of using Facebook were the most important subjects of this study.

3.7. Method of Data presentation and Analysis

It is mentioned that the study has employed both research methods. As far as the researcher's information goes, a qualitative method of certain study helps to subjectively interpret facts. Therefore, in this study; numbers, percentage, cross tabulation and statistics has been used during data presentation and analysis. In addition to this, 'the how' and 'the why' of the research questions have been answered through the power of words. Therefore, the method in which the raw data gathered by observation and questionnaire achieved meaning was through both quantitative (numerical) & qualitative (interpretation) methods.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the findings from questionnaire and observation. The main target of this research as stated in the initial chapter was to understand the usage of social media, mainly Facebook by Ethiopian university undergraduate students. It was also set to understand their attitudes towards this form of media and the impact on their lifestyles.

The study also looked at the relationship between the youths in Ethiopia and Facebook as well as how the two theories (uses and gratification and media dependency) relates to the use of this social media. The data obtained from observation of the users of this site which was carried out to weight their various activities and to find out which activity was most prominent has been also discussed under this chapter. The research questions and objectives of the study were explored by distributing the questionnaire to the 300 respondents. The findings were presented in the form of table, graphs and charts. Likewise, since the mixed research method is used in the study, the explanation and analysis of findings has been presented by treating each question table by table as follows.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	174	58%
Female	126	42%
Total	300	100%

Even though this was a casual sampling of young university student Facebook users, the above figures show that, 58% of the respondents were males while females formed 42% of the sample. The distribution shows that majority of the respondents were males. Although this is not a core issue to be investigated in this study, the gender difference can help to examine if there are differences between the usage and attitudes towards social media.

Table 2: Age variation of respondents

Age	frequency	Percentage
<19	24	8%
19-23	234	78%
24-28	36	12%
>28	6	2%
Total	300	100%

The table shows that, majority of the sample (78%) falls under 19-23 ages. The respondents within the ages of 24-28 were the second highest number (12%). 19 years old respondents formed 8% of the group while the very least number of the sample was formed by over the 28 years age group. Since the study was done on university undergraduate students, majority of the respondents i.e., (90%) fall under the so called “traditional” college students’ age group which is 18-28 years. Similarly a study conducted by Facebook, reveals that this age group had the highest registered users, Zephoria’s Facebook statistics (2013).

Table 3: Duration of respondents’ FB registration

How long have you been using Facebook	Frequency	Percentage
More than 3 months	3	1%
Less than a year	33	11%
Between 1&2 years	51	17%
2 years & above	213	71%
Total	300	100%

The above table indicates that a large number of University undergraduate students in Ethiopia have been using Facebook for more than two years. It figured out that 71% of them are using Facebook for more than two years while 17% used the site for 1-2 years. This in turn shows that around 88% of them are familiar with Facebook for more than a year.

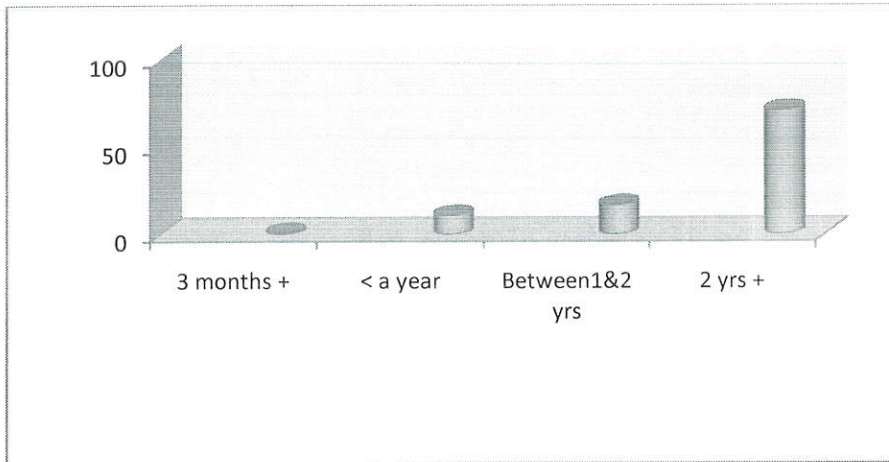
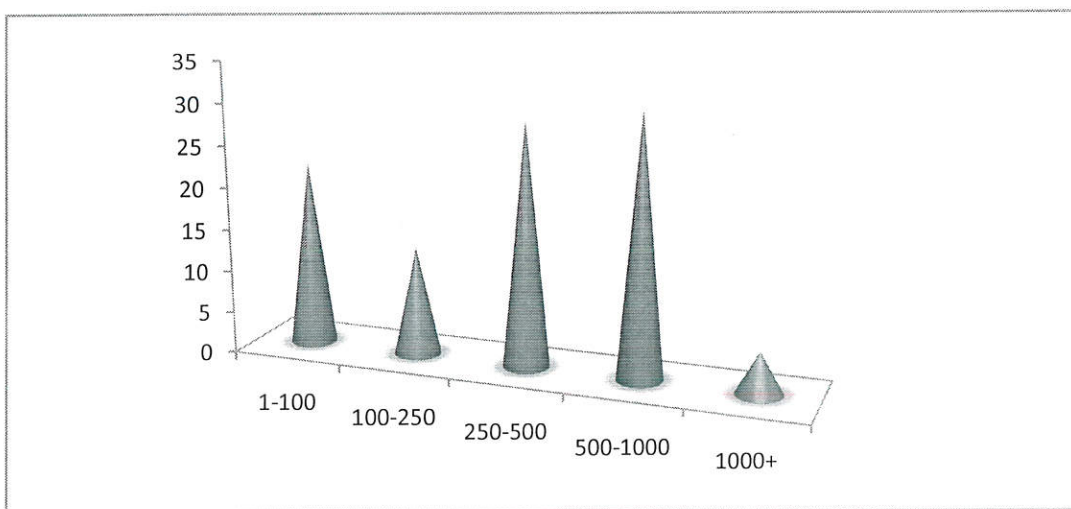


Figure 1: chart showing distribution of Years since respondents registered on FB

Table 4 (a): Number of FB friends respondents have

Number of friends	Frequency	Percentage
1-100	66	22%
100-250	39	13%
250-500	87	29%
500-1000	93	31%
1000+	15	5%
Total	300	100%

Figure 2 (a): Chart showing Number of FB friends respondents have



As evident in table 4 & Fig 2(a) above, 22% of the respondents have around 100 Facebook friends whereas 13% with up to 250 friends. It also shows that 29% of the samples have 250-

500 friends. In addition to this, the majority (31%) of them have up to 1000 friends. The table also indicates that there are people i.e., (5%) who have more than one thousand friends. This means that around 74% of the respondents have between 100-1000 friends. Based on this, it can be said that Ethiopian HE students have large number of Facebook friends. This is because as to Facebook statistics page report, the average Facebook user around the world has 130 friends.

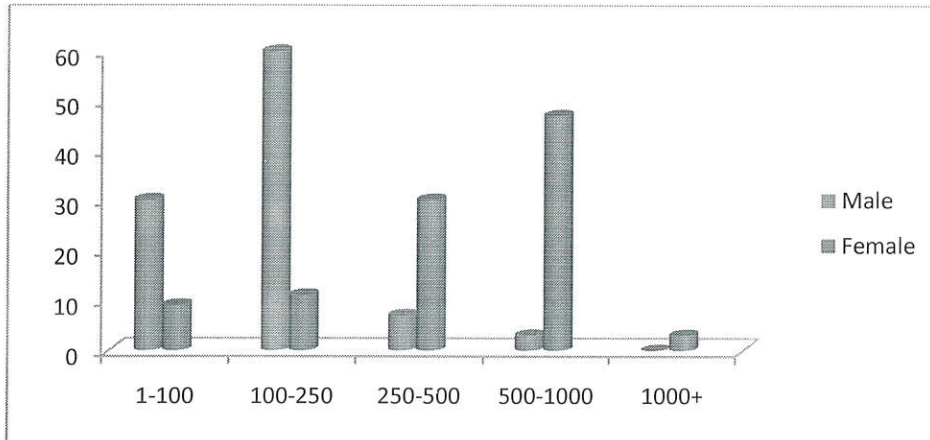
On the other hand, in an attempt made to see if there is any relationship between the number of Facebook friends one has and the number of years he/she has been using Facebook, the data obtained from the questionnaire suggests that the longer one uses Facebook, the more he/she is likely to make more friends. The responses to the questionnaire show that the collective number of friends is higher in those who have been registered for more than two years. That means, majority of the respondents who have been registered for more than two years have more than 250-1000 friends.

Based on gender

Table 4(b): Comparison of Males & Females based on the number of Facebook friends

No. of friends	Frequency		Percentage	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1-100	52	11	30%	9%
100-250	104	14	60%	11%
250-500	13	38	7%	30%
500-1000	5	59	3%	47%
1000+	0	4	0%	3%
Total	174	126	100%	100%

Figure 2(b): Gender based differences regarding the number of FB friends



When we compare the amount of Facebook friends made by the two genders, Females tend to have more friends. As table 4(b) shows, 47% of the Females have 500-100 Facebook friends while only 3% of the males have the same amounts of friends. In addition to this, 3% of the Females have more than 1000 friends while no Male owns 1000 friends i.e., 0%. All together, while 80% of the females have over 250 friends, only 10% of the Males share the same number of friends. This is a big difference. Majority of the Males (90%) have 1-250 friends. This suggests that Female students are actively use Social media than males. What is more, Females are contacting with strangers much more than males, since it is unusual to have 1000 “Friends” in real life. This in turn shows that females are most prone to both positive and negative outcomes of Social media use. These include positive outcomes such as developing wider networks of relationships as well as critical concerns of SNS such as harmful behaviours like harassment and interacting with strangers.

Table 5: Respondents’ response for a FB friendship request from strangers

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	291	97%
No	9	3%
Total	300	100%

The above table shows that small number (3%) of the respondents refuse to accept a Facebook request from the person they don’t know before. 97% of them are willing to accept such request.

Table 6: Reason to accept FB friend requests from stranger

Reason to accept strangers as FB friends	Frequency	Percentage
To expand social network	111	38%
Sharing Common hobbies and interests	29	10%
Looking their attractive display picture	99	34%
Because I share Number of common friends	52	18%
Total	291	100%

From those 291 respondents, 111(38%) of them accept a friend request from strangers to expand social network whereas 99(34%) by looking at their attractive pictures on Facebook. On the other hand, 52(18%) & 29(10%) of them accept strangers because they share a number of common friends and Common hobbies and interests respectively. This is further illustrated with chart as follows.

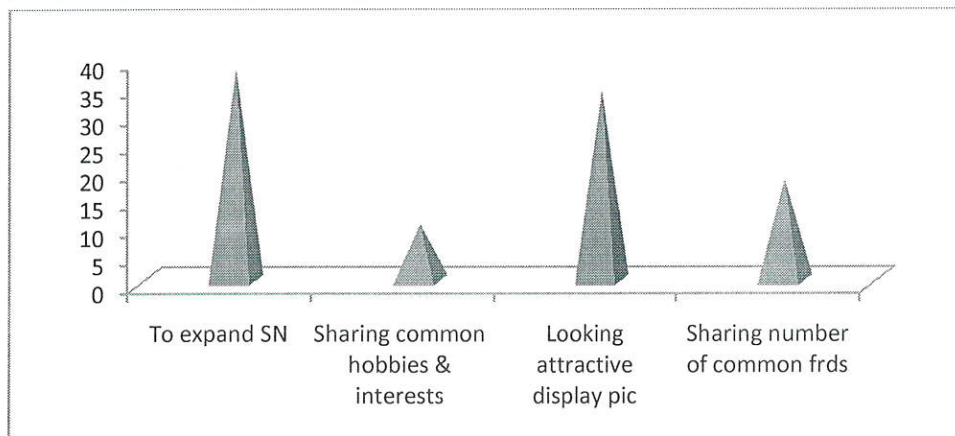


Figure 3: Chart showing respondents' reasons to accept FB friend requests from strangers

Table 7: Respondents' experience of meeting strangers in person

Meeting strangers in person	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	132	34%
No	168	66%
Total	300	100%

As it is shown above, 66% the respondents have never met a person whom they have come to know through Facebook. However, many people (34%) have had that experience. Therefore, although it could result in both negative and positive impacts, a good number of young

students are introducing themselves to a person whom they never physically know; apart from online.

Table 8: Attitude of respondents on FB as a dating service

Is FB similar to dating service?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	267	89%
No	33	11%
Total	300	100%

Most of the respondents believe that Facebook serves as an engagement service. It is only 11% of the respondents who believe otherwise. This could suggest that young students in Ethiopia consider the site as a main means of dating; which could be interpreted from different angles. Moreover, it gives us insights in to why young students in Ethiopia use Facebook for and their frequent activities on the site. The result also confirms with previous research findings of Foregger (2008) who discovered students' motives to use Facebook and its gratifications obtained. According to him, the students demonstrated different motives for engaging in Facebook including passing time, sexual attraction, utilities and upkeep, connection, accumulation, networking, and establish/maintain old ties: which could be said socialization and engagement all together.

Table 9: Number of friends brought back together and met on FB

Number	Frequency	Percentage
1-200	123	44%
200-500	45	15%
500-1000	27	9%
1000+	9	0%
Don't know	96	32%
Total	300	100%

Table 9 shows that a good number of respondents (68%) have been able to reconnect with their friends through Facebook. Hence, although (32%) of them couldn't remember the number of friends reconnected on Facebook, it can be said that Ethiopian youngsters are using Facebook to join up their old friends.

Table 10: Type of FB groups students involve in

What types of “groups” are you in	Frequency	Percentage
Common interest	201	67%
Organizations related	39	13%
Academic	18	6%
Sports	39	13%
Community service	3	1%
Not a member of any group	0	0%
Total	300	100%

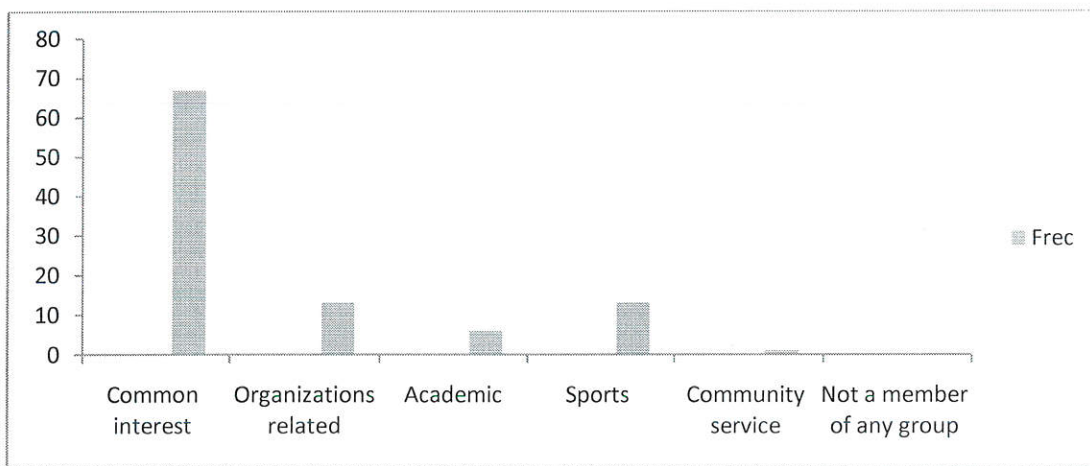


Figure 4: Chart showing type of FB groups students engaged in

The above table (10) and fig (4) illustrates that 67% of Ethiopian university undergrad students were engaged in a Facebook group which they share a common interests followed by sports and organizations related groups. However, very small number i.e. (6%) participates in academic groups while only 1% of them involves in the community service groups. Generally, the result shows that the students are at least a member of a certain Facebook group which mostly is out of academic type.

Table 11: Frequency of accessing FB account

Frequency of accessing FB account	Rate	Percentage
Several times a day	141	47%
Daily	120	40%
Weekly	39	13%
Monthly	0	0%
Total	300	100%

The above table 11 demonstrates that 47% of the respondents log in to their Facebook account several times a day. 40% of them access their account on a daily basis, while only 13% access their account weekly. This result is further illustrated through chart as follows.

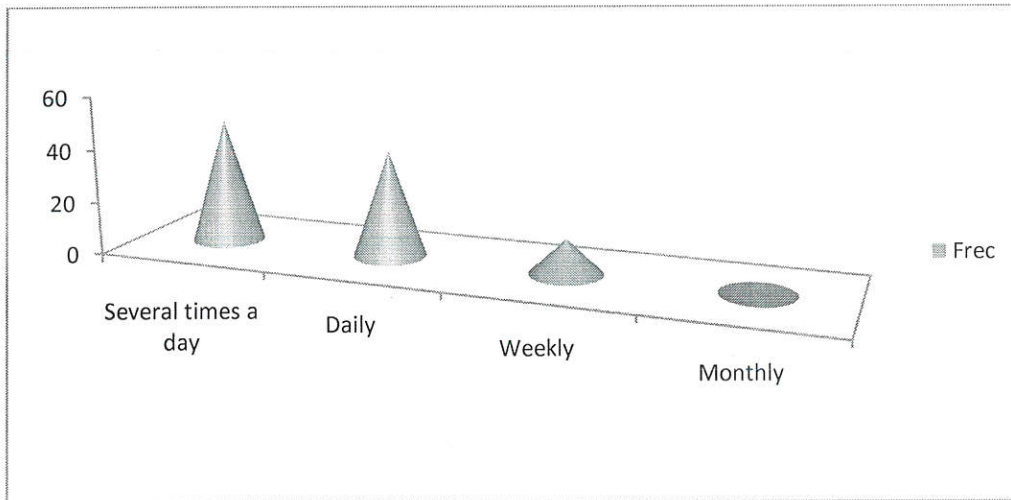


Figure 5: chart screening how frequent Students log in to FB

Table 12: Amount of time spent on FB by University Undergraduates

Time	Frequency	Percentage
Less than an hour	108	36%
1-2 hours	126	42%
3-5 hours	63	21%
6-9 hours	3	1%
10-14 hours	0	0%
15+ hours	0	0%
Total	300	100%

Table 12 shows that 108 (36%) of the respondents spend less than an hour in a day on Facebook. Around 63 (21%) spend up to three hours per day while only 1% of them waste more than a quarter of the day on Facebook. Majority of them 126 (42%) spend 1-2 hours per day on the site. The result is also illustrated in the below figure 7.

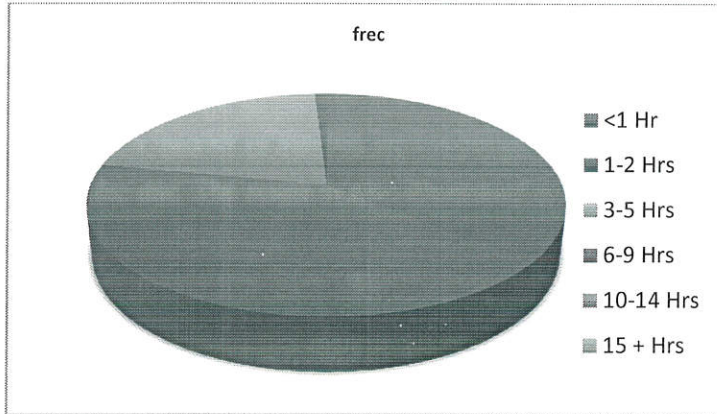


Figure 6: chart showing Amount of time spent on FB by University Undergraduates

Table 13: Reasons to join FB

Reasons to join Facebook	Frequency	Percentage
To make new friends	48	16%
To find old friends	66	22%
To communicate with existing friends	93	31%
To interact with people with common interests	12	4%
To find someone I can share a relationship with	24	8%
To keep up with news and current events	51	17%
I was invited	6	2%
Total	300	100%

Figure 7: Chart illustrating the rationale behind University undergrads to join FB

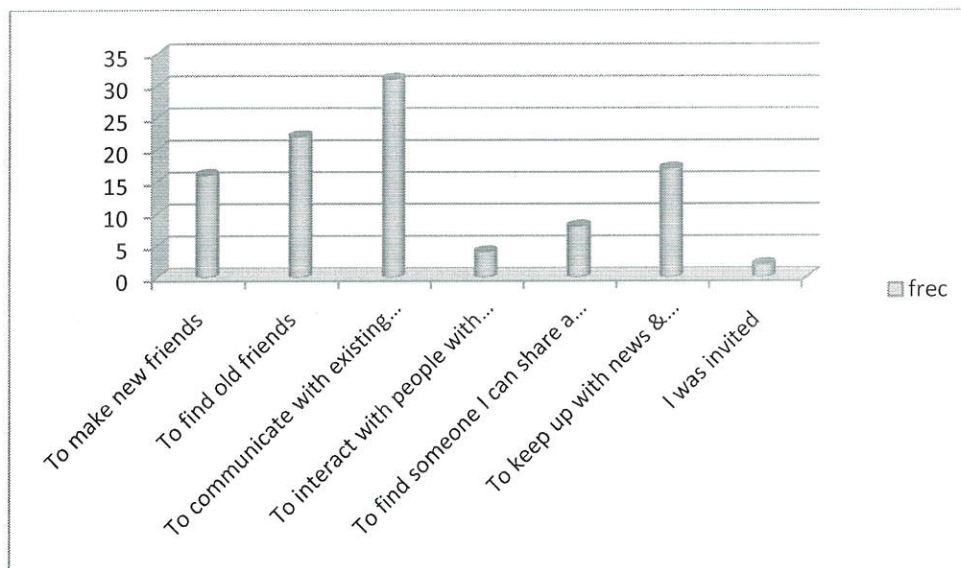


Table 13 indicates that the majority (31%) of the respondents have joined Facebook to communicate with existing friends. 22% joined the site to reconnect with old friends whereas 16% to make new friends and 17% to keep up with news and current events. Furthermore, 8% of them have joined Facebook to find someone they can share a relationship with, 4% to interact with people with common interests and 2% have joined the site because they were invited by others.

Table 14: Regular activities of Ethiopian University Undergraduates on Facebook

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Chatting and messaging	207	69%
Seeing photos and videos posted by friends	33	11%
Updating profiles and status updates	9	3%
Posting and viewing photos	42	14%
Looking for old friends	6	2%
Reading and downloading learning resources	3	1%
Total	300	100%

As it is shown in table 14 above, chatting & messaging are the most frequent activities of Ethiopian university undergraduate students on Facebook with the highest score of 69%. This was distantly followed by posting and viewing photos (14%) and seeing photos and videos posted by friends (11%). Furthermore, 3% of them said the activities they are engaged in the

most is updating profiles and status updates and 2% claimed to look for old friends. This means that, as these students logged in to Facebook and meet people online, they carry out activities such as chatting, posting on their walls and uploading and exchanging new pictures. This further suggests that most of them use Facebook mainly to socialize in addition to other activities. The chart below further illustrates the result presented above.

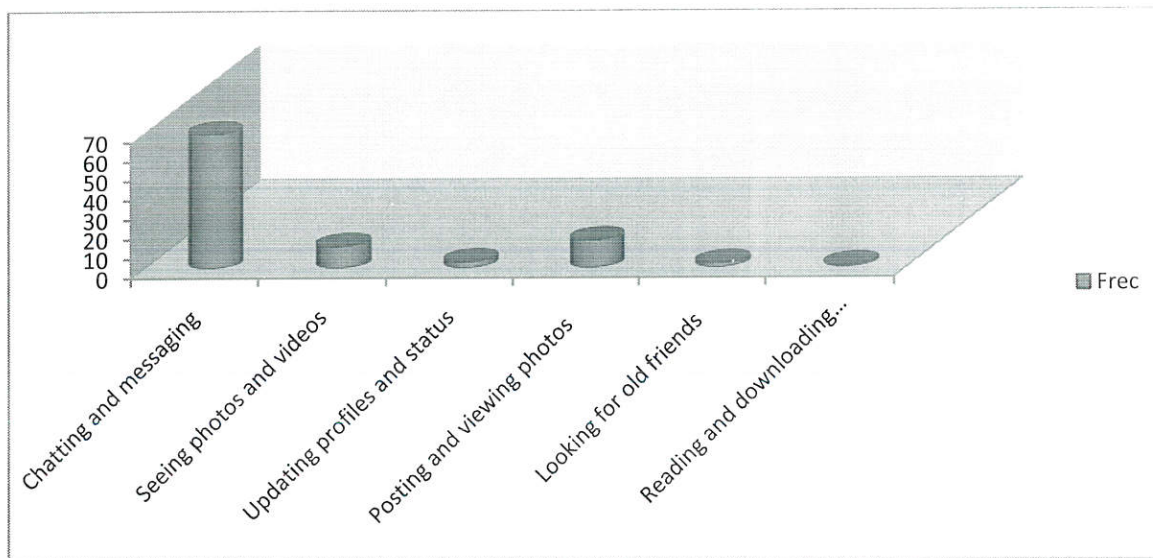


Figure 8: Chart illustrating the Distribution of Ethiopian University Undergraduate students' recurrent activities on FB

Table 15: Activities that would have been done by students instead of FB

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Studying	78	26%
Hanging out with friends/socializing	57	19%
Doing more constructive (school) work	141	47%
Reading novels	24	8%
Total	300	100%

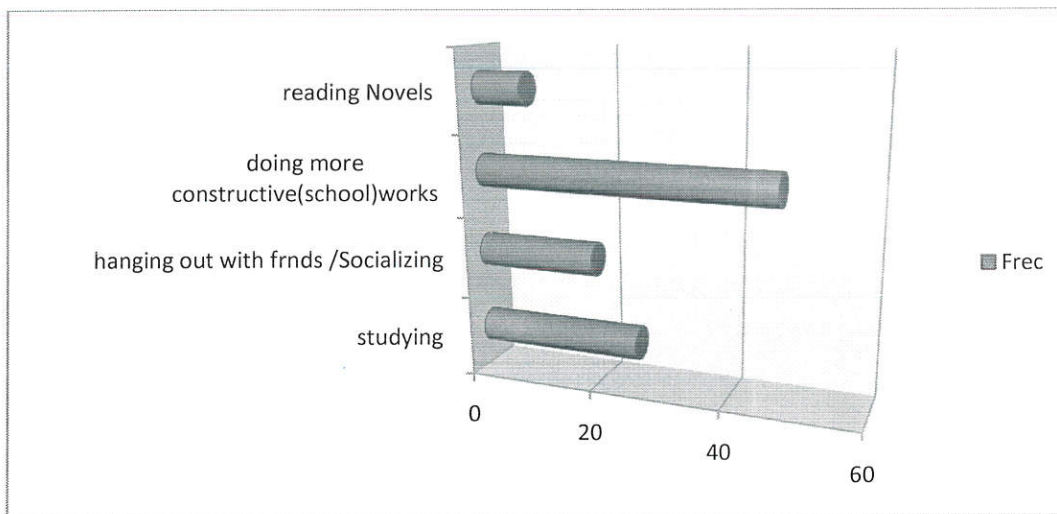


Figure 9: chart signifying Activities that would have been done by Students instead of FB

As it is evident in table 15 and figure 9 above, 47% of the respondents said if they were not using Facebook, they would have been doing school works, 26% studying, 19% hanging out with friends/socializing offline and 8% reading Novels. This shows that Facebook might be intimidating the students to utilize less time to study, read books/novels as well as to socialize offline.

Table 16: Opportunity happened to students as a result of Facebook use

Best opportunity happened as a result of FB use	Frequency	Percentage
Had more friends	42	14%
Being able to connect easily with existing friends	78	26%
Meeting new people/made new friends	15	5%
Enjoying leisure time/ whenever being alone	57	19%
Expressing one's self better	9	3%
Learning from other users	0	0%
Enhancing interpersonal skills	0	0%
Meeting girls/boys	45	15%
Staying up on current events and news	51	17%
Nothing	3	1%
Total	300	100%

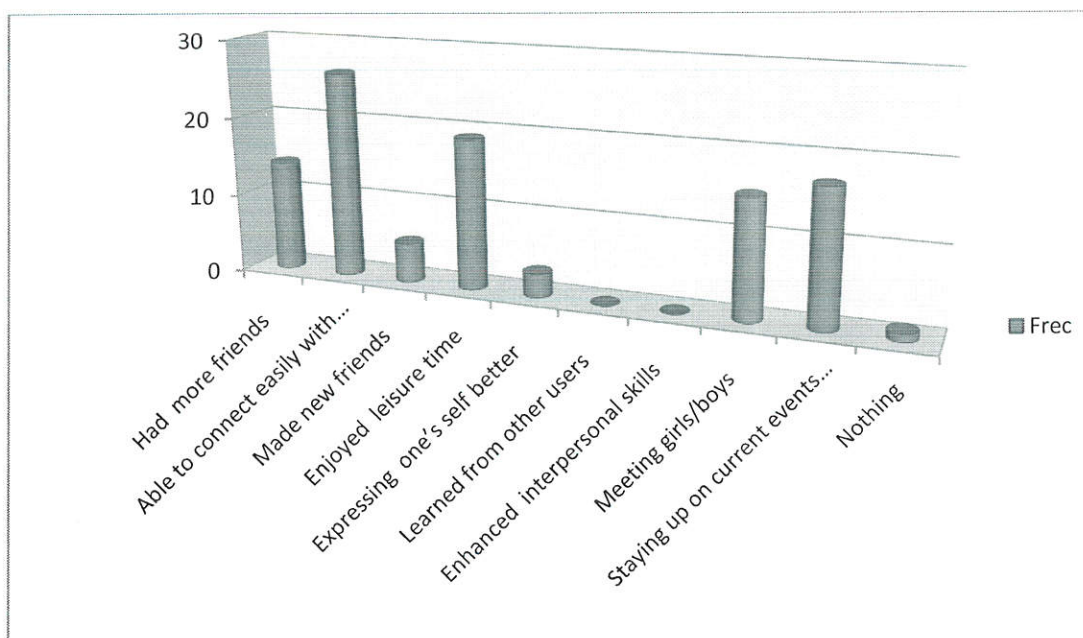


Figure 10: Chart showing best advantages that students gained from using FB

Table 16 shows 26% of the sample considered being able to connect easily with existing friends as the best opportunity they have achieved as a result of using Facebook. On the other hand, 5% of them said the site helped them to meet new people/make new friends. 19% of them claimed enjoying leisure time as the best advantage which is closely followed by those who said staying up on current events and news 17%. What is more, 15% indicated meeting girls/boys (dating) and likewise, 14% considered having more friends as the best opportunity. Very few respondents 3% became able to express themselves better on Facebook. No one ticked on learning from other users and enhancing interpersonal skills while 1% achieved nothing as a result of Facebook usage. Generally, it can be claimed that Facebook became a good means to maintain relationships for around 60% of Ethiopian HE students.

Table 17: The worst thing that's happened to students as a result of Facebook use

The worst thing happened as a result of Facebook use	Frequency	Percentage
Wasting time	102	34%
Exposed to rude people and embarrassing posts	30	10%
Loss of privacy	9	3%
Being found by people you don't want finding you	12	4%
Caught my boy/girl friend cheating	3	1%
Not enough likes on my posts/psychological disturbance	3	1%
I ended up Decreasing in grade/loss of educational achievement	0	0%
Hating friends because of knowing what they're thinking	48	16%
I became addicted to Facebook	93	31%
Nothing	0	0%
Total	300	100%

According to the above table, wasting time was declared as the worst outcome of Facebook use occurred on the majority (34%) of the respondents. Just under that percentage, (16%) considered Facebook addiction as the most worrisome form of impact for them while (10%) reported that it exposed them to rude people and embarrassing posts. Furthermore, the other (4%) said they were forced to meet people they don't want to, while only (3%) of them felt they have lost privacy as a result of FB. In addition to these, three female respondents, (1%), reported that they have detected their boyfriends cheating online. Similarly psychological disturbance is an anecdote of only 1%. According to the finding, 100% of these young respondents had come across some sort of negative Facebook impacts. Figure 11 further illustrate the finding.

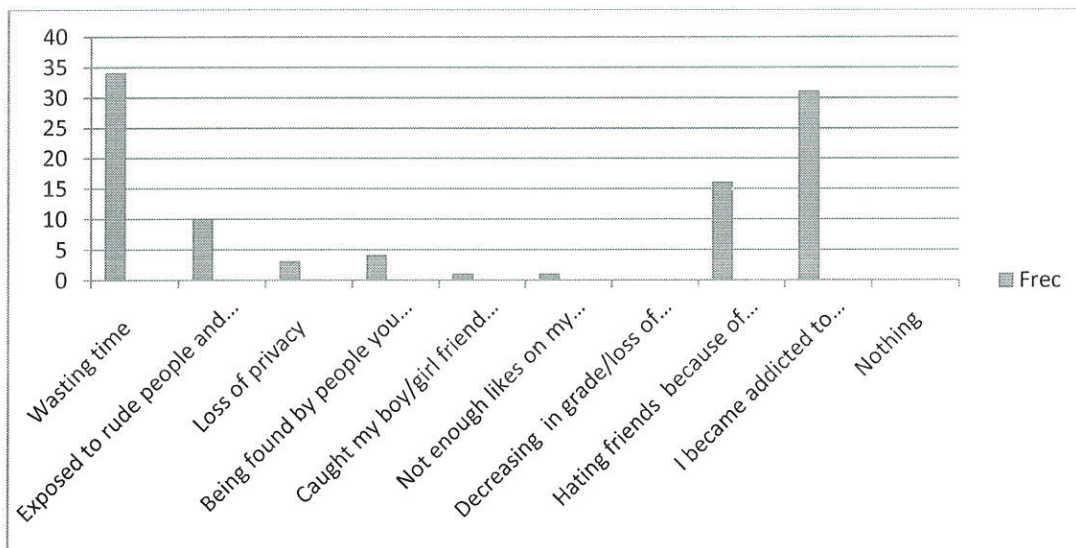


Figure 11: Chart illustrating the negative impacts encountered by students as a result of Facebook use

Table 18: Influence of Facebook on respondents' lifestyle

Response	frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	14%
No	258	86%
Total	300	100%

As it is indicated in the above table 18, very few 42 (14%) of the respondents reported that Facebook influenced their lifestyle. However, 258 (86%) of the respondents affirmed that Facebook hasn't influenced their way of life. In an attempt made to know how Facebook has influenced those 42 (14%) respondents, 20 (48%) reported that it has influenced their habit of socialization. Furthermore, 12 (28%) said it has influenced their spiritual habits whereas the site influenced 8 (19%) of the respondents' dressing style. But only 2 (5%) of them were academically influenced.

Table 19: Effects on academic achievement

Response	frequency	Percentage
Yes	177	59%
No	123	41%
Total	300	100%

Table 19 shows that 59% of the respondents believe using facebook can affect one's academic achievement whereas 41% of them disagreed with the idea; saying it will not affect student learning. However, although 59 % of respondents believe that facebook could affect student's academic achievement, surprisingly, no one of these respondents practically encountered a decrease in grade or a loss of educational achievement. This is because no one of them selected the alternative that says "I ended up decreasing in grade/loss of educational achievement" under question 18 of the questionnaire. However, this finding still corroborates with earlier research findings discussed in the literature review part of this study, (Junco (2011)).

Table 20: Is FB a safe place for college and University students to disclose/share information?

Response	frequency	Percentage
Yes	150	50%
No	150	50%
Total	300	100%

The number of respondents who consider Facebook as a safe place to share information is the same as those who consider the site as an insecure place to disclose information. This suggests that many youth and students in the country post and share different things on their Facebook profile including personal information, embarrassing, humiliating and hurtful content in text, photos and videos.

Table 21: distribution of things that students hesitate to share on Facebook

Things hesitated to share on FB	Frequency	Percentage
Pictures	39	13%
Address	9	3%
Phone number	192	64%
Current location	6	2%
Anything that's worthy	54	18%
Total	300	100%

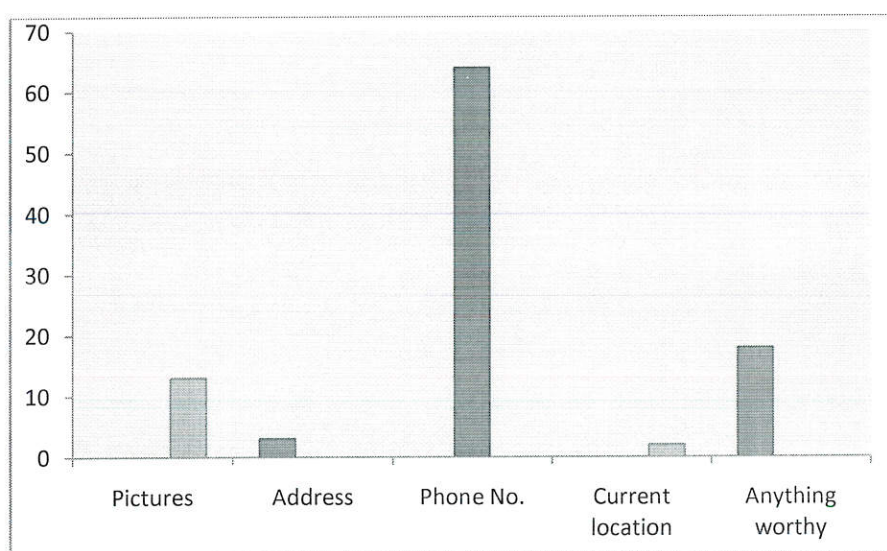


Figure 12: Things respondents hesitate to share on FB

As it is illustrated in the above figure, Phone number is the highly hesitated thing to share on Facebook with 64%. 18% of the respondents keep secret anything that is worthy for them while 13% refuse to share pictures. Address and current location are kept secret by 3% and 2% respondents respectively.

Table 22: Respondents' attitude towards their Facebook addiction

Response	frequency	Percentage
Yes	129	43%
No	171	57%
Total	300	100%

As table 22 shows, 43% of the respondents believe that they are addicted to Facebook whereas 57% of them said they are not addicted to Facebook. However, as it is witnessed by the respondents under table 14 of this study, around 66% of them spend more than one hour per a day on Facebook. According to Facebook addiction symptom scales by Thurs Hub (2011), users who spend over an hour on Facebook on regular basis can be categorized under Facebook addicted person. Therefore, this could be a clear indication of the prevalence of Facebook addiction among Ethiopian University undergraduate students.

Table 23: Habits of using social media as an alternative communication tools

Response	frequency	Percentage
Yes	264	88%
No	36	12%
Total	300	100%

Table 23 shows that very high number (88%) of the respondents uses Facebook as an alternative communication media. However, 12% of the respondents haven't such experience.

Table 24: Habits of using other social networking accounts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	264	88%
Twitter	27	9%
LinkedIn	0	0%
MySpace	0	0%
What's up!	3	1%
You Tube	6	2%
Total	300	100%

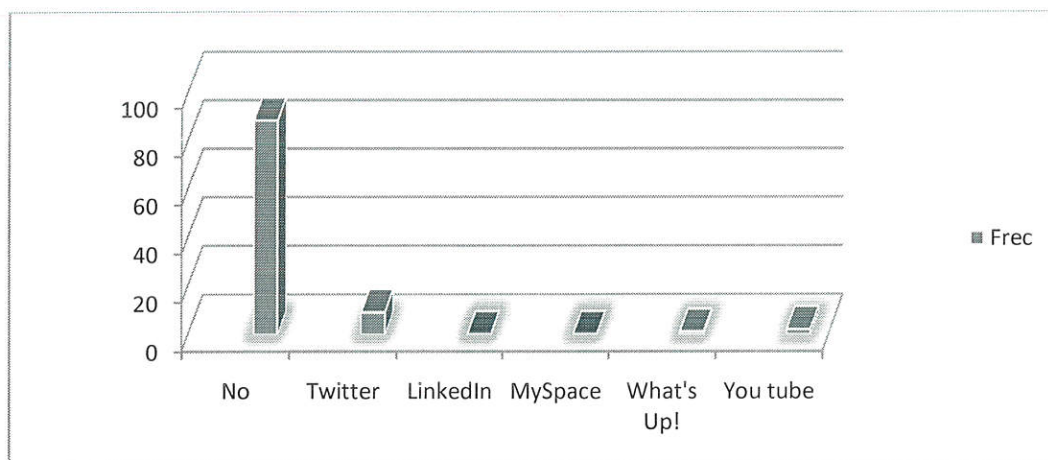


Figure 13: Chart showing the kind of other social media used by Ethiopian HE students

According to the above table, 9%, 2%, & 1% of the respondents use Twitter, You Tube and what's up respectively. However, 88% of them responded that they are not using any other social media than Facebook. This means that, living in a very widespread alternative social media world; majority of Ethiopian young students are using only one social media site.

Table 25: Ethiopian HE students' habit of using academic social media sites

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0%
No	300	100%
Total	300	100%

According to the above table, all of the respondents do not use any academic social media site. Although the sample of the study is small, this result could suggest different issues about the knowledge of students regarding the existence and usefulness of academic social media.

Table 26: Predictions on their FB Usage habits after graduation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	300	100%
No	0	0%
Total	300	100%

Table 26 indicates that 100% of the respondents are committed to use Facebook after graduation.

Table 27: Students expectations on the degree of their future FB usage

Expectations of respondents future FB usage	Frequency	Percentage
My use of FB will decline in the next 3 years	57	19%
My use of FB will stay the same in the next 3 years	96	32%
My use of FB will increase in the next 3 years	147	49%
Total	300	100%

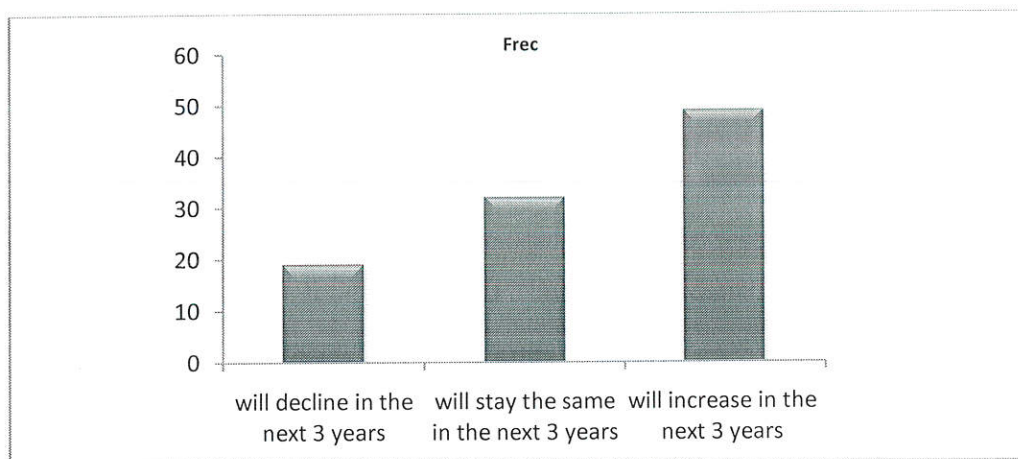


Figure 14: Chart displaying Expectations of Ethiopian HE students' future FB usage

According to the above table and chart, 49% of the sample expects their use of FB will increase in the next 3 years. In addition to that, 32% of them predicted that they will be using the site the same to their current usage habit whereas, 19% assumed their Facebook usage habit will decrease in the future. Generally, the figures show that Facebook will be promisingly used by young Ethiopian students in the future.

4.2. Report and Discussion of the Observation

Observation, unstructured in nature was made on available users at different places (at internet cafes, in libraries, at wireless connection areas, in cafeterias) to weigh against the data gained through questionnaire. Accordingly, majority of the youth & students observed while extremely using Facebook through their cell phones and computers. These days, Glance around in cafes, restaurants, in the taxis, even in Libraries or many places in the campuses and you'll be hard-pressed to find young students who don't have their heads-down using their cell phones to text, or update their Facebook statuses— though most of them being with others. This shows that Ethiopian HE students use and tend to over depend on Facebook wherever they are. Particularly, to the researcher's surprise, almost all users' screen displays "Facebook" at internet cafes and at wireless connection areas. Similarly chatting, viewing others photos and reading comments, reading news and articles respectively, were found their common activities.

In addition to this, the researcher tried to examine the activities of accessible student users' profiles on the site. As a result, uploading and sharing photos and texts, posting comments and good wishes on others profiles (on birthdays, holidays, weddings, & etc) was found as another frequent activity. Generally, it is possible to say the observation substantiates the results of the questionnaire. Both methods revealed the prevalence of over dependence on the site (table 13 & 14). Furthermore, chatting and communicating with existing friends, viewing others photos, posting and reading comments was found as the most frequent activity carried out on Facebook in both observation and respondents' answers to the questionnaire.

On the other hand, these young users also involve in online activities that can be considered as constructive; such as posting & sharing religious, inspirational, informative & educational messages on Facebook. However, it has been observed that many people also post and share photos and texts that can be considered offensive. This includes posting and sharing documents which contain sexually harassing words & contents, uploading videos and photos against individuals' privacy and societal norms, insulting other ethnic, political and religious groups and so on which in one way or another incite conflicts in a society.

The above discussion suggests that although Facebook is being used mainly for socialization by Ethiopian HE students, there is a tendency of using the site for destructive purposes too. Such users post and share photos, videos and texts which contains bad or destructive messages. It seems that some users lack social responsibility and believe that their private

account is safe and secured. It further shows that these people lack awareness about the nature of social media. Such users should understand that although the advent of social media has increased the level of social connectivity and social interaction, it has also provoked social upheavals in many countries, the so called 'Arab spring' for example. In addition to this, such users have to keep in mind that their social networks are searchable. Even when privacy settings are set extremely high; it's always possible to find out personal information. In relation to this, Fodeman and Monroe (2008) states, "For SM users, there is a false sense of privacy." Combined this false sense of privacy with the feeling of anonymity and lack of social responsibility that often develops from using text-centered telecommunications, we see that many students post embarrassing, humiliating, superior and hurtful content in both text, photos and videos. They further suggests that we need to teach people that nothing is private online, especially their social networks.

4.3. Discussion of the Findings

The use of social media interfaces through computer and mobile devices has become quite widespread around the world, and currently, the most prominent interface in Ethiopia is Facebook. In general, the use of this social media is continuing to grow rapidly among all demographics in this country, with particularly heavy use among young segment of the society. This day, it is becoming evident that social media presents risks as well as opportunities to youth development. Hence, in this study, effort has been made to examine social media (mainly Facebook) usage habits of Ethiopian University undergraduate students and its related impacts. This part of the study presents the discussion and interpretation of the findings.

This study explored that Facebook has become the most popular and preferred social media among HE students in Ethiopia. This is because, while almost all of the samples use Facebook, (88%) of them never use any other kind of social media. Based on the findings of the study, it could be also said that these undergraduates are active users of Facebook. Almost (47%) of the sample log into Facebook several times a day, while (40%) of them never allow a day to pass without accessing their Facebook account at least once. On the other hand, (36%) of them are online for less than an hour while a good number (42%) of them spend 1-2 hours on the site. Furthermore, (21%) of the students spend around 3-5 hours per a day on Facebook. Based on this finding, the minimum time spent on Facebook i.e., (one hour per day) will result in seven hours a week and then thirty hours a month which is too much time for a student to spend on a single social media and shows the tendencies of over-dependence on the site by these undergraduate students. This finding still goes in line with the argument of media dependency theory which assumes that individuals in modern society become increasingly dependent upon mass media for many needs. Now that social media has become part of people's daily life, addiction to it has become the resultant effect of over-dependency on it for information, sensation, entertainment, satisfaction and etc.

Although majority (57%) of the students thought they are out of Facebook addiction, spending this much time is a clear indication of over dependence and prevalence of addiction tendency to the site. According to the finding, around (73%) of the students would have utilized that time for studying & doing school works. Others (19%) would have socialized offline and (8%) might read Novels. Therefore, it could be concluded that over dependence

on Facebook is limiting the time that would have been used to accomplish intellectual works. In addition to this, it is also reducing offline contacts.

The students demonstrated different motives for engaging in Facebook. According to the research finding, 31% of the sample joined Facebook to communicate with existing friends while 22% to find old friends and 16% of them wanted to make new friends. On the other hand, when we look at the activities of Ethiopian University undergraduates on Facebook, it is found that use of the site for personal and socialization purposes was high among the sample students, but lower for education related purposes. Accordingly, chatting & messaging took the highest percentage (69%) followed by Posting and viewing photos (14%) and Seeing photos and videos posted by friends (11%). The rest 3% engage in updating profiles and status and 2% claimed looking for old friends. However, being a student, only 1% of them engages in reading and downloading learning resources. This means that a large number of Ethiopian university undergraduate students use Facebook to maintain their social bond in general and thereby keeping their existing relationship, finding old friends and make other new friends. In addition to these, one can learn from finding that although lots of young Ethiopians are likely to rely very much on Facebook to maintain their relationships, they are also dependent on the site to fulfill multiple needs such as entertainment and source of news. Consequently, this substantiates with the assumptions of one of the theoretical framework of the study; media dependency theory. According to the theory, people will become more dependent on media that meet a number of their needs than on media that provide only a few ones, Littlejohn (2002).

Although 59% of the sample thought that Facebook could affect student's academic achievement, none of these respondents practically encountered a decrease in grade. This is because none of them reported a practical decrease/increase in grade or educational achievement under question 18 of the questionnaire. Therefore, it could be said that; even though Ethiopian HE students actively use Facebook, there is no negative/positive relationship between the usage and academic achievement. This should not come as a surprise. Previous research finding by Junco (2011) which was made based on media dependency theory has demonstrated the fact that it is not just a question of if or how much students engage in social media that matters, but also, the ways in which students engage. According to him, more frequent Facebook use among students could have a negative relationship on achievements, however the types of activities students engage in while on social media matters more. Similar to Junco's finding, though they are active Facebook users,

none of the subjects of this research entertained either positive or negative impacts on their education. Hence, it could be said that the Facebook usage habits of Ethiopian HE students is not in such a way that could affect their educational achievement. It should also be noted that an additional paper by Kolek and Saunders (2008) found that there was no correlation between Facebook use and GPA in a representative sample of students from a public Northeast research university. Therefore, it could also be concluded that the critical issue for future investigation is not whether youth or students use one social media or another, but it should be what kinds of interactions and content they experience in these virtual settings.

In addition to the above discussion, majority (86%) of the students reported that Facebook hasn't influenced the way they live. This means that, although all of the respondents actively use Facebook, they are not accepting the contents of uploaded, posted, shared or sent Facebook messages as they are. Yet again, this means that they decide how to lead their lives even though they come in contact with various posts and messages; they are able to lead their lives based on their own preferences and understandings. They are not living according to the aspiration of those posts and messages. They rather are making conscious decisions on what/which message to believe or not. This directly relates to the assumption of one of the theoretical framework of this study i.e., (uses and gratifications theory) which assumes that people are not passive receivers of media messages but take an active role in interpreting and integrating media messages into their own lives. Hence, it claims that the consumers of media messages have the freewill to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them (Katz, 1959). Furthermore, still this finding can be corroborated with the other theoretical framework of the study, i.e., the theory of the network society which claims, people, by and large, do not face their identity in the Internet, except for some teenagers experimenting with their lives. People fold the technology into their lives, link up virtual reality and real virtuality; they live in various technological forms of communication, articulating them as they need it.

The finding shows that 99% of them never use other academic social media sites. Although the sample of the study is small, the above result also suggests that HE students in Ethiopia lack awareness about the availability & usefulness of other academic social media, including Facebook itself. However, there are many academic social media that could better serve students by providing learning resources. For instance, academic social media sites such as ScolaMates, Brainify, Edutopia, Teacher2Teacher Network, eCollege etc could be used in education.

It is believed that social media gives many advantages for users. Of course, it is giving different advantages for Ethiopian HE students too. This could be learned from the finding of this study set on table 18. Accordingly, Facebook helped 26% of the students to easily communicate with their existing friends, 19% enjoys their leisure time on the site, while it serves as a dating tool for 15% of the student. In addition to these, Facebook also serves as a source of news for 17%. In general, it can be concluded that Facebook is being used to maintain relationships for many of Ethiopian HE students. This result also goes in line with previous research findings discussed in the literature review part of this study such as (Raine, 2008; Foregger, 2008); that reveal the different motives of using social media, mainly to maintain existing relationships.

Beyond the above advantages, the students also reported some negative impacts that resulted from using Facebook. Hence, according to the figure, wasting time was the worst impact of Facebook for 34% of the students. Addiction is the most worrisome form of impact for 16% of the students while 10% reported that they were exposed to “rude people” and embarrassing posts. The other 4% found by people they don’t want, & 3% of them lost privacy as a result of using Facebook. Psychological disturbance is an anecdote of only 1%. According to the finding, 100% of these young students reported some sort of negative Facebook impacts. Hence, this result suggests and warns the students to use the site very carefully. Overall, this research suggests that specific and targeted efforts may be needed to counter Facebook risks in order for students to benefit from the many opportunities the site offers.

Finally, the usage and popularity of Facebook among Ethiopia young students tends to continue even in the future. This is because around 81% of the sample wants to use Facebook in the future either the way they are currently using it (32%), or by increasing the degree of their usage (49%). This in turn suggests two important facts. One; either Facebook is providing a satisfying service for the younger students of Ethiopia or, two; they are lacking another alternative media which could better serve them. Whatever the case, the finding corroborates media dependency theory which claims, “If a person finds a medium that provides them with several functions that are central to their desires, they will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future” (Rossi, 2002). On the other hand, Sun et al., (1999) state that dependency on a specific medium is influenced by the number of media sources available to an individual. The more alternatives there are for an individual, the lesser is the dependency on and influence of a specific medium.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter offers the conclusion of the research on the usage and related impacts of Facebook among HE students in Ethiopia. Social media, mainly Facebook was the focus of this study because the site is becoming such an integral part of students' life in the country. Beyond its popularity however, it seems that parents, educators and the media in Ethiopia pay no or little attention to the effects of the site on the youth and students. However, concerns of the site range from youth privacy, safety, psychological well-being, social development, and academic performance, addiction and many others. While there is much to be discussed about the effects of Social media on youth, the core findings and conclusions of the study has been presented as follows.

According to the research finding, Facebook is the most popular and preferred social media among HE students in Ethiopia. The students access their Facebook account several times a day and most of them spend an average of 1-2 hours per day which leads to categorize them under heavy Facebook users. In relation to this, over dependence and addiction tendency to the site has been observed on these students.

Most of the young students in Ethiopia join Facebook mainly with a motive to communicate with existing friends and find old ones. However, the site helped the students not only to easily communicate with their existing friends; it also creates an opportunity for many students to enjoy their leisure time and date online. Hence, Social belongingness was one of the reasons and achievements of the students who use Facebook. Furthermore, Facebook is used as a source of news and current events for many HE students too.

The most frequent online activities of the students is chatting & messaging followed by Posting and viewing photos. However, they hardly use the site for education purposes. This means that a large number of Ethiopian university undergraduate students use Facebook mainly for personal and socialization purposes, but lower for academic purposes. However, this didn't result in either a negative or positive impact on academic achievement of the sample students. Of course, given the nature and methodologies of this particular study, one cannot definitely conclude that there will be no fundamental impact between using social network sites/Facebook and academic achievement. As with all research on new and evolving

media, the changing nature of Facebook use may itself lead to changing media effects and findings as well. Hence, we should not be at ease to assume that this study - or any other for that matter - provides a definitive answer on the implications of a medium. This study also does not intend to suggest that extreme Facebook use, i.e. too much use, cannot exhibit a negative/positive relationship with academic performance. According to this study's finding, for instance, around 63% of the samples spend (7-35) hours per a week on Facebook. Based on this, it could be said that, if this trend continues uncontrolled, it may perhaps affect one's academic achievement. Thus, this study is not suggesting that Facebook use is some unmitigated good. It rather suggests that the question is not whether students are using social media, but how. Therefore, it should be concluded that although too much social media/Facebook uses can induce broad effects on education, this did not seem to be the case with regard to the samples of this study.

Every technological advance comes with its negative side, most especially when it is misused or abused. The same thing has been revealed under this particular study too. Many students spend too much time on Facebook. Consequently, it consumed the time that students might use to study, to read Novels & accomplish other school works and reduced offline communication too. It was observed that many students in many places in the campuses usually bent their heads- down using their cell phones and/or PC's to text, or update their Facebook statuses though most of them being with others. On one hand, this could be concluded that the students actually are becoming more social and more interactive with others, but the style of that communication has changed so that we're not meeting face-to-face as often as we used to. In addition to these, wasting time and addiction were also found the most concerning trend of the sample students. As a result of Facebook use, some students were also exposed to embarrassing posts and 'bad-mannered' people; as some developed trends such as communicating, dating and meeting with different people; even with people they don't know. However, loss of privacy and psychological crisis were found an anecdote and concern of very few numbers of these HE students. It seems that is why many of the sample students expressed greater trust in both Facebook and its users, and were willing to share identifying information on their profiles.

In conclusion, it has been discussed earlier that this days Ethiopian HE Students use Facebook mainly to suffice their social needs like friendship, to contact some of their friends, to discover and establish new friendships, to use leisure times and at the same time to keep up with news and current events. However, the other important thing that should be seen in

relation to this is the issues of dependence on facebook and how this might increase in the near future. It is clear that this study doesn't only show the present use of social media/Facebook. However, it does also show the future trend and pattern of Facebook use among the age group that the study focuses on. Based on the trend and pattern, one can say that Facebook use among HE students in Ethiopia will continue to grow. Thus, this study concludes that there exist a positive relationship between the social media/ Facebook services and these young students. The students' current Facebook usage pattern as well as the positive attitude formed on the site and their predictions on their future usages are evidence for the existence of dependency on and/or gratification of using Facebook. The students use Facebook with different motives. Social belongingness was one of the main motives and achievements of the students as they use this social networking site. They also tend to interact with different people including the unfamiliar online friends. This is also supported by the very low number of students who expressed privacy concerns. Fair enough, that is the communal argument of the two theoretical frameworks of this study too. According to the uses and gratifications theory, media consumers use media for various purposes based on their goals and needs. Whereas, the dependency theory says the more a person becomes dependent on the media to fulfill these needs, the media will become more important to that individual and will continue using that media.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to investigate how and why Ethiopian University Undergraduate students use Facebook and to find out its related impacts. Maximum effort has been exerted to achieve the mentioned objective and the result has been discussed under the earlier part of the study. Based on the findings, the researcher forwards the following recommendations.

- ◆ As shown in the study, there is growing tendencies of Facebook addiction among University undergraduate students in Ethiopian. Therefore as a general recommendation, there is the need to act fast in the direction of fighting and preventing social network addiction the same way we confront substance addiction. This could be possible perhaps, by teaching the negative impacts of Social media and/or by formulating rules and regulations of internet (particularly) Facebook use at least in the academic institutions. Hence policy makers, ministry of education, School administrators, families and the media should collaborate to do so.
- ◆ Young students should have a good reason to use Facebook so that to achieve the maximum benefits it offers and thereby reduce any negative impacts that may result out of its usage.
- ◆ Students should use Facebook properly at the right time and the right place rather than using it during class hours. This might be only possible in the presence of Facebook control mechanisms at least in academic institutions and if the family, academicians and the media involve in awareness creation efforts.
- ◆ Hence, Parents and people in the academic circle as well as the media should teach the young students about the negative impacts such as wastage of time, addiction, sexual harassment, loss of privacy, psychological crisis, loss of educational achievements and so on which could result from Facebook use.
- ◆ Overall, this research suggests that specific and targeted efforts may be needed to counter Facebook risks in order for students to benefit from the many opportunities the site offers.
- ◆ People have to accept the technological changes like Facebook, believing that is a way of socialization and communication not for destructive purposes.

- ◆ Ethiopian students have to use social media sites not only for socialization; they should also use the sites for education, to improve their skills, to promote their talents, to find academic scholarships and /or for other important purposes.
- ◆ Students should never rely only on Facebook and should try to involve in other types of social media, especially academic ones; so that to get helpful academic resources for their intellectual endeavors.
- ◆ Facebook users should also try to communicate with friends and family offline since relying only on online communication will result in different problems including depression, isolation, reducing one's intimacy and confidence as well as many other psychological disorders.
- ◆ The researcher encourages further researchers in the efforts to understand the development and strength of relationships in the online social environment, and particularly those who want to examine the relationship between Facebook use and academic achievement among Ethiopian students.
- ◆ In addition to this, researchers can explore the role of social media in fostering political, religious and /or ethnic unity among Ethiopian people.
- ◆ Other researchers can also examine the roles social media could play in political elections; with reference to the upcoming 2007 national election in Ethiopia.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Dear Respondents;

I am a graduate student at Addis Ababa University in the School of Journalism and Communications. I am conducting a study on “**Social Media Usage among Ethiopian University Undergraduate Students: Impacts and Opportunities.**” The questions in this set are designed to collect the data useful to understand mainly how and why Ethiopian university undergraduate students use social media for and its related impacts. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey on your use of Facebook by marking (\checkmark or \times) symbols on your answers from the corresponding options. I welcome your honest feedback and your answers will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation!

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your age group?

<19 19-23 24-28 >28

3. What type of University/College are you learning in?

Governmental

Private

4. What year of University/College are you in?

Freshman

Junior

Senior

5. Do you have a Facebook account?

Yes

No

If your answer is 'Yes', please continue filling the questionnaire.

If your answer is 'No', please return the questionnaire.

6. How long have you been using Facebook?

More than 3 months

Less than a year

Between 1 and 2 years

2 years and above

7. Thinking just about your Facebook profile... How many Facebook friends do you currently have? (If you are not sure: Just your best guess is fine)

- 1-100 Friends 100-250 Friends 250-500 Friends
500- 1000 Friends More than 1000 Friends

8. Would you accept a request from strangers who want be friends with you on facebook?

- Yes No

9. Why would you accept strangers who added you as friends on Facebook? (*Please tick only one from the list*)

- I want to expand social network
Because I share Common hobbies and interests
Looking their attractive display picture
Because I share Number of common friends
Any other please specify: _____

10. Have you ever met someone in person that you have come to know through Facebook ?

- Yes No

11. Do you consider Facebook similar to a dating/engagement service?

- Yes No

12. How many friends have you been able to reunite with on facebook?

- 1-200 200-500 500-1000 1000 and more don't know

13. What types of "groups" are you in on Facebook?

- Common interest Sports
Organizations related Community service
Academic Not a member of any group

14. How often do you log into Facebook?

- Several times a day weekly
Daily Monthly

15. on an average, how many hours per day do you spend on facebook?

- Less than an hour 1-2hrs 3-5hrs
6-9hrs 10- 14hrs 15 hrs and more

16. Why did you join Facebook?

- To make new friends To interact with people with common interests

- To find old friends To keep up with news and current events
- To communicate with existing friends I was invited
- To find someone I can share a relationship with Others

17. Which typical activities do you spend the most time doing on Facebook? (*Tick one*)

- Chatting and messaging
- Seeing photos and videos posted by your Facebook friends
- Updating profiles and status updates
- Posting and viewing photos
- Looking for old friends
- Reading and downloading learning resources

18. If you were not using facebook, what would you have done to utilize that time?

- Studying
- Hanging out with friends/socializing
- Doing more constructive (school) work
- Reading novels
- Any others (please specify) _____

19) What was the best thing or opportunity that's happened to you as a result of Facebook use?

- I have more friends
- I am able to connect easily with my existing friends
- I have Met new people/made new friends
- I find it a great way to enjoy my leisure or whenever I am alone
- I express myself better
- I learn from other users
- I have enhanced my interpersonal skills
- Meeting girls/boys
- Staying up on current events and news
- Nothing

20. What was the worst thing that's happened to you as a result of Facebook use?

Wasting time

Exposed to rude people and embarrassing posts

Loss of privacy

Being found by people you don't want finding you

Caught my boy/girl friend cheating

Not enough likes on my posts/psychological disturbance

I ended up decreasing in grade and lost educational achievement

I hate most of my friends now that I know what they're thinking

I became addicted to Facebook

Nothing

21. a), Does facebook influence your lifestyle in any way?

Yes No

b), (If **YES**, in what way?)

Career

dressing

socializing

Religion and spirituality

education

22. Do you believe that facebook use can affect student learning or academic achievement?

Yes No

23. Do you feel Facebook is a safe place for college and University students to disclose/share information?

Yes No

24. What sort of things would you hesitate to share on facebook?

Pictures

address

phone number

Current location

anything that's worthy

25. Do you display your relationship status on Facebook?

Yes No

26. Do you display your political views on Facebook?

Yes No

27. Do you feel your pictorial representation on Facebook is important?

Yes No

28. Do you feel your picture is representative of your true appearance?

Yes NO

29. Do you have more than one facebook account?

Yes No

30. In general, do you feel your profile has accurate information about yourself?

Yes No

31. In general, do you feel other people's profiles are accurate factual representations of their personalities?

Yes No

32. Do you consider yourself addicted to facebook?

Yes No

33. Do you use social media as an alternative to other communication tools (telephone, television, radio, newspapers and others)?

Yes No

34. Do you have any other social networking accounts?

No

MySpace

Twitter

What's up!

LinkedIn

You tube

Other _____

35. Do you use any academic social media site?

Yes No

36. Do you think you will be using Facebook after you graduate?

Yes No

37. How will your use of facebook change in the next 3 years?

I expect my use of Facebook will decline in the next 3 years

I expect my use of Facebook will stay the same in the next 3 years

I expect my use of Facebook will increase in the next 3 years

Thank you for taking time to fill out this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.