THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF LIGEGE SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

BALOYI MIRINGO SAMSON

11638197

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SUPERVISOR

Dr. TS MASHAU

CO-SUPERVISOR

Dr. HN MUTSHAENI

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DECLARATION

I, **BALOYI MIRINGO SAMSON**, (Student Number: 11638197) hereby declare that this study is my original work and has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university. I further declare that all the resources that were consulted are included and duly acknowledged in the reference list.

Signature..... **Date**.....03. 09. 2015

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife and children who were always there for me. Friends and colleagues who supported me throughout the study, I thank you. To all parents and stakeholders who care for our young ones, I salute you. To our young generation, our future leaders; you deserve the best, take care.

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ABSTRACT

The increased use of Social networking websites has become an international phenomenon in the past several years. Most people spend most of their time on social networking. Different studies on the impact of social networking on academic performance of tertiary students have been done, but none focused on secondary learners in rural areas. This study adopted a quantitative and qualitative approach in which 100 Grade 10 learners were purposively sampled to respond to a questionnaire and to participate in a focus group interview. The study found that learners are spending a lot of their time on social networking sites. The study also found that learners do not discuss educational matters and have no boundaries while on social networks. Learners are addicted to social networks, and that is negatively affecting them in their studies. It is recommended that age restrictions should be placed on social networks sites, and parental guidance should be provided to help learners.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social networking is a very important element of life which cannot be ignored. In this era of globalisation and technological innovation, social networking sites (SNSs) are the most used communication tools throughout the world. Social networking refers to the gathering, representation, processing and dissemination of social information, such as race, sexual orientation and partners, religion, body type, favourite books and movies, relationship status and photo albums (Schlenkrich & Sewry, 2012:12). It enables people to communicate through internet using their cell phones or Personal Computers (PC).

Social networking technologies are intended to be easy to learn and use, and consequently, have been used in a variety of contexts to improve the speed and effectiveness of communication. The increased use of Social Networking Websites has become an international phenomenon in the past several years. It started with the introduction of the computer and has developed to several SNSs.

The number of users of social networking websites continues to grow rapidly. According to Miah, Omaar and Allison-Golding (2012:1), global consumers spent more than five and a half hours on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter in a day, and as of December 2009, there was an 82% increase from the same time in the previous year when users were spending just over three hours on social networking sites. In addition, the overall traffic on social networking sites has grown over the last three years. Facebook (FB) currently leads the social networking sites in the number of users (Miah et. al, 2012:1).

Jenkins (2009:1) indicated that the fundamental purpose of education is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life. Students learn in new ways using social media, and educators should embrace these new platforms (Jenkins, 2006:1). Nevertheless, most

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school districts block access to SNS (Lemke 2009:5), while parents remain fearful about the safety and its effects on their children's social development. Teenage youths are a unique population of SNS users. They are among the first to have grown up entirely surrounded by communication technologies.

A study done by UNICEF (2012:3) shows that South African residents lead the highest users of mobile technology and mobile social networking on the continent. South African adolescents and youth are the first adopters of mobile technology, with 72 % of 15 to 24 year olds "having a cell phone." Teens own cell phones that enable them to access social networking sites. It is rare to find a child who might have reached 15 years without a phone or who might not have owned one. Gadgets with features where one can access social networking sites are cheaper, which makes it easier also for low income families to buy them for their children.

Pillay (2014:6) noted in a research done by Viacom International (VIMN), published in the Sunday Times, that among 6200 children aged 9 to 14, 74% of South African kids own or use their cell phones compared with 57% of kids internationally. This is of great concern as there can be some effects caused by cell phones on the lifestyle of the child. Children love and cannot live without their cell phones. When children are given such a powerful tool where they can access the internet easily, there must be strict rules to be adhered to. UNISA (2012:7) indicated that 90% of Gauteng learners have access to the internet on cell phones while just more than half (53%) have internet access to a personal computer (PC) at home. If children can access the internet without boundaries, it can be harmful as there are a lot of offences that they can be exposed to though there are those who are mature and can use it for educational purposes only.

With South-Africa being the continents' leading internet user and student users of SNSs accounting for 50% of total internet users (Khan, 2013:59), the assumption is that SNS usage amongst high school students is very high. These students are paying more attention towards these social networking activities rather than utilizing this time for their studies, and this might affect their academic performance adversely (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011: 5023). This area has grasped a lot of researchers' attention but seems

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to be an 'unexplored area' in rural South Africa, therefore, this study is an effort to fill this research gap. The current study aims at exploring the relationship between SNSs usage and educational performance of the student would be a valuable addition to this research area.

Research done by Mayayise (2008: 71) shows Gauteng learners as being amongst people who make the most use of internet on a daily basis. They easily access internet at schools, homes and internet cafes. The social impact of the internet becomes clear when the actual activities that are conducted on the internet are revealed. People can use social networking sites for good purposes, but others can use it for bullying, which can be devastating, as it increases feelings of anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, and suicidal tendencies.

Educational researchers have long recognized that the experience of 'rural' education is unique and contributes to differential outcomes for rural youth. For example, students living in rural areas of the United States have lower levels of educational aspirations, achievement and attainment than their non-rural counterparts (Singh & Dika, 2003: 114). The rural-non-rural discrepancy in educational and other developmental outcomes has been attributed both to divergence in socioeconomic status between the two groups and to difference in family and community dynamics, low institutional resources in rural schools, and fewer academic opportunities in general (Singh & Dika, 2003: 114).

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In South Africa, social networking sites remain extraordinarily popular with high school learners. Teenagers today have many electronic devices like computers, laptops, cell phones tablets and many more. People are so exposed to technology that they do most of their activities through it. They use a variety of activities through modern technology, and these stretch from information-gathering, internet, communication games and more, as opposed to their older generations.

Even though many schools have created many strict rules that forbid the use of handheld technology during school hours or block certain social networking websites, many adolescents are still able to connect during school hours.

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1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While there has been some excellent research linking the diverse social networks of urban minority youth with educational and psychological outcomes (Stanton-Salazar, 200I:3), the same connection for rural youths has not been explored. The school and community factors associated with rurality may be quite different than those in suburban and urban youth. Rural communities are often homogeneous in terms of socioeconomic status and ethnicity and the impact of SNSs on rural adolescents are likely to be similar in all rural schools (Singh & Dika, 2003:114). It is from such a background that this study intends to examine the impact of SNS on high school academic performance in rural schools.

1.3 THE MAIN AIM OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to examine the impact of social networking on the academic performance of high school learners at Ligege Secondary School.

The objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To investigate how social networking affects the academic performance of high school learners.
- To examine whether learners use social networking for academic purposes.
- Recommend appropriate intervention strategies on the usage of social networking.

1.4 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What impact does the use of social networking by high school learners at Ligege Secondary School have on their academic performance?

Sub questions of the study

The following sub-questions underpin the main research question:

- How is social networking affecting the academic performance of high school learners?
- Do high school learners use social networking for academic purposes?

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- What are the appropriate intervention strategies which can be recommended for using social networking effectively?

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following paragraphs define or clarify the concepts used in the study.

1.5.1 Social networking

Schlenkrich and Sewry (2012:12) defined social networking as the gathering, representation, processing and dissemination of social information such as race, sexual orientation and partners, religion, body type, favourite books and movies, relationship status and photo albums.

Boyd and Ellison (2013:151) defined social networking as the use of web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

For the purpose of this study, social networking is defined as the use of a dedicated website or other applications which enable users to communicate informally with other members of the site by posting information, messages, blogs and photographs.

1.5.2 Academic Performance

Huijuan (2009:23) indicated that academic performance is the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the learners. Kang, Shumow and Vandell (1996:453) indicated that academic performance describes learners' academic self-competence, conduct and grades. In this study, academic performance is the extent or level to which learners perform in their examinations, tests or any school tasks.

1.5.3 High school learners

Any person enrolled in the school/education institution in grade 8 up to grade 12.

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1.6 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The theory of Naturalism underpins this study regarding the impact of social networking on learners' performances in rural secondary schools. Fourie, Oberholzer and Verster (1992:84) indicated that the theory of Naturalism purports that all developments are in terms of natural laws and the shortcomings are attributed to external influences such as poor circumstances at home, unsatisfactory environment and deficient or incorrect training. It was further indicated that the factors mentioned above and other external factors such as ignorance, incorrect and defective knowledge, obsolete social and religious criteria, as well as other social evils, are responsible for the deteriorating of the child's good nature.

Social networking is one of those external factors which can develop or deteriorate the child's good nature. Many children are in social networking because of their friends without any assistance from their parents. They use social networking depending on how they feel. Many parents can observe the changes on usage of phones by their children but they fail to assist them. Fourie, et al, (1992:84) indicated that if the child receives the right education and correct knowledge he/she will automatically be good and do well. The proper knowledge is needed in order to use social networking positively to benefit the users.

Watson (as quoted by Fourie *et al* (1992:186) note that if the proper stimuli were presented, specific responses could be elicited in an individual from early infancy, thus the individual could be moulded into any type of person desired through classical conditioning model. The child may be conditioned to a good adaptation by the application of appropriate stimuli. When a learner is on social networking she/he will gladly accept the information on sites if she/he like it regardless of being good or harmful. The correct reaction can only be obtained by trial and error. By repetition of the activity, the correct response is established.

Social networking sites have been created to benefit the users but lack of proper guidance and knowledge on others affect them negatively because of what they do. It is a clear indication that while the child will be using social networking proper guidance is needed in order to reduce negative effects which might occur. Skinner (as quoted

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by Fourie *et al* (1992:187) noted that living organisms (human and animals) tend to repeat behaviour which offered satisfaction to them and avoid that which did not. Children keep on repeating visiting social networking sites for wrong purposes and without limit because that is what gives them satisfaction. The repetition of entering harmful sites, watching harmful information will lead learners to thinking that social networking sites are created for those purposes. They develop the interest on such information because of repeting viewing such sites.

The child need to be supported so that his natural abilities can develop. Langeveld (quoted by Fourie, *et al*, (1992:221) indicated that without assistance from an adult, the child cannot become an adult. It is also indicated in Fourie, et al, (1992:79) that education is the transference of the traditions of the past to each rising generation, a handing down of experience, knowledge, values, standards, norms and usages from generation to generation. It is careful transfer of selection of the accumulated cultural treasures and spiritual possessions of the nation. In his experiencing of the environment, the child must be protected from harmful environmental influences. Improper use of social networking sites can be dangerous as some sites can contain harmful information. It is the responsibility of elders to see to it that the implementation of the new technology is done in a fruitful manner in order to empower the citizens. Children are using social networking sites wrongly because of lack of support. They rely on trial and error method and whatever is appealing to them is fine regardless of consequences.

Children must be taught about the sites which can benefit them and how to use them in a proper way. Boundaries must be created to safe guard our young ones. The aim of naturalistic education can be stated as adaption to and orientation in the natural. Education implies conditioning by means of influences from outside. They must know that it is not good to use social networking sites excessively and without boundaries. Children must know the pros and cons of using social networking in order to benefit from such sites.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology of the study is explained below.

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1.7.1 Research Design

Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005:52) defined research design as the plan according to which research participants (subjects) are obtained and the manner in which the researcher collect information from them. This study used a survey design which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. Ohaja (2003) (quoted by Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh, 2013:92) defined a survey as the study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning, which enables a researcher to make generalisations concerning the population study. The research design involved the selection of appropriate research approaches, research methods, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis procedures in establishing the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance.

1.7.2 Methodology of the Study

1.7.2.1 Population

Welman et al. (2005:52) defined population as the study objects and consist of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. The population comprised 253 Grade 10 learners at Ligege Secondary School, which is located at Dzindi Circuit in Vhembe District.

1.7.2.2 Sampling procedure

Frey, Lawrence, Botan, & Kreps (2000:125) defined a sample as a sub-group of a population. It is part of a larger population, and its purpose is to estimate an unknown characteristic of the population. The sample size was 100 learners from Ligege Secondary School obtained through using the technique of purposive sampling whereby the sample was selected non-randomly. Individuals who participated in the study were selected by compiling a list of all Grade 10 learners and assigned each learner a number based on the order in which they appear in the class register order, placed all the numbers in a container, and picked the numbers randomly; the individuals corresponding to those number formed part of the sample. Where the individuals were not available, the next number was selected, and the corresponding individuals formed part of the sample.

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1.7.2.3 Data collection procedure

Sarantakos (1998:313) indicated that preparation for the first stages of research materialises during the data collection stage which produces relevant information. A letter of introduction from the Department of Basic Education and Training was availed to seek permission from the principal at the school in order to conduct the study. An appointment was made to visit the school to administer questionnaires and interviewing the participants. The data collection instruments are discussed below.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to assess the impact of SNS usage in learners at Ligege Secondary school. The questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining information from the subjects because it is relatively economical, has the same questions for all subjects and can ensure anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:257).

Focus group interviews

Morgan (quoted in Strydom, Fouche & Deiport, 2005:300) describes a focus group as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. Focus group interviews are aimed at maximising the potential of the study by allowing the discussion to go beyond the originally planned themes and topics and by encouraging the respondents to discuss as many issues of the themes as possible (Sarantakos, 1998:253). An interview schedule was developed for focus groups in order to collect data about the issue which might need explanation.

1.7.2.4 Data analysis

Neuman (1997:46) defined analysis of data as identification of recurrent research patterns in data or body of knowledge. The researcher studied the data and identified trends, patterns and relationships relevant to the research question. The use of the two methods helped to overcome the bias which might have been caused by a single method. The data from the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS Statistics Version 22.

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1.8 DELIMITATION OF STUDY

The study was conducted in Vhembe District at Dzindi Circuit at Ligege Secondary School. Dzindi Circuit is within Thulamela Municipality and is mostly rural.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to all principles based on human rights that need to be protected in research. Cresswell (2003:2) indicated that in every research, it is critical that participants grant informed consent before participating in the study. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating. They were also informed of the right to withdraw from the study at any point, if they desired. Furthermore, they were informed that they could choose not to answer any question that they felt uncomfortable with answering.

As Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:55) indicated, privacy and confidentiality, and ensuring that any or all information obtained during a study should not be released to outside individuals. This is because such information might have embarrassing or damaging consequences, and this was discussed with the participants before they participated in the study. An appointment was made to the school to administer questionnaires and interviews with the respondents

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research might help schools develop strategies to help learners use social media effectively as some of the activities given to them require social networking. The Department of Basic Education might benefit as they are providing all schools with internet enabled computers. They must provide strategies which will promote the better use of the computers. Factors hindering progress in education must be dealt with, and policy developers might come up with strategies which can make learners focus when studying and be globally competent. The findings might help parents to participate actively in the education of their children. They might also be motivated to ensure that they control the gadgets that they buy for their children. Learners might benefit as they can learn to use SNSs effectively through being guided and monitored and may avoid harmful or destructive sources of information.

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1.11 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Chapter 1: This is an introductory chapter explaining the manner in which the research was conducted.

Chapter 2: This chapter focused on literature study engaged with by the researcher.

Chapter 3: This chapter focused on the research design and methodology applied for data collection purposes in this study.

Chapter 4: This chapter presented information on data analysis.

Chapter 5: This chapter discussed the study's findings, conclusion, and offered recommendations based on the latter.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Social networking in South Africa has crossed the age barrier, the urban /rural divide and even the relationship gap (worldwideworx, 2012). It is changing the way we live as we always use it in our daily life. It affects those we interact with and what we do. Vahlberg (2010:2) indicated it has soared in importance and has become indispensable and ubiquitous in most teens' lives. It is indicated that even lower income kids own cell phones, which makes it simpler for them to be online since there is little or no difference in race or ethnicity with respect to ownership of cell phones. This study intends to explore the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance.

Research on social networking sites indicates that they can be used for information-sharing, socialising, academically or leisure. Some of the literature on this topic is not specific to high school learners, but has information on social networking and its impact on certain groups of people. This study analyzes the reality and the gap between the positive and negative impact and aspects of social networks in education. Since this social networking phenomenon is continuing to grow at a fast pace, it is important to understand the impact it has on learners' academic performance.

As research by Khan (2013:59) indicates, social networks grab the total attention and concentration of students and diverts them towards non-educational, unethical and inappropriate actions such as useless chatting, time-killing by random searching that prevents them from doing their academic tasks. That may lead to poor performance by students, which may cause them to drop-out from school. If other students are competent in class and others are not, those who are not competent might drop-out because those of their age will be in higher grades, and they might feel embarrassed by being in same class several years later and also being in the same class with young learners. Student dropout is a concern for various stakeholders in education, including students, institution administrators, the government and society, Burkart (2013:1). A

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country with lot of unskilled and uneducated people will struggle to grow economically, and its people will also struggle to take care of their families which, in turn, is a burden to the government.

There were no previous researchers who focused on specific social networking and its impact on high school learners' performance in rural areas. As the use of social networking is expanding among teens, it is important to find out about how high schools might be coping. Researchers have done some considerable discussion regarding the frequent use of social networking and its impact on education on college and university students.

In this study, literature was reviewed to cover social networking and academic performance, positive and negative effects caused by social networking, time spent on social networking and intervention strategies.

2.2 SNSs AND ITS IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

A study by Riman (2014:1) indicated that the global increase of social media affects our lives educationally as the majority of users range from the age of 14-29, and these are the ages in which most people are still at school. Social media consumes more time of students and if it is used accordingly it might improve their performance.

The process of teaching and learning has always been fertile ground for early adopters of innovation in computing technology, and educational practitioners and theorists are exploring the best way in which social media can be used in communication, learning and teaching (Abdelraheem, 2013:31). Computer animation and simulation can be used to teach science concepts that are abstract and difficult (Nee, 2014:76). It was also indicated that the use of computers assists in improving the students' interest in science and improves the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It is possible only if it is used as an effective and valuable tool.

Research by Mehmood *et al* (2013:122) noted that social networking can be a useful instrument in improving academic performance of undergraduate students. As Wilson (1992:132) has indicated, internet provides a great deal of information for all users,

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and it depends on how people use it to be helpful. This view is supported by Jabr (2011:93) who indicated that internet attracts academic institutions as the basic source of information, an essential medium for academic communication, learning support systems and a challenge to promote online learning. Social networking sites, if used accordingly, can improve the quality of our education as all information can be available within a short time of access.

Recent studies have shown that adolescents are the greatest consumers of the internet, particularly for social interactions (Flad, 2010:15). Through social networking sites, students' show that they need to be part of the whole world, and their views are contained on information displayed and communicated. Social networking sites, as well as email, instant messaging, blogging, and online journals have completely changed the way that adolescents interact and gather information. Many institutions offer free access to the internet through wireless connections, and students spend most of their time in various applications, from email to class assignments, research and mostly communicate through their social network sites Jabr (2011:95). Njoroge (2013:69) indicated that social media played a role in behaviour change of youth. Youth depend on technology for various positive things such as research and contacts with old friends and getting in the loop of what was happening either in their circles, nationally or internationally.

Davies and Cranston (2008:3) noted that social networking sites play an increasingly important role in the lives of many young people and presents them with both opportunities and risks. Young people may encounter risks through social networking because they have roots outside of technology in their personal and social lives. Young people need support to develop the appropriate skills and resilience to navigate online social networking risks and opportunities. The study also shows that they need chances to negotiate and develop shared understandings of safe and reasonable online behaviour patterns.

Student engagement is positively linked to student outcomes, including grades. Burkart (2013:4) indicated that student engagement can be characterised by academic and social engagement. Academic engagement involves attending and participating

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in class, studying, talking to instructors and collaborating with other students, whereas social engagement includes recreation, social events and involvement in student groups. All these activities, if managed accordingly, may produce responsible and independent adults. A study by Nee (2014:77) noted that a social network called *Edmodo,* if used as an educational network, can provide teachers and students a secure place to connect and collaborate, share content and educational applications, and access homework, grades, class discussions and notifications without any other distractions like adverts and irrelevant information, but just merely educational related material. It is indicated that teachers must act as moderators and fully control and monitor the pages created in *Edmodo*.

Quality education produces productive students who lead the prosperity of their respective educational institutions and are subsequently proved as strong contributors to the national well-being. Ahmed and Qazi, (2011:5023) defined performance as the apparent demonstration of understanding, concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person and proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student. Therefore, their academic performance must be managed efficiently, keeping in view all the factors that can positively or negatively affect their educational performance.

Use of technology such as internet is one of the most important factors that can influence educational performance of students positively or adversely even though Ahn (2011:1444) indicated that technology alone cannot cause social outcomes such as well-being or learning. Stollak, Vavdenberg, Burklund and Weiss (2011:860) indicated on their research that social networking sites are not affecting student's grade point average (GPA), but ethnic background and parental education appears to have more influence than the amount of time used on social networking sites. The afore-mentioned researchers eliminate the difference in GPA between students whose parents had differing levels of higher education and maintain that the technical features and infrastructure of an SNS community impacts user behaviour.

Wesseling, (2012:20) indicated that Facebook was created as a social utility and a tool for engagement created to help users share information (receiving/providing information and generating ideas), sharing for educational purposes (for learning,

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problem-solving and sharing work), social purposes (retrieving personal information about others or themselves, chatting, making appointments and generally keeping in touch) and leisure (relaxing and gaming. It is a multifunctional platform.

Ahmed and Qazi, (2011:5023) indicated that student are affected by the internet, and the impact is determined by the way they use it. They are positively affected by the informative use of internet while having a drastic impact of recreational use of internet on them. Internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge-creation and dissemination. A research by Mehmood and Taswir (2013:122) indicated social networks as a significant influence in the academic performance of students. The effects depend on the amount of time spent on it and the types of activities that they are engaged in.

Academic and co-curricular engagements are powerful forces in both student psychosocial development and academic success. Improvement in grades and persistence has been noted across a variety of populations, including minority students, first generation students, and students who are not adequately prepared for academic work with increased engagement (Junco *et al.,* 2010: 2). A study by Young (2006:121) indicated that entertainment-oriented internet usage is negatively related to the academic performance, while learning oriented usage is unrelated to achievement. The results indicate that the content on the internet has no influence on the academic performance of the learners even though they consider it to be an important part of their everyday life.

Al-Tarawneh (2014:200) indicated that there are people who view social networks as a tool supporting activities deemed important for the purpose of educational institutions, instructors and students, whereas others view social network as bad influence on students behaviours and time management. Social networks are related to personality of students where some students are influenced more than others. Online social networking sites focus on building and reflecting social associations among people who share the same interests. Helou, Rahim and Oye (2012:8) indicated that social networking sites are used by teachers and students in the West as a communication tool. Professors and teachers use forums and groups to extend

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classroom activities, and some use Twitter to communicate announcements and information to their students.

A study by Tayseer, Zoghieb, Alcheikh and Awadallah (2014:4) which sought to find out from their survey whether students use social networks for academic purposes or not noted that two thirds of their respondents from a sample of 30 students indicated they do not share information about lectures and homework, and more than half of the respondents do not even look for college-related information through social networks even though 81% indicated that they encourage the idea of having debates and discussions over social sites on educational matters. Most students regard social networking sites as part of socialising than learning.

Adenubi, Afolabi and Opeoluwa (2013:113) researched on online social networking and the academic achievement of University students (the experience of selected Nigerian Universities) and concluded that there was no significant relationship between students' use of SNSs and their academic achievement. There was also no significant relationship between students' use of SNSs and their academic achievement when universities were compared. However, it was noted that a significant relationship in sexual behaviour of the respondents was on the basis of gender. Onyeka, Sajoh and Bulus (2013:45) also found that there was no effect caused by social networking sites on studies of Nigerian students.

Akindehin and Akindehin (2011:75) investigated online social networking of some Nigerian University Undergraduates where the performance of the candidates was a major concern to various stakeholders. The aim was to encourage the use of online social networking as a complement to classroom learning activities in order to enhance academic performance. The results indicated that there is a significant difference in the online social network practices between male and female undergraduates and also among undergraduates at different levels of study. Exposure and competence in online social networking practices were found to be the major factors responsible for the significant differences observed.

Vahlberg (2010:13) noted that teens spend most of their time online commenting on

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friends' pictures on social network, commenting on friends' pages or walls, sending private messages on social networks, getting news about current events and politics, buying things online, sharing content, searching for information about health, diet and fitness information, remixing content, blogging, and using virtual worlds.

Al-Rahmi, and Othman (2012:1) indicated that the advantages of using social media in higher education include improving learning motivation, enhancing relationship, offering personalized course material and developing collaborative abilities. The study shows that social networking activities enhance student contact and improves the level of participation in class. Social media enables learners and teachers to share and publish information as a result of learning activities and invites feedback from peers.

Ferdig (2007:1) also added scaffolding, publishing of artefacts and participation in learning communities as other benefits. Social networking improves communication between people regardless of distances, and it strengthens the ties between people using same type of social networking. SNSs can be useful for academic purposes if those involved have the same ideas in using them. Jabr (2011:100) indicated that social networking appears very helpful in building academic groups to achieve better academic learning and communication through exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge and expanding understanding. As noted by Adenubi *et al* (2013:110), students are free to use or explore all facilities within and outside their school environment to facilitate their learning process, part of which is social networking. A study conducted at UNISA (2012:9) also indicated that mobile learning provides learners with an opportunity to connect formal learning experiences in classrooms with informal learning experiences using handheld devices to search for information, interact with instructors and other students and access course materials anywhere and anytime they want to.

Ayub, et al (2014:238) also indicated that internet is widely used by students in institutions of higher education to seek relevant information and materials to complete their assignments or projects, and most libraries in universities and colleges also subscribe to online journal databases, online books and other academic resources. A study by Junco et al (2010:1) indicated that students have extended and good discussions on Twitter more than in the classroom. They are more comfortable asking

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questions on Twitter than face to face where they are shy. They can also easily express their concerns and are capable of organising study groups.

Nee (2014:73) researched on the effect of educational, networking on students' performance where the purpose was to investigate the impacts of incorporating *Edmodo* as educational network into the classroom. About 140 Biology students were randomly selected from Malaysian secondary schools, and the results indicated that students that were instructed using *Edmodo* performed better than those instructed by the conventional approaches.

Al-Rahmi *et al* (2012:6) indicated, in their study, that social media facilitates the academic experience of students, but there is a need to control and manage time as too much time spent on this can lead to poor academic performance. Helou, Rahim and Oye (2012:13) indicated, in their study on students' perceptions on social networking sites and its influence on academic performance, that most students feel SNSs have more positive impact on academic performance because it can be used in various academic activities such as communicating with the faculty authority, lecturers and supervisors, thus making academic discussions with classmates and chatting with friends in respect to topics of educational interest.

Jain, Verma, Verma and Tiwari (2012:484-485) conducted a survey on the impact of social networking in promoting education. In a sample of 128 students, of which 86 were graduates and 42 were postgraduates, 78% indicated that they download the study material instead of purchasing books; and 97% also indicated that they make their project work, presentations and other required report submission from the internet. Surfing in English improves their communication skills and boosts their confidence in presentations and reports. The positive manner in which the students used SNSs might be a result of maturity as no undergraduates were involved in the study. The results also indicated that the majority of the students are members of social network websites.

Hamat, Embi and Hassan (2013:361) examined the use social networking sites by top performing students and found that they have a social networking account and spend

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most of their time using internet than other students, and their preferred internet activity was emailing, which may be linked to their academic performance. Top performing learners use SNSs responsibly and know how to use their online time better, which may not distract them from activities leading to academic success.

Helou et al. (2012:13) investigated students' perceptions on how social networking sites impact their academic performance. A survey was conducted by distributing 325 questionnaires to selected students from Faculty of Computer Science and Information Systems in Malaysian University of which 320 were completed. Results indicated that most of the students do feel that the social networking has more positive impact on their academic performance. SNSs can be used for various academic activities such as communicating with faculty and university authority, communicating with lectures and supervisors, making academic discussions with classmates and chatting with friends in respect to topics of educational interest.

A study by Mamat, Isa, Aziz, Luaran, Mohamad, Asarani, Ibrahim and Jono (2011:1) on social networking usage in higher education environments showed that most of the respondents agree on free access into social networking during office hours and about 60% respondents using the access not only for entertainment but also for information distribution and communication to support teaching activities. The usage varies from assignment announcements, class rescheduling negotiations, and examinations which use some application such as Facebook, Twitter, instant messenger and blog sites.

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2.3 POSITIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Advances in computer technology have enabled the internet to serve as a platform not merely to seek information but also to exchange ideas and knowledge with other users, and obtain expert opinion via email, teleconferencing, chatting and other avenues (Ayub, Hamid and Nawawi, 2014:233). There are always new innovations introduced in technology. Manjunatha (2013:12) noted that people use internet for facilities like search engines, web pages, e-mails, e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, internet banking, internet telephone, conferencing, multi-media sharing, online newsrooms, gaming, shopping, blogging and social networking.

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Social networks are becoming major tools in education. Harb and Abu-Shanab (2009) (as quoted by Al-Tarawneh, 2014: 200) mentioned the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as an important factor that opened doors for distance learning and remote access for educational material. "E-learning" was introduced whereby ICT is used as a facilitator of communication, assignment management and task collaboration in universities. It has become more important in the teaching and learning environment, and using computers, smart phones and internet has become easier to manage as tools to reach students.

Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010:67) indicated that social networking websites have both positive as well as negative impact on the education of youth. When positively used, there can be an improvement in educational performance and negatively, they can be destructive. A study by Manjunatha (2013:12) noted that the usage of social networking has an effect on interpersonal relationships of college students, particularly with their members of family, friends and teachers. It was also found that communication between college students and their members of the family, between college students and their friends has increased.

Alassiri, Muda, Ghazali and Ahamefula (2014:51-52) indicated that information and communication technologies enhances peoples' access to information by providing faster and easier information-delivery, enabling the technology to link to different groups of people remotely and globally, efficiency and transparency afforded by ICTs improves media service processes, ICTs incorporation into social networking services transformed people's lives, and enabled decentralisation and empowerment in decision-making.

Ali and Lee (2010:1) also noted that many smart phones, digital cameras and small laptop computers support social network services such as posting of messages and images. As indicated by Alassiri *et al* (2014:53), features of social networking sites enable users to view, read provide feedback and edit online content. Vahlberg (2010:9) noted that teens use mobile devices for multimedia messaging services (sms), picture messaging and access internet through phones for downloading

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pictures, software and subscribing to text alerts. Communicating through social networking is expanding as many sites are introduced every time. With social networks, we are able to communicate our thoughts and perceptions over different topics with a larger number of audiences and raise our voice. We have the option to make groups with people who are like-minded, share related news with them and ask for their opinion or input about a topic (Syed, 2012:1). Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter and Espinoza (2008:431) also indicated that emerging adults (people in late twenties and beyond) mostly use internet to connect and reconnect with friends and family members.

Hamat, Embi and Hassan (2013:362) indicated that the use social networking sites effectively depend on their ability to form, or at least, assist in forming social connections between users. They also indicated that considering the principles behind collaborative and social learning, the affordability offered by social networking sites are greatly desirable in an online learning environment. The Australian Psychological Society (2010:8) noted that through social networking sites, someone can be able to speak to more than one person at the same time, and it is possible to speak to more people than by phone. The study also noted that it is easier to locate friends and keep in touch with them through social networking.

Beqiri (2014:213) noted on the study of impact of social media on higher education in Kosovo that there is an increase of social media usage within the students. Furthermore, it was indicated that social media has an impact and is considered as an effective tool by students regarding study-related activities (activities related to subjects, research, group activities, projects, internship, etc) and has a positive influence when it comes to communication and interactivity among them. Without the introduction of social networking sites, it could have been difficult for people to have many friends as it is currently. Friends could be limited to only people who are within a reasonable radius where someone can be able to reach, and it could have been difficult to reach the world within seconds without social networking.

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A study by Mozee (2012: 3) also stated that benefits typically associated with the use of social media include: encouraging greater social interaction via electronic media; providing greater access to information and information sources; encouraging creativity among and between individuals and groups; creating a sense of belonging among users of common social media tools; providing more choices to promote engagement among different individuals and groups; reducing barriers to group interaction and communication such as distance and social/economic status; and increasing the technological competency levels of frequent users of social media.

The following has been noted by Akbiyik (2013:6) as positive or desired effects of the Facebook as a social network vehicle. It helps to:

- maintain reconnections with friends whom connection has been lost;
- maintain communication through shared pictures or videos;
- maintain connections with people whom I cannot see or can rarely see in real life; and
- Know about what friends are doing.

Silas and Adejoke (2013:5) indicated that social network and browsing applications such as wireless are used in educational matters to improve learning and information-delivery services such as lecture notes, examination results, admissions, bursary and several other uses. Furthermore, it makes class management, including attendance and administration, easier and more effective for teachers and school principals to communicate to students and parents. It also helps with time management.
Tuan and Tu (2013:1) noted in their study that Facebook resulted in a significant improvement in students' performance in a Vietnamese university. In the same study, they also concluded that the improvements were due to the adaptation to the social environment of the schools. Junco (2012) noted the positive influence by Facebook in its association with co-curricular activities.

Al-Tarawneh (2014:204) noted that Facebook is a great tool for communication, socialisation, coordination, collaboration and entertainment and can contribute to better performance. Kuppuswamy and Nyarayan (2010:68) also indicate that Facebook provides individuals with a way of maintaining and strengthening social ties

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which can be beneficial in both social and academic settings. When people keep on communicating with each other, the relationship is improved, and it becomes easier to share whatever is in someone's mind, including problems that might be experienced educationally.

Riman (2014:1) also indicated that through social media, students are exposed to new ideas and have a big chance of showing their creativity. They have a better direction of what they want, have ease of reaching to mentors in the same industry and people already working in their dream company, and get a taste of what it is like, which was impossible some years ago.

Dunn (2014:1) indicated that social networking teaches students skills they will need to survive in the business world by being able to create and maintain connections to many people in many industries, which is an integral part of developing a career or building a business. When spending more time working with new technologies, students develop more familiarity with computers and other electronic devices which increase focus on technology in education and business. It was also indicated that the ease with which students can customize their profile makes them more aware of basic aspects of design and layout that are not often taught at schools. The ease and speed with which users can upload pictures, videos, or stories is said to have resulted in a greater amount of sharing of creative works. Being able to get instant feedback from friends and family on their creative outlets helps students refine and develop their artistic abilities and can provide much needed confidence or help them decide what career path they may want to pursue.

Mahat and Mundhe (2014:230) indicated that social networking sites are proving to be an advantage in bringing opinions of people. Youth raise their voice against social acts like violation of human rights, corruption and so on. It is a platform where there is freedom of speech as you can easily express your views without fear and feeling of being intimidated. It is easy to check how people judge your views than personally being confronted about what you might have expressed.

Bexheti, Ismaili and Cico (2012:90) did a study to analyse the use of social media in

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teaching and learning in South East European University and found that social media are already affecting the ways in which teachers find, create, share and learn knowledge, through the media opportunities and in collaboration with each other. Teachers find social media a very useful tool for enhancing teaching and learning.
The Australian Psychological Society (2010:1) indicated that increased social participation provides benefits to people's self-esteem and mental health, suggesting that taking part in online social networking is likely to lead to positive outcomes for some people. Communication improves peoples' thinking abilities, thereby leading to someone's self-confidence.

Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008:14) also noted that teens like to get their health-related information online because of the anonymity of such communication as they feel comfortable asking strangers sensitive questions than they would ask a parent or physician in person. Online boards and discussion groups are always available, and it is easy and faster to get information and advice from more sources.

Riman (2014:1) indicated that social media makes the world a smaller place because there is a lot of information, more knowledge and better opportunities to use it. It is easy to reach any place within a short time. It also improves our ability to absorb information because what seemed overwhelming some years ago is affordable nowadays. It was further mentioned that talent got discovered faster through social media as people share ideas and dreams.

Zafar and Naseer (2014:20-24) indicated that social media helps the government agencies to serve citizens in health care and education. It helps the government in checking public opinion, changing and implementation of policy, knowing of public concern and monitoring of the situation. They improve service delivery through interaction with citizen by considering their views on most of the aspects.

2.4 NEGATIVE EFFECTS CAUSED BY SOCIAL NETWORKING

As indicated in the study by the Australian Psychological Society (2010:1) social networking sites led to a different way of communication with others as the concern now can be the reduced face to face interactions and the loss of social skills which

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have emerged. Today's generation prefers online communication which they regard as better than olden days. It was also noted in the study that social networking is addictive and wastes time as many people spend much time accessing it; people you do not want to see your information may gain access to it and use it against you.

Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:14) noted that electronic media may enhance peer relations as they are always communicating together, but evidence shows that there is a concern as parent-child relations seems to be deteriorating because when they come home from work, little or no attention is paid to children. Children are also not monitored on how they are using electronic devices. Adolescents use social media in large numbers. For example, a national survey in 2009 found that 73% of online teenagers use social networking, which is an increase from 55% 3 years earlier (Jones & Fox, 2009:1). That youths are connected to these global online communities is both a frightening prospect for parents and educators and an intriguing area of social science research. For example, educators and parents in the United States face difficult quandaries concerning students and social networking. Many scholars suggest that students learn in new ways using social media and that educators should embrace these new platforms (Ito, Baumer, Bittanti, Boyd, Cody and Herr-Stephenson., 2009:1). Nevertheless, most school districts block access to social networking, while parents remain fearful about safety and effects on their children's social development (Ahn, 2011:1435).

The research by Raju et al. (2014:291) indicated that the easy accessibility and availability of online social networking result in young adults developing the excessive use of networks, which may lead to dependency and addiction on the sites. Dependency on online social networking sites has become a major problem among youth populations. They spend most of their time communicating through social networking. When you keep on visiting the sites, it becomes addictive, and your mind is always focused on activities taking place in it, which makes other things fall behind.

McCann (2014:1) indicated, on the study of the negative impact of social media on teens, that nowadays, teens are always connected. Social media has allowed them to take their life online if they are not with those they need to talk to physically. There is

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no waiting for the following day because of the gadgets like smartphones, which allow them to be on the internet where they can spend most of their time with those who matter the most in their lives. Sometimes, even parents occupy a back seat if they are not strict in allowing their children to focus on what they want. Teens are said to be more comfortable online doing things that they should be more sensitive to do. They feel safe behind their computer screen or phones, so they will post nude or semi-nude pictures. It is also indicated in the study that many teens have an identity problem because they are living a double life. Parents or church members might know these kids to be responsible or well-behaved, but on social media, they tweet and post things which contradict how people know them.

Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:7) also noted that technologies form barriers against all face to face communication. It was indicated that youth use instant messaging to substitute face to face talk with friends from their physical lives. It was also noted that they use instant messaging to talk to members of the opposite sex. Syed (2012:1) indicated that the extreme use of social media has reduced the level of human interaction. Interaction with other people has become effortless, and people have isolated their lives behind their own identity. Face to face communication and meetings have been reduced.

Social networking sites, as well as other new forms of communication technology, are also a concern to many school professionals because of the level of distraction they create within the school (Subrahmanyam et al, 2008:2). Even though many schools have created many strict rules that forbid the use of handheld technology during school hours or block certain social networking websites, many adolescents are still able to connect during school hours as they please (Subrahmanyam et al, 2008:1-2). This has caused distractions during instruction time, and has had a negative impact on the learning environment (Flad, 2010: 24). Onyeka, et al. (2013:45) noted that students use SNSs even in the lecture hall while lectures are going on and also while studying. Students must learn to use SNSs accordingly so that they can also devote their time for studying.

Ijeoma and Burke (2013:48) noted that most of the learners who use social networking

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sites during formal class are unable to concentrate academically. US congress has also proposed legislation to ban youth from accessing social network websites in schools and libraries (Boyd & Ellison, 2013:151). Because of the use of social networking sites at schools, school authorities are faced with lack of determination and inquiries encompassing security issues, legitimate administration, and digital security when they open their routes to long range informal communication locals. If developed countries are experiencing some problems with the use of social networking by learners, there is a need to check the impact on our learners.

On the other hand, Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:5) indicated that privacy controls on networking sites lead to adolescents restricting their parents' access to their pictures, profiles, and writings or they can limit the areas of their profile that their parents can view and as such, they cannot monitor and control their access to the network sites. According to Mayayise (2008:70), the internet is a dangerous tool because of its ability to provide information that is not regulated that can therefore cause self-harm to individuals. The information in it can be damaging if learners use it without boundaries. Ranjha (2010:9) also indicated that users of social media are connected to each other regardless of national boundaries, culture or religion. They risk viewing unsafe content unintentionally.

Helou et al. (2012:13) indicated in their study on students' perceptions on social networking sites and its influence on academic performance that most of the younger students are engaged in the use of social networking sites mainly for socializing rather for academic purposes. Many people lack knowledge and skills of using social networking sites as they might have joined through friends without properly being taught or through trial and error where everything is learnt by chance.

Riman (2014:1) indicated that the ability to retain information has decreased, and the willingness to spend more time researching and looking up good information has reduced due to the fact that people became used to the ease of access to information on social media. The study also noted that attention to pronunciation and grammar has declined drastically due to the fact that most of the communication that happens online is improper. Social networking users use grammar incorrectly because of their

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slang words. Dunn (2014:1) also indicated that the popularity and speed at which information is published in social media has created a lax attitude towards proper spelling, and grammar and reduces a student's ability to effectively write without relying on a computer's spell check feature. A study by UNISA (2012:3) also indicated that the youths of today find calculations and spelling very challenging because of their dependence on the internet.

Almansa, Fonseca and Castillo (2012:129) also noted that teenagers communicate using new codes of writing that ignore grammar and spelling rules. They indicated that the new way of writing emerges in the form of text, images created from the keyboard in which the letters become part of the image that means something entirely different from the linguistic meaning. They further indicated that teenagers can easily regard strangers as friends as long as they are good looking people and are free to share true data about their private lives.

Al-Rahmi et al. (2012:2) indicated that challenges connected with using social media in higher education include studying originality and copyright issues and teachers not being up to date and not understanding how to integrate and take advantage of social software into classes. Teachers do not belong to the new generation, and as such, there are those who might not be actively using social networks. If teachers are not knowledgeable on how to use social networking, it cannot be easy for them to help students. They might also have negative attitudes based on lack of skills and some information they might hear about it.

Elhuda and Dimetry (2014:41) researched on the impact of Facebook and other social network usage on academic performance and social life among medical students at Khartoum University and found that the prevalence of using social networking sites is high and continues to increase. The main social networking used is Facebook. Two thirds of users use mobile phones and tablets, and most of them are female. The study also noted that the prevalence of negative effect of using the SNSs on academic performance is high (7 out of 10 users). It was also indicated that if much time and energy is spent on Facebook, it may lead to Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD).

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Rouis, Limayem and Salehi-Sangari (2011:962) indicated in their study that extensive use of Facebook by students with extroverted personalities leads to poor academic performance, but self-control and performance goal orientations characterize students who are more in control of their social activity and limits the negative effect on their academic performance. Students must know the consequences of their extensive usage of Facebook and manage their social activities in a better way.

Akbiyik (2013:7) also indicated the following as negative effects of Facebook:

- Facebook helps to maintain connections with old friends, but once reconnected, in some cases where life styles were differentiated, the same old closeness cannot be felt;
- You cannot wish relatives to be Facebook friends and access your activities on Facebook;
- Relations in virtual environments cannot be trusted;
- You can get friendship request from people with whom you do not want as friends in real life; and
- Political identity expressed in Facebook may be disliked and cause problems.

Nee (2014:75) also indicated that even though Facebook is good for collaborative, online education with students, it is not right to merge their personal, private family world with something required for a class activity. Most of the things posted on it can be accessible or viewed by others, which can also be used for non-scholastic purposes. If the focus is on using it for school-related issues it is good not to use it for socialization as it might be disturbing to view non educational matters in class.

Almansa et al. (2012:127) analyzed how Facebook is used by young people and found that the number of underage users of the network is growing, without any restrains from parents or school. Facebook restricts teens below the age of 13, but they falsify the information in order to use it.

Okeeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011:2) indicated cyberbullying and online harassment, sex and Facebook depression as some of the negative effects of social networking. It was also indicated that students should be helped as they may use unreliable resources, inaccurately and interpret it as correct, and they can be overwhelmed by

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the information they read. Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:9) indicated that cyberbullying is more likely to be reported by youth with symptoms of depression as it indicates poor parent-child relationships, substance abuse and delinquency. Heavy users of internet are said to be at risk of cyberbullying.

A study by The Australian Psychological Society (2010:4) indicated that most of their respondents, in the research of the social and psychological impact of online social networking, experience unwanted or unknown contacts in their social networking sites or people posting inappropriate, upsetting information, abusive messages and harassment from someone of the opposite sex.

Silas et al. (2013:5) indicated that social network and browsing has negative effects on students' performance at secondary schools which includes use of valuable study time in socializing on social networks. Additionally, some students may be on social networks until early hours of the morning although they are supposed to get enough sleep, hence the inability to stay alert and awake in class due to being tired. Another negative effect on studies is the use of abbreviations and slangs in text messaging and chats on mobile phones, which could hamper good sentence construction and spelling in students' academic work.
Mahat et al. (2014:225) indicated that previously, people keep their data, private but nowadays, they like going public and viewing wall posts, status updates, tweets and every source of excitement of their lives which violates their privacy and liberty at the negotiation of publicising intimate details so as to attract hundreds of online readers and even strangers. The study also indicated that social networking sites creates platform for many cybercrimes. Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:13) indicated that girls who had high levels of conflict with their parents, boys with low levels of communication, those feeling lonely or socially anxious are likely to form close relationship with strangers. People cannot expect online friends to be as honest as they are. Other people do not have problems in giving incorrect information about themselves or whatever may be discussed in order to achieve their goals.

Bexheti et al. (2012:94) noted that teachers are also concerned about the use of social media, and more than 70% cited lack of integrity of student submissions whereas over

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60% report privacy concerns as an important barrier. Some students may rely on the internet for any assignment or project that they are given, and may just download or rewrite topics directly from the internet. It will lead to a huge gap between examination scores written in class and assignments and projects score which have been written at home. If they write on their own, the scores might not be so different.

There is often controversy as to whether or not adolescents should be able to freely use the Internet for communicating with others (Flad, 2010:16). Social networking sites have also been at the centre of concern for many parents because of safety concerns and/or risks (Tynes, 2007:1). Other parents just simply do not want their children staring at the computer too long. The risks and dangers of teen Internet usage are constantly flooding television shows, newscasts, and magazines, always warning parents to educate parents on teen Internet behaviours (Flad, 2010:16).

Okeeffe et al. (2011:3) also indicated that there are pre-adolescents and parents who falsify age in order for them to be part of some social networking sites. Bridging of safety rules will make them access inappropriate information which might be harmful. Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:20) indicated that most girls pretend to be older for self-exploration (to observe the others reaction), social compensation (to make up for shyness), and social facilitation (to form relationships).

Okeeffe et al. (2011:3) further indicated that the biggest threats to young people on social media sites are to their digital footprint (collective, ongoing record of one's web activities) and future reputation. They post inappropriate messages, pictures and videos without understanding that what goes online stays online, and future jobs and college acceptance may be put into jeopardy by inexperience. Young people need to be educated on social network usage as they may lack knowledge of the consequences of using it.

Dunn (2014:1) indicated that the degree to which private information is available online and the anonymity the internet seems to provide has made students forget the need to filter the information they post. It is indicated that many potential employers investigate an applicant's social networking profiles before granting acceptance or

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interviews. Most students do not evaluate the content they are publishing online, which can bring about negative consequences months or years to follow.

Williams (2009:65) also indicated that due to the contemporary nature of online social networking, people often lack ethical consideration of what behaviours should be displayed on the internet. It was indicated that high school and college age students are tagged in pictures that portray behaviours they seek to hide from parents, church leaders, teachers or coaches. The internet contains lots of photos and footage showing underage drinking, provocative clothing and behaviours or illegal activities.

Williams (2009:65) further indicated that internet users do not censor their written conversations when communicating through online media such as email, chat rooms, or social networking websites. The internet provides an environment that is far less disciplined than the actual world and allows for the use of anonymity and modified or entirely different identities. A person can assume a different identity. Guan and Subrahmanyam (2009:352) indicated that online risks facing young people include exposure to sexual explicit material, and this is related to greater sexual uncertainty. In addition, networks promote more positive attitudes towards uncommitted sexual exploration among youth and online victimization, which is a threatening or offensive behaviour sent online to the youth or posted online about the youth for others to see.

Flannery (2011:1) noted that high exposure to social media has an impact on behaviour and mental health of a student, and it leads to lower academic achievement, lower attachment to school, shorter attention spans, and such students are among those who report internet harassment victimisation and unwanted sexual encounters. It is also indicated that visiting hate and satanic sites are associated with significantly elevated odds of violent behaviour perpetration. Exposure to violence activates brain regions that regulate emotion, arousal and attention. It was further indicated that there are students who can be electronic aggressive (any type of harassment and bullying that occurs through e-mail, chat room, instant messaging, website or text messaging), and they make rude or nasty comments, spread rumours, threaten or make aggressive comments, and it was noted that girls are more affected than boys.

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The research by Raju, Valsaraj, and Noronha (2014:289) on social networking among professional students was conducted to assess the correlation of online social network usage and quality of interpersonal relationship among 350 third year students of four different professional colleges of Manipal University. The study found that a weak negative correlation exists between online social network usage and perceived quality of interpersonal relationships. Baliya, Kumar and Lata (2014:74) also found no significant relationship between scores of attitude towards social networking usage and scores of academic performance of low, middle and high achiever post graduate students.

2.5 TIME SPENT ON SNSs AND ITS EFFECT ON PERFORMANCE

The time that learners spend on social networking depends on different activities that they engage in. Some learners can spend most of their time on issues related to school activities whereas to some, it is for fun. The time spent on the internet by some higher education students online might be of concern because some students may have difficulties in controlling the way they use it which can lead to addiction (Ayub, et al, 2014:233).

Ayub et al. (2014:232) did a research on the use of the internet for academic purposes among students in Malaysian institutions of higher education. 1675 students were randomly selected from five different fields of study: social sciences, sciences, engineering, agriculture and computer sciences. On average, participants accessed the internet 4.48 hours per day. Internet use for academic purposes in social sciences, agriculture and computer sciences scored the highest time. The total time on the internet was found to be weakly correlated with the time spent online for academic purposes. For social science students, a low but significant positive correlation existed between the overall time spent online and the time spent on the internet for academic research.

Mahat et al. (2014:225) indicated that maximum of the time social networking sites is used to communicate with people who are already their friends or connections in the social network sharing same mind set or same interests and views, discussions on debatable topics and news articles are the most common topics on social networking

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sites. Akbiyik (2013:4) also noted while researching on the effects of social networks on social life of undergraduate students that some students spend too much time on social networks because they cannot find anything better to do. The study indicated that some students could have used social networks less if they had more opportunities of spending their spare time on sports, arts or other social events. To other students, social networking can be used because of boredom.

Flannery (2011:1) indicated, on the study of social media and its effects on youth, that middle schoolers use more media than any other age group (8hours, 40 minutes per day). Their time on media suggest that it plays a role in their everyday activities and they cannot get rid of it, but need to learn to use it in a way in which they can benefit. Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh (2013:94) noted, in their study of the influence of social media on the academic performance by undergraduate students, that the majority of students are affected negatively on their academic performance because of their exposure to social media. Instead of studying, they spend most of their time chatting and making friends through social media. If the time to study is reduced, there is no way that learners can perform well academically. Almansa et al. (2012:30) also indicated that teenagers spend more time working on pictures of themselves to post on the social network than anything else.

Research done by Egedegbe (2014:6) indicated that despite spending time on the use of internet or social networking, learners are still efficient enough for their studies and do not face any difficulty in meeting their studies requirements. Learners use social networking for research and career activities to upgrade their academic goals. Some learners are able to use social networking sites correctly because they are able to manage their time professionally.

Silas et al. (2013:7) examined activities done on social network and browsing by senior secondary school learners and its effects on their academic performance and found out that time spent on social network cannot lower grades because learners, over the years, have improved on their time management strategies. Students who are responsible are careful in activities that they engage themselves in.

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Kalra and Manani (2013:405) noted that students are managing their time effectively and the use of social networking sites does not harm their academic performance. Students do not face any deficiency in meeting their studies requirements. There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of users and non-users of social networking. Those on social networking, use it purposefully and as such it is not destructive. Young (2006:120) noted when examining the condition of internet usage as well as its effects on teenagers academic performance of high school learners that teenagers consider internet as an important part of their everyday life. They spend more time on internet on weekends than during the weekdays. They are monitored and advised on how to use it effectively. Those with higher average academic grades spend more time on internet than others. Teenagers use internet for both learning and entertainment purposes.

Abdelraheem (2013:36) noted in the investigation of the usage of social networking sites by a sample of university students that those who use social networking sites for social purposes are more than those using for academic purposes, and more than 50% spend two hours or more in social networking sites per day. If an increase in academic performance is needed, there must be a balance in time spent in social purposes and academic issues. Student must reduce their time on social activities and concentrate on academic issues.

Al-Tarawneh (2014:204) noted that other social networking sites like Facebook have bad influence such as addiction and wasting time, which results in poor performance of learners academically. Many learners spend most of their time on it without focusing on education issues. Spending more time on Facebook without using it educationally can never boost academic achievement. If learners are knowledgeable at first about the effects caused by the social networking sites, they can be careful when using them.

Junco (2012:1) also noted that the negative performance of students in the study that involved 3866 US students was related to the time spent on using Facebook. Students who spent more time on Facebook doing things which are not related to school activities perform poorly academically. Similar findings were observed by Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007:1) who noted that students spend much time on

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participating in social networking activities and blame it for their decrease in grade point averages because only few students are aware of the academic and professional networking opportunities the sites offer.

Glass et al (2013:125) noted in their research on the influence of personality use of student academic performance that 80% of them spend 1 to 3 hours on Facebook a day. Their results indicate that time spent on Facebook negatively affects their academic performance. Elhuda et al. (2014:41) also indicated that Facebook usage in universities, schools and companies must be monitored and use of the site be limited for fear that some cannot perform other tasks if they have access to the site. More time on Facebook replaces study time. As the number of students using Facebook is increasing each year, many learners might not perform well academically. An intervention strategy is required to help students use the networking site effectively as social networking usage is increasing each and every day. Sites used well can benefit the users.

Mia et al. (2012:6) conducted a research on effects social networking in adolescent education. The aim of the research was to investigate how high school students in Rapides Parish, Louisiana in the 6th – 12th grades are using social networks for school or education based. 569 surveys were collected. The study measured the usage, time spent on SNSs, specific websites that are being assessed, and tried to find out if these are helping or hurting the students' academic progress. The results indicated that about 42% of the total responders use social networking 7 days a week, and about 70, 3% use it for four hours or less; 51% said they do not use social websites for classwork, and 67% felt that the time that they spend on SNSs has no impact on their performance. Larry (2011:1) indicated that teenagers who, most of the time, use internet and video games will have more stomach aches, sleeping problems, anxiety and depression.

Tayseer et al. (2014:3) noted in their survey aiming to find out if there was correlation between the respondents' academic performance and their use of social networking that students with high academic performance spend more time on social networks while students with low academic performance spend less time. This might be due to

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good time management. Interviewed students also indicated that after studying, they break the routine exploring social sites to relieve stress. Students with low academic performance could not manage their time effectively and spent less time on social sites. The time spent on social networking might also be related to socializing than academic issues.

2.6 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Many researchers have indicated that the use of social networking sites still has some negative effects on students' academic performance. It is of importance thereof to look at the ways in which social networking sites can be of benefit to all those who use them in order to improve the academic performance as technological innovation cannot be stopped.

The use of social networking sites is growing tremendously, but very little has been done to stop the harm and problems caused by the networks. Glass et al. (2013:125) suggested that research needs to be conducted to determine activities that engage students in order to help students do activities which can improve their academic performance. Elhuda et al. (2014:41) indicated that there must be education about the negative effect of prolonged usage of social networks, how to use social networks correctly and promotion of using social networks for academic purposes and scientific research. Social networking sites must be utilized in a positive way in order to get the best out of them.

Tayseer et al. (2014:5), in their study of academic and social impact on college students, recommended that instructors must encourage students to use social sites academically in online discussion on assignments. Instructors should persuade students to communicate with them using social sites if they are too shy to ask and get involved in the class. They further indicated that it is good to create an online social group for older students to share experiences. They propose that students can associate their social accounts on social sites with Blackboard and can know more about their assignments. Students must use social sites to break the routine of studying and as stress relievers.

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Akindehin and Akindehin (2011:74) indicated that there should be a way of bringing the internet into the classroom since the youths today readily understand and operate electronic devices. Furthermore, it was indicated that online social networking, as a complement to the classroom, could be used to preserve the cherished African tradition of expressing views and fostering the family. If monitored properly, SNSs can enrich classroom learning environments and consequently enhance academic performance. Counselors would provide helping relationships to monitor online social networking practices for enriching classroom instructional events.

Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:18) indicated that monitoring is best done by using internet software that monitors, filters, and blocks access to different kinds of content. Students are supposed to be punished for downloading offensive material or using techniques to get around the filter or block to complete their tasks. Monitoring without using any specified tool cannot be productive because students, if alone, can access the internet and claim they did not do it, whereas they might have deleted the content. They can only be faithful if observers or monitors are there.

Mahat et al. (2014:230) recommended that a focus must be on ethical use of the social networking sites so that it serves the society in a right way. If used with respect and in a dignified way, all users can enjoy being part of it. Others shy from using it because of the bad behaviour of others. They also suggested that because parents might be IT literate and use technology suitably well, they may feel capable with the online sites that their children are using, therefore, they are better able to relate to their youngsters online. However, illiterate parents cannot participate as they know nothing about the networks, but can only manage to speak telephonically to their youngsters.

Ijeoma et al. (2013:49) researched on the effects of social media on postgraduate students during academic lectures and library session, and their findings indicated a negative impact on students' academic progress. They suggested that University social media polices must be mandatory for every institution and be continuously implemented. They also indicated that software developers should create software that could be used to control social media usage on campus so that students may not lose their primary aim of being in the University. If higher institutions regulate social

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networking usage, it will be easier for students to use social networking in a positive way.

Abdelraheem (2013:37) indicated that there is a need to look carefully at the student practices in social networking sites and the types that could be used to enhance learning as well as matching the sites with suitable courses and relevant applications. Young (2006:121) also indicated that as students depend a lot on the internet, it is critical to develop educational contents that can stimulate their interests. It is important for parents to know more about the social networking sites and what they offer so that they may help students or channel them to choose educational sites with less or no destructive information.

Miah et al. (2012:8) suggested that school administrations should create technology policies that prohibit students from using social network sites at school or block websites so that learners may focus on their school work while at school. Attention should also be paid to ethical or unethical behaviours and how to protect security and privacy information. They must know how to use SNSs effectively for their benefit. It was also indicated that Technology teachers must give information sessions to students to help with proper use and monitor the use of social networking sites. Monitoring will reduce findings based on self-research measures which cannot be relied on, but it will also be a problem when it comes to privacy.

Raju et al. (2014:291) also suggested that training programs can be conducted for the students regarding online safety issues and for the problems arising due to dependency on online social network sites. It was also recommended that parents must be made more vigilant about the dangers of excess online social network usage patterns in the youth. Okeeffe et al. (2011:800) suggested that parents should be encouraged to ask about their children and adolescents' online searches which can facilitate not only discovery of the information but discussion of certain topics. Student-parent relationships play a role in achieving good results. If a student is closely related to the parent, it can be easier for that child to discuss the information that she/he encounters while online.

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Adenubi et al. (2013:113) suggested that school administrators need not only be aware of what sites students are participating in, but also the significant role that the sites have on the academic achievement because sites can distract students from studying, whereas others can benefit them educationally. Administrators should also build upon the positive attributes that the sites have such as the ability for students to join student groups or meet others from school. It was also suggested that school counselors should communicate with parents about their children and internet use in the homes. They should also hold meetings to educate parents on the issues that occur online such as cyber-bullying and how to monitor their children's internet usage. Parents also need to be aware that there are times when their child's social networking participation is interfering with homework and studying.

Helou et al. (2012:14) also recommended that there is a need for policy makers to evolve strategies to guide and ensure that social networking sites are adopted mostly for academic purposes, especially among the undergraduate students. Furthermore, it was suggested that lectures and faculty managers should engage students mostly through social media just like classroom discussion groups available in SNSs. It was further suggested that faculties should explore available applications on SNSs that are meant for academic purposes and encourage students to use them.

Asemah et al. (2013:94) recommended that students should reduce their exposure to social media and pay more attention to their studies. Students who are willing to record huge academic success should guide themselves against the use of social media. It was further suggested that government, schools and other individuals should encourage hard work by rewarding successful students through scholarship schemes and other incentives. Government should consider the possibility of evolving a policy on teenagers' exposure to social media.

Williams (2012:67) suggested that students must not be reprimanded for their photo or video postings and their speech as things posted on the internet can be used by others. They need to be reminded that things online remain online and can be used in future against them.

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Jabr (2011:100) indicated the importance of social networking efforts to support students through the introduction of wireless connections, fully supported labs, continued training programs, formally (through classes) and informally (through student committees and activities). Social networking sites cannot be avoided and students must develop skills on how to use them accordingly to better their academic communication and learning. Trained students can gain a better understanding of the goals, purposes and benefits behind the new communication tools. Academic staff need to be encouraged in using social networking sites for academic purposes as that will also encourage students to use them for academic related matters. It will help students to focus their efforts to learning and problem solving skills through the internet than wasting time on unproductive applications.

Okeeffe et al (2011:4) recommended that paediatricians must educate families about both the complexities of the digital world and the challenging social and health issues that online youth experience by encouraging families to face the core issues of bullying, popularity and status, depression and social anxiety, risk taking and sexual development. Parents need to be helped to understand that what happens online is an extension of these underlying issues, and they can come up with strategies for dealing with them whether they take place online or offline.

The following points have been suggested as ways in which paediatricians can assist parents:

- Advise parents to talk to their children and adolescents about their online use and the specific issues that today's online kids face;
- Advise parents to work on their own participation gap in their homes by becoming better educated about the various technologies their youngsters are using;
- Discuss with families the need for a family online-use plan that involves regular family meetings to discuss online topics and checks of privacy settings and online profiles for inappropriate posts. The emphasis should be on citizenship and healthy behaviour and not punitive action, unless truly warranted; and
- Discuss with parents the importance of supervising the online activities via active participation and communication, as opposed to remote monitoring with software used to monitor the internet in the absence of parents.

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It was also suggested that paediatricians must increase their knowledge of digital technology so that they can have more of a frame of reference for tools their patients and families are using, which will aid in providing timely anticipatory media guidance, as well as diagnosing media related issues.

The Australian Psychological Society (2010:7) recommended the following tips for positive online social networking:

- If you move to a different area or have less time to meet with friends in person, consider communicating with them online to maintain friendship;
- Talk to your friends or family about how to use social networking sites and read up on the options you have to make your personal information secure;
- Communicate with people who have similar interests, organize social events and share information that you are comfortable with having on the internet;
- If you are experiencing negative interactions with someone online, stop communicating with them and consider blocking them from access to your file;
- If you feel that you are being bullied by someone, think about how you can prevent the person from having access to your profile and talk to someone about what is happening;
- Think carefully before posting other peoples personal information, including posting pictures or making comments about them on your sites;
- It is easy to make comments that can be hurtful or offensive about others. Think carefully about what you post;
- If you think you are using online networking sites too often, think about restricting yourself to a certain amount of time per day or week;
- Screen people who request to be your friend;
- Never share personal information like your mobile phone number or address;
- Remember that information you post online stays online permanently;
- Do not post anything online that you would normally disclose to a close friend.
- Post information in those sections that you are comfortable sharing with strangers; and
- If you want to meet up with someone that you have only communicated with online, ensure you meet in public space, tell someone where you are going and

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- if possible take a friend with you.

Flannery (2012:29) noted that computer monitoring software is not significant therefore, we must know the computer, educate youth about use and victimisation, work directly with schools and know their policies about social media, electronic aggression, and utilize social media for prevention and intervention.

Njoroge (2013:69) found that it was evident that social media played a major role on behavior change of youth and suggested that the following must be done to use social networking effectively:

- The youths need to be trained on better usage of the social media so as to minimize time wastage on chatting and other irrelevant engagements that are not of major importance on their lives;
- All the stakeholders, especially Communication Commission and network providers, need to come up with means of filtering information that reaches the young people through social media platforms as it can minimize exposing them to pornographic and unwanted materials;
- Parents and security agencies should monitor the activities of young people on social media in order to protect them from sex pests and paedophiles;
- To avoid having a generation that does not have face to face communication skills, all the stakeholders should consider organizing social events that the youth will use to interact and mingle with each other physically; and
- To communicate effectively to young people, schools and government agencies should adopt social media as one of their means of communication.

Attia, Aziz and Friedman, (2012:102) suggested that policy-makers must first focus on the context within which social networks are employed. It was also indicated that policy-makers should be mindful of the country's national cultural identity when anticipating its citizens' use of social networks.

UNISA (2012:14) suggested the ideas below for the use cell phones in a responsible way.

Learners should:

- put the cell phones away when engaging in personal conversation;

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- adhere to airtime budget; and
- switch off their cell phones while sleeping;

Parents should:

- stay in touch and know their children's whereabouts;
- understand the technology that their children are using Learners should
- make children understand the importance of face to face communication; and
- Set guidelines for cell phone usage.

Teachers should:

- encourage and support internet use via cell phones for the purpose researching school projects;
- continue exploring and implement the use of mobile technologies such as tutoring, games, quizzes, peer support and advice, literacy development (e-books) and think beyond a computer lab;
- incorporate more active learning styles, such as group exercises, class discussions and other exercises that allow students to interact with course material; and
- Mix digital with non-digital education tools.

2.7 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

Social networking has become part of our life. It is important to know how to use it to our best benefit as we cannot avoid using it. There are also many issues concerning high school students and social networking site participation. Effective and efficient ways of communicating through social networking sites must be created. There may be benefits for students who use these sites properly and appropriately, but others are still failed by it.

Research suggests that there are clear risks involved when adolescents become too consumed with the Internet and social networking sites. For the purpose of this research project, the researcher examined the usage of these sites by learners, time spent on using them and how it affected their academic studies. At the conclusion of

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the research project, clarity was sought on whether high school students were able to balance the use of social networking and their academic load.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 previous studies which dealt with the topic has been explored and in this section, the research design and methodology which helped to determine the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance in rural areas is discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005:52) defined research design as the plan according to which research participants (subjects) are obtained and collect information from them. In this study, a survey design included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh (2013:92) defines a survey as the study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning, which enables a researcher to make generalisation concerning the population study. The research design involved selection of appropriate research approaches, research methods, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis procedures in establishing the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance.

3.2.1 Quantitative research

Welman, et al, (2005:8) indicated that the purpose of quantitative research is to evaluate objective data consisting of numbers. Flexibility is limited, to prevent any form of bias in presenting the results. It keeps the research process as stable as possible by focusing on the casual aspects of behaviour and the collection of the facts that won't change easily. It controls the investigation and structures of the research situation in order to identify and isolate variables. Specific measurement instruments are used to collect data. It focuses more on reliability that is consistent and stable measurement of data. The researcher used a quantitative approach because of a larger sample used in responding to a questionnaire and statistics used in analysis of the results.

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3.2.2 Qualitative research

Baxter and Jack (2008:544) defined qualitative research as an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. It deals with subjective data that are produced by the minds of respondents or interviewees. Welman, et al, (2005:8) indicated that qualitative research is presented in language instead of numbers. It is based on flexible and explorative methods because it enables the researcher to change the data progressively so that a deeper understanding of what is being investigated can be achieved. It investigates only the constraints of day to day events and based their results on the daily events and behaviour of people.

It is a type of research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, describes, ask broad or general questions, collecting data consisting largely of words from participants, describes and analyses these words for themes, conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2005:39). It tries to achieve an insider's view by talking to subject or observing their behaviour in a subjective way and they believe that firsthand experience of the object under investigation produces the best data. The researcher used a qualitative approach in order to analyse the data collected through focus group interview. A lot of data was collected. Themes and sub-themes were created in order to get to the depth of the impact caused by social networking on learners' performance.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Population

Welman *et al*, (2005:52) defined population as the study objects and consists of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. In this study the population comprised of 253 Grade 10 learners from Ligege secondary school in Dzindi Circuit which is located in Vhembe District.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedure

Frey, Lawrence, Botan, & Kreps (2000:125) define a sample as a subgroup of a population. It is a part of a larger population and its purpose is to estimate an unknown

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characteristic of the population. Purposive sampling was used as the researcher has considered participants who were involved in social networking. Welman et al, (2005:69) describe purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling in which the researcher relies on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population. The sample of 100 learners was used considering the size of the population. Only learners who have cell phones were asked to take part in the study. The first hundred learners who volunteered to take part in the study were considered.

3.3.3 Data collection procedure

Sarantakos (1998:313) indicate that preparing for the first stages of research materialises during the data collection stage which produces relevant information. A letter of introduction from the Department of Basic Education was availed to seek permission from the principal at the school in order to conduct this study. An appointment was made to visit the school to administer questionnaires and interviewing the participants. The data collection instruments are discussed below.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to assess the impact of SNS usage amongst learners at Ligege Secondary School. A questionnaire is a most widely used technique for obtaining information from the subjects because it is relatively economical, has the same questions for all subjects and can ensure anonymity (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2001:257). The level of language was considered when compiling a questionnaire in order for the participants to understand, read and write the required information. Where they experienced problems, the researcher was there to assist them.

Focus group interviews

Morgan (quoted in Strydom, Fouche & Deiport, and 2005:300) describes a focus group as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. Focus group interviews are aimed at maximising the potential of the study by allowing the discussion to go beyond the originally planned

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themes and topics and by encouraging the respondents to discuss as many issues of the themes as possible (Sarantakos 1998:253).

Welman, *et al* (2005:201) indicated that focus group interviews consist of a small number of individuals or interviewees that are drawn together for the purpose of expressing their opinions on a specific set of open questions. The aim of using such group interviews is not to replace individual interviewing, but to gather information that can perhaps not be collected easily by means of individual interviews. 10 respondents from the 100 learners sampled for answering a questionnaire took part in a focus group interview. The researcher communicates directly with the respondents and is easy to clarify some aspects of the questions put to the respondents.

Focus group enabled the respondents in groups to discuss their opinions and experiences in such a way that a consensus of opinions regarding research problems can be reached. An interview schedule was developed for focus group in order to collect data about the issue which might need explanation. The interview will be recorded with a voice recorder for analysing.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Neuman (1997:46) defined analysis of data as a research patterns in data recurrent behaviours or body of knowledge. The researcher studied the data and identified trends, patterns and relationships relevant to the research question. The use of the two methods helped to overcome the biasness which might have been caused by a single method.

Analysing quantitative data.

Quantitative data analysis involved a statistical analysis of the obtained data. The data from the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS Statistics version 22.

Analysing qualitative data.

According to Welman, et al, (2005:241) qualitative data analysis involves analysing interviews and doing content analysis and an analysis of an interview is done by identifying important themes in the interview, coding the data, and then creating

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frequency distributions for the themes. Data can be displayed in matrix displays or network displays. To analyse the information the researcher listened the voice recorder and write down the information explained by the participants. The content was divided into themes and sub-themes in relation to the research questions.

3.5 VALIDITY

According to Mcmillan and Schumacher (2001:408), validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world. Participant observation and in-depth interviews, for instance, are conducted in natural settings to reflect the reality of life experience more accurately than do contrived or laboratory settings (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2001:408). The validity of the instruments was established using both construct and content validity tests. Construct validity was established through the help of experienced lecturers and educators who scrutinised my research tools and made recommendations in the relevancy of the tools to my study objectives. Natural settings such as the participating school was used as a place where the study was conducted.

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3.6 RELIABILITY

Welman, et al, (2005:145) indicated that reliability is concerned with the findings of the research and relates to the credibility of the findings. The requirements of generalisation relate to the reliability of the scores obtained. Reliability refers to the extent to which the obtained scores may be generalised to different measuring occasions, measurement/tests forms and measurement/test administrators. Questions were clarified in order to reduce ambiguity and unclear instructions as participants might encounter some difficulties as the language used might be problematic.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to all principles based on human rights that needed to be protected in research. Crewell (2003:2) indicated that in every research it is critical that participants grant informed consent before participating in the study. Participation was voluntary. Participants were told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating. The participants were informed

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of the right to withdraw from the study at any point, if they desire. Participants were also informed that they could choose not to answer any question that they feel uncomfortable in answering.

As Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:55) indicated, privacy and confidentiality, ensuring that any and all information obtained during a study is not released to outside individuals where it might have embarrassing or damaging consequences will be discussed with the participants before they participate in the study. An appointment was made from the circuit to visit the school to administer questionnaires and interview respondents.

3.8 SUMMARY

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In quantitative approach a questionnaire was developed in order to collect relevant information for the research from the 100 sampled participants. In qualitative approach, focus group interview in which 10 participants were sampled from the 100 and an interviewing schedule developed in order to ask questions relevant to the research. Analysis and interpretation of data are discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the methodology adopted in this study. In this chapter, the results of the study were analysed. The analysis assisted in achieving the objectives of the study. The quantitative data were analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22 in the form of frequencies. All 100 questionnaires sampled were returned and analysed as the researcher is the one who administered it. Bar graphs were also used to show the relationship between variables under investigation. The qualitative data was analysed through listening and writing down the recorded information provided by the participants during focus group interviews.

Data analysis in this chapter is presented through the following sections:

Section 1: Biographical data analysis

Section 2: Quantitative analysis

Section 3: Qualitative analysis

SECTION 1

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ANALYSIS

The following section presents analysis regarding the respondents' biographical data.

Table: 4.2.1 Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
12-14 years	1	1.0
15-16 years	42	42.0
17-18 years	52	52.0
19 years and above	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

The results in Table 4.2.1 show that the majority of respondents (52%) fall between the ages 17-18 years. Ages of respondents suggest that the respondents are at the

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adolescence stage, which is the stage between 12 and 19. Bastable and Dart (2007:21) note that at this stage, adolescents tend to think about themselves, and the world significantly influences many of their social interactions and their health. It is at this adolescence stage that teenagers become obsessed with what they think as well as what others are thinking about them, demand personal space, control, privacy and confidentiality (Bastable & Dart 2007:22).

Elkind (1984) notes that when learners are at the age of adolescence, they can identify health behaviours, but may reject practicing them, and this something that is labelled 'personal fable'. Most worrying is that adolescence may begin to involve in risk-taking behaviours due to social pressures they receive from peers as well as their feelings of invincibility (Bastable & Dart 2007:23). This could explain the reasons why they are always on social networking sites.

Table: 4.2.2 Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	55	55.0
Female	45	45.0
Total	100	100.0

The results in Table 4.2.2 show that the majority of respondents were males (55%). The inclusion of all genders helped to view the feelings of both sides as one gender might be slightly having the same lifestyle and might compromise the results.

Table 4.2.3 Respondents' years in grade

Year in grade	Frequency	Percent
1 year	63	63.0
2 years	26	26.0
3 years	5	5.0
4 years	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

The results in Table 4.2.3 show that the majority of the respondents (63%) are doing grade 10 for the first time. 26% for the second, 5% for the third and 6% for the fourth time. One could speculate that the higher failure rate might also be attributed to the use of social networking.

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SECTION 2

4.3 ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Data analysis in this section is presented in four (4) categories as per the study's aims. These categories are: The impact of social networking on high school learners' performance; the effects of social networking on academic achievement; using social networking for academic purposes and intervention strategies.

CATEGORY 1: The impact of social networking on high school learners' performance

The table below indicates the percentages of the responses about each question asked on the impact of social networking on learners' performance.

Table 4.3.1: The impact of social networking on high school learners' performance

CATEGORY 1: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS PERFORMANCE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am addicted to social networking.	19	33	0	32	16
2. I use social networking while studying.	8	23	0	37	32
3. I spend most of my time on social networking.	15	43	0	23	19
4. Social networking disturbs my studies.	14	39	0	23	24
5. Social networking is changing my lifestyle.	17	41	1	21	20
6. I always sleep late while chatting on social networks.	21	18	0	34	27

Item 1 indicates that most of the respondents (52%) agree that they are addicted to social networking. The Australian Psychological Society (2010:1) notes that social networking is addictive and wastes time as many people spend much time accessing it, and most seriously to your privacy, people you do not want to see your information may gain access to it and use it against you.

The results are supported by Al-Tarawneh (2014:200) who indicates that social networking sites like Facebook have bad influences such as addiction. Despite this, the young people, especially students, prefer such online communication which they favour as more efficient and better than olden day communication modes which was dominated by post office mails. Being addicted to social networking could mean that

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students no longer have much time to study and as such, that is having a detrimental effect on their performance.

Statement 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents (69%) disagree that they use social networks while studying. These can also serve as an indication that they do not have much time to study as they have indicated that they are addicted to social networking. Ellison et al. (2007:1) note that students spend much time on participating in social networking activities, and that leads to their decrease in grade point averages because they are not aware of the academic and professional networking opportunities the sites offer. They have little time to use for studying, and that can affect their scholastic performance.

The results in statement 3 show that the majority of the respondents (58%) agree that they spend most of their time on social networking. The results correlate with the findings in statement 1 where the majority of learners indicated that they are addicted to social networking. Akbiyik (2013:4) notes that some students spend lots of time in social networking sites. The results support Jones and Fox (2009:1) who noted that it is no secret that almost all adolescents use social media in large numbers. This was also confirmed by a 2009 national survey conducted in the USA, which found that 73% of online teenagers use social networking, something which shows a considerable increase from 55% 3 years earlier.

The results indicated in statement 4 show that about 53% of the respondents agree that social networking disturbed them when they were studying. These results may be linked to the findings in statement 1 which show that respondents are addicted to social networking and statement 3 that shows the respondents spend most of their time on social networking. This might have serious implications on their performances as they would not have time to study.

Learners are only concerned with the present (Bastable & Dart 2007:23), and their present is social networking even though they know it disturbs their studies. Khan (2013:59) states that social networks grab the total attention and concentration of students and diverts it towards non educational, unethical and inappropriate actions

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such as useless chatting, time killing by random searching and not doing their academic tasks. That may lead to poor performance by students, which may cause them to drop out of school.

The results in statement 5 show that the majority of respondents (58%) agree that social networking is changing their lifestyles. As it is indicated on statement 3 that they spend most of their time on social networking and statement 1 that they are addicted, it is likely that their lifestyle be affected by social networking. The fact that it also disturbs their studies is an indication that their scholastic performance may also be dropping. Flad (2010:16) indicates that the risks and dangers of teen internet usage are constantly flooding television shows, newscasts and magazines always warning parents to educate parents on teen internet behaviours. The change in behaviour of learners may also lead to a change in scholastic performance as it can affect the studying patterns.

The results indicated by statement 6 shows that 61% of the respondents disagree that they sleep late while chatting on social networks, however, they are addicted to social networking, and it disturbs them. Some parents might not be aware that their children are on social networking, and children might be afraid to do it in their presence. Adenubi et al. (2013:110) also suggested that parents need to be aware that there are times when their children's social networking participation is interfering with the study. They might be hiding their activities, and it is difficult to help someone whom you might not be aware is doing something wrong. Other parents might be monitoring and advising their children on how to use social networking sites effectively as noted by Young (2006:120).

CATEGORY 2: The effects of social networking on academic achievement

The table below indicates the percentages of the responses on each question asked about the effects of social networking on academic performance.

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Table 4.3.2: The effects of social networking on academic achievement

CATEGORY 2: THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	Strongly	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly
7. The language I use on social network helps to improve my writing skills.	16	12	1	31	40
8. My school performance is improving since I started using social networks.	9	19	2	37	33
9. If social network were to be stopped, I would improve on my school performance.	51	15	0	23	11

The results in statement 7 show that 71% of the respondents disagree that the social network is improving their writing skills. These results show that learners are not improving their writing skills while on social networking, and this could affect their performance as the ability to write well can enhance their overall performance in class. The results are in line with Almansa et al. (2012:129) who articulate that teenagers communicate in social networking using new codes of writing that ignore grammar and spelling rules. The language that they use differs from the one which is used in writing at school. Silas et al. (2013:5) indicate that the use of abbreviations and slangs in text messages and chats on mobile phones hamper good sentence construction in academic work.

Furthermore, in support of the results in statement 7, Riman (2014:1) states that the ability to retain information has decreased, the willingness to spend more time researching and looking up good information has reduced, and the attention to pronunciation and grammar has declined drastically due to the fact that most of the communication that happens online is improper. In most cases, the users of social networking utilise grammar incorrectly because of their slang words. These results are also supported by Dunn (2014:1) who states that the popularity and speed at which information is published in social media has created a lax attitude towards proper spelling, grammar and reduce a students' ability to effectively write without relying on a computers' spell check feature.

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These results suggest that instead of enhancing their writing skills through social networking, students tend to learn the abbreviated language which is of no benefit to their studies. Most of this learned language tends to interfere with students' spelling. The results in statement 8 show that the majority of the respondents (70%) disagree that their performance is improving because of the use of social networks. These results are supported by the findings in statement 7 which shows that even though respondents are addicted to social networking, their writing skills are not improving. Khan (2013:59) states that social networks grab the total attention and concentration of students and divert it towards non-educational activities.

Asemah et al. (2013:94) indicate that the majority of students are affected negatively on their academic performance due to exposure to social networking as they spend most of their time chatting and making friends through social media than studying. Rouis et al. (2011:962) note that extensive use of Facebook by students with extroverted personalities leads to poor academic performance, while self-control, performance and goal orientations characterize students who are more in control of their social activity and limits the negative effect on their academic performance.

The results in statement 9 show that the majority of the respondents (66%) agree that if a social network was to be stopped, they would improve on their school performance. These results may suggest that respondents are aware of the distractions caused by social networking and know very well that if they can stop or limit their engagement to such sites, it could help them to improve their school performances. Flad (2010:16) states that social networking causes distractions during instruction and has had a negative impact on the learning environment. This is mainly due to the fact that some students tend to be online even when they are in class.

Ijeoma and Burke (2013:48) indicate that most of the learners who use social networking sites during formal class are unable to concentrate academically. Silas et al. (2013:5) state that social network and browsing have negative effects on students' performance at secondary schools, which includes use of valuable study time in socialising on social networks. This is the case where some students may be on social networking still early hours, meanwhile they are supposed to get enough sleep and

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hence the inability to stay alert and awake in class due to being tired. In order to improve the results of the learners, intervention strategies for using social networks effectively need to be implemented to ensure that learners get the best of social networking sites, which in turn can be beneficial to their studies.

CATEGORY 3: Using social networking for academic purposes

The table below indicates the percentages of the responses about each question asked on using social networking for academic purposes.

Table 4.3.3: Using social networking for academic purposes

CATEGORY 3: USING SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. I think social networking sites can be used as educational tools.	55	33	0	5	7
11. We discuss educational matters on social networks.	8	29	0	44	19
12. I use social networks to get information on assignments.	41	36	0	17	6
13. We are able to help each other through social networking.	12	41	0	28	19

The results in statement 10 show that the majority of the respondents (88%) agree that social networking sites can be used as an educational tool. The high percentage of results shows the willingness of learners to use social networking in a beneficial way. A research by Mehmood et al. (2013:122) indicates that social networking can be a useful instrument in improving academic performance. Hamat et al. (2012:361) also note that top performing students have social networking accounts and spend most of their time on the internet than other students, and that cannot distract them from activities leading to academic success. If social networking is used for educational purposes, it can improve the scholastic performance of the learners.

The results indicated by statement 11 show that the majority of the respondents (63%) disagree that they discuss educational matters on social networks. Though they spend lots of time on social networking, they use it as a socialising tool. Tayseer et al. (2014:5) state that in most cases when learners are on social networks, they do not

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share information about lectures and homework, more than half of the respondents do not even look for college-related information through social networks. The majority of learners regard social networking sites as part of socialising than learning. Vahlberg (2010:13) states that teenagers do spend plenty of their time online commenting on friends' pictures on social network, commenting on friends' pages or walls, sending private messages on social networks, getting news about current events and politics, sharing content, searching for information about health, diet and fitness information, remixing content, blogging, and using virtual worlds.

The results indicated by statement 12 show that the majority of respondents (77%) agree that they use social networking to get information on assignments. As they have indicated in statement 10 that social networking can be a good educational tool, writing assignments on social networking can improve their knowledge, but it needs guidance as there can be relevant and non-relevant information to choose from. Ayub et al. (2014:238) also indicated that the internet is widely used by students to seek relevant information and materials to complete their assignments or projects. If social networking is mostly used for school-related activities, learners can benefit, and their academic performance can improve.

The results indicated by statement 13 show that 53% of the respondents agree that they are able to help each other through social networking. Communication through social networking makes it easy to reach any place faster. Jabr (2011:100) indicates that social networking appears very helpful in building academic groups to achieve better academic learning and communication through exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge and expanding understanding. If social networking is used in a good way, it can also be helpful in improving learners' knowledge, which can boost in their performance.

CATEGORY 4: Intervention strategies

The table below indicates the percentages of the responses on each question asked on intervention strategies.

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Table 4.3.4: Intervention strategies

CATEGORY 4: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. My parents supervise me on how to use social networks effectively.	5	18	0	33	44
15. I communicate educational matters with my teachers through social networking sites.	1	0	0	23	76
16. I am able to abstain from checking destructive information from social networks.	9	12	0	35	44
17. Social networking should be used with the supervision of teachers.	53	12	0	12	7
18. Learners should not use smartphones as they always disturb them.	24	30	0	28	18
19. Social networking should be done during school holidays only.	45	29	0	15	11
20. Social networking should be used to check information pertaining to school.	52	24	0	17	7
21. There should be age restrictions on the use of social networking.	58	16	0	12	14

The results indicated by statement 14 show that the majority of respondents (77%) disagree that they should be supervised by parents on how to use social networks. The results are an indication of how the parents relate to their children at home. Okeeffe et al. (2011:4) note that student-parent relationship plays a role in achieving good results. If a student is closely related to the parents, it can be easier for the child to discuss the information that she/he encounters while online.

Mahat et al. (2014:230) also indicated that parents who are IT illiterate cannot be able to monitor or help their children as they know nothing about social networks. They do not know the effects that can be caused by using social networking, and using it without being monitored or guided can be dangerous as the kids can also enter harmful sites.

The results indicated by statement 15 show that the majority of respondents (99%) disagree that they should communicate educational matters with their teachers through social networking sites. Almost all learners indicated that they disagree because it might seem disrespectful to communicate with their teachers in that way.

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Akindehin et al. (2011:74) indicate that online social networking, as a complement to the classroom, could preserve the cherished African tradition of expressing views and fostering the family.

Asemah et al. (2013:94) note that student spend most of their time chatting and making friends. They do not spend much time on educational matters and therefore, it can be difficult for them to use social networking to communicate with their teachers. They regard them as their parents.

The results indicated by statement 16 show that the majority of respondents (79%) disagree that they are able to abstain from checking destructive information from social networks. Their desire to check information that they can be able to access might lead them to wrong network sites. Guan et al. (2009:352) indicated that online risks facing young people include exposure to sexually explicit material and online victimisation.

However, Okeeffe et al. (2011:3) indicate that the biggest threats to young people on social media sites is the fact that they always post inappropriate messages, pictures and videos without understanding that what goes online stays online, and future jobs and college acceptance may be put into jeopardy by inexperience. Dunn (2014:1) adds that the degree to which private information is available online and the anonymity the internet seems to provide has made students forget the need to filter the information they post.

The results indicated by statement 17 show that the majority of respondents (81%) agree that social networking should be used through supervision of teachers. Learners regard teachers as their mentors because they depend upon their knowledge for guidance and motivation as they progress through their studies. They respect advice offered by teachers. Miah et al. (2012:8) also suggested that teachers must give information sessions to students to help with proper use and monitor the use of social networking sites. Proper knowledge will lead to the correct choice of social networking sites and avoid those which can be harmful.

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The results indicated by statement 18 show that 54% of the respondents agree that learners should not use smartphones as they always disturb them. Smartphones have internet, which can enable learners to be in social networking, and if they are not disciplined, they might use it in a destructive way. Mayayise (2008:70) also indicated that the internet is a dangerous tool because of its ability to provide information that is not regulated that can, therefore, cause self-harm to individuals.

When learners use smartphones, they are exposed to information which can destroy them if they are not self-disciplined. As most of them have indicated that smartphones must not be used by learners, they might have been exposed to disturbing information as it might sometimes be difficult to abstain from viewing. Frequent viewing of bad information corrupts the mind. If learners are always on social networking and are unable to control themselves, it might reduce their scholastic focus and performance. The results indicated by statement 19 show that the majority of respondents (74%) agree that social networking should be done during school holidays only. As they have indicated that social networking disturbs them, if they are engaged in it during the holidays, it will increase their study time and help them concentrate at school. They are mostly addicted to social networking and are unable to control their usage and study time. Asemah et al. (2013:94) note that learners spend most of their time chatting and making friends, which lowers their academic performance. Holiday times are good times for fellowshipping or chatting with friends as it was indicated that they mostly do not use social networking for educational purposes. The proper involvement in social networking will enhance school performance.

The results indicated by statement 20 show that the majority of respondents (76%) agree that social networking should be used to check information pertaining to school. Relating social networking to educational activities will lead to greater scores in their studies. It will reduce confusion, as indicated by statement 7 that the learners' writing skills have been reduced by joining social networking. A study by Nee (2014:77) noted that a social network like *Edmodo,* if used as an educational network, can provide teachers and students a secure place to connect and collaborate, share content and educational applications, and access homework, grades, class discussions and notifications without any other distractions like adverts and irrelevant information; it

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merely educational related material. If educational, networking sites are introduced to learners and they spend most of their time on these, academic performance can be improved.

The results indicated by statement 20 show that the majority of respondents (74%) agree that there should be an age restriction on the use of social networking. Some learners cannot restrict themselves from checking destructive information. Subrahmanyam et al. (2008:20) state that the majority of girls that are on social network pretend to be older for self-exploration (to observe the others reaction), social compensation (to make up for shyness), and social facilitation (to form relationships). Guidance is needed to reduce the problems caused by the use of social networking as some information can be harmful to children.

SECTION 3

4.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the data collected through focus group interviews are analysed. The data analysis is presented in four (4) themes as per the study's aims.

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Theme 1: The impact of social networking on academic performance of learners

The following sub-themes were considered in analysing the impact of social networking on the academic performance of learners:

Sub-theme 1.1: Addiction to social networking

Participants were asked whether they are addicted to social networking sites. They indicated that they are addicted to social networking as they spend most of their time chatting and sometimes sleep very late at night chatting on their phones with friends and sometimes strangers. The following were verbatim responses from some of the participants:

L 2: Yes, I am addicted because even if doing housework, I will be with my phone checking messages. I am always with my phone.

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L 7: I am addicted to social networking because I spend most of my time chatting, I sleep late. When I go to school, I cannot even concentrate on school work. My performance has gone down because of social networking. If I am studying and I receive Whatsapp message, I will attend to it first. My time to study is reduced. Before I use social networking sites, I had much time to study because there will be nothing interfering with my studies and my performance was good.

L 8: Yes, I am addicted to social networking because I cannot spend 5 seconds without my phone and being on social networking. If I am busy doing something at home and start using social networking I stop doing all other activities and concentrate on my cell phone. My parents fight with me because of always being on social networking.

Social networking grabs the attention of most of the learners. They spend most of their time entertaining themselves on social networking. The results correlate with the results indicated by statement 1 where 52% of the respondents indicated that they are addicted to social networking. Al-Tarawneh (2014:204) indicates that social networking sites like Facebook have bad influences such as addiction. It is supported by the Australian Psychological Society (2010:1) who also stated that social networking is addictive and wastes time as many people spend much time accessing it.

Students are always on social networking regardless of the tasks they have to perform at home, school or wherever they might be. They become disobedient as they feel those who might require their attention are trying to disturb them. Syed (2012:1) indicates that extreme use of social networking has reduced the level of human interaction. They isolate themselves from others in order to focus on social networking.

Sub-theme 1.2: Use of social networking while studying

Participants were asked whether they chat while studying, and they indicated that they do not use social networks while studying, but their phones are always on and are able to receive social networking messages. They indicated that they can only respond to such messages when they take a break. Participants had this to say:

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L 2: I do not use it. During study time I leave it. I focus on my future. I do not switch it off and if someone sends a message, I will respond to say I am studying do not disturb me.

L 3: I do not use it. My mother takes my phone when I study.

L 6: I only use my cell phone during breaks as I will be studying.

Some participants indicated that they do not use social networking as they are studying. There are also those who indicated that they ignore messages that they will be receiving but their phones are always on. They indicated that they can only respond during breaks. I think this is a worrying factor as they are able to notice calls and received messages, and that can also affect the level of their concentration on their studies. Ayub et al. (2014:233) also indicated that some students may have difficulties in controlling the usage and may lead to addiction. The results correlate with what the majority of the respondents (69%) who indicated in statement 2 that they do not use social networks while studying. It might be better that when they study, their phones be switched off or be with their parents as others have indicated. If they fail to fully commit themselves in studying, they are likely to drop in their academic performance.

Sub-theme 1.3: Social networking changes life style

Participants were asked if they though the use of social networking is changing their lifestyle. They indicated that their lifestyles are changing because of their constant usage and engagement with social networking. Some of the participants indicated that they are sometimes unable to help with household chores at home as they are always chatting on their phones. Participants also indicated that they are always fighting or quarrelling with their parents due to their addictions to chatting with friends and sometimes with strangers who pester them to meet on social networking sites. The following are some of the responses by participants with regard to their lifestyle changes as a result of social networking:

L 2: It is changing my lifestyle. When charting I do not want to be disturbed. If someone or my mother calls me, I do not feel like going there. Sometimes I will not do house activities because I will be busy charting. Sometimes I cannot cook because of charting. Sometimes they will eat late or my mother will cook.

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L 5: Yes, it is changing my lifestyle because of the way I talk, e.g, please is piz. When someone is talking to me, I ignore him or her. Even in the church if there is a message I cannot concentrate on my pastor but social networking.

L 7: Yes, my parents complain most of the time because I fail to respond to what they say because of being on social networking. I do not have much time with them because I am always on social networking and I will be in my room charting.

L 8: Yes, I involve myself on social networking I was not having many friends but now I have more friends whom I do not know. I also know many places where even my parents do not know because sometimes some of those friends invite me. I do visit them regardless that they are strangers to me.

The higher usage of social networking sites by learners is changing their lifestyles as they no longer do things the way they used to do. The results correlate with the findings on statement 5 where they indicated that their lifestyles are changing because of using social networking. They are no longer obedient as they disrespect their parents and fail to perform household activities. At home, they like being on their own chatting through social networking to people whom they do not know without thinking of the dangers that might arise. It is also supported by Almansa et al. (2012:129) who mentioned that teenagers can easily regard strangers as friends as long as they are good looking people and are free to share data about their private lives. The frequent use of social networking, without boundaries, may reduce the level of commitment to their studies which will lower their grades.

Theme 2: Effects of social networking on learners' performance

In analysing the effects of social networking on learners' performance, the following sub-themes were considered.

Sub-theme 2.1: Social networking on improving performance

Participants were asked if they think their performance is improving since they started using social networking. They indicated that their performance is poor since they started social networking. As most of them indicated that they are addicted to social networking, their performance is likely to drop. Some participants indicated that before they started with social networking, they were doing quite well, and their school

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performance was good, but now things have changed. Some participants had this to say:

L 1: It is not improving because before I started using social networking I use to be in top 10 but now I am in top 20.
L 2: No, because since I started using social networking I have no time to study. I spend most of my time on social networking charting and my time to study is reduced.
L4: My performance is not improving because I have more time on social networking if I stop it can improve as I will have more study time.
L5: I use social networking a lot and forget studying. I do not even discuss scholastic issues on social networking with others.
L6:No.it is not improving at all. This is due to the fact that sometimes while studying I receive a lot of chat messages and had to stop studying to respond to them. This is affecting my academic performances.
L 8: No, because most of my time I will be charting. I cannot study without my phone and if I receive messages I will attend to it first regardless that I will be studying.

Learners spend most of their time on social networking doing activities which are not related to improving their school performance. The results correlate with findings indicated by statement 8 that show that the majority of respondents (70%) indicated that their performance is not improving since being involved in social networking. Social networking for them is for socialisation and entertainment not for discussion of scholastic issues. This view is supported by Helou et al. (2012:13) who note that younger students engage in social networking sites mainly for socialising than academic purposes. Spending a lot of time on social networking reduces their time of studying as it can be difficult to focus on doing different activities at once. If they simultaneously study and are social networking, they are unlikely to concentrate on education.

Sub-theme 2.2: Social networking on language improvement

Participants were asked if social networking is helping them to improve on their language proficiency, and they indicated that their language proficiency is not improving at all. Participants indicated that this is due to the fact that while chatting,

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they always use abbreviations and words that are not even related to the spoken, as well as the written language they are exposed to at school. The following were some of the responses from participants when asked if they think their language proficiency is improving, especially written language, since they started using social networking:

L1: The language used in social networking is different to the one used at school. In social networking we use a lot of abbreviations when communicating.

L4: No, because most of the time when I'm writing my school work I get confused and make a lot of spelling mistakes. Sometimes I may start using those abbreviated words that we normally make use of while chatting.

L 7: No, in many cases I make mistakes while writing and use abbreviations. I mostly make mistakes in essays and it is lowering my marks.

L 8: No, because in social networking I use abbreviations. At school, I sometimes write that way.

L10: No, while chatting we use short words which are sometimes a combination of words and letters and I always get penalised when writing essays.

The language that learners use in social networking confuses some of them as it is different to the one they use at school. Riman (2014:1) states that social networking users use grammar incorrectly because of slang words. The results correlate with the findings indicated by statement 7 showing that the majority of the respondents (71%) indicated that their writing skills are deteriorating since they started using social networking. Alamansa (2012:129) also indicates that teenagers communicate using new codes of writing that ignore grammar and spelling rules. Use of incorrect spelling and abbreviations will lower their marks and lead to higher failure rate.

Theme 3: Social networking for academic purposes

In analysing the usage of social networking for scholastic purposes, the following sub-themes were considered:

Sub-theme 3.1: Social networking sites as educational tool

Participants were asked if they think social networking can be used as an educational tool. The participants indicated that social networking sites can be used as educational

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tools such as using them to search for information about their research projects and assignments. However, most participants do not use social networking sites to discuss educational matters, instead, they indicated that they use social networking for socialising and entertaining themselves. Some of the participants had this to say:

L 4: Sometimes if you have assignments you can go to the internet and search. Sometimes it cannot be useful because of searching destructive information like pornographic material.
L 8: Yes, you can get answers easily by searching on social networking which might not be in our books. I go to opera mini and Google.
L 9: Yes, when you are given assignments or projects you can check on internet or when the teacher gives us something which is not in books.

Participants think using the internet for education is limited to research, projects and assignments and cannot associate any social networking site with education. It is not surprising that results indicated by statement 8 show that their performance is deteriorating since they started using social networking as they are mostly using it for socialising. The results also correlate with findings in statement 10 where the majority of the respondents indicated that social networking can be used as an educational tool. Mehmood et al. (2013:122) also support the view that social networking can be useful in improving academic performance of undergraduate students. Junco et al. (2010:1) indicate that students have had extended and good discussions on Twitter more than in the classroom. Educational sites must be identified and students be taught on how to involve themselves properly so that their academic performance may improve.

Sub-theme 3.2: Discussion of educational matter through social networking

Participants were asked if they discuss educational matters through social networking. Most of the participants indicated that they are not using social networking sites to discuss educational matters. These are some of their responses:

L 2: No, I and my friends do not share same grade. I use it for socialising.
L 5: No, we share pornographic and fun videos and also gossiping.

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L 6: No, most of those we have discussions are not school mates and others are strangers. We just comment on topics or jokes which are discussed.
L 9: No, I do not discuss educational matters with friends, I use it for socialising only. If I am given an assignment alone, I can check on social networking.

Even though participants have indicated that they agree that social networking can be used as educational tools, they mostly use it for socialising and entertaining themselves. Tayseer et al. (2014:4) note, in their study, that there are students who regard social networking sites as part of socialising than learning. The results correlate with findings in statement 11 where the majority (63%) of the respondents indicate that they do not discuss educational matters through social networking sites. It also linked with the information in statement 8 where they indicated that their academic performance is deteriorating since they started using social networking. For their academic performance to improve, they have to control the way they involve themselves in social networking as they have indicated in statement 1 that they are addicted to social networking.

Theme 4: Intervention strategies

The following sub-themes were analysed in order to check possible intervention strategies which can be implemented in improving the better usage of social networking sites.

Sub-theme 4.1: Supervision by parents

Participants were asked if they think they must be supervised by their parents. They indicated that they would not want their parents to supervise them on the use of social networking sites and their phones. While other participants indicated that their parents also lack knowledge of the use of these communication technological gadgets, and as such, could not supervise them. Participants noted the following with regard to parental supervision of their phones:

L4: They cannot supervise me as they don't even know that I am on social networking.
L7: No, my parents do not even want me to be on social networking and I like charting. I do not have time with them and tell me what to do.

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L8: No, my parents do not use phones which can enable using social networking they say it can make someone crazy because they sometimes see me laughing alone and wonder why I am laughing. I refuse if they try to take my phone because I bought it. They cannot tell me what to do.

Some parents lack knowledge on the use of these communication technological gadgets. It is only possible to advise about something that you are familiar with. Some parents are not aware of what their children might be in, and the dangers that they might be facing. The results correlate with findings in statement 14 that show the majority of respondents (77%) disagree that they should be supervised by their parents on how to use social networking effectively.

McCann (2014:1) notes that sometimes even parents occupy the back seat if they are not strict in allowing their children to focus on whey want. They like doing things their own way. Children must be guided and monitored if we need to develop a responsible adult. If learners are addicted, it is difficult for them to control their usage of social networking, and their academic performance levels may decrease.

Sub-theme 4.2: Supervision by teachers

Participants were asked if they think teachers can supervise them to use social networking effectively, and they indicated they should be supervised. Learners spend most of their time with teachers at school than with their parents. They have more confidence in teachers as they mostly communicate on various aspects of life. The following are some of the responses:

L 1: Teachers can help us avoid talking and meeting strangers.

L 7: Yes, we abuse social networking, sleeping late and cannot study. Social networking was introduced to simplify things. They can help us to choose websites for education.

L 10: Teachers can guide us to search relevant information.

Participants seemed to be more comfortable with their teachers as they communicate with them on various aspects of life and regard them as role models. However,

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hindsight will show that supervision by teachers on the proper usage of social networking would be highly impossible due to the following reasons: in most of the rural secondary schools, learners are not allowed to come to school with their phones. Secondly, teachers do not stay with learners after school and on the weekends, which adds more dilemma to the whole situation of teacher supervision.

The results correlate with the findings in statement 17 that show the majority of the respondents (81%) agree that they should be supervised by teachers. Bexheti et al. (2012:90) show that teachers find social networks as very useful for enhancing teaching and learning. However, Al-Rahmi et al. (2012:2) note that some teachers lack skills and may have negative attitudes towards social networking. Teachers need to be familiarised with social networking so that they may keep on advising learners to use it in a benefiting way.

Sub-theme 4.3: Learners should not use smart phones

Participants were asked if they think is good for them to use smart phones. Most of the participants indicated that they should not use smart phones, but should use simple phones which can only allow them to call or receive calls only. The following are some of their responses:

L 1: Smart phone disturbs me because when I study I will be with it. I suggest I must use a simple phone.

L 3: Simple phone is better. I will have no time for social networking like Facebook or whatsup.

L 7: I cannot cope with smartphone, without it can improve my performance as I can have more study time.

L 9: I will like using simple phone. You can only call and there will be no time for internet. I will get time to study.

Smart phones seem to disturb them in their studies as they are unable to control the way they use them. The results correlate with findings in statement 18 showing that the majority of respondents (54%) agree that they should not use smart phones.

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Vahlberg (2010:9) indicates that teens use mobile devices to access internet. They spend most of their time on social networking doing non-scholastic activities.

Sub-theme 4.4: Social networking should be used during holidays

Participants were asked if social networking should be used on holidays only. Most of the participants indicate that social networking can be done on weekends or holidays. The following are some of the responses of participants:

L 3: Yes, on weekends or holidays I am always on social networking and unable to study.
L 7: It is good on holidays because there will be no pressure to study. During school time I will have time to study and no chatting.
L 9: Yes, because assignments are mostly given on holidays and I will have enough time to be on social networking.

The fact that they accept that social networking must be done on holidays is an indication that it is a problem to them. They do like to concentrate on scholastic issues as they have indicated in statement 4 that social networking disturbs their studies. They are unable to control and use it in a beneficial way. The results correlate with the information in statement 19 where they indicated that social networking must be used on holidays only. Young (2006:120) notes that high school learners with higher average academic grades spend more time on internet on weekends than during weekdays and are monitored and advised on how to use it effectively.

Sub-theme 4.5: Age restriction on the use of social networking

Participants were asked if they think there should be an age restriction on using social networking. They indicated that there must be an age restriction on the use of social networking. Participants noted that as the majority of social networking sites can expose them to danger and life risks, it would be ideal if age restrictions are imposed on each of the SNSs. Participants had this to say:

L 7: Yes, there must be age restriction. Children can be in social networking, watching pornographic material and it can damage their minds and future.

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L 8: Yes, because I check everything.

L 10: Age restriction will safeguard us. It is good for those with smartphones.

Learners are not afraid of the consequences of entering harmful networking sites. They just like knowing whatever might be happening on the sites. Because of what they come across sometimes when entering websites, they believe it is important to have an age restriction on the usage of social networking. The results correlate with the findings in statement 21 where they indicated that there should be an age restriction on the use of social networking sites. Guan (2011:352) indicates that online risks facing young people include exposure to sexually explicit material which is related to greater sexual uncertainty and more positive attitudes towards uncommitted sexual exploration among youth and online victimization which is a threat or other offensive behaviour sent online to the youth or posted online about the youth for others to see. Age restriction will help reduce bullying and entering harmful sites.

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CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study was to find out the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance in rural areas: a case study of Ligege Secondary School. The basic research questions were as follows:

- How is the use of social networking by high school learners having an impact on their scholastic achievement?
- How is social networking affecting the scholastic achievement of high school learners?
- Do high school learners use social networking for scholastic purposes?
- What are the appropriate intervention strategies which can be recommended for using social networking?

The different chapters outlined in the study examined the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance in rural areas: a case study of Ligege Sec. School.

Chapter One outlined the introduction of the research problem stating the aim, objectives, research questions and research approaches to be used. Furthermore, the structure of the research was also described.

Chapter Two provided a review of literature related to the study under investigation. It was in chapter Two where the effects of social networking on high school learners' performance were discussed. The theoretical framework on which the study is based was also outlined.

In Chapter Three, research methods, instruments and sampling were discussed.

Chapter Four addressed the data analysis and interpretation of results.

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In Chapter Five, a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations are outlined as follows:

- Major findings of the study, which include the findings based on the quantitative and qualitative data.
- Conclusions drawn from the empirical data.
- Limitations of the study.
- Recommendations relating to the study.
- Recommendations for further studies
- Concluding remarks.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.2.1 Findings based on the Questionnaires (Quantitative Data).

Social networking sites have an impact on learners' performance as they are addicted to these sites. They spend most of their time on social networking, and this disturbs their studies, and their lifestyle changes because of addiction.

It was also noted that their scholastic achievement declines due to the language that they use in social networking. They indicated that if they stop using social networking, their performance can improve. However, they also indicated that social networking can be used for scholastic purposes, even though they are not using it for educational purposes.

The results indicate that there is a need for intervention strategies in order to improve the performance of learners. The decline in performance of learners shows the improper involvement in social networking. Learners indicated that they need to be supervised by teachers, and not their parents, in using of social networking. They suggested the use of simple phones than smartphones in order to reduce addiction to social networking. It was also suggested that smartphones can also be used during holidays so that they may have enough time to study. The issue of age restriction was suggested in order to reduce the risk of viewing harmful information.

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5.2.2 Findings based on interviews with the Focus Group (qualitative data).

In line with the triangulation as proposed in chapter 3, one focus group interview was conducted with a total of 10 high school learners from Ligege Secondary School. The comments of the learners confirmed the results obtained from the questionnaire.

It was noted that social networking has an impact on learners' performance as they are addicted to it, and it grabs their attention. They spend most of their time communicating through it and it is changing their lifestyle as they can also befriend strangers, and in some cases, they fight with parents because of not taking instructions at home.

Social networking is affecting learners' performance because the language that they use is affecting their performance negatively. Words that they use in social networking are lowering their marks as they sometimes mistakenly use them in essays and other school activities. They use abbreviations in social networking, which might not be used at school. Since they started using social networking, their performance is declining.

There is also a need for using social networking for scholastic purposes as most of the projects, research and assignments offered can be solved through internet. However, they indicated that they do not use social networking for scholastic purposes.

Intervention strategies must be applied in order to use social networking effectively. Learners are not using social networking for scholastic purposes. They are unable to abstain from checking destructive information from social networking as they like seeing what others are seeing. They also think that there is a need for age restriction in using social networking as they can watch pornographic materials, and this can damage their minds. They indicated that there is a need to reduce the use of smartphones as they are always on social networking, and it would be better to use it on weekends or holidays so that their study time may not be disturbed.

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5.3 CONCLUSIONS

From the findings above, the following conclusions are drawn:

Social networking has an impact on learners' performance and negatively affects the performance of the learners. Learners do not have proper knowledge on how to use social networking effectively and as such, they only use it for socialising and entertainment. The use of social networking makes their academic performance deteriorates as their study time is reduced.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to note that this case study was conducted in one, as against many rural high schools in Dzindi Circuit which is in Vhembe District. This was mainly due to financial constraints and limited time.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations to assist in the better usage of social networking.

5.5.1 Recommendation Relating to the Study

Social networking seems to be improving the way in which people communicate. It is easier and faster for information to reach any place, but there are challenges as some users are negatively affected by social networking. There are those who become addicted, and others may experience cyber bullying or other harmful effects.

- Awareness campaign on promoting social networking sites which can be used for educational purposes must be done by the Department of Education and school administrators. Many schools have wireless installed, but they block the use of such resources because of lack of knowledge. The resources are provided, but the providers must equip the teachers with proper knowledge so that they may help develop schools.

- Parents must familiarise themselves with the new technology. They must also be trained so that they may also be able to assist their children at home. If they are

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made aware, they can easily notice some changes happening in their children and can monitor and guide their children.

5.5.2 Recommendations for further studies

It is suggested that a broader study is needed to aid the generalisations made on this study. The focus must be on:

- Conducting similar research using samples from different high schools in rural areas.
- Conducting similar research at primary schools (focusing on senior phase) to check if they have started using social networking.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS PERFOMANCE IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF LIGEGE SECONDARY SCHOOL

SECTION 1: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Please supply the following information by making a tick on the appropriate block that applies to you:

1. Age:

12-14 years	1
15-16 years	2
17-19 years	3
20 years and above	4

2. Gender:

Male	1
Female	2

3. Grade

Grade 10	

4. Year/s in grade 10

1 year	
2 years	
3 years	
4 years	

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SECTION 2

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS PERFOMANCE IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF LIGEGE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

The following are the statements on 'the impact of social networking on high school learners' performance in rural areas'. Indicate the extent to which you **Agree or Disagree** with each of the following statements on 'the impact of social networking on high school learners performance in rural areas' around Dzindi Circuit.

CATEGORY 1: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS PERFORMANCE	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
22. I am addicted to social networking.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I use social networking while studying.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I spend most of my time on social networking.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Social networking disturbs my studies.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Social networking is changing my life style.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I always sleep late while chatting on social networks.	1	2	3	4	5
CATEGORY 2: THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT.					
28. The language I use on social network helps to improve my speaking and writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
29. My school performance is improving since I started using social networks.	1	2	3	4	5
30. If social network were to be stopped, I would improve on my school performance.	1	2	3	4	5
CATEGORY 3: USING SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES.					
31. I think social networking sites can be used as educational tools.	1	2	3	4	5
32. We discuss educational matters on social networks.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I use social networks to get information on assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
34. We are able to help each other through social networking.	1	2	3	4	5

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CATEGORY 1: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS PERFORMANCE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
CATEGORY 4: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES					
35. My parents supervise me on how to use social networks effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I communicate educational matters with my teachers through social networking sites.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I am able to abstain from checking destructive information from social networks.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Social networking should be used with the supervision of teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Learners should not use smartphones as they always disturb them.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Social networking should be done during school holidays only.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Social networking should be used to check information pertaining to school.	1	2	3	4	5
42. There should be age restrictions on the use of social networking.	1	2	3	4	5

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APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW

1. Are you addicted to social networking?
2. Do you visit social networking sites while studying?
3. Do you think social networking is changing your lifestyle?
4. Is the language you use in social networking improving your writing skills?
5. Do you think social networking is improving your school performance?
6. Do you think social networking sites can be used as educational tools?
7. Do you discuss educational matters on social networks?
8. Do you think parents can supervise you on how to use social networks effectively?
9. Do you think teachers can supervise you on how to use social networking?
10. Do you think learners must use smartphones?
11. Do you think learners should be on social networking during holidays only?
12. Should there be age restriction on use of social networks?

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APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Baloyi M.S
P.O.Box 325
Masia
0944
Email: bmiringo@gmail.com
Cell: 0733058888
22 September 2014

THE DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER
Limpopo Department of Education (Vhembe District)
Private Bag x 2250
Sibasa
0970

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR RESEARCH

1. I am presently attached to the School of Education at the University Of Venda working on a thesis titled **"THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS PERFORMANCE".**

2. Learners from secondary schools under Dzindi Circuit area will be utilised for data collection processes.

3. I would like your permission to conduct my research in schools under Vhembe District.

4. I wish to inform you that there will be no risk involved in the research and that special care will be taken to ensure that there is not any form of disruption in the day-to-day running of participating schools. I shall conduct myself with great professionalism throughout the data collection process.

5. These are my particulars:
   Institution: University of Venda
   Degree: Master of Education
   Course of Study: EDU 900
   Student no: 11638197

Thanking you in anticipation.

Regards

.....
Baloyi M S (Mr)

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APPENDIX D: RESPONSE LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

VHEMBE DISTRICT

REF: 14/7/R
ENQ: RAVELE N.P
TEL: 015 962 1029

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT
DSM'S OFFICE
2014 -10- 08
PRIVATE BAG X2250, SIBASA 0970
TEL. 015 962 1313/4
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

MR BALOYI M.S
P.O BOX 325
MASIA
0944

REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR RESEARCH

1. The above matter refers.
2. We acknowledge receipt of your letter requesting for permission to conduct research in schools under Dzindi Circuit on "The impact of social networking on high school learners performance"
3. We appreciate that you have committed yourself to ensuring that your research does not disrupt teaching and learning in the schools involved.
4. We further request that you should comply with research ethics, especially regarding the confidentiality of the subjects of your research.
5. Kindly ensure that the circuit manager and principals are informed in advance of your visits if there will be any.
6. We wish you success in your research endeavors.

DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

2014-10-08
DATE

Thohoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970
Tel: (015) 962 1313 or (015) 962 1331, Fax: (015) 962 6039 or (015) 962 2288

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APPENDIX E: LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Enq: Baloyi M.S
P.O Box 325
Masia
0944
Cell no: 0733058888
21 October 2014

The Principal
Ligege Sec. School
P/Bag X 960
Shayandima
0945

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. I would like to inform you that I have been granted permission to conduct my study at your school.

2. Therefore, I would like to request your prior permission to conduct research on ***''Impact of social networking on learners' performance''*** in your school as part of my study requirement.

3. I would like to assure you that data collection process will be done during study time.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Regards

.....
Baloyi M.S (Mr)

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APPENDIX F: LETTER TO THE PARENTS

P.O. Box 325
Masia
13 October 2014
Cell: 0733058888
Email: bmiringo@gmail.com

Dear Parents,

I am currently conducting a research on the "impact of social networking on high school learners' performance in rural areas" and I will be focusing on grade 10 learners. I have been granted permission by the Limpopo Education Department to conduct the research at Ligege Secondary School where your child is a learner.

As your child has been selected to take part in the research:

1. S/he will have to answer a questionnaire and be interviewed, and this will take approximately 1hour 30 minutes.
2. There is no known risk involved in the research.
3. There are no costs involved.

You are assured that their identity and responses to this interview will be regarded as extremely confidential at all times and that they will not be made available to any unauthorised user.

Should you have any queries or comments, you are welcome to contact me.

BALOYI M.S
.....

CONSENT
In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, you are requested to complete the following section:

Name: .....

Have read this letter and understand the terms involved.

On condition that the information provided is treated as confidential at all times, I hereby (MARK the appropriate section).

☐ Give consent

☐ Do NOT give consent that the results may be used for research purposes.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

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