Social Media as a Mechanism of Corresponding with Home Based Friends a Study of International Students in EMU

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ABSTRACT

Social media has continued to play a major role in the establishment and sustenance of relationship in many ramifications. The platform has helped in keeping friends and families together thereby breaking the walls of communication gap that might have existed. Social media is also used by students to keep in touch with their friends and families.

This study seeks to find out the use of social media by university students in keeping in touch with their friends and families as well as its rolls as a digital medium of communication as against the conventional mobile communication. Using a quantitative methodology, the research randomly samples 351 post students of the Eastern Mediterranean University.

Findings from this study indicate that majority of the students attest to the fact that they use social media to share information about the cultural values of their current base as well as use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between them and their home based friends. Statistical findings in this study also indicate that male respondents use social media to discuss about their academic activities with their Home-based friends more than the females. Also results from a statistical analysis show that male respondents use social media to discuss about life challenges with their Home-based friends more often than female respondents in this study.

Keywords: Social media, Facebook, Instagram, Home-based Friends, University, Students.

ÖZ

Sosyal Medya birçok ilişkinin düzeninde ve sürekliliğinde büyük bir rol oynamaya devam etmektedir. Bu platform olası iletişim kopukluğu duvarlarını yıkarak arkadaşları ve aileleri bir arada tutmakta yardımcı olmaktadır. Ayrıca, sosyal medya öğrenciler tarafından aileleri ve arkadaşlarıyla aralarındaki bağlantıyı sürdürmek için de kullanılmaktadır.

Bu çalışma aileleri ve arkadaşlarıyla aralarındaki bağlarını koparmayan üniversite öğrencileri üzerinden sosyal medyanın kullanımını bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, bu çalışma geleneksel cep telefonu iletişimine karşı sosyal medyanın dijital iletişim ortamlarındaki rollerini çözmeyi amaçlar. Nicel yöntembilim kullanarak, araştırma, 351 Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi mezununu rastgele örnekleme dahil edilmiştir.

Bu çalışmadaki bulgular, öğrencilerin çoğunluğunun sosyal medyayı kültürel değerleri hakkında bilgi paylaşmak ve kendi ülkelerindeki arkadaşları ile aralarındaki ilişkiyi güçlendirmek amaçlı kullandığını gösterip kanıtlar. Bu çalışmadaki istatistiki bulgular erkek katılımcıların kadınlara göre sosyal medyayı gelmiş oldukları ülkedeki arkadaşları ile akademik aktivitelerini tartışmak için daha sık kullandıklarını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmadaki istatistiksel analiz sonuçlarına göre erkek katılımcılar kadın katılımcılara göre sosyal medyayı hayatlarındaki zorlukları geldikleri ülkelerdeki arkadaşları daha sık tartıştıklarını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya, Facebook, Instagram, Geldiği ülkedeki arkadaşlar, Üniversite

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to God Almighty and my family.

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I wish to appreciate God almighty for providing me the strength and wherewithal to carry out the cask of completing my M.A. programmed against all the challenges. I wish to thank my thesis supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Bahire Ozad for the time and commitment she put into my work and as well her effort in making me a better person. I also wish to thank all members of my faculty and most especially my instructors.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led to the mobilization of students in the tertiary education. This is one of the consequences of communication among young people who prefer to study abroad. These young adults have seen communicating with their relatives as an important phenomenon. The present study seeks to explore how tertiary students who study at the post graduate level in EMU in 2017 communicate with their home-based friends.

1.1 Background of the Study

The term, social media is a popular term in the new technological world which is associated Web 2.0 technology. This is characterized by high level of association, accessibility and distribution of media content such as images, audio and videos and overtime. Also, these have become characteristics of the sign posts Web based technologies. As an all-encompassing concept, social media refers to a variety of Web 2.0 tools such as, blogs, social networks, forums and micro-blogs such twitter. Most of these social media platforms allow users to be creators. A variety of factors allow content such as video or images gain more viewership of these platforms. Social media users post all types of experiences such as personal life stories, review of products to mention but a few. All of these are commonly found on Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and YouTube. One of the common ways is having your content shared or posted by popular individuals (Tiryakioglu & Erzurum, 2011).

Over the past two decades, Social media have become an integral part of human communication and it has translated to different parts and sectors of the society such as health, politics, economy, law, academics, entertainment, fashion, and student migration, the focus of this study. Over the last few years, social media have become a significant part and parcel of our everyday life. Social Networking Sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter make it easy to keep in touch with friends and family. Though, it is fun, informative, many have complained about the time wasting activity (Rowlands, Nicholas, Russell, Canty, & Watkinson, 2011).

1.2 Research Problem

Annually, hundreds of international students travel to different parts of the world to obtain academic degree. Over the years, regions such as the Americas, Scandinavian region and Europe have witnessed major student migration. However, in recent years, some developing regions has also enjoyed massive influx of international students and one of them is Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, the focus of this study. Travelling abroad for international study can be overwhelming. According to Thurber and Walton (2012);

The transition from living at home to living away from home represents a significant transition for first-year College 55 or university students. For many students, the experience is a stimulating adventure, both socially and intellectually. For other students, the experience is overwhelming and distressing (p. 1).

Students in TRNC just like every other part of the world face similar challenges such as language barrier, homesickness and ten to fifteen years ago international students relied solely on cell-phones international calls to reach their family and friends. But with the intervention of social media, it is apparent that some of them use social

media to communicate with family and home-based friends but to what extent is the use of social media over conventional media for instance. These problems have not been empirically answered by any research study and that is what we aim to answer.

Most international students are young adults and therefore many of them are tech-savvy. The problem of social media efficiency hasn't been well answered too especially by studies evaluating social media use and perception among international students in this region and through a survey among university students; we aim to achieve this goal.

1.3 Motivation of the Study

Every study starts with an observation and the first observation for this study is the hundreds of international students that flock into Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for their university education and, specifically, Eastern Mediterranean University. After few years of witnessing the massive inflow of international students into the island, the researcher wonders what method of communication is dominant among these foreign nationals. In a communication exclusive to self, the researcher further asks if Social media have been helpful in maintaining relationship with home-based friends and the idea for this study was born.

The initial thought was not as comprehensive as what we have as this topic now but from speaking with a few international students, researcher found that there are so many layers to this discourse and the researcher also noticed from a skim of relevant literature that no empirical study has been conducted on this area. In order to represent population in our sample, we focused on social media as a tool of maintaining relationship with home-based friends among students in Eastern Mediterranean University.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

For the present study, the aim is to explore the Uses and Gratification of social media users by international students enrolled in a public university in Turkish Republic of North Cyprus in communicating with home-based friends. The use of Social media have been well-documented overtime especially among student migrants. For many it is to gratify family and friends needs and to others it is to be part of a community, to pass time, to obtain information, for entertainment purposes, for news, to gain political knowledge, to learn about latest trends, to be entertained and educate and for some others, it is creating all of these content for people.

While this is the main goal of this research, this study aims to explore how students perceive the use of social media as tool for keeping in touch with friends as opposed to the conventional cell-phone conversations. This is because it is apparent that the invention of conventional cell-phone calling service was a great time in history and millions of people across the world still rely on this form of communication to interact with family and friends.

Considering that computer-mediated communication (CMC), consisting of blogs, wiki's, Facebook and Twitter among others, is still one of the most recent progression in communication technology, it is significant to inquire into how students enrolled in a public university in North Cyprus rate social media's efficiency in respect to keeping in touch with home-based friends. The study aims to ask this question because findings would provide newer insights on how effective social media is in the international community.

Another aim of this study is to statistically provide information on significant difference as to how male and female students use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with 'home-based friends'. It is significant for us to evaluate how male and female use social media to access this variable more and findings would highly impact our study.

1.5 Research Questions

This study investigates social media as a tool of maintaining relationship with home-based friends and therefore asks the following major questions;

RQ1: Why do students use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "home-based friends"?

RQ2: To what extent do students schooling abroad use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "home-based friends"?

RQ3: How do students perceive the social media as a mechanism of corresponding with friends as opposed to the conventional cellphone conversations?

RQ4: Is there a statistical significant difference as to how male and female students use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "home-based friends"?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is ultimately important because it makes important contributions in the following areas;

First, this study is one of the few studies that evaluate the use of new media by international students to gratify their needs related to their home-based relationship. Second, this study is the first to evaluate social media as a tool of maintaining

relationship with home-based friends. This is extremely important because as aforementioned, hundreds of students leave their home country every year to another country where mostly, the language, people, food, culture is unfamiliar with theirs. This in itself is testament to why this study is important because part of coping with culture shock in a new environment is staying in touch with family and friends which is what this study focuses on.

Thirdly, this study makes an important contribution for scholars interested in international student's studies. Most popular among travelling reasons for students is for education but there is limited literature on international students, hence this study would give newer insights in that regards.

Fourthly, this study is important because advancements in new media has changed the way we act, think and feel and this to a great extent shows how much we need more and more research on social media. This study evaluates students in their natural habitat to understand social media as a tool of maintaining relationship with home-based friends.

Finally, despite being a new destination for international students, Turkish Republic of North Cyprus where international students' in question are studying due to the duration of their study. This study is beginning to be eminent at least at the graduate thesis level. This study would make important contributions through the communication and media aspects of international students' study. This way, overtime, journals or conferences on international students can be floated.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Like most empirical studies, this study is not short of limitations. The most prominent ones are as follows;

Sample Size: The sampling procedure of this study is well done because among all requirements of sampling, the most important one is representation of the population and the sample of this study represents the population however, larger samples would helped this study in so many ways. First, the higher the sample, the higher the potency of generalization. Second, a larger sample gives researcher more data to work with in terms of statistical analysis. This sample size of this study is therefore a limitation.

Time: This study was conducted in the Fall Term of 2017-2018 Academic section and the study is limited in that sense.

Social media over other new media forms: It is evident that Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp) are one the most popular, most used and most relied upon forms of new media for almost everything and anything. However, there are other forms of new media tools such as wiki's, blogs or microblogging services such as Twitter. Evaluating these forms of new media tools would give newer perspectives therefore; focusing on the few forms of social media is a limitation of this study.

Nationality: Eastern Mediterranean University is a public university in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. It is the most populous university on the part of the island evaluated and it has international students from over 106 countries therefore, choosing only international students to assess social media as a tool of maintaining

relationship with home-based friends is a limitation of this study. These students are based in north Cyprus and are registered students in the fall 2017/18 semester

1.8 Definition of Terms

The following terms were mentioned and used severally in the discourse of social media as a tool of maintaining relationship with home-based friends, a study conducted among International students in Eastern Mediterranean University.

Social Media: is the forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users creates online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)" (Merriam-webster, 2017).

Facebook: An online social networking site. It was founded in 2004. The SNS sites allow users to create personal profiles. It was initially developed for students and staff, but it has since become the most populous social networking sites.

Gratification: Delight gained from the satisfaction of a desire. While media use depends on the individual user, anticipations of the satisfactions they will receive from media consumption also play a significant role in influencing users motive (Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973).

Home-based friends: This is operationalized in this study to describe friends of international students who are back home in their countries.

Friendship: "friendship is voluntary. Biology or legal procedures establish relationships between family members, and proximity defines neighbors and co-

workers. But friends come together voluntarily. Unlike marital and family relationships, friendships lack institutionalized structure or guidelines" (Wood, 2015, p. 253).

Cell Phone: "wireless telephone that transmits and receives messages via radio signals. It enables people to communicate over a wide area by using a network of radio antennas and transmitters arranged in small geographical areas called cells. The first commercial cellular system went into operation in 1983 in the United States. Cellular service is now available throughout most of the world" (Danesi, 2014, p. 57).

Homesickness: is the suffering or deterioration caused by an actual or expected separation from home (Thurber, 1995).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter II reviews the primary aspects of the literature on social media as well as social networking sites. The chapter also examines two basic theories that best explain the concept behind creating or constructing an identity for an individual. It will explore the basic social media platform that this research focuses on which is Facebook. Therefore, the sub sessions included in this chapter are Background of social media, theoretical background, interpersonal communication, social media as a tool for maintaining relationships, overview of Facebook and overview of Instagram

2.1 Background of Social Media

The gradual development of the internet networking system has brought about a dynamic change in the way people communicate. One of such developments is the social media, as its transformation to web 2.0 has enhanced interactivity in the communication system. According to Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011), "Web 2.0 is comprised of computer network-based platforms upon which social media applications/tools (referred to as social media, for short) run or function" (p. 276). Social media have also brought about a twist in the ways in which individuals receive process and disseminate information at various levels (Hays, Page, & Buh, 2013). This is due to its impact and ability to convince its users as a result of its addictive nature. Social media have created an atmosphere where people can freely express ideas, thereby becoming a means to persuade and convince its users.

According to Baym (2015), "there is nothing more "social" about "social media" than there is about postcards, landline telephones, television shows, newspapers, books, or cuneiform" (p. 1). However, social media have transcended beyond ordinary landline telephones, television shows to becoming a converging medium where all these features and many more are readily available with ease and higher comfort.

Based on its nature, social media can be described as a platform that is user dominant whereby the sender can also become the receiver at the same time (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). This is based on the fact that the platform is audience dependent. For example, Facebook functions as a result of the contents posted by the users on the platform. These users act as the senders and receivers at the same time as they produce new contents for other users to consume while consuming other users' content as well. "The importance of Social media have emerged along with the 'social revolution' in consumer decision-making and information seeking that has been brought about by changing technologies and is played out through social behaviors" (Thomas & Woodside, 2016, p. 67).

Social media have become a platform for surveillance; security agencies, organizations as well as individuals use the platform in monitoring the activities of individuals as well as track them (Carah, 2014). They do this by monitoring updates, location as well as their online presence and activities.   With the increasing growth of social media networks, mass media audience no longer rely on the mainstream media platforms to satisfy their information gratification. This is supported by Strandberg (2013), who states that social media popularity has

increased the online presence of the youth and enhanced access to information and other media needs that used to be derived through the traditional media.

Social media is being strategically used by the political class most especially in times of mobilization during electioneering campaigns (Gomez, 2014). This gives them the opportunity to be closer to their followers and fans. With the aid of social media, members of the political class also involve the electorates in decision making processes as well as becoming accountable through frequent and one-on-one interaction. For example, social media played a significant role in the 13th Malaysian general election in May 2013 as well as the 2008 US election. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are among the most common social media instruments used by political office holders/seekers in propagating their cause, this is due to their uniqueness and their all-inclusiveness nature (Dick, 2012).

Organizations have also employed the use of social media in their various staff organizational developments (Jacobson & Tufts, 2013). They create social media groups that have enhanced smooth and direct communication between staff members; this has eased communication flow among the various staff of such organisations. Social media have also helped businesses grow to a substantial level. This is by the initiation between the business owner and customer or organisations client relationships. Today, business clients now have the opportunity to directly request for specific information pertaining to the goods or services they are about to purchase. This has proved to be a highly beneficial communication tool. "Since these media outlets and tools are so easy to use and nearly everyone has access to a device to engage in the communication, most people simply dive in and start using the media" (Jennings, Blount, & Weatherly, 2014, p. 97). Though some authors have

stated that social media promotes and encourages sexuality (Hasinoff, 2012), this is the result of the exposure to obscene and quite unpleasant pictures and videos users are exposed to. The bottom line is that Social media have significant positive use and is a veritable tool in gratifying social and information desires.

Social media have continued to play an obvious entertainment function as users significantly use the platforms as a means of gratifying their entertainment desires (Wolf & Olszewsk, 2015). Many youth today use social media platforms as a means of staying connected about the events and happenings in the entertainment industry, receive up to date celebrity gossips, receive alerts about latest songs and movies etc. (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012). Social media have created a new communication pattern among individuals, organizations and groups. This enabled more strategic and direct communication pattern when messages can be sent directly to the target audience and with maximum impact. It has also been able to provide better opportunities for the unemployed youths (Feuls, Fieseler, & Suphan, 2014). This is as a result of the job opportunities it creates in many segments of its operation (social media manager, content producers, media monitors etc.) as well as the vast information it provides for them.

Social media have become a highly veritable tool in government as well. This is used by various political parties and candidates before, during and after the various electioneering processes (Khan, Swar, & Lee, 2014). The platforms have also strengthened political communication among various candidates and their communities. Social media have also helped enhance the functioning of democracy in all ramifications (Gazali, 2014). For instance, in politics, citizens have the opportunity to effectively patriciate by challenging and asking questions from their

representatives as well as become a means for the political office holders to hear directly from their constituencies etc.

Social media have been used at various levels of education and monitoring (Wang, 2013). For example, teachers and students sometimes use the platforms to have various degrees of direct and indirect communication among themselves while parents who are on the same platform use the platform to directly and indirectly monitor the online activities of their children and wards. Social media provides an opportunity for various degrees of online communication as well as the establishment of an online community (Petray & Collin, 2017). With the aid of social media platforms, individuals have been able to discover a community, in which they can align themselves to, thereby creating an identity for themselves.

Social media have also been put to effective use in the medical field. This is as a result of health related mobile applications, websites and most importantly through online conversation that has been reinforced between doctor and patient. Social media have also been used in establishing an effective management system of patients who are suffering from various degrees of ailments (Tucker & Goodings, 2016). Though not without its own numerous dis advantages, Social media have continued to play series of beneficial roles that have positively and significantly impacted in various aspects of human lives (Tufts, Jacobson, & Stevens, 2015). Social media have expanded the scope of connection and made global connection and establishment of mutual relationship quite easy and fast. According to Gibson and Gibbs, (2013),

Unquestionably, social media is engaging, networked, multiple publics. More meaningful connections are developing too, beyond total numbers of comments or retweets: invitations to visit or present elsewhere; more regular correspondence with newly found scholars; applications from high quality PhD candidates who have found us through social media (p. 88).

Social media have also impacted in the journalism practice in no small way. This is as a result of its frequent use by media professionals in establishing new contact, sustaining relationships as well as breaking barriers of reaching out to their resource persons and conducting interviews (Bullard, 2015). In his own opinion, Kothari and Hickerson (2016), state that "the proliferation of social media use by journalists raises important questions about how journalism educators should support and encourage social media use by students in and outside the classroom" (p. 413). Social media have created an intense social relation especially among the youth. It has fostered across the border networking such that individuals are now opportune to communicate and interact without any limit (Brunborg, Andreas, & Kvaavik, 2017).

Social media have further strengthened human relations and human unity; this can be traced to the era of Marshal McLuhan who first propounded the word "global village" (Tucker & Goodings, 2014). Today the world has become a global room as communication and interaction has become even easier than McLuhan propounded. Social media have also influenced the photographic skills and zeal in the human mind. With social media the rate at which individuals take pictures has drastically increased. This has influenced the photographic expression among users. "One way in which Social media have influenced camera phone photography is through affording the expression of a form of visual co-presence arising out of the temporal

nature of social streaming technologies, inflected by the portability of mobile media" (Zappavigna, 2016, p. 272).

Social media have become an essential tool for activist in different ramification as it is used to project the voice of the activists (Comunello, Mulargia, & Parisi, 2016). Individuals or groups fighting for their rights have now employed the services of the various social media platforms in requesting for their rights or making their points known. Social media have helped fostered friendship. Today, millions of users make new friends through their use of social media while others sustain and keep in touch with their old or existing friends (Forbes, 2016). This has helped in promoting, maintain and sustain life long friendship.

Social media is now being used as a means of investigating and decoding the identity in which certain individuals portray. This is mostly used by detectives, security agencies or individuals. According to Maltby and Thornham (2016), they argue that; "social media and smartphone technologies within the military offer a unique environment in which to investigate the ways individuals position themselves within certain axes of institutional and cultural identities" (p. 1153).

Social media have also significantly affected the growth and development of the business sector, this is as a result of its ability to help in the promotion of the businesses as well as initiate direct communication between the business owners and consumers (Freberg & Kim, 2017). For instance, with the aid of social media, clients have the opportunity of directly communicating with business owners or representatives; this in turn serves as a means of accessing feedback for various goods and services rendered by the businesses. Social media have also fostered

effective brand management as more attention is given to client satisfaction trough effective, direct and one on one communication (Thompson, Martin, Gee, & Geurin, 2017).

Social media have played active parts in revolutionary protests and agitations, as such, different groups, bodies and organizations effectively use social media to actively mobilize people for different purposes. For example, Odabaş and Reynolds-Stenson (2017, p. 1), state that;

Students of social movements will remember that the term "Twitter revolution" was widely used during the Arab Spring. Enthusiastic journalists dubbed the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Iranian protests as such because of how effectively the use of the social media platform seemed to mobilize collective action and provide a mode of democratic information exchange within contexts of censored mainstream media.

The educational benefits of social media cannot be over emphasized. Social media platforms have continued to serve as an unimaginable role in facilitating ease in the various learning process (Albert, 2015). Based on its advantages, the platform has continued to proffer ease to the complex and rigorous patterns of education (Lewis, 2015). One important feature is its ability to provide its audience timely and largely reliable news. The platforms have become the first choice of news producers in breaking their news while social media audience also makes it a point of duty by frequently checking for news updates. This could be as a result of the minimal level of censorship that takes place on the platforms

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this part of this research, I discuss the relevance and relationship of the most applicable theory that best explain the concept of this research namely Uses and Gratifications Theory. This theory explains how media users use social media platforms to gratify the need to communicate with their friends and families who are far away from them.

2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory brings about a different dimension to the early eras of mass communication and mass society theory. These theories focus on the effects and impacts of the mass media platforms on its audience whereas, the Uses and Gratification Theory postulates that the various media audience have an impact on the media by using the media for what they need and desire at a particular point (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch 1974; Leung, 2009). The theory postulates that media audience have changed from being passive consumers of media contents and therefore assumed the position of active audience where they can use the media for whatever the wish at whatever time and by whatever means (Burakgazi & Yildirim, 2014; Lariscy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2011; Wang, Yang, Zheng, & Sundar, 2016).

Katz, Haas and Gurevitch (1973), came up with five groupings for the classification of the uses and gratifications theory they include;

1. Needs related to strengthening information, knowledge, and understanding- these can be called cognitive needs;

2. Needs related to strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experience-or affective needs;

3. Needs related to strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status-these combine both cognitive and affective elements and can be labelled integrative needs;

4. Needs related to strengthening contact with family, friends, and the world. These can also be seen as performing an integrative function;

5. Needs related to escape or tension-release which we define in terms of the weakening of contact with self and one's social roles." (p. 166-167)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is very essential and significant when examining, analysing or describing the interaction that exists between the audience and the media, most especially how the audience uses the media in soothing specific purpose or desire (Petric, Petrovcic, & Vehovar, 2011). Yet, some scholars have continuously criticize the Uses and Gratifications Theory as non-explicit and vague (Mir, 2017; Ramirez Jr, Dimmick, Feaster, & Lin, 2008), it is quite important and essential to re-emphasise that the theory remains very relevant and applicable especially in the current technological generation.

It is important to state that there are various needs by different audience for the use of media, some may use it to gratify their need to get adequate information that will help them in achieving certain needs and daily activities while others could use information accessed to gratify their entertainment needs (Burakgazi & Yildirim, 2014). According to the Uses and Gratification Theory, the is always a motive behind the use of social media or social networking sites by the audience, as such their ultimate goal for using a specific media and not another at a particular time is to achieve a goal (Wang, Gaskin, Rost, & Gentile, 2017). For instance, a user can use to

chat with friends to watching music videos on YouTube; this is as a result of his need to gratify a particular need at that point in time.

Being a popular theory in the field of Communication and Media Studies and especially in this century where technology has enabled users choose and personalize the use of media, the Uses and Gratification Theory enables its users to satisfy its curiosity at any point in time (Dhir, Chen, & Nieminen, 2016; Dimmick, Ramirez, Wang, & Lin, 2007). The Uses and Gratifications Theory has further created a clearer and wider understanding the current influence of technology and its use on media audience (Dhir, Chen, & Chen, 2017; Quan-Haase, Martin, & McCay-Peet, 2015).

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a grounded theory which seems to create an understanding of media use from the audience perspective, thereby according more strength and power to the audience's influence on the use of the media (Stannard & Sanders, 2015; (Krishnatray, Singh, Raghavan, & Varma, 2009). Media users make use of the media for various reasons and to satisfy certain desires. For instance, some Facebook users use the platform to satisfy their desire and need to communicate or stay in touch. Most importantly in this study, the media audiences use the media to keep in touch with their family and friends who are quite far away from them. Many of the families and friends have no other way to be reached than this social media platform which is also quite cost effective.

With new inventions like video calls, gratifying communication needs has also become easier as many of the social media platforms now afford the users the opportunity to make video calls, thereby having facial communication even when

they are far from each other. For students Eastern Mediterranean University, one of the most important need is to communicate with friends and families back at home. Therefore, they for quite a substantial number of hours stay online in other to communicate. The use of social media for these reasons has proved to be very effective as it has served many gratifying purposes like eliminating loneliness, boredom as well as a means of parents monitoring their children among others.

These and many more have validated the use of this theory for this research work and has proved to be the most appropriate. This is mainly because the audience/research respondents in this case make use of the various social media platforms to gratify their need and desire to communicate.

2.3 Interpersonal Communication

The sporadic growth and rapid development of the internet society has brought about dynamism in the mode and patter of communication in today's society (Petricˇ, Petrovcic, & Vehovar, 2011). Montgomery (2006), gives a succinct explanation to understanding the concept of interpersonal communication;

Interpersonal communication occurs when two or more people interact in a manner that involves verbal and nonverbal behaviours, interpersonal exchanges, and the use of behaviour that fit the specific purpose of the communicative interaction. The intended result is a change in attitudes, behaviours, or beliefs of the interactant (the person with whom one is communicating) and, perhaps, constructive resolutions (p. 57).

Interpersonal communication has also been referred to as the exchange of verbal and nonverbal cues that involve at least a sender and receiver having a direct encoding

and decoding of messages (Matusitz, 2013). The process of communication and more specifically international communication varies from culture to culture (Houston, 2002; Seymour, 2011). This is as a result of the various meanings that is ascribed to messages as a result of cultural influence.

This growth has led to the increase in digital/mobile communication which has further facilitated interpersonal communication in today's society. Also, mobile interpersonal communication has also been said to have quite a lot of economic implication as it softens the cost of communication. Interpersonal communication which has also been described as one on one communication has been said to be a vital feature for organizations to succeed (Hynes, 2012). This is as a result of the fact that organizations would be dealing with clients or customers will require special skills in communicating with their current and would-be clients. Importantly, what interpersonal communication seeks to achieve is to establish a communication or interaction between two people (Hald, Baker, & Ridder, 2015). Interpersonal communication has also provided clearer evidence to why and how people communicate (Barbato, Graham, Perse, & , 1997). However, poor interpersonal skills has been said to be very detrimental to mutual understanding and relationship (Matusitz, Breen, Zhang, & Seblega, 2013). For instance, if a company representative does not relate well with the clients, there is the possibility of the organisations loosing such client which will most probably have a ripple effect of other clients and prospective clients.

Language has also been described as an essential tool in effective interpersonal communication process as it facilitates a smooth and effective communication process (Burgers & Beukeboom, 2016). Interpersonal; communication has also been

described as an effective way of maintain relationship (Yamaguchi, 2005). For example, when there is interpersonal communication among friends, family and associates, there is the opportunity to have direct and one-on-one communication which will eventually facilitate positive and fruitful results.

2.4 Social Media as a Tool for Maintaining Relationships

One of the strongest advantages of social media is its ability to help establish, maintain and foster relationships between individuals as well as among groups. Social media possess limitless number of advantages due to its ability to create connections across borders. The physical absence of a person has a very strong tendency of negatively affecting the relationship that exists between two people (Rodriguez, 2014), but the advent of Social media have bridged the communication gap and enhanced a more cordial and mutual relationship.

To maintain a relationship has been described as quite costly and difficult to manage, as such inventions like social media have helped in maintain long distance or non-physical relationships (Kubacka, Finkenauer, Rusbult, & Keijsers, 2011). In maintaining a stable relationship, communication has been describes as the most essential phenomenon as such individuals involved in one kind of relationship or the order will have to ensure they involve themselves in a communication process that will help sustain and protect the relationship (Punyanunt-Carter, 2006).

The act of establishing relationship has been said to be present in all facet of human endeavour. For instance, organisations tend to build a solid relationship with its clients and would be clients so that they can develop a soft spot for the organization, thereby improving the sales strength of such organization. According to Zhu, Nel,

and Bhat (2006), "…when it comes to establishing specific business relationships in a particular culture, business people can resort to their own cultural values and communication strategies, which may go beyond the area of marketing to include broader social dimensions" (p. 320).

Maintain relationships also begin from little kind gestures individuals show to one another which is usually in turn extended to other members of the society. Some individuals also involve in sending greeting cards to their friends and families, paying visits as well as through phone calls and text messages (Dindia, Timmerman, Langan, Sahlstein, & Quandt, 2004). Today, sustaining such relationships has become easier with the advent of social media platforms.

However, interpersonal communication has facilitated more openness in relationships as a result of one of its vital features which is to keep conversations/interactions within the scope of the discussion (Kaplan, 1978.).

2.5 An Overview of Facebook

Over the years, Facebook has been able to serve as an essential part of human communication system. The social media platform has served as tools that facilitate/enhance communication among individuals while serving as a tool through which individuals monitor, interact and maintain a strong bond with one another (Augusto & Simões, 2017). Caers, et al. (2013), explain that;

Individuals can create an account on the website Facebook.com. After providing some personal information (name, date of birth, gender, email address), the new user chooses a password and gets account access. Facebook opts for a highly standardized layout of user accounts. Regardless of whose account it is, many features appear on

the same place on the screen, making it easy to recognize and find the data one is searching for. (p. 983-984)

"Facebook is an SNS developed in 2004 by a former Harvard undergraduate student Mark Zuckerberg, it allows users to add friends, send messages, and update personal profiles in order to notify friends and peers about themselves" (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010, p. 352). Today, Facebook has recorded over 2 billion accounts, "these users are sharing information and support in health-related Groups, organizing social, political, and community gatherings using the Events feature, and using the site to engage in relationship maintenance activities with close friends and distant acquaintances" (Ellison, Gray, Lampe, & Fiore, 2016, p. 1105).

Facebook has further expanded the level at which communication takes place as it has encourages communication between individuals, groups and virtual community (Bonsón, Escobar, & Ratkai, 2014). Facebook grew rapidly due to its strength in facilitating and easing communication process as well as its ability to help its users stay in toch without any form of hindrance as a result of distance. According to Goggin (2014);

In 10 years, Facebook has established itself as a presiding online platform. Facebook has moved well beyond its North American origins, with considerable take-up internationally across many countries, in the face of many alternative, competing social networking system, social media and app platforms (p. 1069).

Facebook has also been described as a platform that helps to relief stress and ease burden (Moreno, et al., 2014). For example an individual might be going through

stress at a particular point in time but is unable to get over such burden, with the aid of Facebook, such person is able to ease out the stress and escape from the current realities or challenges he might be going through. Facebook has also been described as a veritable too for political mobilization as political parties now use the platform as a strong interpersonal tool to have direct access to their followers and supporters (Cook & Hasmath, 2014).

2.6 An Overview of Instagram

Instagram has been describes as the new revolution in the social media that allows its uses to tell their stories and portray themselves with the aid of pictures and graphics (Reece & Danforth, 2017).

Instagram, a mobile photo (and video) capturing and sharing service, has quickly emerged as a new medium in spotlight in the recent years. It provides users an instantaneous way to capture and share their life moments with friends through a series of (filter manipulated) pictures and videos (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014, p. 595).

Since the launch of instagram, its fan base has continued to grow as it has not only enable pectoral or graphical communication; it has also enabled its users access to direct massing feature which aids interpersonal communication among its users. Instagram was initially launched in October 2010; instagram has continued to provide its users features such as imaging, ability to identify users, face filters and picture editing tools among others (Hochman & Manovich, 2013).

Instagram has facilitated picture communication and made interpersonal communication more interesting, lively as well as more explicit and illustrative.

"Photo sharing communities such as Instagram have made it possible to communicate with large groups of distributed people through an imagine it a picture of what's for dinner or a selfie perhaps more easily than through words alone" (Bakhshi, Shamma, & Gilbert, 2014, p. 965)

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of this study focuses on the research method. In this chapter the following are discussed; research methodology, design, context, population and sampling, data collection procedure and instrument, research procedures and, reliability and validity.

3.1 Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research and at the most basic level, this research method involves using statistical data to present findings to a study and overtime, lots of definitions has been offered by scholars. Cohen & Manion, (1980) defines quantitative methodology as research method that adopts empirical techniques and assertions. To get an all-encompassing definition of the methods, he defined pieces of his definition. He said empirical statement is an explanatory assertion about a specific event in the real world rather than what a specific event ought to be. He also explains that empirical assessments are forms that attempts to evaluate the extent to which a specific event or policy empirically validates a particular measure or not.

Creswell (2003) adds that, quantitative research method "employ strategies of inquiry such as experimental and surveys, and collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data" (p. 18). "Quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generate to other persons and places. The

intent is to establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory" (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 102).

According to (Demers, 2005), quantitative research focuses on obtaining and evaluating of data that is converted into figures. Specifically, in Communication and Media Studies, this method emphasizes the assessment of phenomena and/or trends and their statistical implications in media, advertising, public relations, new media and society, language and communication, intercultural communication (Danesi, 2014).

3.2 Research Design

This study is a quantitative research. This research was conducted in Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. And, The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as the name implies is the northern part of the Cyprus Island. It covers an area of 3,335 km and it has a population of over 300, 000 people. The language of communication is Turkish and the most practiced religion is Islam. The Cyprus Island is the third largest in the Mediterranean. First is Sicily and second is Sardinia. It is between these latitudes; 30.33, 35.41 and these longitudes; 32.23 and 34.55.

This research was conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean University, during the fall semester of 2016/2017 academic term, with International students registered in the university. Eastern Mediterranean University is one of the largest universities in Turkish Republic of north Cyprus. It is a public university with over 20,000 students from over 106 countries and the university offers education through 81 postgraduate and doctoral degree programs and, 100 undergraduate and school programs provided by 5 schools, 11 faculties, and Foreign Languages and English Preparatory School.

The varsity studied has two semesters in a session and this research was conducted in the fall semester of 2017/2018 session which means that research commenced in September 2017 and was concluded in January 2018.

3.3 Population and Sample

The target population of this study is international students enrolled in Turkish republic of North Cyprus's Eastern Mediterranean University. In recent years, Northern Cyprus has become one of the new destinations for international study and from literature we found that it was a gradual process because, Arslan et al said that in 2007 that there were " 40,000+ students, 25.000+ from Turkey and 4000+ from 65 different nationalities, studying at various universities in North Cyprus" (Arslan, Güven, 2007, p. 4).

In recent times, we have seen more and more migration of international students from various regions such as post-soviet countries (Armenia. Azerbaijan. Belarus. Estonia. Georgia. Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan. Latvia), Africa (Nigeria, Cameroun, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa,) to mention but a few. As for this study, we have sampled 10% of the total population of international students enrolled in the Fall 2017/2018 semester at Eastern Mediterranean University in Famagusta. In all, the university graduated a total number of Six Hundred and Eighty-Five Master's Degree students and Four Hundred and Sixty-Eight PhD students. Therefore, the population of this study is 1,153.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaires are generally known as forms expected to be completed and returned by participants of a study. They are generally inexpensive when the sample is not so

large and this method primarily requires high literacy rates and participants are co-operative. In this data collection method, responses can be computed and evaluated through quantitative methods mainly by coding Likert scale items in numerical values.

Survey is a unique research method because it allows respondents to express their ideas and beliefs and this study adopts a questionnaire developed by researcher with the help of the Supervisor. (See Appendix B)

3.5 Research Procedures

The creation of the instrument of data collection started from October 17th to November 11th and as a result. (See Appendix B)

3.6 Reliability and Validity

A reliability and validity test was carried out in the study. For the reliability, Cronbach Alpha was calculated and found at 0.971, this indicates excellent reliability. In order to ensure validity, the questionnaire was piloted among undergraduate students in the university

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into three sections; the first section is the descriptive analysis of all items on the questionnaires as they correspond with each of the research questions. The third part shows the means and attitudes of participants' response to all Likert scale questions. The fourth section contains the inferential statistical analysis which was employed to infer judgments based on one research of the study.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Demographic of respondents

Characteristics of the sample are expressed statistically in frequency and percentage distribution. Items in this category are age group, gender, educational level, faculty, year, marital status (See Table 1 to 6). This section present data collected on the items listed above.

Table 1. Participant's Age group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-23	53	15.1	15.1	15.1
	24-29	192	54.7	54.7	69.8
	30-35	106	30.2	30.2	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

From the data collected from 351 respondents of this study, result shows that majority of the respondents belong to age group 24-29 (54.4%). Those who belong to

age group 30-35 represent 30.2% and respondents aged between 18-23 were 15.1%.

Respondents aged between 24 and 35 represent 84.9% of the sample.

Table 2. Participant's Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	166	47.3	47.3	47.3
	Male	185	52.7	52.7	52.7
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	100.0

Results in Table 2 show that respondent's gender is almost equally distributed. Male

respondents are 52.7% while female respondents are 47.3%.

Table 3. Participant's Educational Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Masters	299	85.2	85.2	85.2
	PhD	52	14.81	14.8	14.8
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	100.0

Majority of the respondents are enrolled as Masters Students (85.2%). Those who are

enrolled as PhD Students are 14.8% of the sample. Result shows that no Doctoral

student participated in this study.

Table 4. Participant's Faculty

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Architecture	17	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Arts & Sciences	25	7.1	7.1	12.0
	Business and Economics	136	38.7	38.7	50.7
	Communication and Media Studies	111	31.6	31.6	82.3
	Education	8	2.3	2.3	84.6
	Engineering	11	3.1	3.1	87.7
	Health Sciences	4	1.1	1.1	88.9
	Law	2	.6	.6	89.5
	Tourism	37	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 reveals the Faculty of the respondent's study. Results show that majority of the respondents are students for the Faculty of Business and Economics (38.7%), then students in the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies (31.6%), Faculty of Tourism (10.5%), Faculty of Arts and Sciences (7.1%), Faculty of Architecture (4.8%), Faculty of Education (2.3%), Faculty of Engineering (3.1%), Faculty of Health Sciences (1.1%) and Faculty of Law (0.6%). Respondents from studying in two faculties; Faculty of Business and Economics and, Communication and Media Studies represent 70.3% of the entire sample. One of the reasons for this is that the questionnaire was prepared in English and students in the faculty of medicine, education and law are mostly Turkish

Table 5. Participant's Program Year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Year 1	208	59.3	59.3	59.3
	Year 2	99	28.2	28.2	87.5
	Year 3	29	8.3	8.3	95.7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Year 4	13	3.7	3.7	99.4
	Year 5	2	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

According to the results found for respondents' year in school. Majority of the respondents are freshmen (59.3%). Respondents in Year 2 represent 28.2% of the sample. Those in Year 3 are 8.3% while those in Year 4 and 5 are 3.7% and 0.6% of the sample, respectively.

Table 6. Participant's Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	148	42.2	42.2	42.2
	In A Relationship	149	42.5	42.5	84.6
	Married	54	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

For respondent's marital status, result shows that respondents who are single and those in a relationship are almost equally distributed. Those who are single are 42.2% and those in a relationship are 42.5%. Only 15.4% of the respondents are married. Respondents who are single and those in a relationship represent 84.7% of the sample.

4.2 Descriptive analysis of respondent's social media usage

This session presents data collected in respect to participants' social media use

Table 7. How do often you use social media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Often	179	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Often	128	36.5	36.5	87.5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sometimes	44	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	351	100.0	100.0	

To ascertain how often respondents, use social media, the social media platform they use more often, how long they spend on social media among other questions we evaluated respondents' social media usage and we found that majority of respondents use social media very often (51.0%). Those who use it often times represent 36.5% of the sample. Those who said they use it sometimes constitute only 12.5%. The sum of respondents who use social media times at short intervals are 87.5% of the sample.

Table 8. Which of these social media platform do you use most often?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	198	56.4	56.4	56.4
	Instagram	153	43.6	43.6	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Considering that two of the most used social media among university students are Facebook and Instagram, the social media platform mostly used by respondents was accessed and result shows that majority of the respondents use Facebook (56.%). Those who use Instagram more are 43.6% of the sample.

Table 9. Which of these social media platform do you use most often in connecting with Home-based friends?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	193	55.0	55.0	55.0
	Instagram	158	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Given that this study specifically measures how social media is used as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends, we asked respondents for the platform they use more in corresponding with Home-based friends. Results show that majority of the respondents use Facebook for this purpose (55.0 %). Those who use Instagram more to interact with Home-based friends are 45.0% of the sample

Table 10. How long do you spend on social media in a day?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2-4hrs	102	29.1	29.1	29.1
	5-7hrs	161	45.9	45.9	74.9
	8-10hrs	62	17.7	17.7	92.6
	11hrs and above	26	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Results displayed in Table 4:10 reveal participants' response to the number of hours they use on social media in a day. Results show that majority of the respondents use social media between 5-7hrs (45.9%), then 2-4hrs (29.1%), 8-10hrs (17.7%), and 11hrs and above (7.4%).

Table 11. How do you use social media in getting in touch with your Home-based friends?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Often	147	41.9	41.9	41.9
	Often	150	42.7	42.7	84.6
	Sometimes	54	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Results in Table 11 show how often respondents use social media in getting in touch with their Home-based friends. Majority of the respondents use social media in

getting in touch with Home-based friends many times at short intervals (84.6%).

Respondent who said they use sometimes represent only 15.4% of the entire sample.

Table 12. How do you use social media in getting in touch with your parents at home?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Excellent	159	45.3	45.3	45.3
Good	119	33.9	33.9	79.2
Just Ok	56	16.0	16.0	95.2
Poor	12	3.4	3.4	98.6
Terrible	5	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	351	100.0	100.0	

To ascertain how respondents use social media in getting in touch with their parents at home, they were asked to grade the use of social media in that regard and, many respondents said it is "excellent" which means that many of them use social media in getting in touch with their parents at home (45.3%). Then "Good" (33.9%), "Just okay" (16.0%), "poor" (3.4%) and, "Terrible" (1.4%). The sum of respondents who answered this question positively constitute 79.2% of the sample.

Table 13. How would you rate social media in respect you corresponding with Home-based friends?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Excellent	142	40.5	40.5	40.5
Good	132	37.6	37.6	78.1
Just Ok	64	18.2	18.2	96.3
Poor	8	2.3	2.3	98.6
Terrible	5	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	351	100.0	100.0	

To establish how respondents use social media in getting in touch with their Home-based friends, they were asked them to grade the use of social media in that regard. Many respondents said it is "excellent" which means that many of them use social media in getting in touch with their Home-based friends (40.5%). Then "Good" (37.6%), "Just okay" (18.2%), "poor" (2.3%) and, "Terrible" (1.4%). The sum of respondents who answered this question positively constitute 78.1% of the sample.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Items Measuring the Reasons why Respondents use Social Media as a Mechanism of Corresponding with Home base Friends

Items in this category are presented in frequency and percentage distribution. All items measure the reasons why respondents use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with home base friends (See Table 14 to 22).

Table 14. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of home sickness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	122	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Agree	145	41.3	41.3	76.1
	Undecided	47	13.4	13.4	89.5
	Disagree	18	5.1	5.1	94.6
	Strongly Disagree	19	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants representing 41.3% agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of home sickness.

Those who strongly agree represent 34.8%; 13.4% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 5.4% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of home sickness are 5.1%.

Table 15. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of culture shock

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	134	38.2	38.2	38.2
	Agree	140	39.9	39.9	78.1
	Undecided	29	8.3	8.3	86.3
	Disagree	28	8.0	8.0	94.3
	Strongly Disagree	20	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants representing 39.9% agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of culture shock. Those who strongly agree represent 38.2%; 8.3% are undecided. Those who disagree are 8.0% and those who strongly disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of culture shock are 5.7%.

Table 16. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of loneliness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	149	42.5	42.5	42.5
	Agree	114	32.5	32.5	74.9
	Undecided	57	16.2	16.2	91.2
	Disagree	15	4.3	4.3	95.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	16	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants representing 42.5% strongly agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of loneliness. Those who agree represent 32.8%; 16.2% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.6% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of loneliness are 4.3%.

Table 17. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of intimidation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	120	34.2	34.2	34.2
	Agree	125	35.6	35.6	69.8
	Undecided	50	14.2	14.2	84.0
	Disagree	30	8.5	8.5	92.6
	Strongly Disagree	26	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants representing 34.2% strongly agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of intimidation. Those who agree represent 35.6%; in order words, 70% agree to the statement,14.2% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 8.5% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of intimidation are 7.4%.

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Table 18. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends to seek Information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	126	35.9	35.9	35.9
	Agree	147	41.9	41.9	77.8
	Undecided	44	12.5	12.5	90.3
	Disagree	21	6.0	6.0	96.3
	Strongly Disagree	13	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants constituting 41.9% agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends to seek information those who strongly agree represent 35.8%; 12.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 3.7% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends to seek Information are 6.0%.

Table 19. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends for fun

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	147	41.9	41.9	41.9
	Agree	143	40.7	40.7	82.6
	Undecided	38	10.8	10.8	93.4
	Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	96.6
	Strongly Disagree	12	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 41.9% strongly agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends for fun. Those who agree

represent 40.7%; 10.8% are undecided. As such, 83% agree on the statement. Those who strongly disagree are 3.4% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends for fun are 3.1%.

Table 20. I use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of idleness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	122	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Agree	145	41.3	41.3	76.1
	Undecided	48	13.7	13.7	89.7
	Disagree	17	4.8	4.8	94.6
	Strongly Disagree	19	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In this table, majority of the participants amounting to 41.3% agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of Idleness. Those who strongly agree represent 34.8%; 13.4% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 5.4% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of Idleness are 5.1%.

Table 21. I social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of Inferiority complex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	110	31.3	31.3	31.3
	Agree	142	40.5	40.5	71.8
	Undecided	49	14.0	14.0	85.8
	Disagree	29	8.3	8.3	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	21	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

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Majority of the participants constituting 40.5% agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of inferiority complex. Those who strongly agree represent 31.3%; 13.0% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 6.0% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of home sickness are 8.3%.

Table 22. I social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of Racism

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	122	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Agree	137	39.0	39.0	73.8
	Undecided	50	14.2	14.2	88.0
	Disagree	21	6.0	6.0	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	21	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants constituting 39.0% agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of home sickness. Those who strongly agree represent 34.8%; 14.2% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 6.0% and those who disagree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of home sickness are 6.0%.

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4.4 Descriptive analysis of Items measuring the use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "Home-based friends

The following are frequency and percentage distribution of result collected from 351 respondents to measure the use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "Home-based friends. (See Table 23 to 41).

Table 23. I use social media to connect with my friends at home

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	118	33.6	33.6	33.6
	Agree	154	43.9	43.9	77.5
	Undecided	54	15.4	15.4	92.9
	Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In this table, majority of the participants constituting 43.9% agree that they use social media to connect with their friends at home. Those who strongly agree represent 33.6%; 15.4% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.0% and those who disagree that they use social media to connect with their friends at home are 3.1%.

Table 24. I use social media for problem solving among my friends at home

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	132	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Agree	145	41.3	41.3	78.9
	Undecided	38	10.8	10.8	89.7
	Disagree	26	7.4	7.4	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0

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Table 24. I use social media for problem solving among my friends at home

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	132	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Agree	145	41.3	41.3	78.9
	Undecided	38	10.8	10.8	89.7
	Disagree	26	7.4	7.4	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In Table 24, majority of the participants representing 41.3% agree that they use social media for problem solving among their friends at home. Those who strongly agree represent 37.6%; 10.8% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.0% and those who disagree that they use social media for problem solving among their friends at home are 3.1%.

Table 25. I use social media to inform my friends about the latest technological innovations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	130	37.0	37.0	37.0
	Agree	143	40.7	40.7	77.8
	Undecided	44	12.5	12.5	90.3
	Disagree	16	4.6	4.6	94.9
	Strongly Disagree	18	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants representing 40.7% agree that they use social media to inform their friends about the latest technological innovations. Those who strongly agree represent 37.0%; 12.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 5.1%

and those who disagree that they use social media to inform their friends about the latest technological innovations are 4.6%.

Table 26. I use social media to discuss about my academic activities with my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	125	35.6	35.6	35.6
	Agree	155	44.2	44.2	79.8
	Undecided	45	12.8	12.8	92.6
	Disagree	16	4.6	4.6	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

According to the results presented in Table 26, almost half of the participants constituting 44.2% agree that they use social media to discuss about my academic activities with their Home-based friends. Those who strongly agree represent 35.6%; 12.8% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 2.8% and those who disagree that they use social media to discuss about their academic activities with their Home-based friends are 2.8%.

Table 27. I use social media to discuss about my futures plans with my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	121	34.5	34.5	34.5
	Agree	138	39.3	39.3	73.8
	Undecided	53	15.1	15.1	88.9
	Disagree	16	4.6	4.6	93.4
	Strongly Disagree	23	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 39.3% agree that they use social media to discuss about their future plans with their Home-based friends. Those who strongly agree represent 34.5%; 15.1% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 6.6% and those who disagree that they use social media to discuss about their future plans with their Home-based friends are 4.6%.

Table 28. I use social media to tell my Home-based friends about my romantic relationships

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	143	40.7	40.7	40.7
	Agree	118	33.6	33.6	74.4
	Undecided	48	13.7	13.7	88.0
	Disagree	26	7.4	7.4	95.4
	Strongly Disagree	16	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In this table, most of the participants constituting 33.6% agree that they use social media to tell their Home-based friends about their romantic relationships. Those who strongly agree represent 40.7%; representing 3/4 of the participants, 13.7% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.6% and those who disagree that they use social media to tell their Home-based friends about their romantic relationships are 7.4%.

Table 29. I use social media to share information about the cultural values of my current base

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	123	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	149	42.5	42.5	77.5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Undecided	37	10.5	10.5	88.0
Disagree	24	6.8	6.8	94.9
Strongly Disagree	18	5.1	5.1	100.0
Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 42.5% agree that they use social media to share information about the cultural values of their current base. Those who strongly agree represent 35.0%; 10.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 6.8% and those who disagree that they use social media to share information about the cultural values of their current base relationships are 5.1%.

Table 30. I use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between myself and my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	133	37.9	37.9	37.9
	Agree	150	42.7	42.7	80.6
	Undecided	47	13.4	13.4	94.0
	Disagree	15	4.3	4.3	98.3
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

From this frequency table, it is evident that majority of the participants constituting 42.7% agree that they use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between them and their Home-based friends. Those who strongly agree represent 37.9%; 13.4% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 1.7% and those who disagree that they use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between them and their Home-based friends are 4.3%.

Table 31. I use social media to discuss about life challenges with my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	127	36.2	36.2	36.2
	Agree	146	41.6	41.6	77.8
	Undecided	45	12.8	12.8	90.6
	Disagree	19	5.4	5.4	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 41.6% agree that they use social media to discuss about life challenges with their Home-based friends. Those who strongly agree represent 36.2%; 12.8% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.0% and those who disagree that they use social media to discuss about life challenges with their Home-based friends are 5.4%.

Table 32. I use social media to show my Home-based friends that I care about them

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	122	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Agree	150	42.7	42.7	77.5
	Undecided	48	13.7	13.7	91.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	21	6.0	6.0	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

From this frequency table, we can identify that majority of participants constituting 42.7% agree that they use social media to show their Home-based friends that they care about them. Those who strongly agree represent 34.8%; 13.7% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 2.8% and those who disagree that they use social media to show their Home-based friends that they care about them are 2.8%.

Table 33. I use social media to show gratitude when I receive a kind gesture

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	124	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Agree	153	43.6	43.6	78.9
	Undecided	44	12.5	12.5	91.5
	Disagree	19	5.4	5.4	96.9
	Strongly Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 43.6% agree that they use social media to show gratitude when they receive a kind gesture. Those who strongly agree represent 35.3%; 12.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 3.1% and those who disagree that they use social media to show gratitude when they receive a kind gestures are 5.4%.

Table 34. I use social media to console my Home-based friends when necessary

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		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	131	37.3	37.3	37.3
	Agree	150	42.7	42.7	80.1
	Undecided	38	10.8	10.8	90.9
	Disagree	19	5.4	5.4	96.3
	Strongly Disagree	13	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants constituting 42.7% agree that they use social media to console their Home-based friends when necessary. Those who strongly agree represent 37.3%; 10.8% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 3.7% and those who disagree that they use they use social media to console their Home-based friends when necessary are 5.4%.

Table 35. I use social media to make decisions with my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	124	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Agree	141	40.2	40.2	75.5
	Undecided	49	14.0	14.0	89.5
	Disagree	24	6.8	6.8	96.3
	Strongly Disagree	13	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In this table, majority of the participants constituting 40.2% agree that they use social media to make decisions with their Home-based friends. Those who strongly agree represent 35.0%; 14.0% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 6.8% and

those who disagree that they use social media to make decisions with their Home-based friends are 3.7%.

Table 36. I use social media to discuss happenings at home

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	123	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	147	41.9	41.9	76.9
	Undecided	51	14.5	14.5	91.5
	Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	94.3
	Strongly Disagree	20	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In Table 36, it is evident that most of the participants constituting 41.9% agree that they use social media to discuss happenings at home. Those who strongly agree represent 35.0%; 14.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 2.8% and those who disagree that they use social media to discuss happenings at home are 5.7%.

Table 37. I use social media to discuss the latest news and happenings with my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	124	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Agree	148	42.2	42.2	77.5
	Undecided	45	12.8	12.8	90.3
	Disagree	20	5.7	5.7	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 42.2% agree that they use social media to discuss the latest news and happenings with their Home-based friends. Those who strongly agree represent 35.3%; 12.8% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.0% and those who disagree that they use social media to discuss the latest news and happenings with their Home-based friends are 5.7%.

Table 38. I use social media to express myself on issues I am passionate about

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	123	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	151	43.0	43.0	78.1
	Undecided	43	12.3	12.3	90.3
	Disagree	21	6.0	6.0	96.3
	Strongly Disagree	13	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Result in Table 38 shows that majority of the participants constituting 43.0% agree that they use social media to express themselves on issues that they are passionate about. Those who strongly agree represent 35.0%; 12.3% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 3.7% and those who disagree that they use social media to express themselves on issues that they are passionate about are 6.0%.

Table 39. I use social media to avoid disconnection with my Home-based friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	132	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Agree	131	37.3	37.3	74.9

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Undecided	58	16.5	16.5	91.5
	Disagree	19	5.4	5.4	96.9
	Strongly Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 37.6% strongly agree that they use social media to avoid disconnection with their Home-based friends. Those who agree represent 37.3%; 16.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 3.1% and those who disagree that they use social media to avoid disconnection with their Home-based friends are 5.4%.

Table 40. I use social media to avoid poor communication patterns

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	119	33.9	33.9	33.9
	Agree	130	37.0	37.0	70.9
	Undecided	66	18.8	18.8	89.7
	Disagree	22	6.3	6.3	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Result in Table 40 shows that majority of the participants constituting 37.0% agree that they use social media to avoid poor communication patterns. Those who strongly agree represent 33.9%; 18.8% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 4.0% and those who disagree that they use social media to avoid poor communication patterns are 6.3%.

Table 41. I use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of my friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	126	35.9	35.9	35.9
	Agree	141	40.2	40.2	76.1
	Undecided	51	14.5	14.5	90.6
	Disagree	22	6.3	6.3	96.9
	Strongly Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants constituting 40.2% agree that I use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of my friends. Those who strongly agree represent 35.9%; 14.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 3.1% and those who disagree that they use social media to share information about the cultural values of their current base relationships are 6.3%.

4.5 Descriptive Analysis of Items Measuring the Use of Social Media as a Mechanism of Corresponding with Friends as Opposed to the Conventional Telephone Conversations

The following are frequency and percentage distribution of data collected from 351 respondents to measure the social media as a mechanism of corresponding with friends as opposed to the conventional telephone conversations (See Table 42 to 49).

Table 42. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is cheaper

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	145	41.3	41.3	41.3
	Agree	133	37.9	37.9	79.2
	Undecided	49	14.0	14.0	93.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	14	4.0	4.0	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the participants amounting to 41.3% strongly agree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is cheaper. Those who agree represent 37.9%; 14.0% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 2.8% and those who disagree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is cheaper are 4.0%.

Table 43. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it extinct space and time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	140	39.9	39.9	39.9
	Agree	141	40.2	40.2	80.1
	Undecided	47	13.4	13.4	93.4
	Disagree	17	4.8	4.8	98.3
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In this table, result of participants' response shows that majority of the participants constituting 40.2% agree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it extinct space and time. Those who strongly agree represent 39.9%; 13.4% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 1.7% and those who disagree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it extinct space and time are 4.8%.

Table 44. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more efficient

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	138	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Agree	151	43.0	43.0	82.3
	Undecided	35	10.0	10.0	92.3
	Disagree	17	4.8	4.8	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In Table 44, respondents were asked if they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more efficient. Result shows that majority of the participants constituting 43.0% agree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more efficient. Those who strongly agree represent 39.3; 10.0% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 2.8% and those who disagree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more efficient are 4.8%.

Table 45. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it allows multi-tasking

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	132	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Agree	159	45.3	45.3	82.9
	Undecided	44	12.5	12.5	95.4
	Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	98.3
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In response to "I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it allows multi-tasking" result shows that majority of the participants constituting 45.3% agree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it allows multi-tasking. Those who strongly agree represent 37.6%; 12.5% are undecided. Those who strongly disagree are 1.7% and those who disagree that they use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it allows multi-tasking are 2.8%.

Table 46. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it has video features

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	140	39.9	39.9	39.9
	Agree	156	44.4	44.4	84.3
	Undecided	34	9.7	9.7	94.0
	Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	97.2
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the respondents agree that the use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it has video features (44.4%). 39.9% of the strongly agree. 9.7% are undecided. 3.1% disagree that use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it has video features and 2.8% strongly disagree.

Table 47. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more accessible

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	134	38.2	38.2	38.2
	Agree	162	46.2	46.2	84.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Undecided	32	9.1	9.1	93.4
	Disagree	16	4.6	4.6	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In response to "I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more accessible", result shows that 46.2% agree with this statement. 38.2% of the students strongly agree. 9.1% are undecided and 2.0% strongly disagree and 4.6% disagree.

Table 48. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it provides a better way of conversation (through pictures, voice note etc.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	148	42.2	42.2	42.2
	Agree	153	43.6	43.6	85.8
	Undecided	35	10.0	10.0	95.7
	Disagree	10	2.8	2.8	98.6
	Strongly Disagree	5	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In response to "I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it provides a better way of conversation (through pictures, voice note etc.)", result shows that 43.6% agree with this statement. 42.2% of the students strongly agree. 10.0% are undecided and 5% strongly disagree and 2.8% disagree.

Table 49. I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it provides a wider access to communicate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	117	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Agree	154	43.9	43.9	77.2
	Undecided	58	16.5	16.5	93.7
	Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	96.9
	Strongly Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	351	100.0	100.0	

In response to "I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it provides a wider access to communicate", result shows that 43.9% agree with this statement. 33.3% of the students strongly agree. 16.5% are undecided and 3.1% strongly disagree and disagree, respectively.

4.6 Mean and Attitudes of Respondents

To establish the average for the participants' response to all Likert scale questions, we present the means and attitudes of reasons why International students use social media in maintaining relationships with Home-based friends, use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with Home-based friends and, use of social media as a mechanism of corresponding with friends as opposed to the conventional telephone conversations. For the cut point, Bal's (2004) suggestion are taken as; 1=Strongly agree, (1-1.79 SA) 2=agree, (1.80-2.59 A) 3=Undecided, (2.60-3.39 U) 4=Disagree (3.40-4.19 D) and 5= Strongly Disagree (4.20-5 SD).

Table 50. Means and attitudes for reasons why International students use social media in maintaining relationships with Home-based friend

Statements	Means	Attitudes

Home sickness	2.05	**A**
Culture shock	2.03	**A**
Loneliness	1.96	**A**
Intimidation	2.19	**A**
Seeking Information	2.00	**A**
Fun	1.85	**A**
Idleness	2.05	**A**
Inferiority complex	2.17	**A**
Racism	2.09	**A**

Table 50 shows the means and attitudes of why international students use social media in maintaining relationships with Home-based friend. On average, it is evident that respondents agreed with all items; home sickness, culture shock, loneliness, intimidation, seeking information, fun, idleness, inferiority complex, and racism.

Table 51. Means and attitudes measuring use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with Home-based friends

Statement	Means	Attitudes
I use social media every day to connect with my friends at home	2.00	**A**
I use social media for problem solving among my friends at home	1.97	**A**
I use social media to inform my friends about the latest technological innovations	2.00	**A**
I use social media to discuss about my academic activities with my Home-based friends	1.95	**A**
I use social media to discuss about my futures plans with my Home-based friends	2.09	**A**
I use social media to tell my Home-based friends about my romantic relationships	2.01	**A**
I use social media to share information about the cultural values of my current base	2.05	**A**

I use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between us	1.89	**A**
I use social media to discuss about life challenges with my Home-based friends	1.99	**A**
I use social media to show my Home-based friends that I care about them	1.99	**A**
I use social media to show gratitude when I receive a kind gesture	1.97	**A**
I use social media to console my Home-based friends when necessary	1.95	**A**
I use social media to make decisions with my Home-based friends	2.03	**A**
I use social media to discuss happenings at home	2.02	**A**
I use social media to discuss the latest news and happenings with my Home-based friends	2.01	**A**
I use social media to express myself on issues I am passionate about	2.00	**A**
I use social media to avoid disconnection with my Home-based friends	1.99	**A**
I use social media to avoid poor communication patterns	2.09	**A**
I use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of my friends	2.01	**A**

Table 51 shows the means and attitudes of use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with Home-based friends. Out of all items measured in this category respondents agreed. Results show that on average, respondents agreed with all categories i.e. I use social media every day to connect with my friends at home; I use social media for problem solving among my friends at home; I use social media to inform my friends about the latest technological innovations; I use social media to discuss about my academic activities with my Home-based friends, and so on.

Table 52. Mean and attitudes social media as a mechanism of corresponding with friends as opposed to the conventional telephone conversations

I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because;	Means	Attitudes
It is cheaper	1.89	**A**
It extinct space and time	1.88	**A**
It is more efficient	1.89	**A**
It allows multi-tasking	1.86	**A**
It has video features	1.85	**A**
It is more accessible	1.86	**A**
It provides a better way of conversation (through pictures. voice note etc.)	1.78	**A**
It provides a wider access to communicate	1.99	**A**

The table above shows the means and attitudes of social media as a mechanism of corresponding with friends as opposed to the conventional telephone conversations. On average, it is evident that respondents agreed to all item; I use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is cheaper, it extinct space and time, it is more efficient, it allows multi-tasking, it has video features, it is more accessible, it provides a better way of conversation (through pictures. voice note etc.) and, it provides a wider access to communicate.

4.7 Independent Samples T Test with Respect to Gender

Independent Samples T-tests is employed in this section to compare means of male and female international students who use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with Home-based friends. Throughout this study p is taken at the *p*< 0.05 level.

Table 53. Independent Samples Test

	f	Sig	t	df	p
I use social media to connect with my friends at home	1.202	.274	-1.735	349	.084
			-1.745	348.999	.082
I use social media for problem solving among my friends at home	1.120	.291	-.244	349	.808
			-.242	336.255	.809
I use social media to inform my friends about the latest technological innovations	.569	.451	-1.000	349	.318
			-.999	342.942	.319
I use social media to discuss about my academic activities with my Home-based friends	.051	.821	-2.067	349	.039
			-2.073	347.893	.039
I use social media to discuss about my futures plans with my Home-based friends	.806	.370	-1.487	349	.138
			-1.487	344.787	.138
I use social media to tell my Home-based friends about my romantic relationships	.226	.635	-.225	349	.822
			-.224	336.534	.823
I use social media to share information about the cultural values of my current base	.465	.496	-1.231	349	.219
			-1.229	341.402	.220
I use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between myself and my Home-based friends	.356	.551	-1.652	349	.099
			-1.661	348.971	.098
I use social media to discuss about life challenges with my Home-based friends	4.980	.026	-2.826	349	.005

			-2.855	346.836	.005
I use social media to show my Home-based friends that I care about them	.175	.676	-2.064	349	.040
			-2.072	348.357	.039
I use social media to show gratitude when I receive a kind gesture	.544	.461	-.728	349	.467
			-.731	348.710	.465
I use social media to console my Home-based friends when necessary	.350	.554	-.993	349	.322
			-.993	345.348	.321
I use social media to make decisions with my Home-based friends	.418	.519	-2.428	349	.016
			-2.436	348.162	.015
I use social media to discuss happenings at home	.027	.869	-.986	349	.325
			-.985	344.087	.325
I use social media to discuss the latest news and happenings with my Home-based friends	.332	.565	-1.284	349	.200
			-1.282	342.302	.201
I use social media to express myself on issues I am passionate about	.664	.416	-1.409	349	.160
			-1.413	348.113	.159
I use social media to avoid disconnection with my Home-based friends	.128	.721	-1.635	349	.103
			-1.644	348.977	.101
I use social media to avoid poor communication patterns	1.384	.240	-2.492	349	.013
			-2.501	348.463	.013
I use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of my friends	.795	.373	-2.962	349	.003
			-2.982	348.943	.003

p < 0.05

Result shows that there are statistical significant relationship in six scores; First, "I use social media to discuss about my academic activities with my Home-based friends"; female students (M= 1.83; SD=0.93) and Male (M= 2.05; SD=0.98) *t* (351) =-2.067, *p* = 0.39. Second, "I use social media to discuss about life challenges with my Home-based friends" female students (M= 1.83; SD=0.92) and Male (M=2.14; SD=1.12) *t* (351) =-2.826, *p* = 0.005. Third, "I use social media to show my Home-based friends that I care about them"; female students (M= 1.88; SD=0.95) and Male (M= 2.08; SD=1.07) *t* (351) =-2.064, *p* = 0.039. Fourth, "I use social media to make decisions with my Home-based friends"; female students (M=1.89; SD=1.01) and Male (M=2.16; SD=1.07) *t* (351) =-2.428, *p* = 0.15. Fifth, "I use social media to avoid poor communication patterns" female students" (M=1.95; SD=1.02) and Male (M=2.22; SD=1.09) *t* (351) =-2.492, p = 0.13. Sixth, "I use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of my friends"; female students (M= 1.84; SD=0.94) and Male (M=2.16; SD=1.06) t (351) =-2.962, p = 0.003.

To ascertain which group (Male or Female) were accessed higher, we check Group Statistics Box and we found that male respondents accessed these items more than females. Therefore, we draw a conclusion that male respondents use social media to discuss about their academic activities with their home-based friends; use social media to discuss about life challenges with their home-based friends; use social media to show their home-based friends that they care about them; they use social media to make decisions with their home-based friends; they use social media to avoid poor communication patterns and, they use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of my friends more than the female respondents.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This portion of the study consists of three parts. The first part is the summary of the study which is the brief information of the case study bases on the data analyses. The second part includes conclusion drawn from the study which is the part answers the main research question for this study. The results for the relevant research questions will be explained in this part. In the third part recommendations for further research will be made.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This research is based on a study of how university students use social media platforms as a tool of communication with their family and friends back in their various homes. The research examined the various factors that aid student communication as well as the motivations behind their urge to communicate with their loved ones.

The study adopted a quantative research methodology while randomly sampling of international students in the masters and PhD categories at the Eastern Mediterranean University. This enabled us gather data from students who are miles away from their family. A fifty three (53) item questionnaire was designed and distributed to respondents in this study who are of different nationalities and background.

Three hundred and fifty one respondents in total answered the questions. Respondents' gender, department, marital status, use of social media among others were answered in the demographics session and were analysed with the Statistical package for Social Science SPSS program while the other parts which seek to answer questions pertaining to the research questions were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics.

5.2 Conclusions Drawn from the Study

The result of this research is presented in a descriptive and inferential statistics format. Among the 351 respondents in the survey, 166 representing 47.3% are females while 185 representing 52.7% of the respondents are males. Significant number of the respondents do not only use social media platforms effectively, they also use the platforms in communicating with their friends, families and loved ones who are quite a distant from them. This study also indicates that international students in EMU find social media as a quite effective tool in communicating and even in establishing new relationships.

RQ1: Why do students use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "home-based friends"?

This research question seeks to provide answers to why international students use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with their Home-based friends. Result from the study indicated that students use social media as a mechanism of corresponding with their Home-based friends because of home sickness. This is mostly whenever the feel lonely or feel left out in some of the activities that usually take place at home such as religious and cultural events (Bian & Leung, 2015).

Respondents also attest to the fact that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of culture shock due to their newness in the environment or when they see some amazing cultural practices that differs from theirs. Social media is also used to keep in touch with Home-based friends because of loneliness. In many cases, due to the fact that they are in an unknown environment, they tend to feel lonely. With the aid of social media, they will be able to interact and communicate with their friends there by becoming engaged in an activity.

According to the findings in this study, a significant number of respondents agree that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends because of intimidation. This intimidation could vary in different ways and forms and could occur among their religious, social or academic peers. Also the study found out that majority of the respondents agrees that they social media as a mechanism of corresponding with Home-based friends to seek information. This is further supported by Weiser (2001); who states that "it enables us to perform routine tasks quickly and efficiently; making flight plans, purchasing new books and clothing, checking movie schedules, searching for employment, catching the latest news, and performing research…" (p. 723) Information could range from events and happenings at home, which could also, range from politics, weddings and academics amongst others. In the study, findings indicate that social media is used to keep in touch with Home-based friends for fun as well as when the user is idle or have less work to do. This is a way of keeping the mind busy and not getting involved in things that could lead to violence etc. The findings in this study also indicate that majority of the international students studying abroad make use of social media in order to get over certain issues like inferiority complex as a result of being in quite a

strange environment and also when they are faced by issues of racism and segregation. Racism could occur as a result of the difference in culture, religion, color, background, orientation and language among others. Therefore this study has been able to find out that international students use social media for various reasons due to inferiority complex, racism, boredom, as well as need to be informed among others.

RQ2: To what extent do students schooling abroad use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "Home-based friends"?

With findings from research question one; it is clear international students in EMU use social media and for various reasons. This research question seeks to find out the extent to which these students use the social media platforms in getting across to their family at home.

According to the finding in this research, significant numbers of the respondents agree that they use social media to connect with their friends at home as well as for problem solving in times of need, these kinds of problems includes settling arguments or disputes, communication gap among others. Our findings also indicate that the use of social media keeps them abreast of latest technological innovations so as to keep them well updated and informed promptly. Respondents also agree that they use social media to discuss about their academic activities with their Home-based friends. Though research has found out that social media is a distraction to academic activities, it is also a useful tool in promoting academic excellence (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). This helps them develop mentally and psychologically. Respondents also significantly agree that they use social media to discuss about

futures plans with their Home-based friends as well as tell their Home-based friends about their romantic relationships. This is one of the most common conversations that occur between youth as they also use such conversations as a way of escaping from their day to day activities.

Findings from this study indicate that majority of the students attest to the fact that they use social media to share information about the cultural values of in their current base as well as use social media to strengthen the relationship that exists between them and their Home-based friends. Studies have shown that social media is a great tool in the provision of prompt information to its users. (Wei & Lo, 2006) Our result also indicate that students use social media to discuss about life challenges with their Home-based friends, show their Home-based friends that they care about them through constant check-ups and interaction as well as show gratitude when they receive a kind gesture from their Home-based friends. Results also indicate that students use social media to console their Home-based friends when necessary, make decisions with their Home-based friends as well as discuss happenings at home.

From the results in this study, analysis indicates that students use social media to discuss the latest news and happenings in and around their current location with their Home-based friends. They also use social media to express themselves on issues they are passionate about, avoid poor communication patterns, to keep their thoughts in the heart of their friends, as well as avoid disconnection with my Home-based friends through constant check-ups, interactions and conversations.

RQ3: How do students perceive the social media as a mechanism of corresponding with friends as opposed to the conventional cell-phone conversations?

According to the findings in this study, respondents agree that they use social media more often as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is cheaper; they also use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it extinct space and time. Results also indicate that the respondents use social media as opposed to conventional telephone conversation because it is more efficient, allows multi-tasking, has video features, more accessible, provides a wider access to communicate as well as due to the fact that it provides a better way of conversation (through pictures, voice note etc.)

RQ4: Is there a statistical significant difference as to how male and female students use social media as a tool for maintaining relationship with "Home-based friends"?

Statistical findings in this study indicate that male respondents use social media to discuss about their academic activities with their Home-based friends more that the females also results from a statistical analysis show that male respondents use social media to discuss about life challenges with their home-based friends more often than female respondents. in this study, results also indicate that male respondents use social media to show their Home-based friends that they care about them, use social media to make decisions with their Home-based friends, use social media to avoid poor communication patterns as well as use social media to keep my thoughts in the heart of their friends as against the female respondents.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the sample size and the nature of the respondents in this study, it could be stated that this study could be generalizable to international students studying abroad. Further studies could conduct a qualitative study on the use of technological devices

in maintaining relationship with Home-based friends. Other studies could also carry out the communication challenges international students experience during their study abroad. In conclusion a research could be carried out to measure the negative impact of social media on the academic performance of international students in universities

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