

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM ON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS AMONG  
YOUTH AFTER COVID 19**

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the impact of Instagram on mental health disorders among the youth in Kampala District in the post-COVID-19 era. The study incorporates a thorough literature review, drawing from previous research on the subject, and establishes a theoretical framework to outline the research objectives. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather comprehensive data.

Data collection involved conducting surveys and in-depth interviews with youth to understand their interactions with Instagram as a social media platform. The research also includes valuable insights from medical professionals gathered through interviews conducted at three medical facilities in Kampala: Mulago Referral Hospital, Naguru Hospital, and Kairos Hospital. These facilities have treated cases relevant to the study, providing critical perspectives on the issue.

The analysis of the collected data is presented in various forms, including pie charts and tables, which illustrate the statistical findings. The qualitative data offers a deeper understanding of the personal experiences and perceptions of the youth regarding Instagram's influence on their mental health.

The dissertation concludes with a comprehensive discussion of the findings, highlighting the significant impact of Instagram on mental health disorders among the youth in Kampala District. Based on the results, recommendations are provided to address these issues and suggest potential interventions for improving mental health outcomes in this demographic.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this Dissertation to my Dad and Mom, Mr and Mrs Peter and Stella Makawa who have funded my education and provided support for my research both financially and emotionally.

## APPRECIATION

I take this opportunity to appreciate the School of Journalism, Media, and Communication for giving me the knowledge, and skills in research, by granting me this opportunity to conduct my research project hence being able to complete my research successfully.

I appreciate Mr. Acaye Francis for supervising me as I conducted my research. His guidance and follow-up have been of immense value, hence completing this research project successfully



DECLARATION

I, MAKAWA PEACE ELIZABETH with registration number S21B04/014, hereby state that this research report is the true account of my current findings.

I confirm that this report has not been submitted in whole or in part to any other academic institution for any awards.

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MAKAWA PEACE ELIZABETH

APPROVAL

I hereby certify that Ms. MAKAWA PEACE ELIZABETH registration number S21B04/014, research activity, has been supervised by me. I confirm that the report she has developed has been directly under my supervision.

I, therefore, approve that it be submitted to the School of Journalism, Media, and Communication in partial fulfillment for the award of a Bachelor's Degree.

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Date: -----

MR. ACAYE FRANCIS

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Instagram is an application that has arguably been the focus of a multitude of studies that didn't possibly for its mental health effects in recent years. Each concludes that the application has the potential to break down someone's self-esteem, body image, and overall happiness from a young age. Long-term use of Instagram is also associated with an elevated risk of the development of eating disorders such as depression. (Jason Crosby, 2022)

Research conducted by Twenge et al. (2020) indicated that the rise in mental health challenges among individuals, especially youth, is a result of prolonged social isolation and increased screen time on platforms like Instagram. The disruption of daily routines, uncertainty about the future, and exposure to distressing news on Instagram have contributed to heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and stress in the post-pandemic period.

Recent research cited by The Carlson Law Firm indicates that Instagram is linked to a rise in mental health problems among teenagers. Studies have also connected increases in depression, anxiety, disorders related to eating, self-injury behaviors, thoughts of suicide, and suicide tries with the use of Instagram (The Carlson Law Firm, 2023).

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

Social media platforms, in particular Instagram has become a pervasive presence in the lives of many youths. While it can offer positive benefits such as social connection and support, it can also have negative effects on mental health. Studies have found that excessive use of social media particularly Instagram is associated with high levels of depression and anxiety among young people. Instagram use has also been linked to a range of mental health disorders like body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and decreased life satisfaction, especially among young girls (Fardouly et al 2018; Huesman, McLaughlin et al., 2019 , Masterson et al., 2020)

Research has also shown that social comparison is a primary reason why young people feel worse after using Instagram (Vogel et al., 2019). Comparing oneself to others on social media can result in negative self-perceptions and contribute to the development of anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric issues.

It has been noted that Instagram promotes constant social comparison due to its emphasis on curated images and the lives of others (Perloff, 2014). Therefore, users are most likely to experience negative emotions when they perceive themselves as successful compared to others on Instagram. (Fardouly et al, 2018). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 10-20% of adolescents experience mental disorders.

According to an article from The Carlson Law firm, recent studies have suggested that Instagram causes increases in mental health issues for teens. Researchers have also linked spikes of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harming behaviors, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts with Instagram use.

A study by Fobes and Turner (2020) highlighted that excessive time spent on Instagram may lead to increased feelings of anxiety and depression among adolescents. The constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles on Instagram can create unrealistic standards and create a sense of inadequacy among users, particularly the youth demographic.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There has been a notable and organized rise in mental health disorders among young people in Kampala district in recent years. The increase is closely connected to the utilization of social media sites, with Instagram playing a major role, particularly following the COVID-19 outbreak. The negative impacts consist of both a tragic death toll and the emergence of antisocial conduct. These obstacles underscore the pressing necessity for heightened awareness and comprehension of mental health concerns among youth. My study focuses on investigating the influence of social media on mental health and creating methods to increase knowledge and assistance for young people in Kampala.

### 1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Explore the prevalence of mental health disorders among youth in Kampala district related to Instagram usage.
- Investigate the factors contributing to these mental health issues, with a particular focus on Instagram.
- Propose strategies to address and mitigate mental health disorders among the youth in Kampala district.

## 1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will explore the effects of Instagram on the mental well-being of young people in the Kampala district to gain a thorough understanding.

- What types of mental health disorders do young people in Kampala district go through?
- How has Instagram played a role in the increase of these mental health issues?
- What plans can be put into place to assist these young people in conquering their mental health obstacles?
- What is the extent of mental health issues among young people related to Instagram?

## 1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

### 1.6.1 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The study will take place in various youth and healthcare facilities in Kampala district. The process will include interviewing both young people and healthcare providers who have experience with mental health issues in different areas of the district. This method strives to collect a wide range of views from various angles and areas, offering a thorough understanding of the frequency and consequences of mental health problems linked to Instagram usage in young people.

### 1.6.2 CONTENT SCOPE

Researchers have indeed investigated the link between the use of Instagram and mental health issues, such as eating disorders, body image worries, and social anxiety. Moreover, certain research examines the impact that using Instagram may have on the mental health of individuals. These studies frequently indicate that people who utilize social media tend to experience higher levels of anxiety and depression symptoms. It is still uncertain if using social media causes these conditions or feelings to make individuals more inclined to use platforms like Instagram. More research is required to understand the exact cause-and-effect relationships involved in these connections.

### 1.6.3 TIME SCOPE

The research project will span from March to July 2024, covering five months. This timeframe allows for comprehensive data collection, analysis, and evaluation. During this period, the researcher will engage in various activities including literature reviews, fieldwork, experiments, and collaboration with experts in the field. Starting in March, the initial phase will focus on setting up the research framework, defining objectives, and establishing methodologies. April and May will be dedicated to intensive data collection and preliminary analysis. By June, the researcher will be working on the findings, identifying patterns, and drawing conclusions. The final month, July, will be reserved for compiling the results, preparing reports, and presenting the findings. This structured timeline ensures that each stage of the research is given adequate attention, facilitating a thorough and methodical approach to the study. The ultimate goal is to produce insightful and reliable results that contribute significantly to the field of study.

## 1.7 JUSTIFICATION

The rise in social media use during the COVID-19 pandemic is attributed to people trying to stay connected while isolated. Platforms such as Instagram have become the main way people interact socially, entertain themselves, and share information. It is essential to comprehend the impact of this increase in usage on mental health, especially in young people, to create successful mental health interventions. The lockdown imposed by the Ugandan government during the pandemic worsened this situation by causing disruptions in their daily routines, difficulties in education, and increased feelings of loneliness. Instagram, known for its visually focused and often perfect content, may have a distinct influence on young users, leading to a need for further exploration of this connection. Research indicates an increase in mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and dissatisfaction. Examining the particular influence of Instagram could offer a focused understanding of how this platform plays a role in these problems and aid in creating precise tactics to reduce its adverse consequences. Concentrating on the youth in Kampala District provides a specific comprehension of the problem. Cultural, socio-economic, and educational factors specific to this area can impact the way Instagram impacts mental well-being. This study can offer localized information that can be utilized to customize mental health services and policies in Kampala District.

Understanding how Instagram affects mental health can help create interventions and policies to encourage healthier use of social media. This study can help educators, parents, mental health professionals, and policymakers in developing supportive settings to promote mental wellness in young people. This research will add to the overall knowledge of social media and mental health. Concentrating on the period after COVID-19 will enhance comprehension of how shifts in social media usage due to the pandemic impact mental health, offering insights that have worldwide significance.



## 1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research conducted on the features of Instagram such as photos, videos, and live streams, may contribute to problematic usage due to the motivation for seeking certain content to fulfill needs, such as entertainment or social interaction (Whiting and Williams, 2013); (Kircaburun and Griffiths, 2018) indicate that using Instagram could harm mental well-being, emphasizing the need for additional studies in this area. Through studying the effectiveness of these actions, researchers can discover methods to improve the psychological well-being of Instagram users.

Social media has different effects on different groups, especially marginalized communities. Singh and colleagues (2021) discovered that psychological distress among Indigenous Canadians on Instagram is caused by social comparison and internalized racism. By studying how Instagram affects mental well-being in various populations, researchers can recognize and tackle disparities in mental health. An example is research conducted by Warnock-Parkes et al. (2021) which discovered that using a self-comparison intervention through Instagram stories led to enhanced body image and mood when compared to a control group. This indicates that Instagram has the potential to be a useful platform for providing mental health treatments, a significant discovery for professionals and researchers in the field of mental health.

## 1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Social Comparison Theory (SCT). This states that individuals engage in social comparisons to evaluate their worth and abilities, this process is intensified by social media where individuals compare themselves to others who present idealized versions of their lives (Festinger, 1954; Tesser and Collins, 1988). Concerning Instagram use, the theory suggests that youth may be more likely to experience negative mental health outcomes such as social comparison and body dissatisfaction.

### Relevance of Social Comparison Theory

Instagram is characterized by the sharing of curated and often idealized images, which can lead to negative social comparisons among youth. These comparisons can increase incidences of feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction, contributing to mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. The current, broader concept of social comparison theory therefore includes "any process in which individuals relate their characteristics to those of others" (Buunk & Gibbons, 2000, p. 491) and encompasses comparisons on many different dimensions.

Factors that govern content visibility on Instagram often promote posts that give rise to high engagement. Youth may find themselves exposed disproportionately to content that highlights unattainable lifestyles or appearances, intensifying feelings of loneliness and anxiety. This is particularly relevant for adolescents and young adults who are in critical stages of identity formation (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). When individuals compare their ordinary lives to the extraordinary portrayals they see online, it can lead to negative self-evaluations and feelings of dissatisfaction (Perloff, 2014).

Studies have attempted to establish the correlation between extensive social media use and increased distress among adolescents. For instance, youth spending more than three hours daily on social media platforms are at a higher risk of mental health issues, including depressive symptoms and eating disorders. For instance, studies have shown that users who spend more time viewing fitness and beauty-related posts report higher levels of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating behaviors (Fardouly et al., 2015).

While some adolescents may use Instagram to connect and find community, the negative impacts of social comparison often outweigh these benefits, particularly when youth are already vulnerable due to the isolation experienced during the pandemic.

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms like Instagram have many uses, including social connection, education, and entertainment. Over the years, social media usage has increased steadily, gaining more popularity. In 2016, Instagram had millions of weekly users actively contributing (Zainuddin et al., 2022).

According to Woods and Scott (2016), increasing use of social media can lead to lowered self-esteem, social anxiety, and depression. A study by Fardouly et al. (2018) evaluated the mental health of preadolescents to determine if monitoring their screen time had an impact. The negative effect highlighted was the presence of social comparison. Instagram platforms, where users display their lives, many compare themselves to the photos and videos they see online (Escobar-Viera et al., 2018; Fardouly et al., 2018; Muhammad, 2018). Variables such as life satisfaction, depression, and level of satisfaction with appearance were measured. Participants whose parents controlled their time on social media reported better mental health statuses than those without restrictions (Fardouly et al., 2018).

Mental health outcomes such as suicidal ideation decreased empathy and social anxiety have been linked to social media usage (Berryman et al., 2018; Foroughi et al., 2021). The study by Koronczai and Demetrovics (2022) discussed image-based social media. Image-based social media refers to social media such as Instagram, which frequently feature posts that include editing and filters to improve physical appearance. Reproduced, the impact of Instagram on mental health disorders among youth is a complex issue that requires further research. While some studies have found a significant relationship between excessive Instagram use and anxiety and depression, other studies have found that social media use does not necessarily lead to mental health issues. Mindfulness interventions have shown promising results in addressing these concerns. Nonetheless, it is crucial to prioritize ethical considerations when conducting research involving social media use among youth to ensure participant safety, confidentiality, and privacy.

**3.0 Design of research**

This research utilizes a mixed-methods approach, which includes gathering and evaluating quantitative and qualitative information.

**3.0.1 Collection of Data in Numerical Form**

Quantitative data will be gathered using a survey to assess mental health symptoms and behaviors, such as depression, anxiety, and self-harm, along with the frequency and length of time spent on Instagram. Demographic data of participants will be collected to assess whether specific attributes can forecast mental health results.

**3.0.2 Collecting Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data will be gathered by conducting interviews or focus groups with a smaller number of participants who have reported facing mental health issues linked to their use of Instagram. Open-ended questions will be utilized to investigate participants' encounters, feelings, and actions to discover any recurring themes or patterns.

**3.0.3 Integration of data**

It is vital to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data after gathering them. Quantitative data will help uncover trends or patterns in mental health and Instagram usage, while qualitative data will offer a deeper insight into the personal and social significance of these experiences. This thorough strategy intends to provide a complete overview of how Instagram usage affects the mental well-being of young people.

**3.0.4. Justification of the Mixed-Methods Approach**

Researching mental health disorders in youth-related to Instagram use is intricate and multifaceted, requiring a thorough research strategy. Hence, this research employs a hybrid design integrating qualitative and quantitative methods.

### **3.0.5 Approach to Quantitative Research**

Surveys and questionnaires are used to quantify the occurrence and frequency of mental health issues and youth engagement with social media. This method offers statistical data that can be examined with statistical software, aiding in the ability to apply findings to larger groups of people. This research will collect information about age, gender, frequency of Instagram usage, and if mental health disorders are present. This information can be quantitatively analyzed to detect trends and patterns and to make statistical inferences about the connection among these variables.

### **3.0.6 Approach to Qualitative Research**

Qualitative approaches, like conducting interviews, are ideal for investigating how young people perceive mental health issues and their use of Instagram. These techniques yield extensive, detailed data that can be examined utilizing thematic analysis and other qualitative research methods. Interviews will be conducted to collect information on the personal experiences of young people with mental health issues who are active on Instagram, leading to a better grasp of the impact of social media on them. Analyzing this qualitative data can help in recognizing patterns and understanding particular factors that play a role in the emergence and persistence of mental health issues in youth who utilize Instagram.

### **3.0.7 Merging Both Methods**

Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods will offer a more thorough comprehension of the intricate connection between youth mental health disorders and social media usage. By combining data from both methods, the results can be confirmed and combined, ultimately improving the study's credibility.

### **3.1 METHODS OF RESEARCH**

#### **3.1.1 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY INVESTIGATION**

This study uses a combination method that involves collecting and assessing information from numerical and descriptive sources.

#### **3.1.2 GATHERING OF NUMERICAL INFORMATION.**

Quantitative data has been collected through a survey evaluating mental health markers and patterns of Instagram usage. Data on participant demographics will be gathered to assess if certain characteristics can predict mental health outcomes.

#### **3.1.3 GATHERING QUALITATIVE DATA**

Qualitative data has been collected through interviews or focus groups with a small group of individuals who have recorded mental health problems associated with their usage of Instagram. Open-ended questions will be used to explore participants' experiences, emotions, and behaviors to uncover themes or patterns.

#### **3.1.4 DATA INTEGRATION**

Once both numerical and descriptive data have been collected, it is crucial to merge these data sets. Numerical data will be used to identify trends or patterns in mental health and Instagram usage, while descriptive data will provide a more profound understanding of the personal and social importance of these interactions. This comprehensive approach aims to offer a full grasp of the relationship between Instagram use and mental health in youths.

## 3.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When conducting research with human subjects, it is important to consider ethical considerations. In the case of a study on mental health disorders among youth and Instagram use, there are several ethical issues to consider.

It is important to obtain informed consent from participants or their guardians before conducting the study. Palmer, B. W. (2015, September 1, 46(8)), indicates that Participants should be provided with clear information about the study, including its purpose, methods, and risks. They should also be allowed to ask questions and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout the study to protect the privacy of the participants. Smith, J. K. (2018) 23(2), 87-102). Highlights the importance of Maintaining confidentiality in research. Participants' personal information, such as their names and social media accounts, should not be shared or revealed without their explicit consent.

Data collection should be conducted in a way that is sensitive to the needs and privacy of the participants. M., & Rouziès, D. (2023, 92-99) stress the significance of maintaining privacy to ensure that data collection processing meets participants' privacy requirements while safeguarding sensitive data, acquiring informed consent, and maintaining participant anonymity. For example, participants should not be asked for their login details to their Instagram accounts and should not dive too deeply into the content of their social media accounts. It is also important to note that Instagram's policies must be adhered to.

Ethical considerations must be taken into account when conducting the study to ensure the safety, privacy, and well-being of participants.



## CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The pie chart below shows Instagram use among youth post-COVID-19 era, this information was obtained through a survey. During this survey, the youth within Kampala district were asked questions concerning the way they used Instagram after the covid 19. These questions involved how often they use Instagram ie, weekly, daily, monthly, and even those who do not use Instagram at all.

Fig 1. A PIECHART SHOWING INSTAGRAM USE AMONG THE YOUTH IN KAMPALA, POST COVID 19 ERA

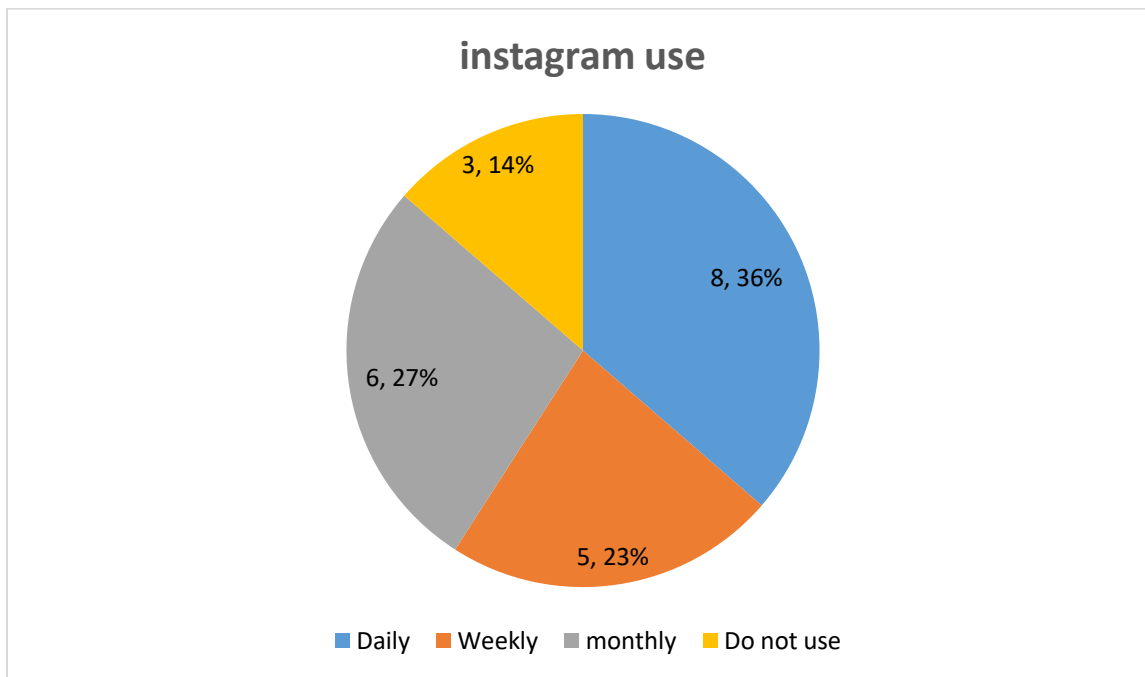


Table 1.

A table showing usage of Instagram by percentage according to the information gathered from the different youth within the Kampala district;

PERCENTAGE	Rampantly used Instagram after Covid 19.	Faced bullying on Instagram	Had a chance to visit therapists	Negatively affected by content
Yes	54.45%	45.5%	36.0%	40.91%
No	45.55%	54.5%	64.0%	31.82%
Total %	100	100	100	100

#### Explanation

According to the above table, a percentage of 54.45 of the youth within Kampala district rampantly used Instagram after covid 19, whereas 45.5% admitted to being bullied on Instagram. Of those who admitted to being bullied on Instagram, only 36.0% have been able to see therapists and get help and lastly, 40.91% of the youth are negatively affected by Instagram.

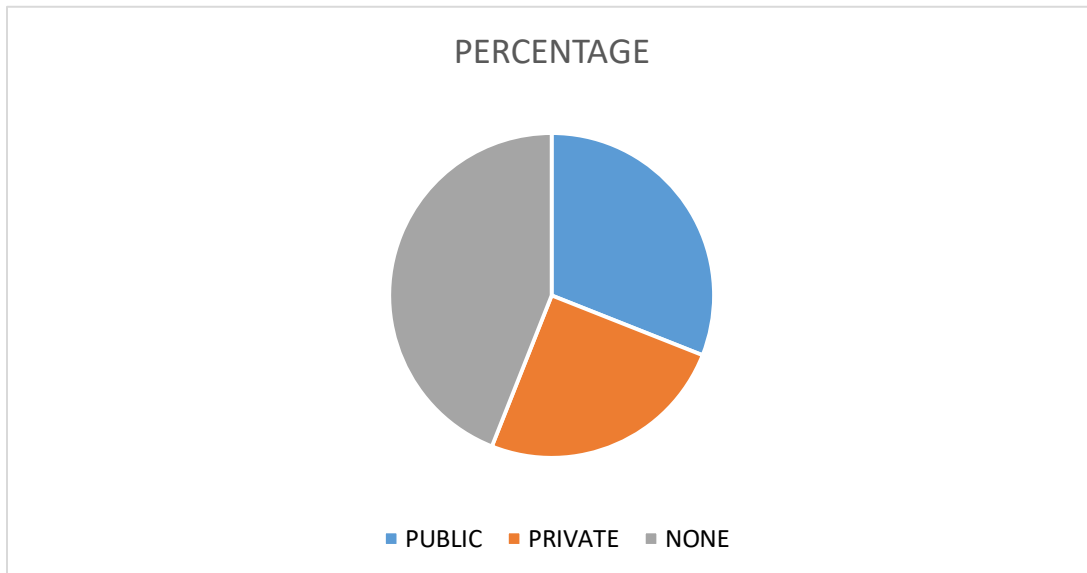
Table 2.

Table showing the statistical data of youth that acknowledge Instagram-related mental health issues.

PERCENTAGES	MULAGO REFERRAL HOSPITAL	NAGURU HOSPITAL	KAIROS HOSPITAL
Youth that come out	31%	5%	10%
Youth that seek hidden help.	25%	14%	20%
Youth that haven't come out	44%	81%	70%

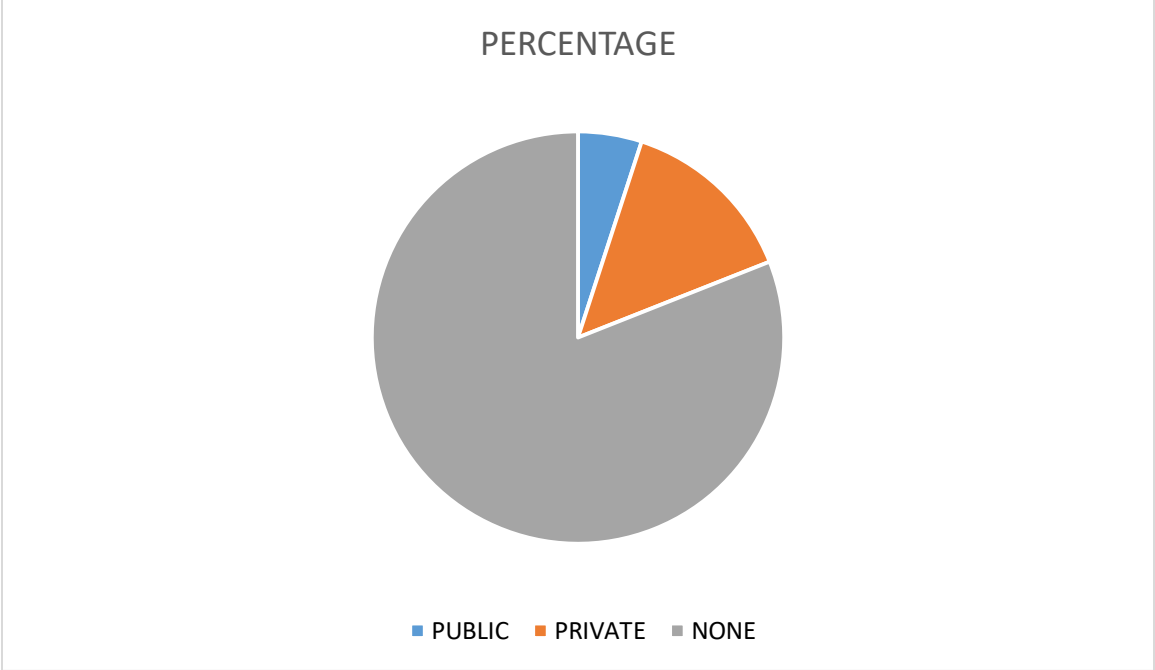
From the above information, it was established that at Mulago Referral Hospital, 31% of the youth came out openly to seek help, 25% preferred not to openly seek help, while 44% preferred not to seek help at all.

Fig 2. PIE CHART SHOWING YOUTH PREFERENCE IN SEEKING HELP AT MULAGO HOSPITAL.



Naguru Hospital state that 5% came out openly to seek help, 14% preferred not to seek help openly and 81% did not seek help at all.

Fig 3. PIE CHART SHOWING YOUTH PREFERENCE IN SEEKING HELP AT NAGURU HOSPITAL



Kairos hospital state that 10% of the youth came out openly to seek help,20% preferred not to seek help openly and 70% did not seek help at all.

Fig 4. PIE CHART SHOWING YOUTH PREFERENCE IN SEEKING HELP AT KAIROS HOSPITAL

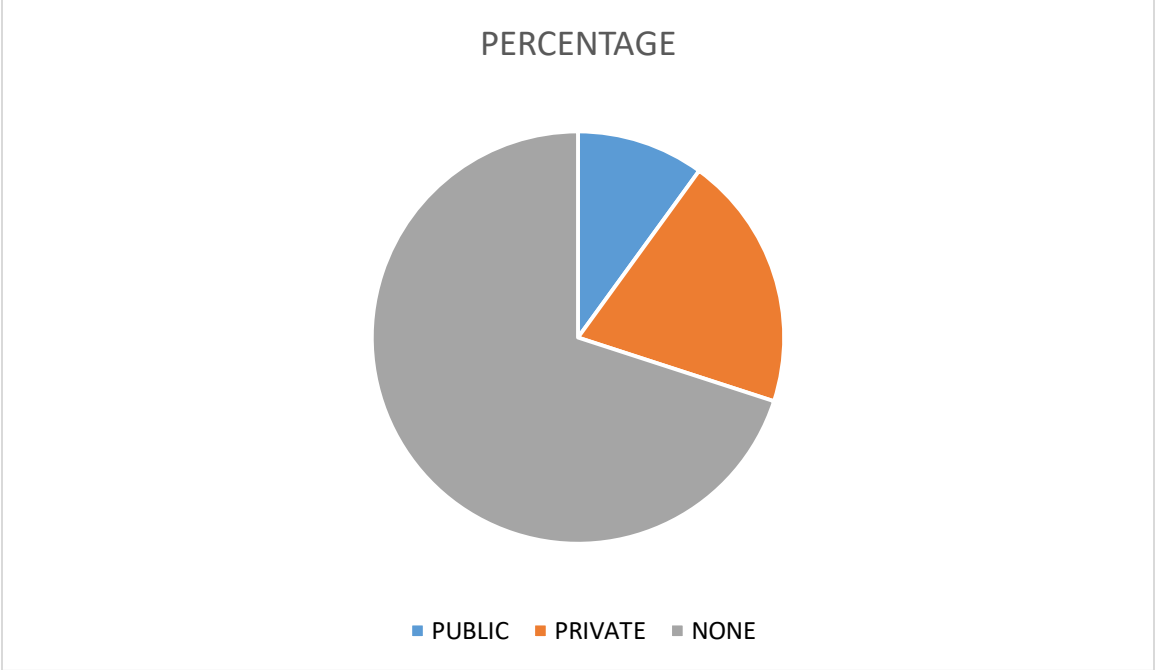


Fig 5. BAR GRAPH SHOWING PREFERENCE SEEKING HELP AT ALL THREE HOSPITALS

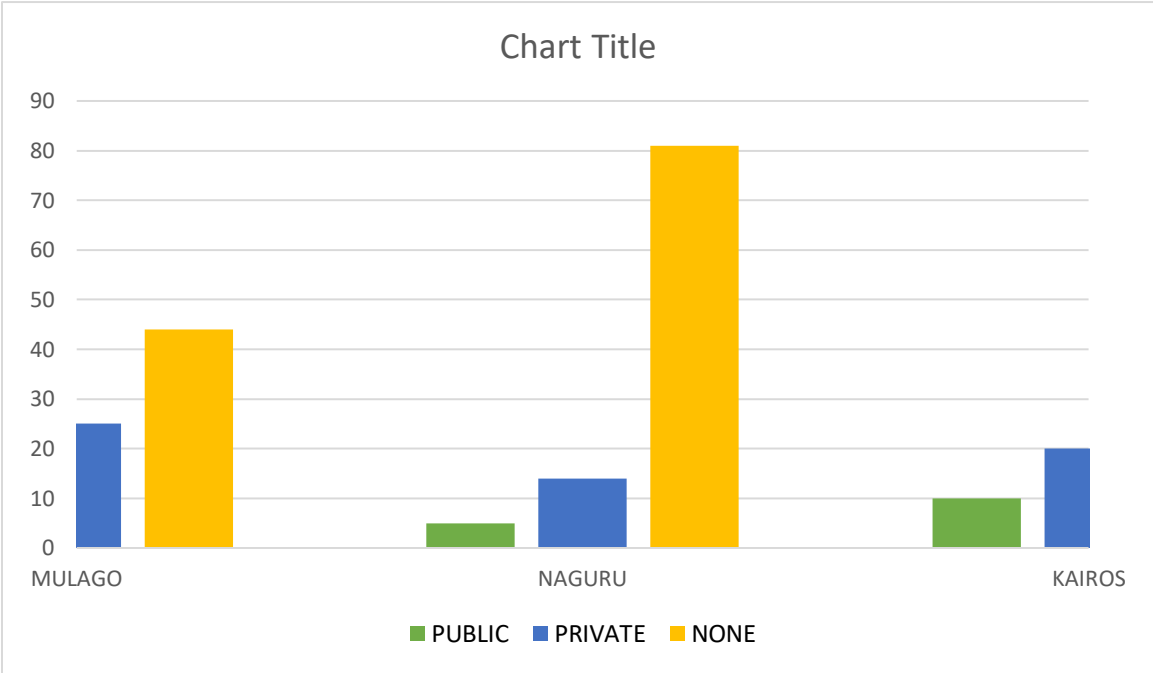


Table 3.

Table showing listed Instagram-related mental health disorders from the Mental health facilities.

MEDICAL HEALTH FACILITIES	TYPES OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS
Mulago Referral hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depression</li><li>• Low self-esteem</li><li>• Addiction</li><li>• Eating disorders</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Body image disturbances</li></ul>
Naguru Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addiction</li><li>• Copied behavior</li><li>• Sleep disorders</li><li>• Sexual disorders</li><li>• Anxiety</li></ul>
Kairos Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body image disturbances</li></ul>

#### OBSERVATIONS

According to the above table, it is clear that the mental health disorders highly related to Instagram are body image disturbances followed by addiction, anxiety, and then the rest

4.2 Summary of findings. According to statistics from Mulago Referral Hospital, 31% come out to claim positive, and 25% look for hidden help which means the rest are not ready to come out, and the different mental health disorders caused by the use of Instagram as a social media platform which include;

Depression is caused by the content put on the platform whereby one may not be able to cope for example if the information is about social status, it may put one who's not mentally strong down. It may also lead to fear, isolation, poor concentration, feelings of excessive guilt or low self-worth, thoughts of dying and suicide, and disrupted sleep among others.

Low self-esteem; this disorder is not considered as one most of the time, however, it's a very serious disorder as it can alter one's life and make it difficult and as a result, most people shut themselves out from others. Most of its symptoms drive the victim away from society, friends, and family. Some of them include;

- Saying negative things and being critical of oneself
- Focusing on the negatives and ignoring achievements
- Thinking other people are better than them
- Thinking they don't deserve to have fun
- Refusing compliments
- Avoiding challenges for fear of failing
- Finding it difficult to make friends

All the above points are signs and symptoms of persons suffering from low self-esteem and this could have a lot of consequences in the life of a youth, if not helped out earlier.



content put on Instagram which includes alcohol, drugs, and even immoral videos and pictures, lead youth into the consumptive addictions. This disorder is very common among the youth especially after covid 19 since most of the information was got from social media platforms like Instagram hence neglecting studies, and getting involved in criminal activities such as rape, defilement, and even homosexuality among others.

Eating disorders is caused by videos put on social media platforms in this sense it's Instagram of people who maintain their bodies by eating a given amount of food to either make them lose or gain weight. Some of the youth especially the girls or ladies end up following these trends and put them into their daily lives which is not good for their bodies. It may also be the cause of illnesses for example peptic ulcers, and cancer among others which cannot be cured easily. This is because it involves starving oneself or eating more than the body can take.

Anxiety disorder involve excessive anxiety characterized by fear and excessive worry. This interferes with an individual's daily life and have different ways of showing such as panic, generalized anxiety , social disorder, and post-traumatic among others. Instagram has been one of the main causes of this because of the content leading youth to practice what they view for example scary videos and this can lead to anxiety which may involve blackouts

An individual is considered to poses Body image disturbances disorder when she or he excessively compares his or her body to others because of discontent with their bodies Instagram is a platform where different celebrities post pictures of themselves and talk about their bodies causing the viewers who are mostly ladies not have the same body structure to lose confidence in their body size and shape hence the comparing. Finding from Mulago hospital, indicate that Instagram has played a big role in the increase of these mental health disorders in the following ways;-

Instagram is one of the highly used social media platforms, since its information posting is not restricted, explaining the high volume of users. Most youth therefore join this platform, and post what they want to, causing a high incidence of mental health disorders.

Comparisons are inevitable on such a platform as statuses of different people are easily displayed. This leads to dissatisfaction among some of those on the platform, who feel disadvantaged, for example body-wise females.

When one spends a lot of time on social media, they become isolated from the world and the people around them, physical interaction becomes less or ends completely hence things like depression kick in and one may even end up becoming suicidal or at worst commit suicide.

The fact that an individual is on Instagram all the time waiting for information and interacting with those on the platform, hence sleeping disorders, may end up sleeping late because they want to view this content and yet for one's mind to function well, they must rest enough.

Bullying is very rampant on platforms like Instagram, and if an individual's mind is not strong enough to take in the whole torment, it can cause depression and suicidal tendencies.

However the youth can be helped to overcome these mental health disorders, this can be done in the following ways;

Creating awareness by talking to them about the dangers of spending a lot of time on platforms like Instagram because they may be ignorant or may not know its dangers and also making time for other things in life, can help to reduce the cases of Instagram-related mental health disorders.

Helping them promote physical health, that's to say physical exercises, going out for games and to places like the beach, meeting physical friends and being in or keeping contact with friends, attending family reunions to let them know that there are more important things than social media.

Advising them to create time for sleep, because sleep is important for the brain to function well, so one can divide the time they spend on Instagram and get some time to relax their minds and rest too.

Limiting screen time involves reducing the time one puts on Instagram, and interacting with other things like novels, bibles, and newspapers among others to at least have more knowledge about more things around them other than concentrating on Instagram for information that may not even be authentic.

Encouraging sports activities like football, and basketball among others to keep fit, unlike Instagram which keeps the eyes strained and makes one passive. This can be done by making daily timetables for these activities to keep them distracted from platforms like Instagram.

In another interaction from Kairos Hospital Kampala, a more scientific explanation for Instagram-related mental health disorders was given. There are two categories of mental health disorders which are; Psychotic disorders which are the mental health challenges that cause one to lose touch with reality whereas neurosis disorders are mental health challenges characterized by anxiety and, depression among others, and are associated with social media more so after covid 19 since most of the youth were home and unemployed, they had too much access to Instagram and other social media platforms.

However, by the time an individual gets a mental health disorder from Instagram, they may have already had their vulnerabilities that are sparked by the content pit on these social media platforms and these can later lead to mental health disorders. For example in situations where one is insecure about their body and keeps on viewing posts on other's having perfect bodies, they begin comparing themselves to others hence body image disturbances. Others can get phobias from the content, eating disorders, and even depression, and in the mental health cases he deals with, 5% to 10% have a contributing factor to Instagram as a social media platform, approximately 20% are still seeking hidden help which means the other 70% haven't come out.

Instagram has contributed to the increase of these mental health disorders through the content. Exposure to unfiltered content on these platforms could spark vulnerabilities in anyone that later transform into these mental health challenges as mentioned above.

The negativity of the information put out there, for example, if one is looking down on the financial status of others, talking ill about the big-bodied, food, among others, may cause negative thoughts to the viewers especially if they already had insecurities or vulnerabilities hence isolation, eating disorders where none eats less just to reduce size, depression, low self-esteem among others.

The youth can help to overcome these Instagram-related mental health disorders and these were his views;

Giving the youth a balanced view; they should know the positive side of this Instagram content but also put in mind that it has a negative side, one that can cause them mental health disorders and damage their everyday life.

Physically interacting with them to encourage them to choose wisely, especially in their daily lives and the activities they do for example if an influencer on Instagram is posting about having slim bodies, one can choose to regulate what they eat and still be healthy instead of deciding to have maybe one meal a day just to reduce weight.

Parents should maybe change the ways they bring these children, especially in their youth stage. For example, creating questions on the things we view to have more critical thinking instead of basing on Instagram for critical thoughts on some issues. This can help keep them in check mentally and overcome these Instagram-related mental health disorders.

Parents should also be careful of the age at which children are introduced to Instagram and other platforms because research has shown that most children are introduced to them as early as 8 years old hence affecting their mental state and causing these vulnerabilities that later transform into mental health disorders.

According to information from Naguru Hospital, the population has not yet recognized these Instagram-related mental health disorders, therefore the youth find it hard to come out, however, about 14% seek hidden help however the statistics are not clear hence he has no specific statistics to back up these cases.

The Instagram related mental health disorders include;

Copied behavior involves alcohol, drug abuse, and homosexuality, this is due to the posts on Instagram that make it seem like homosexuality is something normal, and the videos of drug parties and alcohol may force one to follow the crowd hence affecting their mental health

Sleep disorders, most young people spend day and night hours watching videos and interacting with people on Instagram and even forget that they have to rest hence making their brains tired and less functional.

Sexual disorders, some of this content posted on Instagram affects the minds of the youth hence leading to acts like masturbation and also bringing back gayism as another problem that has been affecting the youth for quite some time and this grew rampant after the covid 19 era.

The only way to reach out to the youth is through health education. This involves educating them about both the positive and negative impacts of Instagram as a social media platform for them to choose the information they take in wisely.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

From the information it is clear that Instagram as a social media platform has affected the youth around the suburbs of Kampala negatively, they note down the different mental health disorders faced by the different youth groups like eating and sleeping disorders, depression among others with signs including isolation, low self-esteem among others. All three have a similar solution which is educating and sensitizing them on the dangers of relying on Instagram and creating more communication with family and friends, co-curricular activities, and bringing in ideas concerning the misuse of Instagram for proper brainstorming, sieving information that is put out for the youth to view. Some of the limitations in this study included getting information from the youth around the city and even on the online surveys as some of the youth refused to accept the negative part of Instagram as a social media platform hence bringing out the point about them not ready to come out to be helped and seeking hidden help.

## 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS.

I believe more research should be put into the mental health disorders concerning Instagram and other social media platforms. In this tests should be carried out and also more sensitization should be made to the youth on the importance and disadvantages of the information they take in from Instagram for example Television talk shows and adverts should be made to keep the awareness.

The youth should also be made comfortable enough to come out about these mental health issues, this means the medical practitioners in this field should be able to study and identify these symptoms because these are a hidden thing eating out most of the youth. It may even help solve and reduce suicide cases among youth



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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

**2. Have you visited your Instagram page with the last 48 hours?** 22:48

**1. How often do you use Instagram?** 22:48

**3. Has your use of Instagram become more rampant after covid 19?** 22:48

**4. How you ever faced bullying on Instagram?** 22:48

**6. Do you prefer Instagram over other social media platforms?** 22:48

**5. If yes, have you been able to see a therapist or be helped in this situation?** 22:48

**8. How has Instagram influenced your daily life as a youth?** 22:48

**7. Do you get affected by some of the content put on Instagram?** 22:48

**9. Should the content put on Instagram be restricted?** 22:48

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

