**Online Social Interactions of the Youth**

Ivy R. Clemente1, Kyla C. Peralta1, Moira Samantha A. Sales1, Renzel Redj Q. Valmores1

Hilmer Fernandez2

moirasamantha.sales@lorma.edu

ivy.clemente@lorma.edu

**Abstract:** The internet and social media have been used frequently now by teenagers because of how accessible the advancement of technology has been. This has then led to social networking sites becoming a crucial part of socialization for teenagers. This study aims to investigate and determine the experiences of teenagers and how they handle their safety as they go about interacting online. The researchers used a descriptive qualitative research design with the data being gathered using survey questionnaires through Google Forms and the main respondents being teenagers in Senior High School chosen through purposive sampling. After the data was collected, the researchers utilized thematization to analyze the data which then revealed that the students were very much aware of the risks of online interactions especially with strangers and take different precautionary measures to improve their online safety such as through the use of VPNs and managing personal information to be shared. The study found that the experiences varied as the teenagers claimed they had their fair share of positive and negative encounters. The respondents stated how it’s a fun way to meet new people and communicate with mutual friends although some expressed that they had unpleasant experiences such as cyberbullying, sexual solicitation and mental health issues.

**Keywords:** Teenagers, Online Interactions, Online Safety, Experiences, Youth