

**The Potential Benefits and
Risk of Social Networks amongst
Learners: A Comparative Study
Of High Schools in Capricorn District**

M.A (Media Studies)

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**THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISK OF SOCIAL NETWORKS
AMONGST LEARNERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS
IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT**

By

MOLOPA MOKGAETJI FLORAH

RESEARCH DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I, Mokgaetji Florah Molopa, Declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Arts in Media Studies has not been submitted by me for the degree at this or any other university; that is my own work in design and in execution and all the material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Ms Molopa M.F


Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents (Maggie and Piet Molopa), my spouse Boitumelo and to my children Neo, Kgotso and Mosa, for their support during the time of my studies. To my late aunt Ruth Sehoana, who passed away on the 15 April, may your soul rest in peace! I would like to say thank you for being my role models and giving me strength and courage. Thank you for giving all you could for this achievement.

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ABSTRACT

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are quickly becoming some of the most popular tools for social interaction and information exchange. This study investigates the benefits and risks of social networks by comparing two schools in Capricorn district namely Sekitla High School and Capricorn High School. Through increased internet and media literacy – ensuring all young people develop the skills to critically understand, analyse and create media content – these challenges can overcome and risks mitigated in a way that ensures the many benefits of SNS can be realised.

The results reveal great significant difference in the online activity patterns between men and women. Girls tend to be in great danger than the boys. There is a disparity between the genders in terms of their attitudes, behaviours, and needs. Therefore the study concludes that there are certain risks in social networking and they can be overcome if the learners are more willing to help their teachers and parents by disclosing any information that can be a threat to them and their education by mainly using social networks for educational purposes.

Key words; Gender, social networks, internet, benefits, risks, learners

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CHAPTER ONE

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Contemporary media practices have advanced meaningfully from their traditional forms, with the key concepts of this 'new media' being participation and interactivity (Anderson, 2007:1). Society has entered a digital age, where everything in our lives is spread out across as much media as possible and this media is shaped by everyone. Much of this media exists or relates to the Internet and the 'online world,' as Brücks, Mehnert, Prommer and Rader (2008: 2) confirm in their statement that "the Internet is part of our everyday life" for the reason that "we do the same in the Internet as in real life, probably in a more efficient, faster and cheaper way." As such, communication using the Internet as a channel is becoming increasingly popular.

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks (Skog, 2005:03). Social networking sites (SNS), like Facebook, Twitter and Mxit are the latest technologies and trends in online communication. According to Hodge (2006:02) social networks have become extremely popular in recent years and continue to attract a large number of users. Since their introduction, millions of users have integrated these sites into their daily routine. They have become some of the most popular online destinations, not surprisingly; this level of user attraction has been accompanied by much coverage in the most popular press, including

speculations about the potential gains and harms stemming from the use of social network services.

According to Hodge (2006:03) social networking sites are playing a crucial role in bridging boundaries, enabling communities to communicate on a platform. It has become a popular means of staying in touch /communicating with friends and family while growing the social circle of new acquaintances. When it comes to online social networking, websites are commonly used. These websites are known as social sites. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. Depending on the website in question, many of these online community members share common interests in hobbies, religion, or politics. Once you are granted access to a social networking website you can begin to socialise. This socialisation may include reading the profile pages of other members and possibly even contacting them.

The friends that you can make are just one of the many benefits to social networking online. Another one of those benefits include diversity because the internet gives individuals from all around the world access to social networking sites. This means that although you are in South Africa, you could develop an online friendship with someone in the United States of America. Not only will you make new friends, but you just might learn a thing or two about new cultures or new languages and learning is always a good thing.

Social networking often involves grouping specific individuals or organisations together. While there are a number of social networking websites that focus on particular interests, there are others that do not. When Skog (2005:02) talks about

the main focus of websites he says that they are often referred to as "traditional" social networking websites and usually have open memberships. This means that anyone can become a member, no matter what their hobbies, beliefs, or views are. However, once you are inside this online community, you can begin to create your own network of friends and eliminate members that do not share common interests or goals.

According to Hodge (2006:05), there are dangers associated with social networking including data theft and viruses, which are on the rise. The most prevalent danger though often involves online predators or individuals who claim to be someone that they are not. Although danger does exist with networking online, it also exists in the real world, too. Just like you are advised when meeting strangers at clubs and bars, school, or work -- you are also advised to proceed with caution online.

Social networking sites have brought tremendous changes in people's life. It is now easier and cheaper to chat over the phone with a friend using Mxit, Facebook and Twitter. Some people have even got addicted to the networking sites and use them more often and as such their life is completely influenced by the frequent usage Skog (2005:16).

Social networking sites are designed to foster social interaction in a virtual environment. In general, communication is facilitated through information posted in the profile (i.e., the user's personal page), which often includes a photograph of the member and personal information describing his or her interests, both of which provide information about one's identity. Members can view one another's profiles

and can communicate through various applications similar to email or online message boards. Such interactions can potentially address many concerns of adolescence and emerging adulthood, such as the need for friendship and peer feedback.

With proliferation of social networking online, the society is affected; differences in what people do and how they do it. Changes in society are simultaneously useful and negative and this is the case with the impact of online social networking. In this study the researcher observe the potential gains and harms of high school learners around Ga-Potsi with reference to Sekitla High School, and Polokwane with reference to Capricorn High School.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social networking is everywhere; it is very common to find learners having cellphones with internet connecting to social networks. However, there are just many new opportunities to connect as there are to get into potential danger. Social networks have opened many new doorways' for cybercrimes, and with all the people on social networks who are completely new to technology they are more likely to find themselves in danger. It is more important than ever to make sure that they are aware of the risk involved.

These risks can be of cyber-bullying, dangers of being raped, attacked or even molested. It is assumed that learners are more likely to fail their grades because they will be busy on Mxit and Facebook, and they may neglect their studies

1.3 AREA OF THE STUDY

The research findings will focus on the potential gains and harms of social networks amongst high school learners. There have been reports in the media about social networks that have been very disturbing. This study will look at what learners of different regions are using social networks and what they gain or benefiting from using social networks. They say that there are two sides to each and every story, so this study will also look at the pros and cons; which are the harms or dangers of using this social network. This envisaged study will consider two schools namely Capricorn High School and Sekitla High School.

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the research study was to explore and provide investigated evidence on what learners gain from using social networks and the harms that they may also encounter during the process of networking. This study will compare two schools which are situated in two different areas one in the City of Polokwane (Capricorn High School) and second school is in a the outskirts of Polokwane in a village called Ga-Potsi (Sekitla High School).

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions that will be addressed by the study are:

1. What are the risks that learners may encounter while using social networks?

2. What do learners benefit from using social networks?
3. How is social networking affecting learners' performance at school?
4. What are the risks that are involved in the different sexes?
5. How has social networking affected learners in terms of behaviour?

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research design

This study is a qualitative case study of two high schools in Capricorn district. Comparative case studies mainly focus on specific situations wherein the researcher studies individuals, groups or particular phenomena. They are a useful way of learning about people and practices by making it possible to compare specific practices (Parahoo, 1997:166). According to Wimmer and Dominick (1995), qualitative research uses a flexible questioning approach, although a basic set of question is designed to start the project, the research can change questions or ask follow up questions at any time. Qualitative data come in a variety of forms, such as notes, observing in the field, interview transcripts, documents, diaries and journals.

1.6.2 Population and Sampling procedures

The researcher's target population will be drawn from the learners of the high schools in the Capricorn region namely Capricorn High School and Sekitla High School. These schools differ in location and infrastructure. Capricorn High School is situated in the city of Polokwane, whereas Sekitla High School is in the outskirts of

Polokwane in a village called Ga-Potsi. The researcher will look at learners from different regions, Urban and Rural. At least 50 participants in each school; this will include 24 learners in grade 11 and their teacher and 24 learners in grade 12 and their teacher. The two schools will be convenient for the researcher as they are closer to where the researcher is based and it will therefore reduce the costs for the researcher.

1.6.3 Data collection and instruments

The researcher will personally collect data at the two high schools on cross-sectional site visits. The following techniques will be used as data collecting tools.

1.6.3.1 Focus Group Method

The focus group method will be used as a preliminary method of the data collection process. Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data. Although group interviews are often used simply as a quick and convenient way to collect data from several people simultaneously, focus groups explicitly use group interaction as part of the method. This means that instead of the researcher asking each person to respond to a question in turn, people are encouraged to talk to one another: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes and commenting on each other's experiences and points of view. The method is particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to

examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way.

1.6.3.2 Self-Administered Questionnaire

Self-administered questionnaires will be used and will also serve as discussion documents to collect detailed information from all the learners and teachers who will be involved in this study.

1.6.4 Data analysis and presentation

The cyclical process of data analysis will be applied whereby the researcher will focus on the familiarisation of data by identifying main themes in the data collected (reading). The collected data will be examined in-depth to provide detailed descriptions of information, which will then be categorised and coded into group themes. Illustrative tables and graphs will be used to present research findings where quantifiable data are available. Following this, the researcher will interpret and synthesise the organised data into general conclusions or understandings.

1.7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this age of globalisation, the world has become too small a place thanks to the electronic media and portals. Communication has become effective as never before thanks to the advent of internet. The social networking sites have also played a crucial role in bridging boundaries and crossing the seas and bringing all people at a common platform where they can meet like-minded people or find old friends and

communicate with them. It has become a potential means to relation building and staying in touch with all known. The objectives of this study are stated below:

1. To identify the potential benefits and risks of using social networks
2. To compare the usage of social networks amongst genders
3. To determine the major visited social networks
4. To evaluate how social networks are affecting the lives of the learners.
5. To compare the usage of social networks in terms of the area where learners reside.

1.8. DIFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Social networking

According to Barnes (2006:11), social network sites are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to:

- (1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,
- (2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
- (3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

A social network service is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities. A social network service essentially consists of a

representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web based and provide the means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Stutzman (2006:10).

1.8.2 Profile

This is where you tell the world about yourself. Profiles contain basic information, like where you live and how old you are, and personality questions, like who is your favourite actor and what's your favourite book. Social networks dedicated to a special theme like music or movies might ask questions related to that theme.

1.8.3 Friends.

Friends are trusted members of the site that are allowed to post comments on your profile or send you private messages. You can also keep tabs on how your friends are using social networking, such as when they post a new picture or update their profile. Friends are the heart and soul of social networking.

1.8.4 Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women.

1.8.5 Urban area

A geographical area constituting a city or town

1.8.6 Suburban area

A residential district located on the outskirts of a city

1.8.7 Smart phones

A smartphone is a device that lets you make telephone calls, but also adds in features that, in the past, you would have found only on a personal digital assistant or a computer--such as the ability to send and receive e-mail and edit Office documents. More of the smartphones can access the Web at higher speeds, thanks to the growth of 4G and 3G data networks, as well as the addition of Wi-Fi support to many handsets. Still, while not all smartphones offer high-speed Web access, they all offer some sort of access. You can use your smartphone to browse your favourite sites.

1.9. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The research study will be structured as follows;

1.9.1 Chapter One: Introduction and Background of the Study.

This chapter has provided the introduction and background of the proposed study. It will outline the main objectives including the aim of the study. This chapter will explore and provide the significance of this study.

1.9.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter the researcher will look at other studies that have been conducted in previous research that are related to this particular study. This chapter will provide an overview on the theoretical framework that guides the study

1.9.3 Chapter Three: The Concepts of Social Network

This chapter will give a profound background on Social networks, including the benefits and risks of social networks.

1.9.4 Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter will highlight the type of research design that the researcher will undertake. It will give more details on the methodology of the research while including all the limitations and ethical considerations that the researcher would have undergone in the process of collecting data.

1.9.4 Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter will analyse the collected data while giving the interpretation. It will provide detailed description of information, which will be categorized into coded themes. Illustrative tables and graphs are used to present the findings where quantifiable data are available.

1.9.5 Chapter Six: Conclusions

This chapter will provide conclusion and recommendations that will then help other researchers when they conduct a research of this nature. It will generate an in-depth understanding of the undertaken study.

1.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

1.10.1 Honesty

The researcher will strove for honesty in all scientific communications. Data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status be reported with honesty. The researcher does not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data.

1.10.2 Objectivity

The researcher strove to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required.

1.10.3 Integrity

Promises and agreements that were made, will be kept with integrity; and the researcher will act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.

1.10.4 Carefulness

Careless errors and negligence was avoided; carefully, and good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and journals are be kept.

1.10.5 Respect for Intellectual Property

The researcher honoured patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Unpublished data, methods, or results were not used without permission. Proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research was given.

1.10.6 Confidentiality

Confidential communications, such as interview papers, will be protected.

1.10.7 Respect

Respect was given to all the people who partook in this study. Permission of participants was sought first; nobody was forced into participating in the study.

1.10.8 Non-Discrimination

Discrimination against students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity will be avoided.

1.11. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that this study will provide a guideline for learners to know where to draw the line while using social networks. It will help them to know the uses of social networks, the dangers of the new medium and how to overcome them. It will also help them to use these social networking sites accordingly and they will learn to be secretive about their privacy matters. There are many reasons for learners failing their studies, and the researcher truly believes that social network is one of them because learners will be having undivided attention, and they will be indulging in talks that are not school related. In other words learners will be able improve their grades as they will be able to concentrate more on their books after having the knowledge of the dangers that come along with using social networks. They will be able to erase the stigma that underlies in their minds that females are more prone to danger than male.

1.12. CONCLUSION

The chapter addressed the background of the study and the statement of the problem. The research questions, aim and objectives of the research were also outlined. The terms that were used in the chapter were defined for clarity purposes. The research design and methodology which discussed how the study will be undertaken was addressed. The dissertation and the significance of the study were highlighted and finally the ethical considerations of the study were explained.

The next chapter discuss the literature on the benefits and risk of social networks, looking at the international perspective. The international benefits and risk of social networking will be outlined in the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Hodge (2006:06) today's teenagers are what researchers call "digital natives," a generation constantly connected to the Internet and *Facebook*, texting and instant messaging. Now, a set of new studies reveals the psychological effects of constant Facebooking. Social media has changed the way people interact. In many ways, social media has led to positive changes in the way people communicate and share information; however, it has a dark side, as well. Social networking can sometimes result in negative outcomes, some with long-term consequences. It does not matter if you are searching for that former college roommate, your first grade teacher, or an international friend; there is no easier or quicker way to make a connection than via the social network.

According to Boyd (2007) although *Facebook* and *Twitter* are probably the most well-known social networking communities, there are new websites popping up regularly that are dedicated to allowing people to connect and to interact via the Internet. Through such sites, individuals make new friends, business connections or extend their personal base by connecting and interacting with friends of friends and so forth. Because of the autonomy afforded by the virtual world, individuals are free to create a fantasy identity and can pretend to be someone else. It is hard to say no, be rude, or ignore someone when you are looking them in the eye. It is incredibly easy and quick to unfriend or unfollow someone or simply blocks their efforts to

make a connection. Just one click of the mouse and your problems are over. Unfortunately, this feature of online socialisation according to Boyd (2007) frauds people of the prospect to learn how to resolve conflicts in the world outside the internet and it could retard or cripple one's social skills development.

Teenagers are at greater risk because those years are when they are learning to interact with others or build and maintain relationships. They are not spending this time in face-to-face interactions with their peers or others nor are they developing the necessary social skills for future success.

This Chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section of the Chapter will trace the history and development of theories that will be used in this research and several studies involving various mass media. The second section will describe the international experience of social and their impact on learners.

2.2 Theoretical Principles

Before developing this exploratory study, it was necessary to understand the theoretical structure upon which this research in particular is underpinned. This study will draw from theories of the uses and ratifications theory, the hypodermic needle theory and lastly the two step - flow theory.

2.2.1 The uses and gratification theory

According to Boyd (2007:03), one influential tradition in media research is referred to as 'uses and gratifications' (occasionally 'needs and gratifications'). In contrast to the concern of the 'media effects' tradition with 'what media do to people' (which assumes a homogeneous mass audience and a 'hypodermic' view of media. Fourie (2001:297) explains this theory much better by saying that this theory proceeds from the need of users and the probable gratification that they derive from media use. What do people think about the media, what they use the media for and what do they get from media use? People use the media content to escape from their daily routine and work, and from a wide variety of problems that they encounter in their lives. The gratification is emotional release, albeit of a temporary nature. Media provides content that gratifies the needs of companionship and sociability. People use media content to compare themselves and their situations and values with those of others. They also use the media for information, entertainment and education.

The uses and gratification tradition developed from the Functionalist theory by well-known sociologist researchers, including, Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz. The functionalist paradigm insists on media effects towards people, such as the frequently used model of the "hypodermic needle" or a "bullet theory" aimed at a passive audience (Severin & Tankard, 1997). This model was used by practitioners from the 1920's to the 1940's, but a shift occurred during the middle of the 20th century that lead mass media to further develop and understand the notion of Uses and Gratifications. The following discussion synthesises the findings of various researches on the Uses and Gratification model .The Uses and Gratification (UG)

approach was first denoted by Elihu Katz in 1959. Most communication research up to this point was questioning, "What do media do to people?" However, Katz suggested asking the question, "What do people do with media?" (Severin & Tankard, 1997).

Nevertheless, the uses and gratification approach, within the Functionalist theory, shifted the focus from the purposes of the communication to the purpose of the reader (Severin & Tankard, 1997) and unlocked a door to a modern understanding of mass communication. Uses and gratifications theory, in the 1940s by Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1944), attempts to clarify the reasons people use mass media and the different types of gratification they receive from it.

Gratifications, simply stated, are rewards or satisfactions obtained by the individual. The theory relies on the belief that the audience is not purely a group of passive media consumers, but they play a 400 Syed Abdul Siraj active role in selecting different media to meet their needs (Infante, Rancer & Womack, 1997; Lowery & De Fleur, 1983). The theory came into prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s at a time when researchers realized that traditional effects theories did not adequately explain audience experiences with mass media (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

Uses and gratifications (UG) ascended originally in the 1940s and endured a restoration in the 1970s and 1980s. It presents the use of media in terms of the gratification of social or psychological needs of the individual (Blumler & Katz, 1974). The mass media compete with other sources of gratification, but gratifications can be obtained from a medium's content (e.g. watching a specific programme), from

familiarity with a genre within the medium (e.g. watching soap operas), from general exposure to the medium (e.g. watching TV), and from the social context in which it is used (e.g. watching TV with the family). Uses and gratifications theorists argue that people's needs influence how they use and respond to a medium. Zillmann (cited by McQuail 1987: 236) has shown the influence of mood on media choice: boredom encourages the choice of exciting content and stress encourages a choice of relaxing content. The same TV programme may gratify different needs for different individuals. Different needs are associated with individual personalities, stages of maturation, backgrounds and social roles. Developmental factors seem to be related to some motives for purposeful viewing: e.g. Judith van Evra argues that young children may be particularly likely to watch TV in search of information and hence more susceptible to influence (Evra 1990: 177, 179).

Uses and gratification theorists tend to exaggerate active and conscious choice, whereas media can be forced on some people rather than freely chosen. According to Zillmann (cited by McQuail 1987:237) the stance can also lead to the exaggeration of openness of interpretation, implying that audiences may obtain almost any kind of gratification regardless of content or of 'preferred readings'. Its functionalist emphasis is politically conservative: if we insist that people will always find some gratifications from any use of media, we may adopt a complacently uncritical stance towards what the mass media currently offer.

Uses and gratification research has been concerned with why people use media. Whilst this approach sprang from 'mainstream' research in social science (Evra 1990), an interpretive tradition has arisen primarily from the more arts-oriented

'cultural (and 'critical') studies'. The approach sometimes referred to as reception theory (or reception analysis) focuses on what people see in the media, on the meanings which people produce when they interpret media 'texts' (Hobson 1982). This perspective tends to be associated with the use of interviews rather than questionnaires. Such interviews are often with small groups (e.g. with friends who watch the same TV programmes). The emphasis is on specific content (e.g. a particular soap opera) and on specific social contexts (e.g. a particular group of working-class women viewers).

Technology has made it even easier for people to keep in touch. People now buy cellphones that have *Facebook*, *Twitter* installed in them. It is no easier to buy a phone that does not have internet. The high publicity that social networks have been getting lately have made people even more addicted to social networks and they hardly believe they can leave without them.

2.2.2 Two-step flow theory

The two-step flow of communication hypothesis was first introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in *The People's Choice*, a 1944 study concentrated on the process of decision-making during a Presidential election campaign, (Weimann, 1994:23). These researchers projected to find pragmatic support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions. According to Baran & Davis, (2009;12) They were surprised to discover, however, that informal, personal contacts were stated far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as sources of influence on voting behaviour. Armed with this data, Katz

and Lazarsfeld developed the two-step flow theory of mass communication. According to Lazarsfeld and Katz, mass media information is channelled to the "masses" through opinion leadership. The people with most access to media, and having a more literate understanding of media content, explain and diffuse the content to others.

According to Lazarsfeld and Katz (2009) the term "personal influence" came to illustrate the process intervening between the media's direct message and the audience's reaction to that message. Opinion leaders tend to be similar to those they influence - based on personality, interests, demographics, or socio-economic factors. These leaders tend to impact others to change their attitudes and behaviours. Social networks in this regard have been popularised by celebrities (people who are role models to many young men and women). Even powerful people even tend to influence each other to join social networks. It makes it harder for the public to resist.

The two-step theory refined the ability to predict how media messages influence audience behaviour and explains why certain media campaigns do not alter audiences' attitudes. This hypothesis provided a basis for the multi-step flow theory of mass communication. According to Fourie (2007: 234-235) factors of this theory co-determine human behaviour and attitudinal change, in that; media users are not at mercy of the media but selectively expose themselves on themselves on the basis of their own knowledge, experience, background, education, culture and expectations. In other words, people expose themselves selectively to media content with which they agree, prefer, and comprehend. The group (friends and family) in which media users are situated can filter media users' interpretation and experiences

of media messages and in sense acts as a buffer against one-sided interpretations. Media contributes to behavioural change and reinforces existing behaviour.

However, Lazarsfeld's two-step hypothesis is an adequate description to understand the media's influence on belief and behaviour. According to Troidahl (2008), media exposure is a first step to introduce discussion, at which point opinion leaders initiate the second-step flow. These findings also realize opinion leader's decisive role in the balance theory, which suggests that people are motivated to keep consistency among their current beliefs and opinions. If a person is exposed to new observations that are inconsistent with present beliefs, he or she is thrown into imbalance. This person will then seek advice from their opinion leader, to provide them with additional cognitions to bring them back into balance.

It has now become a norm to have a *Facebook* page. *Facebook* or *twitter* has become a routine to many young man and women. Statuses are updated frequently just to inform people about the things that they are encountering in life.

2.2.3 The hypodermic needle theory

The hypodermic needle theory is one of the most renowned theories that analysed the relationship between audience and media. According to Croteau, & Hoynes, (1997), this theory was developed in the early 1920s with the beginning of mass media, radio and cinema. In its simple description, this theory suggests that mass media can easily influence a large group of people without any challenge and opposition from those people. Actually, it suggests that mass media inject messages

and information directly and uniformly into audiences' minds who immediately will be influenced. People from different ages and walks of life are more addicted to social networks. The mass media has portrayed social networks as a more efficient way to communicate with everyone around the globe. Other researchers further elaborate that:

...this theory did not agree with those who are saying that the audiences are using their experience, intelligence and opinion to analyse the message. Therefore, media producers and creators can manipulate the audience and inject the information and the messages that they want. This theory equates the media with an intravenous injection: certain values, ideas and attitudes are injected into the individual media user, resulting in a particular behaviour. The recipient is seen as a passive and helpless victim of media impact (Fourie. 2007:232).

It implies that the mass media have a direct, immediate and powerful effect on its audience.

Casimir, (1995) stated that the Hypodermic Needle Theory otherwise known as the 'Magic Bullet' theory originated in the 1920's and was the first major theory concerning the effects of the mass media in society. 'Magic Bullet' theorists' believed that the media could shape public towards a defined point of view. In this way messages are "injected" into all members of the audience causing a uniform thinking among them. A prominent theorist of the Hypodermic Needle theory was Harold Lasswell who said that the new mass media could directly influence and sway public

opinion. The under-discussed gives a picture of a critical look at the theory. The theory was deterministic and this did not allow for freedom of choice.

The audience were 'injected' with a one way propaganda. From this light, the researcher can confidently say that the theory undermines the right of individuals to freely choose what media material they consume. The theory is also noted for its positivity and evidenced by the fact that audience were not allowed to contribute. This undermines the core aim of media studies which is the audience. From the latter, one can argue that the audience could not use their experience, intelligence and opinion to analyse messages. It will be very difficult to operate this theory in this new world where the audience have become sophisticated.

Furthermore, the Hypodermic Needle theory was not based on empirical findings. It rather, employed assumptions of the time about human nature. People were assumed to be uniformly controlled by their biological instincts and that they react more or less uniformly to whatever 'stimuli' came along Lowery and Delfleur, (1995:400). Contrary to its shortcomings, the theory had the following outlined point to give it a positive look;

- a) It was seen as an asset in mobilising people especially through radio and
- b) It also paved the way for research to be conducted on its merits and pitfalls.

According to, Casmir (1995), the media effects are the consequences or results that humans experience to diversities of media content (media content-what a media product is made up of). It is important to note that much research is particularly

driven towards the negative effects. They come in the form of psychological, behaviour, physiological and cognitive effects and all of these can be positive or negative.

1) Positive effects

- a) Exposure to educative media content is of great importance. For example the education we receive on talk shows and distance learning,
- b) Exposure to informative media content such as news and
- c) Exposure to entertaining media content that serves as an escape from the stress of everyday life

2) Negative effects,

- a) Exposure to violence and sex on some media content
- b) Exposure to hate journalism and
- c) Exposure to false or astonishing information

Social media has recently been covered in the media as being very controversial and very dangerous to teenagers. Learners have been exposed to bullying, have been violated and sex tapes have been forwarded to people through the use of social media.

2.2.4 Summary

In summary, the theories presented above have been effective in gaining a better understanding of the motivation and concern of electronic media including the Internet. A particularly, unexamined area at the present time, is how the Internet is used simultaneously by segments of global audiences. Considering that audience activity is one of the key components of the uses and gratification theory, it is expected that audiences are purposive and active. The media is very persuasive and can be very influential. The two step flow theory is vital in this regard as people influence each other to have social networking pages in their cell phones. What the mass forget is that they are certain effects that come with social networking. People are prone to be in danger or risk or they can benefit from the social media.

2.3 AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL NETWORK: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Countries differ in the way they view social networks. This is not because they are different, but simply because some of the challenges they face are different to our own. Social networking in South Africa is still emerging. People have yet not seen the impact of how they can use them, Boyd (2007). This then shows the view that there is still imperialism and that we are yet to be a developed country. The researcher will look at a brief history of Social Networks and the problems or issues that are faced by other countries, below:

2.3.1 The Media Culture of Young People

According to Robins and Webster (1999), in a mediated culture, it can be difficult for teenagers to discern whose representations are closest to the truth, which representations to believe, and which images matter. This is partly because the emergence of digitalised communication and the commoditisation of culture have significantly altered the conditions under which life and culture are experienced. Teenagers now experience their life by immolating what they see in the media. Many are still attached to the romantic image of organic communities in which people converse with one another face-to-face and live in a close-knit local environment state that digital communication is gradually undermining this traditional approach:

“Most of the ways in which we make meanings, most of our communications to other people, are not directly human and expressive, but interactions in one way or another worked through commodities and commodity relations: TV, radio, film, magazines, music, commercial dance, style, fashion, and commercial leisure venues. These are major realignments.”

Castells (2001:43)

In the world of young people, the media culture may be characterised primarily in terms of three distinct considerations. First, it is produced and reproduced by diverse Information communication technology sources. It is therefore domineering to replace the teaching of knowledge and skills central to agrarian and industrial

societies with education in digital literacy. A similar point is made by Kellner (2001), who contends that in a media culture it is important to learn multiple ways of interacting with social reality. Children and young people must be provided with opportunities to acquire skills in multiple literacies to enable them to develop their identities, social relationships and communities, whether material, virtual, or a combination of the two.

In the present media culture, the age at which childhood is perceived to end is declining, and the period of youth seems to be extending upward. It is useful, however, to recall that the majority of young people in the world do not live according to the Western conceptions of youth. For them, childhood and adolescence in the Western sense exist only indirectly through media presentations, Groebel (1999).

According to Livingstone, et al (2011) the same media culture influences seem to be in effect outside the Western world, but their consequences are likely to be somewhat different owing mainly to variations in definitions of childhood and youth and to the different authority relationships prevailing in individual cultures. Children and young people are often seen as innocent victims of the pervasive and powerful media. In the extreme view, the analysis of the nuclear family, teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, paedophilia, child trafficking and child prostitution spreading through the Internet, drug use, juvenile crime, the degeneration of manners, suicide and religious trends are all seen as problems exacerbated or even imposed upon society by the media. Parents seem to have become disconnected from their children's education. Schools have been transformed into teaching factories incapable of providing young people with the coping skills they need to survive and

thrive in the media culture. Chapter three offers a detailed discussion on the concepts of social networking.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

3.1 Introduction

Social network is the term applied by social researchers to comprehend various inter-personal dynamics that take place within the immediate environment of people (Wellman, 1979). It reflects a wide range of relationships that people maintain with other people and can directly impact on the well-being of people (Thoits, 1992). In a social network, people can readily present themselves, and allow others to get acquainted with and link them based on the data stored in their online profiles. This forms a social structure made of individuals or organizations called “nodes.” The interdependency of nodes represents people's friendship, and other relationships.

Social networks have been deliberated and some definitions have been proposed. Barnes (2006) introduced the term of social networks to represent patterns of ties including bounded groups (e.g. families, villages, and so on) and social categories (e.g. sex, race, and so on) (Barnes, 1954). Van der Poel (1993) suggested four different approaches to understand social networks which can also be regarded as the four fundamental features of social networks:

1. *Interaction approach.* It is based on the contacts individuals have with others over a period time.
2. *Role relation approach.* It focuses on the types of roles which impact on individuals, such as family members or intimate friends.

3. *Affection approach*. It is the individuals' subjective criteria to determine who is the most important to him/her.
4. *Exchange approach*. It is individual behaviour based on specific rewarding systems to determine the scope and composition of one's social network.

Van der Poel reflected that the last approach is the most useful for outlining personal social networks. The features that were outlined above will be very critical in analysing the collected data.

Social network sites as explained by Barnes (2010) are web-based services that allow individuals to

- (1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,
- (2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
- (3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

Haigh (2010) further states that social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, are essentially online communities that allow users to come together, communicate and share things such as photographs, music or other files, and most prolifically to create short messages, often in the style of mobile phone text messages but shared among a group. People use the site to ask their friends questions, say how they feel today and what they are up to, or comment on something they have seen on someone's page.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" (SNSs) also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Online social interactions fundamentally differ from face-to-face interaction in offline social networks. Online social networking typically offers opportunities for expression that are less restrictive. Users may disclose at all levels quite different than in their face-to-face conversations (Debatin et al, 2009).

3.2 The principles of social networks: Social Networking Activities

Advancements in technology have resulted in people being able to access a wealth of information and participate in virtual opportunities not previously available. Through the tools of computers and cell phones, society has moved from engaging in face-to-face interaction while performing these activities to endeavours that do not require in-person interaction with others (Wellman, 1979). The devices have therefore become the actual mediators between people and knowledge or entertainment. Within recent years, technology has also made available different avenues for communicating. According to Groebel (1999) the capabilities of computers and cell phones have allowed users to develop means to participate in the world of social networking, now making the device the mediator of communication between individuals.

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this uttered social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

While Social network sites (SNSs) have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of Friends who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén, 2003, in Boyd 2007). After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section. Most sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo. Some sites allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile's look and feel. Others, such as Facebook (FB), allow users to add modules ("Applications") that enhance their profile.

The visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. Facebook takes a different approach - by default, users who are part of the same "network" can view each other's profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Most SNSs require bi-directional confirmation for Friendship, but some do not. These one-directional ties are sometimes labelled as "Fans" or "Followers," but many sites call these Friends as well. The term "Friends" can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied (Boyd, 2006).

The public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs. According to Arendt (1998). The Friends' list contains links to each Friend's profile, enabling viewers to traverse the network graph by clicking through the Friends lists. On most sites, the list of Friends is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile, although there are exceptions. For instance, some Myspace users have hacked their profiles to hide the Friends display, and LinkedIn allows users to opt out of displaying their network.

According to Boyd (2006) most SNSs also provide a mechanism for users to leave messages on their Friends' profiles. This feature typically involves leaving "comments," although sites employ various labels for this feature. In addition, SNSs often have a private messaging feature similar to webmail. While both private messages and comments are popular on most of the major SNSs, they are not universally available.

Beyond profiles, Friends, comments, and private messaging, SNSs vary greatly in their features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities; others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology. Some sites are designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, political, or other identity-driven categories in mind (Boyd, 2006)

While SNSs are often designed to be widely accessible, many attract homogeneous populations initially, so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society, even if that was not the intention of the designers (Arendt 1998).

According to Skog (2007:24) the first recognizable social network site was launched in 1997. It was called SixDegrees.com, it allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. People were able to connect with one another and send messages. Although the concept of computer-based communities dates back to the early days of computer networks, only some years after the advent of the Internet online social networks have met public and commercial success. Following the SixDegrees.com experience in 1997, hundreds of networks (ranging from blogging venues, to dating and socializing sites, to glorified classified systems) have spurred online.

At the most basic level, an online social network is an Internet community where individuals interact, often through profiles that represent their selves (and their networks of connections) to others (Arendt 1998). Social networks can grow rapidly,

and some - like FB - can achieve mass market penetration in a few months since their inception.

3.3 Mediated Publics

Social network sites are the cutting-edge generation of 'mediated publics' - environments where people can gather publicly through mediating technology. In some senses, mediated publics are similar to the unmediated publics with which most people are familiar - parks, malls, parking lots, cafes, etc (Skog, 2007:33). Teens show up to connect with their friends. Other people are likely to be present and might be brought into the circle of conversation if they're interesting or ignored if not.

Public spaces have many purposes in social life - they allow people to make sense of the social norms that regulate society, they let people learn to express themselves and learn from the reactions of others, and they let people make certain acts or expressions 'real' by having witnesses acknowledge them (Arendt, 1998). Social network sites are yet another form of public space. Arendt (1998) further states that mediated and unmediated publics play similar roles in people's lives; the mediated publics have four properties that are unique to them.

- Persistence. What you say sticks around. This is great for asynchronous communication, but it also means that what you said at 15 is still accessible when you are 30 and have purportedly outgrown your childish ways.

- Search ability. My mother would have loved the ability to scream "Find!" into the ether and determine where I was hanging out with my friends. She couldn't, I am thankful.

Today's teens can be found in their hangouts with the flick of a few keystrokes.

- Replicability. Digital bits are copy - able; this means that you can copy a conversation from one place and paste it into another place. It also means that it is difficult to determine if the content was doctored.

- Invisible audiences. While it is common to face strangers in public life, our eyes provide a good sense of who can overhear our expressions. In mediated publics, not only are larkers invisible, but persistence, search ability, and replicability introducing audiences that were never present at the time when the expression was created. Arendt, (1998:234)

These properties change all of the rules. At a first pass, it is challenging to interpret context in a mediated space. Physical environments give us critical cues as to what is appropriate and not - through socialisation Arendt, (1998:235). We know that the way we can act at the beach is different from how we can act at a public lecture. No one can show up to a lecture hall wearing a bathing suit, lay down a towel, and proceed to rub oil all over them. The lack of context is precisely why the imagined audience of Friends is key Arendt, (1998:235). It is impossible to speak to all people across all space and all time. It is much easier to imagine who you are speaking to

and direct your energies towards them, even if your actual audience is quite different.

According to Chafkin, (2007:190) states that participants in social network sites imagine their audience and speak according to the norms those they perceive to be generally accepted, just like journalists. The difference is that journalists are trying to carefully craft a message to energise a targeted audience while teenagers are shooting the breeze, showing off, and just plain hanging out amongst the people they call friends. The momentary speech that would be acceptable in any unmediated public with a homogeneous audience is not nearly so well-received in a mediated public with variable audiences.

Of course, two audiences cause participants the greatest headaches: those who hold power over them and those who want to prey on them. The former primarily consists of parents, teachers, bosses, and other authorities. The press have given the impression that the latter is made up of sexual predators. Context is only one complication of this architecture. Another complication has to do with scale. When we speak without amplification, our voice only carries so far. Much to the dismay of fame-seekers, just because the Internet has the potential to reach millions, the reality is that most people are heard by very few. (Arendt, 1998:45)

3.4 The benefits of social networks

According to McCarthy (2010), recent research findings indicate that modern-day modes of communication can greatly benefit teenagers, especially anxious girls and boys. Teenagers in general, greatly fear humiliation and rejection. Developing new friendships, and deepening existing friendships, can be quite difficult for them. Using texting, instant messaging, Facebook, Mxit or tweeter can help them by providing some space and protection from potential, immediate negative feedback which would cause the teenager to shut down and withdraw. These modalities allow them to take greater risks of healthy self-disclosure that can enhance friendship development and ultimately increase self-confidence and well-being.

Social networks, like Facebook, break down barriers to communication, such as cliques, popularity, socio-economics, and physical separation. Teenagers who normally would not speak to each other at school are now able to connect and build friendships. There is a greater community being experienced online than at school.

3.5 Negative views of social networking services

Most social networking sites are open to all, especially Facebook, which means that your teenager could be exposed to harassment, bullying or sexual advances. Cyber-bullying and harassment are most often perpetrated by other teens and tend to happen most to older girls and to teens of either gender who have a strong online presence. It may take several forms:

- publicizing private instant messages, text messages or e-mails
- posting threatening messages
- posting photos that will cause embarrassment
- spreading rumours

According to Boyd, (2008) the use of social networks can expose individuals to harassment or unfitting contact from others. Unless parents are diligent to filter the Internet content to which their families are exposed, children could be exposed to pornography or other inappropriate content. Recent media reporting of social networking services has tended to focus on the negative aspects of services, for example the presence of predatory adults who want to use services to contact and groom young people . According to McCarthy (2010) illegal and unsuitable behaviour is an unfortunate fact of human societies, whether it takes place online or offline. However, over-emphasising these types of activity is not useful in supporting young people to recognise, manage and negotiate risk for themselves. Just as in the real world, we need to approach risk in an even-handed and realistic way in order to best manage it. Most responsible social networking services employ people to post-moderate anti-social activity, although it should be noted that the amount of information published means that services are reliant on users making reports. Boyd (2008) states

"Online social networking can facilitate identity exploration, provide social cognitive skills such as perspective taking, and fulfil the need for social support, intimacy, and autonomy. Whether constructing their profiles in Myspace, creating a video and posting it on YouTube, or

talking in chat rooms, teens are constantly creating, recreating, and honing their identities -- a primary goal of adolescent development.

This requires constant reflection on which they are, on who they want to become, and on their values, strengths, and weaknesses...

As teens prepare to enter the adult social world, online social environments provide training wheels, allowing young people to practice interaction with others in the safety of their homes."

3.6 Piloting Public Life Today

Boyd (2007) states that the Internet lacks walls. Conversations spread and contexts collapse. Technical solutions are unlikely to provide amnesty from this because every digital wall built has been destroyed by new technologies. According to McCarthy (2010) the inherent replicability of bits and the power of search make most walls temporary at best. This is why most participants in networked publics live by 'security through obscurity' where they assume that as long as no one cares about them, no one will come knocking. While this works for most, this puts all oppressed and controlled populations (including teenagers) at risk because it just takes one motivated explorer to track down even the most obscure networked public presence.

Teenagers are facing these complications head-on and their approaches vary. Some try to act differently on their profiles, putting on a public face intended for those who hold power over them. While this is typically the adult-approved approach, this is unrealistic for most teens that prioritise socialisation over adult acceptance. Some teens work to hide their profiles by providing false names, age, and location.

Byron (2007) also adds that the youth are also working through the implications of the comments system. For example, teens often break up with their significant other through Facebook comments (typically boys breaking up with girls). The reason for this is simple: a vocalised breakup is visible to all Friends, making it difficult to play the 'he said/she said' game or to control the breakup narrative by modifying the Instant Messaging (IM) conversation. This behaviour is viewed as being brave to others and they tend to immaculate it from what celebrities are doing to each other in their relationships. Because they view celebrities as their role models they tend to follow what they are doing, (Example Slikour and Bonang South African celebrities). While most of this is taking place through text right now, video is increasing daily.

According to McCarthy (2010) video is not currently searchable, but technology will advance, making it possible to determine who was in what footage. These systems will also go mobile the moment someone figures out how to break through the mobile carrier roadblock. When things go mobile, location based information will add a new dimension to the hyper public infrastructure. Recently video footages have been on our social networking sites of teenagers having sex, even if they are not situated in the same province but the video is likely to hit each and every province, Boyd (2007).

3.7 Types of social networks that are covered in the research

3.7.1 Facebook

According to Elison et al., (2006) Facebook (www.facebook.com) is an online social networking directory that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet.

According to Paul& Brier, (2001) *Facebook* was created and launched in February 2004 by Harvard students Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes, the site began as a network strictly for Harvard University. Two months later, the site extended to include other Ivy League schools. After that, the college network slowly grew and by the end of 2004, *Facebook* had registered more than one million users. Now open to anyone with a valid email address or cell phone number, the site comprises members' pictures; biographies, interests and messages, and members can browse freely through open profiles, Putnam, (2000). Members may choose their personal levels of security to prevent strangers from accessing their personal information.

The platform enables anyone, anywhere, to construct complete applications that members can choose to use. Applications range from photo sharing to graffiti walls and everything in between.

3.7.2 Twitter

Twitter is regarded as the fast growing popular social media. Boyd (2007) gives more details on how the concept of *Twitter* emanated from, he further continue by saying: This social network is the brainchild of programmers who worked at the podcasting company Odeo Inc. in San Francisco. The founders are Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone.

Twitter is also explained as, a social medium that allows individuals to share short messages with a network of other users. As with other social network sites (Boyd and Ellison, 2007) *Twitter* users establish connections via the mechanisms of following and it appears that these users interact with each other in exclusive ways compared to other. It offers a social networking and micro blogging service, enabling its users to send and read messages called tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the user's profile page. Tweets are publicly visible by default; however, senders can restrict message delivery to just their followers. Users may subscribe to other users' tweets – this is known as following and subscribers are known as followers.

When someone follows another user on *Twitter*, his or her messages are displayed in a unified feed, or timeline. According to Putnam, (2000) *Twitter* users can initiate conversations through the use of @ replies (i.e. @ Floram) or through tagging their message by placing a number sign or hash tag, in front of a keyword or phrase (#SA-IDOLS). With these tools-@ replies and (#) hash tags are useful for any *Twitter* user to monitor messages referencing particular topics as they appear on the network

3.7.3 Mxit

According to Barnes (2006: 13) *Mxit* is one of the biggest mobile instant messengers worldwide; this application is widely used in South Africa and is very popular amongst the younger generation. Basically is a small java application that runs on mobile phones that allows multiple users to chat instantly over the internet using GPRS packet data. This means that messages are sent for the fraction of the cost of a sms since a couple of characters of text amount to only a few kilobytes, due to this led to Mxit rising in popularity and Mxit solely relied on word of mouth marketing.

3.8 Social media usage:

3.8.1 Meeting new friends

Some studies show that people use SNS as a new channel to meet people outside their non-virtual environment. Such relationships are built upon common interests rather than physical location (Lampe et al., 2006). Other studies show that the purpose of meeting new friends online is to obtain emotional support not available offline, and such people eventually meet face-to-face (Ellison et al., 2006).

3.8.2 Entertainment

Many people use the internet to be entertained and relax (activity outcomes) and to kill time (self-reactive outcomes) (Flanging, 2005; Larose & Eastin, 2004; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000).

3.8.3 Maintaining relationships

Losing contact with old friends means reducing social capital (Paul & Brier, 2001; Putnam, 2000). People now use internet tools to keep present friendships, especially with distant friends (Cummings et al., 2002; Ellison et al., 2007; Wellman et al., 2001). People started using SNS to maintain relationships. For them, organizing their SNS profiles is equivalent to managing their friendships (Donath & Boyd, 2004; Ellison et al., 2007).

3.8.4 Understanding and learning

SNS provide personal profiles and make it easier to make friends. Haspels points out that some SNS offer news feeds, photo updates, and so on, so that people can get acquainted with one another without engaging in conversation (Haspels, 2008).

3.8.5 Searching for friends

Two types of friend searching have been identified: social searching and social browsing (Lampe et al., 2006). Social searching means searching for close friends online and getting to know them better. Social browsing means searching for people whom one just wants to get acquainted with and perhaps become friends with offline

3.8.6 Social involvement

The question of whether the internet increases social capital is still being debated. Putnam divides social capital into network capital (relationships with friends and neighbours) and participatory capital (involvement in politics and volunteer organizations) (Putnam, 2000).

3.9 Why youth use social networking sites

A recent survey of college students in the U.S. showed that social networking sites are used for social interaction with offline acquaintances in order to maintain friendships rather than to make new friends (Ellison et al., 2007). In fact, these authors found a strong positive relationship between *Facebook* use and social capital, or the resources gained through social interactions. Surveys of teens and college students with social networking site memberships reveal that youth primarily use these sites to stay in touch with friends they see often and those whom they see rarely. In addition, about half of teens use social networking sites to make new friends (Lenhart & Madden, 2007) and about half of college students use them to let others know more about them.

Boyd D (2007) states that, the rapid adoption of social network sites by teenagers in the United States and in many other countries around the world raises some important questions. Why do teenagers flock to these sites? What are they expressing on them? How do these sites fit into their lives? What are they learning from their participation? Are these online activities like face-to-face friendships – or

are they different, or complementary? The goal of this chapter is to address these questions, and explore their implications for youth identities. While particular systems may come and go, how youth engage through social network sites today provides long-lasting insights into identity formation, status negotiation, and peer-to-peer sociality.

3.10 How do youth use social networking sites?

Limited research is available about how adolescents and young adults interact on social networking sites. Online sites are often considered innovative and different from traditional media such as television, film, and radio because they allow direct interaction with others. However, one study of online teen bulletin boards found that many visitors spend considerable time “lurking,” or reading others' posts without posting any reply (Ellison et al., 2007).

Most schools have blocked social networking websites, and mobile phones are at least frowned upon, so social networking is something young people do mostly in their free time. In today's world children dress like miniature adults and creative outdoor play is being replaced by media entertainment that is saturated with sex, violence, and gender stereotyping. Internet pornography is easily and routinely accessed by teenagers (Ellison et al., 2007).

Social networking sites, like bulletin boards, also allow users to look at what others have posted without requiring any specific response. These sites facilitate interaction with others and feedback from others, as well as input from the user in creating a

profile. However, they also make it easy for users to lurk while looking at others' content. We were interested here in how users socially interact on Facebook.

According to Ellison et al., most teens create at least a basic profile, with their name, age, status, photo and interests, but many go much further. Many teens make regular visits to update their profiles and to visit others' profiles. Communicating with others is a key aspect of using social networks. Teens may post public messages or may use bulletins or private messages to communicate with those on their friends list. Most teens use sites such as Myspace and Facebook to stay in touch with their current friends. Teenagers use the sites to make social plans with their friends, and sometimes to flirt.

3.11 Persuasion on social Media

Miller and Charney (2007) argue that writing has four unique effects when compared to oral communication; firstly, writing alters “the particularity of an oral situation” replacing it with the “decontextualized” and universalised space of the text. Secondly, it emphasizes logic over the direct persuasion of an audience, replacing what “an immediate audience willing to accept (with) what any rational hearer should accept; thirdly, it “transform an audience into readers, who must be addressed as a decontextualized abstraction” rather than any particular group of individuals, and finally it “transforms performance into text.

The argument here is that social media represents a hybrid of oral and written communication, demonstrating the feature of both. Communication via social networks often retains the particular nature of communication for example; users of

social networking site frequently interact with a small group of friends who they know offline (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social network websites are a huge part of the lives of most young people and many adults and they can be great fun and really useful. They can also create problems Haigh (2010).

3.12 Privacy concerns on social media

Popular press coverage of social networking sites has emphasized potential privacy concerns, primarily concerning the safety of younger users (George, 2006). Researchers have investigated the potential threats to privacy associated with social networking sites. In one of the academic studies of privacy and social networking sites, Gross and Acquisti (2005) analysed 4,000 Carnegie Mellon University Facebook profiles and outlined the potential threats to privacy contained in the personal information included on the site by students, such as the potential ability to reconstruct users' social security numbers using information often found in profiles, such as hometown and date of birth.

Acquisti and Gross (2006) argue that there is often a detachment between students' desire to protect privacy and their behaviours, a theme that is also explored in Stutzman's (2006) survey of Facebook users and Barnes's (2006) description of the "privacy paradox" that occurs when teens are not aware of the public nature of the Internet. In analysing trust on social network sites, Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007) argue that trust and usage goals may affect what people are willing to share

Facebook users expressed greater trust in Facebook than Myspace users did in Myspace and thus were more willing to share information on the site.

In another study examining security issues and social networking sites, Jagatic, Johnson, Jakobsson, and Menczer (2007) used freely accessible profile data from SNSs to craft a "phishing" scheme that appeared to originate from a friend on the network; their targets were much more likely to give away information to this "friend" than to a perceived stranger. Survey data offer a more optimistic perspective on the issue, suggesting that teens are aware of potential privacy threats online and that many are proactive about taking steps to minimize certain potential risks

Privacy is also implicated in users' ability to control impressions and manage social contexts. Boyd (2007) asserted that Facebook's introduction of the "News Feed" feature disrupted students' sense of control, even though data exposed through the feed were previously accessible. Herumin (2004) argued that the privacy options offered by social networking sites do not provide users with the flexibility they need to handle conflicts with Friends who have different conceptions of privacy; they suggest a framework for privacy in social networking sites that they believe would help resolve these conflicts.

Young users' privacy concerns arise when they are unaware of real and accurate personal identifiable information they provide to those websites; such information can be accessed by a large number of people they do not know and typically would not trust. By accessing personal information and friend's list from Facebook, cyber predators may create a new Facebook page about the same person and attract the

victim's friends to communicate with them (Michael, 2009). While those friends assure that they are talking to someone with whom they are familiar, they may tend to give out their confidential information or even plan to meet this "friend".

3.13 The concept of gender

The term gender became popular in the late 1980's and is of Western origins as a second-generation concept for equity. It easily accommodates race, class, ethnicity and male-female power relations than the term women (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995). Gender is socially constructed power relations between men and women characterised by a set of arrangements of culturally variable attributes and roles that men and women play in their daily lives. These sets of arrangements are reflected by structural relationship of inequalities and through different roles attached to the work performed by men and women (D'Haese & Kirsten, 2006). Saulier, Bently, Gregor, McNeil, Rathwell & Skinner (1999), define gender as a socio-cultural variable that refers to the comparative, relational or different roles, responsibilities and activities assigned to males and females. It is rational in that it identifies the relationship between men and women. Gender refers to the qualitative and interdependent character of men and women's position on society (Ostergaard, 1994). The conceptual distinction between sex and gender is a useful analytical tool to clarify ideas and now has been almost universally taken up.

According to this distinction sex is connected with biology whereas gender identity of men and women in any given society is socially, culturally, historically and psychologically determined (Wallace & March, 1991). Wallace and March (1991)

also stated that gender is learnt through a process of socialisation and through the practice of the particular culture concerned. The concept of gender makes it possible to distinguish the biological founded (which are unchangeable) and sexual differences (workable and may be changed political and opinion-shaping influences) between the roles given to or undertaken by men and women respectively in a given society.

In this light, beginning with the narrower perspective where the term was seen as more or less the same as 'women', gender is now perceived as not only a concern for women, but also as a concern for men (Singh, 2007). Based on the premise that men and women exhibit socially and culturally determined differences in behaviour, roles of responsibilities, as also differences in social, cultural and economic attributes and opportunities (Woroniuk et al, 1997).

3.14 Gender equality Approaches

Gender studies suggested that for sustainable developing countries to take place, women's concerns and needs has to form part of their projects. Three traditional gender equality approaches are made from the gender studies, namely: gender equity, gender difference and gender plurality (Jacobson, 1992; Perrons, 2002; Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002).

3.15 Traditional gender equality approaches

The distinguished three approaches to the realisation of gender equality will be disclosed in the following sub-sections. This includes the gender equity approach, gender differences approach and the gender differences approach and the gender plurality approach.

3.16 The gender equity approach

Gender equity approach holds that women are equal to men, and that they should be treated in the same way as men with regards to rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities (Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002). This way, the gender studies argue that, women would be enabled 'to compete on equal terms with men' (Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002: 254). However, this has a negative impact on women, especially those who are living in rural areas and still practising their traditions. Women were never able to compete on equal terms with men as most of them were always engaged in household chores which include, among others, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the old and sick and collecting water and fire wood. These women did not have time to participate in all the activities that men are engaged in, it was against that context that gender difference approach was introduced.

3.17 The gender differences approach

Gender difference approach argues that women are not the same as men, because women are primary caregivers (Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002). Their involvement in the development process should therefore be based on the adaptations of the

environment to their reproductive and social responsibility as caregivers (Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002: 254). Even though the approach considered women's roles as caregivers, the gender disparities were not solved. The approach assumed that women were engaged in almost the same household activities. The fact that women are different and so are their activities, was not taken into consideration.

3.18 The gender plurality approach

According to Aufhauwer & Hafner (2002) gender plurality approach holds that women and men have 'multiple gender identities' which cannot be ignored. However, the use of sexual differentiation for classification discouraged, while gender-atypical involvement in the development is promoted (Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002). Men and women were allocated roles according to their sex, not their gender. As discussed above, gender is defined as socially constructed power relations between men and women characterised by a set of arrangements of culturally variable attributes and roles that men and women play in their lives. These sets of arrangements are reflected by structural relationship of inequalities between men and women manifested through roles and responsibilities and through different values attached to the work performed by men and women (D'Haese & Kirsten, 2006) this has nothing to do with their sexual differences.

From the gender studies perspective, these three gender approaches provide limited intellectual inspiration for gender equality. Firstly, the gender equity approach would, on its part, promote the development of 'honorary men', seeking to fit into men's existing templates; secondly the gender difference approach would further entrench societal differentiation based on sex by limiting women to 'women specific task'; and, thirdly the gender plurality approach has the potential of further undermining

women's participation in the broader societal development (Aufhauwer & Hafner, 2002). The Gender initiatives are derived from the equity approach which states that men and women should be treated equally. But yet this seems to be impossible as women do not have the physical strength as men and in South Africa women and young girls are seen as being very fragile and they have enough laws that govern them against abuse from men.

3.19 The Social Media Gender Gap

Maddock G and R Vitón (2009), in their study found that there is a great significant difference in the online activity patterns between men and women. Men have a greater tendency to use the internet for functional tasks (get information or download) whereas women use the internet in a 'richer and more engaging way' (employ Social Networks for information, maintain/ strengthen family connections, sharing news). The rise of social networking has prompted women of all ages to engage in a host of associated online activities, such as photo sharing, gaming, video viewing and instant messaging.

According to Thangham C, (2008), women outnumber men on most Social Networks. There is a disparity between the genders in terms of their attitudes, behaviours, and needs. Men are less expressive. It is rare to see a man gushing about the brand new suit he picked up. And because social media are so much more "in tune" with women, male audiences will be increasingly seen as less valuable than female ones.

In general, it has been argued that females relate differently to others and therefore often have different social networks compared to males. The social networks of females are more likely shaped by a preference for emotional closeness – a preference for relations to whom they feel closely and emotionally attached (Liebler & Sandefur 2002; Bell 1991). Often a preference for emotional closeness results in females having more family members in their networks (Marsden 1987; Moore 1990). On the other hand, the social networks of males are more likely shaped by shared activities (Liebler & Sandefur 2002; Bell 1991).

Previous research also shows that females are more likely to be both providers and receivers of emotional support (House, 1987; Agneensens et al. 2006). The issues of emotional closeness and social support are the main focus in this investigation.

3.20 Summary

Teenagers are not creating digital publics to scare parents - they are doing so because they need youth space, a place to gather and see and be seen by peers. Publics are critical to the coming-of-age narrative because they provide the framework for building cultural knowledge. Restricting youth to controlled spaces typically results in rebellion and the destruction of trust. Of course, for a parent, letting go and allowing youth to navigate risks is terrifying. Unfortunately, it is necessary for youth to mature. What we're seeing right now is a cultural shift due to the introduction of a new medium and the emergence of greater restrictions on youth mobility and access. The long-term implications of this are unclear. Regardless of

what will come, youth are doing what they have always done - repurposing new mediums in order to learn about social culture.

Technology will have an effect because the underlying architecture and the opportunities afforded are fundamentally different. But youth will continue to work out identity issues, hang out and create spaces that are their own, regardless of what technologies are available. ("Identity Production in a Networked Culture: Why Youth Heart Myspace"

3.21 An Overview of social Network: South African Experience

Modern media practices have evolved significantly from their traditional forms, with the key concepts of this 'new media' being participation and interactivity (O'Reilly, 2005: 1) (Anderson, 2007). Society exists in a digital age, where everything in our lives is spread out across as much media as possible and this media is shaped by *everyone*. Much of this media exists or relates to the Internet and the 'online world,' as Brücks, Mehnert, Prommer and Rader (2008: 2) confirm in their statement that "the Internet is part of our everyday life" for the reason that "we do the same in the Internet as in real life, probably in a [...] more efficient, faster [and] cheaper [way].

3.21.1 Personalities driving social networks growth in South Africa

Social networks are growing much faster in South Africa. People are connecting from their phone and even from their computers. One of the drivers of growth of social networks is the media obsession with the network, each and everything now is done

even from the social network page. Everyone who is prominent in his own right have a Facebook page. Most radio and TV personalities with large audiences are engaged in intensive campaigns to drive their listeners and viewers to both Twitter and Facebook. It is quite evident that the mass is drawn by the elite group in order for them to join Facebook.

3.21.2 Supporting Social networks in South Africa

Africa is currently the world's fastest growing market for mobile communications and access to information technology is essential for economic, social, cultural and political development in today's world. Mobile technology, the internet and social networks can make vital information more accessible to children and to create platforms for discussion and participation on matters that affect them, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). According to Brown, C and Czerniewicz, L. (2010), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) believes that ICTs have the potential to empower children and young people – particularly in the developing world – but access should be accompanied by education and regulation to ensure that children's safety is not compromised.

“Children are incredibly adept at figuring out new technologies. And while they may have technical knowledge, they are not always aware of some of the implications of using the technology. UNICEF is committed to ensuring that young people not only benefit from innovation, but they are safe from anyone seeking to exploit them through these platforms,” says Aida Girma, UNICEF South Africa Representative.

Social media and mobile phones have also made young people vulnerable to new means of bullying or victimisation. The survey found that 26% of those answering had been insulted or experienced some form of 'cyber-bullying'. Race, location and gender emerged as the most common reasons for insult.

Facebook, with its 750 million members, has become an everyday feature of modern society, allowing users to stay connected across the globe. However, the relative ease with which one can be "friended" by strangers has resulted in some women becoming victims of cybercrime, Brown, C and Czerniewicz, L. (2010).

The media attention given to the notorious case of South Africa's "Facebook rapist" may have finally woken people up to the dangers of social networks. The case also showed that the wheels of justice can move swiftly when necessary. Perhaps the notoriety of the case itself, and the resulting public eye, stimulated the prompt action of the justice system. This is often not the case. During 16 Days of Activism, many survivors of sexual and domestic violence will complain about how little attention their plight receives, Hoveyda, P and Sinha, A, (2011).

Thabo Bester, the "Facebook rapist", was relatively unknown until stories began to emerge in newspapers and on television about a man in his 20s, pretending to be a modelling scout on Facebook. Instead he conned young women and stole their possessions. The robberies turned into sexual assault and even alleged murder. After a brief cat-and-mouse chase, police finally arrested him on September 21 in Alberton, Johannesburg.

According to UNICEF, a 2007 report by People Opposing Women Abuse (Powa) found only 7 percent of those one in nine reported rape cases resulted in successful convictions. Moreover, of that 7 percent, only 5 percent reach the high courts for sentencing. These statistics certainly present a very bleak picture of the justice system. While sexual assaults have been a worrying trend in South Africa long before online social networking took root, it's apparent that there's a need to have a close look at these new forms of potential abuse.

Media remains essential for spreading accurate and well-researched information about cybercrime.

3.21.3 Bridging the gap of communication (Geography of space)

While some parts of the Capricorn district experience privileges of having electricity in their homes, proper sanitation and water which falls under the requirement of being a civilised person living in South Africa some people at Ga-Potsi village and the neighbouring villages are still struggling to acquire their basic need which are in our South African constitution.

3.22 Conclusion

With the increasing number of social networking sites, have you stopped to question the dangers of social networking? Social networking sites are a great way to stay in touch, and a means of re-connecting with family and friends. But they may be a field of hungry predators. You may communicate numerous times, but what guarantee do

you have regarding, whom you are actually corresponding with although you may be looking at the advantages of social networking; every one's motive isn't necessarily the same.

The next chapter discusses the Research design and Methodology that the researcher used and followed when conducting the research. The chapter will include, among other things, the sampling designs and procedures, data collection and analysis procedures and limitations of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter indicates how the researcher of this study established the relationship between pupils and social networks. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the researcher collected data, if ever the proposed method in chapter one were followed and then indicate challenges faced during data collection. To explore these challenges, the qualitative research method was used for the study. Finally, the chapter discusses possible limitations of the research.

4.2 Research design

The researcher used qualitative research design for this study. The qualitative research design is the study in which the researcher observes the activities in the area and interview people. It gives detailed account of actions and representation of actions, so that there is a better understanding of social issues, to use it to bring about a measure of change (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). In qualitative design, individuals are conceptualised as active agents in constructing and making sense of realities that they encounter (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

A qualitative design is usually appropriate when the researcher intends to examine the properties, values, needs, or characteristics that distinguish individuals, groups, communities, organisations, events settings or messages (Mouton & Marais, 1990). The method of reasoning is usually inductive, based on specific assumptions and

ends with descriptions resulting from respondents or participants. Qualitative design is suitable for the exploration of areas where limited or no prior information exists. Furthermore, the approach is appropriate in the description of behaviours, themes, trends, attitudes, needs or relations that are applicable units being analysed (Du Plooy, 2002:83).

Qualitative research design is a research method used extensively by scientists and researchers studying human behaviour and habits. "Qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As one qualitative researcher noted, "I knew that I was not at home in the world of numbers long before I realized that I was at home in the world of words."

The data collected in qualitative research has been termed "soft", "that is, rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures." Researchers do not approach their research with specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test. They are concerned with understanding behaviour from the subject's own frame of reference. Qualitative researcher believes that "multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is the meaning of our experiences that constitutes reality. Reality, consequently, is 'socially constructed'" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Data is usually collected through sustained contact with people in the settings where they normally spend their time. Participant observations and in-depth interviewing are the two most common ways to collect data. "The researcher enters the world of

the people he or she plans to study, gets to know, be known, and trusted by them, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed. This material is supplemented by other data such as [artefacts], school memos and records, newspaper articles, and photographs" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Rather than test theories, qualitative researchers often inductively analyse their data and develop theories through a process that Strauss called "developing grounded theory". They use purposive sampling to select the people they study. Subjects are selected because of who they are and what they know, rather than by chance.

4.3 Kinds of data

Both primary and secondary data have been collected. Primary data was collected from high school learners from Capricorn high school and Sekitla Higher secondary school, through questionnaires. The information was relating to biographic data the respondents, their opinions about social networking and the effects that social media has on them.

Secondary data have been collected from documented sources such as books, journal article, newspapers, magazines as well as other media. These data consist of the dangers of social networking, as well as the effects they have on the youth, coupled with their international and South African experiences. They also project ways in which learners can be able to cope with their studies while networking.

4.4 Target population

The researcher's target population was drawn from the learners of the high schools in the Capricorn region, namely, Capricorn High School and Sekitla High School. These schools differ in location and infrastructure. Capricorn High School is situated in the city of Polokwane, whereas Sekitla high School is in the outskirts of Polokwane in a village called Ga-Potsi. The researcher looked at learners from different regions, urban and rural. There were 50 participants in each school; this will include 24 learners in Grade 11 and their teacher and 24 learners in Grade 12 and their teacher. The two schools were convenient for the researcher as they are closer to where the researcher is based and it reduced research costs for the researcher.

4.5 Sampling design

The researcher used sampling because time, cost and effort of collecting data from a sample are usually substantially less than are required to collect the same information from larger population. The study requires an in-depth of individual's perceptions on social networking from the population, only a small sample may be possible. In that manner, comprehensive information was collected. It is far easier to check the data of a small sample than those of large population. (De Vos, 1998; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

There were two levels from which the study had to sample, namely: the selection of the schools; and the grades within the school. The schools were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. According to Bobbie, (2001), Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. As already indicated in the previous subsection, the reasons for using convenience sampling include costs, time and energy, accessibility. The schools were also chosen in order to compare them against each other hence the difference in the location. The researcher looked at learners from different regions, urban and rural. There were 50 participants in each school; this will include 25 learners in Grade 11 and their teacher and 25 learners in Grade 12 and their teacher. The two schools were convenient for the researcher as they are closer to where the researcher is based and therefore reduced research costs for the researcher.

4.6 Data Collection procedures

The researcher personally collected data at two high schools in the Limpopo province. The researcher used Focus group method as a preliminary method to the data collection the data collection process. As a method it provided valuable insight on the nature of why learners use social networking media. In-depth interviews were used and they also served as a discussion document to give details of the challenges that are faced by learners while networking. More information was collected through careful analysis of archival records such as newspapers and magazines.

The researcher drafted questions based on ideas and information discussed in the relevant literature as well as information that came up from the pilot study. A detailed discussion of the techniques and their relevance in the study is provided below.

4.7 Focus group interviews

Focus groups are often a useful starting point for the design of a research questionnaire because they provide a means for exploring the way potential respondents talk about objects and events (Shambashani & Rook, 2006:37). Furthermore, the term focus is described as the full title that implies that the interview should be limited to a small number of issues. The researcher sought to understand the audience's attitudes and behaviour that emanated from the questions or discussion and expression of different opinions and views.

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging (Shambashani & Rook, 2006:37). Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.

Focus groups allow interviewers to study people in a more natural setting than a one-to-one interview. In combination with participant observation, they can be used for gaining access to various cultural and social groups, selecting sites to study, sampling of such sites, and raising unexpected issues for exploration. Their main advantage is their fairly low cost compared to surveys, as one can get results

relatively quickly and increase the sample size of a report by talking with several people at once.

As a preliminary method to the data collection process, a focus group discussion was held to debate social networks benefits and risks. Furthermore the focus group discussion provided the researcher with valuable insight on the kind of challenges learners are faced with.

Since focus groups are often conducted to obtain specific information from a clearly identified set of individuals, the researcher involved schools to participate in the focus group discussions. Participants were both able and willing to provide desired information and were representatives of the population of interest (Steward et al, 2006:51). This involved a well-planned research endeavour that required the same care and attention that is associated with any other type of scientific research. The nature of the discussion was determined in large measure by the composition of the group and the interaction that ensued among members. Although focus groups can produce quantitative data, their primary purpose is the collection of qualitative data. Hence, particular care was given to the composition of the group because the quality of the discussion and perhaps even its direction could be determined by the interaction of the particular set of people brought together (Steward et al, 2006:51)

4.8 Construction of Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this study was divided into three sections; namely the demographic profile of the learners involved in social networks, what learners benefit

from using social networks, the risk involved in using social networks and are they using social networks in line with their school work.

Under section A, the demographic profile of the learner involved in social networking involved questions based on their gender, age, grade and their residential address. In section B, this based its questions on the learner's benefits and risk of using social networks, if they are really concerned about their privacy, including the most networking site they frequently use. Lastly section C, focused on whether their teachers are intergrading social networks in their teachings.

4.9 Data collection and analysis Procedures

Primary data was collected which includes focus group questions and questionnaires which the researcher filled with together with the respondents. The questionnaires consisted of the combination of open and close questions which were the main data collection apparatus. The questionnaires were used to collect information about how the learners viewed social networks, whether they are benefiting from them and if so what are the benefits. The researcher also looked at the risk involved in social networking.

Secondary data was collected through reading, analysing and understanding of the relevant debates that have been streaming in the media (this include magazines, newspapers and magazines) and in books.

The cyclical process of data analysis was used in the study. It was applied during the data familiarisation process by way of identifying main themes in the data collected (reading). The data were examined in depth to provide detailed descriptions of information, following which they were categorically coded into grouped themes. Where quantifiable data were available, illustrative tables and graphs were used to present research findings. Following this the researcher interpreted and classified using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The SPSS outputs was carefully studied, presented and interpreted in relation to the research problem of the study.

4.10 Limitations of the Study

An intensive case study of all the high schools in the province would have been most appropriate approach to present a generalised report on the potential benefits and risks of social networks amongst learners. However, the study only covered two schools in the province comparing the influence of being in different locations or environment. During data collection in Polokwane (Capricorn high school), the researcher had to face certain challenges. Firstly the researcher had to narrow down the grades because the matriculants were far busy they could not attend to do questionnaires. Which then meant that the researcher had to make amendment to the study that interpreted that the learners who were asked to fill in questionnaires were the Grade 10 and Grade 11 and the same had to be done in both schools.

Secondly, the researcher was only allowed to conduct her research after school hours which implicated the learners because they had to travel back home with the transport which were arranged and paid by their parents.

During data collection at Sekitla high School, the researcher had other challenges as well. Firstly, the learners who were asked to fill in the research were supposed to be individuals with smartphones. Most of the learners at Sekitla high schools did not have access to all the social media mentioned in the research, which impacted poorly on the research study.

Secondly, some of the learners complained that they wanted to be rewarded for participating in the research. Most of them thought or expected to be paid for the questionnaire they filled. Lastly, the learners were not willing to answer some questions as they thought their teachers were going to read their questionnaires. That changed as soon as they saw that the questionnaires did not require them to fill in their name.

Nevertheless, data were collected through cluster and purposive sampling based on the researcher's judgement about what she believes is appropriate target population from which to collect data. The researcher managed to fill in 100 questionnaires, which was the exact number the researcher intended to do.

4.11 Ethical considerations

It was indicated in chapter one that the research was conducted with integrity (honesty and truthfulness). The respondents were thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the study and its aims. Integrity: the researcher was at all times professional and applied her expertise objectively, accurately and justly. Consent: Relevant people were informed about the research to be conducted and who, when and the procedures which will be followed during the study. In this case the head of department for the Department of Education was consulted to ask for permission before data was collected in the two schools in the Limpopo province, and to also explain the all the necessary details about the research. The principals of the schools were also given briefing about the study before learners of their schools were consulted. Harm: involved individuals and bodies were convinced that the research does not pose any form of harm to the learners, environment and the researcher.

Psychological abuse, stress or loss of self-esteem: participants were not placed under any stressful, embarrassing, anxiety-producing or unpleasant situations. In order to avoid this, the researcher filled the questionnaire together with the respondents so that it was easy for the participants to complete filling in the questionnaire. Issues of privacy and confidentiality were considered during the study including that of participants and respondents of the research. In order to respect this ethic the researcher did not ask names of the respondents. Copyrights and intellectual property rights plagiarism is avoided at all times. Information and extracts

not belonging to the researcher were always quoted with references. The wisdom of the research will still be shared with other people.

4.12 Conclusion

Even though there were challenges during the research, the researcher tried by all means to stick to the designed plan to execute the research. However the researcher failed to execute the questionnaires to the grade 12 as planned due to some unforeseen circumstances and constrains. More questionnaires were given to the learners at Sekitla High School. The researcher managed to have 43 respondents at Capricorn High School and 57 at Sekitla High School. Most importantly the researcher insured that the ethical considerations were honoured at all times.

Chapter five, which is the research findings, representations and interpretation, follows. Chapter five focuses on and discuss the results which were found while conducting the research in the two high schools found in the Limpopo Province.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS, PRESENTATIONS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The survey conducted in the two schools at the Capricorn district reveals four distinct patterns regarding social networks. These include the harms that learners encounter while using social networks, what they are gaining from using this networks, the risks that are involved in different genders, behavioural change and lastly how geography of space does not pose a difference in the usage of social networks.

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data which the researcher collected through a combination of strategies. Respondents were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. The data collected were examined in depth to provide detailed descriptions of information, following which they were categorically coded into grouped themes. The evidence provided is both quantitative and qualitative in terms of form, analysis and interpretation.

5.2 Geographic and developmental infrastructure, background of the two schools

These two schools are based in the Limpopo province, Capricorn district. These schools differ in location and infrastructure. Capricorn High School is situated in the

city of Polokwane, whereas Sekitla high School is in the outskirts of Polokwane in a village called Ga-Potsi.

5.2.1 Background of Capricorn high school

Capricorn High School has proper sanitation, water facilities and electricity. The school has a computer lab where learners are taught computer skills. The school comprises of about 1225 learners who are enrolled at the school. It has been 51 years since Capricorn High School opened its gates to learners. The school was opened on July 25 1961 as Pietersburg English Medium School with 428 learners enrolled and changed its name to Capricorn High School in October of that year. Today Capricorn High School is known as one of the top schools in Polokwane. It outshines many other schools and it has shown great achievements and infrastructure over the years.

The learners from Capricorn High School are very much privileged; they have all the resources centred on them. They have proper sanitation, health facilities and electricity. It is not difficult for the girl child to finish school as there are no constraints to keep her from doing that. There is gender equality. There are no traditions that can keep a child from not going to school.

5.2.2 Background on Sekitla High School

Sekitla High School on the other hand is situated in a village called Ga-Potsi. The village falls under the jurisdiction of ward 31 and it is ruled by the traditional institution in the authority of a chief (Dikgale). The residents of the village are the Northern Sotho (Bapedi) speaking people. Sekitla High School accommodates 331 learners in the school at the present moment. The estimation of the distance from the city of Polokwane to Ga-Potsi is approximately 43 km. The school building is Modern but there is a problem with sanitation, so they use pit toilets. The school is built on fertile land and the learners have a garden in their school yard.

The geography, and infrastructure of the two schools are totally different and this is relevant in the study as the researcher is comparing the two schools. The schools also differ in the facilities, because of where they are placed. Knowing the geographic background is relevant to this research as the researcher wants to determine if new trends are used everywhere. The question here is if space does have an influence or impact in the way you live your life.

5.2.2.1 Culture and Tradition in the village of Ga-Potsi

The culture and tradition of the village are manifested in a physical form which include, among others, houses, lapa, kraals, spatial layout and farms. Almost half of the households in the village have traditional houses known as huts. The materials that are used to build those huts include, amongst others, mud, stones or bricks, cow

dung, wood and grass. The huts are built with stones or bricks then covered with mud (also used as cement) or cow dung; the wood and grass are used for roofing. This is one of the signs that show that people still follow their culture and tradition in the village. Again, more than three quarters of the households in the village have built modern houses. The materials that they used include: bricks, cement, wood tiles or congregated iron. In some of the households there is a combination of the huts and modern houses. As part of their culture and tradition, the 90% of the households have *lapa*. In cases where there are a number of houses in the yard, *lapa* serves as the foreground of their outbuilding connecting the houses. In addition to their culture and tradition, most households still practise animal farming. Animals such as goats, cattle and sheep are kept in the kraals at night and released during the day for grazing. Apart from the people practising their culture and tradition, they are well aware that children have to go to school and learn more than they did in the past, because women in the village were not allowed to go to school as they had to participate in a whole lot of things, which include house chores, picking of fire wood, going to dams and rivers to fetch water and that is why most women in the villages were not learned and men were. This then brought in the laws of gender equality.

5.2.2.2 Electricity in the village

About 70% of the households in Ga-Potsi do not have access to electricity, including Sekitla High School. So it makes it difficult for them to have computer labs for learners in the school. These households depend on fire for cooking and as a result, they also have special kitchen (popularly known as *mothopa*) built for that activity. To make fire, wood is needed and female learners are expected to collect fire wood.

5.2.2.3 Health facilities

Still on developmental infrastructure, the residents of Ga-Potsi village use the health facilities in Segopje village or Mankweng Township. Both the clinic and hospital are located in Mankweng Township and one clinic in a nearing village called Segopje. The distance from Ga-Potsi to Segopje village is about ± 5 km and ± 20 km away from Mankweng Township. As some of the girls at Sekitla are living with their grandparents as their parents are working in Johannesburg, the girls are now given the duties of being caregivers, they take the sick to the clinic or hospital and their young siblings when need arises. Some are not even taken to the hospital because they lack money for transportation, as a result the girls would bare a burden of taking care of the sick until they are healed and it makes it difficult for them to catch up with their school work when they return. Therefore lack of health facilities militate against gender equality in the village.

5.3 Factors that are connected to social networks

5.3.1 Cellphone brands

Schools that have computer facilities in their schools have blocked social networks so that the students cannot access their accounts. This does not stop the learners from accessing the social networks as there are new cellphone trends that are emerging on a daily basis. These cellphones are termed as “smart phones” which means they can access the internet at any given time. But these can only be done if you have airtime or data bundles.

The researcher observed that most of the learners are using cellphones that are expensive and some of the cellphone are on contract. That means that the learners had access to internet easily. For some learners it is strenuous as they have to wait for their parents to buy them airtime while others compromise on their lunch money to buy airtime.

5.4 Research findings

This process was based on the re-statement of the study aim and objectives articulated in the background of the study which set to:

- Explore and provide investigated evidence on what learners of different genders gain from using social networks and the harms that they may also encounter during the process of networking, in the Capricorn district two schools.

5.5 The objectives were set to:

- To compare the usage of social networks amongst genders
- To identify the potential gains and harms of using social networks
- To determine the major visited social network
- To evaluate how social networks are affecting the lives of the learners.
- To compare the usage of social networks in terms of the area where learners reside.

5.6 Gender profile of the respondents

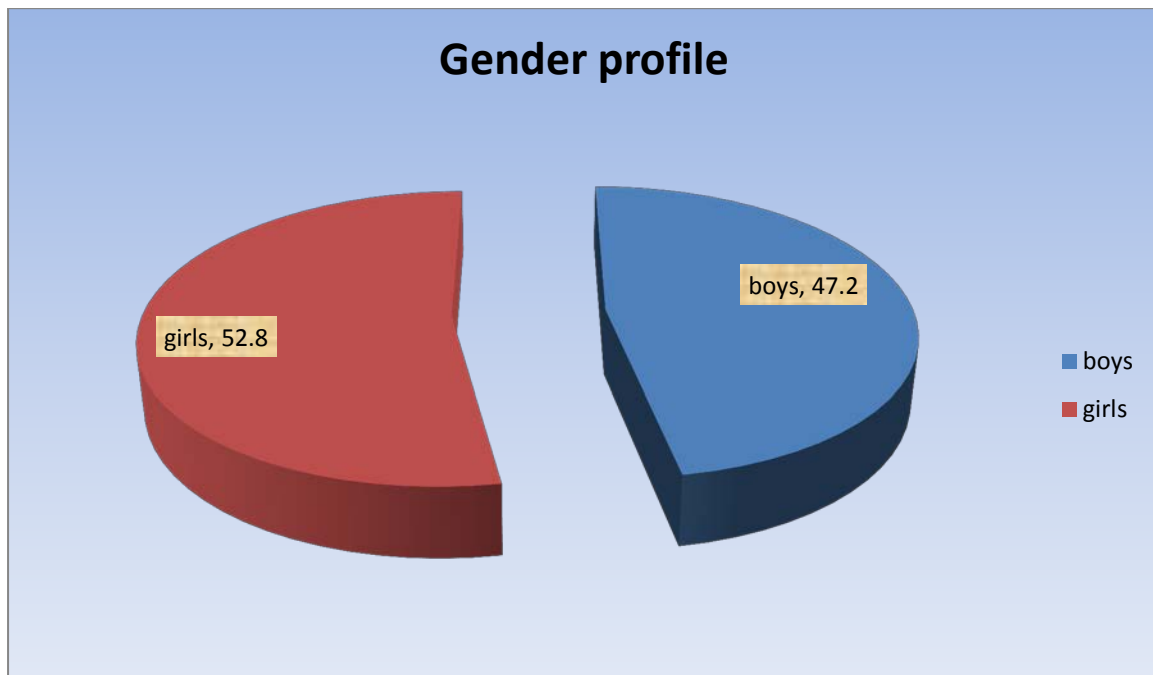
Technologies, including communications technologies, have a long history of shaping and being shaped by the gender of their users. Although technologies used to perform housework have an apparent historical connection to gender in many cultures, a more ready connection to SNSs may be drawn with telephones as a communications technology readily and widely available in the home. Telephone use has long had gendered connections ranging from the widespread assumption that women simply talk more than men, and the employment of women as telephone operators. In particular, young women have been closely associated with extensive and trivial use of the telephone for purely social purposes (Boyd, 2006).

Similarly, women's use of and influence on the development of computers has been underestimated while significant developments in computers have been masculinized. Thus the idea that there may be both real and perceived differences in how men and women use SNSs – and that those uses may shape the SNSs – is neither new nor surprising and has historical analogues.

There is historical and contemporary evidence that current fears about young girls' online safety have historical antecedents such as telegraphs and telephones. Further, in many cases those historical reactions resulted in restrictions of girls' use of technology to protect them from predators, molesters, and other criminals threatening their innocence (Hargittai, 2007). Like current fears focused on computer use, particularly SNSs and other communication media, these fears are most intense when the medium enters the home. These fears have the potential to – at least

temporarily – overwhelm the positive and empowering uses of these technologies. These historical fears are echoed in contemporary media accounts of youths' use of SNSs.

Figure 1: gender profile of the sample



As choosing the learners, there was no specific technique which was used. Any available learner in grade 10 and 11, who was willing to be part of the study filled in the questionnaire, and is a coincidence that there was gender balance. The learners filled in the questionnaire willingly and the gender balance did not affect the study. The survey results will not be influenced by the balance and will not be biased.

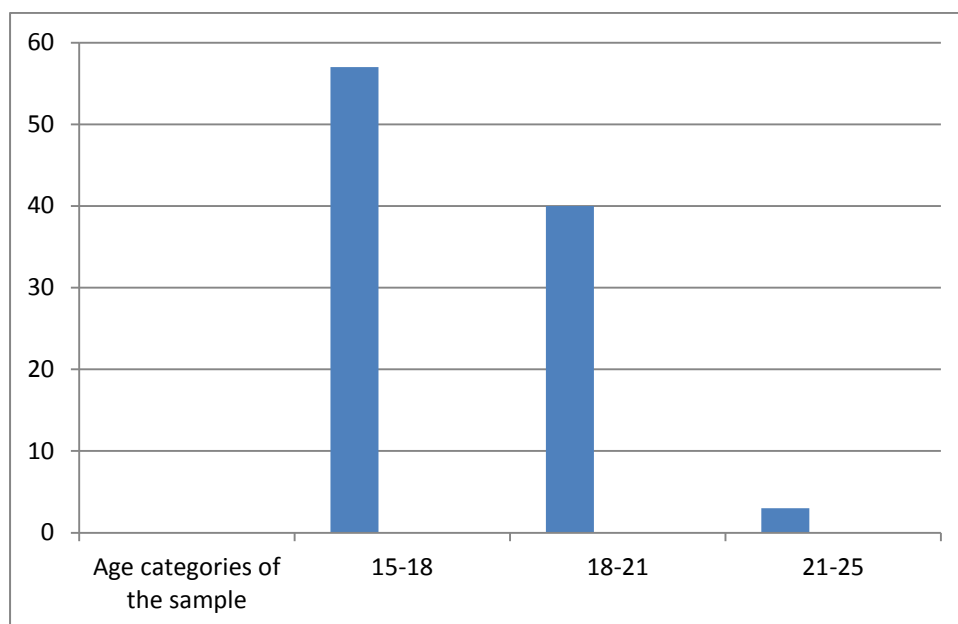
5.7 Age groups of the respondents

In the world that we live in you would expect that the learners who are in grade 10 are 16 years of age and those who are in grade 11 are expected to be 17 years of age. Due to factors of learners failing their grades and some going to grades earlier

or later than expected and some being promoted to the next grades because they are intelligent, it is expected that you will get different age groups.

From the sample presented below, the majority of the respondents, making 57% of the total sample, are between the ages of 15 and 18 years, (Figure 2). The reason might be that most of the learners fall under that age category and that they were the most accessible group of learners available in the school and that they had access to social networks. Learners aged 21-25 were also part of the study and they only form 3% of the sample. This is the lowest age category of participants.

Figure 2: Age categories of the sample

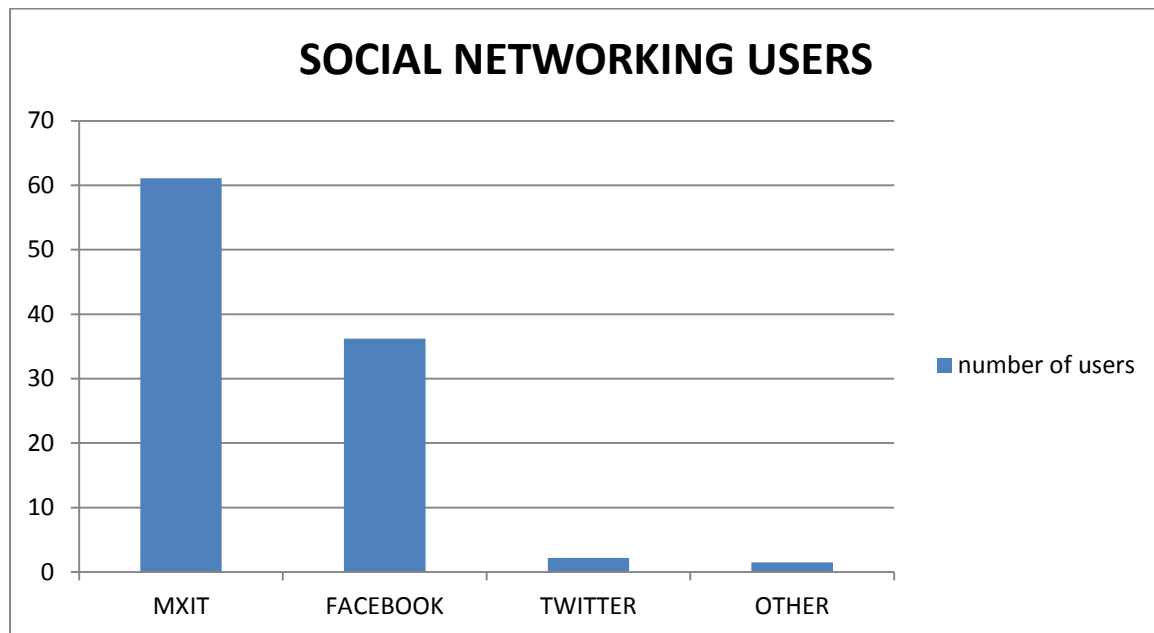


5.8 Users of Social networks

When looking at the social network sample, it is divided into the social networking sites. These include Facebook, Twitter, Mxit or others which are not covered in the research. The majority of the respondents are using Mxit to connect to their friends.

From the total sample, 61.1% of the respondents indicated that they were using Mxit. Facebook comes second to Mxit with 36.2 learners in the survey (Figure 3).

Figure 3: social network users



The respondents who prefer Twitter and other social networks both comprised 3.7% from the total sampled population. From the overall survey results on the users of social networks Mxit is the highest as it is cost effective and for them they are able to reach a large number of people. Facebook and twitter require you to have data bundles or enough airtime as that will guarantee you a visit to the website.

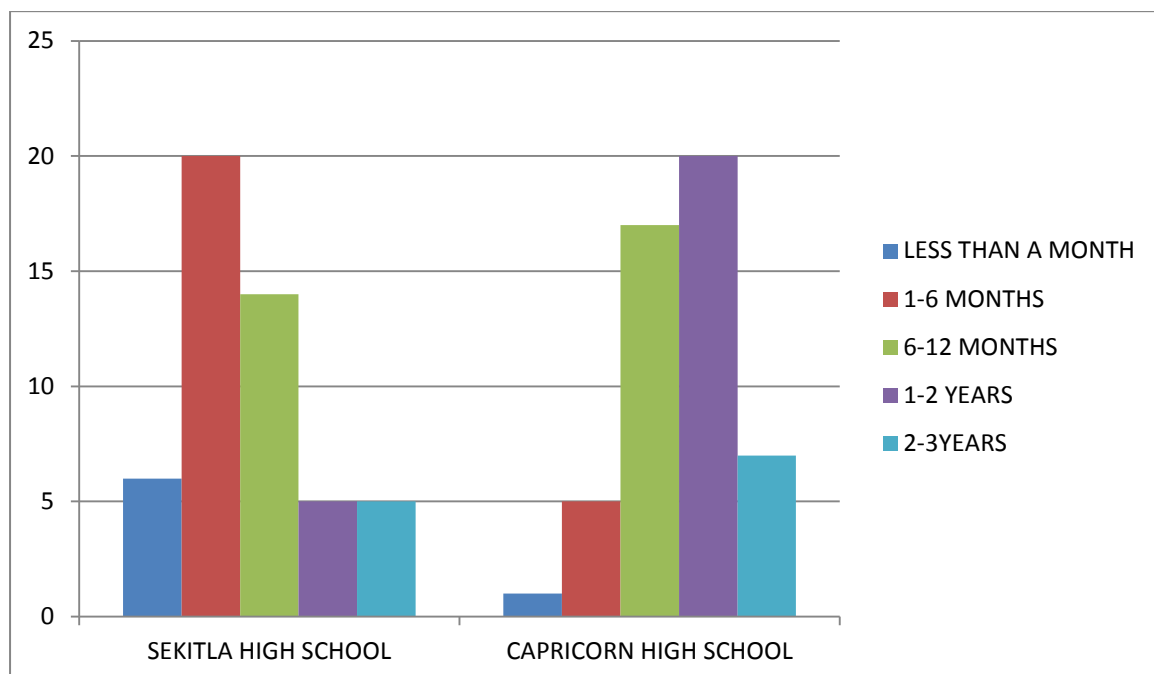
5.9 Duration of social network

It appears that the respondents have not used social networks for a long time. This is due to the reasons that their parents did not want to buy them phones which are able to link to the internet because they felt that they are expensive, and that it was not the correct age for them to have cellphones. Some of the respondents admitted that

cellphones are indeed very influential in a sense that you start communicating with people who you don't know and that you are easily absorbed in the dating scene and you fail to concentrate or focus on your school work.

When comparing the two schools, the researcher noticed that learners who were in grade 11 were likely to have been using social networks for more than a year and those in grade 10 have plus minus six months networking. They elaborated that their parents bought them cellphones once they turned sixteen as birthday gifts. While comparing the two schools the researcher noticed that learners from Sekitla High School only started having cellphones while in grade 10 whereas the learners from Capricorn High School started using cellphone ever since they were in grade 7.

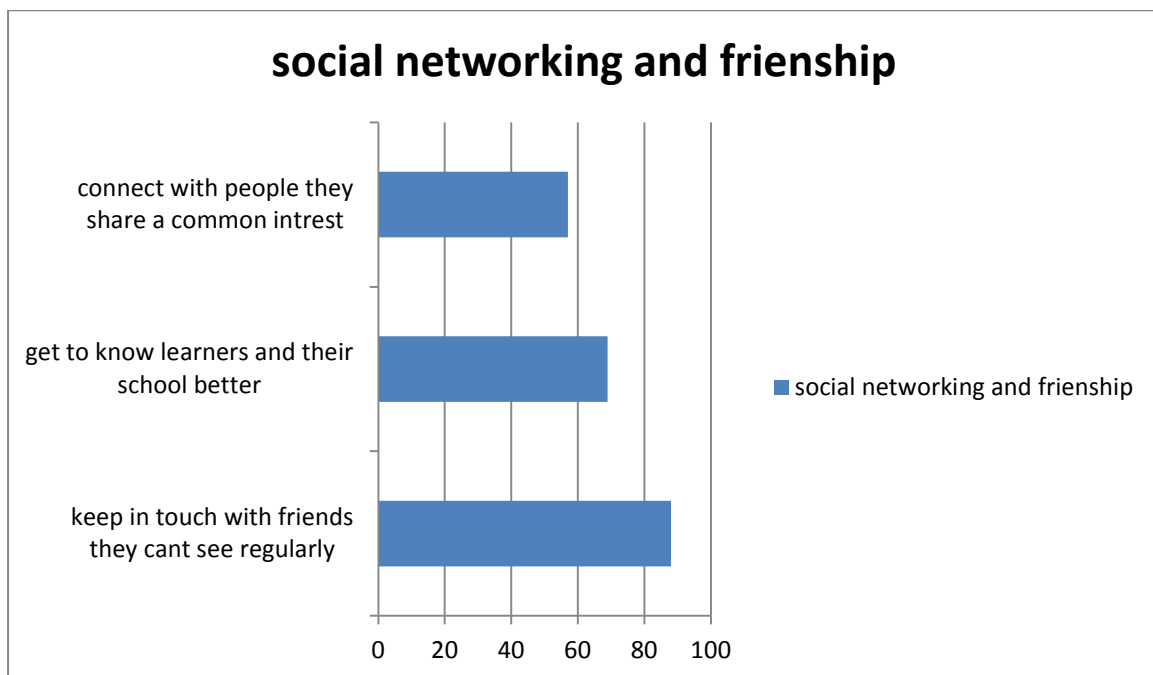
Figure 4: duration of social networks



5.10 Interpersonal communication

Interpersonal communication has been a growing issue as more and more people have turned to social networking as a means of communication. Benniger (1987) describes how mass media has gradually replaced interpersonal communication as a socialising force. Further, social networking sites have become popular sites for youth culture to explore them, relationships, and share cultural artefacts". Figure 5 shows that learners are now able to

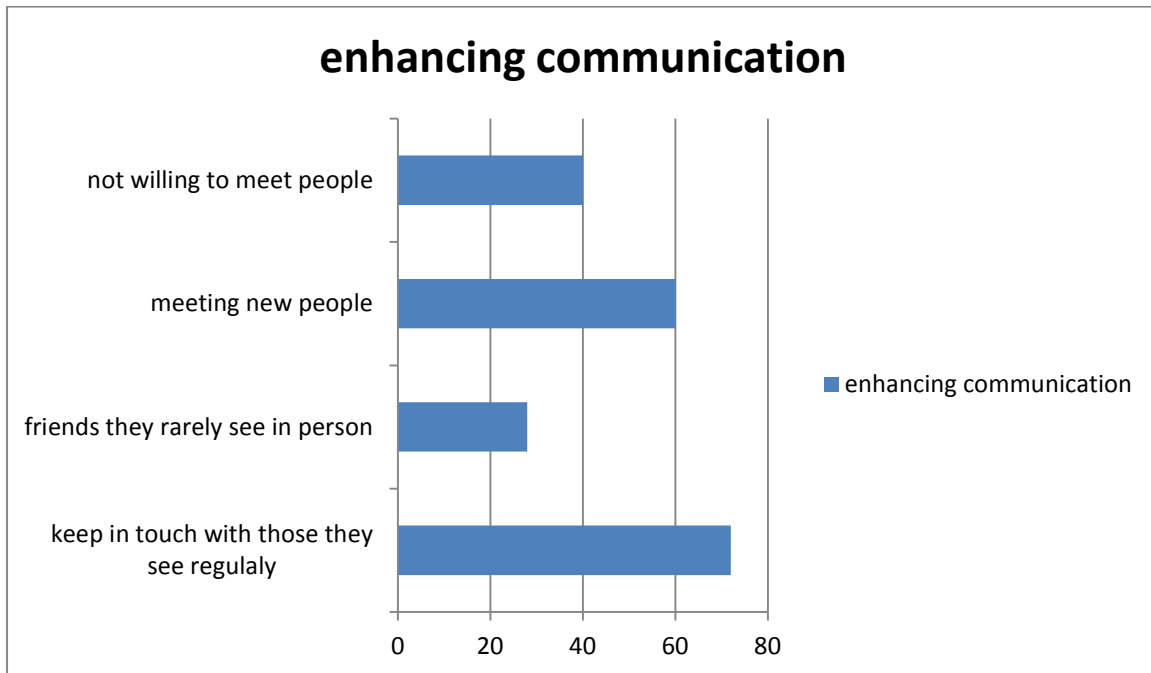
Figure 5



For teens in the survey, social networking extends the ability to keep in touch with the people they see every day. The overwhelming majority, 72 percent, do so, while 28 percent use sites to keep up with friends they rarely see in person. The relative boldness of teen boys carries over to social networking. Those aged 15-17 proved

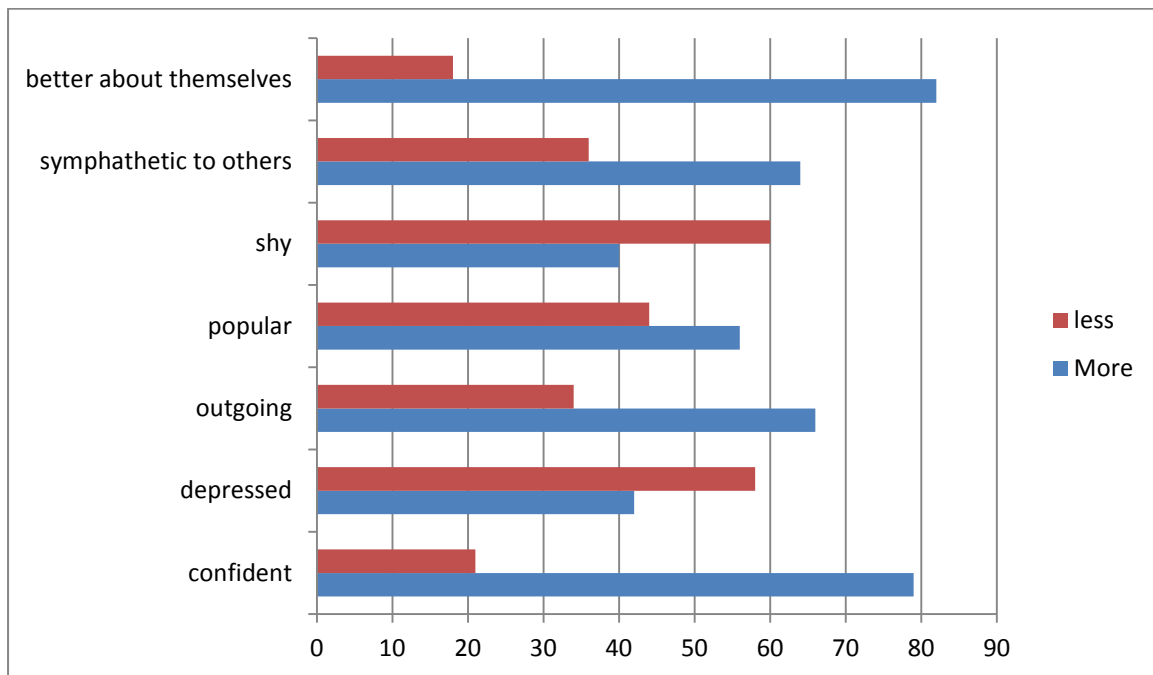
more likely to befriend new people, with 60 percent of them willing to do so. About 40 percent of learners the same age showed no similar willingness.

Figure 6



The learners were asked to indicate who they mostly communicate with while using social networks and because they spend a lot of hours on their phones. They indicated that they would go to the bathroom to chat during school hours; they would chat to their friends when the teacher is not yet in the class or maybe he/she being disrupted by other colleagues. They also communicate while they are walking home or transported to various places. This is also evident in the society that we live in where you would find the youth in a taxi or a bus, on the phone chatting all the way to the destination. For some they will forget when to get off the taxi or bus because they are distracted by their phones. They mentioned that they have perceived certain effects on social and emotional well-being and this is evident in figure 7.

Figure 7: perceived effects while using social networks

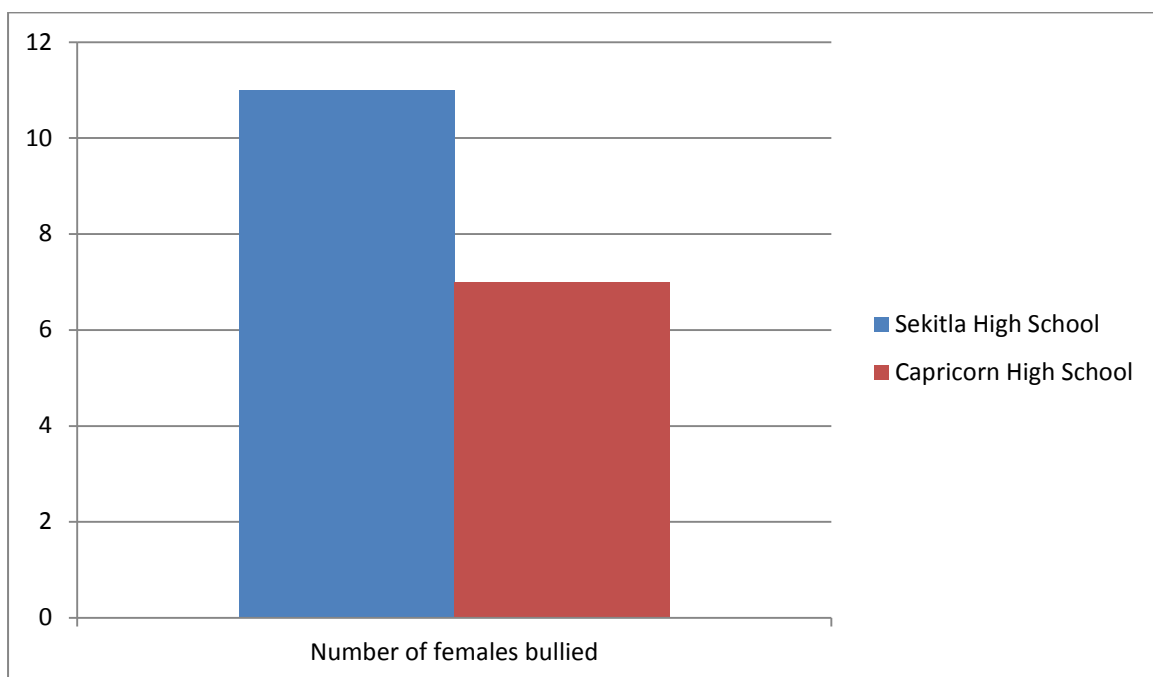


Learners at Sekitla High School indicated that they spend most of their time communicating with their close friends and to them these are their girlfriends and boyfriends. The researcher was told that the only time they get to communicate with their classmates is when they do not understand the homework they were given or when they were absent from school premises due to some certain reasons. 100% of the learners at Sekitla High School answered that they never chat or communicate with their parents on social networks.

The answers were totally different to the Capricorn High School learners as they indicated that they communicate with their parents or family members on social networks. It was quite surprising that none of the learners at both schools indicated that they have never spoken to a stranger on their social networks. When further questioned they acknowledged that some people are not to be trusted on social networks.

When the learners were asked whether they were ever bullied on any social networks it did not come as a shock to find that all the boys denied that they were cyber-bullied and the females were the ones who were cyber-bullied by other females. They indicated that the reasons it went that far was that, they were accusing each other of snatching their boyfriends. Some of the learners said that other females were jealous of their facial features and they talked badly about them on social networks. Figure 5 shows the number of female learners who said they were cyber-bullied. Cyber-bullying, is a relatively common occurrence and it can often result in emotional trauma for the victim. Depending on the networking outlet, up to 39% of users admit to being “cyber-bullied”. Danah Boyd, There are not many limitations as to what individuals can post when online. Individuals are given the power to post offensive remarks or pictures that could potentially cause a great amount of emotional pain for another individual

Figure 8: Number of females cyber-bullied



11% of the learners of Sekitla High School were mostly bullied as compared to the 7% of Capricorn high school. Then one tend to ask if the geography of space has great impact on why learners from Sekitla are prone to be more bullied than those at Capricorn High School. Is it because they are from a rural place, or is it just a coincident? Are leaners from Capricorn High School more advanced or civilised as compared to the other learners residing in the outskirts of Polokwane?

5.11 Privacy within social within social networking sites

Privacy has been the primary topic of many studies of SNS users and many of these studies have found differences between male and female SNS users although some studies have found results contradictory to those found in other studies.

Some researchers have found that women are more protective of their personal information and more likely to have private profiles. Other researchers have found that women are less likely to post some types of information. Acquisti and Gross found that women in their sample were less likely to reveal their sexual orientation, personal address, or cell phone number. This is similar to Pew Internet & American Life research of children's user of SNSs that found that boys and girls presented different views of privacy and behaviours with girls being more concerned about and restrictive of information such as city, town, last name, and cell phone number that could be used to locate them. The researcher found that girls are less likely to share information that "identifies them directly – last name, cell phone number, and address or home phone number," linking that resistance to women's greater concerns about "cyberstalking," "cyberbullying," and security problems.

Table 1.1 shows the general concerns of how the learners (girls) of Sekitla High School and Capricorn High School are concerned about their privacy as opposed to teenage boys of both schools. The number of girl teenagers covered in the research was a bit higher than those of teenage boys but they proved that they were mostly concerned with sharing their intimate secrets. The researcher will give a comparison of how the girls answered the questionnaire.

Table1.1 Sekitla high school learners and their privacy concern

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat Highly
Dating history	16	30	11
Financial information (e.g., info on things you buy, where you buy from, etc)	31	9	17
Gossip between friends	15	21	21
Intimate secrets	8	12	37
Lifestyle related (eg. photos, blogs, history etc)	35	6	16
Contact numbers	14	6	37
Religious / political beliefs	28	15	14

It is quite evident that teenage girls will think twice about revealing their contact numbers as they know that they can be in danger from the predators. It is not unusual to them to share photos as this is a way of showing off their new clothes because most of their time they spend wearing uniform.

Table 1.2 reveals what the boys from both schools are generally concerned with, and the revelation is different as compared to what the girls have said.

Table 1.2 Capricorn high school learners and their privacy concerns

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat Highly
Dating history	16	7	20
Financial information (e.g., info on things you buy, where you buy from, etc)	33	5	5
Gossip between friends	5	8	30
Intimate secrets	5	5	33
Lifestyle related (eg. photos, blogs, history etc)	38	5	0
Contact details	33	10	0
Religious / political beliefs	17	16	10

Male teenagers said that they too were concerned about sharing their privacy issues as it would make them less popular to the girls. They wanted their information less reserved in case they wanted to date other girls except for the ones they are already dating. They are mostly concerned with their image and publicity than sharing their intimate secrets. Teenage boys said that they were not concerned with revealing where they bought their clothes because they want to brag about the cost of the items and in that manner it made them more popular with the girls.

5.12 Privacy Concerns

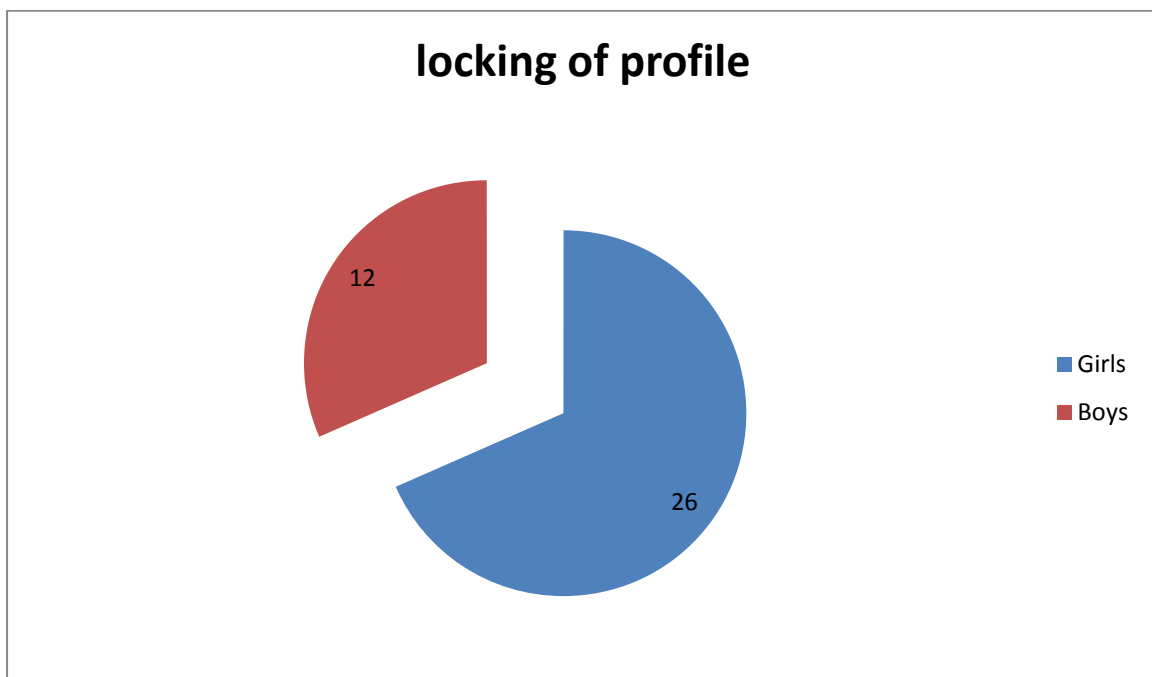
While there can be benefits from the collaborative, distributed approaches promoted by responsible use of social networking sites, there are information security and privacy concerns. The volume and accessibility of personal information available on social networking sites have attracted malicious people who seek to exploit this information. Learners tend to divulge a lot of information about themselves and this lead to them being in danger from predators. It is very easy to contact a person you saw on Facebook as their cellphone number might have been included (Hargittai, 2007).

Security and privacy related to social networking sites are fundamentally behavioural issues, not technology issues. The more information a person posts, the more information becomes available for a potential compromise by those with malicious intentions. Teenagers, who provide private, sensitive or confidential information about themselves or other people, whether wittingly or unwittingly, pose a higher risk to themselves and others (Boyd, 2007).

Information such as a person's street address, phone number, financial information, or confidential business information should not be published online. Similarly, posting photos, videos or audio files could lead to an organization's breach of confidentiality or an individual's breach of privacy.

Learners were asked if they lock their profiles so that people who are not their friends cannot have access to their information and below this is how learners from Capricorn High School and from Sekitla High School responded. 26 percent of the girls responded that they locked their profiles because they are scared of people or man specifically who may take advantage of them whereas 11% of the boys from both the school said that they also lock their profiles because they want to have control the number of people who get to know about their life.

Figure no. 9.1



Learners from Capricorn High School shared the same sentiments as those from Sekitla High School. They believe that as a person you do not have to befriend people you do not know. So it must be difficult for the person to view your profile. 27% of the girls said they feel much safer if they lock their profiles and 13% of the boys felt that they felt that people start chatting to you if they have seen pictures and your profile.

Figure 9.2



Information spreads faster through Social Network Sites than through a real-life network. Information might be disclosed to a group of people unexpectedly, because the digital information is easy to copy, can be stored indefinitely and is searchable. It especially harms users when information travels through different spheres, and ends up with people whom it was not intended for. None of the learners in both school felt that they should use a different name in order for them to feel safe because if they do so which means they will not be able to communicate with the people they know. It means that they have to look for fake photos and they will be creating a wrong identity. The learners felt it is just important to know the people you accept as friends. It does not matter if you have a few friends; the important thing is that you know them and you will be safe. Accepting wrong people randomly can bring harm into your life.

5.13 Knowledge of social networks

Most respondents knew the meaning of social networks and what they entailed. They understood that social networks' intentions are to bridge the communication gap, to be able to communicate with people from different parts of the world. They have contracted the world into a village; they are able to communicate with people from different places. They are able to follow new trends by using social media like Twitter by following the people who are celebrities in their world. They are able to know what the celebrities are up to in their worlds.

All the information they provided to the researcher showed that they are the children who were born during the world of internet. They are the baby boomers and they knew every social media that they can be able to access on their cell phones as most of them had smart phones.

Figure 10



Learners of Capricorn High School were more knowledgeable about the types of social networks as compared to learners of Sekitla high school. 30% of the learners at Sekitla High School knew the meaning of social media and the many networks that are available, whereas 80% of the respondents at Capricorn High School were more learned on social networks.

5.14 The geography of space

For the learners to be able to participate in social networking they need to be aware of the social media that are available to them. They need to have smart phones that will enable them to download as many social media that are available. According to the survey results of the school, where you come from determines your knowledge of social media. The learners at Sekitla High school said that they are not well informed

about social media and they cannot access other social media on their cell-phones because some of their parents cannot afford smart phones.

The researcher found that the assumption made that if your child attends school in town or you live in town you have a better chance to know about the new innovations and trends that are in the market. Most of the learners at Capricorn High School were more privileged than those of Sekitla High school. The learners at Sekitla High School also mentioned that it was meaningless for them to have other social media because most of their peers could not afford smart phones, as other social media are only available on smart phones.

Figure 10: Proportions of respondents on the geography of space as a determining factor towards the usage of social media

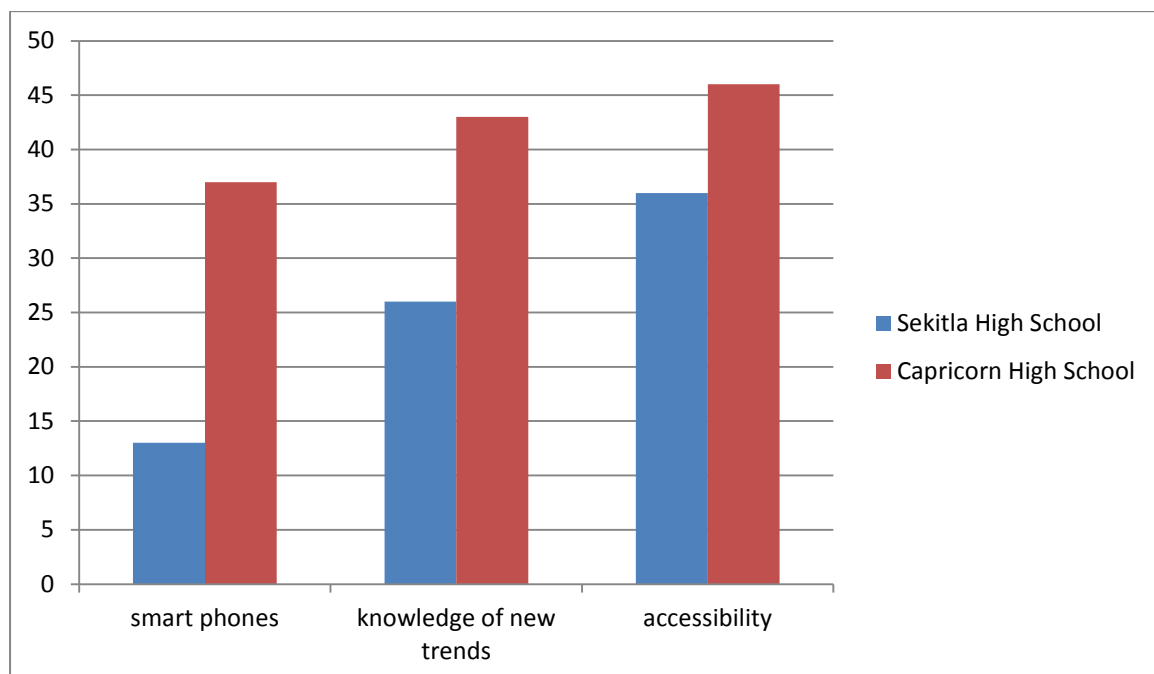


Figure 10 illustrates that the number of learners with smart phones at Sekitla high school is at 13% as compared with the 37% at Capricorn high School. The

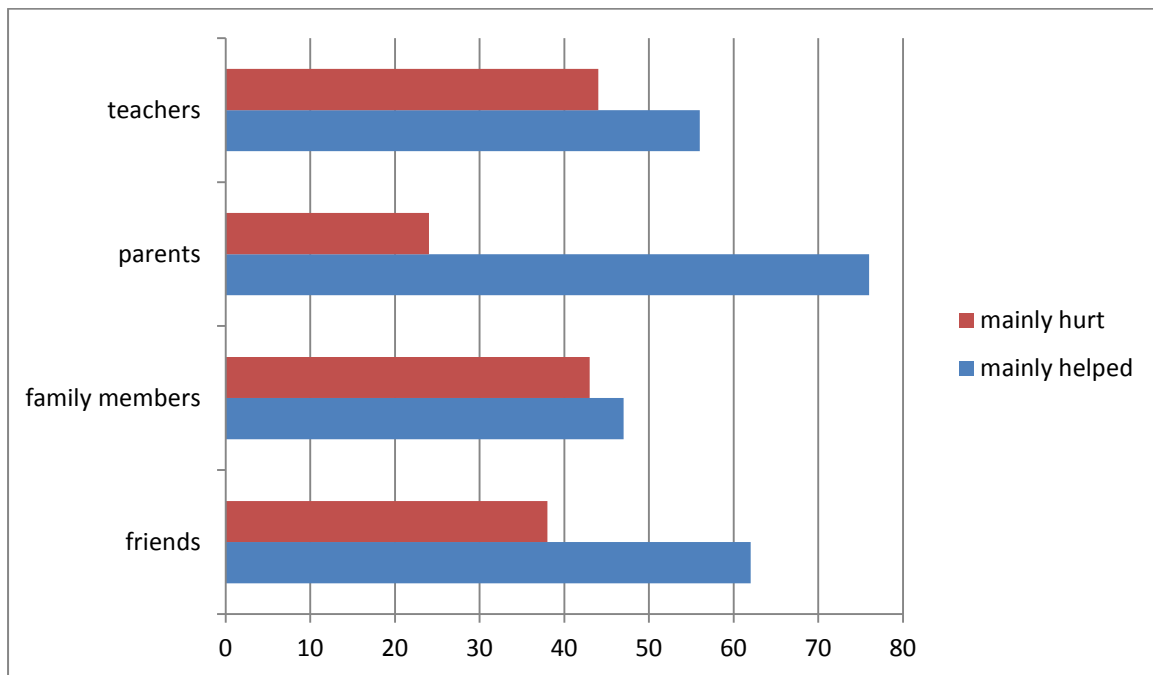
knowledge of the new trends in social media is at 26% for Sekitla and 46% for Capricorn while 36% of the learners are able to access social networks without the interruption of network and a whopping 46% of learners do so at all times.

5.15 Impacts of social networking

The respondents from both schools acknowledge that social networking can rather be distracting at times more especially when it came to the matters of the heart. They responded that many learners who are dating can at times post their pictures posing together on Facebook and it can traumatise those who were willing to propose the girl or those who had relationship feelings for the boy. And that can lead to one not concentrating on their studies.

Among the learners who responded to the questionnaire, percent who say social networking has mainly hurt or helped their relationship with their; teacher, parents, family members and friends are shown on figure 10

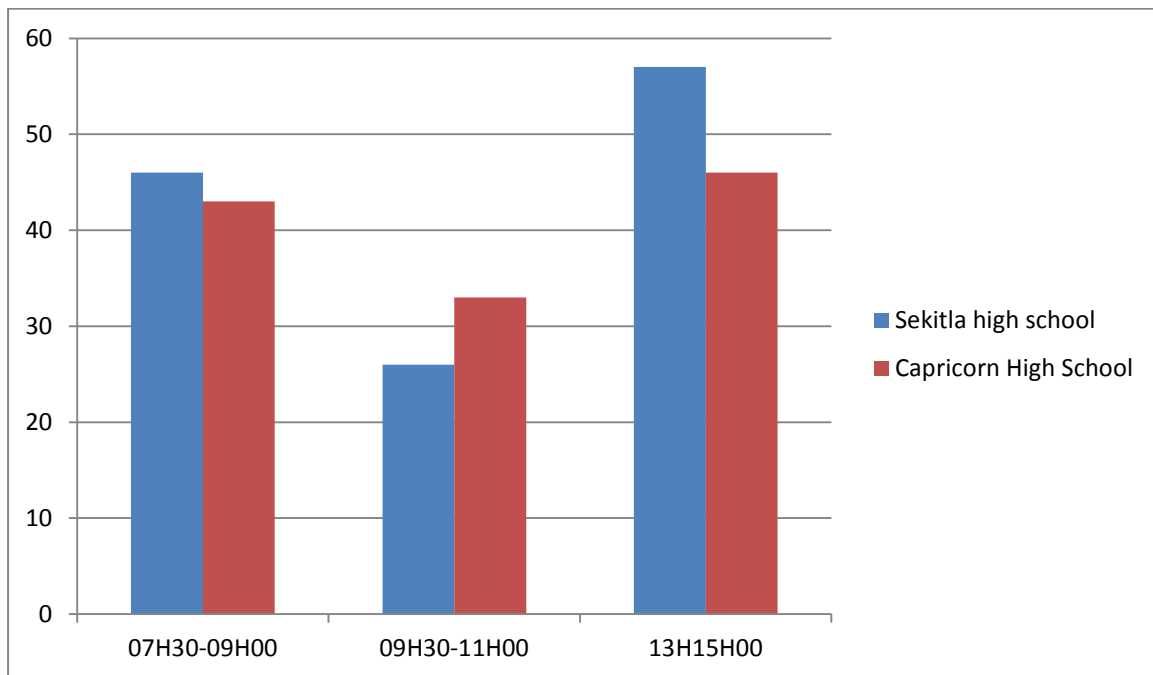
Figure 11



Another challenge is when your boyfriend or girlfriend breaks up with you on Facebook because you will become a laughing stock to those who never appreciated the fact that you are dating. In addition to the challenges mentioned above they included being cyber-bullied by your fellow learners or the learners from other different schools. And social pressures (the pressure to please your peers on social media) and the pressure to do well at school as some of the learners are not good at multi-tasking these challenges can make them drop on their grades.

Learners were also asked about the number of hours they put in social networks and they proved to be very high. The learners' responses from both schools were equal. Many of them said that they networked during school hours. Figure 12 shows the frequency rate in which learners visited social networking sites.

Figure 12: Frequency rate



From the chart above, 46% of the student from Sekitla High School used social networking sites as compared to the 43% of learners at Capricorn High School who networked during the early hours of the morning and during their classes. The number they spend during social networking sites is even higher in the afternoon wherein 57% of the learners in Sekitla High School used the sites more than the 46% of Capricorn High School, which proved to be even higher while they are at home. Daily overuse of media and technology has a negative effect on the health of all children, preteens and teenagers by making them more prone to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders, as well as by making them more susceptible to future health problems. Facebook can be distracting and can negatively impact learning. The survey found that learners at both high schools, who checked Facebook at least once during a 45-minute study period, achieved lower grades.

5.15.1 Enhanced learning opportunities

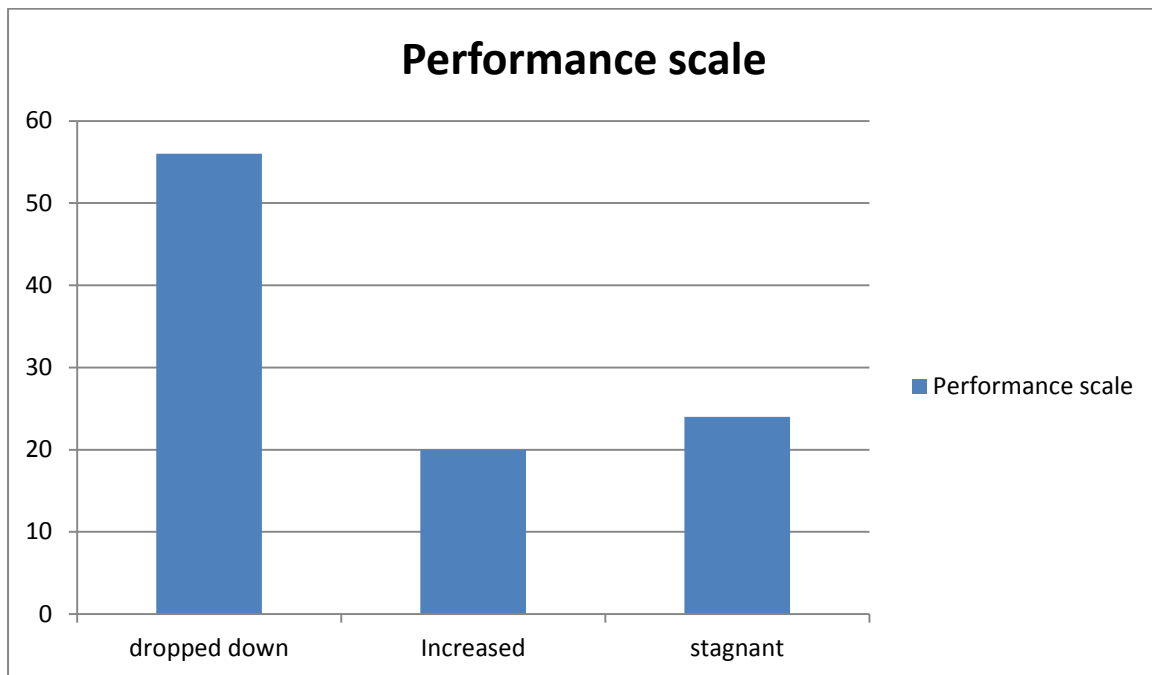
The respondents of both schools said that they are using social media to connect with one another on homework and group project. For example, Facebook and similar social media allowed the learners to gather outside of class to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments.

Although it helps them to meet outside school environment it can also cause distraction while they do their assignment as other learners may be busy chatting while they are supposed to be working.

5.15.2 Performance of the learners

Many respondents admitted that ever since the introduction of social media, their performance has dropped down a little. They are worried that they cannot handle the pressure of networking and education. They find it hard to keep up with their peers and they are afraid of being laughed at. They also acknowledged the fact that their poor performance in English writing was brought down by the street language.

Figure 13: Performance at school



56% of the learners from all the school responded that their performance has dropped ever since the introduction of social media. 20% of the learners said that social media has helped them with their studies and they use social media as a platform to ask their peers or friends about the concepts that they were not clear to them at school. While 24% of the learners said that their grades have not improved nor decreased.

Looking at the responses of the learners at both schools, it was very important that the researcher give questionnaires to their teachers. The teachers' responses to the questionnaire showed that they were most aware of the new technological innovations that are now available in the market.

5.15.3 Usage of the web or social media for teaching purpose

Teachers responded that they use the web for mainly sourcing information and online reading for the books that may become useful to their learners. They admitted that the concept of social media is still new in teaching and they do not approve of teaching or communicating with their learners on social media as this may raise eyebrows to higher authorities and they thought it will send wrong impressions to the parents. From the media, the learners and their children, the teachers learned that there are many concerns about social media and they made it their point to gather information about them.

5.15.4 Risks of social media on the learners

Most of the risks the teachers at both schools noticed fall into the following categories: peer to peer; inappropriate content; lack of understanding of online privacy issues and grammar.

Teachers' at both schools responded that Cyber-bullying is quite common at their schools and it can cause profound psychological outcomes including depression, severe isolation and tragically suicide. Although none of the learners has ever killed him/herself they at all times try to educate the learners about the dangers of social networks and they try to seek help for their learners if such problems prevail.

The teachers are also worried about the learner's texting sex messages (sexting) to each other during periods. Sexting can be defined as "sending or receiving or forwarding explicit messages, photographs or images via cellphone, computer or

other digital devices.” Many of these images become distributed rapidly via cellphones or internet. The teachers also found out that their learners will at times send nude photos of themselves and this can lead them to be suspended and called for a hearing with parents available.

The teachers were also concerned that their learners spend a great deal of time on social media and this have made them to fall back on their grammar and spelling when it comes to their school work. They use short words when writing their tasks and they are afraid of learners not being able to progress further with what they are taught and this may lead to leaners not passing their grades because of all this influences mentioned above.

Their other concern was the proliferation of pregnancy at their schools. They are more worried that the female learners will not be able to finish school as they would have to be at home nurturing their babies because of the influence in social networking. Teachers also responded that many of the parents are shocked about their children’s behaviour, and the issues that they lead to. They try by all means to confiscate the learner’s cellphones but parents will come to the school being angry at the way the teacher treated their child not knowing that the learner is the one who was chatting during their class. And this fall bad on the parents if they are called back for their child’s hearing when they were involved in sex videos.

5.16 Conclusion

Looking at the overall challenges that the respondents identified, some of the theoretical challenges were discussed in chapter 3 are experienced in both the schools. According to the survey results at both schools there are a lot of risks as compared to the benefits of social networking. Most of the learners lack knowledge of social media and they are prone to be more in danger. They are wrongly influenced by their peers on social media and they end up dating at an early age. This then lead the learners to lose concentration on their grades and they end up repeating grade after grade. The number of learners' failing at school is determined by many factors, and from what the researcher has gathered, social networking is on top of the list.

Learners at schools are involved in activities that may risk them from acquiring their matric certificates because they are easily influenced by trends that they do not have enough information about. The next chapter is chapter six, Conclusion and Recommendations. The chapter will discuss the findings of the survey and from then recommendations will be drawn. The recommendations will include those from the survey by the schools, theory and the ones from the researcher.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the study and to indicate what was achieved. The conclusion and recommendations are also drawn from the research findings. This chapter will be presented in four sections. Section one is the introduction and section two is the summary of the research where the whole dissertation will be briefly summarised. Recommendations will be discussed as section three where in solutions to the identified challenges and risks will be discussed. Section four will conclude this chapter.

6.2 Summary of the research

This study aimed at investigating and uncovering the potential benefits and risks of social networks amongst genders, while comparing two schools in the Capricorn district. Capricorn high School and Sekitla high school were both identified as the study area (chapter1). Literature review which has contributed to the knowledge in terms of how social network has emerged. The discussion focused on the location of media theories in the broader framework; they presented an effective understanding of the motivation and concern of electronic media including the Internet. Considering that audience activity is one of the key components of the uses and gratification theory, the media is very persuasive and can be very influential. The two step flow theory is vital in this regard as people influence each other to have social networking

pages in their cell phones. They tend to project a message that social media is the easy way of communicating with each other. The aim of the theories presented in the research was to achieve that they are certain effects that come with social networking. People are prone to be in danger or at risk or they can benefit from the social media.

Furthermore, the general principles of gender were discussed. The discussion focused on the location of gender in the broader framework of the international development thinking and practice. The approaches to gender studies were also identified and discussed. The identified gender approaches were classified into three groups namely; the traditional gender approaches, the development-specific gender equality approaches and the different approach in gender policies. Under the traditional gender equality approaches, three approaches which include the gender equality approach, the gender differences approach and gender plurality approach were discussed. The different approaches were very important as we know that girls at an early age are taught certain traditions that they should carry throughout their lives and they are prone to dangers as they do not have enough physical power as compared to boys. Girl's experiences a lot of dangers even though in the world we live in boys are easily molested and there is a high rate of pregnancy because of the influence the media has on them.

The principle of media culture was also discussed in the literature review, and it gave concerns that teenagers are often seen as innocent victims of the pervasive and powerful media and this is seen by the high proliferation of social media. There is a need for the teenagers to own smart phones without knowing the consequences that

they come with. A few years ago desktop computers were the only way to connect to the internet. But now most mobile phones, personal digital assistants and even some game consoles can access the internet. When parents give their child a mobile phone today, it is not just a phone anymore - it is a mobile computer with, in most cases, powerful internet capabilities.

This means most children nowadays have some sort of unsupervised access to internet-related facilities and services. Parents should understand that children may be mentally quick with technology but not always aware of all the risks involved.

Still on literature review, social networking activities were outlined, through the tools of computers and cell phones, society has moved from engaging in face-to-face interaction to a more digital way of making conversation. The devices have therefore become the actual mediators between people and knowledge or entertainment. In particular, teenagers might not have the skills necessary to keep themselves safe online, meaning that they are not always concerned about the personal information they post on online sites. Social networking tools, such as Facebook and MXit, can make users more vulnerable to risk.

The benefits and risks of social networking were amicably discussed, creating awareness and understanding of what social networking at an early age does to the teenagers. And whether the internet has brought change in bridging the gap of communication even in the rural places, where there is no running tap water in their yard, where there are only a few selected houses that have access to electricity.

As part of the study, the research design and methodology were outlined. The research used qualitative approach where primary and second data was collected. Primary data was collected through observations and questionnaire. Secondary data was collected through reading, analysis and understanding of relevant debates of the risks and benefits of social networking in our teenagers, regardless of their danger. The research limitations and how the ethics of the schools were considered were also discussed (chapter 4).

The survey conducted in both schools revealed their geographical, cultural and development of their infrastructure and how they impact on their usage of social networks. The potential benefits and risks those are available when you are using social media. The gender differences was discussed looking at the girls' participation in social network and the many media reports that were streaming from the past years and now about the dangers of predators on social networks. The risk of failing and repeating grades because of negligence of Education.

From the survey results, it was clear that learners shared almost any information about themselves on these sites, and it becomes easy to figure out where they live and what his or her daily routine is and this can lead to life-threatening consequences. The results of the research showed that Cyber-bullying is indeed a growing concern. When someone is harassed, threatened or humiliated by nasty messages or pictures mobile phones or social networking sites that is cyberbullying. That is one of the reasons to suspect that the high number of recent suicides at schools were the effects of cyber-bullying, as it can be as devastating as physical bullying - or even more so.

Social media and mobile phones have also made young people vulnerable to new means of bullying or victimisation. The survey found that 18% of those answering had been insulted or experienced some form of 'cyber bullying'. Race, location and gender emerged as the most common reasons for insult.

The survey looked at how young people interact on the social media platform. The rise of the mobile Internet in South Africa means that more people, especially teenagers, are using social networks as key tools in their identity formation. This timely report provides an important piece of the puzzle to understanding the formation of mobile youth cultures and exploring the role that cellphone applications play in the lives of the respondents of the survey. Moreover the risks surpassed the benefits of social networking at a great level. The teachers were also concerned about the incredibly proficient way in which learners are figuring out new technologies. And, while they may have technical knowledge, they are not always aware of some of the implications of using the technology. The teachers noticed that the usage of social networks by their learners extends beyond signs and symbols, manifesting itself in the learners' physical appearance and movements. Social media culture influence is visible in how learners present themselves to the world through means made available by prevailing fashions; the writing in their school books is a sign that can be used effectively to produce that they have adopted a new cultural identity.

6.3 Recommendations

Hereunder the recommendations are derived by looking at the current situation and suggesting solutions to improve the status of the learners at both schools and South Africa as a whole. The recommendations are discussed as follows:

6.3.1 Understanding of the social networks

The participants of the study have identified that there is a challenge in understanding the social networking sites that are available on their phones, while it is easy for them to be a member of all of them. In order to deal with this challenge a number of things should be done at schools. Learners should be able to talk about the networks that they are members of with their teachers, so that their teachers make enough research about the positive and negative impacts of social media. While keeping in mind those pupils will only select information that they think is relevant to them, and that they are competing with the media, especially television, which present material that disturbs children and makes them passive, because they have not yet reached a stage of development that allows them to appropriately process the information they are receiving. From this perspective, learners are seen as tractable recipients of messages, as spellbound viewers susceptible to a range of addictions. An even clearer manifestation of such pessimism is “media panic”, which describes the concern, worry or fear that arises from the use of new devices or the adoption of new cultural forms by teenagers during a period in which they are challenging earlier cultural practices and conceptions.

6.3.2 Active Involvement of parents in teaching

Most parents wish that formal education were the number one priority of teenagers- this is rarely the case. Most teenagers are far more concerned with connecting with friends. Their activities are very much driven by their friend group and there is immense informal learning taking place outside of school. Learning social norms, status structures, and how to negotiate relationships of all types is crucial to teens. While most parents take these skills for granted, they are heavily developed during the teen years. In contemporary society, this process primarily takes place amongst peer groups.

Over the last year, dozens of parenting guides have emerged to provide black and white rules about how teenagers should interact with social network sites. Over and over, these rules fail to protect the teenagers. Rules motivate submissive teenagers, but they do little to get teenagers to think through the major issues. Conversation (not lecturing) is key and it needs to be clear that there is no correct answer; it is all a matter of choices and pros and cons

6.3.3 Government intervention

Government should try to include new media in their syllabus wherein teachers will be taught about the new media that are available in the market, so that they have more knowledge and be able to solve issues that the learners encounter. They should try to use social network as a method of teaching were learners can contribute in a debate. Right now, the primary public space that allows teenagers to gather is online. Not surprisingly, teenagers are gathering online to hang out with

their friends so it will be worthwhile if they did that to educate themselves in debatable topics which are relevant to their grades.

It is critical for educators to understand how mediated publics, such as social technologies are shifting the lives of youth. The effectiveness of any educational practice is directly related to the ability of that practice to increase learners' engagement: If Facebook indeed increases engagement; it is possible for Facebook to be used in educationally relevant ways to improve learners educational outcomes. Social networking sites can be used to document school research, promote artistic talents and experiment with other forms of content creation. They provide a way to interact with others who share the same interests and to get constructive feedback on on-going projects

6.3.4 Monitoring of profiles

The information you post on the Internet is available to almost anyone who is clever enough to access it. Most predators need just a few vital pieces of personal information to make your life a nightmare and if they successfully reveal your identity, you are prone to be more in danger. It is important for learners to lock their profiles so that people they do not know cannot access information about them and it can help them to manage the number of friends they have on their social networking pages.

It is rare for harassment to spill over into real-world conflicts, but it can still be a cause of emotional distress for teens. A greater danger is that teens may become targets. The anonymity of some social networking sites makes it easy for immoral

people to target young teens and engage them in harmful conversations. It is easy for predators to pose as teens and lure children into harmful real-world contact as well. Most social networking sites have privacy controls in place; teenagers should make sure they use them. Active monitoring of profiles and behaviours catches some predators, but not all of them. When making new friends online, teenagers may mistakenly believe that they are talking to someone similar to their age do not realize that they are communicating with an adult. They can meet dangerous individuals in chat rooms without realising the true nature of the person. Young users can put themselves in danger if they give away too much information or even plan to meet people they do not know offline.

6.3.5 Protecting Yourself

You must protect yourself from the dangers of social networking at all times. The Internet is a great place to meet and network with others who share similar interests. However, it is also a breeding ground for hackers, scam artists and other less than legitimate practices. According to Boyd (2008) they are some things you can do to help ensure your personal safety is:

- Set your profiles to private – be selective when accepting requests of people you do not know. Would you answer your door to a complete stranger, welcoming them into your home? You would ask, “Who is it”, “what do you want”? You need to be just as selective when opening yourself to strangers in the cyber zone. Go, take a look at their page, do some research and see what they are really about before connecting on a personal level.

- Determine what you share in your general search profile – again, be very selective only sharing your name and your photo for maximum protection.
- Do not list your address, city, state, full birth date, etc. you will be opening yourself up to scam artists and other not so desirable activities.

You can help reduce the dangers of social media by shielding yourself as much as possible. Keep in mind, many of the social networking sites are by default, viewable to anyone. Most social networking sites, will allow you to go in and control who can and cannot see your profile like Facebook. You should go in and manually set your privacy settings to “friends only”. By only allowing your personal friends access to your information, you are significantly reducing your risk and opening yourself up to relax more and enjoy the best social network experiences.

6.4 Further research

There is a need for more research in this area of study. This will help in determining areas of concerns when it comes to social networking. This discussion of the potential benefits and risks of social networks amongst genders as a comparative study of the high schools in Capricorn district, illuminates the ways in which the “online” and “offline” worlds are mutually constituted. However, it is important to find way in which the internet can also be available at rural areas. This will assist the people living in those remote areas to know more about social networks and to bridge the gap of communication.

6.5 Conclusion

Social Networking Services (SNS) are significant players in the internet environment, transforming communication practices, opening new spaces and processes of socialization and impacting upon traditional social structures. These effects are particularly relevant for the most frequent users of SNS –teenagers. This new environment poses certain challenges and, like any setting for social interaction, has some inherent risks. However, this review suggests that these challenges and risks have been over-emphasised in recent years both in popular media and social research. Through increased internet and media literacy – ensuring all young people develop the skills to critically understand, analyse and create media content – these challenges can be overcome and risks mitigated in a way that ensures the many benefits of SNS can be realised. In other words, by maximizing the benefits of SNS, whether it be their role in delivering educational outcomes, or facilitating supportive relationships, identity formation, or a sense of belonging and resilience, many of the risks of online interaction, such as cyber-bullying, privacy breaches and predation, can be minimized. Strategies to this end must be underpinned by best practice evidence and more research should be undertaken to ensure that emerging practices and effects of SNS are understood and responded to.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

The Potential Benefits and Risks of Social Networks Amongst Genders: A Comparative Study Of High Schools In Capricorn District- Urban Vs. Rural

This questionnaire is designed to solicit information on the challenges of the application of the potential benefits and risk of social networks amongst gender; a comparative study of high schools in the Capricorn District. This survey is part of a Masters of Arts in Media Studies research project registered with the school of Languages and Communication at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus. The information collected will be used for academic purpose only. Respondents are also guaranteed anonymity; and participation in the survey is voluntary.

THANK YOU

**THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AMONGST
GENDERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN
DISTRICT- URBAN VS. RURAL**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

NAME OF LEARNER: -----

NAME OF SCHOOL: -----

GRADE: -----

GENDER: -----

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: -----

AGE: -----

- **THE AIM OF THE STUDY IS TO EXPLORE AND PROVIDE INVESTIGATED EVIDENCE ON WHAT LEARNERS GAIN FROM USING SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE HARMS THAT THEY MAY ALSO ENCOUNTER DURING THE PROCESS OF NETWORKING.**

THE INFORMATION SOUGHT THROUGH THIS INTERVIEW WILL BE USED FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY AND WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

SOCIAL NETWORKING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LEARNER

1. Which of these social networks are you a member of?

Facebook: _____

Mxit: _____

Twitter: _____

Other (specify): _____

2. Which is your favourite social network? _____

Give reasons why?

3. Do you use social networks to interact with new people you do not know?

4. How many times do you use social networks?

Daily: _____

3 times a week: _____

Once a week: _____

Once a month: _____

5. Rate your favourite social network in terms of user friendliness.

Excellent: _____

Good: _____

Average: _____

Poor: _____

Very poor: _____

6. Can you access your social network via mobile phone? _____

7. Why do you use social networks? _____

8. What time do you frequently use social networks?

In the morning: _____

In the afternoon: _____

In the evening: _____

Random times: _____

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE PRIVACY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE

LEARNER

1) Age

15-18	
18-21	
21-25	

2) Gender

Male	
Female	

3) Which of the following (if any) social networking sites are you a member of? You may select more than one option.

Facebook	
twitter	
Mxit	
Other	

(specify)	
-----------	--

4) Roughly how long have you been using social networking sites?

less than a month	
1 - 6 months	
6 months to a year	
1 - 2 years	
2 - 3 years	
3 years+	

5) Roughly how many hours a week do you spend on social networking sites?

0 - 5 hrs	
6 - 10 hrs	
11 - 20 hrs	

21 - 30 hrs	
31 - 40 hrs	
41 - 50 hrs	
51 hrs+	

6) Please indicate what information you include on your social networking sites. You may select more than one option.

Email address, Home town or city Instant messenger screen name, Mobile phone numbers	
Photographs of others, Photographs of yourself, Political views Real name	
Relationship status Sexual ,orientation Other(s) - please specify	

7) Roughly how many friends in total do you have in all of your social networking sites?

0 - 10	
11 - 30	
31 - 60	
61 - 100	
101+	

8) Please indicate who you speak to most using social networking sites

	Never	Rarely	Fairly	often	Nearly Always
Close friends					
Class-mates					
Family					

Friends					
People that live far away					
Strangers / people you do not already know					

Privacy within Social Networking Sites

9) In general, how concerned are you about the privacy of the following information you submit on social networking sites?

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat Highly
Dating history			
Financial information (eg. info on things you buy, where you buy from, etc)			
Gossip between friends			
Intimate secrets			
Lifestyle related (eg. photos, blogs, history etc)			
Professional / work related information			
Religious / political beliefs			

10) In general, how active are you in safeguarding (protecting) the following information submitted by you on social networking sites?

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat Highly
Dating history			
Financial information (eg. info on things you buy, where you buy from, etc)			
Gossip between friends			
Intimate secrets			
Lifestyle related (eg. photos, blogs, history etc)			

Professional / work related information			
Religious / political beliefs			

11) Please select the social networking site you use most. If you choose other please ensure you have specified it in question 3.

Facebook	
twitter	
Mxit	
Other (specify)	

12) Please state the privacy controls or methods you use in your chosen social networking site (question 11):

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat Highly
Lock profile so only people I know can view it			

Take no action / accept the default privacy settings			
Provide some fake or inaccurate information			
Other - please state			

13) Please answer the following in regards to the social networking site you chose in question 11:

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat Highly
I feel that the privacy of my personal information is protected			
I trust it will not use my personal information for any other purpose			
I worry that I will be			

embarrassed by information others post about me on it			
I would continue to use it regardless of its privacy policy if it helps me meet new people			
I would continue to use it regardless of its privacy policy if it helps me stay in touch with friends			
I would continue to use it regardless of its privacy policy if it is popular			

End of Questionnaire

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Read separate instructions for the moderator before interview

1. Name the social networking sites that you know.
2. What are the general aims of social networks?
3. Do you think it is important to have social networks?
4. What kind of people do you meet on social networks?
5. How many friends do you have on the social networking site and do you communicate with all of them?
6. Do you think it important to have new friends that you do not know?
7. Have you ever met with anyone who you were recently introduced to while social networking?
8. Do you trust everyone who is on your list of friends in the social networking sites?
9. What kind of information/ talks do you indulge yourself while networking?
10. What are the harms that one may encounter while using social networks?
11. Don't you get any form of distraction while using social network? What kind of distraction?
12. How well are you performing at school?
13. What type of influence do you think you are getting from social networking?
14. What is that you gain from using social network?
15. Have you been cyber bulled while networking?
16. Do you carry your phones to school?
17. Do your parents know that you are registered to social networks?

18. Can a day pass without you using any social networking site?
19. Have you been in some sort of danger while networking?
20. What is the recommendation that you will give to a person who just started networking on the social sites?

APPENDIX D

SOCIAL NETWORKING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHER

Name _____ Subject _____

Q1. Do you use Web and other social media tools in your line of work?

Yes _____ No _____

Q2. How often do you use Facebook for official teaching purposes?

Thrice a day _____ once a day _____ Rarely _____

If yes, for what length of time have you used Facebook for official purposes?

Less than 1 year _____

Between 1 and 2 years _____

More than two years _____

Q3. Have you identified any teaching advantage of using Facebook over traditional media?

Yes _____

No _____

(If yes, please specify) _____

Q4. How do you gauge the use of technology in your place of work?

Excellent _____

Good _____

Fair _____

Poor _____

Q5. What are the risks involved with social networking

Q6. What actions are you taking to alleviate the challenge that comes with Social networking?

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
Turfloop Campus



Private Bag x 1106
Sovenga
0727
SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: (015) 268 2593
Fax: (015) 268 2868
Email: sheila.mmusi@ul.ac.za
Website: www.ul.ac.za

27 February, 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY IN THE
CAPRICORN DISTRICT SCHOOLS**

The bearer, Molopa M.F Student No: 200402056 is a Master of Arts student in Media Studies at the University of Limpopo and is currently conducting a study for academic purpose on the **“THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISK OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AMONGST LEARNERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT”**.

Could you please allow her to undertake the research at Capricorn High School and Sekitla High School. The targeted sample will consist of Grade 10 and 11 pupils. The results will be made known to you, and eventually be beneficial to the provincial Department of Education

Kind regards


.....

Prof SO Mmusi

HOD: Media, Communication & Information Studies

**DEPARTMENT OF
MEDIA, COMMUNICATION
AND INFORMATION STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
PRIVATE BAG X1106
SOVENGA 0727**

Finding Solutions for Africa



APPENDIX F



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF **EDUCATION**

Enq: Mnisi V

Tel: 015 290 7680

Fax: 015 290 9416

Student No: 200402056

Dear Mr Molopa MF

Application for permission to Conduct Research Study in Capricorn District School

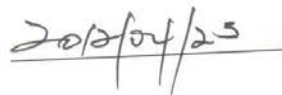
1. The above matters refers:
2. The Limpopo Department of Education acknowledges receipt of your letter.
3. We therefore grant you permission to conducting a study in the Capricorn District school in the purpose of Potential Benefits and Risk of Social Networks amongst learners.
4. After the completion of the study, we will appreciate a copy of your research which will serve as resource for the Department.

Regards,



MJ Thamaga

Head of Department


Date

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

APPENDIX G



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enq: Mnisi V

Tel: 015 290 7680

Fax: 015 290 9416

Student No: 200402056



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Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

APPENDIX H

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
Turfloop Campus



Private Bag x 1106

Sovenga

0727

SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: (015) 268 2593

Fax: (015) 268 2868

Email: sheila.mmusi@ul.ac.za

Website: www.ul.ac.za

27 February, 2012

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Kind regards

Prof SO Mmusi

HOD: Media, Communication & Information Studies

DEPARTMENT OF
MEDIA, COMMUNICATION
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PRIVATE BAG X1106
SOVENGA 0727

Finding Solutions for Africa



APPENDIX I



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

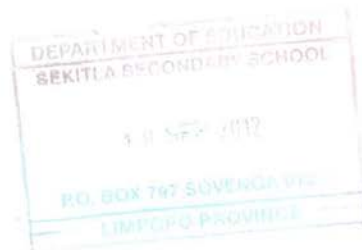
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enq: Mnisi V

Tel: 015 290 7680

Fax: 015 290 9416

Student No: 200402056



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