

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TITLE OF THESIS

**Female Identity Construction on Facebook Among Humanities Students
At Howard College, University Of KwaZulu-Natal**

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Declaration

I, **Hilde Lubaba**, declare that this dissertation is my own work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged.

It is being submitted for the Degree of Masters of Social Science in Media and Communications, at University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Summary

Rationale

Online social networking applications such as Facebook provide a podium for university students' socialization by increasing their network opportunities and maintaining close interactions. According to Ullom-Minnich and Kallail (1993:1), an alternative and interesting aspect of Facebook is its ability to foster the construction of smaller, more intimate communities within the larger context of an institution, stimulating a better sense of belonging between students. This study will therefore investigate how Facebook assists female students in being social integrated on campus.

This research paper aims to investigate the female gender role and the way it is represented on the social network Facebook. The study surveys how identity and gender roles are signified on Facebook in the university context. Internet social networking has gained popularity as a means of sharing profiles amongst young people (Levy, 2007:26). Facebook is one of the most visited social sites and its popularity as a means of communication has grown over the years. It is often popular amongst college students mostly as a means of communication (Cassidy, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Levy, 2007:26). An online profile is created, it becomes a space where the users can post information or comments about each other profiles, photos are exchanged and shared, users share videos and are also able to join virtual reality groups based on mutual interests and circumstances (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2006:174).

This research thesis distinguishes the kind of image female students are portraying on Facebook, and investigate whether the way they are represented meets with the Facebook user's approval. Howard College has students that range from different races, creeds, classes and social groups, so it have been important to gather information from different types of backgrounds. This research also aims at addressing issues of this misrepresentation (such as loose women or individuals with no dignity) and seeks to understand how and who female students' believe they should be represented, but also whether they themselves are responsible for any misrepresentation.

Introduction

Identity is a social context it is not only about being rational; what makes it social is the fact that it can be negotiated. When we come into the world, we enter as empty canvases, which develop character traits as we grow (Goffman, 1959:55). Instead, we become who we are in relation to others, as others become themselves in relation to us (Goffman, 1959:66). Facebook was established in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg who was a Harvard University student at that period (Zuckerberg, 2012:8). Facebook has become important to student daily life. Students use Facebook to exchange information for educational goals, make new friends from campus, and so on (Ellison, 2007:1143).

Baiyun (2012:44) Investigates how university students use Facebook and the roles that personality and culture play in disclosure of information in online social networking based environments. His study will help the researcher answer questions based on the Facebook consumption patterns and to investigate if Facebook can shape identity and culture. Facebook users use Facebook to create a certain image of selves. Seidman (2013:403) did a research study to investigate the motivations and reasons that cause people to use Facebook, he states that self – representation behaviours and motivations were best predicted by low thoroughness and high anxiety .The use of Facebook to fulfil belonging and self-representational needs (Seidman, 2012:407).

Social interaction showed to be the main reason why Facebook was used as well as to express and develop identities, and to fit into a certain peer-group (Pempek *et al.* (2009:227). Ross *et al.* (2009:578) Different motivations may be influential in terms of Facebook use, for instance a person’s personality can be one of the examples. Beck (2000: 211) states, “in the modern era, individuals can choose who they want to be, they have self-fulfilment in having the ability to be whom they want to be. The possibility of being the author of your own life and the creator of your own identity is the norm in this day and age”.

Location of the Study

The University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus, Durban.

This study will be confined to the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This is situated on the Berea Ridge overlooking the old city of Durban and its famous harbour. This campus has existed for nearly 85 years and is one of three campuses which house the College of Humanities, the other two being Edgewood in Pinetown and 85 kilometres away in the city of Pietermaritzburg. This study will be situated on this Howard College campus and will focus on female Humanities students registered on this camp.

In 2016 there are 18 138 Humanities students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, 8 685, 48 percent, being on the Howard College campus. Of those 8 685, two-thirds (5 580 or 64 percent) are female. There are 1 014 female postgraduate students and 4 566 undergraduate Humanities female students on the Howard College campus.

Objectives

The purpose of this research is investigating the perceptions female university students have regarding their use of Facebook, with regards to conducting this research, the following objectives listed below are guiding the research project.

- ✚ To identify whether the use of Facebook has an impact on identity construction and culture.
- ✚ To investigate the relationship between the use of Facebook and the self-presentation of identity among the UKZN Howard College, Female students.
- ✚ To investigate whether Facebook can be used as a tool for improving the social needs of female humanities students at University.
- ✚ To investigate what address some of the privacy issues that female students have to contend with as regards the use of Facebook

Questions to be asked

The following questions are being asked:

- ✚ Whether the use of Facebook impacts /shapes the culture and identities of female students?
- ✚ Does gender influence how one is portrayed on Facebook?
- ✚ Whether female students are aware of the range and dangers of the Facebook and how these can be confronted.

Research Methods / Approach to Study

Qualitative methodology

Content analysis

Content analysis organises written material, decreasing it to more applicable, controllable bits of data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:88). This research thesis will make use of the content analysis method, because the researcher seeks to reflect on the cultural patterns of on Facebook, the participation within mutual groups on Facebook, and the trends occurring on Facebook.

Sample population

Nine (9) research participants are being chosen, all female Humanities student on the Howard College Campus. Of these there are three African, three Whites, and three Indian. The three races are chosen in order to provide a rich and diverse range of information. The research participants will be between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and all are undergraduate Humanities students. They are all new in the university social circles, are young people new to university life, and are experiencing a new degree of freedom not available to them before arriving on campus. The other reason for this selection is that, the researcher wants to get fresh perspectives on current trends about Facebook. The research participants must be constant Facebook users who the researcher will be-friend in order to access their accounts for analysis.

Sample technique

Purposive sampling technique (Tongco: 2007:531) will be used for this study, the researcher will purposely choose females from three races in order to get a variety of cultural content. The participants will be chosen on the basis that they are active on Facebook (therefore aware of the social phenomena that will be researched).

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews

The use of Semi-structured interviews assisted with the ability for the interviewee to elaborate more on the issues raised by the researcher (Bochner, 2002:176). Questions were prepared before the interviews regarding the topic in order to guide both the researcher and the research participant. The above will ensure the researcher covers the correct material and is consistent across all interviews.

In recruiting the research participants, the following recruitment strategy was employed. Three African, three Indian and three white female students had to be identified; they had to be undergraduate students. The above selected students had to be undergraduate students based from Howard College UKZN; the requirement was that they had to be from the school of humanities. All of these students were chosen at random, but with a purpose, through mechanisms such as mechanisms such as the UKZN Facebook page, notice boards on campus and personal contact via academic staff and fellow students.

Befriending on Facebook

The research participants were be-friended the on Facebook. Only research participants that were willing to befriend the researcher will be used in the research study. The friending process was within a period of 18 months. This was done in order to view the changes in the participation on Facebook, and the identity construction process, before and after they were registered at UKZN. The period that the changes will be investigated will be from the first time they created the account to current. The researcher looked at the social pages they liked, consistency in their identity, how they use Facebook for academic purposes and finally the statuses they posted. The

research also looked at what the participants re-post, what posts they liked and commented on reposting should be included – what other postings are ‘liked’ or ‘shared’?. All the above was done in order to see what kind of activities they partook in, which possible affect the way they create their identities on Facebook.

Ethical considerations

Rigour

Rigour was dealt with through taking of notes during the interviews with the research participants. The researcher also summarized the data by arranging it into themes that was important for the research. Such a journal helped the researcher to keep track of events and records that may otherwise be forgotten and yet could make the interviews more relevant and representative.

Right to withdrawal

Some of research participant may choose to withdraw whenever they felt uncomfortable; they are not forced to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with. Theoretical Framework

Identity construction Theory

Self-recognition is crucial part of one’s identity. Self-recognition is how a person views themselves in difference to other human beings (Rosenberg: 1986: 71). The special attribute that people recognise us for is Identity (Lull: 2000: 44). The arrival of the internet has altered the traditional conditions of identity construction. Interactions online has nothing to do with peoples physical attributes; the communication process is in text mode. The ability to communicate without having to meet people is the new way of identity formation (McKean et. al, 2002: 9).

Facebook have progressed into popular web space where users interconnect and give updates to contacts. This enabled exchange of data assists in the creation of social capital by inter-connecting individuals and creating a bond between them and preserving remaining relations (Ellison et. al.2007:1168). Nevertheless this online communication might decrease the skills and values of communicating on face to face encounters (Ellison et.al, 2007:1166). Part of participating on these online social networks is information disclosure which is an important part

of the identity construction process on the sites. Boyd and Ellison (2007:11), States “the alleged threats to confidentiality do have influence on the information that is disclosed about themselves.

Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies offer a valuable conceptual framework to this study as it is a “constellation of questions and concerns regarding nature of social experience and the character of cultural phenomena” (Howley, 2002:3). The research will be conducted and analyzed through a cultural lens, analyzing the data through this lens will assist the researcher in acquiring the cultural perspective. ‘Individuals become cultural programmers who construct personal ‘super cultures ‘that transcend cultural traditions and boundaries (Lull: 2000:44). This above statement explains how people constantly pick up cultures through the interactions with various cultures.

Cultural studies have had an impact on how society functions; it shows that the understanding of culture has changes over time. Lull (2000:44), states “human expressive needs are exercised easily with the assistance of the developed contemporary cultural globalization, and the expansion of communicational space”. As technology evolves, so does the interaction between different cultures, geographical barriers and space are diminished. Communication has been facilitated through new technologies, therefore a sense of belonging to a certain community has changed shape, because of globalization (Willis: 2000:57).

Anticipated Problems and Limitations

The punctuality of the participants, if the participants will be able to find time within their schedules to participate in the study? The above can be avoided by telling them in advance of the project and what will be expected from them. The participants may have a problem friending the researcher on Facebook, therefore only the ones that agree will be used in the study. The research participants may not be comfortable sharing some personal information with the researcher, if the research participant is uncomfortable sharing some information they are welcomed not to, they will not be forced to share.

Structure of dissertation

The structure of the dissertation will be as follows:

Introduction: provides back ground to the study. It explores the study's problem statement, research aim and objectives, significance of the research and the delimitation of the research. The chapter also provides an overview of the breakdown of the entire thesis from the background to data collection and analysis.

Chapter 1: Review of Literature is the review of literature it contextualizes the research within the applicable collected works and provides its academic foundation. The chapter begins with a review of the several concepts in using Facebook and relating to students female students.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework; the theoretical framework will put this study under a theoretical point of view, which will provide a stance for the research and place the research within a specific phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Research methodology- stipulates the paradigm contained by the study, its general design, the research process, and the techniques employed. The chapter also explains the measures for data assortment and analysis, and further highlights the validity and reliability measures adopted. Issues relating to research ethics (e.g. participants' rights to confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent) and how these were controlled in this research are also deliberated in this section.

Chapter 4: Findings. In this chapter the data obtained will be presented and analyzed.

Chapter 5: Summary and conclusion

Chapter 1

Review of literature

In this chapter goes on to discuss a brief review of other studies undertaken around this research topic, and also discusses literature that is of relevance to the study. Even though the study is based on a South African perspective, most of the case studies reviewed are based from other continents with generated limited relevant results. Research undertaken from a South African perspective of Facebook is very limited. This chapter will begin by looking into the matter of identity construction, female social security, and gendered identity, student identity formation on Facebook; photographs as tools for identity construction; Facebook and the cultural theory; and the privacy safety and identity of students using Facebook.

Identity construction

Identity construction is one of the most important elements of human existence. The way someone constructs their identity is dependent on many factors. Identity formation is related to the way one socialises with people around one, and how one picks up habits, forms of expression, fashion sense, interests and language. Culture plays a significant role on identity formation. According to Strker *et al*, the expansion of behaviours to describe, outline and provide sense to personalities or groups in relations to others and themselves is called Identity. The mutual understanding of self and other in a multifaceted interaction of shared recognition is the basis of forming an identity (Stryker *et al* 2000:26).

“Identity theory is a theory that is related to actions and choices one makes, it is about interacting with different individuals and making choices (Stryker, 2000, p. 26).

The most exciting aspect of human existence is the ability to make choices, choices on what to eat, what to wear, who to associate with and so on. Identity theory states that various roles make up the self, which contributes a lot to role behaviour (Gearhart and Kang, 2010:90). The people one surrounds themselves with, the places they ‘hang out’, music, and plays one watches, all the

above has an impact on the way one develops into a person. Personalities differ through experiences; the experiences someone goes through may well have an impact on how they develop psychologically later.

Individual self-understanding has to be negotiated in order to fit into other individuals personal expectations (Nava, 2007:45; Bennett *et al*2011:28). Identity is a word that includes two superficially conflicting values, as it implies both connections with another and individual uniqueness in terms of difference from the other.

Identity construction signifies and suggests that 'fitting in', being involved within an environment as well as making oneself unique, therefore it signifies having the same characteristics with the individuals in that environment and also having your own individual characteristics. Most often over time of sharing the same space with members of a community or environment, you may find that they start having similar characteristics; therefore there is no strictness in defining identity (Ricoeur, 1990/1992:52).

The self is from moment to moment fragile, and often dependent on others, since their self-projections are exposed too, have a common interest during our associations in order to maintain our own individuality within social interactions (Goffman, 1969:98). 'No man is an island', due to this fact we are prone to develop certain characteristics from other people around us, therefore identity and the self usually changes, no identity is a fixed entity.

No individual personality is similar to that of the next person, personalities are not fixed entities but can change. The change could take place because of the interactions and occurrences (Anderson 1983, Hall, 1997 and Du Gay 1996, Pickering 2001.

Below are the discussions that Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler had on the notion of identity construction. Giddens opines that we are in an era of late modernity, where traditions are deteriorating and identities are flourishing. Giddens had used three theoretical frameworks in order to emphasize on the power that language has on the process of identity

construction. The dissemination of prevailing discourse from the media shape the way we view the world (Giddens, 1984:20).

Within identity construction there is usually a social negotiation that occurs through contact with others it is also formed indirectly through reading a book, or watching television, or listening to the radio. Taking part in a semiotic exchange of communication is the basic requirement for the formation and transformation of personal identity as an integrated and coherent entity. Martin Baro (1985:61) sums up social psychology associated with the concept of personal identity in four statements:

- 1) Identity goes hand in hand with what we see in the world
- 2) Ones identity depends on their personal traits
- 3) Identity is stable
- 4) Identity is created, and identity is an essential part of society.

Even though the embodied subject is fabricated within a frame of semiotic references, it remains personal as he or she recollects a capacity for flexibility (Baro, 1985:32). As much as we want to build our own identities, there are factors that impact the outcomes of selves. Identity is shaped through different interactions with other people and it is those experiences that shape how we ultimately act. Even though these influences exist, it is ultimately up to us to decide what to adopt and what to leave aside. Human beings have the ability to reason and make choices that are the main factor that differentiates us from animals. Even though there are pressures from friends and surroundings, we ultimately, to an extent have the choice to either be influenced or take a stance in what you believe in.

The way a person presents themselves can have an affect on them, some individuals, especially those with stress and anxiety attacks find it easier to communicate their feelings on Facebook, rather than face-to-face (Manango *et al.*, 2008:45). Hare (1983:12) prompts that our peculiar existence is a product of assumptions and alterations from social foundations, comprising of

indigenous concepts concerning the identity. Individuality is the main element of being unique; therefore identity construction is a project. We are all unique in our own ways, every person has their own characteristics and abilities different from the next person.

Asendorp and Wilpers (1998:35) discuss five traits of online communications and socialising. The first one is *openness*, the second is *extraversion*, the third is *agreeableness*, the fourth one is *conscientiousness*, and lastly comes *neuroticism*. These five traits explain the steps that are initiated on online settings; they go into details on how form relations online (Ross et al., 2009:578). Openness has to do with creativity, intellectual skills and uniqueness (Sun and Wu, 2011). The above signifies the qualities of being open to new opportunities, open to meeting new people and the ability to share ideas, innovations and aspirations, finally being original and not trying to imitate any other person (Carpenter, Green and LA flam, 2011:88).

The second trait extraversion, the act, state, or habit of being predominantly concerned with obtaining gratification from what is outside the self (Correa *et al.*, 2010:247). Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, self-confident, and friendly. Basically it's being confident in your own capabilities and loving to share your innermost heart with others. The third one is agreeableness; this one entails warmth cooperativeness, and helpfulness (Leary and Allen, 2007:1033).

Research has shown that when an individual feels like they belong within a certain group or environment it improves their mental health and well-being (Grieve et al., 2013:76).

The fourth one, conscientiousness, is the trait of being conscious, disciplined, responsible, vigilant, and orderly. This means you are cautious about your actions online, you keep socialising keeping in mind that you don't disclose information that will impinge in your privacy (Downey and Feldman, 1996:1327). The last one, Neuroticism, is characterised by moodiness, anxiety and emotional instability. This can also refer to worry, jealousy, envy and loneliness (White *et al.*, 2004:1519).

Identity construction is an important element of the human species; it has been searched and explored through many different venues. Different mediums and techniques had since been sought by artists in order to project their identity through visual representations. Painters and artists draw on the same technique of portraying their life experiences in their work, just as the users of Facebook do.

A solid emotional stamp on a human is needed in order for one to construct an identity, life experiences, connections and relationships are core elements of identity construction. In the construction of identity Constructing identity symbolically involves metaphorical or symbolical representation of beliefs or sentiments in a communicative way, crafting conceptual graphic depictions.

Race, age, sexual preferences gender and cultural heritage are the defining aspects of identity construction, it is through these factors that one's personality is developed and coloured. Aspects of early socialization such as friendships, and family relations and community involvement shape our identities. We construct some aspect of our identities, but other aspects are constructed through others. Audiences construct meanings through language and images guided by conventions and familiar ideologies (Swanson, 1991:77).

The Merriam- Webster's dictionary (2011) defines identity in the following terms": "the set of behavioural characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group. The distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity: individuality, (p.245).

Granovetter (1973:201) argues that weak ties often serve as bridges, connecting otherwise disparate groups of individuals. The internet provides individuals with increased opportunities to locate and interact with members outside their network, subsequently increased opportunities for bridging social outcomes (Wellman, 2002:65). Empirical research has also found that the level of interaction over the internet is positively related to indicators of social capital, such as generalised trust (Best and Krueger, 2006:24). Ellison *et al* examines the use of Facebook

intensity against satisfaction with college life, they found that Facebook can be a bridge that facilitates participation at colleges especially among those students that are shy or have a low self-esteem (Ellison *et al* 2006:31).

Student identity on Facebook

As a student moves from high school to university they need to develop new skills in order to fit into the social spectrum in their new academic environment (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot and Associates, 2005:99). For example, a first year a student needs to gain time management skills, so that they can balance the time they when socializing and make time for studying as well (Upcraft *et al*, 2005:99). Making new friends is similarly an important aspect of a student's life at university. Students use Facebook to preserve their previous network of high school friends and also to form and sustain bonds with new friends on their campuses (Ellison *et al.*, 2007:1168, 2011; Junco & Mastrodicasa, 2007:33). For many students, the undergraduate experience is an opportunity to interact with more and different kinds of individuals whom they might not have encountered before college.

Social capital is essential to students for varied reasons including, finding friends, arranging activities and social interactions on campus (Ginnakos *et al* 2013:36). Social capital widens knowledge sharing; it improves academic performance, physical and mental health, economic and intellectual development (Ellison *et al* 2007:15:1168). Social capital increases knowledge sharing, fosters greater consistency of action, influences learning and forms shared understanding (Burton *et al*, 2010:20).

Facebook is used to formulate and shape friendships and to create new information with these new friends (Ellison *et al.*, 2011:12). Turke (1995:33) States that there are three uses for virtual experience: 1) as an escape, 2) as a way of attaining a degree of social mobility, and 3) as a measure of resistance. This also apply to the uses of Facebook, students use Facebook for the above statements. Sometimes they use Facebook in order to experiment on the application, view pages to their likings, read news, get relationship advice and so on. On the other hand some use it as an escape, to relax from the stress of school work, to distress and recollect their energy from

exhausting lectures. Lastly to reconnect with loved ones, family and catch up with long distanced friends.

The practice of social information seeking is related to student's apparent levels of social capital (the resources obtained from their relationships and interactions such as emotional support (Ellison *et al.*, 2011:9). It is very important for students to have a social life because it assists them with relieving some stress resulting from academic pressure. Social capital is related to improved self-confidence, scarcer mental and behavioral problems, and improved value of life (McPherson *et al.*, 2014:16). Studies showed that the use of Facebook was considered to have a direct link to the development of relations, which arbitrated to the link between Facebook use, self-esteem, satisfaction with university life, and the student's evaluation of their own performance.

Facebook account-holders can also join common-interest groups online, organized by schools, organizations, workplaces, or other entities (Boyd & Ellison, 2008:12.

For students Facebook is not only negative, but can also contribute positively to their campus lives. Chen and Bryer 2012:87, States online social networks like Facebook can be shaped, constructed and framed into spectrums where students share interesting ideas, build their identities, create innovative ideas for their learning journeys and exposure for their the betterment of their future's. This can be done without distant and physical boundaries creating social exposures beyond their imaginations.

A study done on student identity by Hew in 2001 revealed that students realised that lying about their identities was a waste of time, due to the fact that most of the people they were communicating with knew them on a personal level (Hew, 2001:7). What is the use of creating a false identity to people you know, it would be better if one creates another Facebook account where they would invite strangers only, because strangers would not point out lies, due to the fact that they do not know you. Individuals tend to stretch the truth a little in their online self-representation. This is true with many Facebook users especially students. This occurs because they want to fit in and be looked up to. As new trends are developed each year, self-image

changes and students do not want to be left out; they want to keep up with every trend, fashion and current INS. Therefore users may do their outmost best to forge that certain identity in order to fit in.

The negative aspect of Facebook is that females constantly have been noticed to have jealousy and related feelings towards other women (Muise, Christofides and Desmaraise, 2009:6).

With smart phones' consistency in developing new applications, one is able to alter and improve images through editing applications. Female students alter their images, using filters and photo shop to edit images, remove blemishes, and black heads in order to look flawless and fresh. Some females only post pictures of themselves having fun only, creating the image that they are living elaborate lives. Most do the above in order to keep up with their online friends.

The need to belong is the fundamental drive to form and maintain relationships (Baumeister and Leary, 1995:56) and a major motivation for Facebook use

The above quotation is significant. Before one is integrated into a university or tertiary institution; it is of importance that a student is first integrated into the social aspect of that institution, so that the academic experience is made easier. Students have distinctive needs and as such an awareness of student integration is appropriate in developing methods to satisfy the needs of these students (Braxton, Vesper and Hosler, 1995:5; Braxton, Sullivan and Johnson, 1997:77; Tinto, 1975:35).

The experiences and interactions of students are very much shaped by campus culture. Kuh and Whitt (1988:78) define campus culture as the way in which students understand and interpret meanings attached to events and actions on and off campus. This is done through a strong conviction of norms, ideologies, beliefs, practices, and assumptions that had shaped their ways of thinking.

Student affairs specialists face trials in addressing online social networking. Institutions must consider Facebook as a developing means to affect the campus community through a new path of communications affiliation opportunities (Goslin et al., 2007:9).

Student success is strongly linked with campus culture, this helps with the understanding of how students interact with communication structures on campus and the university community (Astin, 1975:89). The drop out of female university students can be avoided through proper communication strategies, if communication is profoundly installed within a structure numbers of academic dropout's are will be surely decreased. Student socialization plays a pivotal role in the success of students; it influences student persistence and kindles interest in being involved with academic endeavours (Kuh and Whit, 1998; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1975:19). Social networking sites permit a varied people, including professors, students and employers. This can be beneficial to students because they are able to communicate with their professors via Facebook, and student to student interactions would be of benefit with regards to sharing notes.

... students have an irresistible need to connect to their peers because of the development of these 24/7 accessible technologies (Fodeman and Monroe, 2009:36).

The above statement has a positive and negative connotation, it may be good to constantly connect with peers, but the above can backfire as well. Students can spend excessive time on social networks, so much so they end up neglecting their academic work.

Facebook is considered by Patton to be an essential media tool within college encounters that assists in the maintenance and encouragement of academic participation (Patton, 2007:16). He continues to suggest that if the student continues to have one to one online conversations with another student who encourages academic participation; students will most likely do well at both academic and social interaction on campus (Patton, 2007:17).

Online communication is considered to be a poor technique of communication, face-to-face interaction is a preferred technique, and students who are socially awkward tend to go prefer online communication. This is why researchers suggest that youngsters need to learn how to use

media in a healthy way, because it has an influence upon their lives (Brown and Bobkowski, 2011:443). Caplan 2007:54, agrees by saying that online social networks may assist shy people by giving them a chance to practice and gain social skills that they could not acquire due to timidity on face-to-face encounters. Fear of being embarrassed was one of the most common challenges (Seeley-Wait, Abott and Rapee, 2009:15).

Facebook and University/College

Bainbridge made a study that investigates the Facebook culture on university of North Colorado she comes to the realization to have a progressive culture and society it is important to have strong communication and this is achieved through technological advancements. Facebook is one of those tools that can enhance communication (Bainbridge 2005:1). On University campuses technology is a norm, there are facilities such as computer laboratories where students can log on and make use of the internet with ease, this therefore makes social networking widespread to students (Bainbridge, 2005:1). Due to the above reason it is a common thing that students will observe their fellow students that use online social networks (Bainbridge 2005:1).

The way in which students perform academically is mostly reliant on many factors therefore it would be of great help to look at their participation on Facebook. Student socialization is a vital component in ensuring that they are well integrated on campus (Bainbridge, 2005:2). If Students associate with each other on often basis it is most likely for them to be more interested in being at university and intern they have more positive approach on their academic participation and will most likely yield better results (Bainbridge.2005,3).

According to Bainbridge the effect that campus culture has on a student is vital in comprehending the socializations students have across varied communication networks within the university community (Bainbridge, 2005, 3). With Facebook a student can acquire a diverse such as employers, professors and other students (Gross et al, 2005:6). Students can also communicate via Facebook while at residence Halls and also maintain online and offline associations (Lampe et al 2006: 35). Grossing *et al* advises institutions to see Facebook as a tool

in developing and creating an innovative lane of communication links and opportunities (Grosling *ET al.*2007:17).

Greenhow in 2011 conducted a study on how young people use online social networking sites to facilitate their learning experiences in many ways. She gathers two findings from her research one being that online social networks can offer a form of indirect or direct support to the student, by the above she means that through online social networks students get social interactions, moral support, emotional support, and help to relieve some academic pressures (Greenhow 2011: 4). The second and last finding was that online social networks offer students online benefits that may possibly improve the student's academic performance (Greenhow 2011: 4). Herring (2007: 4) opposes this idea by stating that online social networks such as Facebook could be harmful to academic performances due to its nature of decreasing standards of literacy and that could therefore be a danger to societal values (Herring, 2007:4).

Students in (Greenhow, 2011:5) state that they used online social networks to validate their campus social experiences. The students continue to state that using online social networks served the following benefits, attaining feedback on their innovations or academic work, peer support in sharing university experiences with fellow students, and getting academic assistance from other students (Greenhow, 2011:5). Online chatting through social networks such as Facebook helped them to organize group discussions, attaining and sharing guidelines on how to do an academic project or assignment, organizing study groups, organizing campus social events and so on (Greenhow, 2011:5).

Greenhow continues by stating that online social networks assist with sharpening the student's communication skills, brainstorming ideas, exchanging feedback and also transitioning into an environment (Greenhow, 2011:5). Dika and Singh (2002:22) supports the above statement by asserting that online social networks were found to be contributing towards educational outcomes which in turn positively effects academic performance which translates to the fact that students perform better academically if they feel they belong and are connected to their peers (Dika and Singh, 2002:22).

In a study done by Sharon to investigate the differences in a social network communication between men and woman she states that woman are the most active users of Facebook and that

they use it during late hours when they are supposed to be asleep (Thompson, 2012:88). She continues to state that female Facebook users begin to neglect interaction with friends and focus more on virtual friendships, she also found that Facebook causes negative self-body image and this in turn causes them stress (Thompson, 2012:88). A study done by Morris in 2006 to investigate the uses of Facebook by undergraduate and postgraduates reveal that undergraduate students use Facebook in order to bridge the lack of emotional support and also to compensate loneliness or the unfamiliarity of being in a new environment (Morris, 2006:14).

South African context of the uses of Facebook

The South African social media landscape is now using Facebook; this was as a result of a case study that was conducted among more than a hundred South African brands (South African Social Media Landscape Summary, 2006:1). The study also showed that the statistics of Facebook use has grown by eight percent from 12 million to 13 million users. The South African society has become very fond with the use of Facebook, it is mostly used in Businesses for marketing purposes, but individuals also frequent this online social networking site for communication purposes (Ross and Slabber, 2013: 2847).

A study was conducted by Bevan-Dye in South Africa to investigate African Students' tendency of using word of mouth communication and whether their gender difference influences their tendency to use word of mouth communication. Facebook remains the most popular online social network in South Africa; this situation is ached with an estimate of 11.8 million users in 2015 which 75 percent is accessed through the use of mobile phones (Bevan-Dye, 2015:9). Globally it is stated that the percentage of females that use Facebook is more than males this is also the case in the South African landscape where there is a relative difference in use between the genders where there is a relative difference in use between the genders most are university graduates and the rest are university graduates (My broadband, 2014:1-10). The findings to Bevan-Dye's study were that the students do not give or receive opinions on the site and that there was no difference between male and female participants tendency to engage in a word of mouth communication on Facebook (Bevan-Dye, 2014: 11).

Bosch in 2009 conducted a study in the University of Cape Town to investigate the uses of online social networking for teaching and learning. Bosch comes across these following assumptions , with web 2.0 the uses of online social networks has become popular this has caused individuals to share information , through blogs, podcasts, wikis and so on , that can be done on daily basis (Bosch 2009: 185). South African Facebook use has become quite common and widespread , South Africans now have an opportunity to share local content and this is made possible through the use of mobile phones (Bosch 2009:186). Bosch concludes by stating that undergraduate students use Facebook for social networking and for pursuing motivation or moral support from their peers, initiating student participation on campus and community building among students (Bosch 2009: 189).

Photographs as tools for identity construction

People consciously and unconsciously work to define the way they are perceived, hoping to engender positive impressions of selves. This effort entails emphasizing certain characteristics, though dress, hairstyle, behaviour and speech, while hiding other characteristics perceived as flawed depending on the context (Zizi, 2011:54). Photographs are a perfect way of creating the self, and depicting only what one wishes others to see. College students consciously upload and tag displayed photographs thus selecting certain subjects and events to emphasize. Inspired by Chalfen's (1987:23) examination of how we construct, manipulate, interpret, live with, participate in, and generally use visual symbolic forms is vital to ones construction of identity.

The smart mobile phone has bridged the gap between offline and online connections, therefore students can connect to their friends at any time any place without physically being in front of a computer or laptop. The advent of new technologies makes it easier and faster for people to communicate and reach one another instantly Facebook even has instant messenger, this application makes it easier for smart phone users to inbox each other directly from their phones (Nylander and Larshmmmer, 2012).

Relationships are also a key aspect of personal photography demonstrating important bonds between family and friends. There is a sound purpose to personal relationships for us and for others (Barthes, 1981; Jacobs, 1981:48). We consciously and unconsciously transform ourselves

before the camera; portraying a version of ourselves we hope to be (Barthes, 1981:56; Jacobs, 1981:23; Slater, 1995:13).

Facebook tagged photographs present more than random moments in a person's life. They present a suspended take on college life socially, through a collage of scenes celebrating the self, group culture, and membership that are played out over and over again. Facebook pictures are where college students visually play out their lives for each other demonstrating their identity as a college student. These practices serve as performative exercises of identity and belonging, simultaneously declaring and collaborating shared experiences.

Gendered identity and language

Being male or female is more than a biological factor in this world. Social constructs and implications are attached to gender. Culturally gender is defined, valued, presented and channelled into various roles dependent on cultural norms. In other words culture constructs what and how a woman should act and how a man should behave. Such norms a woman should adhere to, without discussion, complaints or doubt. There is a misconception that women are created to be subordinates to men or for masculine gaze.

The way we act and behave is the final product of the effects that society has on us. The gender of a person is socially constructed. Through society we also learn what is expected of us with regards to gender roles, what is right and wrong?, The internet has become a spectrum where gender defences are now bridged, now it is no longer about which gender has more excess to computers, but it is now about the different consumption patterns between the two genders (Ono and Zavodny, 2003:11). It is said that women spend more time interacting with close ties via the use of the internet than men do (Beneva, Kraut, and Frohlich, 2001, Kennedy Wellman and Klement, 2003:21).

When looking at aspects of gender networking Patton 2007 found that males do not engage in online social networks more than females do, female students are more active on the one to one Facebook interactivities than male students, therefore female students are more frequent users of

Facebook than male students (Patton, 2007:18-19), he states that this is mostly due to the fact that females like to gossip.

Any culture attaches a range of characteristics, expectations and assumptions to the biological sexes of male and female. Gender refers to the particular ranges that define masculine and feminine qualities. Individual sexual identity expresses any particular composition and characteristics, expectations and assumptions. Masculinity and femininity may seem biologically distinct categories but focus on gender enables us to see how sexuality is a cultural construction rather than an identity determined by ones sex.

Brim (1968:33) states that women are thought to be more demonstrative about their feelings. The women may feel freer to express emotions, although affection displays must be muted when there is danger of communicating too much intimacy. McAdams (1989:32), states in communicating, conversations of women are negotiated for closeness in which people try to seek and give confirmation and support when reaching a consensus. Women try to protect themselves from others attempt to push them away. Before we can see how women thought of themselves and of their associations with men, we must find out how they were perceived by men. The masculine outset of females gave rise to idealizations and customs that strongly influenced the behaviour of females, who lacked the authority to contest the male view of their sex. Issues of fashion and style play a central role in participants approach to their profiles.

There is a concept that, woman should be constantly accompanied by their own image, they must constantly watch themselves, be aware of what they do, how they do it, and the manner in which they carry themselves in the public eye must be according to certain cultural norms. She was trained from a young age to always survey herself. This in turn becomes part of her make or identity, it becomes second nature. This is exactly what and how society wants females to act like, this raises questions to the views of females on their representation. How do they want to be represented and seen? Is Facebook an appropriate space to create an identity, and is it easier for them to paint an appropriate representation for themselves? The aim of this research paper is to give answers to the above questions.

She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in her is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another... (Berger 2014:103).

Subjectivity and culture, has shown that women are active agents with regards to identity construction, they take charge and are in control of their lives. Language is one of the main elements in the creation of identities, within language gender differences are highlighted, meanings are negotiated and struggled over, culturally woman are subjected, but with new modern cultures and new languages, gender differences are highlighted women are subjected, but with new modern cultures and new language dissemination, languages are now flexible allowing for change and fluidity. This flexibility allows women to participate and not be discriminated by race, gender and social class.

Ferguson (1987:12) argues...the recognition of the self is an on-going process that involves both individuality and external attributes to selves gained from other parties. The above elements then form an individual's identity.

Support systems and sense of community are vital elements towards the identity construction of females; the sense of community is reinforced through social networks and other forms of support systems. Traditionally a females 'place' is often regarded as being at home, where they have domestic responsibilities that they need to adhere to the therefore they are more likely to construct their identities around cultural womanly roles. This, however, has changed rapidly through the uses of social networks such as Facebook (Green et al 2002:13).

...Usually an individual's personality is shaped through local culture which in turn forms a different set of (Mowl and Towner 1995:23).

Social construction entails a lot on gender and identity, there is a big connection between the two, this due to the fact that within construction of the society there are certain norms that pertain to gender and identity. Studies like those of social construction question notions of gender

identity, they delve deep into the genesis of gender, dismissing the constructed primordial roots of gender. Constructionists conceptualise gender as an interactional accomplishment, an identity continually negotiated via linguistic exchange and social performance (Cerulo, 1991:56).

Another study showed that most women use Facebook in order to communicate with people they already have relations with. On the other hand, men use Facebook to meet new people (Tufekci, 2008:36). Haferkamp *et al.* discovered that, comparing themselves with other people is one of the dominant characteristics that women do on when using Facebook.

Hey (1997:54), states it is through sites and created settings such as Facebook, that creates a voice for girls to express themselves, without being discriminated by gender

A statistical online social network called ‘the takeaway’; state’s that 71 percent of the online population is dominated by women. It continues to say that ,woman have more than twice as many posts on their Facebook walls as men and they have eight percent more ‘Friends’ (refer to appendix3). The image in appendix 3 shows a table which shows that more than double the population of women use Facebook than men. As such, woman makes up the majority of those on social networks. Looking at the ways woman on Facebook utilise their profiles to create an identity is therefore especially important in order to understand identity construction in the social networking space.

It is said that woman who spend most of their time on Facebook tend to compare themselves to other women online with regards to body image and feel concerned with their appearance (Triggerman and Mc Gill, 2004; Triggerman and Slater 2004:79). Woman frequently post pictures with concentration on their faces, whilst men present their complete bodies (Haferkamp *et al.*, 2012:91). Rosen (2011:163) found that women have larger Facebook networks than men, and (Walker, Cohen and Sibbald, 2008:15) found that women are more likely than men to introduce topics on Facebook that could lead to gossip about themselves.

The internet promises women a network of lines on which the gossip, chat work and play, liveliness brings a fluidity to identities which once had to be fixed, and multi-media provides a

tangible settings in which woman creatively find space to build their identities. Woman are retrieving the circuits on which they were once switched, hacking into security's controls and discovering their own posts- (Adam, 2002:422).

Females and social support

Social support can be considered to be a communication process that assists people with feeling like they are loved, they belong and are appreciated. House (1981:43) defines social support as the connection between people; it involves empathy, emotional control, appraisal and the sharing of information. Social capital refers to the benefits that can be attained from connections between people through their social networks (Putnam, 2000:6). Bonding social capital can be exclusive and aids in creating group solidarity, it is created among groups of strongly connected individuals such as ones family and closest friends. On the other hand Bridging social capital provides access to a wider range of information and diverse perspectives, bonding social capital is linked to a social support and more substantive support, such as financial loans.

Svenindson found that female self-presentations on online social networks were linked with relationships and feelings, while those of males focused on status and technology. Females are more sensitive to social support and are easily disappointed if they receive unexpected feedback, females devote more energy to managing and maintaining their social network.

Facebook users have noted that one of the main uses for social networking technology is relational maintenance (Lampe, Ellison and Steinfield, 2006:167).

Males do not disclose personal information on social networks more than females do, and females are considered to have more interest in developing their social ties than males do (Tannen, 1991:51). Females nurture, support, their interactions and have more social relations. The above also apply on face to face interactions as well (Tannen, 1991:3). Females have different types of friends and each friend is there for a reason. Females are prone to need social and obtain support than men do.

Females devote more time chatting, discussing delicate issues and assisting each other. Females are more likely to enjoy social events such as going out with friends (Houseman, 1991:6). Females are more concerned than others to the way they are viewed by others; there is a possibility of getting disappointed if they do not get positive feedback from others, so they are more eager to change their actions to make an enhanced impression (Coulson, 2008:9).

Facebook and identity construction

Technology has also generated new forms of communication, in social networking sites and other systems which bridge the structural and functional characteristics of mass interpersonal peer communication (Berger, Chaffe, 1989 Cappella, 1989:21). Facebook was created by a student of Harvard University, alongside with several classmates Mark Zuckerberg. At first Facebook was only available to his fellow students at Harvard, and then he incorporated the Ivy League Schools as well as Boston colleges. The only people who could join were those with email address registered with their colleges. High school children followed, professional adult's then corporate networks and soon anybody with a valid email address, on the condition that they were older than 13 years (Boyd and Ellison, 2008:12). Globalization is facilitated by satellites and cables that offer instant communication and networked interaction with distant others through networked mobile devices. It was through globalisation that dreams of students such as Zuckerberg's came true. The contribution he has made to social sciences has made it possible for people to interact regardless of age, race, culture background and social class.

Social networks allow people to gather for social, cultural and civic purposes, and they help people connect with a world beyond their close friends and family. Cultural media studies offer different notion of what constitutes a public. In locating the term public as synonymous with audience (Livingstone, 2005:91), uses the term to refer to a group bounded by a shared text, whether a world view or a performance.

Physical co-presence is no barrier for communication any longer, thanks to new communication technologies, these technologies increase the range of generalised others backing to the construction of the self. A lot of studies have been done due to this development. Online social networks have become so popular, their popularity raises questions on identity construction, due

to the many trends and interactions online (Verni, 2012:24). In the process of creating a profile, they often reveal much of their true identities by publishing personal information, photographs, and personal preferences.

New communication technologies create environments for self-development and identification; they present new opportunities for collective association and consumption (Cerulo 1997:385).

Online networks are considered to be larger than face-to face networks; therefore online networks have people of all kinds offering more diversity (Acar, 2008:103). Rather than telling, Facebook users show, they show how they construct their identities. People on Facebook put their ideas and constructs of who they wish to be online, sharing it with people in order to recreate their identities. Past research had assumed that people on Facebook create pretentious lifestyles; this research will look at whether female students do create fake identities on Facebook. Do their lives depict what they are in real life? Or do they act a certain way online and another offline? This paper will try and answer the above questions. Facebook includes both written words and photography making identity construction a fun process.

Identity is determined by our thoughts, desires, hopes and experiences; it is therefore what people know us as (Rosenberg, 1986:52). The more we share about who we are, the more people understand you on a personal level. Some people are better on face-to-face encounters, and there are those that are shy and reserved, they cannot cope in face-to-face encounters. These people then find it easier to use online social networks such as Facebook to express their emotions better and make friends; this indirectly assists them to gain social capital. Whether in face-to-face encounters or online encounters, people have the tendency to hide certain aspects of their identity so that they are not judged. People will only share what they want you to know; therefore identity construction at some level is dependent on the person (Goffman, 1959:16).

The construction of identity has therefore gone past the face-to-face real life domain. Identity construction is a complex process because it refers both to how we consider ourselves from a subjective point of view and how we define ourselves from the position

of 'others'. Against this backdrop, Cheung and Lee (2010:24) differentiated between two broad categories of identity, personal identity and social identity.

Social identity is what we would like other people to see, but personal identity is who we are on a personal level. Personal identity is the quality that separates us from the next person, it is unique and original, and no two people share the same identity (Cheung and Lee 2010:24; Pearson 2009:7). Therefore, on online social networks we create that socially constructed image in order to be seen fit by the society. There is no longer a need to build social relations that are based on the physical structure of a person, due to Facebook people of different backgrounds and physical structures interact without having to be judged. On online social networks it is only text that speaks, there is no need to travel long distances in order to see a friend. The need to communicate is only a password away. The creation of disembodiment and the fact that one does not know whom they are communicating with on a personal level creates a new culture of communication (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002:33; McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002:31).

Anonymity on Facebook allows people to create identities that they desire people to see instead of those that they are known of. In other words, Facebook can be a space to create and form identities that they choose instead of the assumptions that people have about them (Suler, 2002:455), but people who know someone see that it is fabricated. It can be argued that the above results in a certain form of empowerment, and giving an individual power to put their identity construction process into their hands (Rosenmann & Safir, 2006:71). This makes way for people to be creative and get rid of the 'boxed notions' that people have about others and replaces those notions with new ideas about that certain individual. This is exciting because it provides a more hands on experimentation in identity construction. But the validity of the identity can be questioned because it may seem artificial or untrue.

The online world is considered to be a third type environment where people pretend to be individuals that they always desired to be, therefore creating what has been termed 'hoped-for possible selves' (Yurchisin et al., 2005:63).

As human beings, regardless of gender, we find contentment in knowing that people accept us, and that we belong. So Facebook allows one to display a desired image, an image that would appeal to peers, friends, work associates and the like. We also have two aspects to selves. Hoping to become better than who we already are, we ourselves have the desire to become our hope-full selves (Markus and Nurius (1986:954). In the hoped-for selves we are perfect beings, with perfect lives, everything is catered for we lack nothing, on other hand in reality, we lack a lot of things and or lives depend on certain requirements. It may be argued that, it is our hoped for selves, that we create on Facebook, because one only posts text that is related to the idea of the identity they wish to identified by. The identity that we would love to be in real life is blocked by physical and material constraints, for example, money, time or experience (Higgins, 1987:1120).

Young people find functionality, self-discovery, expression and enjoyment from Facebook (Grabner-Krauter and Bitter 2013:21). They ‘discover’ themselves on Facebook; they create an image through its use, and shape their views towards life. Relationships have a huge impact on identity construction. Young people frequently want approval from their peers; they want their friends to be pleased with whatever decisions they take (Brown and England 2005:458). Identity changes – it is not static factors like friendship changes people’s identities; one’s identity evolves through interactions with different groups of people.

The concept of trust is increasingly relevant in negotiating identity in both online social networks and physical interactions. Trust in social relations is multidimensional and there are diverse interpretations and rationale for engaging and developing trust even in online social relations (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter, 2013:324).

There need to be some level of trust before the initiation of a friendship even if it is with total strangers online. One trusts that the other person on the other hand also hopefully has the same level of trust in them. Therefore trust is an important element in identity formation, because online relations involve the sharing of information (Volakis, 2011:67).

It can be argued that students do not fake their identities on Facebook, but instead Facebook identities are an extension to the real life personalities. Facebook is a space that allows students to be creative in expressing who they really are. The arrival of the online social networks has

mostly influenced the way of constructing identity online, in particular among young individuals. Identity creation is a twofold process, taking place both in the virtual and the real world and it is never immobile. It is assumed that Facebook assists students in fitting in within the university social life.

Ong (2002:56), states that, the introduction of literacy did more than provide a record it transformed how people thought and communicates. Furthermore, Benjamin (1969:217) adds: what is captured by photography has a different essence than the experienced moment. Both writing and photography provide persistence, but they also transform the acts they are capturing. Writing and photography are elements that are used within Facebook; these two cater two different types of people, one that likes written words and the other that loves visual art. Students find it easier to learn if there are pictures so photography assists in the narration of an event and writing puts into perspective what is being connoted in the image.

Nie (2001:13) Suggests that the internet does not really make everyone sociable, there are those people who are already sociable when they start using online social networks. On the other hand some people cannot balance their real social lives and those online, they become too involved with their virtual online communication so much that, they isolate themselves from the world. This therefore disturbs the process of social capital making face-to-face interactions irrelevant for that certain individual. Wellman, Witte and Hampton (2001:1519) agree by stating that, it may also reduce the individuals' devotion to society.

Facebook is a tool that helps meet the needs of people – it caters to the participants need to belong and feel accepted. Facebook is a great tool that can be used in coping with social disconnections (Sheldon, Abad and Hirsch, 2011:100). The self-representation concept is based on the fact that people have needed to share their identities with others on a social level (Goffman, 1959:32). Baumeister, (1982) states that self-presentation may possible be used to portray the self as honestly as possible. Kim and colleagues (2012:48) defined self-presentation as an activity where individuals present their identities on a virtual society, she asks questions on, how far do people go in presenting themselves? People not only post pictures, but they also

share information that could be beneficial to other people, such as company products. People can improve their image by offering helpful and useful information (Eric, 1988:36).

Self-worth and self-esteem are closely associated with the need to belong. It has been proposed that self-esteem may act as a socio-meter a monitor of one's acceptability to the group. A drop in self-esteem serves as a warning signal of potential social exclusion and motivates the individual to take steps to avoid rejection and improve one's standing in the social hierarchy (Leary, 2007:1033). Yu et al., (2010:1494) suggests that Facebook use is fascinated relationship development and acceptance from peers, it also allowed acculturation to the university, Facebook is a complex and possible cultural social factors.

Research shows that Facebook users spend their time on Facebook reading comments, commenting on status updates, going through people's profiles. They use Facebook in order to keep up with their favorite pages, news, and information celeb gossip, writing and replying to messages from friends. The challenge with constantly checking up on friends can result into stalking tendencies where the user constantly spies on the next user either to monitor their moves or to keep up with whatever they are doing. Take for instance a situation where someone gets into an argument with the next person, they update their status saying how annoyed they are, then the other reads the comment. The above makes the situation even harder and enhances the difficult situation. In other words, Facebook has a major impact on people's relationships, and not always for the positive.

Kim and Lee, 2011 asserted that the more the number of friends on Facebook the better the representation and popularity of the user. However Bradzaeg, Luders and Skjtne, 2010, oppose by saying, the more the friends, the higher and the amount of privacy issues. They continue to argue by stating that users with many friends tend to be constantly tired or exhausted, because of the large amounts of information that needs to be processed.

There is also evident that Facebook serves as a stress relief from the heavy load of work placed upon students (Cohen and Hoberman, 1983:99). Research Done by Tam (2013:1) showed that 71% of Facebook users agree that Facebook is now part of their daily lives and is able to destroy

the boundary between their daily lives and is able to control the boundary between their physical world and their online world.

There are now more diverse ways of communicating with people, you do not need face to face interaction anymore (Harrison& Gilmore, 2012:109; Park, Yun, Holody, Yoon, Xie, Lee, 2013:87; and Sultan, 2014:98). Facebook was chosen by the researcher because it is predictably considered as the most effective SNSs in the world (Hughes, Rowe, Batey, & Lee, 2012:22; Lee & Cho, 2011:52). Facebook provides interactive and real time net-works of friends, it transcends geographical boundaries (Borsch, Knight, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011:22; Gusic, 2009:65; Peterson, 2012:76). Since its introduction in 2003 Facebook has gained more than 900 million users all over the world (Goldman, 2012:86).

Facebook also provides timely updates on social and cultural issues and current trends (Kwak *et al.*, 2010:5).

Diener, 2013:663 states that happiness is reliant on interpersonal relations and social capital relationships with friends, colleagues and family usually lead to subjective well-being and social relationships. Social networks like Facebook are tools that assist these relations so that they can thrive. Through the use of Facebook one can continue communicating and interacting with loved ones. Pre-existing social ties are continued with supposing barriers like distance and time; Facebook on the other hand also allows one to create new relations as well.

The interactions on the online communities constantly continue even in the real world interactions with people one met online (Morris, 2006:101)''.

On the other hand Lonqvist and Itkonen 2014 reported a link between the amount of Facebook friend and the level of happiness and satisfaction. He concluded that the more friends one has on Facebook can have an impact on their happiness, due to the social support they gain from having a lot of friends. Kros et al, 2013 states that Facebook has a negative impact on how people live their lives and that they usually measure their success according to the expectations of mutual

friends on Facebook. Does this mean that one can be defined by the life of others? This is what this paper will investigate.

Individuals are attention seekers; seeking approval from people around us is always one of the main traits. According to Goffman 1959, people adjust their presentations based on their atmosphere, whether the place is church, work, nightclub and so on.

Social networking sites such as Facebook grant people the ability to develop identity profiles that can constantly be revised and updated and subsequently linked to other friends' profile pages (Verni,2012:41).

Mukesh, Muyo and Goncalves 2014, states that comparing and keeping up with contacts on Facebook usually causes anxiety, and jealousy associated with wanting to be like them. The inability to adjust to the demands of interpersonal relations and the stresses of daily living may result into a low self-esteem or a low social attractiveness (Tong Van Der Heide, Langwell, 2008:98).

Facebook and networked interactivity

According to Patton 2003:3, Facebook is a social tool that facilitates individual to understand the world around them, he continues to state that Facebook as a company makes it possible for individuals to share information throughout every other social network just like how human beings socialise with each other regardless of their different races and ethnic varieties.

Facebook has become a regular routine for many individuals; most people cannot go a day without sharing information with their online friends (Patton, 2007:3). The wall is a very important process related interactivity in Facebook. It is a space where mutual friends share information with each other but the difference is that it is more public it is different from the inbox messaging that occurs on Facebook (Patton,2007:4).

Facebook allows for individuals to interact on one-to-one or one-to-many (Patton, 2007:6), this therefore provides the user with a variety of choosing their communication strategy and who to communicate with. The above grants an extent of privacy and safety ,because one can choose not to share certain information within a group setting ,so therefore they would prefer to use the one on one communication process (Patton,2007:7)

Facebook and the Cultural theory

Facebook has changed the conventional distribution of information. It has shifted the cultural norms of information sharing. Technological advancements come with new ways of sharing information, new ways to sustain connections with people, access to broad information and new ways for presenting themselves. This assists students within high tertiary education to gain learning and networking opportunities (Chen and Bryer, 2012:87).

Users use their beliefs when creating new relationships. When disclosing themselves online they look to what extent they feel their beliefs permit them to disclose information. Selfhood is a cultural dimension in which an individual links culture in understanding certain concepts and ideas. The individual gives meaning to that specific context depending on their cultural beliefs (Ricoeur, 1990/1992:89). We all have different cultures and those cultures allow us to process and understand concepts of the world. Culture colors our world, it makes one unique from the other, and cultures are not fixed entities, but are instead flexible through globalization. Globalization has allowed different cultures to come together, therefore one ends up adopting certain cultural attributes from other cultures.

The manner in which most people form and change opinions of politics, style and other cultural is very common and it involves many discussions , debates, and inward questioning (Katz,1957:73;Katz and Lazarsfeld,1955:4;Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet , 1944:71). The mass media has a huge impact on cultures; what we see on the television, what we hear on radio and so on can and does impact on our view about society. The things individuals see on Facebook allow us to have different views on other cultures. We begin to see other people's cultures in a different view, a new light. Generalized assumptions about other cultures and broken down and we develop knowledge instead of assumptions and prejudices.

It is in language that ideology has to be found. The ideological message is contained in the underlying structure, which is 'packed' in speech as to be more or less inaccessible to both speakers and hearers. On the most lucid, influential and readable exponents of this view, Roland Barthes, expresses this as a distinction between what a statement denotes and what it connotes (McLellan, 1986:32). Ideologies are socially shared and are related to societal structures, an obvious insight which however needs a different theoretical analysis (Ballaster, 1991:34). Similarly, beliefs are not only personal nor do they always freely emerge as products of the individual mind. Rather many of them are socially assimilated, created and changed, for example through social practices and contact in general and through discourse and communication to be specific (Billing, 1983:56).

Identity is both a personal and socio-construct that is a mental representation. In their presentation of self, people construct themselves as being a member of several categories, for example, woman. Identity is a gradually constructed abstraction from personal experiences of events, both experiences and their inferred self-representation are at the same time socially constructed. Part of our self-representation is inferred from the ways others see, define and treat you (Doise, 1978:81).

Mead (1936:44) assumed that meaning comes from involvement and value. The realist custom in which Mead operated opposed the unfiltered truths found in realism, which was the convention during Mead's time (Goodman, 1995; Joas, 1991:45). Through experience with the world (including other peoples), an individual constructs meaning. The value of dealings with the objects of the world gives those objects meaning. The above statements apply on Facebook as well, people make meanings through experience and meanings are embedded in their already constructed ideologies. On Facebook the reader processes the meaning depending on their particular ideology and their own cultural content.

Ideology defines the social identity of a group, groups abide to certain ideologies, ideologies are learned through experiences. Within different cultures there are different perspectives of making sense of concepts. Identity is both personal and social construct; identity is also a mental

concept. Whatever one knows starts within the brain, where information gets processed and stored, since the brain stores information it picks on new information each time during different events.

When experiences are shared with other people one become emerged within their cultures as well. Although ideologies are mostly socially shared, they are also prone to be produced by individuals depending on the social context. There is in itself no ideology that is true not false, but every ideology belongs to a certain context. Categories of people build an ideology that is suitable for them at that certain moment. Facebook allows every gender to create their own identities regardless of any cultural rules or ideologies; gender has no impact on the freedom to create a certain identity online.

Through Facebook people construct their own identities, through different ideologies. On Facebook one meets people from various ideological backgrounds; you therefore get immersed with new knowledge and culture. Learning about different cultures allows the Facebook users to be exposed to different cultural values. The culture of an individual influences stereotypes through information that is received from indirect sources, such as parents, peers, teachers, political and religious leaders, and the mass media (Hibbard and Bushmaster 1998:77).

Stereotyping is how we perceive each other, especially individuals outside our group. What we believe to be “normal” is associated with who we are hanging out with (Macrae, Stangor and Hewstore 1996:23). Facebook allows it users to share cultural knowledge; this helps them to stop having superstitions and stereotypes. Facebook has a culture of its own, because of the diversity of its users, they share culturally rich information. Facebook to some extent is a tool for acquiring cultural capital; the users get schooled about culture whist using Facebook.

Representation is how images and language enthusiastically construct meanings according to sets of conventions shared by and familiar to makers and audiences (Swanson, 1991:17). It is through the recognition of signs that we understand the meaning; the meaning is constructed through the already formed ideologies that are built within our beliefs and cultures. Our cultures are the backbone of identity construction; we understand the word through our cultures. Media products

are understood through our cultures, even if we are not familiar with the things that are happening within the media, we make sense of them through the use of cultural norms. Culture is a collective entity; it needs a collective in order to be properly acted out. Therefore that specific collective needs to be in agreement in decision making processes.

Conventions within those specific cultures are usually familiar within the participant of that specific culture. Assumptions, common knowledge, common sense, general knowledge, widespread beliefs and popular attitudes all fall part of the context meanings within which representations are produced and circulated. They are part of our cultures and the knowledge of our culture. This perspective and our individual varieties of understanding , values and attitudes is overseen in turn by a system of influence that offers varied validity to these meanings ideas and responses. In this system there are levels of power, some meanings are dominant and others are subordinated. Methods to representation include the way the media uses conventions, how spectators make meaning from them and how signs work and are used in the cultural context.

The way we see ourselves is based on certain elements, elements of gender, class, race, and sexuality and so on, as well as those that include varieties of interest groups which involve, particular associations. And the qualities that are relative to these classifications include the way we look, the way we behave, the lifestyle we embrace, it can even go to the extent of the car we purchase. We therefore begin to see which characteristics are socially permitted and which are not, ideas about what people are like and how they are meant to be understood already triumph in our culture. The social and cultural context change depending on the changing relations and meanings of images over time, these meanings are usually legitimized by the social and cultural context.

Privacy, safety and identity

When one is able to publicise private information online without the fear of disclosing personal issues, they put themselves in danger. Overlaying current explanations of privacy onto technological spaces is unwarranted as the potential avenues for violence are hazy when one considers the construction of online spaces (Robison, 1997:29). The above is due to the fact that no one knows the person that uses the online surveillance strategy, privacy as a tool for the

avoidance of invasion over personal information becomes dense and therefore possibly vulnerable (Utek,2009:49).

Individuals love to have some sense of control over their lives (Rossler, 2004:30). Online social networks can be disruptive to privacy (Grimmelman, 2009:72). They are said to counter people's sense of control. Just because people are trying these new ways of communicating it does not mean they purposefully put themselves in situations where their privacy is tempered with.

Physical and Cultural factors have a huge role in the way one views issues of privacy, what is private in culture A, may not be in culture C and D. Hine 2009 argues that the internet has its own culture, and is a cultural artefact, therefore looking at privacy issues as above may complicate privacy theories, this raises questions about the norms and representations of privacy created online.

The opposite factor to the benefit of achieving a sense of privacy can connote that individuals may feel they have no control over their privacy. Lines of secrecy are not clear due to the unknown tracking procedures, participating in an online space changes the ways in which privacy displays itself in comparison to the 'real world' spectrum (Woo,2006:56). In past decades online privacy was defined as keeping away information from the public so that your dignity and identity may not be tarnished. In recent years people divulge private information so that they can score points and gain popularity on online social networking sites.

Facebook also shares personal information of their users with its partners in order to attain profit, as a result this raises a lot of privacy issues and has led to a lot of research regarding privacy issues (Pegararo, 2012:1). Debatin et al.,2009, expresses that more than 90% of students are well informed about privacy issues on Facebook and 77% assert that they are likely to confine others' access to their Facebook profiles.

Facebook users have most of the power to control what their profile looks like, who is their friend, and who they don't want to befriend. Facebook allows the user to reject whatever friend request they do not approve of, they are able to delete contacts, they are able to add a friend,

untag themselves on pictures and content they do not approve of. Facebook users are able to add and like pages of their interests, users can interact via private messages, members can post messages on each other's walls as well. Most students use Facebook to interact with people that they know and trust; in this case self-disclosure is easily negotiated, because it is different from sharing information with total strangers. If so, the communication with friends that occurs on Facebook may help young adults resolve key developmental issues that may be present during emerging adulthood, including both identity and intimacy development. In this manner Facebook becomes a positive development strategy with regards to student integration.

Research done by Gross and Acquisti discovered that most Facebook users trust and are comfortable with the safety of Facebook, due to the fact that they are aware of the information they share on Facebook and on top of that they are aware of the safety precautions that are available for them on the site (Gross and Acquisti, 2006:15).

A significant theoretical fact was discovered by Ellison et al which was that some Facebook users have a tendency of meeting the individuals they meet on Facebook in order to create a solid and intense bond between themselves, rather than that of the virtual interaction (Ellison et al 2006:1131). The above speaks to this research question of whether female students understand the safety precautions they need to take when using online social networks such as Facebook. Meeting individuals from online social networks may not be a safe option because the identity of the anticipated user can be questionable because you may not know the true identity of the person beyond the screen. One may not know if it is a kidnapper or a person who preys on naïve individuals especially young females.

The ability to connect with others by way of social networking sites may be especially meaningful for individuals who are prone to forms of social anxiety in the context of face-to-face interaction (Acar, 2008:5; McMillan & Morrison, 2006:10; Stouder & Ouellette, 2004:19; Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Studies show that female internet users are not likely to share personal information such as phone numbers, physical addresses on social media pages due to the relatively high privacy concerns (Lewis et al., 2008:1; Thewall, 2008:7).

Conclusion

The section reviewed literature about identity construction, being a student on Facebook, privacy issues related to the use of Facebook, factors around being a female that uses Facebook, photograph sharing on Facebook and Finally the cultural implications of using Facebook

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The topic of this study is 'Female identity construction on Facebook among Humanities students at Howard College, University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal'. The rationale is to carry out research into female perspectives of their process of identity construction on Facebook. The study seeks to understand whether Facebook can be used as a medium of facilitating female undergraduate students with social cohesion on campus, whether the female students understand the danger of sharing private information on Facebook, and finally whether being female influences the way they portray themselves on Facebook.

This section of the chapter will put the study under two theoretical frameworks in an endeavor to answer the objectives listed above. The two theories that will be discussed in this chapter are the Identity Construction theory and the Cultural Studies theory. These theories will provide a rich perspective to the study and will seek to put the study within a legitimate theoretical stance. This chapter will also put the study under an appropriate research design, being the qualitative research design. This chapter will go on to discuss the research methods used in order to facilitate the study.

Identity construction theory

Many philosophers and scholars have written about identity construction over the years (Ellis, 2010:11). Even though a large amount of research has been published on this, in the past most focused on notions of identity and religion, and about identity and self-esteem. There has not been much written to-date about Female students' identity construction on Facebook. What research does exist tends to focus on students using Facebook but not on their specific gender.

Identity theory seeks to make sense of the self and how social structures can impact the self; identity is rooted in symbolic interactionism (Gearhart and Kang, 2010:56). Just as the statement above statement, individuals create Facebook profiles become symbols of representations and other individuals interact with them through their profiles (Gearhart and Kang, 2010:45).

Society at large has a profound impact on how one builds one's identity. Interactions with other individuals influence how identities are enacted. An identity is the core attribute that differentiates one individual from another. Notions of ethnicity, gender and race are some of the characteristics that define an individual identity. Some other aspects of identity can be choices we make, attributes we collect from peer influences, places of social interactions, social and economic class and religious faith (Farnham and Churchill, 2011:54).

One's role in society, in social settings, can be key attributes towards an individual's identity construction process. In online settings such as Facebook, notions of race and gender can be withheld and misinterpreted because the relationship is virtual and not physical. The above statement can be a challenge because it distorts the process of identity construction (Sunden, 2003:77).

Identity construction is compared by Goffman to a character being on stage acting out what is expected of them by the audience (Goffman, 1959: 49). The above can be useful in answering the question of whether, what the female students portray is their real selves or just a fabricated identity. Similarly to an actor/ actress on stage individuals on Facebook may want to portray attributes of self that would please other people. Same as the concept of being on stage individuals that use Facebook are believed to be acting or pretending to be a person that they are not, but this notion can be argued. Some things that individuals post on their wall are sometimes fabricated or slightly changed, the portrayals are not mirrors their unique identities.

Online social networks could be places where individuals express themselves freely and create new-selves in a spectrum where they are unlikely known by the other Facebook users. Text-based communication can mask ethnicity, age and gender therefore the individual will not know the identity of the person other side. Undergraduates self-esteems were improved by them editing and viewing their profiles by them editing and viewing their profiles on Facebook (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011:78).

Individuals create their identities on Facebook in different ways display dishonest portrayals of selves, but others create an identity that is closer to their real selves (Smock, 2010:33). Self-

presentation is linked to identity construction because the way individuals present themselves says much about their identity (Bobkowski, 2008). Facebook users may choose to not present a certain aspect of their lives in order to convey an image that they see as acceptable to their friends (Gearhart and Kang, 2010:67). They post information on their walls in order to appease or satisfy their audience, so that they look good in the eyes of others (Smock, 2010:33). The above has great significance to this study because; the study examines how female undergraduate students present themselves on Facebook. The way they present themselves, is it who they are on face-to-face encounters or is it fabricated?

Identity and Emotion

On Facebook individuals often write on the walls what they feel and the emotions they are going through, so it would be useful to understand the notion of identity and emotion (Barker, 2008:350). Emotions can be defined as an inward state of mind or consciousness of how an individual feels towards lived experiences (Barker, 2008:350).

Identity and subjectivity

As human beings we are subjects of selves and others within a social sphere, we are also subjected to social practices. The principles we hold about our characters are referred to as self-identity therefore the opinions others have about us is referred to as social identity (Barker, 2003:324). Identities are formed through cultural processes; an identity does not exist outside culture. The notion of using 'I' varies from culture to culture. Identity is an entity which can be read by others, this can be achieved through people seeing our tastes, beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles.

Giddens professes that identity is not dependent on what we have or traits that we possess, but is how we view or think about ourselves. Giddens refers to identity as a 'project', something that we create. This concept really touches on this research, because it speaks on notions of identity and so does this study. Do the female students create these identities on Facebook and are those

profiles that they really are? Giddens continues to state that our creation of identities are constantly changing, and that they are based on our past, presence and our hoped for futures. Therefore our identities are shaped by our circumstances and current environment (Barker, 2000:224).

Even though our identities are projects, we were born in a world that had existed before we were present in it. We are placed in a world that has a language, cultures and practices that were already in place we therefore learn those languages and practices because it was created that way. That process of fitting in is referred to as acculturation (Barker, 2000: 225;Giddens, 1984:45). The above is what Hall refers to as the sociological subject where an individual inhabits a space that was not independent or self-sufficient, but was created through ‘significant others’, who created the values, meanings and symbols (Barker, 2000: 34 Hall, and 1992b:52).

Cultural theory

This research will focus more on the production and consumption of culture. Culture production is how individuals create cultural meaning and it looks at the reasons why they place that specific meaning, and finally at reasons why they place those specific meaning towards a specific concept or phenomenon (Rojek, 2007:78). Cultural consumption looks at how individuals absorb ideas of culture and how they partake into that cultural concept, basically how it fits in with their lives (Rojek, 2007:97). Cultural studies is not one sided, therefore it consists of multiple theorists (Barker, 2000:44). The interpretation of culture is different from individual to individual, here are many possibilities. Cultural studies involve a cluster of ideas, it depends on who is using it and for what purpose, and culture also evolves with time (Barker, 2000:76).

The term culture is rooted from the Latin word “cultura”, which means agricultural practices of harvesting and farming animals (Rojek, 2007:66). The term culture nowadays has different social definitions of power and knowledge (Rojek, 2007:95). Culture can be referred to as and enrichment of the mind, manners, creative achievements, taste and mental abilities of a specific individual (Rojek, 2003:18).

Cultural studies state that the mass media manufactures consent for dominant ideologies. The cultural theory is majorly influenced by the Marxist view of society; it criticizes any theoretical framework that does not take power relation into consideration (Cotterell, 2007:3).

Ideology is one of the main components of cultural studies, ideology is a framework to which one makes sense or interprets social existence. Ideology is defined by Hall as those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks which we present, interpret, understand “make sense” of some aspect of social existence (Hall, 1980:78). In other words ideology is a cultural tool which assists the individual into understanding social concepts of life.

Another definition of culture is less hierarchical one that defines it as a practice created by the mass and not the elite class. Another definition of culture is one that is narrative, this defines culture as beliefs, myths, practices and the usual way of living that is part of a certain community (Rojek, 2007:45).

Cultural studies is concerned with all those practices, institutions and systems of classification through which there are inculcated in population particular values, beliefs, competencies, routine of life and habitual forms of conduct (Bennett,1998: 28)

Practices within a certain society, how they, dress, how they carry themselves and what they believe is part of their culture. Culture can also be the practices that the individuals of that specific society practices. Cultural practices, beliefs, way of life varies from one society to another. Cultural studies deal with practices of shared meanings within any society; these meanings are formed through language and signs. Without language it would be hard for us to understand the signs and make meanings from them (Barker, 2000:34).

The mobile phone and its impact of culture

The arrival of the mobile phone has shaped culture, phones have now become a need rather than an optional device, and phones have made information sharing easy (Rojek, 2007:63). Critics

state that mobile phones have a ‘‘content less culture’’ which means they offer empty conversations about nothing (Rojek, 2003:64). The above can be argued with the fact that mobile phones do offer a spectrum for sharpening public opinions and they give individuals voices (Rojek, 2007:86).

Culture and communication

Communications is one the key element of culture because without language one cannot develop or exchange meaning (Rojek, 2007:56). Genetic inheritance shapes our identities, but culture also plays a large role in shaping our identities (Rojek, 2007:76). Culture clusters individuals in relation to their social, political, economic categories in order to facilitate that specific individual’s preference (Rojek, 2007:77).

Cultural studies exist to change what is expected from a certain phenomenon. Its main objectives are to break down boundaries that had individual’s captive, boundaries that derive from culture, society, economics and politics. Without culture we cannot make sense of reality, because it is through our cultural codes that we make sense of the world (Rojek, 2007:65). Cultural codes are those conventions that we use to generate meanings (Barker, 2008:89). Meanings derived from a certain concept are a result of cultural familiarization (Barker, 2008:90). Cultural studies investigate how identities are presented and themed, it also looks at how individuals make sense of their identities (Rojek, 2007:63).

Textual representation is a vital aspect of this study because it derives from cultural studies. The concept of textual representation developed in the years 1958 to 1995; it is based on the ideas of giving meanings to textual material through the use of themes and codes (Rojek, 2007:15). The concept of text does not only refer to written words but any practice that signify. This therefore includes the creation of meaning through sounds, images, objects and activities. The above can all be referred to as cultural texts. Different readers can get or acquire different meanings from each cultural text, because each individual has their own unique ideological background and way of interpretation (Barker, 2000:56).

In 1957 Barthes stated that denotation refers to the outward meaning that a text signifies and connotation is the meaning that is complex association that relates to that specific text (Rojek, 2007:69). In 1977 he then contradicted himself by then stating that signs are polysomic meaning that signs had multiple layers of meanings. Barthes meant that those layers were not static but changed over periods of time (Rojek, 2007:69). The meaning derived from the sign is dependent on the audience or reader, the meaning derived is embedded within the reader or audience's cultural ideology (Rojek, 2007:68).

An alternative critical thinker of textual representation Bakhtin stated that the meaning of a sign is dialogic, meaning that the meaning is dependent on the relationship between the audience and the individual which enacted the text (Rojek, 2007:68). He also professes that the meaning changes during the dialogue; Bakhtin's approach uproots itself from the idea that meaning is fixed and dependent on power relations (Rojek, 2007:67).

Derrida is also a key thinker in textual representation, he proposes that no meaning exists outside the system of signs; therefore signs are textual (Rojek, 2007:67). According to Derrida every sign is given meaning through presence, meaning is fluid not static; it contains traits of other meanings and changes constantly (Barker, 2000:56).

What is interesting about the above key thinkers is that they all arrived at the same conclusion which is that the meanings of a sign constantly changes within eras. The other interesting observation is that the meaning of the sign varies from each person and that an individual culture influences the meaning they derive from sign.

Globalization

Globalization has had a major impact on cultural studies and identity formation (Rojek, 2007:89). Identity is no longer an entity dependent on fate. Through globalization cultures are now shared and mixed, therefore identities are influenced by hybridity of cultures. Identities are mobile they are influenced by different ethnicities and races (Rojek, 2007:89).

Ideology

Within the Gramscian analysis ideology is defined as ideas, meaning and practices that reveal universal truths, guide of meanings that assists a specific social group (Barker, 2000:56). Ideology is a tool that individuals use to measure their moral standards and beliefs. Ideology is described by Gramsci as social cement that binds a social group together.

Truth is considered a cultural goo, rather than international knowledge (Barker, 2008:88). Cultural studies hold the notions that ideology is false, due to the fact that it is self-serving and favors the powerful (Barker, 2008). No particular ideology is the correct one, but instead ideology is the correct one, but instead ideologies vary from different individuals. Ideology shouldn't be a source that support a certain power but should be a source that links and supports ideas of any social group, the above definition does not include the concept of truth (Barker, 2008:90).

Representation

One of the main objectives of this study is to investigate the relationship between the use of Facebook and the self-presentation of identity among the UKZN Howard College, Female students. A great amount of the work on cultural studies, deals with the concept of representation. This study is about the way we view/ understand the world and society and also the way we present ourselves within society (Barker, 2000:91).

The study of culture deals with notions of representation and signifiers. The above then brings about questions of meanings within the presentations of different concepts of meanings within the presentation of different concepts and cultures. Materiality is a key element in understanding meanings embedded in objects, sounds, images, books, magazines and even television programs. The entire above are understood within specific social contexts (Barker, 2000:91). Cultural studies can be understood as a study of creating meaningful ways to understanding the society and the world at large.

Race, Ethnicity and Hybridity

Ethnicity is a cultural concept which speak about and individual's norms, belief, values, and cultural practices which make them unique. It is argued that racialization is a social construction and not a universal category of biology or culture (Barker, 2000:100). It is an argued fact that the production of culture is a pure entity due to the different merges of cultures through globalization (Barker, 2000). Hybridity has created new cultural representations due to the shrinkage of the world, for example - Latino Americans (Barker, 2000:100).

Physical and biological characteristics usually are associated with race; whilst on the other hand are the social cultural differences of an individual. Ethnicity is about understanding different racial constructions rather than that of racial biological differences (Procter, 2004). According to Hall, there is no understanding of identity outside of culture and presentation (Pocter, 2004).

Conclusion

In this section the theoretical perspective was discussed in more details, those theories being the cultural theory and the identity construction theory. The two theories were used because I believe in order for one to understand an individual's identity construction process one has to understand that specific individual's cultural background. The cultural theory was discussed in detail with the discussion of concepts such Ideology, race, ethnicity hybridity, representation, globalization, and communication. Identity construction theory was also discussed, with its concepts such as representation, identity and subjectivity, and finally identity and emotions.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter the research design and methodology that I used will be presented and unpacked. The frames of reference used in originating observations, reasoning's, perspectives or ways of looking at reality are referred to as paradigms (Babbie, 2007:32). The research design, methods of data collection, observation strategy, sample descriptions and the location site will be discussed in this chapter. According to the above this chapter will base the study within a specific paradigm, limitations; finally objectives will be discussed as well in order to show the methods the research will make use of.

This chapter will discuss the aspirations, experiences and how female students make use of Facebook whilst studying at UKZN. The thesis will discuss their experiences of being on campus, and how they create their identities online. This chapter will comprise of the research questions, there after it will go on discussing the research approaches, research design and research instruments used in this research paper. The rationale for conducting this study was to explore the mind behind the use of Facebook, to research whether in the interactions between each other female students that use Facebook know who they are, and how they construct their identities on Facebook. In order to acquire answers to the above research questions the researcher had to investigate and do research using specific research guidelines and paradigms. The processes undertook will be discussed in detail in order to provide clarity.

Qualitative Methodology

The qualitative methodology was used as an instrument for getting dense data from research participants. This methodology was chosen because the intent was to research on people's emotions and behavior towards Facebook, therefore the qualitative methodology is the most appropriate method to utilize. Qualitative method offers an interpretive approach to the study, in order to acquire information from the participant one must be flexible, able to listen, and

empathetic (Hennik et al 2011:9). Qualitative methodology looks at how people bring meaning how they understand a certain phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:4). Qualitative methods are used when a researcher seeks to acquire an in-depth understanding of research issues which face the study population (Hennik et al 2011:9). The qualitative method was the better option for me because it qualitative research method assisted me in answering why female students use Facebook as a space for identity formation, and as well as how these identities are portrayed?

A qualitative study research design should be a spontaneous process operating through every phase of a project (Maxwell, 2013:10). Purposive samples of nine female students each from three different racial ethnicities from UKZN Howard College were interviewed. The reason behind this choice being far from racism rather, it is a resultant of a net diversity of a united rainbow nation (a multiracial and united South Africa).

The qualitative research method is interested in investigating the research phenomena based on the perceptions of that specific population that is being researched. Like this study the qualitative research method permits me to investigate the female research participants first hand. The research participants are able to share their experiences with the uses of Facebook and what they have heard from their friends about the uses of Facebook. Not only does the qualitative method look at the phenomena but it also seeks to obtain information that speaks to the cultural lens of the participants, the values and morals of the research participants with regards to the phenomena investigated, behaviors and social backgrounds of those particular participants investigated.

The ability to provide a complex textual description of peoples experiences in a given research topic is one of the greatest aims of the qualitative research methodology (Lincoln, 2000:23). The above applies to this study because one of the objectives was to capture the experiences of the research participants, how they feel about the uses of Facebook, how they construct their identities, who they feel they are and whether what they produce online is a true depiction of their identities. This study gives the research participants the freedom to voice out their perceptions richly and adequately. The qualitative methodology offers the humanistic angle of

the issue that is being investigated, a human perspective of the problem and how those humans feel about the issue (Lincoln, 2000:49). It provides information about the relationship of the individuals with the issue investigated, their opinions, behavior towards that issue, and finally believes with regards to that issue. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research (Lincoln, 2000:55).

OVERVIEW

Flexibility is the main difference between the quantitative and qualitative methodology, usually the quantitative methodology is hardly flexible. The research participants are each asked questions in an identical manner, the process of the interview is facilitated within the same guidelines the researcher followed with other participant. The questions are strictly closed ended; therefore the results produced are usually structured, and often the participants give a yes or no answer (Lincoln, 2000:25). On the other side the qualitative methodology is more flexible it allows the researcher and research participant to have more interaction with one another. The questions asked within the qualitative method are more flexible and open ended, research participants can respond using their own words, and are more complex with their answers (Lincoln, 2000:26).

The above applies greatly to this study due to the fact that the participants could provide input freely and adequately. The responses were meaningful and culturally relevant to them, and at times they would provide input that was not anticipated, therefore provided a fresh perspective towards the study, the responses were also rich in nature (Lincoln, 2000:87). The participants had different personalities, some were shy therefore I had to probe and cater to their different personalities in order to encourage them to answer.

Qualitative research is exciting and important, through the qualitative research one can explore wide array of dimensions of social world, including the texture of weave of everyday life, the understanding, the ways that social process, institutions, discourses or relationships work and significance of the meanings that they generate (Mayring, 2014: 10).

All aspects of Validity, Rigour and ethical considerations were adhered to. This assisted both the researcher and participants in ensuring honesty, privacy, rights are not tempered with by both parties. This chapter will also discuss the limitations that the researcher had during the research

To conclude the qualitative research design was an appropriate choice because one of the objectives of the study was to understand why female students use Facebook and their assumptions towards the uses of Facebook. Within qualitative research, the researcher tends to familiarize themselves with the concept that is studied. Qualitative research strives to understand a phenomenon within a specific context; the researcher does not influence those specific phenomena (Patton, 2002:39). Qualitative research is any kind of study that does not rely on quantitative means or numeric predictions (Patton, 2002:39). That is what the objective of the study was, to get information that was related to human emotions and experiences, and not the quantitative side of the uses of Facebook.

The Qualitative method ensured that the research participants provided answers that were from their honest and broad experiences, instead of providing yes or no answers. The perceptions of the experiences of the research participants were very important in this regard. This strategic plan ensured that the data provided was rich and deep and the data also revealed the research participants concerns and input instead of vague close ended replies. The research participants were also free to express their perceptions with regards to the uses of Facebook and their thoughts in general about being a female student.

The qualitative research method also allows the researcher to be a part of the research by being observant, this was achieved through be-friending my research participants on Facebook. Befriending the participants allowed me to understand their process of identity construction. Even though the observation was conducted online instead of face to face it allowed me to have first hand experience of my participants. The following research questions bellow were used as objectives. The Qualitative method has also allowed the participants to state the meanings they associate with concept of identity construction. I understand that notions of identity tap into

private or sensitive issues; therefore that is why I chose qualitative methods in order to conduct the research with the delicacy it entails.

In concluding, the qualitative method was chosen because I wanted to acquire the human experience of the uses of Facebook, and the socially constructed nature of the uses of Facebook. Denzin and Lincoln define paradigms as what we think reality is and how we view our world according to our own views and believe (Denzin and Lincoln 2008b:31).

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions female university students have regarding their use of Facebook, with regards to conducting this research, the following objectives listed below are guiding the research project. Without research objectives I don't think the research would have a backbone, therefore the objectives bellow are an essential part of the study.

- ✚ To identify whether the use of Facebook has an impact on identity construction and culture.
- ✚ To investigate the relationship between the use of Facebook and the self-presentation of identity among the UKZN Howard College, Female students.
- ✚ To investigate whether Facebook can be used as a tool for improving the social needs of female humanities students at University.
- ✚ To investigate what address some of the privacy issues that female students have to contend with as regards the use of Facebook

Research questions

Research questions help to keep focused when conducting research or gathering data (Maxwell, 2005:67). The following research questions were guides following the above research objectives, the two work hand in hand in order to investigate the phenomena of the uses of Facebook as a spectrum to present identities.

- ✚ Whether the use of Facebook impacts /shapes the culture and identities of female students?
- ✚ Does gender influence how one is portrayed on Facebook?
- ✚ Whether female students are aware of the range and dangers of the Facebook and how these can be confronted.

With the first question I wanted to discover if female students understand the significance that culture plays on their identities, and since they are students is it possible that they might be influenced by the different cultures present at the university. The above is due to the fact that UKZN Howard College has varied cultures, and a community that is blended with a variety of races and ethnic backgrounds. What I wanted to know about the second question is whether being female influences the way one portrays their identity on Facebook, and whether they present a socially acceptable image of themselves. The tired and last objective was to investigate the seen and unseen dangers of virtual participation, and whether female students know of the dangers that they can be faced with. Facebook has privacy settings that could help its users, it was of interest to investigate whether the students know about those privacy settings and if they use them.

During the interviews I asked a set of questions that were related to the ones above, the questions asked were a guide (see Appendix). I started off by asking the participants random questions about Facebook as form of an ice breaker, to build support and trust and in order for the participants to feel comfortable and open up. I then followed up with questions related to the study in order to collect core information needed for the study. The most important objective was to get the perspectives of the research participants regarding the uses of Facebook as a spectrum for identity construction.

Case Study Research Design

A case study includes a comprehensive analysis of a single sample of something. Becker 1963 describes case studies as a process of studying a group whilst reaching an ultimate understanding

of that specific group. Case studies are used to arrive at a general theory of that specific group studied, and therefore forming a new hypothesis occurs.

A case study design was used in this research paper. Bell 1999 states in observing the characteristics of an individual unit for the researcher to get to the core elements of that unit, a case study research design is advisable. With the case study research design the researcher was able to attain a good quality of data. This data has assisted the researcher to grasp the views of the participants in more dept. The researcher now has the ability to think outside the box in order to try to see whether the use of Facebook has an impact on shaping their culture and identity as female students.

Thus, in order to acquire valuable data to this ends, the case study approach allowed the research participants to speak on how gender can/ or not influence how one can be portrayed on Facebook and, share their thoughts openly instead of being limited and constrained. Holistic evidence of the uses of Facebook was attained by the researcher through the uses of the case study research design.

Content analysis

This study will make use of the content analysis will be used in the analysis of the information. Certain themes came up during the collection of data, therefore in order to appropriately present the data the qualitative content analysis was the perfect tool of analysis. Similar themes will be grouped and analyzed together in the following chapter. The themes will be analyzed in deftly and supported by the cultural and identity construction theory. Content analysis has no distinctive guidelines for assorting the data , therefore the analytical abilities rely on the individual style of the writer (Hoskins and Mariano,2004:6).The uses of content analysis will assist the researcher to uncover the causes of using Facebook. Content analysis method is appropriate because the research seeks to reflect on the cultural patterns of on Facebook, the participation within mutual groups on Facebook, and the trends occurring on Facebook. Content analysis allowed me to test theoretical issues and to enhance understanding of the data I

gathered. Through content analysis, it was possible to assort words and themes into different categories.

The content analysis method assisted me to break down lengthy data into more convenient units of data. The researcher will then count the frequent words. The data will be dissolved into key words and phrases. The units of data will be categorized by specific words, phrases and themes. The data will be grouped into similar phrases or themes. As a qualitative research, this case study will also use Research question questions dangers (if there is) of the Facebook and these can be confronted or avoided. Content analysis is a mixed method therefore can be used within a qualitative study; this research will focus more on the qualitative aspect of content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The data will be presented thematically; the dominant and repetitive themes will be the core and development of the data presentation.

Location of the Study

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College campus, Durban.

This study was confined to the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This is situated on the Berea Ridge overlooking the old city of Durban and its famous harbour. This campus has existed for nearly 85 years and is one of three campuses which house the College of Humanities, the other two being Edgewood in Pinetown and 85 kilometres away in the city of Pietermaritzburg. This study will be situated on this Howard College campus and will focus on female Humanities students registered on this campus.

In 2016 there are 18 138 Humanities students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, 8 685, 48 percent, being on the Howard College campus. Of those 8 685, two-thirds (5 580 or 64 percent) are female. There are 1 014 female postgraduate students and 4 566 undergraduate Humanities female students on the Howard College campus.

(<https://ii.ukzn.ac.za/Report/SelfHelpRegSummary>. Accessed 9 April 2016;).

The choice for this location was dictated by the fact that the researcher is one of the students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and it was convenient and logistically possible to do research there. This meant that transportation costs were cut down, and since the researcher is dependent

upon the use of a wheelchair it was easier to do research in a place the researcher was familiar with, rather than traveling far distances. Besides factors of mobility, UKZN Howard College has a rich and diverse number of cultures and ethnic backgrounds and this had been one of the most interesting factors that influenced my choice of location for the study. Another obvious reason is that 64% of the students at Howard College are females, and the majority of the female students are undergraduates, so it interested me to do research on the majority of the percentage of gender represented at the university.

Recruitment strategy

The recruitment strategy was as follows, Identifying 3 African, 3 Indian, 3 White, they had to be undergraduate students from Humanities, and they had to be registered Howard College female students. Purposive sampling is both deliberate and flexible due to selecting on purpose, selecting people who have in-depth information on the study topic (Hennik et. al, 2011:85). There is no stipulated way of recruiting research participants within the purposive recruitment the researcher adopts a strategy which is most suitable for their target population (Hennik et. al, 2011:85). The students were selected with purpose but at random, some volunteered through the notices they saw on campus.

Description of Sample

Nine female participants were selected purpose-fully; these were from three different ethnicities and background in order to get rich diverse data. The sampling was probable because the races chosen were meant to represent a certain population of people. The female participants were between the ages 18-24 years old. The Purposive sampling technique assists with regards to choosing research participants effectively and wisely assists with regards to choosing research participants effectively and wisely, and is necessary in answering the main objectives (Bernard, 2002). All the nine ladies were first year undergraduate students at UKZN Howard College. I had formulated a recruitment strategy in acquiring the participants. They had to be undergraduate students, because they have a fresh perspective towards university life and a new degree of

freedom. The other reason is that, the researcher wants to get fresh perspectives on current trends about Facebook. The research participants must be constant Facebook users, the researcher will be-friend them in order to access their accounts for analysis.

They had to be female students; they had to be active users of Facebook. I wanted to know of the changes in the way these students present themselves on Facebook, as students and how they presented themselves in the past. The chosen sample was balanced out from the following races, White, Black, and Indian. The variety in the races was divided equally in order to give a balanced data, and rich diverse information.

Methods of data collection

The data collection was divided into three phase's phase one was the primary information from books, magazines, internet, online articles and journals. In phase two I gathered information from interviews, one-to-one face to face interactions with the research participants. In phase three I collected information from observing the research participants walls on Facebook. The data collection process involved the uses of the internet, online articles, and journals. The UKZN library assisted very much with regards to collecting theoretical information to back the research. The interviews took place at my campus, Howard College therefore I needed a gate keepers letter from the registrar. The interviews were conducted as soon as I received the gatekeeper's consent this was received on the 17 of August 2015.

The other forms of resources did not require any source of permission in order to attain it, so I had already started collecting data as soon as I was done with the research proposal in June 2015. The ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu- Natal Ethics Committee was given on the 3rd of September 2016. Articles were also very useful in understanding the uses of Facebook, the statistics and current news. I also used books and magazines as well in order to get a more theoretical stance for the study. In my opinion the most resource-full data collection process was also by interviews with the research participants and befriending them on Facebook. The research participants were chosen at random, but according to criteria that they had to be female and had to have an active Facebook account. I therefore went around campus asking if they were interested in my study and whether they were active participants on Facebook. If all of the above

matched to the individual I would then politely request an interview at the time and day which was suitable for the both of us. I made sure that the interviews were mostly in a space where the participant was comfortable due to the fact that different individuals have certain preferences and I wanted them to be at ease so that I can get as much information as I could from them.

The interviews were very insightful in the sense that one could get up to date with the current trends that are occurring on Facebook. The interviews also helped me with regards to not having a narrow vision; the points raised by the research participants were very insightful and educative. Sitting down and having a conversation with the research participants ensured that they are more at ease in sharing information. Considering that the research is about students at UKZN it was not a challenge to get participants to give frothy minutes of their time in order to be interviewed. The Facebook walls of the research participants were very informative and had a great impact on the over- all data. The walls assisted with regards to having a proper vision of who they were before they were enrolled in university and their current lives at university, how their participation on Facebook have changed within that period of time.

In conclusion, in reviewing the information data and data collected from the interviews I began to interpret an attaching meaning towards the data. After attaching meaning towards the data I started picking up themes that were related to identity construction on Facebook on Facebook. The voices of the participants truly assisted in creating meaningful themes.

Semi-structured Interviews

The research questions for the interview were written in ordinary language so that the research participants could relate to the questions and answer at ease. According to Hennik et al, the difference between research questions and interview questions is that research questions are written in academic language (Hennik et al, 2011:34). The above does not apply to interview questions, because interview questions are more colloquial in language, therefore the participants will understand what is asked (Hennik et al, 2011:34). Before the interview I requested permission to record the interview and explained that this was done so that I could keep record of the data. I therefore explained that the recording will serve as part of the evidence to show that

research was conducted , I also explained that the information was going to be transcribed into a thesis ,but will be used for the study only and not for public use. The interviews were one-to-one, a time was scheduled and we met with the research participant in order to do the interview. The interview was not too strict or formal it was as if we were just having a casual conversation, this was done so that the participant could feel comfortable. Even though it was a conversation I needed to ensure it is a conversation with purpose, therefore the semi-prepared questions guided both me and the research participant.

Semi-structured interviews were used, semi-structured interviews are aimed at allowing the interviewee elaborate more on the issues raised by the researcher (Buchner; 2002, 176). Semi-structured interviews were used as a method of data collection, the interviews were prepared before-hand in order to guide both the researcher and the research participant. The questions were written in a way that allows the research participants to speak as possible and to give more details. Semi-structured interviews were chosen just to have a form of guideline so that we do not drift away from the expected context, but otherwise I did not want the questions to be too academic so that the participants could answer at ease and also take the interview as a conversation. Before I began with the interview I first introduced myself, told those more about the study and asked them about their wellbeing's in order to create some type of ice breaker.

A series of eight questions were used as a guide for both the interviewee and interviewer the participants. The questions served as a guide to ensure that all the participants were asked the same questions, therefore ensuring I get the same data. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe the respondents, it also facilitated in helping the respondents when they did not understand the questions or what was expected of them by the researcher. The questions asked were prepared in a way that one had to go deep and not just give a yes or no answer. The questions asked also had follow up questions so that they would guide the participants in answering to the specific context that was expected.

The conversations went on naturally and new concepts and information about their process of identity construction on Facebook started to develop. During the interviews the respondents would sometimes drift away from the questions, but it was easy to direct the respondents back to the areas the researcher needed to cover. There was no set rules of answering the questions the participants would at times skip the questions and answer the ones they were comfortable with; there was an instance where a participant could not understand the question when it was asked in English, so I had to ask the same question in isiZulu so that she could understand. The interviews that were done made it easy for the researcher to ask the respondents about their emotional motives, and behavior that occur on Facebook. Knowing the respondents aspirations, their motives, believes and feelings towards the uses of Facebook was very useful in understanding where they stand.

To conclude, no incentives were offered to the participants in order for them to participate, nor did they ask for the incentives. During the interviews I acknowledged information by nodding or saying yes, or saying “good point”, and sometimes a friendly smile or gesture. There were instances where I could not understand the context of the information provided, so I would then ask them to repeat politely by phrases such as ‘please clarify’ or what do you mean by that?. When asking questions I deliberately avoided asking questions that would result in a yes or no answer.

Observation (Befriending on Facebook)

As part of the observation because the research is based on the online social network Facebook, I asked the participants if I could befriend them on Facebook. The data posted was observed and analyzed; this gave the researcher more insight to what the research participants post on Facebook. Looking at their accounts assisted in the sense that I acquired rich insight into their lives and I documented the changes that occurred between the time that they were in school and the current time that they are enrolled in university. I looked at the activities that they were involved in with regards to Facebook participation.

In conclusion, the reason for using Semi- structured interviews was not to limit the participants, but so that there was a guiding format in the way the questions were asked, so that I would not forget my already set research objectives .The interviews were a better way of doing my research I did not have to travel because I stayed on campus, and I too am a student at UKZN Howard College, so no transport costs were involved. In order to set up the interviews the respondents were called and asked to spare time in between their busy schedules. The interviews had to occur in the times that were more suitable for them. The interviews were recorded using my Vodacom tablet (mobile phone); the participants all consented to be recorded. The participants answered the questions up to their abilities. The recorded data was then transcribed for the analysis process.

Ethical considerations

In doing research one must be careful to consider all ethical issues, due to the fact that you are working with people. Before I even began with the interviews I had given the participants the informed consent form, which protects them from doing anything that was not consented (See appendix). Participants are protected by the informed consent form, they have a choice to remain anonymous, provided with the option to stop the interview whenever they wished, and finally they could select the time and place of the interview and so on and so forth. The above involves confidentiality on results, and to ensure anonymity. Anonymity was achieved using pseudonyms in the place of the real names of the research participants. I adhered to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethical considerations in order to ensure the research is Ethical.

Sufficient information on the research project was shared with the research participants, in order for them to know what they are getting themselves into. One of the ethical procedures is that participants should not be at in any harm or risk, therefore I had to respect their privacy by protecting their identity. All the data that was collected is protected by both me and my supervisor. Due to the fact that I was dealing with human subjects I had to instill trust between I and the research participants, so that in turn they could voice out opinions freely. Basically the most evident reason for protecting their identities was so that they are not compromised in the process of information sharing.

A research proposal was submitted and an ethical permission certificate was issued in order to ensure that the research conducted was ethical. The UKZN ethics committee gave me ethical clearance, showing approval of the research topic. The data was collected; audio recorded and will be destroyed after the research is completed. The research participants befriended the researcher on Facebook but requested the researcher not to show any images or what they posted on Facebook in the research, but only to give reference in writing. They were only comfortable with the researcher to view their walls on Facebook. Some participants did not answer all the questions and were free answer only those questions that they were comfortable with. As I have mentioned before all the data presented in this research was given consent, therefore I ensured that I adhered to all the ethical considerations. If there was information that the participant did not wish to disclose in as part of this research I ensured that it was obliged to as requested.

Privacy, Anonymity and confidentiality

There was information that was provided by the participants which was private and some of the participants requested it to be of record, I adhered to such requests. Most of the research participants requested that their walls and photographs must not be part of the research so I decided not to include any of the images for consistency and also to adhere to their requests. The participants explained that the reason why the above was to be avoided is because there is pictures of family members and friends therefore it would go against ethical reasons to share those images without their consent. For the above reasons I just used their walls for my own enlightenments and also in order to get an understanding of who they are so I can get a wider perspective with regards to the research. The data will be presented using pseudonyms for all the participants in order to hide their identities and also to ensure consistency. The participant identities will be presented in the next chapter as participant A-J, therefore avoiding their names. The only information that will be presented is the one that I was allowed to share, since some requested that some of the information not to be disclosed. The research will be stored in a password protected computer and the hard copies will be kept in a locked room.

Validity and Reliability

Cohen ET al.2000 stated that qualitative methods need to be honest and rich in depth. Researchers have a responsibility to make sure that all measures of reliability and validity are met in this study (Creswell and Miller, 2000). The data produced in this research is reliable, a true picture of what is being studied will be provided. The information will depict an honest image of social reality of the respondent's response pertaining to the given data upon this work. The research participant her experiences in the uses of Facebook and how she constructs her identity online. The text is relevant to the context of the study. Valid information was provided by the research participants and the face-to-face encounter made provident of ensuring that the information is valid. Content analysis will be used as a tool of analysis to ensure that the data is reliable and valid.

I dealt with the issues of Rigour through observation and taking personal notes of the daily activities basing on the concepts under study. After every interview I replayed the recording and wrote down important themes that came up during the interviews. I also wrote what I could do to improve the way the interview was conducted and also what needed to be changed and what questions could be added or removed. The above was done in cases where a participant was seen to be uncomfortable in answering a specific questions, I would change it or spin the question in a way that was more conformable and not invasive. Such a journal will help in order to keep track of events and records that may otherwise be forgotten and yet could make the interviews more relevant and representative

Audio recordings resemble the real voices of the participants therefore this contributes to the trustworthiness and reliability of the data collected. After recording the interviews, the participants would listen to the recordings in order to check for their approval. The above was done to ensure that I don't write anything that would expose or threaten the identity of the participant, so that I don't invade on their privacy. The above was also done so that the participants could check and see if there was information that they did not want the researcher to include in the study. The information that is used in the research is one that was agreed upon by the participant and me, to ensure that the research is ethical

Challenges to the study

One of the challenges to the study was the issue of having to ask the participants on what subjects they post on Facebook. This is because Facebook is a private space and some participants were not comfortable in fully sharing that private space. Had all the participants allowed the researcher to use some of the images posted on their walls it would have been very useful especially to the data presentation in chapter 4

Concluding remarks

In this chapter the research design of the study was outlined. The setting of the study was presented and an analysis of the sample or research participants was provided. The ethical considerations, methods of data collection, and the limitations to the study were also listed within this chapter.

Chapter 4

Findings and analysis

In this chapter the findings will be presented from both the interviews and the observations undertaken in the project. The data will be presented through the lens of Identity Construction theory and of the Cultural Studies theory. The method that will be used in the data presentation is that of qualitative content analysis. Due to the fact that this research takes on the form of qualitative methods, the presentation will be thematic. Nine interviews were undertaken with nine female students from UKZN Howard College campus; they were all undergraduate students who constantly use Facebook. They were representatives of three different ethnic backgrounds, African, White and Indian.

The research objectives were:

- 1) To identify whether the use of Facebook has an impact on identity construction and culture.
 - 2) To investigate the relationship between the use of Facebook and the self-presentation of identity among the UKZN Howard College, Female students.
 - 3) To investigate whether Facebook can be used as a tool for improving the social needs of female humanities students at University and finally.
 - 4) To investigate what address some of the privacy issues that female students have to contend with as regards the use of Facebook.
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This chapter will comprise three sections, the first section will be the analysis of the interviews through the use of qualitative content analysis /themes and the cultural and identity construction theory; the second section will be the presentation of the observation of the participants Facebook accounts what their interests were pre-university entrance and during their undergraduate year of study, the last section will be the concluding remarks.

Introduction

As part of this introduction Terms and Facebook Jargon will be presented in order to offer clarity and for the reader to understand the data presented below. Just as every institution has its own diction, vocabulary and jargon, so does Facebook. This introduction will provide a description of Facebook, what Facebook is and possible why individuals choose to use it as a space for identity clarity and understanding of the views from the research participants. Since identity theory states that identity construction is a symbolic interaction between different individuals (Gearhart and Kang, 2010:56), it is important to have an understanding of terms used on Facebook, this will assist in understanding the way the identities are constructed and portrayed.

The creation of Facebook has facilitated in bridging the gap in communications by removing geographic barrier, time constraints, cultural and ethnic misconceptions. One can meet people beyond geographical boundaries in real time, gone are the days of only the telegraph and postal service. Through the use of social networks such as Facebook the world is now at your fingertips, with the use of a computer or even a mobile phone it is easy to get in touch with your loved ones, friends and associates. Beyond the concept of communication, one is now able to build a certain image, one has the opportunity to build and shape an image that they would want to depict online through the use of Facebook. This concept is very interesting, in real life one's image is dependent on one's ability to communicate, the way one is dresses and the way one presents one selves. It is then up to the other parties to judge on this basis of how they feel towards one. Facebook has broken conventional restrictions of interactions between individuals. The table is extrapolated from the Dummies series relating to Facebook.

TERM	FUNCTION
Timeline	<p>The timeline is the profile page of the individual; it includes the individual's photographs, biographical information shared by that individual and videos. This is where ones friends can leave messages and he/she can also share information</p> <p>(http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html Tuesday July 19 2016).<u>Carolyn Abram</u></p>
Newsfeed	<p>The News Feed is a constant stream of updates about your friends' activities on and off Facebook. It appears on the individual's home page(http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html Tuesday July 19 2016).<u>Carolyn Abram</u></p>
Friend	<p>A Friend is and individual you are connected to on Facebook. Friending is the act of sending someone a friend request; all friendships have to be confirmed by both individuals in order for it to be official on Facebook(http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html Tuesday July 19 2016).<u>Carolyn Abram</u></p>
Status update	<p>A status update is a short post you share on Facebook talking about what you're doing, thinking, or feeling at the moment. People update their status about everything from what they're eating to sharing memories about a loved one to advocating for a particular political position(http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html</p>

	Tuesday July 19 2016). Carolyn Abram
Publisher	The Publisher is the box that lives at the top of your News Feed and Timeline, where you can go to create posts, status updates, share photos, and so on(http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html Tuesday July 19 2016). Carolyn Abram
Share box	The Share box is the blank text box that sits at the top of your Home page and under your cover photo on your Timeline. It's where you go to add status updates, photos, links, and more to Facebook. The part of the Share box that's important is the Privacy menu, right next to the Post button. Refer to Appendix 3 (http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html Tuesday July 19 2016)

Discussions from the interviews/perceptions

Cultural studies deal with the concept of shared social meanings, which is how we make sense of our world (Rojek, 2007:78). The meanings we acquire come from signs; these signs are created through language (Barker, 2000:76). Just as on Facebook individuals write and post pictures and statuses, which are then received by other people, those people make meanings through these signs (pictures, quotes...etc.). The interpretation of culture is different from individual to individual, here are many possibilities. Cultural studies involve a cluster of ideas, it depends on who is using it and for what purpose, and culture also evolves with time (Barker, 2000:76). Within cultural studies it is suggested that in order for an individual to understand culture, one needs to understand how meaning is formed symbolically in language as a signifying system. The pictures and statuses posted are understood within their language structures, and these meanings of social interactions are made valid through their cultural ideologies and language

system. On the next paragraphs are the themes that came up during the interviews with regards to the perceptions of Facebook and identity construction. The themes that will be discussed are Facebook and Culture, Facebook and Academics, Facebook and Parents, Facebook Privacy and Safety, Facebook and identity, Facebook and Communications, Facebook and Trends and Finally Being a Female on Facebook.

Facebook and its ability to educate about culture

A common theme found among research participants was that they expressed the importance of Facebook as a tool that can teach one about other people's cultures. Most of the participants voiced that Facebook did not change their cultures but instead educated and gave them more clarity and information on other ethnic cultures different from theirs. The above was achievable through seeing posts on Facebook from friends, which usually depict traditional events such as weddings, death, the welcoming of a new born and so on. Acquiring such information ensures that one learns more about other cultures instead of having assumptions and stereotypes about cultures different from their own.

As an example this is what Participant A said about Facebook and culture:

To a certain extent like some of the friends I make on campus, post things about their cultures, for instance a guy posted a picture of topless girl Zulu girl with the traditional stuff on , and for us it's not normal, but he told us about the culture , and explained why he did that, there is different pages on Facebook Zulu Hindi, and so on so they help us know more about different cultures, so if he didn't tell us we would have judged him and his culture, but no it has no impact on my culture, on campus we have different people from different cultures, so in a way Facebook helps us to know more about these cultures and understand cultures instead of thinking and judging instead of having misconceptions about cultures that are different from ours.

Other participants felt that people imitate other foreign cultures, such as American culture, instead of being true to their own culture. The question now is that, does Facebook create opportunities for people to learn and get influenced by other cultures? When asked whether Facebook has an impact on culture Participant F answered as follows:

‘Yah I suppose as a culture as people you are supposed to do stuff a specific way and act a specific way but on Facebook you dress you want and you modernise your culture , your culture is getting lost and stuff, but people change just to be popular and stuff, not many people put stuff on culture ,people art that popular not that pretty as well they Photoshop pictures , people quite stuff from overseas and copy lyrics from people that they don’t know just to be popular , they don’t even understand the lingo that they quite, it irritates because how do you change the world with your one quite or status on Facebook , where there are so many users’.

Participant F strongly believes one should rather stick to their own culture of doing things, she feels that people should not imitate what is depicted on Facebook. She does believe that Facebook has a great influence on individual preferences in the way they dress, and act.

Participant H, highlight’s the fact that on Facebook a new culture is created and that culture amalgamates into new ideological perceptions:

Facebook has a culture of its own the new age culture new generation new funk, people are very free, its liberating on Facebook, culture that emancipates people , people are free to post anything, in a positive way it opens new doors to new cultures , new identities helps you find yourself, you find people updating things that you are like oh my word I am against that , because without seeing that you wouldn’t consciously say this is what I am so you are like I will delete it of my image, because Facebook is your

image, the negative side is that it doesn't make you live in the moment in the sense that you live there but you are also somewhere else, a social life fabricated and restricted to the internet so you are not communicating to the person next to you , but the person online.

The general consensus was that Facebook enlightens the participants on the different cultures, even though they experience different cultures some of them would rather stick to their own cultures and ways of doing things. Their perceptions towards Facebook with regards to culture show that it is a good thing that they are exposed to different cultures because their knowledge on cultural and racial peculiarities is beneficial in order to broaden their mindsets.

Participants use Facebook to keep track with social events on campus

Keeping up with social events and the acculturation on campus is very essential to students. Knowing what is occurring around campus ensures that as a student you do not miss out on any events and ensures you are at the right place at the right place.

Participant B expresses the value that Facebook adds to her daily campus experience, she states that she uses Facebook “to keep up with stuff like strikes, because I'm not up campus everyday”. Some students do not stay on the campus residential premises but at home, and therefore for her Facebook helps her to be connected with the occurrences on campus.

Participant C shows that Facebook assists her to be more social on campus and that Facebook acts as a communication device. :

“I guess it makes me more fun, more outgoing because you keep in touch with so many people, keeps up with the strike because I'm not always on campus”.

In 2015 students at Howard College Campus were involved in the 'Fees Must Fall' strike, therefore most participants such as Participant C, felt that Facebook was an obvious source in providing updates on that current strike.

Participant H shows the importance of Facebook with regards to the socialization of a student within University. This is what she says about it:

'How I portray myself on Facebook I am not stanced on any beliefs so I am open to whatever it is that I see on Facebook I am very musical so I copy lyrics and update them, University life has opened me to how diverse university is , when I got here last year I met different cultures it has helped me to see different activities and organisations such as poetry, BASCO, so Facebook has opened me up to the university life it has helped me to connect with the university at large , there are different kinds of things that happen at university Facebook connects me to the university''.

What was gathered from the interviews is that most of the participants strongly depend on Facebook to get updated with the events on campus. The positive is that with Facebook the news is usually in real time, and about real occurrences unfiltered or edited. The updates also provide different angles of the events on campus instead of a one sided view, the participants are provided with a variety of posts or entries on different events with the use of Facebook.

Participants make use of Facebook to keep up with academic procedures on campus.

Facebook has become very common in academic institutions such as universities; Facebook makes it possible for the members to construct profiles in order to communicate with other members in order to form new friendships (Stutzman, 2006:33). The above is also applies to

UKZN Howard College, students and Staff members create Facebook in order to communicate and build friendships in order to share, pictures, ideas, and to create a conducive ,friendly environment. The most essential aspect of being a student is achieving good grades; therefore it is evidently important to keep up with academic procedures. When a student keeps up with academic procedures and requirements they are will most likely do well academically.

Participant A puts light on the importance of Facebook as a tool that can assist with academics:

“We have the UKZN page that keeps you up to date, for instance whenever we have a strike we get updated on Facebook, so whatever email we get if people don’t have emails they post it on Facebook, there is other pages like for instance the law faculty has their own page for the Law students, you get updates about other faculties as well, so they post academic stuff, so in this way Facebook helps academically as well”.

With Facebook students can share ideas and work hand in hand in combating academic pressures. When one does not understand a certain concept they can simply go on Facebook and text their colleagues and ask for assistance or clarity. Some students also create a page where all the students in the same faculty can share ideas and consult with each other about challenges that they face within a certain module.

Take for instance Participant A, who needed help with handing in an assignment and then later on thanking the student that assisted her with handing it in:

“Last week Friday I had an incident where I needed to go home, but I also needed to hand in my assignment at the same time so, I rushed to class and the girl who walked in with me, I didn’t know who she was, I gave her the assignment , so I asked her to hand in the assignment for me, I asked for her name and on our board had so many students with the same name so Instead went on Facebook to look for

her and I found her because I saw her picture, I then asked her If she was able to submit and whether she had a problem”’.

In this way Facebook was used as a searching device and it assisted Participant A to reach out to her fellow student.

Just like Participant A answered above with Facebook one is able to connect with fellow students, and create new bonds whilst balancing academic work. If participant A did not have a Facebook she would not have been able to checked the status of the submission and also thank her colleague. Participants showed that as students it is essential to create friendships with fellow students so that you feel secured, safe and up to date with academic work.

Participant H also asserts the importance of Facebook as an academic source:

“I have sites on Facebook such as the psychology sites where I read my articles or my school work; sometimes you have a group on Facebook where they update stuff about the class or groups for assignments”’.

Participants also voiced that on Facebook one can use academic sites which can assist with challenging courses in order to acquire more information, just in case one could not get clarity during lectures or tutorials. Sometimes as students you cannot acquire all the information from the lecture room therefore one need alternate sources’ in order to gain clarity instead of having tunnel vision.

Participant F stated the following about Facebook being a tool of assisting her with academic challenges: **‘On Facebook we have like groups like a Law group they post information on it egg strikes, they just post on Facebook about Law and stuff’.**

The participants spoke about the contribution that Facebook has on their academic journey. With the use of Facebook they are able to broaden their academic sources, create companions during

their academic career, and also afford the ability to communicate and share ideas with lectures and fellow colleagues. Another vital aspect of Facebook is the fact that it assists socially awkward students to be able to voice out their opinions and to ask questions to their lecturers, due to the fact that they are shy to ask within face-to-face occurrences.

Facebook as a tool to create new friendships at campus and restoring past friendships and family

Human beings are social creatures, we live in a world with people therefore we at times need companionship so that life challenges become easier. The same applies to students at a university, students need friends in so that they feel like they belong. Old friendships are also important as well because past experiences improve life; therefore participants felt that Facebook assists them to rekindle past relations. Facebook also assists individuals to keep up with relatives that are far away.

“Participant B said the following about Facebook and keeping up with relationships: I guess it affects me in a positive way like I said keeping up with friends because I’m not always here to know what they are doing and where they are and stuff and family I have a lot of family that stay overseas to get to communicate and stuff and see their pictures, to see how the little ones are growing up”.

“Participant I: “To an extreme extent all my family and friends use Facebook if I can’t reach you anywhere I always go on Facebook, classmates when they need to talk about relevant issues find me on Facebook”.

In order to maintain past relationships participants raised that they use Facebook in order to keep up with friends they met before they started at university. With Facebook one can communicate with friends that are even across geographical barriers.

Participant B also continued to show the ability that Facebook has on rekindling friendships: **With friends, there are a lot of friends that are not studying here so I get to communicate with them through Facebook and stuff. Whilst on campus it easier go on Facebook in order to chat to a friend in order to know their whereabouts, this would be cheaper than making a phone call.**

Participant H: “Facebook doesn’t hinder my social life, it assists me, for example of I’m doing my school work ill have tab opened at the back, I would get a message from my friend saying ‘I’m at the LAN’, so it assists me to socialise while doing my work, so everyone is always on their phones connected to Facebook because of the free Wi-Fi”.

The most evident conclusion is that Facebook has the ability to organise relationships between individuals. Most of the participant’s perceptions come to the conclusion that with Facebook one can assist one to keep up with family events and welfare within their absence. With Facebook they can also be reminded of friends that are far away or just friends that they are no longer in touch with.

Facebook as a cheaper platform for communication

As a student academic life is quite costly, from balancing expenses of res fees, buying books, meals and making sure you look good and hygienic. There is also the aspect of socialising and keeping in contact with loved ones, due to the fact that family can relief some of the academic stress. Communication is not cheap in the sense that in order to make a call one has to have money, that is where Facebook comes in , it cuts down some of those costs , especially if one uses the free WIFI from campus. Participant F supports the above statement by raising the following point:

‘My family overseas and in JHB and stuff so Facebook makes it cheaper to contact with people instead of phoning it’s so expensive to phone I stalk some people on their pages to see what they do’’. Even though this takes away the face to face encounter with her family she can at least have comfort in seeing what her family members are up to’’.

Facebook is a great source for communication and managing relationships for a student. Participant D uses Facebook as an alternate communication tool due to the fact that some individuals do not use other social networking applications:

‘Facebook assists me because some of the students here don’t have Watsap or BBM so Facebook might be the only platform to communicate. Facebook is a great source for communication and managing relationships for a student’’.

Creation of False I identities on Facebook

Social networking sites have become a huge part of identity formation to many young individuals, youngsters in this generation; enjoy visiting websites in order to get inspiration. Social websites such as Facebook have become an extension of personalities and identity; young people express themselves on Facebook. Due to the fact that we spend most of our times creating relations and trying to maintain a certain image, self-portrayal and identity construction becomes a dominant aspect of our lives.

Identity is an essential component of ‘the self’ as a human being. Self-concept is the entirety of who one is as an individual in reference to ones opinions, taste, and preferences and in reference to whom you see yourself as (Altheide, 2000: 2). Altheide continues to state that identity on the other hand is who people see you as in a social setting. Settings such as Facebook can be argued

to be a form of announcing ones identity to the public so that others can accept you as a social entity.

We dress a certain way, listen to certain music and so on, just to maintain a certain level to the people around us. We tend to want to fit in so that we are seen as part of a certain group that then gives us a sense of security and confidence. The issue is whether the identity construction is influenced by peers and whether it is a true reflection of who they are. Do their portrayed image match up to their offline personas or it's just a facade. One of the themes that came about during the interviews was the notion that individuals create false or fake identities on Facebook.

Another aspect of identity construction is that that we don't realise about online participation is that when one post certain images, those images may tarnish ones reputation, therefore participant I highlighted that aspect of being watchful of what one posts online, this is what she said:

“I don't struggle but other people do they post pictures that they thought were appropriate at that time, but are not as an appropriate at a time later , I feel like you can remove such but on the net it still exists”.

At times one tends to compare themselves to other, measure their success, their appearance, their tastes according to what we see in other individuals. These comparisons may sometimes cause one to feel insecure about themselves and loose self -confidence. Therefore some participants felt like they constantly have to compare themselves with their friends on Facebook in order to acquire some sort of assurance that they are following the current trends. Participant H said the following about the issue of comparing oneself with other people, “Initially when I started it was for people to see what I was about, but now I don't upload much, but basically check what is

going on, because people always post about themselves and their personal lives just to catch up and make myself feel better or worse’.

Participant G also expressed the fact that she gets insecure when she views what her friends post on Facebook:

‘My identity when I go on Facebook and I see how chicks carry themselves a lot of body pictures and oh I’m going to the beach YOLO that party life ,how people go to the beach every Saturday s ,Sunday I don’t do much of that kind of stuff, so sometimes I feel side-lined, mainstream people posts you sometimes look at it and you are like , I wish I was like that , I’m shy, as a teenager I used to have a lot of pictures partying and looking pretty make up, I love a lot of drama ‘.

As per above some participants felt that, they are consistently comparing themselves with their friends on Facebook where else other participants had opposing views. The other participants expressed that they are not influenced by what they see on people’s walls. They instead look at what people post in order to keep up with their lives and see interesting posts, pictures and so on. Participant E reiterates on the point above “Ok university I have learnt of different ways, I choose to have a positive outlooks on everything, If I see something negative I don’t let it impact me”. It is said that many people spend too much time on Facebook, where else they could spend their times chasing their dreams. What often occurs to the participants is that, instead of Facebook making them content and happy, the participants end up attaining feelings of envy, anger and sadness.

‘On the other side some participants such as participant A felt that on Facebook individuals do not depict their true identities “Facebook gives false identity of people like people lie about where they live, all their details they lie about themselves, I don’t lie”.

Parents viewing changes of their children's behaviour through Facebook

It can be argued that parents instil certain attributes, morals, and beliefs in their children. Parents therefore expect their children to carry themselves in a dignified manner, to show that they come from dignified homes. With technology consistently becoming very vital to individuals, some parents partake in Facebook as well and therefore can easily access their children's Facebook posts.

Participant D clearly voices out her concern with individuals posting information that opposes certain moral obligations: 'with family like for distant relatives I can communicate with them on Facebook it depends on your personality and what you like to post, and I have to consider what I post with regards to family morals and levels, what I decide to post is what family considers as ok'. By her statement it is obvious that this individual cares about what her parents view them, their perceptions about her as their daughter.

Participant A also speaks about how family members can be disappointed when one posts things that contradict family ethics. She also speaks about how that impacts your reputation as a student and daughter:

“It impacts on their identity, first of all people can view where you study for instance because on your profile its written student at UKZN, and your family can see what you doing sometimes it's not good, for instance people that know you and u are a pastor's daughter and you went to a concert with alcohol it's not good, for me I don't have such situations, normally Participant”.

Privacy and safety precautions when using Facebook

On Facebook there is an option where one has the choice of 'privatising' one's account and so making it safe. There is a function called **“Custom Privacy”**, this dialogue box appears

whenever one clicks on the custom privacy bar (**Refer to Appendix 4**). Customise privacy has two sections/options for an individual to choose, those who can see what you post and those who cannot see what you post. There are categories of options within this function, the first category is **“friends of friends, friends, specific people lists, and only me”**. Friend of friends means, one permits the friend of friends of that individual to view what you post. The friend’s option stipulates that only that specific individual/ friend can view what you post. Next is the specific people list, this option offers the individual a blank space where they can type in a person which they allow to view their timeline. The other option is the only me option, this is helpful when one needs to store information but they do not wish to share it on their timeline, but would like to share it when they see fit. If one chooses the **public or everyone** option, you are basically permitting the whole world to view what you have posted on your timeline. The other suitable option is to use the **List** category, this category allows you to put your friends into categories this is helpful in instances when you don’t wish to share information with a specific group. The information presented below will stipulate whether the research participants understand and make use of the Facebook privacy settings.

Participant D states the following about privacy settings:

“I think one has to prioritise you have to explain to yourself no I am this individual , this is the person I am , not that person, Privacy settings and something like that , not logging in on in public spaces and only logging in at home. She understands that it is not safe to leave private information and log in details on a public computer. She also speaks about how important it is to keep true to who you are and not conforming to other peoples preferences”.

Participant G states the following about privacy on Facebook: **I don’t like people that know me to know everything about me, I feel like if you open itself up to everyone you open up yourself to everybody like stalkers and kidnappers, I don’t let people know my**

whereabouts other people write ‘checking in into Westwood-Mall’, I don’t post about my daily stuff, I post about emotional stuff and mostly poems for example I wrote once about being a bird and stuff. It is evident that she chooses the safer option of not divulging all her information online, she understands the risks of over sharing private information.

It is a whole different experience to participant H, due to the fact that she had encountered a negative experience with not having proper privacy settings. The following attests the claim above: **‘I am vulnerable, I don’t feel complete without it, because I feel like I need to see something, with regards to safety issues, I recently changed my password and made it hard because people hack accounts, but I don’t really share personal stuff on Facebook, I don’t disclose anything that is private, but in my inbox there is personal info, but for the public to see no...’**. It is evident that through this experience she has learnt the importance of privatising her Facebook account.

It is evident that participant F understands her privacy control function when using Facebook. She states the following: **...’ generally a lot of people will accept friend requests that they don’t really know and putt stuff on Facebook that is personal and then people see that but for me I don’t really do that on Facebook I only have people that I know, on Facebook if you have been hacked you report it and they give you lots of options on how to sort the problem...’**. She chooses to avoid befriending strangers; instead she chooses whom she adds on her Facebook.

Participant I is more updated about the Facebook privacy settings it can be argued that she is vigilant and well informed about the uses of Facebook. She has the following views about privacy settings on Facebook: **‘... Facebook has upgraded their privacy and security settings; Facebook is worldwide so as a person you need to be vigilant of your use and what you share’**. She clearly knows what she is doing on Facebook and is very careful not to over divulge private information. She also knows her boundaries in sharing personal information.

Participant B says the following about privacy on Facebook:” **...my profile is private, I accept who I know and I only have people that I know on Facebook**”, evidently it is a safer option to keep ones limit of friends to the close circle of friends one knows already.

Participant C also shares the same sentiments as participant B above with regards to: **“... Not my profile is private I have privacy settings , I accept who I know I deny who I don’t know ,so I only have people that I know only.** The above would be the most intelligent option in order to ensure safety’.

Participant G raises concerns about self-image in comparison with others: **“There is one girl in particular who posts “I am a Law student, the struggles of being a Law student”, it makes you a bit inferior when I see a cute girl and a cute guy together it makes you a bit jealous because you also want someone in your life.**

Some participants felt that they do not imitate other people on Facebook; they instead keep true to who they are. Participant A states the following about self- image: **for me I don’t compare myself with anybody on Facebook.**

Other participants such as, Participant B felt that it some people do make them feel insecure about herself but also that Facebook offers a chance for her to improve on herself by getting whatever accessory, or trait that the certain individual has, this is what she says, **“To an extent maybe it leaves me a little bit insecure, that if people are posting pictures I’ll be like I want to do that or get that stuff as well”.** It is evident that she on her opinion does not see imitating other people as a keeping up with trends.

Participant C also illiterates the same concept of wanting to also partake in some traits that they see on Facebook, to cover up for her insecurity: **“To an extent maybe that it makes me a bit insecure, maybe someone else has put on a pretty picture of themselves I say “I need to do this and that look like this and that, yah that kind of stuff”.** Perhaps the reason why she partakes is because she also wants to feel like she belongs to the current trends.

The general assumption is that most of the research participants are clear about the safety precautions when making use of Facebook. The above is hypothesis perhaps due to the fact that Facebook has clear guidelines of safety and privacy settings; they are easily accessible and can be cater to individual preferences. The privacy preferences now depend on the individual because what is considered as private to one person varies to the next.

Facebook as a means of keeping up with new trends

Identity theory stipulates that individuals strive to accomplish or sustain a positive social identity (Postmes and Branscombe, 2010:10). As individuals we want to have a positive self-concept and one that people can view as almost perfect in a social perspective. The research participants show that they constantly feel the need to improve on their image of the self that is why some of them use Facebook to keep up with current trends. Even though some search for current trends they do not feel the need to change themselves, but just look at the trends so that they keep up with the times. Another aspect of identity construction is that individuals want to achieve positive individualism (Postmes and Branscombe, 2010:59). As individuals we do not want to be the same as others, we tend to want to be distinct and unique therefore other research participants felt that there was no need for one to change, but instead stay true to who they are even whilst online.

Participant B uses Facebook to keep up with her loved ones and also to keep up with trends in the beauty industry. This is what she had to say about Facebook and trends : **‘I use it to keep up with friends, going out and stuff, who is doing what, new beauty tips and stuff like that’**. **It is evident some students see Facebook as a tool that keeps them up to par with the world, it is in itself an accessory that colours their daily lives.**

Participant F shows that she does not conform to the ideal notion of posting only edited images of herself on Facebook, but she also posts pictures that are unfiltered. She feels she does not see the need to act like somebody that she is not. She said the following:

“Well the pictures you put on Facebook you want people to like them because you want to be popular on Facebook or what so ever so people create fake identities on Facebook to make themselves look better than they are I put ugly pictures I put anything up on Facebook only on special occasions I put nice pics I take pics out and at home”.

Participant D is very concerned about how she is perceived by her friends on Facebook and on campus, she states that she loves keeping up with trends so that she looks good and keeps up with standards. She states the following:

“I would say that on Facebook new trends come up every month and now when you want to do something like that, that impacts your identity like new shoes new jeans now you want to go out post a picture to show that you have them too or something like that, as a student a social networking makes me fit in”.

Participant E states the following about trends on Facebook:

“I see trends and I choose to listen to what I want to, and it entertains me as well, for me it’s not about trying to fit in in the university. She also doesn’t see why she should imitate trends in order to fit into university, she does look at the trends but is selective of what trends she picks up, it can be argued that she is very confident and happy about who she is and she feels that she is unique just the way she is”.

What was gathered from the interviews regarding Facebook and trends is that even though the research participants search for new trends on Facebook it is not all of them that use those trends,

some simply search for their amusement, some to fit in within a certain social group, some search for the advancement of their stylistic appearances, and some just want to be up to date with the current trends.

The meaning of being a female student on Facebook

Cultural studies have shown concern with subordinated groups on the grounds of class, race, gender and age. It can be argued that Females are often subordinated in many situations, but in this research paper the female participants had a lot to say about being female on Facebook and how it has created a platform for them to voice out their opinions. Not to say that this research paper advocates for females but since their gender is vital in this research the point above is essential. Gender is socially constructed, it consists of the ideas we have about masculinity and femininity, and how we apply these notions to people based on their designated sex assignments (Tier- Since gender is socially constructed and not innate we learn gender norms through interactions with people and cultural texts and objects. The major agents of socialization are family, peers education, religion and the media. Socialization is the lifelong process whereby people learn norms and values of the society they live in. Gender roles dictate what is considered acceptable for men and woman in terms of behavior, career, and parenting and so on (Tier-Bieniek and Leavy 2014:5).

During the interviews some participants felt that they had to keep up with the expected image of being female that was depicted on Facebook. Keeping up with the expected norms and conventions according to Participant H meant acquiring certain fashion items and keeping up with trends that were advertised by certain beauty and fashion companies. This is what she said about Facebook “Facebook is beneficial , as a female I have an image to keep to , I have fashion stuff there that helps me to keep up to, what is trending what’s not , so it helps me in that way, It hinders because I may be caught up those things and not the reality of “this is me”, so it makes me want things that are not there at the moment , I wouldn’t say I compete with other people but

I might have jealousy because I would want whatever that person had plus Facebook has adverts it's like a marketing place where they adverts that sell stuff , they make you want and want''.

On the other hand there are females who would rather stick to their own conventions of what they feel beauty is. The research participants were different individuals with different preferences, some individuals shy away from attention so they distance themselves from activities that could attract attention. Participant A is one of those individuals who shy's away from attention this is what she says, "As female u get a lot of females that post pictures of themselves, their clothes, make up for me it's just simple, I don't want to draw attention to myself, so I just keep it simple, I don't want people to know everything about me, Facebook has no limitations so it empowers females to post what they want without restrictions''. She voices out the fact that Facebook creates opportunities for each individual female not to conform to social image of a perfect female.

On the other hand there were participants who were very vocal about the negative way females are portrayed on Facebook. Participant F blames females of posting images that are in a negative light in order to get likes. She goes on to state that females measure their popularity, influence, beauty and worth by the amount of likes and comments they receive on Facebook. The above can be negative towards an individual due to the fact that likes do not define success, popularity and worth. This is what she says:

‘It's both I think it assists you in your social life like people that weren't popular before become popular on Facebook it gives really bad perceptions of woman in general people put stuff that shouldn't be there , but woman just want to get likes in order to be popular ,so it's giving a bad perception of woman, I think people on Facebook create their own identities that aren't truly them they want to be better than they are so they then create an identity that people would like on social media , so they create a false identity about females''.

She then highlights that Facebook provides the space for females to be able to express their views, and that on Facebook freedom of speech is granted without any turbulences, 'On Facebook you can get your point out as a female it assists you as a person to speak on your behalf without anyone disturbing you''.

Participant B also shared the same sentiments as participant F,

“The negative thing is that when females post a picture there would be guys commenting rudely, I am diligent so I don’t let Facebook impact on my studies , I use Facebook ,when I am bored’’. She does not agree with the fact that females are sometimes perceived in the immoral light on Facebook, and also that they are sometimes victimised by negative comments.

Bienier and Leavy, 2014:2). Gender is a set of cultural specific meaning attached to an individual because of their sex assignment (Lorber, 2008:531), the challenge with these phenomena is that it can become stereotypical and generalized; therefore this section gives voices to the research participants, voices for them to state how they view themselves with regards to gender and identity. Participant D provides the essence of the above statement by stating the following about gender dynamics on Facebook,’’ Both the good part is as a female you get a platform to say what you want to say from a female perspective, as a hindrance on the stereotypical world they would be like woman are not supposed to say that, something along those lines, there is freedom of speech but at the same time you have to say it even if it may sound stereotypical, the message needs to be sent across’’.

Gender identities are not just static but rather fluid entities that are continually formed in social interactions (Carter, 2014:247). This statement is evidently demonstrated by the above perceptions voice out by the research participants. The identities can be changed or influenced by the socialization with individuals they communicate with on Facebook. In identity theory the self is a reflexive process that is revealed in social interaction and portrayed to others through

identities that fit specific situations (Carter, 2014:248). The relations and interaction created on Facebook can improve an individual's self-esteem, and their ability to socialize with other individuals with ease. Social identities also allow actors to feel good about them-selves as well as remove uncertainty about their environment (Carter, 2014:249). Culture and most importantly, socialization impacts the dimensions of meanings which form the basis for one's person identity (Burke, 2004:5-15). Through the interactions and exposure to different cultures and ethnic varieties new identities are formed and a deep understanding and enlightenment of the different cultural heritage is formed.

Discussions from Observation /be-friending

In this section discussions from the Facebook pages of the research participants will be presented, their pages like, where they check in, their interests, such as favorite books, film, music and so on will be mentioned. This will be done in order to attest to the discussions per the above section, and also to broaden on their identities and what they associate themselves with. The observation will discuss what the participants used to post during the periods 2013-2015, that is pre- university entrance and during their undergraduate study.

Participant A

Participant A is a Humanities psychology undergraduate student. She loves posting where she checks into, she goes to places such as the Moses Mabhida Stadium, Mug and Bean (Musgrave Center), Panaretos, Ushaka Marine World and the Pavilion Center. She is also a sport 'fanatic' from her Facebook page it was gathered that she monitors the following pages, the Springbok ,Kaizer Chiefs and Bafana Bafana. She follows pages of the following celebrities, Demi Lee Moore, UNathi, Simphiwe Dana, Vishawn Mitchel and Khaya Mthethwa. Her favorite film is *The Passion of Christ*, *Obsessed*, and *Sex and the City*. Her reading list entails, *The Holly Bible*, *Secrets Make You Sikh* and *Long Walk to Freedom*.

Pre-university entrance and during her undergraduate studies she still has the same activities online, such as posting photographs of friends, family and social life. She still goes to church, the Facebook pages she likes are still consistent and her interests have not changed. Participant A during her undergraduate study still posts statuses that relate to her Christian faith such as ‘Fill me up God’, therefore her beliefs have not altered. Regardless of the fact that her identity construction has not changed she has added pages that would assist her with her academic work such as EBCSO-host, where she reads her articles and so on.

Participant B

Participant B is a Media Studies undergraduate student in Humanities. Pre-entrance at university she posted pictures of her outings with friends, and family, now she posts more about her academic goals that relate to the journey of completing her studies, she rarely posts about her family. She ‘checks into’ places such as the Olympia Hall (Pietermaritzburg), and the Radisson Blue Hotel (Port Elizabeth). Her taste in music is as follows, Every Nation Music Band, Kari Jobe, and Gagasi FM and Rebecca Friedlander. Her favorite movies are, The Parent Trap, and Battle of Haditha. She follows Oprah Winfrey, BBC Food and Doctors. She seldom posts about friends and family, but of current affairs that are discussed in the news such as strikes at the University. She has joined pages from UKZN such as the UKZN Student Action.

Participant C

Participant C is a Psychology undergraduate student at Humanities. She does not post about places she ‘checks in’, perhaps for safety and privacy reasons. She loves to watch shows such as *How I Met Your Mother*, *Big Brother Africa*, *Rhythm City* and *Modern Family*. Movies such as *Daddy’s Little Girls*, *Good Deeds* and *Jumping the Broom* are her favorite. Her best books are *Holly Bible*, *Long Walk to Freedom* and *Nothing but the Truth*: a documentary novel.

Pre-university life she used to post about high school life, photos of her friends and family. Currently she posts about the struggles of being a student. She has joined the UKZN SRC and Student page in order to keep up with events on campus. She also joined the Hamamarsdale page to keep up with events of her home town while she stays at one of the UKZN residences. Even though she has changed environments she still posts about her family and friends. She also posts about self-love and reaching for goals, one of her statuses read as follows: Never love somebody more than you love yourself, Beauty is within yourself.

Participant D

Participant D is a Community Development undergraduate student. Pre-university entrance she took a gap year after Matric and joined the Induna Modeling Agency. She used to post pictures of herself modeling for this agency, pictures of her traveling meeting other models from different countries and all over Africa, pictures of fashion shows she took part in and so on. She was a social butterfly; she used to post pictures of outings at fancy restaurants and hotels. Of current she still posts about fashion and current trends even though she does not model anymore due to the fact that she has to concentrate on her studies and attaining her undergraduate bachelor's degree. She does not post on places she checks in anymore due to privacy reasons. She loves Ushaka Marine World and McDonalds. Her favorite soccer team is Manchester United. She joined the UKZN Community Development page that was created by her fellow students where they get academic updates and share ideas.

Participant E

Participant E is a Social Work undergraduate student at UKZN Howard College. Pre-university she used to post pictures of her school friends and her school debate team, pictures of their winnings at the debate competitions. She also posted a lot of quotes regarding her teenage life such as "Letting my baby sister play with my hair resulted in this nest". Places she 'checked

into' are Wakaberry Yoghurt Bar, Makaranga Garden Lodge and Durban Botanic Gardens .She likes the following music artists, Beyoncé, Rich Porter, Brett Newski and Lumineers Ophelia. Her favorite films are Pretty Woman, Titanic and Lion King. She joined the UKZN Badminton Club page, and she loves art therefore she also joined the Carlada Cruz Ceramic Artist page. She still loves art and shared pictures of her paintings.

Participant F

Participant F is an undergraduate Law Student. Pre-university entrance she did not post picture of herself, but instead entered entries of poetry and general comments about life. Currently during her undergraduate study, she is more exposed to people; she now posts pictures of herself and friends from university. What has remained constant is that she still posts entries of poetry. She has joined the UKZN Law student's page created by her and her peers for academic purposes. Participant F does not post on places she checks into, perhaps for safety and privacy reasons. Her favorite music artists are Katty Perry, Laminin and UB40. She loves reading, her reading lists entails Harry Potter books, Holly Bible, the Lion King and the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Participant G

Participant G is also a Law undergraduate student at Howard College UKZN. Pre-university entrance she posted pictures of her pets, her family members, events at home and her school friends. She also used to post entries of Poetry and quotes. Currently she does not post much about her personal life. Most of her current posts are pictures she was tagged by relatives, family members and friends. The only time she posts if she has changed her hair colour. She is no longer very vocal on Facebook; perhaps her interests have shifted more to her academic career. Her favorite places are Wimpy (Kensington Square), Durban Harbor and Spur. Her favorite movie is The Forbidden. Places she visits the most are Wimpy (Kensington Square), Durban

Harbor and Spur. She loves series such as Prison Break, Chuck, Supernatural and Greys Anatomy.

Participant H

Participant H is a Psychology undergraduate student at Howard College UKZN. Pre-university entrance she used to post pictures of her family and high school friends. She also posted a huge amount of photographs that showed her culture; Hindi ceremonies. Of current she still posts photos about cultural events and ceremonies because her cultural beliefs have not changed. The posting of pictures with family and friends also a constant factor it has not changed. She has joined the UKZN Hindi Association page and the BASCO page in order to learn about African Cultures at large. She has checked into the following places: Paradise Valley Natural Reserve, Gate Way Mall, and Musgrave Centre. She likes sports her favorite sports teams are Real Madrid C.F and Springboks. Rihanna is her favorite music artist; she also loves radio channels such as 5FM and Metro FM.

Participant I

Participant I is a Community Development undergraduate student at Howard College UKZN. Pre-university entrance she was not active on Facebook, she did not post much. Of recent she seldom posts pictures of herself and her new university friends. Her consistent posts usually pictures of herself at different NGO's that she visits on weekends in order to volunteer. It is evident that she is very passionate about helping the less fortunate one of her status updates states the following: 'my mission in life is to go an extra mile, for those who are not capable to assist themselves'. She often posts pictures of her interactions with the elderly and young children. She does not post about places she checks into, perhaps due to privacy reasons. She loves Opera Winfrey and follows her, her favorite books are *Long Walk to Freedom*, *Saving Grace* and *Homeward Bound*.

Conclusion

Identity varies from the one individual to the next. The descriptions above of the participants give evidence to the fact that an Identity of a person is unique entity, no identity is the same as of the next persons. There is diversity even within 'allocated groups'. The research participant's interests, hobbies and tastes range and vary according to their individual personalities and tastes. What was particularly noticeable from the observations is that some of the participant's interests changed from pre-university entrance to after then they were enrolled into university. On the other hand some of the participant's interests have not altered. So new environments, new friends and new experiences have either the ability to shape, add or transform our identities and tastes.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Section I

In the conclusion Identity Construction and Cultural Theory will be revisited and discussed with regards to the findings gathered from the research. The discussion will also comprise of the set objectives that were set as the premise of the research. The objectives were as follows:

- Identifying whether the use of Facebook has an impact on identity construction and culture.
- Investigating the relationship between the uses of Facebook, and how self-presentation of identity is presented among the UKZN Howard College, Female students.
- Investigating if Facebook can be used as a tool for improving the social needs of female students at the university.
- Investigating what address some of the privacy issues that female students have to contend with as regards the use of Facebook.

The discussions will state whether the above objectives were met, and if the findings were expected.

Identity construction on Facebook

Identity construction is an individualistic portrayal of the self, it includes a lot of entities such personality, taste, interests and so on. Within identity theory identity is defined as a concept that can change according to the surrounding and influences (Burke and Stets, 2000:224). An individual's desire and familiarity to belong to a specific group within society (Burke and Stets, 2000:225). The individuals association with specific groups depends on the morals, values, and style of speech that match to their own personally (Burke and Stets, 2000:225). The person's self-esteem is measured by the feedback they receive from his or her group members. The

groups' approval or disapproval can sometimes affect the individual's self-esteem (Burke and Stets, 2000:225). Each individual identity is usually formed through association with different group settings and attributes, no identity is the same as the next (Burke and Stets, 2000:226). The information gathered from the research participants is evident to the above statement. The research participants have varying and unique identities due to their different associations with people.

The character traits of a person, their social group, social relations, are components that define who they are (Leary and Tangney, 2012:69). Identities can change depending on who a person was in the past, who they wish to be in the future, whom they fear to be and who they are forced to become (Tangney, 2012:69). This is evident to the research participants, some of their identities have changed since enrolment at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. They identify themselves as undergraduate students, academics, and empowered females, who are striving to acquire degrees towards their chosen career paths.

Self- views that emerge from the reflexive activity from self-categorization within a group create ones identity (Burke and Stets, 2000:226). Individuals have the tendency to rely on what people within their social structures view them as (Burke and Stets, 2000:226). The research participants have been able to share the way that they construct their identities on Facebook. The major concern that comes to mind is whether what they shared is the true portrayal of their identities or whether it is fabricated. The reason why the above was stated is due to the notion that Facebook , like a magazine is a space where one can edit whether it be a photograph or a quote in order to attract more views or "likes" and to gain popularity. On the other hand it may not be that they want to gain popularity but instead, that they want to thrive for a perfected version of who they wish to become (Haferkamp, 2012).

Identity theory states that, being part of a group does not mean one must be invisible, but instead one must act and fulfill their expected role or even sometimes manipulating the situation to suit ones' desires (Burke and Stets, 2000:226). Some of the research participants shared the notion that they did not need to change who they are in order to fit in. Even though some of the research participants were adamant on changing, there were those who wanted to change in order to fit in.

The above contradiction attest to the fact that people are unique, even on online social networks individuals are able to make their own choices.

It is known that new media applications such as Facebook, Myspace, Tweeter and so on are used often as sources of communication. It is evident that one of the benefits of social media is the ability to share knowledge and information online with a variety of individuals or groups (Baruah, 2012:1). Identity construction theory assisted the researcher in analyzing whether the research participants portrayed accurate representations of themselves online. The new media online social networks have also become spaces where businesses can advertise their products to customers whilst also maintaining positive relationships with the clients. The relationships are then maintained due to the fact that clients are then able to provide and share ideas with the specific brands and companies (Baruah, 2012:1). The above can attest that the research participants were interested in different brands and fashion trends, their participation on such sites could be vital because brands can have an impact on their identity formation and reputations. Identity construction has many angles therefore trends and brands to some individuals could be vital elements of the way they construct their unique identities.

Identity theory stipulates that one has a responsibility to fulfill with certain group structures, but it also states that you do not have to conform to such requirements. Individuals need to find a balance between role identities and personal identities (Burke and Stets, 2000:229). Social media can also be slightly impersonal, this is due to the fact that it is not physical, and does not require face-to-face interactions (Baruah, 2012:9). One of the privacy issues of Facebook is that it has a risk of certain individuals stealing ones identity due to the lack of control of private information (Abdulani et al, 2014:137). There are certain qualities of selves that one does not wish to share with specific individuals for particular reasons. These reasons could range from cultural and religious attributes; therefore if certain information could be shared it could ruin ones reputation and limits. Once one shares personal information in the form of data on the net it is very difficult to control the dispersion of that information shared due to the fact that the administrator is invisible (Sahoo, 2015:223). The data shared could therefore end up in the wrong hands such as that of criminal or even parents (Sahoo, 2015:223). It was a clear concern of the research participants that they watch what they post in order to try and have control over their reputations.

Researchers within the identity theory were very interested in investigating the evolvement of an identity within groups or social settings (Burke and Stets, 2000:229). The identity theory was a useful theory in investigating the identities of females within Facebook. Facebook has ranging social structures and people join groups in order to communicate. Face to face interaction could result into healthy and reliable relationships, but virtual interaction could cause one to forget about physical world that could therefore have a negative affect the way they interact with people when it comes to face-to-face (Sahoo, 2015:225). Facebook has become a platform where individuals can discuss pivotal social issues such as girl education, human rights, corruption and so on, it can therefore be argued to be very educative (Chowdhury and Saha, 2015:25). Even though there is a possibility for one to be addicted to Facebook on the positive side, the Facebook could be considered to be leisure from stressful academic career (Chowdhury and Saha, 2015:30)

Evidently some users on Facebook use it just to pass time or avoid responsibilities and careers, this could therefore have a negative impact, on their future careers, Some students just log in, in order to look at pictures and chat to their peers and this is a waste of valuable time which could be used for academic responsibilities (Chowdhury and Saha.2015:30). There were research participants who had expressed that they use Facebook just to pass time and to see what their peers are doing. They do not log in to share information but just to read what other people posted. Individuals use Facebook in order to keep up with the events happening in their countries (Swayer, 2011:2). Students were found using social networking sites such as Facebook in order to stay in touch with friends that they see seldom (Akbiyk,2013:5).Regardless of how occupied students are most often find time to make, the uses of Facebook part of their daily lives (Akbiyik,2013:5).

Social networking sites could lead to anxiety and addiction due to the fact that people tend to feel the urge of constantly checking their profiles even in times where they really need to be working or attending classes (Sahoo, 2015:222). Facebook assists individuals to keep track of the lives of people they have not seen in a while (Spoil and Gitimu, 2007:2). Individuals between the ages 18-25 are individuals who still want to acquire a sense of self-worth. Social networking sites

such as Facebook therefore gives them that possibility (Spocil and Gitimu, 2007:2). Identity formation occurs between the above ages and is therefore a period of exploring, discovering and seeking feedback in order to affirm their self-identities (Spocil and Gitimu, 2007: 3). Identities are affirmations of selves within group settings, it is what makes one unique from the next individual (Kaskazi, 2014:69). The feeling of knowing yourself helps with regards to making choices and decisions, because you first look inwards to see if it affirms to your beliefs and morals and values (Kaskazi, 2014:69).

There are many different classifications of identity an example would be that of religious identity. A religious identity would be what an individual hopes for, what they value and how they behave (Kaskazi, 2014:73). Role identity is what is referred to, the role one has to play within a specific context (Kaskazi, 2014:73). An example would be a 'student' as a student you are required to attend classes/lectures, submit assignments and write tests, participate in academic and social events on campus. The research participants also expressed the above notion or role identities and personal identity. They showed their concern that as a daughter one cannot just post unethical content due to the fact that they respect and go back and remember their upbringing. A personal identity would refer to personal characteristics, emotional and personal attributes. Basically all the characteristics that make a person stand out and unique from the next person (Kaskazi, 2014:74).

At times a person's identity is reliant on what is important to them only at that specific time (Kaskazi, 2014:76). This is due to the fact that people love to seek approval from peers, so that peers view them in the same light that they see themselves (Kaskazi, 2014:76). The question ,who am I?, would be the best to describe identity on a personal level (Korte,2007:168).Individuals pick up certain characteristics' and traits from people they usually associate with (Korte,2007:168). Identity construction is an ongoing process of interaction between the individual and internal or external group (Jenkins, 2004:22). The individual may not agree with certain attributes of their group members, they then choose not to adopt those attributes (Karte, 2007:169). Even though the above has some truth other individuals compromise, their values and moral beliefs in order to fit within that group (Korte, 2007:169).

Individuals would join a group in order to attain a sense of belonging, pride, involvement and stability (Korte, 2007:170).

It is believed that woman use communication in order to share personal problems and develop a feeling of empathy (Rosenfeld and Procter, 2001:147). Interpersonal communication through the uses of technology facilitates individuals to stop loneliness and social anxiety into developing productive relationships (Schiltz, 2011:9). Pressures arising from peers could influence an individual's ability to think independently, this is the case also on social networks and in this research (Bank, 2014:1187). Envy could be one of the negative impacts of online social networks, due to the fact that some Facebook users compare themselves to other Facebook users on a social level (Bank, 2014:1187).

Facebook fosters creativity; individuals on Facebook create pictures, cartoons, jokes and videos that depict current issues and trends. The above are then shared and exchanged online with people who browse through their walls (Chowdhury and Saha, 2015:30). The above could assist in enhancing the artistic abilities of the Facebook users, which in turn boosts their self-esteems and may push them into choosing their career paths (Chowdhury, 2015:30).

Culture and Facebook

Cultural studies is said to be the way in which we spiritually and materially understand the world. Cultural studies takes from different disciplines, it is therefore flexible. Within Cultural studies concepts like gender, race and ethnicities are just societal constructs that are clarified for the organization of cultures (Grossberg, 2016:3). The new media culture has a massive influence on the day to day life of many individuals (Ravi et al, 2012:485). The changes that come with globalization have cultural ideologies and meanings (Ravi et al, 2012:486). On social media every individual can report on events this causes them to be "Journalists" (Ravi et al, 2012:490). Cultural differences could be argued to be one of the elements that attract individuals into wanting to communicate with the next individual in order to learn about the existing differences between one another (Sawyer, 2011:7). Facebook fosters interactions between different cultures by bringing people together, this in turn quences the cultural curiosity of the users who want to learn about cultures that are different from their own culture (Sawyer, 2011:7).

Hegemony is a vital concept in cultural studies and in this research. Hegemony is the study of how dominant cultures have influence on other groups of cultures (Grossberg, 2016:5). The above concept was evident within this research study, but it was more how the cultures within Facebook have an impact on the user on the individualistic identity. Hegemony is a vital theory with regards to the investigation of the power acquired by dominant cultures and their influence on identity construction. The idea around cultural studies is the exploration of how individuals construct culture and that culture shapes people (Grossberg, 2016:7). That is why cultural studies remain instrumental within this study, due to the fact that the objective was to investigate the impact that other cultures have on female Facebook users. The information gathered from the participants of this study was that, on Facebook they learned more about other cultures, rather than the general assumption that other cultures influenced or changed their individualistic identities. The fact that the participants felt that their own culture remained intact is a good thing because difference and uniqueness is celebrated within cultural studies.

Another concept of cultural studies is resistance to dominant powers; with regards to the data gathered the dominant power was definitely the different opinions of peers on Facebook. On Facebook when one shares information there is massive opinion's that accompany the data that was shared. It is therefore dependent on that individual to either resist the opinion's or not let them influence their stance and self-esteem or to let the opinion's control or shape their individualistic perceptions. Cultural studies were instrumental in understanding the relationship of power within which individual realities are formed and created (Grossberg, 2016:10).

Online communication sites have the ability to update and keep us conscious of events and social occurrences around us. (Baruah, 2012:4). Social media is found to be cost effective. On Facebook individuals display their identities by demonstrating their relationships with each other (Shoo,2015:222).On Facebook individuals share interests and activities, they create virtual relations (Sahoo,2015:222).The above is depicted by Sahoo to be similar to how tribal cultural people share interests as a community. In the world that has various ethnic, culture and religious communities. With the use of Facebook one becomes exposed to these different outlooks on life.

Therefore Facebook becomes the space where all these differences are accommodated, communicated and shared (Chowdhury and, Saha 2015:30).

Social networking sites give a sense of independence and high self-esteem to certain individuals (Sahoo, 2015:222). The above is due to the freedom that comes with Facebook, a freedom of expression. In this day and age cultural identity is usually associated with material things; this is done through a culture of consumption (McCraken, 2006:10). The range of communication needs for different personalities are satisfied through online social media such as Facebook (Quan –Haase et al, 2016:350).

Ideology is another important element of cultural studies, within Ideological constructs one develops an identity and identifies with specific norms and ways of life. Ideology fosters realistic social connections and therefore contributes to individual attributes which fosters individuality and freedom (During, 2001:5).

Cultural studies focusses on ‘‘who I am’’, or as important, the ‘‘we are’’ of culture on individual and collective identities (Johnson 1987).

Cultural cuts across diverse social and political interests, whilst addressing issues (Grossberg,-- :1). Cultural studies was an appropriate theory to use in investigating identity construction of the female students. Cultural studies make it possible for one to acquire information easily due to the fact that it draws from a variety of fields (Grossberg, 2016:2). Stuart Hall attests to the above statements by writing ‘Cultural studies are not one thing, it has never been one thing’ (Hall, 1990a:11). One of the research objectives was to investigate symbolic behavior specifically with regards to identity construction on Facebook, Cultural studies was therefore instrumental in achieving the purpose.

Section II

Discussions with regards to the objectives

We shall now look at the different objects set in this project and assess which were achieved and the results emanating from the study regarding this objective.

Identifying whether the use of Facebook has an impact on identity construction and culture

The above objective was met due to the fact that the research participants provided proficient perceptions on the uses of Facebook and whether this social network could impact culture. The general findings were not that Facebook can change cultures, but rather that Facebook opens up a canvas where cultures can be explored and shared. Globalization has made it possible for the world to become a small village, therefore the other finding was that on Facebook different cultures are shared and therefore Facebook has become a culture on its own. The most profound finding that was gathered was that with the use of Facebook ethnic, gender and racial stereotypes are addressed and changed due to the fact that on Facebook one becomes more enlightened on such matters.

Facebook has people from a range of cultures therefore sometimes when one posts some information it could be misinterpreted due to the differences in each ideological background (Boyd and Heer,2007:12).The female students might have posted something to express their current issues, but that may indirectly be offensive to their parents, lecturers or even potential employers. The above cannot be controlled because the interpretation of text shared differs from one individual to the next.

In answering the question whether the participants show a true portrayals of selves on Facebook? The answer is, yes they do. Even though they do portray themselves, there are instances where they only show the best sides of their lives. This is done because of the fear of being exposed to scrutiny and negativities of the public, with people throwing their different opinions in the faces of the participants. Even though the research participants are open to sharing their selves, they

share with limits in order to avoid scrutiny. Facebook allows one to have close social contact with peers and individuals prefer to not over share information, especially private information in order to survive in that specific social structure.

The researcher expected the research participants to state that Facebook had a definite impact on their identities. Instead it was evident that instead of Facebook changing their cultures; it instead strengthened their own identities. Some participants expressed that some of the activities on Facebook made them remember their own morals and values would never post anything that could stain their identity. The most evident reply to the above objective was that the participants are informed about different cultures, instead of those cultures changing their own ethnic cultures. The researchers view towards the above reply is that, even though the participants feel that their cultures are not altered they do not realize that culture is not a fluid entity. The researcher feels that the participant's identities have not changed but rather improved by the different cultures and connections with different ethnic individuals.

Investigating the relationship between the uses of Facebook, and how self-presentation of identity is presented among the UKZN Howard College, Female student

The findings with regards to the above objective were limited, this is due to the ethical considerations that the researcher was obliged to adhere to. Most research participants did not allow the researcher to include their photographs within the research; otherwise more elaborate discussions with the uses of photographs would have been very beneficial to the presentation of this research paper. Regardless of the above limitation proficient findings were gathered. The most common findings were that there was a strong relationship between Facebook and the self-representation of identity; this is due to the fact that Facebook offers such opportunities because it is a space for individuals to paint their own canvases of what they feel an identity is. The beauty of this concept is that no identity is portrayed and presented in the same manner as of the next individual.

The researcher in this section was expecting that the participants would share more information about their associations with students from UKZN who were on Facebook. The researcher wanted to know whether the participants were influenced by the groups they associated with on campus. Whether their perceptions about life were altered, their dressing styles were altered and their mannerism changed. The general consensus was that some of the participants present an identity which was almost close to who they are in reality; they do not post pictures of statuses to impress peers and mutual friends online. The other few participants did mention that they at times felt that they had to post certain information to impress peers or so that they don't feel like misfits.

Investigating if Facebook can be used as a tool for improving the social needs of female students at the university.

The above objective was met in the sense that most participants attest to the fact that with Facebook they were able to communicate with not only their friends but also their family members. Facebook was used by the participants in order to fit into University life and its social structure. The majority of participants stated Facebook stated that they use Facebook to communicate with current friends that they met at University and also to keep old friendships. Whilst at university Facebook is a tool that connects both students and the university staff in order for each to communicate and understand each other. With the use of Facebook participants stated that they are able to keep up with social events and academic requirements.

Facebook is considered to be a tool that assists undergraduates to be familiar with being at university (Schultz, 2011:12). Therefore Facebook offers undergraduates students a feeling of community (Schultz, 2011:12). Students make use of Facebook in order to seek information from their peers through what the peers share on their walls (Schultz, 2011:12). Self-esteem increase or decrease depends on the comments and feedback received from their friends after he or she posts a comment, picture or video (Schultz, 2011:13). Institutions of higher learning are

now making use of online social networking sites to distribute instructional content (Paul, Baker, and Cochran: 2012:5).

With the above objective the researcher's hypothesis was that Facebook surely improved the social needs of the research participants. The researcher did not expect that Facebook could hinder face to face interactions. The other opinion is that individuals differ in the sense that some people are extroverts and others are introverts, therefore some people will prefer face-to face interaction rather than online communication.

Facebook has the ability to improve social needs but sometimes it could damage the beauty in face to face encounters. Most research participants shared the notion that Facebook has helped them to foster the new relationships formed at university and bind past relationships. Research participants expressed that in times where they felt lonely, Facebook was there for them. They could go through the walls of their Facebook friends looking at the pictures, videos and comments posted. The above made sure that they were no longer lonely but felt occupied. This is in turn like a substitute for face to face socializing and a more controlled way of communication in the sense that one can choose to exit at any time they wish to.

To investigate what address some of the privacy issues that female students have to contend with as regards the use of Facebook

In this section my hypothesis was that the female students who participated in this study would have a lot of challenges with regards to privacy issues. One of the researcher's concerns pre-research and interviews was that the research participants would have been ignorant of the privacy settings. Users of Facebook are less likely to add a person they are not familiar with on their friendship list, this is because they are often familiar with the Facebook privacy settings (Kaskazi, 2014:859). The above was the assumption that I had but it was evidently untrue due to the fact that the majority of the research participants understand the privacy issues that Facebook offers. The participants understand the safety precautions they should take when using Facebook. Most of the participants use the Facebook privacy settings and understand them due to the fact

that they are easy to use and are set up in a way. Most of the concerns raised by the research participants were with regards to the negative portrayal of Females on Facebook, such as attention seekers and goalless. The research participants felt that they at times felt the need to compare themselves with others in order to measure their success or outward appearances.

The issue with the online network is that even though the individual changes their behavior what they had shared before (Pictures and comments) will always be connected to them. What was previously shared can possible be recycled, filtered and redistributed by another individual. The negative aspect of the Facebook is that it could be used as investigating tools on students. For example an employer may go to the Facebook account of the applicant to seek for information that was not shared on their resume (Oblinger and Hawkins, 2006:14).

Even though social media has a positives it also has negatives in the sense that some individuals create accounts in order to mislead people and kidnap or murder them (Baruah, 2012:9). Another negative effect of social media it that it can reduce productivity due to the fact that individuals waist hours online ,time that could be used doing academic work or duties at the office (Baruah,2012:9). Social networks use can foster self-control which is an important key to social order (Wilcox and Stephen,2012:4).Some individuals minimize and choose with scrutiny what to post ,in order to avoid the loss of control (Wilcox and Stephen,2012:4).

Conclusion

The use of Facebook can be ‘a blessing but also a curse’, it depends on the way one uses the medium. Identity construction is dependent on many factors, such as the people one associates with, the materials and resources one consumes, interests and so on. Safety settings are available on Facebook but using them depends on the user. Self-promotion is important to certain individuals and to some not as important, they just make use of Facebook to socialize. Some females have a tendency to use Facebook in order to hide their scars and not so perfect sides. It all goes to show that as individuals we want to paint perfect notions or presentations of selves, we hide our hurt. The uses of Facebook all depends on individual preferences and interests.

Cultural backgrounds and ethnicities have a big influence on whatever decision one makes, this is evident with regards to the use of Facebook.

Mobile technologies are very popular in Africa, therefore Africans are now getting used to online social media (Essoungou, 2010:1). This has therefore made it possible for Africans to be able to connect with the world beyond geographical barriers. The above is evident in the perceptions the participants had about communicating beyond geographical restrictions. They expressed that they could communicate with loved ones that were overseas.

Not only are Africans interacting with other continents, but they are now communicating with each other more and more (Essoungou, 2010: 1). Africans are now using mobile phones in order to participate in the online social networks such as Facebook; this is a massive shift in the uses of the internet in Africa (Essoungou, 2010:1). Daily activities such as watching television, reading a newspaper, have become less relevant for Africans (Essoungou, 2010:1). The above reiterates the opinions the research participants have with regards to the fact that they did not feel the need to read a newspaper or watch television. The above is due to the fact that on Facebook one can subscribe to a news channel, news and current events are constantly available.

Even though there is a gap in the gender dynamics in the access of education, there is a huge improvement in ensuring girls gain access to education and improving the way women are represented (Essoungou, 2010:1). At the Females at the University of KwaZulu- Natal expressed that with Facebook they are able to gain information on matters that were not discussed during lectures. On Facebook they could therefore self- educate and add upon the knowledge from lectures. The widespread use of mobile phones has made it possible for more and more females to gain access to information and social networks (Essoungou, 2010:1). The above is very evident in the University Of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College, most of the research participants voiced out that they used their mobile phones in order to keep in touch with friends and loved ones on Facebook.

The experiences of Facebook as an African student are a bit different from a European Student. There are certain cultural guides that prevent certain practices; this comes in with the use of Facebook as well. Some individuals think twice before posting information that contradicts their cultures. The above is also expressed by the students in the interviews, in the sense that whenever they wish to post anything they first think of their parents and how they would feel if they were to read that specific information. The negative part of online social networking is that one is not sure of the consequences that may follow in the future, what one posts can come back to damage a reputation in the future. The major concern is the control of the information shared, it is not clear who the real owner of the information is after it is shared online (Jacobs and Solo-Anaeto, 2015:37). The above points to the fact that some research participants acknowledged negative side of posting private information and that any data posted could come back to haunt a student's future career.

According to Africans, the uses of online social networks have altered African values and cultures due to the fact that they are influenced by western ideas. If the participants on these online social networks get influenced by the western ideas, their own African cultures could be eroded and possibly be extinct (Jacobs and Solo-Anaeto, 2015:37). Cultural gatekeeping is essential to ensure that individuals within that ethnic group behave themselves and consider how they treat one another. On online social networks there are no gatekeepers; instead individuals are free to post any content without considering whether or not it could be offensive to the next individual (Jacobs and Solo-Anaeto:38). The above goes back to communication being the most essential element of any society and ethnic group. Students come from different ethnic groups therefore being at University does not change their ethnicities. Some students expressed that using Facebook does not change their cultural knowledge but instead enhances their knowledge of other cultures.

Regardless of the ethnic group one comes from it is essential to communicate and respect one another, this ensures that misunderstandings and cultural stereotypes are addressed (Jacobs and Solo-Anaeto, 2015:42). The above also assists in the appreciation and understanding in the

differences between cultures, in the sense that ‘‘it is fine that you are from another culture and I accept you as you are’’. Females nowadays have equal opportunities to their male counterparts; they can now be academics, and career women. The use of Facebook gives them opportunities to create identities which they want; this gives them a new sort of power. Females are rarely subordinated on grounds of ethnicity, education and social class.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TOPIC: Female identity construction on Facebook among Humanities students at Howard College, University of KwaZulu –Natal.

Letter of invitation to participate in the study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Hilde Mwamini Christina Lubaba. I am collecting data as part of a research project. The project is conducted under the supervision of University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Culture and Media in Society (CCMS). The study is to explore Female identity construction on Facebook among Humanities students at Howard College, University of KwaZulu –Natal.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The data will be kept securely for five years for purposes of verification. Should you request, an electronic copy of the project emanating from this project will be sent to you on completion.

Your willingness to participate in this study will greatly be appreciated.

Details of the researcher and institution of research:

Researcher	Hilde M.C.L	0617383941	Hilmwamini@gmail.com
Department	Centre for Culture and Media in Society (CCMS)	031 2602505	http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za
Institution	University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	Howard College Campus, Masizi Kunene Ave, Glenwood, Durban, South Africa.	http://www.ukzn.ac.za
Supervisor Senior Professor & F.R.Hist.S. Dean & Head of School of Arts (Acting)	Professor Donal McCracken	031-260 2346/1866	mccrackend@ukzn.ac.za
Chair, UKZN Human Sciences Research Committee	Dr. Jean Steyn		Steynj@ukzn.ac.za
Committee Clerk, UKZN Human Sciences Research Committee			
<i>Please do not hesitate to contact any of the above persons, should you want further information on this research, or should you want to discuss any aspect of the interview process.</i>			

Key informant Interview	Focus Group Discussion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the purpose of this interview is for solely academic purpose. The findings will be published as a thesis, and may be published in academic journals. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand I may choose to remain anonymous. (Please choose whether or not you would like to remain anonymous.) 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand my name will be quoted. (Please choose whether or not you would prefer to have your remarks attributed to yourself in the final research documents.) 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I will not be paid for participating. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I reserve the right to discontinue and withdraw my participation any time. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I consent to be frank to give the information. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand I will not be coerced into commenting on issues against my will, and that I may decline to answer specific questions. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand I reserve the right to schedule the <i>time</i> and <i>location</i> of the interview. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I consent to the use of any photographs that may be taken of me. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>* By signing this form, I consent that I have duly read and understood its content.</p>		
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Name of Participant	Signature	Date
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

Topic: Female identity construction on Facebook among Humanities students at Howard College, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Note: You are not forced to answer a question that you don't feel comfortable with, answer with as best as you can

Questions

If possible please provide a detailed answer.

1. On average, how often do you use Facebook? If possible break down the approximate times in a day/weekend you are on Facebook.
2. Why do you use Facebook? Please give details of the various uses (including university-related) that you use Facebook.
3. In what ways do you think Facebook impacts on your identity? Explain your answer, giving as much detail as possible and discussing in particular your identity as a university student.
4. In what different ways, positive and negative, does Facebook assist or hinder you in coping with university social life?
5. To what extent do you maintain contact with the world, family and University through the use of Facebook? Please break down your answer according to category and in particular, let me know about the function of Facebook in maintaining contact with others as a student.
6. Do you think you are vulnerable on Facebook? If so, please explain why you feel this way.
7. Do you think that Facebook has an impact on culture, if so in what ways? In particular I am interested in how Facebook and culture impinge on your university experience.

Appendix 3

FACEBOOK IMAGE 1

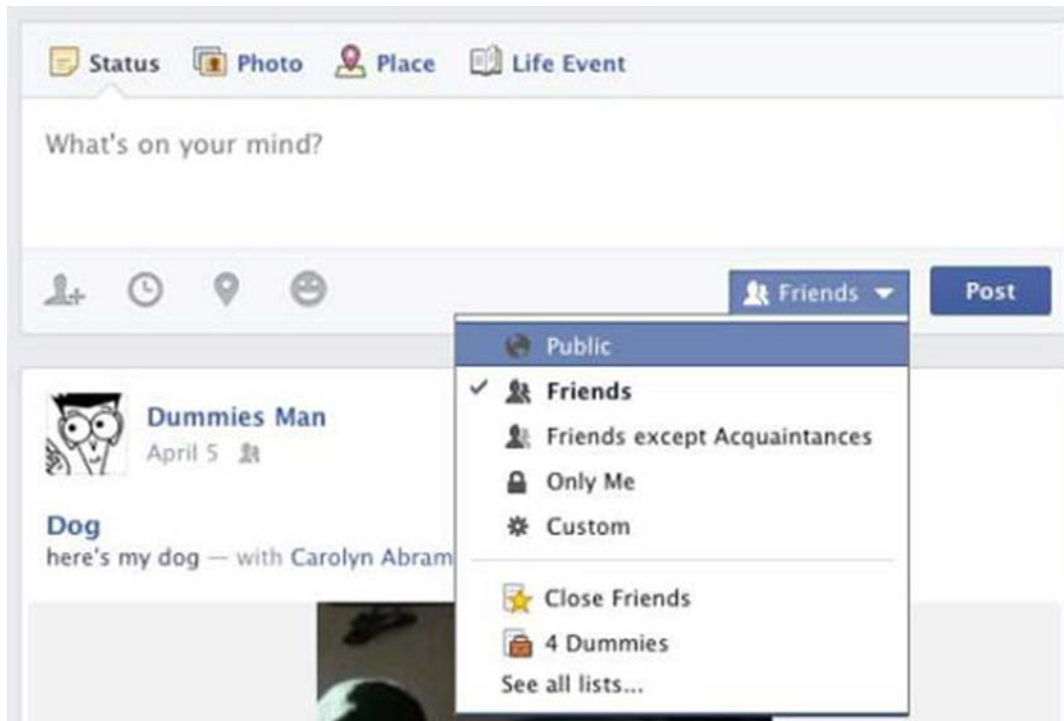


Image from: (<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html>

Tuesday July 19 2016).[Carolyn Abram](#)

Appendix 4

FACEBOOK IMAGE 2



The image shows a 'Custom Privacy' dialog box from Facebook. It has a blue header with the text 'Custom Privacy'. Below the header, there are two main sections. The first section is titled 'Share this with' with a green checkmark icon. It includes a dropdown menu labeled 'These people or lists:' with 'Friends' selected. Below this is a checkbox labeled 'Friends of those tagged:' which is checked. A note below the checkbox reads 'Note: Anyone tagged can also see this post.' The second section is titled 'Don't share this with' with a red 'X' icon. It includes a text input field labeled 'These people or lists:' which is currently empty. At the bottom right of the dialog box, there are two buttons: 'Save Changes' and 'Cancel'.

Image from: (<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/common-facebook-terminology.html>

Tuesday July 19 2016).Carolyn Abram

Appendix 5

GATEKEEPER 'S PERMISSION



03 September 2015

Ms Hilde Christina Lubaba (211548183)
School of Applied Human Sciences – CCMS
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Lubaba,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0907/015M

Project title: Female identity construction on Facebook among Humanities students at Howard College, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

With regards to your application received on 10 July 2015. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenika Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor D McCracken
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

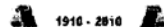
Dr Shenika Singh (Chair)

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Appendix 6

Interview 1

Thank you for participating in my research, the title is Female identity construction on Facebook among University Students at UKZN Howard College

On average how often do you use Facebook?

I use it every day, I use it at night before I go to sleep, I don't use it to post anything, I use it before I go to sleep, I use the internet, I go through my news feed to see what everybody else is doing, I go on Facebook whenever I have time, I only post when it's necessary, when I need to, I post pictures of friends and family, I write on friends walls

We have the UKZN page that keeps you up to date, for instance whenever we have a strike we get updated on Facebook, so whatever email we get if people don't have emails they post it on Facebook, there is other pages like for instance the law faculty has their own page for the Law students, you get updates about other faculties as well, so they post academic stuff, so in this way Facebook helps academically as well

To keep in contact with friends and distant family members that are not in South Africa, for instance I have got family members who are overseas; it's cheaper to talk to them over Facebook, instead of calling, and to keep up with friends from high school who we have gone separate ways with

It impacts on their identity, first of all people can view where you study for instance because on your profile its written student at UKZN , and your family can see what you doing sometimes it's not good, for instance people that know you and u are a pastor's daughter and you went to a concert with alcohol it's not good, for me I don't have such situations , normally Facebook gives false identity of people like people lie about where they live, all their details they lie about themselves, I don't lie

Last week Friday I had an incident where I needed to go home, but I also needed to hand in my assignment at the same time so, I rushed to class and the girl who walked in with me, I didn't know who she was ,I gave her the assignment , so I asked her to hand in the assignment for me, I asked for her name and on our board had so many students with the same name so Instead went on Facebook to look for her and I found her because I saw her picture, I then asked her If she was able to submit and whether she had a problem.

I don't go all out for me Facebook is not a platform where one shares too much, many people treat Fb as a diary they go all out, for me I just keep it simple post things with family and comment on what people share

As female u get a lot of females that post pictures of themselves ,their clothes , make up for me it's just simple, I don't want to draw attention to myself, so I just keep it simple, I don't want people to know everything about me , Facebook has no limitations so it empowers females to post what they want without restrictions

No not at all

To a certain extent like some of the friends I make on campus, post things about their cultures, for instance a guy posted a picture of topless girl Zulu girl with the traditional stuff on , and for us it's not normal, but he told us about the culture , and explained why he did that, there is different pages on Facebook Zulu Hindi, and so on so they help us know more about different cultures, so if he didn't tell us we would have judged him and his culture, but no it has no impact on my culture, on campus we have different people from different cultures, so in a way Facebook helps us to know more about these cultures and understand cultures instead of thinking and judging instead of having misconceptions about cultures that are different from ours.

It depends on the individual like myself I can control my use of Facebook, it doesn't hinder my studies in any way, some people are addicted to it, for me I don't compare myself with anybody.

Interview 2

In the morning, during campus, whenever I'm free, through eating, throughout the day I use it to keep up with friends, going out and stuff, who is doing what, new beauty tips and stuff like that

To an extent maybe it leaves me a little bit insecure, that if people are posting pictures I'll be like I want to do that or get that stuff as well

To keep up with stuff like strikes, because I'm not up campus everyday

I guess it affects me in a positive way like I said keeping up with friends because I'm not always here to know what they are doing and where they are and stuff

With friends, there are a lot of friends that are not studying here so I get to communicate with them through Facebook and stuff and with family I have a lot of family that stay overseas to get to communicate and stuff and see their pictures, to see how the little ones are growing up

Not at all, my profile is private, I accept who I know and I only have people that I know on Facebook

No its just a means of communication , I don't do any weird things on Facebook, but if someone posts a naked picture it may make me question about the background, I also understand that people have their free will to post whatever they want

The negative thing is that when females post a picture there would be guys commenting rudely, I am diligent so I don't let Facebook impact on my studies , I use Facebook when I'm free when I'm bored.

Interview 3

Every day, whenever I get up and before I go to sleep, basically throughout the whole day Basically to keep up with friends , family and going out whose doing what in pictures and new beauty tips and stuff like that

To an extent maybe that it makes me a bit insecure , maybe someone else has put on a pretty picture of themselves I say 'I need to do this and that look like this and that, yah that kind of stuff.

I guess it makes me more fun, more outgoing because you keep in touch with so many people, keeps up with the strike because I'm not always on campus

I guess in a positive way keeping up with friends because I'm not always on campus ,there is a lot of friends that do not study on this campus ,and family members that stay overseas so it helps me keep up with them and see the little ones

Not at all, my profile is private I have privacy settings , I accept who I know I deny who I don't know ,so I only have people that I know only.

No it doesn't, it's just a means of communication I don't do weird stuff, I guess maybe if someone puts a nude pic, it would make me question their background, what people post with

regards to their culture makes me question my own but it doesn't change it, people have the right to post whatever they want with regards to their culture

I guess a negative thing would be for example if a girl posts a picture and guys would have their negative side comments ,personally for me I am a diligent student so it doesn't affect my studies I only use Facebook when I am bored or when I know I have nothing else to do.

Interview 4

In the morning, when I get up, on campus 3 hours max

I would say that on Facebook new trends come up every month and now when you want to do something like that, that impacts your identity like new shoes new jeans now you want to go out post a picture to show that you have them too or something like that, as a student a social networking makes me fit in

Facebook assists me because some of the students here don't have Watsapp or BBM so Facebook might be the only platform to communicate

With the university I would have to talk about the strike it helps me keep up with the strike, and with family like for distant relatives I can communicate with them on Facebook it depends on your personality and what you like to post, and I have to consider what I post with regards to family morals and levels, what I decide to post is what family considers as ok

I think one has to prioritise you have to explain to yourself no I am this individual , this is the person I am , not that person, Privacy settings and something like that , not logging in on in public spaces and only logging in at home.

Both the good part is as a female you get a platform to say what you want to say from a female perspective, as a hindrance on the stereotypical world they would be like woman are not supposed to say that, something along those lines, there is freedom of speech but at the same time you have to say it even if it may sound stereotypical, the message needs to be sent across.

Interview 5

Every day, 2 hours per day I inbox Swazi ill look at other people's posts

Ok university I v learnt of different ways, I choose to have a positive outlooks on everything, I f I see something negative I don't let it impact me

Sometimes it's helpful, I do what I want to do, I see trends and I choose to listen to what I want to, and it entertains me as well, for me it's not about trying to fit in in the university, I only have two friends and I chill with them only, in a feminist I like empowering young girls and showing them that it's not only a man's world a woman can do it too, focus boys will always be there they not going anywhere.

I usually talk to my friend Swazi; I don't really talk to family on Facebook

Interview 6

Everyday 5 times a day 1 hour per day on and off again

Well the pictures you put on Facebook you want people to like them because you want to be popular on Facebook or what so ever so people create fake identities on Facebook to make themselves look better than they are I put ugly pictures I put anything up on Facebook only on special occasions I put nice pics I take pics out and at home

On Facebook we have like groups like a Law group they post information on it egg strikes, they just post on Facebook about Law and stuff

My family overseas and in JHB and stuff so Facebook makes it cheaper to contact with people instead of phoning it's so expensive to phone I stalk some people on their pages to see what they do

Yes because generally a lot of people will accept friend requests that they don't really know and putt stuff on Facebook that is personal and then people see that but for me I don't really do that on Facebook I only have people that I know, on Facebook if you have been hacked you report it and they give you lots of options on how to sort the problem

Yah I suppose as a culture as people you are supposed to do stuff a specific way and act a specific way but on Facebook you dress you want and you modernise your culture , your culture is getting lost and stuff, but people change just to be popular and stuff, not many people put stuff on culture ,people art that popular not that pretty as well they Photoshop pictures , people quite

stuff from overseas and copy lyrics from people that they don't know just to be popular , they don't even understand the lingo that they quite, it irritates because how do you change the world with your one quite or status on Facebook , where there are so many users

It's both I think it assists you in your social life like people that weren't popular before become popular on Facebook it gives really bad perceptions of woman in general people put stuff that shouldn't be there , but woman just want to get likes in order to be popular ,so it's giving a bad perception of woman, I think people on Facebook create their own identities that art truly them they want to be better than they are so they then create an identity that people would like on social media , so they create a false identity about females, on Facebook you can get your point out as a female it assists you as a person to speak on your behalf without anyone disturbing you.

Interview 7

I go on about once in a second day, I go and look in my news feeds, I just browse through to see who posted what on my wall, when I was 16 I used to know what happens on my feed it has changed though no one really posts in my feed, I always wanted to know what's happening on my feed, but now it is different, I don't get notifications anymore, I'm one of those people no one really take interest in.

My identity when I go on Facebook and I see how chicks carry themselves a lot of body pictures and oh I'm going to the beach YOLO that party life ,how people go to the beach every Saturday s ,Sunday I don't do much of that kind of stuff, so sometimes I feel side-lined, mainstream people posts you sometimes look at it and you are like , I wish I was like that , I'm shy, as a teenager I used to have a lot of pictures partying and looking pretty make up, I used to be more active at a younger age, I don't do the selfie thing all the time, every time I dye my hair I change my profile picture ,most of the pictures on Facebook I was tagged on by my family and friends they post a lot of pictures of me, I go on and read , I love a lot of drama , I don't post much but I love drama, I don't post any personal stuff, I am not really vocal on Facebook

I don't like people that know me to know everything about me, I feel like if you open itself up to everyone you open up yourself to everybody like stalkers and kidnappers, I don't let people know my whereabouts other people write "checking in into Westwood-Mall", I don't post about

my daily stuff, I post about emotional stuff and mostly poems for example I wrote once about being a bird and stuff

I never post any pictures of my body on Facebook

There is one girl in particular who posts “I am a Law student , the struggles of being a Law student’’, it makes you a bit inferior when I see a cute girl and a cute guy together it makes you a bit jealous because you also want someone in your life

Interview8

I use Facebook when I wake up in the morning check my updates, whenever I am at the LAN I use Facebook while I am doing my school work , so I can check up on my friends, I check updates before I sleep basically I am always on Facebook to check what is going on

Initially when I started it was for people to see what I was about, but now I don’t upload much, but basically check what is going on, because people always post about themselves and their personal lives just to catch up and make myself feel better or worse

I have sites on Facebook such as the psychology sites where I read my articles or my school work; sometimes you have a group on Facebook where they update stuff about the class or groups for assignments

How I portray myself on Facebook I am not stanced on any beliefs so I AK open to whatever it is that I see on Facebook I am very musical so I copy lyrics and update them, University life has opened me to how diverse university is , when I got here last year I met different cultures it has helped me to see different activities and organisations such as poetry,BASCO,so Facebook has opened me up to the university life it has helped me to connect with the university at large , there are different kinds of things that happen at university Facebook connects me to the university

Facebook doesn’t hinder my social life, it assists me, for example of I’m doing my school work ill have tab opened at the back, ID get a message from my friend saying ‘I’m at the LAN ‘ , so it assists me to socialise while doing my work, so everyone is always on their phones connected to Facebook because of the free Wi-Fi

Facebook is the only means of communications so far since I don’t have a phone so I use my laptop when I need to communicate with family so I contact my brother and my sister who so ever

I am vulnerable, I don't feel complete without it, because I feel like I need to see something, with regards to safety issues, I recently changed my password and made it hard because people hack accounts, but I don't really share personal stuff on Facebook, I don't disclose anything that is private, but in my inbox there is personal info, but for the public to see no

Facebook has a culture of its own the new age culture new generation new funk, people are very free, its liberating on Facebook, culture that emancipates people , people are free to post anything, in a positive way it opens new doors to new cultures , new identities helps you find yourself, you find people updating things that you are like oh my word I am against that , because without seeing that you wouldn't consciously say this is what I am so you are like I will delete it of my image, because Facebook is your image, the negative side is that it doesn't make you live in the moment in the sense that you live there but you are also somewhere else, a social life fabricated and restricted to the internet so you are not communicating to the person next to you , but the person online

Beneficial as a female I have an image to keep to , I have fashion stuff there that helps me to keep up to, what is trending what's not , so it helps me in that way, I t hinders because I may be caught up those things and not the reality of "this is me", so it makes me want things that are not there at the moment , I wouldn't say I compete with other people but I might have jealousy because I would want whatever that person had plus Facebook has adverts it's like a marketing place where they adverts that sell stuff , they make you want and want

Interview 9

I use it every day, once every hour, just to check on my updates

Facebook is useful for when there are things like protests on campus and things happening at school , it keeps you barest with things that are happening , does it have a negative impact?, I think that not , I am not saying that people can't differentiate between Facebook and school time To an extreme extent all my family and friends use Facebook if I can't reach you anywhere I always go on Facebook, classmates when they need to talk about relevant issues find me on Facebook

No Facebook has upgraded their privacy and security settings; Facebook is worldwide so as a person you need to be vigilant of your use and what you share

I don't think Facebook has an impact on culture in any way because I am able to separate the two, it's something you use and when you are done, you are done and get back to life

I don't struggle but other people do they post pictures that they thought were appropriate at that time, but are not as an appropriate at a time later, I feel like you can remove such but

Female Users and Male Users of Social Media Sites pages

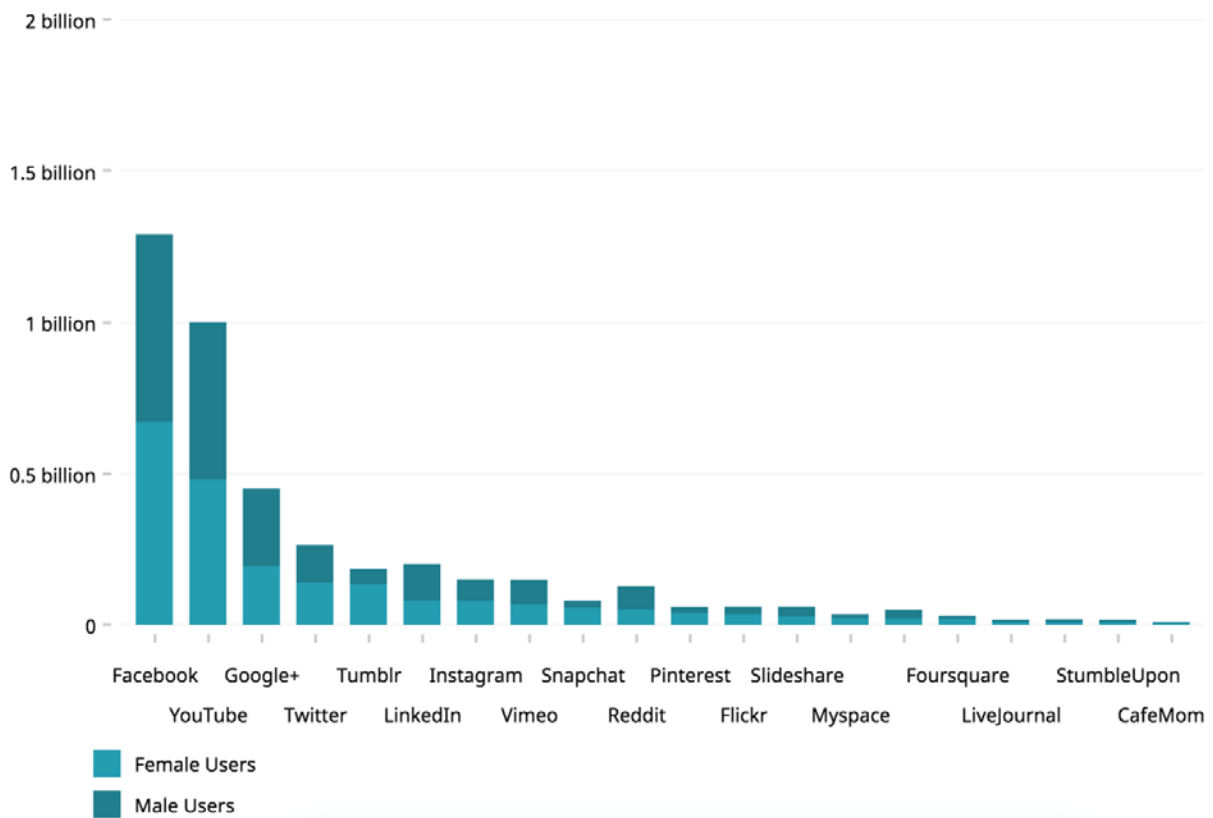


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