Virtual ontology, moral responsibility and agency: The ethical implications of mobile communication technology use on parenting style in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Thando Nkohla-Ramunenyiwa

Student no. 214550356

Supervisor: Dr Beatrice Okyere-Manu

Thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of the Doctor of Philosophy

in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics

2017

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Pietermaritzburg

DECLARATION

I, Thando Nkohla, have fully read the rules of the University of KwaZulu-Natal on plagiarism and I declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated is my own work under the supervision of Dr Beatrice Okyere-Manu. The thesis has not been submitted to any other institution of learning either in full or in part for any academic award.

Signature (student)   Date: 14 January 2017

Signature (supervisor)   Date: 14 January 2017

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an analysis of the usage of smartphone technology by teenagers in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. This technology seems to be a two-edged sword: on the one hand, it is beneficial for teenagers to keep in touch with each other and with their family members without being confined by geographic borders. On the other hand, this technology provides teenagers access to virtual ontology which can challenge their agency. This challenge can compromise the moral responsibility of parents. When teenagers are glued to their smartphones whilst engaging in virtual ontology, they seem to socially remove themselves from the family setting. Parents are not always sure what exactly their children are engaging in whilst navigating virtual ontology. This thesis contextualises this problem into an African context. It establishes that in the African family, premised on values of interconnectedness and interrelatedness, the habit of smartphone usage by teenagers socially isolates them from their families and undermines the communal nature of the African family.

The literature review in this thesis further exposes some of the ethical implications faced by parents and their teenagers, such as the issue of privacy, trust, responsibility, etc. The focus group interviews conducted with teenagers from Pietermaritzburg schools confirmed the existence of various ethical implications, establishing that the digital divide between parents and children plays a huge role in these existing implications. The thesis also reveals the perceptions of the parents through individual interviews, where parents expressed their sense of moral responsibility regarding the smartphone usage of their teenage children.

In an attempt to address the challenge faced by African parents, this thesis proposes a holistic ethical perspective called the ethic of systemic coherence. This perspective requires African parents to deconstruct in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility in this technological age. This could enable them to lean towards a parenting style that will be helpful in keeping up with the exponentially developing smartphone technology used by their teenage children.

DEDICATION

To my daughter, Adivhaho Vuyokazi Ramunenyiwa,

and

My late father, Kenneth Vuyo Nkohla

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE:
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

There have been a number of debates surrounding the use of technology over the years which outline both positive and negative consequences. Scholars like Martin Heidegger have described how technology has been used to achieve humankind's ends and how it capacitates the execution of tasks (Heidegger 1954, cited in Dreyfus and Spinosa, 2003). An alternative view of technology from scholars such as Hans Jonas is the idea that if technology is in the hands of an irresponsible person, it can present undesirable consequences (Jonas, 1984 in Morris, 2014). Considering both the positive and negative discourse surrounding the outcomes of technology, this research explores the ethical implications of mobile communication technology use by teenagers on the moral responsibility of African[1] parents. This technology that is constantly changing technology exerts considerable pressure on parents, which influences parenting style. Sarita Yardi and Amy Bruckman recognised effective parenting style as striking a balance between parents [responsibility] and agency of children (2011:2). With the introduction of technology, this balance may be compromised because parents do not know how far they should go in providing moral guidance. This argument suggests that African parents would have to deconstruct in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility in order to influence their parenting style to complement the constantly changing technology. In this context, it makes it worthwhile to develop a theory which is both relevant for the African parent and the technologically developing world to provide some form of guidance that can be recommended to African parents.

Against this backdrop, this chapter aims to provide the structure and plan of this research study, commencing with the purpose of the project. The purpose of this research requires discourse through which this research can be conversed. The aim of the literature review was to provide a holistic view that gives insight to an open-minded approach to this study. With the help of the identified research objectives discussed under preview of methodology, this research is empirical in nature. The study is framed by three theories, namely Agency theory,

---

[1] African in the context of this study refers to a person born and bred in Africa

Consequentialism and a Theory of Responsivity. The limitations of this research are also discussed as well as the strategies used to work around them.

1.1 Background

Contemporary youth are born into a technologically advancing world, making them natives of this technological world that has become so digital. The evolving nature of technology, mobile communication technology that teenagers have access to constantly and carry everywhere, introduces a unique responsibility for parents, including South African parents. Bennett, Maron and Kervin (2008) claimed teenagers and children today can be described 'digital natives'. Their parents, on the other hand, who were not born directly into technological advancement are labelled by Prensky (2001) as 'digital immigrants' [and or strangers]. Parents thus have a moral responsibility over their children's use of mobile communication technology and at the same time are dependent on the children to teach them how to use these technological devices. An African proverb, "When drummers change their beat the dancers must also change their steps", describes dynamic mobile communication technology and proposes a deconstruction and reconstruction of parenting style to alter to keep abreast of technology. Technical competency becomes essential in parenting in this technological age. This technical competency, combined with African communal values, should provide a method by which African parents can deconstruct and reconstruct their current moral responsibility. Having outlined the background to this study, the motivation behind the study is now introduced.

1.2 Motivation for this study

This study is motivated by the researcher's exposure to the work of Hans Jonas "The imperative of responsibility – In search for an ethic for the technological age" (1984). The researcher was particularly interested in the search for an ethic that complements this technological age. Jonas's research is not limited to technology; it considers other important areas of life in the midst of technological development. The focus of this thesis is the family unit, in particular the African family. In addition to the balance of parental responsibility and the agency of teens, as mentioned in the introduction, parents are faced with another dilemma. On the one hand, mobile communication technology enables parents to keep in touch with their children when they are not within their reach and can expose their children to educational platforms that can assist with school assignments, downloading of educational material, and other benefits. On

the other hand, the same mobile communication technology provides teenagers access to communication in virtual worlds, exposing them to cyber bullying and alienation from the family and the real, tangible world. The environment they can be exposed to is an addictive virtual world of social networks, video games, music videos etc, and the content can be inappropriate.

The constantly changing mobile communication technology in post-colonial Africa challenges the customary African way of raising children that is premised on communitarian values. Mabovula proposed that African communitarianism is embedded in African cultures and practices, encouraging a lifestyle of interdependence and intersubjectivity seen in African communal living (2011:38). Mobile communication technology's ability to encourage alienation of African teenagers from their communal setting introduces the conception of a new, unfamiliar dynamic in the African parent-child relation. When teenagers are in a family setting, they become occupied in the virtual world through their smartphones to a point where they become socially detached. Hence, Mabovula (2011) claimed that they become detached from communal values of "ethical reciprocity" and interconnectedness. It is not only detachment; but also the agency of the detached teenagers when navigating the virtual world. The purpose of this study was for the researcher to explore the implications of the use of mobile communication technology on parents' moral responsibility.

1.3 Research problem
What are the ethical implications of mobile communication technology, as a gateway to virtual world, on moral responsibility of parents and children's moral agency?

1.4 Key research questions
1. What has been the ethical discourse surrounding mobile communication technology?
2. How does virtual ontology clash with parents' moral responsibility towards children?
3. In what ways have mobile phone technologies disrupted and reconfigured parenting practices in post-colonial Africa?

1.5 Research objectives
1. To examine the discourse surrounding mobile communication technology;

2. To explore virtual ontology and its impact on moral responsibility of African parents; and

3. To identify the ways in which mobile communication technology devices have disrupted and reconfigured parenting practices in post-colonial Africa.

1.6 Preview of methodology

The method of investigation involved a literature review of library books and academic journal articles. Interviews were also used: focus groups with teenagers at high school and individual structured interviews with parents.

Both probability and non-probability sampling were used in this research (Babbie, 2013:127). Babbie defined probability sampling as a method of selecting participants based on "random selection" (2013:132). Two high schools in Pietermaritzburg, one in suburbs and one in township, were randomly selected for this research. The aim was to include socio-economic diversity within the sample. Socio-economics can affect the communication technology devices that students have access to and how they engage in social networks.

Fundokuhle Secondary school is a public high school located in the township Imbali in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. It is regarded as a previously disadvantaged school because during apartheid (pre-1994), it was part of the low-level Bantu education system and school management which were (and still are) the distinguishing features of township schools. As a result, the school currently still does not have adequate facilities for learners, such as sporting facilities and computers for learners. The school is a mixture of both girls and boys who are predominantly Zulu speaking. It has learners from grade 8 to grade 12 (14-18 year-old teenagers). There is no diversity in terms of race; it is an all-African school. Learners come from the local neighbourhood of the township so their socio-economic backgrounds are quite similar; the learners are from working class homes. This means that the parents interviewed from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) were predominantly working class and local to the Imbali community.

The second school, Alexandra High, is a public high school in the Pietermaritzburg suburb of Pelham. It is a racially diverse school, with both girls and boys from grade 8 to grade 12 between the ages of 14 and 18. It is considered a 'Model C' school which is classified as an advantaged school, historically and currently, as it provides adequate sporting facilities and computers for learners. Children in this school are not only diverse in race but also come from

a range of socio-economic backgrounds where there is a combination of township and suburb learners from working class to middle class families. This means that parents in the PTA at Alexandra are parents from both working class and middle class who live in the surrounding areas of the school or close to the school.

Babbie (2003:128) argued that non-probability sampling entails sampling that is not based on chance; it is based on purpose. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to select pupils (girls and boys) between the ages of 16 and 18. As a relatively mature group of high school students, they could interact well in a focus group. Purposive sampling was also used to select parents with children from 16-18 years from the school PTA. Parents were interviewed individually rather than in focus groups. Snowballing was used as a sampling technique: initial parents selected from the PTA recommended other potential parents.

Ten parents were selected from the township and ten parents from the suburbs. No translator was required for either focus groups or the structured interviews as the researcher can speak both English and isiZulu which are the common mediums of instruction in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). In the event of students (or parents) providing un-anticipated answers about mobile communication technology devices that the researcher was not prepared for, such as pornography, cyber bullying, explicit content on the Internet accessed through smartphones, etc., the researcher referred students and parents to the school's counsellor.

In terms of methodological approaches, this study made use of a critical approach (Peter Knorringa and Irenevan Staveren "Beyond social capital: A critical approach", 2007) which involved recognising that social relations are not restricted from exhibiting negative factors, such as the negative factors that mobile communication technology use can have on family relations, especially parent-child relations. The theoretical frameworks were used to assess the ethical implications of mobile communication technology use on moral responsibility of African parent and the moral agency of teenagers.

Kay Lopez and Danny Willis in their paper "Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contribution to nursing knowledge" described a descriptive approach in research as essential for providing a description of the research subjects and the research problem (2004:727). A descriptive approach was useful in this research for describing the current context of mobile communication technology in the family and comparing this with families in South Africa prior to the introduction of this technology.

Content analysis as explored by Duriau, Reger and Pfarrer (2007) in their paper "A content analysis of the content analysis literature in organization studies" confirmed that content analysis is an important qualitative research methodology tool for "understanding the cognitive schema of people (research participants)". The choice of words that participants use in answering questions reveals underlying themes that are useful for analysing interview content and applying theoretical frameworks.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The following three theories were used to guide this research: Agency, Consequentialism, and Hans Jonas' "A theory of responsibility".

1.7.1. Agency

The literature review revealed the benefits and shortcomings of the virtual ontology faced by today's teenagers'. Agency is a term which has been part of our discourse for many years, especially during the Enlightenment era. During this time, scholars such as Immanuel Kant presented an ethical view of human agency, where [ethical] human action is premised on freedom and rationality, as mentioned by Irwin in Hyman and Steward (2004:139). Human agency as used by Kant should not be confused with agency. Agency was defined by Shalom Schwartz as the human ability entailing intangible mental states that humans can mentally ascribe to,(1990). Human agency, on the other hand, as used by Kant, is the agency which goes beyond an "ascribed mental state"; it entails freedom and rationality when acting, which is the agency that will be used in this study. Michael Luck and Mark d'Inverno claimed that human agency is autonomous agency, because the freedom and rationality that humans have can enable them to act based on what they desire, or act based on motivation and intentions (1995:2). This idea is important in addressing the autonomous agency of teenagers in virtual ontology.

Virtual ontology in mobile communication technology devices is a world on its own, which arguably has structures or an 'architecture' that keeps it going. It would therefore be necessary to present autonomous agency not within isolation but within a structure. Karp and Masolo introduced a definition of agency by Kratz, who outlined agency as embracing a person as being culturally shaped by phenomena that influence one's effects on the world; these phenomena include certain rights, abilities and responsibilities (2000:137). Agency also includes how one manages one's actions and the effects this has on others. This definition of agency by Karp and Masolo is not only sociological, in the sense that it acknowledges the idea

of humans as actors within society being shaped by socially constructed structures to behave the way they do, but it also highlights an important dualism necessary for this research. This dualism is the agency/ structure dualism which is seen in the work of scholars such as Giddens and Marx.

Agency in this research is looked at according to Anthony Giddens and Karl Marx, as their notion of agency is coupled with structure. The agency of teenagers in a virtual world is influenced by the structure of the virtual world in which they are operating. In illustrating the idea of structure, Giddens introduces a general understanding of structure commonly used by functionalist authors such as Spencer, the idea that structure involves "patterning of social relations or social phenomenon" (1984). Giddens (1984) argued that what comes with this understanding of structure, on the one hand, is the duality object/subject, where structures are seen as being 'removed' from human action. On the other hand, structure in this general sense is also seen as outside of time (and space). For Giddens, the idea of structure feeds off both notions of structure, as he pointed out that both are instrumental in understanding the structuring of social relations and perpetuation of "situated practices" (1984:17)

Giddens also described an understanding of structure through the lens of social analysis, the idea that it involves "rules of transformation governing the matrix" (1984:17). Giddens pointed out that rules are, by their nature, transformational, which is why he was able to present a structure as relating to "structuring properties allowing the 'binding' of time-space in social systems, the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them systematic form", (Giddens, 1984:17). The structures of virtual ontology witnessed in social media platforms have created timeless structures for teenagers, which can play a role as they navigate social media. Depending on the teenager, the way social media is navigated can result in positive or negative consequences. This leads to the second theoretical framework, consequentialism.

1.7.2. Consequentialism
Martin Peterson stated that consequentialism is the normative ethical theory which states that the morality of an action can be judged by the consequences resulting from the action, (2003:403). Prominent thinkers who have been associated with consequentialist ethical theories are Jeremy Bentham who later influenced the work John Stuart Mill. The strand of consequentialism which the two thinkers adopt is utilitarianism, which adds in the element of utility in the outcome of an action. By utility, Bentham and Mill refer specifically to an outcome

that satisfies the greatest number of people as described by Simon Blackburn (2001) in "Ethics: A very short introduction". Consequentialism in this study, will be used in its customary sense as defined by Peterson (2003).

This research has used the concept of consequentialism in exploring the consequences of mobile communication technology used by teenagers on parenting, particularly the moral responsibility of African parents. This can influence African parenting styles, particularly in terms of the impact on the values instilled in children by their parents.

Consequentialism is a theory which is often contrasted with deontological ethics, where consequences are not used as a measure to judge an action; instead it is the nature of the act itself that is evaluated. Kant, as one of the prominent figures of deontological ethics, based his theory on sought principles which he presented through the idea of universal obligations, or the moral law, as presented by Brady and Dunn (1995:394). In as much as Consequentialism is contrasted to Deontological Ethics, the latter is not used as a theoretical framework, only the former is one of the traditional ethical theories used as a framework for this study.

1.7.3 A Theory of Responsibility

Hans Jonas sought to find an ethic applicable to this technological age. Jonas presented this ethic as one that does not restrict human action and responsibility to the human condition. Jonas states that the removal of this restriction is essential because man is living in a modern world that is constantly developing technologically (1984:1). This technological development influences the nature of human action and therefore changing human action. Jonas then formulated the premise: with altered human actions, there should also be altered ethics, an ethics that is not grounded to unchanging tradition. It is clear that Jonas was suggesting a direct relationship between ethics and human action. Modern technology that changes human action should be accompanied by a changing ethic for changing human action.

Previous technology ethics, according to Jonas, embraced ethical neutrality as far as humans' relation with that which is non-human is concerned, and was solely anthropocentric (1984:4). What makes this problematic would be that firstly, ethical neutrality is passive regarding moral duties that one needs to perform. This idea could be applied in this research regarding technology and social networks, where even in their use of technology, humankind can easily be spectators of improper or irresponsible use of technology and social networks. The other issue is that a purely anthropocentric ethic is insufficient when applied to non-human phenomena such as technology. An anthropocentric ethic is sufficient for intersubjectivity, but

as far as the non-human such as technology is concerned, the anthropocentric ethic needs to be revised.

John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism ethic, for instance, can easily fall into the trap of anthropocentricism as it is concerned with the greatest happiness for the majority (of humans), it maximises pleasure and decreases pain (for humans), and can therefore be about attaining humans interest (Blackburn, 2001:76). For the purpose of this research, a starting point that is anthropocentric will be useful, because irresponsible or even responsible use of technology concerns humans who design this technology and then use it. But there are also non-human factors to consider, such as the technological instruments themselves. In this case "A theory of responsibility" by Jonas (1984:90) becomes a useful framework to deal with phenomena that involve both humans and non-human features, which is technology.

1.8 Significance of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyse the ethical implications introducing communication technology devices in households. In this study, these implications are those which concern parents, regarding the use of smartphones by their teenage children. With parenting styles immersed in values such as communitarianism and interconnectedness, African parents are faced with the dilemma of adjusting this parenting style to the constantly developing technology of their teenagers. The ethical implications which this study aims to analyse feed off each other because the use of smartphone usage by teenagers expose their agency to an intangible, virtual world which does not have the presence of the authority of their parents. Thus, teenagers can behave outside the paradigm of values such as African communitarianism and interconnectedness. What is the responsibility of the African parent in this regard? This study, through discussion with parents and teenagers, aims to develop an ethical perspective that will provide the African family with a holistic approach in dealing with the introduction of communication technology within the family. The prominence of this current occurrence within modern families makes this study worthwhile.

The overall purpose of the study is to analyse the responsibility of parents when smartphone technology is brought into the household. Parents of this technological age seem to have an important role to play when it comes to the smartphone usage of their teenagers. At an age where peer pressure is inevitable, where teenagers are still getting to know who they are, their behaviour on social media platforms can be dangerous. Within this virtual world arises an

ethical complication, where conflict between what they have been taught at home and the expectations expressed on social media platforms are inevitable. A holistic ethical perspective is required by the African family. A hands-on approach from both the parents and their teenagers is required in order synchronise the harmony of the parent-child relation with the rapidly developing technology that is now featured within the home. Leung and Lee (2011) in their paper "The influence of information literacy, Internet addiction and parenting style on Internet risks" advocate 'hands on' parenting style in this technological age.

1.9 Structure of the study

Chapter One has introduced the study by providing an overview of the research. It begins with the background of the study and provides a motivation behind the study. This motivation is enhanced by the literature review which sets the scene for this research. To provide guidance for the research, the objectives of the study are highlighted and will be explored further. The research methodology is described and reveals the empirical nature of this research and provides a brief overview of the selection of respondents, research location, limitations of the research, etc.

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework of this study, introducing 'agency' (human agency) as an essential theoretical framework that has given the study guidance when it comes to the agency of teenagers in virtual worlds. This will be helpful in revealing why parents in post-colonial Africa could be motivated to deconstruct and reconstruct a parenting style which can complement the technological era. Consequentialism will be important in discussing the ethical implications of mobile communication technology use given the many consequences of mobile communication technology. Jonas's "A theory of responsibility" will also be used as part of the theoretical framework that guides the study. This is applicable to both parents (in terms of moral responsibility) and teenagers (in terms of whether their agency in the virtual world comes with being responsible for their actions).

Chapter Three describes technology and social networks to assist with understanding how these have ethical implications for the family. This chapter will address the first research objective concerning the discourse surrounding information communication technology. Various debates about the nature of information communication technology devices are presented, as well as what teenagers are confronted with as they navigate this intangible space. One of the many

issues they are faced with is the digital divide, which could be based on technology literacy, socio-economic background and even the exposure that a teenager has regarding technology.

Chapter Four aims to address the second research objective, where the goal is to explore virtual ontology and its impact on moral responsibility of parents. This chapter outlines parenting in the context of African communitarianism, where parenting style is influenced by respecting elders, the belief in a higher power and community-centred life (communitarianism). Parenting in the African context is contrasted to Western parenting, revealing extended and nuclear structures which may also be contributing factors to parenting style.

Chapter Five describes the research methodology of this study, providing more background on the fieldwork data that follows. This data comes from the focus group discussions with teenagers from two Pietermaritzburg high schools. The data concerns the perceptions of these teenagers regarding smartphone technology. These perceptions shed light on the third research objective of the study, which is to identify the ways in which mobile communication technology devices have disrupted and reconfigured parenting practices in post-colonial Africa.

Still addressing the third objective, Chapter Six outlines the reactions of parents revealed in individual interviews. These reactions by parents are informed by the perceptions of teenagers from the previous chapter and together they address the third objective of the research.

In Chapter Seven, the data captured from both the focus groups and the interviews is analysed using the theoretical frameworks of agency, the theory of responsibility and consequentialism. Content analysis was used to analyse interviews. Themes developed by the researcher were used to analyse the content provided by both teenagers and parents from focus groups and interviews.

In Chapter Eight, the researcher proposes a perspective to assist parent-teenager relations in the context of communication technology devices.

In Chapter Nine, a summary of the whole study is provided, followed by a conclusion which closes the study.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the reader to the changing nature of technology and its implications on parenting in this technological age. This has laid the foundation for the discussion of the

purpose of the study, which introduced Hans Jonas' work "The imperative of responsibility: In search for an ethic in the technological age". This work motivated the researcher to address the impact of the changing nature of communication technology on the family front, highlighting how it could affect the moral responsibility of parents. To address this, research objectives were developed to guide the study. The study is concerned with an African perspective which varies from the Western context provided in the literature review. In addition to describing the empirical nature of this study, this chapter identified three theories that were used to frame this research, namely agency theory, consequentialism and a theory of responsibility. The next chapter will explore these three theories in more detail, highlighting how each theory will contribute to the progression of the research.

CHAPTER TWO:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Modern technology has introduced actions of such novel scale, objects, and consequences that the framework of former ethics can no longer contain them." Hans Jonas (1984)

2.0 Introduction

The above statement by Hans Jonas is an important premise for this study. It encompasses the three theoretical frameworks instrumental in guiding the thesis. Asserting that modern technology has "introduced actions of novel scale" sets the scene for human existentialism in the context of technology, introducing humans as agents who produce "actions of such novel scale". The "agents" idea reveals the first theory that guides this thesis. In this research, agency signifies the agency of teenagers in their use of modern technology, in particular communication technology devices. This agency of the modern-day teenager is accompanied by consequences, good and bad, introducing consequentialism as the second theoretical framework. The third theory guiding this thesis is Jonas's theory of responsibility. This theory will be discussed from the standpoint of the parents of the modern-day teenagers in question.

2.1 Agency

With the introduction of technology, human agency has gained more attention of academic and daily discourse, and has become a substantial part of how humans experience the world in both public and private spaces. With communication technology, in particular, the boundaries between private and public spaces have become blurred; humans can communicate far beyond their door steps and national borders. Furthermore, there is a new dimension of how humans navigate such vast space. Agency, as a tool of navigation in this vast space introduced by technology, is an important framework in this research. Agency is used to analyse the actions (and behaviour) of teenagers in the vast world to which communication technology devices expose them.

2.1.1 Agency definition

Agency is a term used by several scholars in different disciplines and in different capacities. Scholars such as Fredriech Hegel and Immanuel Kant mentioned in Pippin (1991: 532), Marx,

(1867) and Bourdieu (1977) are among the prominent figures who have used the term either implicitly or explicitly. Quante shared Hegel's philosophical view of agency and introduced the idea of "subjective (and moral) will" (2004:7). This "subjective and moral will" for Hegel captured the primary criteria for one to be called an agent producing action. Hegel's concept of agency was inspired by human will that is either subjective and or moral, because it is at that point that action is conceived. This view of "will" as a condition of agency is seen in the work of Kant. Bandura (2000:75) further developed the notion of "will" mentioned by Kant by providing a cognitive essence to this notion of the "will" in human agency. He claimed that the presence of the "will" in human action not only suggests the intention of human action in agency, but also empowers humans to create their cognitive environment which informs their experience as agents. In other words, humans are agents by virtue of being cognitive beings who can rationalise when conducting an act. A simpler, less complex manner in which one could understand agency is informed by the fact that humans perform actions (good or bad) (McCann, 1998). The ability of humans to perform an act is unlike that of animals, as human actions are encouraged by an objective that a human expects to achieve in performing an act. This objective that the agent envisions in action is accompanied by the abovementioned views of Hegel and Kant regarding will and rationality. Agency can therefore be summarised as the ability that humans have to perform an act. This act is inspired by a goal that the act aims to achieve, and that goal is obtained through reason. For example, for a person that performs the act of studying, the goal is for the betterment of self in order to get a better job or increase the scope of opportunities. This demonstrates that reason was used to attain that goal.

2.1.2. Types of agency

As described previously, agency is used in many different disciplines which implies that agency has considerable scope and can arise in diverse forms. In the discipline of ethics, the notion of agency seems to take on a more individual aspect, but in the discipline of sociology, it takes a more collective/structural perspective. These two aspects of agency will be the areas of focus in the agency section of this research. The discussion begins with individual agency followed by collective/structural agency.

2.1.2.1 Individual agency

Immanuel Kant described the term agency as "the will behind the actions", which he argued is premised on freedom as a condition of moral action. This implies that arriving at a will in moral action stems from freedom that an individual has and is not encouraged by any form of coercion, (1873). Placing reason on a pedestal has implications for the agency of humans, as reason

works hand in hand with freedom as far as moral action is concerned. This is because with reason, humans have the freedom to justify their actions; they do not act under coercion or indoctrination which enlightenment does not encourage. Kant made known the motto of Enlightenment as having "…courage to use your own understanding" (1873:1). It is an era that encouraged individual independence in thinking and acting, hence recognising that individual freedom that can be achieved in performing an act (Kant, 1873:1). This line of thought and principle during this time was clearly influential as it emanates in future works of Kant and Hegel. This individualistic thinking on agency was also identified by Gubrium and Holstein (1995: 555) who argued for the linkage between agency and individuality, where the individual is the producer of action (an individual centric idea to agency). Actions come from and are produced by the agent, through their own cognition and free will.

Free will is not a term that can be discussed in isolation, for instance; from what is the agent free? In this research, it translates into the idea that in certain instances, the free will of the agent is compromised when acting. One of the phenomena compromising individual agency lies beyond individual: structures external (sometimes internal) to human agents which influence how they behave. This is often referred to as the agency and structure discourse.

2.1.2.2 Agency and structure

Human agents do not live in a vacuum, making agency an element of their being that is not isolated. Agents act within a system or structure in which can either embrace or disregard freedom and will in agency. Scholars Karp and Masolo introduced a definition of agency that incorporates structure, which is often seen as a more sociological perception of agency. Their definition outlined agency as the idea that embraces a person as being culturally shaped by phenomenon that influence one's effects on the world; these phenomena include certain rights, abilities and responsibilities (Karp and Masolo, 2000:137). The use of the term agency in this context implies that agency does not exist within structures, such as cultural structures which can potentially inform how one experiences the world. Agency could then be understood as the apparatus which humans use to navigate through systems, structures, and their environment.

The Communist Manifesto (1848) by Marx reveals the agency of humans within the socially constructed class system. Marx was moved by the working life of the proletariat and described how the proletariat was exploited by the capitalistic system brought on by the Industrial Revolution. Agency in this regard is now discussed in the light of structure; hence the dualistic debate of agency/structure comes into being, which is further elaborated in Weber's interpretation of human agency in the class system. Weber contextualised the class system

based on modernity. Weber used the metaphors 'iron cage' and 'steel hard housing' to describe modernity (1919:79). Iron represents the early phase of modernity, which is the Industrial Revolution in Britain; as modernity developed over the years, it becomes more flexible, and hence is illustrated with the "steel-hard house" metaphor (steel is a more flexible element than iron). Scott (1997) presented the idea that steel is an element that is flexible at any temperature, making it 'material of high industrialism', and could arguably represent modernity at a more advanced level. So, the 'steel-hard housing' metaphor could be interpreted as a confined structure in which modern humankind has been placed, like the hard case that cocoons as well as contains humans and their agency.

Scott further explored the Weberian idea of modernity, revealing how Weber associated modernity with the onset of capitalism, a social structure likened to 'a lifeless machine' possessing a 'congealed spirit' (1997). Furthermore, Scott (1997) stated that according to Weber, this 'congealed spirit' has a twofold nature: one fold could be described as a spirit operating in a lifeless machine, which influences people and hauls them into its mechanical operation, an operation determining the fate of workers on a daily basis, subjecting them to rules operating in the structure of this machine called modernity. The second fold of the machine consists of a structure compiled of bureaucracies which organise the operation of the machine and by placing hierarchies and rules in workspace, brings about dominance and obedience.

With this Weberian idea of structure in mind, it follows that his rendition of the class system structure is founded on determinism. This determinism would then breed a compromised agency which is reactive to structures instead of actively performing an act upon a structure. The agency of humans in this case is used to navigate social structures which have already determined the fate of individuals, thereby perpetuating the class system regarding the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The class system is not the only structure used to interrogate the agency/structure binary. Religion is also used to demonstrate this binary. Nietzsche is known for his controversial remarks on religion, especially in the light of religion being seen as a structure.

Grillaert made reference to Nietzsche's idea of how free will is a language construct promoted by Christianity, which Nietzsche argued was not applicable in reality and creates a "deception connection between the agent and the act" (2006: 45). The concept of free will in agency mentioned by Hegel and Kant is contested by Nietzsche as impractical; he also claimed that

Christianity created agency in order to assign punishment and blame for those who do not act as expected. From this, it follows that Nietzsche supported the Enlightenment's praise of science that comes with turning away from religion, as this does not fall prey to the "theologian construct of free will". The concern for Nietzsche thus became a concern for the impracticality of the agency and agent link; thus, he shifted his attention to fatalism that challenged the notion of agency and explored fatalism as a deterministic structure. This calls for further exploration of the agency/structure debate which continues in the post-modern era.

Dornan (2002:305) hailed Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens as prominent post-modern scholars in agency discourse. Dornan did however point out that Bourdieu's conception of agency, unlike Marx, is not entrenched in the subject/object debate which stems from agency/ structure dualism. Marx, for instance, introduced the human subject and the social structure as an object. In a classed society, the bourgeoisie's agency is enabled by their resources while the agency of the proletariat is restricted by lack of resources, which enslaves them within the class social structure (Dornan, 2002:305). What one needs to be aware of is that Bourdieu's dualism when it comes to human agency is more concerned with the dualism of what is internal to humans and how that is portrayed or influenced by that which is external to humans. This internal/external dualism is seen in Bourdieu's entry point regarding the link between what lies external to the individual and how the individual uses agency. He developed the concept of 'habitus' which is defined as being comprised of internal dispositions which are unconsciously internalised and determines how one perceives and acts in the external world (Dornan, 2002:305). There are many examples to demonstrate these internal dispositions. These could entail social structures such as patriarchy, which in different ways, determine how men and women perceive and act in the world.

Bourdieu (1977) went on to argue that the structures which form the *habitus* are themselves structured, and perform the function of structuring. These structures performing structuring are, according to Bourdieu, propagated over time as a structuring that is ordered in such a way that it "lives on" without obeying or being restricted to rules, becoming a habitual practice. This, according to Bourdieu, is the architecture of practice, where human action is confined within this set up, where habitus as internal cognitive structure in humans influences the navigation of the structures external to the human. This idea of the habitus could be understood in terms of ideologies or social constructions, because like the habitus, these structures are abstract and construct society, or rather keep constructing society. These constructions cannot be physically pointed out, but are manifested through practices, rules, values and principles followed by

society. These constructions are perpetuated even in virtual ontology, where patriarchy in such a space is translated onto social media platforms. The definition of social media platforms is elaborated by Boyd and Allison (2007) in Papacharissi (2009) as an Internet based service where individual users (or groups) connect with each other. They provide users with an opportunity to create a profile that they share on this platform, and interact with each other based on the profiles they have created and portrayed on this platform (Papacharissi, 2009:201).

Women that post pictures on social media are expected to look a certain way to get validation from gazing eyes. This gazing eye seems to be more critical than that of tangible society due to the bigger audience (more people to please and more people to get validation from). A study done by Jessica Ringrose, Rosalind Gill, Sonia Livingstone and Laura Harvey (2012) affirmed the above on the gazing eye, but looked explicitly at the teenage community on social media platforms. They highlighted the scrutiny that girls get from boys on social media. When girls put up pictures, they are pressured to look a certain way to be accepted by [social media] society or to get validation (2012:36). This is the structure which the agency of women becomes subjected to, sending the message that women (together with their agency) submit themselves to this structure on social media platforms.

Social media platforms, as contemporary means of communication, carry with them a gendered narrative, where masculinity seems to be gaining strides, which is why the gaze still has strong masculine connotations. This could be the reason why the gaze in social media is more directed at females than males. To support this claim, Hodgson would best describe social media platforms as entailing a gender narrative which can either be based on femininity or masculinity, (2001:8). These narratives could easily be seen from the differing gendered experiences, because male and female experiences in this process of modernity are quite important and differ because of their difference in gender. As a result, how they relate with each other in modernity process may also differ, (Hodgson, 2001:8). Schlyter introduced the woman's body as the starting point of her everyday experiences in her relation to others, which most importantly incorporates the power relations between her as a woman and other(s), (the man) (2009:12). She demonstrated that the power a woman has is negotiating through her body (Schlyter, 2009:13). This negotiation could be with the social structures in society. In the case of this research, these structures could be the ones existing within virtual ontology. Teenage girls being pressured to look a certain way leads to them negotiating their bodies with expectations external to their bodies. This negotiating through bodies applies to teenage boys as well, but is more popular amongst girls because of patriarchy.

18

It follows that the idea of the gazing eye in social media provokes the masculine/feminine boundaries, and it does so in such a way that masculinity is privileged and affirmed and femininity is made inferior and devalued (Hodgson 2001). Yet, the reality is that being subdued to patriarchy in the real world before entering social media can translate to a submission of such a nature even on social media. In light of this, Bourdieu's ideas of "internalised dispositions" which are "attained unconsciously" as characteristics of structures are affirmed by this illustration of patriarchy and the validation of women's bodies.

Giddens described a theory of agency which is not restricted to "unconsciously internalized structures" (Dornan, 2002:307), but permits scope for conscious human action which is goal orientated and accommodates freedom in action. Giddens proposed a theory of action, which is similar to Bourdieu regarding structure and action, but he went further and contended that there is a mutual relation between human action and social structures which is the underlying premise of Giddens' theory of structuration (Dornan, 2002:307). Giddens (1984) argued that what is accompanied by this understanding of structure on the one hand is the duality object/subject, where structures are seen as being 'removed' from human action. On the other hand, structure in this general sense is also seen as outside of time (and space), which introduces the idea of human free will and rationality which are not confined by space and time. Giddens (1979:24) also noted that free will and rationality consent the agents to monitor their conduct within the social structures of which they have knowledge. This validates agents to shape the world or structures they are functioning in and also enables structures themselves to change over time (Dornan, 2002: 307).

There was a backlash against structuralism in America during the times of Giddens' 1970s' work on agency theory. The criticism did not only come from fellow European scholars such as Derrida, but included the American sociologist Talcott Parsons. Being a scholar highly influenced by Kantian ideas on human action, as stated by Munch (1982:771), it was reasonable for Parsons to counter scrutinise structuralism as a theory of human action [agency] where structures are the primary influence of human action. Parsons seemed to revisit Kantian ideas on human action as being founded on freedom and rationality to the extent that his theory of action is called "voluntaristic theory of action", which Parsons attempts is reasonable in articulating social order and rational action. In addition to freedom and rationality as espoused by Kant, Procter (1980:331) argued that Parson's theory of voluntary action was based on the idea that action is dualistic, faced by both the conditional and the normative: the conditional in the sense that humans are conditioned to act by "the imperatives of nature", the normative

comes in because as acting agents, humans in the normative world navigate this world through "effort' that will enable their actions to be effective, in the midst of the efficacy of the conditional "imperative of nature" (Procter, 1980: 332). This voluntaristic theory of action links with social order and rational action in that when rational actors share common social values and abide by these values which determine the absolute goals of actions, they are united and "share and perform co-operative activities". These rational actors, as a collective, perform meaningful actions prompted by their values. These values bind the rational actors together which brings about social order (Turner, 2005: 53).

2.1.3 Argument for agency theory

Bishop (1990) accentuated the idea that what makes agency theory so important is that it provides an answer to an important concern. This concern is based on finding the difference between action and behaviour (1990:11). Although Bishop referred specifically to the causal theory of action[2], the agency/ structure dualism theory was influential simultaneously with the ideas presented by Enlightenment thinkers on freedom and agency. All the mentioned theories provide a sense of what prompts action as stemming from the idea of humans having 'a will', reason, cognisance and freedom. These key words are indicative of how humans are not just passive specimens with no dignity, behaving from instinct. These key words are a reminder that humans have dignity, are active and not passive, and are subjects and not objects. Most importantly, they emphasise that possessing reason and freedom by default qualifies one as an ethical agent, able to consciously make decisions that can have a positive impact on the self as an individual and in society at large.

These positive impacts lead to the second argument in favour of agency theory, which is the argument raised by Giddens in Haralambos and Holborn (2008). This argument is based on the idea that the interaction that humans have with structures can result in positive transformation (2008:889). Examples to demonstrate this include human agents such as activists who interact with social constructions in a way that challenges the status quo, pushing the envelope and defying the odds. Giddens, in Haralambos and Holborn, articulated how agency within social structures does not always have to be conforming behaviour (2008:889). This highlights a transformative aspect of humans as agents and considers how they interact with structures (social constructions). In the context of this research, this would apply to teenagers who would use virtual ontology (namely social media platforms). The expected behaviour of teenagers

---

[2] "to act is to be caused to behave by mental states of one's own – mental states that make the behaviour reasonable in the circumstances" (Bishop, 1990:11)

within this space would be mischievous, given their parents do not have authority over the space and are mostly absent from the space. A teenager that defies the odds in this space and uses social media for meaningful, transformative purposes, even if their parents are not present in that space, is a non-conformer.

2.1.4 The critique of agency/structure

Olssen described the structuralist view of agency theory as one which does not credit the subject's free will in agency; it seems to present agency of humans as being determined by structures (2003: 193). By excluding free will in human action, there is an exclusion of ethical discourse. For ethical action to exist, there needs to be an agent that has both reason and freedom, which seem to be compromised as soon as structures are given precedence over humans.

A shortcoming of the idea of agency in relation to structure was described by Jacobs and Hanrahan (2005:20), building on the ideas of Margaret Archer. Archer claimed that this agency structure discourse falls into the trap of the "fallacy of central conflation", where the agent and (social) structures are conflated and deprived the opportunity of being studied as separate entities. Archer (in Jacobs and Hanrahan, 2005) exposed this fallacy by delineating its three sides: firstly, she showed how agency/structure exposition is confronted by the misconception that agency and structure cannot be discussed without the other, which she proposed is an invalid argument (2005:20). Archer contended that agency in its own right has properties and powers of its own, and also society has its own properties and powers (2000:18). By conflating the two phenomena, Archer claimed one is trapped into a reductionist account of agency (structure) which not a viable route. What Archer wanted to reclaim was "humans as the ultimate (emergent) social life or social cultural structures, rather than subjugating humanity as if it were the epiphenomenon of social forces", (Archer, 2000:18).

Dornan argued in the same vein as Archer. She stated that the agency/structure dualism seems to be portrayed at an individual level, yet this level of analysis ends up being insufficient in the actual dualist situation (Dornan, 2002: 315). The individual focus of analysis enables more complex issues to arise relating to the individual which the agency/structure dualism may not incorporate. Dornan stated that issues such as the daily experiences of individuals from cross-cultural backgrounds of individuals from all walks of life cannot be encapsulated by and be confined with a western understanding of agent/structure theories (2002: 315). In addition to

this, to which actions is the individual as the unit of analysis considered? There are a range of actions which the individual carries out; are they all confined to the agent/structure dualism?

The second perspective of the fallacy of conflation exceeds the epiphenomenon problem in terms of reducing human agency; it nullifies the powers and properties of humans. Archer claimed certain post-modern thinkers were responsible for "the death of man", which was preceded many years by the "death of God"[3] as mentioned by Nietzsche. With reference to the "death of man", the likes of Lyotard and Foucault asserted claims such as "the self does not amount to much", and "man would be erased like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (Archer, 2000:18). Such claims have prompted Archer to conceive the idea of 'downward conflation', which is a conflation that magnifies social powers and displaces human powers and properties enabling human to engage with or resist social structures. This is why Archer's writing aims to resurrect humankind from this death (the seemingly passive state in structures), and highlight the importance of agency of humankind within/against structures.

The last perspective of the fallacy of conflation is 'upward conflation': "In upward conflation, cultural properties are simply formed and transformed by some untrammelled dominant group, which successfully universalises an ideological conspectus to advance its material interests" (Archer in Jacobs and Hanrahan, 2005:20). Having a dominant group in society "forming and transforming" properties can easily allow for minority groups to be submerged by the majority. Simply because a group is dominant, does not mean that this group is the one which promotes ethical ideals.

In addition to the fallacy of agency/structure binary, Archer (2002:459) pointed out yet another criticism of the agency/ structure duality. This had to do with the idea of non-proportionality, where the following question arises: At what point is attention more focused on voluntarism of the individual than determinism and vice versa? (Archer, 1982: 459). In other words, at what point would the agency/structure duality pay more attention to the free will and rationality of the individual and at what point would it pay more attention to structures? This is again where Archer (1982:459) stated that such questions make Giddens' structuration non-propositional.

Another element that feeds into the critique of the agency and structure binary is objectivism, which emphasises the agency and structure binary. This is seen in one of the assumptions of objectivism mentioned by Charalambos Vrasidas, who stressed how the real world is structured

---

[3] The 'death of God' is a metaphor by Nietzsche which portrays the turning away of humanity from God and to praise of Science and reason as ways of understanding the world.

and is independent of the mind of a human (2000:1). The emphasis of the agency and structure in this statement by Vrasidas demonstrates that objective reality is made up of structures that can exist separate from the human mind. This demonstrates the duality of agency and structure, hence fitting the binary fallacy. Bourdieu critiqued objectivism raising the issue of free will, arguing that objectivism restricts an agent from having a "practical relation with the world", (1977:3). To add to this objectivism critique, Bourdieu mentioned an idea by Leah (1962), which supported his claim as it stated that it was impossible to use social constructions to explain human behaviour (1977:16). Leah argued this was the case because by doing this, social scientists are assuming individuals are always not acting freely; they are controlled by social constructions. Leah further argued that individuals can act in a way they can manipulate the constructions and make those constructions work to their advantage (Leah, 1962) in Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu argued in the same vein as Leah, presenting the argument that the practices in the *habitus* are "objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules…" (1977:16).

One could argue that by always using social construction to describe individual behaviour, social scientists disregard the role of human free will and rationality as well as morality, which is what distinguishes human acts from animal acts driven by instinct. By always playing the "social construction card" in explaining human behaviour, social scientists could arguably be equating social constructions in human behaviour to instinct that is driving animal behaviour. In Kantian thought, it is though free will and rationality that individuals act morally or immorally (and which separates the individual from animals). Dornan added to this by stating that there is often the assumption that theories of agency are at the level of the individual; but, on the other hand, by introducing the idea of structures the attention is taken from the individuals (2002: 315). This is problematic because if the aim of agency theory is to address individual agents resisting structures, then the aim is not achieved (Bell, 2002:42).

2.1.5 How agency will be used to guide this research

Agency, from an individual and structural perspective, has been important in guiding this research. In terms of individual agency, teenagers as individuals have their own agency with their own free will and reason, by virtue of being human. As stated previously in the chapter, this was raised by Kant and Hegel. As individuals possessing these qualities of free will and reason, teenagers can be seen as agents who use their agency to navigate the virtual world they access through communication technology devices.

In terms of agency and structure, the virtual world is also a structured ontology, structured by designers, engineers, information technology specialists. The teenager could be like the proletariat, where class can play a role in the teenager's agency, or intuition could play a role or the values instilled into the teenager in his or her upbringing. It is within the architecture of the socially constructed class system that Marx provides an understanding of how the agency of the exploited proletariat contrasts with the agency of the owner of the sources of production, the employer of the proletariat. In the case of teenagers and smartphones, there are several structures which need to be observed in analysing their agency in virtual worlds. This includes intuition of the teenagers that is informed by socio-economic structures. A teenager from the township with knowledge of technology has different skills in the use of technology from a teenager from the suburbs from a private school. In terms of the structure of language, English literacy can be a structure which teenagers use or struggle with in their agency in virtual worlds accessed through communication technology devices. The list is endless when it comes to the discussion of the agency of teenagers and the structures which influence their interaction with technology. These structures will become clearer when analysing the data from teenager focus groups.

2.2 Consequentialism

Consequentialism is one of the so-called mainstream, normative ethical theories. Normative implies that this ethical theory is grounded on promoting norms that are not simply universal, but also serve humans with guidance when encountering "ought" in human action. From here, a definition of consequentialism becomes useful.

2.2.1 Definition of consequentialism

The term 'consequentialism' was coined in the late 1950s by scholar Elizabeth Anscombe; the original term on which it based is utilitarianism. Mathis and Shannon discussed the use of the term 'utilitarianism' by political philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late 1700s, and how this was later developed by John Stuart Mill (2009:103). Today, utilitarianism is viewed as a type of consequentialism, and will be discussed as such, as it is founded on similar principles regarding what is deemed as "right action".

Sosa (1993) defined consequentialism as an ethical theory that values the consequences of an act (rather than the act itself). This definition reveals two things: firstly, it reveals the futuristic nature of this theory that is more concerned about the short and long term effects resulting from

an action. Secondly, the act itself is not valuable in and of itself, which is quite accommodating in terms of the kind of act needed to produce favourable outcomes (Sosa, 1993:101). As revealed by Mathis and Shannon (2009:103), the features of being futuristic and pleasurable are not unique to consequentialism. These features appear as undertones in Aristotelian ethics. Starting with the former, having consequences as a primary criterion of ethical judgement by default espouses the future in which those consequences unfold. By being future oriented, there is a sense of forward looking in performing an act, which provides an attempt to pre-empt the repercussions of an action. Pre-emption is necessary to achieve desirable consequences, and hence allows the actor to put consequentialism into practice. It is for this reason that consequentialism is regarded as having some of its foundations in the Aristotelian ethic on teleology (*telos*)[4], which embraces the futuristic element, and eudemonia[5] which embraces the pleasurable or desirable action, as mentioned by Mathis and Shannon (2009:103).

2.2.2. Types of consequentialism

There are four types of consequentialism, namely: utilitarianism, act consequentialism, rule consequentialism and indirect consequentialism. The following section discusses each type.

2.2.2.1 Utilitarianism

Peter Singer defined utilitarianism as an ethical theory which holds that the rightness or wrongness of an action is seen through outcomes of the act (1994:201). The outcomes or states could either be ones which promote pleasure or bring about pain. Utilitarianism, then, aims to promote pleasure through the "utility/Happiness Principle", where aiming for happiness comes with the intention of achieving pleasure. This happiness which results in pleasure is calculated as a utility, in other words it must be useful in the sense that it must be experienced by a majority of the population (Singer, 2009:201). Utilitarianism received widespread recognition from political philosopher Jeremy Bentham and later his student, John Stuart Mill. Mill further developed the ethical theory of utilitarianism in his 1861 publication "Utilitarianism". Like Bentham, Mill alluded to the idea of maximising pleasure and minimising pain in action, but went further by differentiating lower and higher pleasures with preference for higher pleasures (1879:10). This, for instance, can be demonstrated in a situation where a decision should be made that will affect people; an analysis should be made amongst the people who will be affected by the consequences of an act – they will prefer an act resulting in a higher pleasure.

---

[4] Greek word meaning goal or aim

2.2.2.2 Act-consequentialism

One of the variants of this theory is act-consequentialism, which Scheiffler (1994) portrayed as a variant of consequentialism involving weighing up a series of actions and then choosing the action that would produce the best consequences. Cocking and Oakley classified act consequentialism as direct consequentialism, as the act is directly aimed at achieving consequences which aim for the best consequences (1995). It seems that Cocking and Oakley saw act-consequentialism as generic blueprint of consequentialism, as it is based on the idea that with every cause comes an effect, and hence with every action comes a consequence. When applied with accordance to the objective of act-consequentialism, the act should produce the best possible consequences. The objective nature of this kind of consequentialism has led it to being dubbed as objective consequentialism, highlighted by Carlson in Howard-Snyder (1999). The important feature is that it encourages the agent to exercise his/ her ability to choose, from available choices of action, an act that will produce the most favourable consequences.

Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that the act chosen with the so called most favourable consequences is actually the option with the most favourable consequences (Carlson in Howard-Snyder, 1999). It could be the case that the options from which an act is chosen, in hindsight, could have been more favourable than the chosen option. From this, one could argue that the crux of objective consequentialism could be based on the idea of objective discretion when it comes to choosing an act that will produce the most favourable consequences.

2.2.2.3 Rule-consequentialism

The second variant of consequentialism that is well known is rule-consequentialism. Scheiffler claimed that this type of consequentialism is one which subscribes to particular rules in order to achieve the best consequences (1994). Cocking and Oakley would classify this consequentialism as indirect consequentialism as its primary concern is to abide by certain rules and procedures, then following that procedure, consequences resulting from it will determine whether or not the action is right or wrong (1995). The example here would be the idea of utility, where an agent would want to exhaust all possibilities of actions that will result in achieving utility. If the utility is achieved, it wouldn't be much of an issue if the population affected is the majority, as long as the rules leading to achieving the utility are obeyed. The point is abiding by a rule that will achieve a consequence rather than making the consequence the primary purpose.

2.2.2.4 Indirect consequentialism

Harris stated that in addition to consequentialism being known for actions which can be directly linked with the consequences, it can also be viewed in cases where there is an indirect involvement in the consequences (1974:265). This is indirect consequentialism, which entails an agent's failure to prevent an action leading to bad consequences (Harris, 1974:265). An example to illustrate this would be a whistle blower that receives threats that can harm his or her family. If any family member gets harmed, this whistle blower is arguably indirectly linked with the harm inflicted on his or her family members even though he/she was not the person who directly inflicted harm on the family members. Williams often linked indirect consequentialism to negative responsibility, where the person's failure to prevent a bad consequence from occurring is negatively responsible for the actual occurrence (1985).

2.2.3 Arguments for consequentialism

Mulgan stated that the upside of consequentialism as an ethical theory is that is encourages actions that will make the world favourable to live in, which is arguably the foundation of any ethical theory. The idea of consequentialism seems to support this foundation (2001:14). Promoting actions that produce the best consequences is quite instrumental in making the world a better place.

It is at this point that Mulgan discussed another strength of consequentialism as a theory. He claimed that consequentialism is a theory that is instrumental in promoting actions with the best consequences and as a result makes the world a better place; it is for this reason that Mulgan vouched for consequentialism as the most rational ethical theory (2001: 14). Mulgan expanded on this by presenting the argument that it is a rational ethical theory because it encourages individuals to maximise utility in their actions and also consider the well-being of other agents. From this, Mulgan stated, it can be deduced that consequentialism is impartial and honours equality in the sense that finding the best consequence with maximum utility does not permit bias, but gives room for the best option for the majority. Mulgan did, however, concede that as much as the strength of consequentialism has been highlighted, this very strength is open for criticism (2001:14).

Stubbs (1981) added that consequentialism provides one with a clear measure to determine whether an act is good or bad. Approved actions are ones which affirm pleasure and disapproved actions are ones which affirm pain (1981: 503). Stubbs continued to argue that this is done objectively, as consequences that are external to an individual are not personal and subjective. Using measures external to an individual to judge whether or not an act is wrong

or right suggests that there are no feelings used to make judgement, and this brings about impartiality as a necessary condition of normative theory (1981:503). Impartiality and objectivism are useful in the universalisation of an ethical theory. This element of consequentialism is similar to that of its opposing theory deontology proposed by Immanuel Kant. This similarity of universality that deontology has with consequentialism is found in the categorical imperative (Kant, 1873: 293), which is an imperative stating that one should act in such a way that if one's actions were to be universalised, the world would be a better place. Even with this in common, deontology has an important difference from consequentialism: it is a non-consequentialist theory and looks at the act itself and not the consequences.

2.2.4 Critique of consequentialism

Thomas Nagel, in his paper "The view from nowhere" (1986), provided a critique for consequentialism which benefits this research. This is because Nagel discussed consequentialism in the light of agency. Nagel (1986) stated that consequentialist theory tends to be agent neutral and agent relative. In describing the former, Nagel made the claim that consequentialism, being focused on the happiness or the pleasure of the majority of the population, removes itself from the specificity and identity of an individual. It also regards the happiness and pleasure of one individual as the same as that of the next person. By so doing, it sees the individual agent as merely a number, an object through which consequentialism is calculated, whose happiness is calculated the same as the next individual agent. This is no different from mass produced goods which, because they are all alike, are given the same unit of time and material to be used. It makes consequentialism impersonal when it is in fact applied to individual agents who are people.

What makes this a discredit for consequentialism as a normative ethical theory is that it is meant to guide human agents in their "ought" in action, but if the theory is agent neutral, how does it achieve that? And if the agent is relative, how does it achieve that on a universal, objective platform? If the agent is "just a number through which consequentialism is applied", then no credit is given to the agent as a unique, rational individual that uses reason when performing an act. Mulgan (2001) echoed Nagel's point by stating consequentialism "ignores the separateness of persons", which has implications for the identity and the agency of individuals as there is no acknowledgement that individuals can form a collective and be addressed as such (Mulgan, 2001:17). It does not erase the fact that they are individuals with their own identity, ambitions, goals, human dignity and intentions (to name a few).

Taking on a critique from the vantage point of utilitarianism as a breed of consequentialism, Railton argued that consequentialism can be regarded as an ethical theory that encourages hedonism (1984: 140). Based on the premise that it encourages pleasure and discourages pain, and from this, aims for the maximisation of pleasure, it could follow that utilitarianism as a form of consequentialist theory encourages people to chase pleasure. This then could arguably mean that humans are driven by the same instinct that drives animals to chase pleasure.

This pleasure that needs to be maximised or needed to have utility is one which encourages action to be about utility, making humans constantly calculate how they maximise utility. Kennett coined this constant calculating an "incessant calculating", which defeats the whole point of using ethics and replaces ethics with utility (2003:41). What is important to note in this regard is that this constant calculating assumes that the role of a human is that of a machine, which is constantly calculating. It is as if human rationality is founded on arithmetic formula which humans use to calculate the utility they receive from all the pleasure they pursue and enjoy, affirming hedonism. In the light of utilitarian motives of action, comes another critique presented by Kennett, which states that utilitarian motives can be a restriction to sympathy, and hence easily prevent people from helping others.

2.2.5 How consequentialism guides this study

Consequentialism is a key ethical theory to guide this study because communication technology has both positive and negative consequences. These consequences are vital to consider in the context of the family, especially for parents and their teenage children whose lives are immersed in communication technology devices. This encourages the deconstruction and reconstruction of parenting skills in this modern age in order to adapt to this change in line with teenage lifestyles. The consequences, whether positive or negative, make parents aware of how the modern teenagers are exposed to virtual worlds to a greater extent than before. In its suggestion of an acting agent, one is reminded that consequentialism in the context of this research aims, in particular, to address the consequences resulting from the actions of teenagers using communication technology devices. Some of the consequences of the use of communication technology as used by teenagers can be observed in Jonas's work on human kind, technology and agency (1984:18). Technology can be used for expansion of human lifespans. This consequence is concerned with the level of dependency that teenagers have on communication technology to a point where their agency is at risk of being compromised.

The second consequence mentioned by Jonas entails technology used in controlling human's behaviour, which brings in the question of ethics in teenager use of technology. The third has to do with technology used to genetically manipulate future humans. We need to consider the kind of humans that "technology is breeding". Teenagers of today could be setting the tone for future generations when technology could arguably be developing at a quicker pace. This, in turn, could be pre-supposing a constantly altering parenting style for teenagers.

2.3 A theory of responsibility

The use of technology and the responsibility thereof is a discourse that has gained incredible importance in this technological age. Controversial technological developments with responsibility issues include cloning procedures by doctors, plastic surgery procedures by surgeons, creation of space shuttles by scientists and engineers, etc. What makes this link with technology and responsibility important is not simply the scale of this discourse but also the introduction of ethics. Consider the global crisis seen in phenomena such as the degrading environment at the expense of irresponsible use of technology. The particular responsibility that this research is interested in is that of the African parent in the age of technology where teenage children are spending a considerable amount of unsupervised time in virtual ontology.

2.3.1 What is a theory of responsibility?

Hans Jonas sought to find an ethic applicable for this technological age (1984). This ethic, he believed, should not confine human action and responsibility to human condition. Jonas stated that the removal of this restriction is essential because humans are living in a modern world that is constantly developing technologically and this technological development influences the nature of human action, and hence changing human action (1984:1). Jonas then formulated the premise that with altered human actions, there should also be altered ethics, an ethics that is not grounded on unchanging tradition (1984:1). This ethic involves humans being responsible in the use of technology in a manner that aims to positively influence the world currently and futuristically. This is the kind of ethic which can be applicable to the teenagers using communication technology devices, but also, most importantly, to their parents who have a responsibility of guiding their children. Altered human action, mentioned by Jonas, could be translated to the teenager's actions being altered; today's teenager actions have been altered technologically from the teenagers existing in the generation when Jonas published his book "The imperative of responsibility: In search of an ethics for the technological age". This

suggests that the responsibility of parents in this generation could require some form of altering to keep up with the altered change of their teenagers.

2.3.2 Types of responsibility: Substantive and formal

Gareth Williams pointed out that the use of the term responsibility can be traced as far back as the Aristotelian times during 300 BC and it should be seen as a virtue with a pluralistic nature (2008:455). Williams suggested that this plurality is linked to multiple demands. On an individual level, it was discussed as "that which comes with human agency". This idea revealed by Williams affirmed the critique outlined by Jonas about the "short arm human power" problem that such ethical theories provide, which outlines how these theories deal with the actions done in the now, how actions affect one now and do not look beyond the now and into future generations. Williams (2008:459) provided a definition of responsibility as developed by Max Weber, where (Weber, 1919: 441) stated that responsibility has to do with a person "[bearing] the foreseeable consequences of his or her actions". This perception of responsibility surpasses the now, focusing on the idea that actions live on even in future, through consequences of the act.

Jonas, like Williams, incorporated not only the idea of foreseeable consequences in responsibility but affirmed the idea that responsibility can either be aligned to a state, group, institution or can be aligned to a parent as an individual agent. When it comes to substantive responsibility, which is premised on forward looking responsibility, it placed responsibility on the agent in the sense that it is the caring of an object or subject inspired by the "ought to be" of an object, which incorporates the responsibility of the welfare of the object/subject. Jonas (1984:92) further argued that the "for" in the "responsibility for the welfare of other" indicates that the act of responsibility is intended for the other, which lies outside the individual. As much as this responsibility is one intended for what is outside the individual, Jonas argued that the power for the individual to act is possible in such a situation. It is either there to help or threaten the one that needs to be helped. Jonas argued that in order for one to come closer to this kind of responsibility, one needs to ask the following question "What is meant by irresponsible action?" It can be argued that Jonas's use of welfare to illustrate this responsibility has not done him justice because it hasn't clearly illustrated what he is saying about substantive responsibility.

Jonas (1984:91) labelled this kind of responsibility substantive responsibility, a forward-looking responsibility premised on the care of an object/subject. This responsibility is not

similar to the general understanding of responsibility entailing accountability for deeds. This kind of responsibility can be compared to formal responsibility which entails one being held accountable for his or her deeds, where as an agent, one is the cause of the consequence for which one is accountable. This is the kind of responsibility that previous ethics usually considered in their discourse of the responsibility of an agent.

The responsibility that will be of importance in this research is substantive responsibility which will be the area of focus in this section. Jonas (1984:97) stated that this substantive responsibility can either be allocated on a group level (such as government), or on an individual level (such as a parent). The former level is based on the primary premise "from freest choice", where the group assigned to care for an object/subject does so out of choice, where in doing so the "spontaneous taking over of collective interest" comes which is not brought on by nature but is socially constructed. The arrangement in this social construction is that the object(s)/subject(s) the government is responsible for, are only interacted with from a distance, through organisational structures and systems. The latter could be seen as a natural call of duty, where a parent, as a result of pro-creation is responsible for the well-being of the offspring through "basic naturalness" and not through organisational systems. The object/subject to be cared for in this case is ideally within the proximity of the parent (Jonas, 1984:97).

Jonas (1984:90) mentioned the idea that both parents and government are subjects, and their power as subjects should then be channelled to the "ought-to-do." The subject in this case could be the parents, who ought to do what is expected of them for the benefit of their child: this involves the caring parental love that parents must give to their children. Their children are the "ought-to-be" object whose existence creates a responsibility for their parents. This example makes the substantive responsibility clearer, but insinuates that parental love is the type of love needed to make one substantively responsible or that it is a sufficient condition for an ethical theory. By using this example, it is revealed that the ethics that Jonas is striving for involve a responsibility of non-reciprocal relations that are like those a parent has for his child. In being responsible for the child, the parents are not expecting to get something in return from the child; they want the child to have a good upbringing that will a flourishing life.

2.3.3 Principles of responsibility: Totality and continuity

Jonas stated that responsibility (on the part of the parents and government) is first and foremost grounded on causal power, causal in the sense that there is a manifestation or result from the power of the cause (1984:101). It arises from the act of responsibility. The second condition

which Jonas mentioned is that causal power comes from an agent exerting the power, then finally, the third condition is the consequence arising from the act. These features will only be observed from the parent as a subject, as this research focuses on the parents.

Starting with the first condition, it becomes important to note that for Jonas, totality is an important feature of responsibility which is demonstrated through causal power. Jonas stated that totality encompasses the child, in this case the teenager in the virtual world, from their naked existence since birth to their highest interest (1984:101). This totality reaches into the future of the child that is yet to be lived out, their development since birth till their future, their education, their conduct, their knowledge, well-being, who they become as adults, etc. The parent needs to be cognisant of the nature of totality in the existence of their teenager as a subject they are caring for. In the light of technology and virtual worlds, the parents need to bear in mind the features mentioned by Jonas. How does their children's use of technology feed into their totality, and at what point do parents need to know that this totality is observed and nurtured the way it should in the midst of virtual ontology? This totality brings forth the second dimension of responsibility faced by the parent, which is continuity.

Jonas mentioned continuity; in acknowledging the totality of the nature of their teenagers, parents continue to embrace and nurture that so that their parental responsibility in the totality of their children is not something that comes to a halt at some point (1984:102). It needs to continue, needs to be consistent, especially because the totality of their teenagers is also consistently in existence. This continuity and consistency feeds into the future, which is the third and finally feature Jonas mentioned in his concept of responsibility.

Totality and continuity combined are indicative of a future feature in the feature of responsibility. In mentioning this feature of responsibility, it is important to note Jonas' theory of responsibility as an ethical theory that embraces both sides of ethics: the objective side, being reason and the subjective side, being emotions of ethics. In being instituted by nature, the parent's responsibility is rational and objective in the sense that it is rational for parents to make financial investments for their children's future. Their responsibility also has an emotional, subjective side. The compassion that parents have for a child makes the parent responsible for the well-being of the child and how the child is feeling. Jonas (1984:84) argued that "… truly worth the effort must mean that the object of the effort is good." It should be truly worth the effort for parents when they are responsible for their children, because their aim is for the good, the good for their children to become great people in future. This what is most

important for Jonas' theory on responsibility because it involves a responsibility that is considerate of the future and those who will be living in it.

Jonas's theory of responsibility raises the awareness that modern technology comes with new dimensions of responsibility, which not only has to do with the vulnerability of nature, but also with the 'new role of knowledge in morality'. Jonas claimed that this new role should be one that seeks to close the gap between "the ability to foretell and the power to act" where the former is overtaken by the latter (1984:8). This gap and order is a moral problem because it suggests that "the ability to foretell and the power to act" are not linked, when in fact they are, and again suggests that human action is driven by its power to act before foretelling the consequences that will arise from the action which is an order that is contra to morality.

2.3.4 Arguments for 'A theory of responsibility'

The theory of responsibility contributes to understanding human behaviour in contemporary lifestyles influenced by technology. Modern technology changes human action and we need changing ethics that accommodate this changed human action. Jonas (1984:2) seemed to propose a direct relationship between ethics and the human action, which is an integral dimension of life in the technological age and makes the theory of responsibility relevant. This theory is not stagnant; it aims to move with the changing technology that constantly influences human behaviour. Earlier ethical theories are restricted in their applicability because of the following factors:

1) There was no ethical importance in spheres of non-human entities. Thus, a theory concerning technology and its use would have not been deemed as ethically relevant. There was therefore embraced ethical neutrality as far as human relations with that which is non-human was concerned.

2) Ethical relevance was therefore directed to the human sphere alone, making it solely anthropocentric.

3) Action in the domain of humans was seen by ethical theories as being constant, to the point that the consistency does not re-shape the world.

4) The good and evil of an action was not really traced back to the actor but was instead attached to the action itself.

From these four characteristics, Jonas contended that previous ethical theories all confine human action not only to the human, but to a short-term context, which he claimed was a "short arm of human power" (1984:6). What makes the "short arm of human power" inapplicable to

the technological age is the idea that technology presents humans with an incredible power to act that has long term repercussions. This, for Jonas is the novel moral problem with the previous ethics. He therefore introduced the kind of ethic that would be useful in this technological age. According to Jonas, humans need to "act so that the effects of your action are not destructive of the future possibility of such life" (1984:11). It is clear from this premise that Jonas wanted to deal with the 'short arm of human power' problem by introducing the idea of 'future possibility' as a way of expanding the scope of human action and not confining it to a short time span. Jonas also, importantly, attached action to the actor, and by doing so provided space for accountability, or rather responsibility for an action performed by the agent. In this research, as much as the teenagers are themselves the users of technology, parents have a form of responsibility in the use of technology by their children and the way parents behave will affect the way their teenagers behave. To investigate this responsibility, the term 'responsibility' needs to be re-visited to understand the goal of Jonas' theory.

2.3.5 Critique of the theory of responsibility

The discussion thus far leads to the premise that responsibility is the imperative in humans' use of modern technology. Jonas confirmed this by claiming that it is humans' "duty to preserve the physical world in such a state that the conditions for that presence remain intact" (1984:10). As much as Jonas sought to find an ethic that is applicable to the modern age, he also needed to find a means through which this ethic could be effectively implemented. Living in a contemporary world where human action can be easily driven by liberalism, which encourages the progression of individual man, the system of capitalism can be used as a so-called ethic for the capitalist. The capitalist wants to make profit, but the conditions by which this profit is maintained are not considered. The Kyoto Protocol is a global agreement to address climate change but the countries that abide by the Protocol are unable to influence the USA. There are more platforms through which the ethic of responsibility is compromised, than there are platforms by which this ethic can be upheld. This is the challenge which Jonas' ethic faces.

The second critique of the theory of responsibility is evident in the idea of continuity. Here, Jonas clearly makes the point that responsibility is something that should continue, and should do so bearing in mind totality of the subject. The problem with this statement by Jonas is that the rate at which totality of an individual is affected by the advancement of technology far surpasses continuity. Continuity seems to suggest consistency, and the rate at which the totality of teenagers using virtual worlds is affected by technological advancements is a rate which is

much higher than the continuity which Jonas was proposing. There is an indirect relationship between technological advancements and consistent continuity as a feature of responsibility.

The third challenge of Jonas' theory relates to the time at which his 1984 book "The imperative of responsibility: In search of an ethics for the technological age" was published; at that time many ground breaking technological inventions were coming into being. Baer (1978) described artificial intelligence of computing during the late 1970s and 1980s, where computing played a role in memory devices, in communications, video services, etc. This artificial intelligence seems to have led to the introduction of virtuality, as the Internet became part of computing technology at this time. At this time, those enjoying the use of technology were not anticipating an ethical theory that would be providing enlightenment on moderate use of technology. The other challenge faced by Jonas in publishing this work is mentioned by Wiese (2007:xxvi) as being related to him as a Jewish writer writing for a secular audience.

2.3.6 How the theory of responsibility guides this study

This research aims to keep up with constantly changing modern day technology, such as communication technology devices. Teenagers are currently so immersed in these technologies that the responsibility of their parents becomes an important issue to consider. The parents, in their responsibility of their teenagers, are in a situation where they need to deconstruct and reconstruct their parenting styles in a way that complements Jonas' idea of 'the new role of knowledge in morality". This new role of knowledge for contemporary parents is a knowledge which will assist them in keeping up with their children's knowledge about the use and navigation of technology. It seems a new role of knowledge is needed by contemporary parents to understand the responsibility they have for their children with regard to technology. The theory of responsibility, with its focus on forward looking responsibility, enables parents to develop ways in which they can keep up with the changing technology and with their teenagers. The theory proved useful in analysing the interviews conducted with the parents.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the three theoretical frameworks that have guided this study. The agency theory has been presented from a purely individual agent perspective where free will and rationality of the teenagers in the virtual world could be observed as the primary cause of action within virtual ontology. The other dimension of agency in this research is highlighted in the light of structure, where the agency of teenagers could also be observed from the structure

of virtual ontology, which too could play a role in the manner in which teenagers navigate virtual space. The second theory, consequentialism theory, is important in analysing the ethical implications of the presence and use of communication technology devices on parenting teenagers within virtual worlds. The principles of utilitarianism, pleasure and pain, are used to analyse whether teenagers and parents' pleasure or pain is maximised by communication technology devices of teenagers. The last ethical theory, the theory of responsibility by Hans Jonas, is important in analysing the kind of responsibility that parents have over their teenagers who are the recipients of their care. Jonas presented features of responsibility which parents, as the subjects of responsibility, should carry out with their teenagers. The next chapter provides a deeper analysis of parenting, and amongst other things outlines differences in parenting style. The study will pay particular attention to Africa, especially the modern context of South African teenagers who are spending most of their social time on social media platforms they access through communication technology devices.

CHAPTER THREE:
DISCOURSE ON INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

"Humans have always sought means to extend themselves beyond the practicalities of their immediate situations in the process both of survival and making meaning. Technology has always been one of those means." Horsfield (2002:4)

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical frameworks that have guided this research. The theories include agency, consequentialism as well as a theory of responsibility. They have guided the study in analysing teenagers, the consequences of technology in the family, and the responsibility of the parent in this panorama. The quote by Peter Horsfield cited above introduces the nature of Information Communication Technology as a means through which humans extend themselves into a virtual ontology. This extension is into the intangible, the computerised, virtual world. This chapter addresses the first objective of this research, which is "to examine the ethical discourse surrounding mobile communication technology". This chapter commences by providing a description of ICT devices, and further outlining the features of Information Communication Technology devices. These features provide clarity in terms of the functionality of ICTs. This is followed by different kinds of virtualities, which will provide insight in terms of how virtuality is not restricted to computerised systems. Virtuality is also discussed as a digital community, through the use of platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, to provide insight in terms of how this community differs from an 'actual community'. The chapter then discusses the ethical issues linked to ICTs, which is of relevance for family relations between parents and children.

3.1 Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The contemporary world thrives on globalisation and global village ideals where people can communicate beyond national borders, where information is communicated through platforms fitting for such an environment. Such mediums enable people all over the world to have access to each other through advanced communication which brings a whole new level to time and space. Pat Heathcote stated that Information Communication Technology (ICT) entails any computer based device that is utilised to store information, to enter information, to retrieve information and to communicate information to a person/people (2003:3). These include desk

top computers, mobile phones, laptops and tablets. Underlying the functioning of ICT devices is another important element through which the functions are performed. Brian Williams and Stacy Sawyer identified this element as 'digital' which they defined as a system through which information is processed electronically and is processed via computer technology (2013:12).

3.2 Features of ICT devices

There are many features of ICT devices, but only those linked to the agency of teenagers within the virtual world, are discussed in this thesis. These include the keyboard/keypad, the screen of the device, camera and video features, Bluetooth as well as the feature of being able to connect to the Internet.

3.2.1 Keypad/keyboard

Chang, Chen and Zhou have highlighted the QWERTY keypad as one of the features of some communication technology devices. This keypad is named QWERTY after the first six English letters which appear on the top row of this keypad (2009:740). This kind of arrangement is also found in contemporary computers and laptops, and has evolved from the typewriter machines of the 1800s. In the same way that a typewriter was used to type letters, either to friends, family or for work purposes, the keypad and keyboard are used for the input of information through short message services (sms), also known as text, via mobile devices and to send emails. The keypad and keyboard are also used to enter information through instant messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, which will be discussed further in the chapter, and Black Berry Messaging (BBM)[6] which are both accessed through information communication technology devices. One of the phones which still have this keypad as a hardware feature is Blackberry, although more contemporary phones have a QWERTY keypad that pops up internally on a touch screen. The keypad of ICTs is in English which is important in terms of the English literacy of the user. For instance, English users will be more comfortable with the keypad/keyboard of an ICT than an Arabic user who is only familiar with Arabic alphabet.

3.2.2 Screen/touch screen

Computers have screens upon which the users view whatever it is they are engaging with on their communication device. The touch screen is a more advanced screen which works together

---

[6] Black Berry Messaging is an application that can be downloaded on any communication technology device. This may cost the user of the communication technology devices additional money to access. It is an instant messaging platform encouraging instant dialogue between the user and whoever the user is communicating with.

with a tangible QWERTY keyboard/keypad (Yatani and Truong, 2009:1). This kind of screen has in-built computer-generated keypads that appear on the screen when required, translating to more screen space. The touch screen is also useful for in-built camera technology: with more screen space, there is more room to frame a photograph and more room for humans to extend themselves into the computerised world.

3.2.3 Camera

Cameras used in ITC devices such as mobile phones function differ from traditional cameras which require film. The camera of ITC devices works on digital technology, where the lens of the camera is the means through which light enters the camera to electronically capture an image. The image is then processed into digital information and stored into the memory of the ICT device (Williams and Sawyer, 2013:277-278). When the image is stored as digital information, it can be conveniently transferred to other ICT devices which also use the same process of converting information or images into digital information.

The camera of ICT devices can take pictures and record videos and store and share these easily The transfer methods for these include wired or wireless connectivity which work for both digital devices through which digital data will be transferred, whether it be pictures or videos. Bluetooth is an example of wireless connectivity.

3.2.4 Bluetooth

Bluetooth is a platform which facilitates communication between two communication technology devices through wireless interaction (Chang, Chen and Zhou, 2009:747). This wireless interaction includes transferring of files, pictures, music from one device to another. Instead of using hardware to connect devices when transferring data, Bluetooth allows quick and easy transfer. The condition for this transfer is based on proximity. Beyond a certain radius, Bluetooth wireless connection cannot be accessible. Friends and family members can share pictures, songs, or any kind of data through Bluetooth using their ICT devices.

3.2.5 Internet access

David Crystal defined the Internet as "an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any central computer (or host) on one network to any host on another" (2001:2). This is the most important feature of ICT, as it affirms the whole point of being in possession of an ICT device. All ICTs could be seen as hosts in the definition provided by Crystal, hosts which are the source of messages or data transfer. Simply put, if an ICT device is a car, then the Internet is the fuel. The Internet gives an ICT device its

purpose, which is a computerised network through which users can communicate with each other. Each ICT device is manufactured in such a way that it is able to link to the Internet, receive information and communicate information to fellow ICT device users. ICTs, being so mobile, are convenient to communicate with others at any place and at any time, as long as the device is linked to the Internet.

A term which could be equated to Internet is cyberspace. According to Williams and Sawyer, cyberspace is like the Internet, except it encompasses everything that is wireless, in other words everything which falls within the computerised world (2013:20). David Birch and Peter Buck argued that cyberspace includes even the computerised networks that link all computers and ICTs, which the Internet does not (1992:74). The point here is that the Internet and cyberspace are both computerised, intangible domains that are linked with computer ICT devices.

3.3 ICTs and virtuality

According to Horsfield, virtual communication refers to any form of communication which occurs over a non-physical domain, such as a computer based communication (2002:1). Non-physical implies communication that is not face to face. The Internet is one of the most common examples of the virtual, which encourages communication that is not face to face. The link between ICT and virtuality is an important one because the features of ICT mentioned previously are either instrumental in navigating the virtual world such as Internet, or enable users of ICT to enhance or extend their access to the virtual world. According to Jillian Yeow, ICTs are enablers when it comes to communication and work done on a virtual platform (2013:1). This can be demonstrated according to the features of ICT discussed in this thesis. The QWERTY keyboard makes it quick and easy for users to type messages. The keyboard is familiar, as the letter arrangement on the keyboard/keypad is similar to that of a desktop computer. Touch screen is important for enhancing the space of viewing virtual world; the bigger the screen, the better. ICTs with big screens are usually touch screens because there is no hardware keyboard to use space on the face of the phone.

Michael Macedonia and Lawrence Rosenblum noted technology's ability to "move between reality and virtuality", which can occur through the camera feature of an ICT device, whether it is through the camera or video mode (2001:6). The camera/video mode allows the user of ICT to capture a picture of a real scene and then edit that scene by adding in features. This involves a transition from reality to virtuality, as simply taking a picture is restricted to reality,

time and space, but editing that picture on a computer of ICT occurs in a vast domain that is not restricted to space and time.

3.4 Virtuality and its nature

Horsfield showed in his article entitled "The ethics of virtual reality: The digital and its predecessors" that what makes virtuality a complex ontology is that its immaterial nature does not necessarily make it unreal or make it less actual (2002: 1). Virtuality is instead a different kind of reality, an intangible reality that is actual on its own ontological terms. It follows that trying to make distinctions between tangible reality outside the virtual and intangible virtual reality is challenging. It exposes the possible grey areas overlapping both ontologies. Pierre Levy raised the point that virtuality is more a matter of a different kind of actuality, where its intangibleness makes its scope limitless because it is not confined to time and space (1998:16). Both Horsfield and Levy agreed that virtuality is a reality and is actual; its intangibleness and vast space does not make it an unreal ontology; it is real in the sense that is exists and is actual. There are different kinds of virtuality which affirm the definitions provided by Horsfield and Levy.

3.4.1 Different kinds of virtuality

Horsfield and Levy's phrases 'non-physical', 'intangible reality' and 'different kind of actuality' establish the idea that virtuality is not restricted to a computerised world. Virtuality can be classified as a domain that is not necessarily accessed through the physical body as it is itself not a physical domain. Different kinds of virtuality which fit the descriptions by Horsfield and Levy can be discussed. These include religion, mental, and technological virtuality, amongst others.

3.4.1.1. Spirituality as a variant of virtuality

Saied Ameli (2009) has written about spirituality, with its characteristics of intangibleness and not being confined to time and space, as a variant of virtuality that fits the features previously mentioned in the definition by Levy and Horsfield (2009: 209). He claimed that religion's idea of connecting with the spiritual world encompasses connecting to an intangible, immaterial ontology which represents the material tangible world in a different manner (2009:209). Religion thrives on transitioning humans from the material to the immaterial, the object tangible world to the virtual intangible world that is spiritual. This rendition by Ameli of spirituality as a virtual reality is also one which conforms to the idea of the spirit not being

confined by time and space. This is seen in the common characteristics found in religions across the world, which confer to the idea of non-conformity to time and space. The basic characteristics mentioned by Cooper (2012:27) include the existence of a supernatural being accessed through faith. Both the words 'supernatural' and 'faith' denote two things which qualify religion as a virtuality: 1) they capture the immaterial and intangibility brought about by religion, and 2) they serve as adjectives which are not confined within space and time by virtue of their meaning. This is because 'supernatural' recognises an ontology above and beyond the natural and tangible reality and hence beyond space and time. Faith too, by virtue of being intangible, enables humans to tap into a realm that is beyond tangible ontology, which is beyond time and space.

3.4.1.2. Mental virtuality

Rob Shields labelled capitalism and postmodernism as theories which carry complex dualism. Shields stated that theories such as these, have, on one hand, a utility in terms of providing a lens through which social phenomenon can be understood (2006:223). On the other hand, these theories are limited in terms of making practical interventions regarding social phenomena which humans encounter or are constantly engaged with. This argument raised by Shields is indicative of the virtual nature of the theories. But for the purpose of this research, capitalism and postmodernism will not be terms used to demonstrate a virtuality, as capitalism is practical and exists in our embodiment. An ideology which is useful for exploring the definition of virtuality is communism. Communism could be seen as a mental virtuality; it seems a valid concept theoretically in terms of addressing inequalities related to class. Its inapplicability to the current world which thrives on capitalistic ideals driven by financially powerful economies, makes communism a virtual reality.

Joseph Schull described ideology as a shared belief amongst a group of people; unlike religion that involves the spirit, ideology involves the human psyche (1992:730). It is intangible and exists in the head of the individuals who carry a specific belief. Communism is an example, as it is based on intangible ideologies of a world system that is not yet feasible but is a world that its 'believers' believe will materialise one day. Another example to illustrate this is egalitarianism. It is an ideal, for instance, for there to be a scenario where parents and children see themselves as equal, or men and women, the rich and poor. Egalitarian ideals exist virtually in the minds of those who follow it, but social structures, hierarchy, role playing in society do not allow for egalitarianism. By being a provider to a child, the parent cannot be equated to being a child. Even in situations where a child provides for their unemployed parent, there is

no equality. Power relations brought on by money in this illustration, or practical social constructs, limit communism and egalitarianism to the mind and they cannot exist in the physical world.

3.4.1.3. Technological virtuality

Technological virtuality is the area of focus in this study. This links to the definition of the virtual where the intangible nature of this space provides humans with an unrestricted landscape, the freedom to explore creativity, imagination and even forge an identity. An illustration which could be used to elaborate Levy's point is that of a graphic designer. A graphic designer using a virtual platform (designing software on computer) has more scope for creativity than a graphic designer using pencil and paper. The former artist can use drawing techniques on the computer that a pencil cannot achieve, such as the ability to change the thickness of a line, geometric dimensions, space usage, etc.

The graphic designer illustration portrays a dimension of technology based virtuality. Horsfield noted that technology has the ability to stretch humans, through action and body, beyond what they can in achieve in an environment outside technology (2002:4). Horsfield mentioned action and body, as virtuality involves a sense of disembodiment for the human being where disembodied action is not as limited as embodied action. This is because embodiment comes with limitations, agency within a body is limiting compared to the disembodied agency that virtuality provides for the human being. One of the factors which limit embodied agency is time and space, by which virtuality is not restricted, as the virtual world does not have time zones nor does it have national boundaries.

Head stated that in addition to technology providing humans with the realm which disembodies them and puts them in a realm outside space and time, Heidegger emphasised that it extends the reach of human being to a point where it allows them to form and control whatever it is that technology exposes them to (2011:23). Even in the virtual world, this Heideggerian idea stands. With this extension of reach for humans comes both a positive and negative potential regarding the manner in which the humankind uses technology. This is positive in the sense of no restrictions to creativity and potential, extending imagination and un-limiting human potential. This is negative in the sense that with this limitedness and freedom to explore potential through technology, comes responsibility. If responsibility is not there, then this unlimited capability becomes a liability, a potential to cause unlimited harm. This makes the virtual world a canvas, a vast space through which humans are able to be artistic, explorative and free to create.

As a vast space, the virtual world is increased not only by technological computerised systems but also by the imagination of the humans using it. Horsfield confirmed this by stating that creativity is not restricted within virtual ontology as there is no limit placed by time or place; it is "deterritorialised and dehistoricised" (2002:4). So, this vast space of creativity is not restricted to the example of the graphic designer; this vast space brought on by virtuality brings on board other dimension of human life which must be factored into this virtuality. 'Deterritorial' and 'dehistoricised' features of virtuality allow for a space and time that is not informed by histories attached to colonialism, class and race based identities. Rather, there is an open canvas intended for those who allow themselves to explore responsibly this unrestricted digital world and be part of a digital community.

3.5 Virtual world as digital community

Horsfield (2002:5) described technological virtuality as digital and accessed through digital electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, computers, etc. Horsfield further elaborated that because this digital space is intangible and unconfined, technology allows for humankind accessing this digital space to have the option of extending themselves within this space beyond physical capabilities. Jerald Hughes and Reiner Lang added to Horsfield's argument and stated that the digital community entails an interchange between humans via information transmitted electronically (2003: 180). Bearing in mind its nature, which is electronic/ digital, Hughes and Lang noted how the digital community presents a different set of values which are not necessarily used in the real world and hence influence their behaviour (2003:180). For example, the normative values in the real, material world entail respect and peace. The digital community can be an environment which can breed values against respect and peace, creating a different set of values which have no moral standing, such as the disrespect that is evidenced in ill-treating of others in the digital community. Disrespect in this environment comes with the idea that there is no physical, embodied experience which can bind a perpetrator to be accountable or responsible for their actions. This leads to a consideration of the architecture of the digital community.

Zizi Papacharissi advocated that it is the architecture of digital communities that could be one of the reasons why human being behaviour is influenced (2009:201). She noted how architecture incorporated in social networks, including anonymity, enables a user to freely express himself or herself and probably not fear repercussions as the identity is protected by

the architecture of the network. There are a number of examples of digital communities in which humans behave in a manner they would not necessarily behave when outside the digital community. The only ones discussed in this research are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram, as those are the most popular networks/ platforms for teenagers in particular. The descriptions of each digital community will be a synopsis, not an in-depth analysis of the ethical issues occurring on each platform. These ethical issues which accompany digital communities will be discussed in depth towards the end of this chapter.

3.5.1 Facebook

Nicole Ellison, Charles Steinfield and Cliff Lampe offer a description of Facebook as a platform with digital interconnections that allows individuals to not only connect with each other digitally, but also allows individuals to have the freedom to create their own identities within this system (2007:211). Like a community, individuals are able to converse and interact with each other within this space, where they share ideas, pictures, thoughts etc. From this definition by Ellison, Facebook appears to be a communal setting, where identity is constructed through its limitlessness ontology, and hence allows the user to either create a false representation of themselves or exaggerate who they really are. This is part of the architecture of Facebook; there are no measures to ensure the sincerity of their identity. This means that Facebook can allow teenagers to deliberately create and maintain unreal profiles which their parents possibly do not have access to. The benefit of Facebook as far as parent and children relations are concerned is that both the parent and child are able to share with each other what they share with friends via Facebook.

3.5.2 WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an application that can be installed on a mobile phone. The individuals who are part of this application register with their mobile telephone numbers and are able to interact with anyone on their phonebook who has also registered with WhatsApp through their phones (Montag, 2015:2). People can be connected easily and cost effectively (downloading the WhatsApp application involves a small once-off fee, from then on communication is free but requires Internet connection). In addition to WhatsApp being a cost-effective platform for communication, WhatsApp gives users the advantage of an instant messaging service.

3.5.3 Twitter

Twitter is a digital platform which allows users to share messages limited to 140 characters. These short messages are called Tweets. Videos and picture can also be shared on this platform

as links to other registered twitter users, but sharing occurs only with twitter users who follow each other (Zhu and Proctor, 2015:31). Twitter can be downloaded as an application even on mobile phones, which makes it accessible at any time that a user has Internet access. The architecture of Twitter can influence a user's behaviour: a user can create a false identity and use this to say negative things on the twitter pages of other users. This false identity could be used as a form of anonymity can be helpful for teenagers reaching out on Twitter to organisations that could help them with adolescent challenges such as substance abuse. Teenagers can use false identities or pseudo names to get help anonymously. The limit of 140 characters requires Twitter dialogue to be clear and straight to the point. Advertisers who market centres that can help teenagers with substance abuse can communicate their message to the youth in a concise and straightforward way, as teenagers tend to prefer catchy, short messages.

3.5.4 Instagram

Instagram is an application used on mobile phones to take picture which can be uploaded and shared with other users (Salomon 2013:408) of Instagram, Facebook or Twitter. Like the other digital communities, Instagram gives users the liberty to register with a pseudo name which could influence their behaviour. Instagram pictures can be edited to look more aesthetically pleasing. This leads to a consideration of appearance versus reality (Gupta, 2015:1). Gupta claimed that appearance is related to 'what seems' to be the case, whereas reality relates to 'what is truthfully' the case. This applies not only to Instagram but to all the other digital communities as well. Teenagers can portray themselves according to how they would like to be. Instagram users can edit their photographs but require a certain level of technological skill, which raises the issue that skill with technology can determine how one uses and understands technology.

3.6 The nature of digital community

Papacharissi (2009:200) claimed that digital communities are not only based on their architecture, in other words how the communities are created by computer engineers, but the identity of communities needs to be considered. She noted how Facebook gives the user the liberty to create an identity (even if it may be false), by enabling the user to create a profile and upload a picture. Unlike the real, physical world, the digital community is one which may be filled with users who can creatively re-create realities which might necessitate the

reformulation of what is meant by community. This could be applied to Twitter as well. Users are not obliged to use real information on their profile as there is no authority that checks whether the information entered by the user is genuine and true. The real, physical community has physical communal connotations, an area where people know each other and look out for each other.

Lucas Introna and Martin Brigham have interrogated the word 'community' in the phrase 'digital community' (2007:160). Their basis of interrogation is grounded on the definition of community as presented by Heidegger (1962), which is founded on the notion that a community is comprised of beings who share a world, who share the same prospects and see the same things as meaningful and important. Furthermore, Introna and Brigham stated that Heidegger's definition is entrenched in how belonging in a community means being immersed in that community by constantly engaging in the prospects which make it meaningful to be part of that society (2007:168). Having discussed examples of digital communities, it must be noted that the definition of community provided by Heidegger is applicable here too. Digital communities have citizens with the same prospects, some use digital platforms to keep in touch with long lost friends and family, to share thoughts and ideas (whether meaningful or not), to capture milestones in their lives which they share with their online friends. These are not the only features which a digital community shares with an actual community.

An additional characteristic that the digital community shares with actual communities is that there are differences between community dwellers which can cause divisions. For instance, in actual communities there could be divisions based on class or economic status. Digital communities also have divisions, the most eminent one being based on the division of skill. The more skilled an individual is in their use of technology, the deeper their understanding in using it. Yardi and Bruckman mentioned the idea of 'technical competency', which assumes that there are different levels through which a user of technology can be competent in their use of the technological device (2011:4). The same is applicable regarding how one utilises a technological device when accessing digital communities. This technical competence in itself is indicative of differences in competence levels which can create a digital divide. The class divisions seen in the real world are transcended into the virtual world as well. Affluent children will have better ICT devices and are likely to be more skilled, the generation gap becomes more evident etc.

3.7 Digital divide

In a situation with differing levels of technological competence, division is inevitable because users of technology have different kinds of skills. Having people with higher technical skills in technology suggests that there are people with lower technical skills too. Having people with more advanced ICT devices assumes there are those with not so advanced ICT devices. There are divisions in the digital world. Michael Gurstein defined the 'digital divide' as the divide between the haves and have not's, the skilled and the unskilled, those in rural areas and those in the suburbs, the literate and the illiterate, male and female, those literate in English when it comes to technology (2003:2). Each of these divides exists on a global scale as well. Although English literacy can be a factor to consider, it is not always applicable on an international level. Japan is an example of a country which has development in its digital literacy but is not necessarily enhanced by the ability to speak English. Even though English is not a native language to Japan, it is one of the leading users of ICTs in the world and in the development and adaptation of ICTs (Pick and Sarkar, 2015:197). Technological literacy and development are not solely pushed forward by literacy, but literacy is an important element of ICT devices as the modern QWERTY keypad on most devices is comprised of letters from the English alphabet.

Illiteracy and literacy leads to the next feature of divide mentioned by Chen and Wellman, 2004:22), which is based on level of education and income determined by an individual's socio-economic status. Chen and Wellman noted that this is different for developed and developing countries, where education and the income based digital divide is larger in developing countries and smaller in developed countries (2004:22). Annika Bergstorm claimed that the use of the Internet by educated citizens is much greater than by those who are not educated, and that the rate at which white collar workers use the Internet is much higher than the use of Internet by blue collar workers (2015:11). By educated, Bergstorm seems to be referring to university affiliations, where educated users are engaged in work related to a computer, such as desktop research. This is not restricted to university environments; the same applies to white collar workers in jobs which require work carried out on computer based technology. From this, one could deduce that the larger the gap between the rich and the poor in a country, the larger the digital divide. A country with a large base of working class can translates to many blue-collar workers, who are mostly engaged in manual labour, and do not require Internet access. The digital divide in the workplace is however an international phenomenon and can be observed from a global level.

The digital divide on a global scale is evident between developing and developed countries. Each country is exposed to a different kind of development, which in turn sets the scene for ICT access, the kinds of economy each country has, the political climate and education system, to name a few. Gerolf Weigel and Daniele Waldburger have illustrated how the digital divide on a global scale translates to a division based on poverty and wealth. They observed that developed countries benefited greatly from the Industrial Revolution which provided developing countries a 250-year head start in terms of economic development in comparison to developing countries (2004:211). Weigel and Waldburger further argued that developing countries were not involved in the industrial revolution, which led to the access that the developed countries have had all along which developing countries did not have (2004:211). Paul DiMaggio and Eszter Hargittai claimed that the word 'access' carries considerable weight when it comes with class (2001:4). This is because when it comes to ICT, access can be linked to economic power, which makes purchasing power an inevitable side effect of access to more developed versions of ICT's. This purchasing power is limited for developed countries which therefore have a limited variety when it comes to ICT devices that they can afford. Moving from an international scale to the household, the next section explores the digital divide within the context of the family.

3.8 Digital divide within the family

In addition to education and socio-economic status, Chen and Wellman (2004: 24) indicated that age is also a factor when it comes to the digital divide. They substantiate this by stating that younger generations are more prone to Internet interactions than older people (Chen and Wellman, 2004:24). Gwenn Schurgin O'Keeffe and Kathleen Clarke-Parsons claimed that teenagers log on social media at least once daily and up to more than ten times daily (2011:800). This makes social media the most popular way through which teenagers interact with one another. Modern day teenagers or 'millennials' (children born between 1990s and 2010, Bush and Codrington, 2008:29) are so absorbed with ICT consumption that their childhoods are not like that of the previous generations. This exposes another digital divide within the family, as the childhood and exposure of the millennials is different from their parents and grandparents who were born before the development of today's communication technology.

The millennials are sometimes called 'digital natives' by authors such as Marc Prensky (2001) and Jing Lei (2009). Prensky claimed that digital natives are so hooked to the screen that they

use all their leisure time on on-screen activities such as playing video games, listening to digital music players, and because they have become so acquainted to instant messaging, they send and receive instant messages on their phones through WhatsApp and BBM.

The digital divide in the family is evidenced by the older generations not being as immersed and experienced with ICTs as the teenagers. With the presence of the digital natives within the family comes the presence of another category in the family with regard to the digital divide. This includes the parents of the digital natives, who are sometimes labelled as the digital immigrants. Prensky described digital immigrants as those people who are acquainted with technology, have a level of technical literacy but who are not as experienced with technology as the digital natives (2001:1). Prensky claimed that they are the people who "print out a document in order to edit it", and do not necessarily edit the document online as a digital native would (2001:3). Bennett, Maton and Kervin highlighted that, according to Prensky, the digital immigrant is characterised by those born before the 1980s, who, in the family are typically the parents of the digital natives (2008:4). Digital immigrants are identified by Bennett et al. (2008:4) by their lack of fluency when it comes to digital language, and because they were not born into technology, they find it challenging to adapt to contemporary digital culture. Culture in this context takes on the meaning which Martin (2002:58) claimed breaks the stereotypical definition of culture that entails "shared beliefs and values", as well as "uniqueness. Martin rather defined culture as based on the following:

a) The environment: Anthony Giddens and Phillip Sutton stated that the environment (fitting for this context of culture) entails a spatial context that has tangible and non-tangible factors which influence that space positively or negatively (2009:159). In the context of this research, the spatial context is virtual ontology, which is an environment that has factors which influence the behaviour of teenagers. This behaviour includes the manner in which teenagers behave on a regular basis to the point where it becomes a norm to behave that way within that environment. In virtual ontology, for instance, teenagers do not have to censor themselves because their parents may not have access to that virtual space. This means that the presence of their parents in that environment can be a hindrance (or enabler in some cases).

b) How people in that environment relate with each other: Giddens does not divorce his notion of the environment from the behaviour created within that environment. He rather provides a link between the environment and behaviour, establishing how the

51

former and latter equate to the creation of social constructions (2009:161). This can be translated to virtual ontology as well, where virtual ontology has its own social construction which informs behaviour within that virtual environment. Virtual ontology is not a tangible space where people physically sit face to face and converse with each other; they usually communicate with a person on the other side of the screen. There is a removal of the physical interaction, touch, embrace which are part of a tangible environment. This restricts teenagers to intangible interactions, and hence constructs constructions which will be suitable for such an environment. Virtual ontology is restricted to intangible interactions because that is the nature of its environment.

The virtual ontology environment influences how teenagers relate to each other. Their relation revolves around a space that allows them to share pictures and videos, as well as send text messages. These interactions are not given room to thrive physically but are given room to be explored on a virtual level. In as much as that can be done in a positive way, this virtual interaction can also create an environment which can capitalise on its inability to allow physical interaction. Teenagers in this space can hide behind the physical inaccessibility of the person or people they are interacting with.

c) <u>How that environment is arranged</u>: By discussing the environment and the relations of people in the environment they are in, the arrangement of virtual ontology has already been introduced. Its arrangement is twofold. On the one hand, it does not allow for face to face interaction; on the other, it encourages the communicators to be mindful of their interaction which is premised on the content of the conversation rather than the facial expressions and physicality of a person achieved through face to face communication (Giddens, 2009:276). The three mentioned phenomena seem to provide a tripod foundation for culture, especially in the context of a digital culture existing for teenagers. However, it is important to note that this culture in virtual ontology applies more to teenagers who have access to smartphones with Internet access, as it is those smartphones which expose teenagers to the virtual ontology platforms which have been mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Cheryl Brown and Laura Czerniewicz stated that individuals who have no access to Internet and social networks, whether it is by choice or not, are digital strangers, who in the context of South Africa apply to older digital immigrants (2010:363). Digital strangers can be students who do not have access to ICTs or anyone in the family who has no access to the digital world,

particularly senior citizens, especially those who are illiterate, in black families in South Africa. Most of these elderly people, in addition to being illiterate have no access to Internet and social networks, and are often left to raise their digital native grandchildren who are technologically literate. Holborn and Eddy identified the migrant labour legacy, absent fathers, poverty and HIV/AIDS as some of the factors contributing to the large number of grandparents being left to raise children (2011:6). This dynamic of the digital stranger and digital native under the same roof can create a challenge in the relationship that the elderly digital stranger has with the digital native grandchildren. Bennett, Maton and Kervin (2008:4)) stated that by the digital stranger's inability of fluency when it comes to digital language, they find it challenging to adapt to contemporary digital culture hence struggle to get through to their grandchildren. This is a concern in the context of the South African family, in particular.

One of the factors which further aggravate the digital divide within the family entails the differing worldviews that parents and grandparents have when compared to the worldview of digitally literate teenagers. This idea of worldviews is elaborated in Carol Merchant's "Science and worldviews" paper (1992) which explores organic and mechanistic worldviews. These worldviews influence how humankind sees and experiences that world. In this research, the organic worldview is applicable to the parents and grandparents who have little or no digital literacy. The mechanistic worldview on the other hand is associated with the teenagers in the household who generally have impressive digital literacy.

With an organic worldview, parents and grandparents of the digital natives were exposed to a world which was not entrenched in rapidly advancing technology. They had a more organic view of the environment and saw the world as an organic earth which needs to be nurtured and preserved. This earth needed to be taken care of as it was seen as an organ that keeps humans alive and which co-exists with humans (Merchant, 1992). For Merchant, because the earth has soil which produces harvest, rivers and lakes which produce life, resources which can be mined from it, it can be viewed as an organ that produces for human life and hence humans are connected to the life which nature presents to them. It is such imagery that has prompted the description of the earth as 'Mother Nature'. As living organs, both humankind and nature do not merely co-exist but are united in their function of living and growing together. This view by parents and grandparents is evidently removed from technology and influences their digital literacy.

Merchant revealed how the introduction of capitalism came with the death of nature and a change of human values. This view of the world transitioned into a mechanistic world, which Merchant states is a view of the world which has deviated from the organic. This mechanistic world view has given humankind tools such as technology to understand the world as something that, like a machine, can be broken down to be understood (Merchant, 1992). This mechanistic world is the world which the digital native is born into, which has informed the digital instinct and fluency of modern day teenagers as digital natives. With this, it seems that the worldviews of the native and their parents and grandparents is on different ends of the spectrum, and hence contributes to the digital divide within the household.

Latour's narrative, similar to that of Merchant, has a creative take on the transition of worldviews within the family which outlines the digital literacy that speaks to the digital divide. For Latour, the digital divide has its own story, which could be inspired by the story of the hammer. Latour takes the one through how different people have used the hammer in different ways, depending on the tasks for which the hammer is being used (Latour, 2002:249). This narrative exposes the nature of the hammer, how its use has a potential that has unfolded in different times and spaces, which can be traced as far back as its conception and right back to the current period. With time, this hammer has evolved in design, and with space has obtained additional uses. Additional to the narrative of the hammer are the elements which constitute it. Latour mentions the wooden handle of the hammer since "it came out of the German factory and was produced for the market" (Latour, 2002:249).

By grabbing onto its wooden handle, Latour noted how the user of the hammer becomes part of that narrative. From this, Latour branded every technology as an "exquisite cadaver", an object which can be researched and deconstructed to be understood. The same narrative can be presented for technology, in the case of this research, communication technology. In starting the narrative of communication technology, especially in the context of sending messages, it is important to present communication as a feature of communication technology. The story begins in the old times when messages where sent through messengers, string telephones, speaking telegraphs, which have advanced to cell phones which are multi-purpose communication devices. The narrative captures time and space which reveals how generations have adapted differently to the changing nature of technology of communication devices. With time, the human becomes more and more in tune with technology and the use thereof. This can be demonstrated in the classifications within the family provided by Brown and Czerniewicz (2010). In each family, a digital lineage is evident: digital strangers, digital immigrants and

digital natives. These three classifications, which will be explored in depth, play testament to the developing and changing nature of technology and how humans at different times adapt differently to it.

The differing worldviews existing within the household are also emphasised by modernity. Lassman (2000) reminded one that "the idea of a fundamental conflict of values, which deepens under modern conditions, is central for an understanding of Weber's political thought. It is the fate of modern man to live with a 'polytheism' of conflicting values" (98). Here Lassman expressed his view on the nature of modernity, which sets up conditions that put families in a dilemma, where 'what has always been done' is up against 'what is done in the modern world'. This is because modernity does not seem to conform to the old way of doing things; it creates and invents conditions that are suitable for the global village, conditions that favour convenience, technology and development. It is therefore inevitable for modern humans to face a clash of values with those still practising the 'old way of doing things'. The specific clash of values that will be explored here is one that is related to 'the old' versus 'the new' regarding how the world is seen and experienced. The digital native, immigrant and stranger can easily not see eye to eye because their value systems are informed by their differing times and experiences. Whimster confirmed this by stating that Nietzsche and Weber prophetically wrote about such clashes of value that would be experienced by modern humans; modernity not only renews the tension between pre-modern religious values and modern secular values, but "increases the intensity of this conflict" (1987:210). The digital divide is aggravated as a result because of the tension existing in the conflicting values of the digital native and the digital immigrant and stranger. This could translate to an ethical concern as this gap can affect the communication and understanding between teenagers and their parents or grandparents. But there are many more ethical considerations which will be explored in the next section in the discourse surrounding the use of ICTs.

3.9 Discourse surrounding ICT use

There are countless examples which can be explored portraying the usage or misuse of ICT devices. This section will outline safe, educational platforms, nihilism, inauthentic faceless relations, trust, privacy, and platform for raising opinions.

3.9.1 Safety

Czeskis et al. (2010) have outlined a parenting style for the technological age that is being adopted by many parents in the United States of America (2010). This work by Czeskis et al. reveals the concern for safety that parents have for their children who are constantly on smartphones. Parents can insert software technology in mobile phones of teenagers to assess whether or not their teens are in safe areas. Certain technologies can assist parents with the safety and whereabouts of their children. Messages, WhatsApp or calls by children when they have arrived safely can also reassure parents. But the safety which parents may find challenging to monitor is safety within the digital community. There can arguably be an issue of violating the rights of children, but it is also important to consider the safety concern that parents have for their children.

Kaniyarakath Minimol and Julom Angelina stated that teenagers are at a time in their lives where they want to explore new things, which can include exploiting Internet use by visiting websites which may not necessarily be beneficial for them (2015:57). Minimol and Angelina could be referring to, amongst other things, teenagers communicating with strangers on social media. This can be detrimental to their safety, especially because their parents are uninformed when it comes to their teenager's risky behaviour on social media. Albert Liau, Angeline Khoo and Peng Ang elaborated on this by stating that one of the many concerns that parents have regarding their teenagers using ICT devices to access Internet is the exposure they can get from sexual material which can adversely affect their development (2005:513). African teenagers with mobile communication technology devices are not exempt from the exposure that other teenagers face when it comes to communication devices.

3.9.2 Exposure to educational platforms

Masa Popovac and Lezanne Leoschut acknowledged that in the South African context, studies done in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban reveal that 62% of teenagers have access to the Internet at home (not only through computers but mostly through mobile communication technology) (2012). They can access Information Communication Technologies (ICT) programmes which have become popular educational platforms in Africa. ICT programmes would be a helpful platform for African teenagers, especially those who have parents that not able to assist them with homework. A study done by North-western University School of Communication revealed that most parents turn more to technology and media as an educational tool for their children (2013). Bennett, Maton and Kervin identified this idea of ICTs as being an expected educational platform as the contemporary youth are born into a

technologically advancing world, making them natives of this technological world that has become so digital. This plays a positive role in how educational material is accessed, which is convenient and instant.

Another discourse surrounding ICT is that the use of the ICT devices can be seen as a distraction to teens with their education. Gustavo Mesch claimed some teenagers use ICTs solely for entertainment and socialising purposes (2006:122). The concern here would be that teenagers would abuse the use of ICTs as a tool that could be used for educational purposes using them instead for recreational purposes. Mthembu et al reported the findings of their research about teenagers from a Cape Town high school, (2014:137). The study revealed that at school, even during class time, teenagers use their mobile phones so much that social networks (virtual world) serve as a form of escape from the real world as they chat with their friends online. They escape into a virtual world that is inauthentic and without the presence of a legitimate, moral authority such as parents.

3.9.3 Ethical nihilism

The absence of a legitimate moral authority in the virtual world is echoed by Ernst Wolff who mapped out the arguments of Han Jonas and Emmanuel Levinas regarding technology (2011:34). The common thread running through the two philosophers' ideas on ethics and technology, as revealed by Wolff, is that the introduction of technology has come with secularisation and the 'death of God'. This challenges the very existence of ethics and values, which suggests resorting to nihilism. Bearing in mind how virtuality provides a disembodiment, which humans navigate without being physically there, there is no structure of punishment for the irresponsible user. According to Ess and Thorseth, the absence of physical bodies in virtual worlds allows for no physical coercion and punishment (2011:6). How is a perpetrator identified when he or she is not residing within a body? This challenges not only the responsibility of an agent operating within a virtual world, but is an ontology which does not accommodate a moral or legal authority that has the power to intervene should anything immoral or bad occur within such a space.

Sagan in his paper "Freud, women and morality: The psychology of the good and evil" uses a simile to describe the super ego (1977:19). He described the super-ego as the inner, parental voice that tells one what to do or what not to do; it is a voice that can lead (or mislead) based on the kind of values that one has been brought up with. In his attempt to explain his own concept of the super-ego, Freud, in Storr's book titled "Freud", describes the super-ego as a

part of the mind that absorbs parental guidance and societal norms into the psyche, such as cultural and ethical ideas, and that influences the actions of humans (1989:49). It could follow from this that the environment in which one has been raised, society, community and the home, are what establish norms in behaviour and hence influence the superego. This will be necessary in analysing the kind of "norms that the virtual world is instilling in teenagers and children". If the virtual world is playing the role of a superego for teenagers and children, there are concerns regarding what the virtual world perceives as the right and wrong way of engaging. Usually the right and wrong in the virtual world and real world are not complementary, so that in itself has implications for African communitarian values instilled in African children and teenagers. In a nutshell, technology can be seen as the host of nihilism. This idea of nihilism and technology that Levinas and Jonas have pointed out is essential for this study. This is because, with their use of smartphones to access a world with no moral authority and which is hence nihilistic in nature, children and teenagers can easily behave out of line when in the virtual world. Parents are thus faced with this challenge, and with African parents in particular, nihilism is not complementary with African communitarian values. It becomes clear that the virtual world that children and teenagers engage with constantly is inspired by different sets of values and norms from their African communitarian upbringing.

3.9.4 Face-less relations: Inauthentic?

ICT communication is an essential manner through which humankind can keep in touch regardless of the part of the world they are in. Even though this comes with not being in the presence of the other, ICT nevertheless ensures that loved ones everywhere can be reached. Raeline Wilding (2006:131) stated that ICT devices play an essential role in terms of restoring bonds between family members scattered all over the world. Wilding (2006:131) highlighted how communicating with faraway family members has become more immediate through instant messaging such as WhatsApp. Calling faraway family members was quite costly, but with the introduction of ICT devices which enable access to social networks, a more affordable and sustainable way of communication has been introduced. These benefits of ICT communication come with a disadvantage, which is absence of the actual presence and face of the family member that one communicates with, and this raises an ethical concern pointed out by philosopher Martin Buber.

Buber laid out an argument about the two kinds of orientations (in dialogue), ego-based orientation and person-based orientation (Doriza, 2005:313). The ego-based orientation was famously labelled by Buber as the "I-It" orientation in which the individual does not have a holistic view of their existence: they only pay attention to a small part of themselves and acknowledge this as being complete (2005:313). Prensky stated that teenagers of this technological age are so addicted to the screen that they spend all their leisure time on on-screen activities such as playing video games and listening to digital music players (2001). This affirms the ego-based orientation mentioned by Doriza and can isolate teenagers from their physical surroundings and absorb them into virtual ontology. Zur and Zur (2011) confirmed this by stating that the isolation is physical, as teenagers of today are all alone physically in their room and on their smartphones, so they are isolated from their family to hang out with their friends in a virtual world. The other orientation that Doriza mentioned is the person-based orientation which is more in line with African communitarian values. This person-orientation Buber coined the "I-Thou" orientation where the individual "I" acknowledges the Other as a person just as the self is a person, and therefore appreciates and respects the Other when engaging with them (Doriza, 2005:314). Without the face of the other, it person-orientation can be challenging.

This idea of facelessness brings about a feature on social networks that raises considerable ethical questions. This is the idea of anonymity and pseudo names in social networks, often known as "catfish". There is no system that gives an option to provide evidence that the name one uses on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn is one's real name and real identity (picture). People can hide behind the anonymity feature and pseudo name and use that "power' to behave unethically on social networks. Papacharissi (2009:201) presented the idea of how social networks can have architecture which influences the manner in which social network users behave. He mentioned how architecture incorporated in social networks, including the anonymity, enables a user to freely express himself/herself and probably not fear the repercussions as the identity is protected by the architecture of the network. The use of Facebook, where the user has the liberty to create their own profile, can give room for users to create pseudo names and use a picture that is not really theirs. This faceless, anonymous feature created by social networks not only removes the face of the other in human relations, but also compromises authenticity and accountability which Introna (2001: 14), in his paper "Virtuality and morality: On (not) being disturbed by the other". Here, Introna presented the importance of face to face relations mentioned by Levinas. He argued that what makes face to face relations

so important for Levinas is that being in the presence of the Other and seeing their face is authentic, their face is not a representation that they would get from Facebook, a video or Skype. This idea by Levinas is quite necessary for restoring face to face relations which technology does not embrace, and it is complementary of African communitarian value of ethical reciprocity.

This could call for an understanding of what this kind of technology actually entails and for understanding the relation that humankind has with it. In his paper "Question concerning Technology", Heidegger (1977:1) presented a definition of technology which he argued was an instrumental and anthropological definition. He stated that technology was both a "means to an end" and also a "human activity". He states that this is the case because achieving an end is a human activity; there is a mutually inclusive relation between the two phenomena. This definition by Heidegger seems to present an empowering perception of technology from the perspective of mankind, which makes one aware of how technology is instrumental for humans to achieve their means. Steigler (1998:24), in his book "Technics and Time", presents a slightly different stance to that of Heidegger when it comes to the relationship between humankind and technology. He argued that modern human's relationship with technology is premised on dependency; where humans have become more dependent on technology for performing tasks to a point where technology governs humankind instead of the other way around. The revealed feature of technology and social networks that it empowers humankind and yet at the same time presents itself as that which humankind should depend on, has ethical implications when it comes to family members and communication via social network platforms. It raises the concern of human agency in use of technology. Does it empower human agency or do humans use their agency to empower themselves through the use of technology?

It is therefore important to explore the characteristics of both humankind and technology. Light and McGrath (2010) in their paper "Ethics and social networking sites: A disclosive analysis of Facebook" presented, through disclosive ethics, the idea that when engaging in discourse regarding the ethics of social networking, it is important to consider both the human that use social networks as well as the social network platform (technology). To support this idea, Light and McGrath, through their two-year fieldwork, revealed the idea that human subjects as well as technology have moral characters, which presents the idea of accountability should there be an inappropriate use or consequences of social network sites. Technology is both complex and uncontainable and it has spread around the world and is virtually within anyone's reach; it therefore becomes complex to govern such an entity. This, one could argue, makes technology

an 'ungovernable' moral agent and hence could be making ethical responsibility on part of technology impossible. It becomes important to be mindful of the idea that when observing the ethical implications of technology on the family, it is important to consider both the use and behaviour of family members' using technology as well as the actual designers of social networks who could have included features in social networks that encourage unethical behaviour. This approach could provide an understanding of face to faceless relations.

In her attempt to provide a solution for face to faceless relations, Davy (2007:39), in her paper "Another face of ethics in Levinas ethics and the environment", deconstructed the argument by Levinas and presented an ethic that goes beyond human face to face relations and includes animals, nature, etc. What is important about this paper is that it provides hope for so-called 'face to faceless' relations, where the human face, through language is in contact with technology/social network. It is important to know the ethics of face to face relations and restore those kind of relations; on the other hand, now that technology and social networks are an integral part of our contemporary world, it is also necessary to apply ethical principles when it comes to face to faceless relations. This stance by Davy can be helpful for the African parent to keep up with their children.

3.9.5 Proximity

Proximity is an important element of ethics in the relation with the Other. Lucas Introna (2001:12) illustrated that drawing the Other into the present, in proximity, is essential in understanding the responsibility a person has towards the Other. The presence of the Other allows for one to be vulnerable to the other, to have a relation with the Other. Presence draws one to the Other, and allows opportunity for a genuine relation by virtue of being human. Introna (2001:12) further elaborated that understanding the virtue of the Other being is not affirmed by the face; it is affirmed by the presence. The face acts as a window to this humanness and the Other no longer becomes a stranger but someone to whom one should be responsible. Introna noted how proximity which allows for the presence of the Other is compromised by technology, in the case of this research, communication technology devices, as technology reaches beyond proximity and does not find the presence of the Other in communication essential. Introna emphasised that this compromise of proximity comes with a reduction from the present face of the Other to the virtual image of the Other (Introna, 2001:14), where the Other becomes a representation of something. The image of a person seen through a video is a representation of that person and not the person himself or herself. Sherry Turkle (1996:180) affirmed that through virtuality, not only are humans not authentically present in the face of

the other, but there is room for inauthenticity as there is a misrepresentation; there is room to re-create. This can be illustrated with the example of news anchors presenting on television: communicating to the viewer is not personal; the viewer is part of a mass, the viewer has no identity. The viewer sees the news anchor as the provider of news, a formal presentation of a person that is made up to be presentable to viewers who are strangers.

3.9.6 Trust

Charles Ess and May Thorseth (2011:xi) argued that trust is a crucial aspect of human society, which feeds off the idea of the co-presence of 'the Other' as mentioned by Levinas. With social networks' feature of physical absence of the other, Ess and Thorseth (2011: xi) stated that the element of trust in a relationship becomes challenged. They argued that through the lens of what they term the "phenomenological aspect of trust, which is drawn from trust that humans experience amongst each other through co-presence". Ess and Thorseth (2011: xi) are inspired by Bjorn Myskja's (2008:214) idea of trust which states that co-presence and trust go hand in hand. This is because humans' dependence on each other is a sign of vulnerability, which is a mechanism that is commonly applicable on the grounds of human mortality and embodiment. For this reason, it is understandable that Ess and Thorseth mentioned the importance of trust in human society. Trust reminds humans of their vulnerable nature informed by their mortality and embodiment. Raimundo Abello Llanos, Camilo Madariaga Orozco and Omar Sierra García (1999: 249), like Ess and Thorseth, claimed that family relationships are developed when family members have mutual trust between one another, and this materialises mostly when family members are within the same space physically. In this case, Llanos et al used physical presence as a condition of mutual trust and the development of the relationship between family members. Not being in the same space physically could translate to mutual trust between family members being affected, going back to the idea of the co-presence of the other as mentioned by Levinas.

3.9.7 Privacy

In addition to trust, an important ethical concern when parenting children using mobile communication technology is privacy. The questions to ask as far as trust and privacy are concerned between parents and children are: At what point do teenagers earn trust from their parents as far as their behaviour in virtual worlds is concerned? Does a friend request to their teenager's Facebook profile or any other profile on social media encourage parents to not trust relations their children have for now don't trust their children and want to 'spy on them'

through their profiles? David Westermann revealed that young people are often not impressed with their parents befriending them on Facebook and knowing their Facebook profile (2011:8).

The issue of privacy arises from Westermann's statement. It could be the case that teenagers feel that by having access to their Facebook profile, their parents are able to access most of their Facebook activity, and this could be an infringement to the teenager's privacy. The Facebook feature of "checking in" to a location can reveal the whereabouts of children, consequently having parents as friends on Facebook encroaches privacy. Another issue of privacy on Facebook raised by Williams and Sawyer is based on the idea that there are certain apps on the social media platform which can easily capture the mobile numbers and home addresses of users as well as personal pictures (2013:100). This is a privacy issue for users as hackers can retrieve and use information. Teenagers should then be wary of what kind of information they upload on social media as it can be accessed by strangers.

3.9.8 Platform to voice opinions

Bonnie Nardi (2015:20) claimed ICT provides a platform for citizens to protest and make their voices heard; the same platform also enables teenagers to share their feelings amongst their peers if they prefer not to share these feelings with parents. The danger of expressing feelings through ICT devices and onto virtual platforms is the vast recipient audience, people all over the world from different religious backgrounds, cultures, values, social norms, etc., so offending a person is quite easy. This may be received negatively by some, such as American citizens when Hilary and Trump were campaigning for US president in 2016. Claims made by each candidate created a stir throughout the US. It is not only politicians who voice their opinions on social media, teenagers also raise their views or share their feelings. Children who voice negative opinions on social media and hurt others are usually those with a questionable emotional attachment to their parents, and use social media as a platform to express emotions (Law et al, 2010:1652). Such a phenomena allows room for cyber bullying on social media platforms in particular.

3.9.9 Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying involves intentionally inflicting harm on a person or group of people and doing so repeatedly via social media (Tokunaga in Hutson, 2016:63). Some opinions that teenagers may have about each other can result in hate speech and cyberbullying towards their peers.

Parents may be unable to defend their children as most of the cyber bullies are anonymous. A recent case in the USA was highlighted in Vanity Fair magazine (Lewensky, 2016:1).

Teenagers often keep quiet about cyber bullying making it more difficult for parents to deal with it. Marjorie Rachoene and Toks Oyedemi revealed that teenagers never really open up about cyberbullying to their parents as they have a fear that it might escalate the bullying (2015:305). In South Africa, a study by Rachoene and Oyedemi in the Nelson Mandela Bay area, revealed about 37% of primary and high school children experienced or witnessed cyber bullying online, (2015:305). Few witnesses and victims report this to a parent or teacher. Cyberbullying is not the only concern parents have for their teenagers, online dating is an additional concern.

3.9.10 Online dating

Online dating is a phenomenon that has also gained popularity in virtual ontology. Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis and Sprecher claimed that online dating requires heavy membership and subscription fees (2012:5). The expense of online dating should preclude teenagers still in school; most do not have permanent employment for covering costs associated with online dating membership and subscription fees. Online dating tends to cater for a more mature and employed market. Teenagers who date can meet online via social media platforms and make arrangements to meet up via virtual ontology communication. Parents are generally not given the opportunity to screen their children's online dates. According to Shao-King Lo, Al-Yun Hsieh and Yu-Ping Chiu some people who date online use a profile that is not 100% honest. They may place their most appealing photo on their profile, or have pictures which are manipulated to make their features look striking, or even use a false picture on their profile, (2013:1757). False identification on social media would require mature discernment on part of teenagers, as they may face encounters where they think they are chatting to a peer but this is actually a person twice their age. Without their parents online to monitor online dating, children discern which dates are potentially harmful.

All the above topics in this section are merely an indication of some of the implications of using social media and smartphones.

3.10 Conclusion

Information Communication Technology devices can be understood as a means through which humans extend themselves, whether this be through artistic means, communication means or means through which teenagers are enabled to do their homework. ICT devices are also a means through teenagers are exposed to the intangible, computerised, virtual world. Teenagers

commonly explore this world through digital communities such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. Exploring these worlds requires a level of digital literacy which teenagers, on average, master better than their own parents. As children born into an increasingly technological age, teenagers seem to be more naturally acquainted with navigating the digital communities as digital natives, in comparison to their parents who digital immigrants that are still adjusting to the digital world. The different levels of digital literacy between the parent and child can create digital divides within the family, and also bring about other ethical issues. Safety, trust, privacy are some of the many ethical issues raised regarding the use of ICT.

There is no doubt that ICT devices have their perks, such as making communication with friends and loved ones convenient regardless of distance. But there are also disadvantages. As much as family is able to stay connected, ICT devices introduce privacy as an issue which comes with complex dynamics between parents and their teenagers. Grey areas in this regard have to do with "at what point does privacy of a teenager start and end when it comes to ICT device usage?" The next chapter will look into the family, in particular, and get a sense of the internal family structures and how parenting styles can influence parent and child relations in this technological age. ICT can have quite serious implications for the safety of teenagers. ICT can be seen as something which was introduced into the household and which has changed the relationship between family members, especially between the parent and child.

CHAPTER FOUR:
VIRTUAL ONTOLOGY AND PARENTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Advice to parents of the technological age: "...your kids are digital citizens. You might as well take the time now to teach them responsible digital citizenship" (Sadlier and de Beer, 2014:172)

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined ICT devices as a means through which humankind is able to explore the intangible, virtual ontology which is not restricted to time and space. With this feature, ICT devices can connect family members who are geographically far from each other, transcending boundaries and long distance. Being disembodied in such a space, teenagers are not physically present for their parent's supervision, which raises several ethical challenges, such as privacy and trust. Leading from the quote by Sadlier and de Beer, the idea of digital citizens brings an awareness of how virtual ontology is an integral part of the lives of modern day kids, which means parents need a strategy to incorporate this into their parenting. Teaching children responsibility in the virtual ontology world is one of the strategies that could work. This chapter aims to explore this, bearing in mind the second objective of this research, which is: "To explore virtual ontology and its impact on moral responsibility of African parents".

The second part of the objective will be tackled first, where background on parenting and its functions will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of different types of parenting styles. The style common to South African parenting will be discussed next, in the light of contemporary challenges faced by South African households. The chapter proceeds by incorporating virtual ontology and modern day parenting, where the responsibility of the parent in this regard is examined. This, in turn, exposes a dilemma faced by African parents, as African parenting and value system seems to be challenged by globalisation culture. The important question arising from this is: What is the moral responsibility of parents in this technological age?

4.1 Background on parenting

Giddens and Sutton defined family as a group of people, comprised of adults and children, who are linked either genetically or through adoption. The adult members of the group assume the

role of taking care of the children (2011:331). Carlfred Broderick puts forward a similar definition with traditional connotations, stating that family is comprised of two or more adult persons living in the same residence through marriage, with children whom they have either adopted or who are genetically theirs (1993:52). Broderick does, however, acknowledge that there are living arrangements that could imitate family-like relations, such as unmarried lovers staying together. Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn claimed that family is comprised traditionally of the male and female with one or more offspring, all of which reside in the same residence (2008:460). In the modern world, families can either be two female or two male adults with offspring. The adults undertake the responsibility of taking care of the children by providing for them in the best way they can. By taking care of children, a dimension which could be added to the definition by Haralambos and Holborn: that parents care enough to ground their children in values that will aid in creating valuable social relations with others, and prepare them to become responsible adults with noble lives. After all, the function of a family is to raise children in such a manner that they will be an asset not only to the family but to the society at large.

4.2 The family as a functional system

Broderick further argued that the family is a system which in its own exclusive way orders and structures genders and generations (1993:37). It is a system which provides a unique quality in terms of how family members within it relate. The family is also a system that is functional and hence carries out certain functions as mentioned by Broderick (1993: 37): the family system functions as an "1) open, ongoing, 2) goal-seeking, 3) self-regulating, social system." Broderick claimed one of the features which presents the family as an open and ongoing system is the rules, regulations and checks to manage and regulate the family unit as a whole. This involves how each family member, as an individual part of the whole, relates to each other (1993:37).

In the second function of the family as a goal seeking system, one of the manners in which the family as a system can seek goals is through the visionary mind-set of every family member. The family must be a visionary unit that aims to support and achieve goals set for the family (Broderick, 1993:40). As a unit or system, when all the parts making up the unit have the same goals, it is easier for a system to reach its destination as far as its goals are concerned. The last function mentioned for a family system is self-regulating (Broderick, 1993:43). Here,

Broderick used an argument by Buckley (1967) who states that a family is regulated when it has sufficient information for it to function. This information, according to Buckley, is knowledge about the world outside the family system, information about the past regarding the family system, and lastly information about the family as a system together with the individual family members making up the system.

What is important about this perception of family as a system is that it makes it clear that like a system, the family has a function that, when fulfilled, it can sustain itself and all the other social relations through which the family is influenced or affected. Carol Sigelman and Elizabeth Rider stated that family as a system should be seen as functioning within other systems (2009:438). By re-iterating Broderick's idea of how the family operates as an open system in itself supports the notion that the family system operates within other systems, as the family is only a part of a whole in society. It functions within an international system, that international system is comprised of national systems, those national systems are comprised of communities, and those communities are comprised of homes. The family has to be open to allow engagement between its system and the systems within which it is operating.

Murdock and Gore highlighted an important feature of functioning in the family (2004:319). This feature is formulated by (Bowen, 1978). This has to do with the function of the actual individuals within the family, especially when responding to each other. This is the interpersonal functionality of family members which Bowen coins "Differentiation". Nancy Murdock and Paul Gore cited Bowen's definition of differentiation as: "the ability to function autonomously as an individual without being emotionally dependent or attached to the family process" (2004:319). From this definition, it can argued that differentiation is important in that it recognises that, even though a family is a unit as a whole, the emotional functionality of the individuals making that whole is also important for the functioning of the family unit. Emotions are an important element of human functioning, especially because they influence interpersonal relations, whether in small nuclear families or large extended families.

4.3 Types of families

Family size can be one of the factors used to categorise families. The more family members become actively involved in raising the child, the more parental roles can be extended by other adults in the family to the children. The opposite is also true, where the smaller the number of adults involved in the raising of the child, the smaller and more nuclear the family is.

4.3.1 Nuclear and extended family

Patricia Amos differentiated between nuclear and extended families. She stated that the former is characterised by a mother, father and child/ children, whilst the latter is comprised of the same but is extended to grandparents, aunts and uncles, as well as cousins (in Lucia Seidl-de-Moura, 2013:68). The former is often associated with a typical western family setting, while the latter, which will be the focus of this study, is associated with an African family setting. An African family typically extends beyond relatives and extended family, to the community. This can be observed in an idea pointed out by Nonceba Mabovula (2005:108): "your child is mine [and] my child is yours" as the premise of African parenting. This emphasises the collective parenting of an African child. In other words, in African society, the community raises the child, not only the child's parent.[7] The community as a whole has the responsibility of ensuring that children in the community become adults who will make a positive impact on society. This responsibility begins in the home with parents, how parents raise their children and what kind of values they instil in their children.

4.4 Defining parenting

The common understanding of parenting involves adults (generically mother and father) who are responsible for the upkeep and raising of a child whom they have birthed or adopted. Building on this, Amos (in Lucia Seidl-de-Moura, 2013:66) claimed parenting is about living up to the responsibility of raising a child from birth to adulthood with the intention of supporting the child to become a responsible adult that will have a positive impact on society. This is accompanied by multi-faced dimensions consisting of emotional, physical and intellectual capabilities of the child that a parent needs to nurture.

Jeannie Brooks-Gun and Lisa Markman claimed that parenting is premised on behaviour of the parents towards their children (2005: 139). This behaviour should be portrayed through the following, to name a few: nurturing, teaching and discipline. Nurturing is the way parents show their care and love for their children (Brooks-Gun and Markman, 2005:139) and is evident in the manner in which a parent interacts with a child. As teachers, parents play a pivotal role in the learning areas of children, from putting together a puzzle to instilling values in children. Another important aspect of parenting mentioned by Brooks-Gun and Markman (2005:139) is discipline which serves as the moral compass for children, where children are shown which

---

[7] This links to the Nigerian proverb that it takes a whole village to raise a child.

behaviour is appropriate and which is not. There is controversy as to the forms of discipline that parents use.

4.5 Forms of discipline

Shaffdeen Amuwo, Robert Fabian, George Tolley, Ardith Spence and Jacqueline Hill claimed that there are broadly two forms of discipline that parents apply to their children, one refrains from any form of physical spanking of a child (2004:154). The second one uses physical forms of disciplining a child, such as spanking. Amuwo et al. (2004:155) argued that the general consensus amongst professionals is that physical punishment here and there is reasonable, but it must not be to the point of physically abusing a child. In as much as professionals raise this consensus, it can never really be determined whether it is the parent, grandparents, other family members or people outside the home or even the child himself or herself when it comes to the last word regarding the child's discipline. Another factor that needs to be taken into account is how a parent defines the word 'discipline', as this will enable the parent to discern which form of discipline will enable them to groom their children accordingly. Lisa Locke and Ronald Prinz viewed punishment and discipline as instruments used to align a child with appropriate behaviour in order to avoid misbehaviour (2002:897). They further argued that it is essential for parents to create an atmosphere of nurture before instilling discipline, so that discipline stems from love and care and not abusive behaviour of a parent (Locke and Prinz, 2002:898). From this articulation of discipline, it could be deduced that the way a parent disciplines a child is heavily reliant on the parenting style adopted by the parents.

4.6 Parenting styles

Parenting style is influenced by many phenomena, such as the parent's personality, culture, socio-economic status and the family dynamic, to name a few. Focusing more specifically on culture (Bornstein, 2012:212) stated that values and practices entrenched in a culture constitute what is considered normal in the behaviour of the members of a culture. Bornstein claimed that culture prescribes normativity, and with different cultures all over the world, the normativity resulting from culture is not universal but relative. Parenting, being one of the phenomena influenced by the values and norms of a culture, also becomes relative, and plays a role in instilling cultural values into children who can then further instil these values and norms into their children. Culture can also play a role in the way parents discipline their children, for

instance some cultures may encourage corporal punishment as a parenting norm whilst others may not. Parents can sometimes by default consciously or subconsciously take on parenting practices which are entrenched in their culture. As a result, there are different parenting styles influenced by different cultures. There are four types of parenting styles mentioned by Kudakwashe Gwemende (2006:51) which were originally coined by Baumrind (1966) and developed by Maccoby and Martin (1983).

4.6.1 Neglectful parenting style

Gwemende argued that this style involves parents who neglect their children in the sense of not providing them the guidance which parents are meant to provide for their children, and this can create a rift between parent and child (2006:51). Lisa Kakinami, Tracie Barnett, Louis Seguin and Gilles Paradis added that this parenting style is not responsive to nor demanding of the child (2015:19). Neglectful parenting does not create a bond between parent and child.

4.6.2 Permissive parenting

According to Gwemende, permissive parenting is where parents show concern, so their children are more willing to share what is happening in their lives (2006:52). They support the child the best they can but they do not take charge or control their children in any way. Children should be supported and not controlled, as controlling children leads them to do what they are told, not what they want to do. Kakinami stated that permissive parenting responds to the child but does not demand anything from the child (2015:19). It goes only a step further than neglectful parenting but does not go far enough in terms of nourishing the relationship between parent and child.

4.6.3 Authoritarian parenting

The third kind of parenting is the inverse of permissive parenting, more control and less support. This parenting style is coined authoritarian parenting, where rules are set out for children to follow and abide by (Gwemende, 2006:52). Children under this parenting style acknowledge and submit to authority. Kakinami stated that even in their submission, children under this parenting style are required to respond to authority but there is no demanding in the relationship between parent and child (2015:19).

4.6.4 Authoritative parenting

The last kind of parenting is authoritative parenting, which is a combination of permissive and authoritarian styles (Gwemende, 2006:53). The children under this parenting style receive high control and high support, in a more all rounded parenting style relative to the previous styles.

This is a parenting style which creates a conducive atmosphere for proper development of children. Kakinami confirmed this by stating that authoritative is both responsive and provides "demandingness" between the child and the parent (2015:19).

The above-mentioned parenting styles are a synopsis of the different kinds of parenting. The parenting styles which will be observed in this research in particular are taken from Mary Ntukula and Rita Liljestrom, who mention two broad styles of parenting: 'the model of independence' and 'the authoritarian model'.

4.7 The model of independence

Ntukula and Liljestrom identified the model of independence as one of the models of parenting. They argued that this model is often associated with middle class nuclear families in the suburbs. The term 'independence' stems from the nuclear family being independent of the rest of the family (2004:127). This family model is premised on a social contract based on equality between family members, with the aim of focusing on individual development. The independence model is aimed at parents instilling in children, the ability to be self-reliant and independent, encouraging children to exercise their individual autonomy (2004:128). Heidi Keller, Susanne Voelker and Relindis Yovsi referred to a case study done in a Western family from Germany, where, through observation, they established that even from infancy, children are encouraged to be independent. Infants are socialised into "independent sleeping, sleeping through the night and early self-regulation" (2005:160). With this model of independence, allowing the child to sleep independently from infancy gives them room to familiarise themselves with the idea that there are times when parents are around and times where parents allow one to be alone. This ultimately feels normal for the child.

Ntukula and Liljestrom provided an assumption based on a historical account of the value of independence in the Western society, which they stated was industrialisation. The Industrial Revolution in Britain for instance, encouraged a move away from the feudal system into the city, where the industries were (2004:129). This form of organised labour resulted in a move away from the family to individualisation. The nature of work became more organised, workers now became part of the 'production line', fulfilling a specific role in a chain of activities, alienating them not only from fellow humans but also the family (West, 1969). This alienation is solidified by the nature and conditions of employment, where such workers work in bad working conditions. These workers are seen as part of the instruments of production, instead

of as hard working humans who work long hours and do not receive adequate compensation. Long hours mean time away from the family; exploitative and insufficient compensation equate to less purchasing power for the family.

This trend of industrialisation and individualism established ground for ideals relating to independence and solidarity, which translated into the individual lives of Western citizens. Ntukula and Liljestrom stated that parenting in the model of independence allows children to see themselves as individuals, separate from family members in terms of their independent use of autonomy and agency (2004:128). The child can become self-reliant and to look out for his or her interests. In their independence model, Keller et al. (2005: 160) stated that this parenting model allows for children to thrive in developing as unique individuals. This model of parenting seems to be doing more than making children become independent, but rather gives children the opportunity to develop confidence from a young age to pursue what they think is best for them as individuals, and from there to develop themselves based on what they actually think is best for their lives. This individualism also provides room for accountability, because the freedom that comes with embracing individuality comes with the responsibility of facing any repercussions resulting from individual choices and actions.

4.8 Critique of independence model of parenting

Hannah Arendt is not supportive of individualistic ideals. This is seen in her view on the human condition. Arendt's (1958:175) idea of the human condition is founded on three activities: labour (which embraces natural, human physicality, such as ploughing the fields), work (which is functional in the world, far removed from nature but into human, socially constructed work structures and conditions), and lastly, the most important, action, which is based on human plurality. All three conditions will be utilised to assess the independence model of parenting in terms of how their children are conditioned.

Considering key words such as "human physicality" and "natural", Arendt (1958:175) viewed labour as a human condition that could be aligned with physical work done by humans before the introduction of machinery used in the factory. An example to illustrate this would be the hunter gatherers, who used tools to physically hunt for prey in order to provide food for the household. Labour, in this regard, could also be understood from an individualistic perspective, where as an individual, the hunter gatherer had to look out for himself and his family. Having this individualistic approach was a survival mechanism in hunting, and the boy child could

learn that from the father in order to provide for his own family one day. This brings one to the second human condition, which is work.

The independent model of parenting could groom the child to be more focused on the activity of work. This is because work is one of the means through which modern humankind's life is structured. Having mentioned how the idea of individualism has links with industrialisation, it follows that industrialisation introduced humankind to industrious work which is a means through which income is obtained to purchase daily needs. This routine brought on by work could have been one of the reasons why Marx had ideas about alienation of the worker, which once again captures the essence of individualism that the independent model of parenting is instilling in children. The dynamic of the public space called work is likened to the private space at home through Rousseau's 1755 work on "The Discourse on Political Economy". Here, Rousseau made it clear that the family was the primary political arrangement; politics that lie outside the home were secondary. If the model of parenting teaches children to be self-reliant, individualistic and separate from the whole, then this could have an influence on how children understand the world outside the home. This is a problem when juxtaposed with the work of Arendt, who demonstrated the importance of human plurality in human action.

Arendt understood action as the most essential condition of the human being, especially when done in plurality. Plurality, for Arendt (1958:175), was integral as it demonstrates how the nature of human action can bring about both equality and distinction when performed in the midst of other: equality, in the sense of being in the midst of others with whom the human is equal, and humans can also perform an act by virtue of being human, and distinct in the sense that the act of a human, when executed in the midst of others, can leave a mark or a legacy forever. A parenting model that embraces plurality is one where parents start within the home and carry this out in through the rest of society, and is, according to Arendt, the instrument through which the human condition of action is achieved. Individualism restricts action as it does not provide an audience to witness the action, and hence does not give it purpose.

This is not the only problem that comes with individuality. Haralambos and Holborn (2008:763) highlighted that living in this technological age means there has been a progression where technology has become more developed and more entrenched in the everyday lives and activities of humans. As a result, parent-child relations have been affected. The challenge in this regard is that this technological age requires children who are independent. For parents, this can be a challenge as this independence can translate to children being detached from their

parents. In the context of this research, independence can reach a point where parents could feel they have lost authority over their children. With smartphone technology, in particular, teenagers are not only independent in virtual ontology, but their independence is coupled with freedom. It is such situations which require a parent to consider a parenting model that can help with gaining authority in order to be able to guide their children if they go astray. This then leads to the authoritarian model of parenting.

4.9 Authoritarian model of parenting

Ntukula and Liljestrom identified two models of parenting. The first model is the hierarchical, authoritarian family model. They stated that in African and Asian communities, particularly rural ones, authority and hierarchy set the tone for how the family is structured. They observed authority operating within an environment embracing "an ethic of relatedness", where hierarchy structures the home and is based on an individual's role and function in the context of the family as a whole (2004:126). Augustine Shutte (1993) stated that this context of the role and function in the context of the whole is integral to a family as it exposes the complementary nature of family members, which keeps the family functional. He gave the example of a mother and father in the family: the mother gives birth and is a caregiver providing children with an understanding of the self and the home. The father, who is traditionally associated with being the breadwinner, symbolises the world that is outside the home, (1993:156). Shutte demonstrated how the bigger picture is that both mother and father play complementary roles in terms of how they each provide valuable insights and impact on the life of the child. This is not where it stops, there is also an understanding of how identity plays a role in the family structure.

This model is characterised by each member of the family abiding by a particular role and function within the family. Ntukula and Liljestrom revealed this by stating that such a hierarchical setting enables family members to identify themselves through their roles and function within the family (2004:126). It then becomes important how a family member identifies himself or herself as an individual for the sake of the family and society at large. When it comes to parent-child relations, acknowledging one's identity as a parent comes with certain expectations translated into the roles and functions of taking good care of the children. On the other hand, expectations such as respecting elders contributes to the role and function one plays as a child. Children, for instance, are taught to respect elders, which will set the tone

of how they perform their roles and functions as children in the context of family. Shutte noted that these roles and functions encourage reciprocity between parent and child as well as personal growth and development for each family member in order for them to become a positive influence on the society at large (1993:156).

Ntukula and Liljestrom (2004: 126) identified one of the major features through which authoritarian parenting model flourishes, and this is proximity, as it is within proximity that their collectiveness as a family is viable. This model resembles the ideals of traditional African communities (2004:126). John Mbiti articulated how proximity and collectiveness within the African communities embraced the idea that each member of the community is an individual that makes part of a whole. This is to the point that existing out of the whole is detrimental to how an individual grows and how the individual develops (1969: 108-109). Keller et al. traced this from infancy in the African community of Nigeria, among the Nso people, where proximity is an important element for the mother and infant. From infancy, this culture bases the mother and infant relations on the following proximity cornerstones: "primary care, body contact and body stimulation" (2005:174). Keller et al. believed that proximity during breastfeeding allows the mother and infant to connect through care of the mother, through bodily contact as the infant is being breastfed, and lastly through non-verbal bodily connection. The infant feels the warmth of the mother's skin, the mother's heartbeat; the mother feels the same and finds a connection with the infant. Alice Moyo would refer to proximity as the connective dimension in African model of parenting, where warmth and support are used to reach out to the child (2012:22).

This idea of proximity could be juxtaposed with the previous model of independence, where proximity assumes dependence on the person within proximity, it assumes an interconnectedness and closeness, a communality that the model of independence does not complement. What better way to discuss proximity than to explore the notion of dependence and the role it plays in individuals identifying themselves in the context of those nearby, neighbours, family etc. It allows one to focus on the elements which are conducive to dependence and interconnectedness, such as warmth and support amongst individuals as a means to sustain the communal interconnection.

Warmth, support and proximity are mentioned by Moyo who embraced the idea raised by Mzamo Mangaliso and Mphuthumi Damane (2001). They stated that it is through others that the individual is who he or she is. This ideal applies not only with the living, but also with

forefathers, who have passed down values to live by, with the intention of these values being preserved from generation to generation (2001:24). Amos in Lucia Seidl-de-Moura put this into context by stating that the idea of collectiveness encourages a setting where the elders are able to transfer values to children through storytelling (2013:9). This storytelling is appropriate in a communal environment, which Mabovula (2011:38) states is an environment which captures an "ethic of reciprocity", "intersubjectivity", "cooperation", "collective existence", and "collaboration and solidarity" amongst other terms. Storytelling in such a setting of co-operation and unity is commonly done through oral communication.

According to Ong (1982:69), oral communication was for large groups, in this context, in settings where there is collective living and co-existence. Mushengyezi claimed that oral story-telling was used for transferring of values (2003: 13). Orally told stories featured folktales, myths, idioms, etc. which had valuable life lessons and values that African parents and grandparents passed down to their children and grandchildren. Amos in Seidl-de-Moura identified storytelling, extended family, and mothers' care as some of the key methods through which African parents transmit values to their children (2013:65).

The words 'hierarchy' and 'authoritarian' commonly used to describe African parenting could have negative connotations. This will be critiqued later when discussing the weaknesses of this model of parenting. Even though the African family is typically characterised by hierarchy, authoritarian structure, its communitarian feature provides harmony within the hierarchy. Ntukula and Liljestrom (2004:127) noted how 'hierarchy' and 'authority' bring about a sense as each member of the family knows his/her place and role. This not only promotes order, it can also prevent conflict and allow for warmth and co-operation. It is not that there are no nuclear families in African families, but even in nuclear families, there is communality, co-operation and interdependence.

4.10 Critique of authoritarian parenting model

The authoritarian model of parenting has been presented as one which is common amongst African societies which thrive in an environment of interdependence and communality. This model has shortcomings which can affect adolescent children. Beenish Sarjat and Naeem Aslam identified the challenges which can arise from utilising the African model of parenting. They did this by assessing the authoritarian model against two considerably essential parenting components, namely parental responsiveness and parental demandingness (2010:48). Parent

responsiveness could be seen as the role which parents play in terms of how they assist their children to embrace individuality, to develop as individuals and be able to confidently assert themselves (Sarjat and Aslam, 2010:48). This point by Sarjat and Aslam is essential for the adolescent that is still understanding who he or she is as a person. This is because the adolescent years are the years in which teenagers have considerable peer pressure; they try to go with the next 'in thing' or what their peers deem as popular. Not embracing individuality can lead to an adolescent being vulnerable to peer pressure.

Sarjat and Aslam further stated that if parents are able to understand and discern their children's needs and demands, they will be able to assist their children to develop first and foremost as individuals, and from here they will understand their place and role in the broader society (2010:48). In as much as there are traditional ceremonies held in African communities to assist adolescents into adulthood or maturity, these traditional ceremonies are in the context of cultural adherence and practice and not necessarily for the individual autonomy and development of a teenagers as an individual. Amos shared a traditional ceremony called "puberty rites" practised in some African communities such as Ghana and Nigeria. This ceremony is well suited for the young, who are given a platform through which older women who advise them, instil discipline in them, and prepare them for adulthood, such as how to become good wives (2013:71).

In South Africa, Mogotlane, Ntlangulela and Ongunbanjo described a traditional ceremony for boys in the Xhosa culture, where they are initiated into manhood (2004:57). In as much as both ceremonies mentioned could be instilled by culture and can be enforced by parents to encourage their children to take part in these ceremonies, this does not necessarily count as parental responsiveness. This is because the two ceremonies are culturally motivated; utilising culture based ceremonies as a parent on a teenager child as an individual does not mean that there is a responsiveness to the needs of the teenagers as an individual. It could mean that the individual as a teenager is being submerged into cultural expectation and tradition. The other important issue is that it is a relatively impersonal ceremony, structured for all adolescent girls or boys, not for an individual person with specific needs and demands. This makes it seem as though the authoritarian model is more concerned about the whole, the community and how cultural traditions are seen as a method of sustaining the community.

When it comes to parental demandingness, Diana Baumrind stated that assertions to be made by the parent to the child are done in order to make sure the child understands his/her

integration of the family as a whole, especially in the child's development into an adult (1991:61-62). In the environment of co-operation, ethical reciprocity, and interdependence to name a few, at what point do children in a communitarian environment have a platform to voice their views on what they think about the initiation ceremonies, on how they feel as individuals in the context of family? Sarjat and Asmal confirmed this by stating that the authoritarian model of parenting does not give room for verbal discourse on the part of the children. As a result, children can seek different platforms to express themselves (2010:49). In the context of this research, the use of social media which they access through their communication technology devices, could become a problem. This is because on this platform, there are strangers who can take advantage of this and become a potential threat to the safety of children.

4.11 Some insight on parenting South Africa

Parenting in South Africa is no different from other African countries. Detailed mention of South Africa is imperative, as the research is conducted in South Africa. Richtel and Morrel (2006: 151) claimed that the word 'parent' itself is heavily laden with both a functional and social meaning. The functional meaning has been explored in the beginning of this chapter, which outlined that parenting is based on the function of parents playing the role of responsible caretakers to their children. The social meaning thereof is based on the social role of the father and mother, in terms of the social structures which inform the role played by each in the life of a child (2006:151). This can be elaborated with the example of social roles expected of fathers to "bring home the bacon" as the breadwinner of the house. The father then carries the financial sustainability of the household by providing food, shelter, clothing and education of the children. Mothers, on the other hand, are expected to play the nurturing role, stay at home full-time and take care of the children. These are the social roles which society has created, moulds that parents should fill. In the South African context, a large number of fathers have not adequately fitted the mould. Richtel and Morrel illustrate this by stating how South Africa has a high rate of absent fathers, in contrast to the many fathers today who are active in the family (2006:151). It follows that the social role of fathers mentioned by Richtel and Morrel (2006: 151) has become compromised.

In South Africa, Richtel and Morrel (2006:153) have traced the problem of absent fathers as far back as the migrant labour system instituted by the apartheid government in South Africa, (2006:153). This was a popular system of labour in South Africa from the early 1900s. Holborn

and Eddy argued that since then, most black households, particularly in the rural areas, were regulated by mothers. This trend of mothers who are single parents is common even in contemporary South Africa. Within black families, in particular, the trend is not restricted to rural areas but exists also in townships and suburbs (2011:1).

With fathers working away from family, their absenteeism was factored in by traditional African societies/communitarian setting. "Collective parenting" (Richtel and Morrel, 2006:152) is well established: the external family as a collective assists mothers who are not residing with their children's father. This became a survival mechanism for single mothers who were not coping alone. Mkhize supported this idea, adding that [communitarian] fatherhood in African communities is common where the uncles of the child are also father figures within the household and for the rest of the community (2005). The single-parent trend is common even in contemporary South Africa, where in black families in particular it becomes convenient for single mothers to stay with extended family to get assistance to look after their children, (Holborn and Eddy, 2011:1). Grandparents are the typical extended family in South Africa and they often help to raise grandchildren. Poverty is another factor mentioned by Holborn and Eddy which contributes to the difficulties in single-parent households (2011:1). Turner added single parents try to combat poverty with financial assistance from extended family to raise their children; the elderly even use their pension money to assist with children's expenses (2005).

Richter and Morrel have highlighted that physical absence of fathers since migrant labour has been perpetuated over the years even into contemporary South Africa, where in pre-marital pregnancies, young men have "normalised" not supporting their pregnant girlfriends during and after pregnancy (2006:152). This problem, highlighted by Richter and Morrel, causes a ripple effect, with the physical absence observed by sons with absent fathers who then become absent fathers themselves. Alfred Motalenyane Modise noted, however, that there are also single fathers who are raising their children in South Africa, and who play an active role in raising their children (2015:110).

Moyo carried out a study in a South African high school with a sample of 257 grade 11 pupils. Her study was based on how parenting style in the Western Cape can influence the goals and aspirations of teenagers. The study indicated that most the black pupils' parents were authoritarian, which influences the self-perception of black adolescent youth (2012:58). Mzobanzi Mboya stated that the authoritative model results in the adolescent heavily

depending on the image of the family as a whole when grasping the idea of individualisation and self-concepts (1995:25). What Mboya has identified could arguably be problematic for adolescents in high school who need to be more self-reliant as they transition into adulthood. With absent fathers, interdependence is affected; in households where children are orphans, there is a challenging dynamic of independence versus dependency. Outside the home, such as at school, for example, the family is not in sight, which requires the adolescent to have some level of independence.

Another issue which could be explored as a dimension in the parenting of South African children is the Child Act. Chandre Gould and Catherine Ward have described how the Child Amendment Act aims to guide parents with positive parenting. This is a legal policy framework that mandates parents not to resort to corporate punishment when disciplining their children (2015:2). At times, it is the children's rights in the Child Act versus the communal values parents refer to as the basis for bringing up their children. David Ndegwah and Otto Kroesen mentioned three values that inform African communal thinking and hence have an influence on African parenting style: respecting elders, belief in a higher power and community-centred life (communitarianism) (2012). The aim of these values is to promote a healthy co-existence between parents and children. Co-existence as a collective is so important and values in communities and families need to be passed down from generation to generation.

The socio-economic landscape in South Africa, in historically disadvantaged families in particular, is challenging the passing down of values from generation to generation. Holborn and Eddy identified, in addition to migrant labour legacy and absent fathers, poverty and HIV/AIDS as some of the factors behind grandparents coming in to assist single mothers to raise children (2011:6). Gould and Ward highlighted that poverty can lead to depression in parents and single headed households often face financial pressure (2015:2). Parental depression can lead to neglect of children, who then might resort to drug abuse and risky sexual behaviour. What could this translate to in the context of a predominantly authoritarian parenting style?

South Africa is a rapidly developing technological environment. Brown and Czerniewicz claimed that youth of all backgrounds in South Africa have access to a smartphone (2010:9). The South African family is therefore, like any other, exposed to and also influenced by the world outside the household through globalisation and technology.

The digital divide within the kind of family setting where the elderly look after orphaned grandchildren is very evident: the digital native is under the care of the digital stranger. This kind of digital divide can be beneficial in terms of teenage grandchildren bonding with their grandparents as they teach them how to use ICT devices, but can be a challenge when it comes to communication between the two generations. With access to virtual worlds and unlimited information of the Internet through ICT devices, teenagers no longer require advice from the elderly who are traditionally the carriers of wisdom. Instead, teenagers opt for information they retrieve from the Internet. With globalisation, teenagers access all kinds of information from any corner of the world through their ICT devices.

4.12. Parenting and globalization

The concept of globalisation can be considered from many facets, socially, economically, politically and in terms of development. Rhaikan, Mondakhmet, Ryskeldy and Alua (2014) described globalisation as a phenomenon entailing the coming together of nations into one, big global nation. This results in cultural diversity, economic and political relations between nations, mass migration, compression of space and time through development of transportation and communications systems (2014:8). Rhaikan et al.'s definition captures the essence of globalisation, how it navigates space and time through development and places diverse nations, societies, humans, cultures, languages, traditions, into the same space. Hybridity is inevitable in all facets of life, such as culture, race, religion, traditions, etc., as is an attempt at hegemony, as mentioned by Rhaikan et al. (2014:9) that will homogenise society.

The current hegemony that is infiltrating nations through globalisation is the West. Western influence is seen in the economic systems, in the media industry, in fashion, in music, etc. Upendra Acharya argued that the West structured international law, and through this they are able to influence the behaviour of other non-hegemonic states (2013:940). The West has power, as they can exercise the law they have written to assess the behaviour and actions of non-hegemonic states, but what happens when they have to assess their own actions and behaviour? There is a conflict of interest arising here which raises an important ethical question. Being the writers of international law, what guarantee is there that proves that Western deals and interests are not disguised in the law?

A factor which strengthens globalisation, according to Giddens (2009:127), is communication technology devices, as these devices can bring people together in a global village without them

being physically present in that world. These devices also encourage the quick spread and retrieval of information and knowledge which can be dangerous for children because their parents are usually not with them within that space. Parents can lose the ability to monitor their children and ensure that they behave based on the values instilled in them. Brown, Gourdine, Waites and Owens argued that the diversity that a globalised world brings in terms of con-existence and exposure of different cultures has implications for norms and values that parents use to parent their children in a culturally diverse environment (2013:109). Brown at al. claimed that this can challenge parents' authority and change the nature of the relation between parent and child (2013:110). Societal norms and values internationally and nationally can be affected, as the vast knowledge and information which children have access to via the Internet makes them question many things, including those which are forbidden.

Gwemende agreed that globalisation seems to be compromising family life, both of nuclear and extended families (2006:iii). Individualism seems to be triumphing, to the point where individual development based on exploring opportunities and grasping them, no matter how far or close they are to one's family, is affecting family life and parenting, in particular. Anthony Giddens and Phillip Sutton (2009) added that people in a globalised world are exposed to more opportunities to develop themselves: they are no longer restricted by tradition or customs which keep them at home, such as the family practice that an eldest son must learn the craft of his father's business so he can take over the family business. Communal values are eroding, as globalisation has opened a much wider avenue for individuals to develop themselves, (2009:147).

For example, for a relocated man, it can become difficult to establish where home is. Is it where the relocated man spends most of his time away from home working, or is home where he has left his wife and children? The idea of home comes with some form of displacement for the children in particular, when their parents are split between two homes. Is home where their mother is or where their father is? Nobles stated that studies have shown a progressive correlation between the presence of a parent and the parent being a positive influence on the child (2011: 731). In a globalised world where mobility is less of a restriction, migration is not uncommon. Many parents have migrated to another country and left their spouse to earn a better salary in another country. With this kind of dynamic, a new family structure is created, which Nobles (2011:730) has called 'transnational'; raising the child now sometimes uses the African model, where the extended family assists the single parent left by a spouse working in a different country.

William Robinson noted how the transnational setting peaked since the 1970s and 1980s, which implies that over the past 40 plus years there have been many families all over the world who have had their household structure restructured by globalisation (2009:7). Restructuring does not end in the household, but permeates to the society. If there were any values that a certain society was living by, transnationalism changes that dynamic and this can negatively or positively influence the value systems that children in each community world-wide are living.

An additional way in which globalisation is challenging parent-child relationships is through the media. Faiz Alsaedy has noted how globalisation has been highly influenced by media. Media technology has become so advanced that television and Internet cables are available to more people and connect more people through different technological platforms than before (2015:36). The relationship between globalisation and media makes marketing through mass media an option. Mass media can be a source of propaganda for children; they are constantly overwhelmed by images of 'the latest fashion', 'the latest gadget', 'the best place to hangout' etc. Amongst themselves, children influence each other to attain that which makes them cool and relevant. When children ask their parents for these marketed items which their parents may not be able to afford, this can become a problem and can affect the relationship between parent and child.

What feeds this peer pressure is what Robinson (2009:12) has called 'global cities'. These global cities are power stations of globalisation; they have the commercial and industrial features that can handle the flow of money through imports, exports and production, and they are fuelled by a flow of people migrating from the villages and visiting from other nations moving through the city, consumerism, flow of information, etc. Global cities are driven by 'culture of globalisation'. Akopyan, in the Global Studies Encyclopaedic Dictionary, defined the 'culture of globalisation' as global trends which result in the formation of a universal culture (2014:112). Teenagers going through adolescence, who are still trying to discover who they are, easily fall victim to global trends. This can affect the relationship with their parents who may be trying to guide them so they do not follow trends which will have a negative effect on them.

African parents, in the context of this research, are faced with the challenge of deconstructing and reconstructing moral responsibility to keep up with the exponentially changing technology that plays a role in the actions of teenagers in virtual worlds.

4.13 Parental responsibility in the midst of technology

Fahlquist and van de Poel (2012) raised a debate regarding the responsibility of parents when it comes to their children's access to technology: should parents use technological measures to monitor their children who may use technology irresponsibly? Or should parents steer away from "shifting their responsibility to an artefact?" (Fahlquist and van der Poel, 2012:285). Fahlquist and van de Poel developed a case study on V-Chip technology (a chip that parents can insert inside a television set for blocking any programme with high violent content. The V-Chip is programmed by parents to detect the ratings given to television content. This V-Chip idea was so popular in the USA that it was endorsed by President Bill Clinton (Fahlquist and van der Poel, 2012:287)

With communication technology devices, parents face a different scenario. This is because communication technology devices are personal, mobile and sometimes children have passwords on them. The V-Chip idea may not be practical with communication technology devices. Parents would have to form a partnership with the service provider or the communication device company. Would parents then be shifting their responsibility to a third party? This brings one to the heart of the Fahlquist and van de Poel debate, which expounds on the categories of responsibilities faced by parents regarding the use of technology by their children (2012:287). They differentiated between two responsibilities: morally motivated responsibility, which can be linked with Kant's idea of "treating others not as a means to an end but as an end in themselves", and an amoral/ immoral kind of responsibility which is motivated by functionality, such as a chauffeur who is tasked with the responsibility to drop off managers who have come to a conference from another province. Whether or not those managers will be doing no good or not is not the issue, the task is to transport them to the venue.

Fahlquist and van de Poel (2012) made a distinction between forward looking responsibility and backward looking responsibility. In the former, responsibility is motivated by what lies in the future. The latter entails looking back in time and finding blame for an act done in the past. Fahlquist and van de Poel do however make the claim that the responsibility of the parent when it comes to the V-Chip technology is more task responsibility than it is moral responsibility, (2012:288). This is because placing a chip inside the television set is more of a task than a parenting skill. An example of moral responsibility would be for the parent to provide a platform where children are able to express how they are feeling. With forward looking responsibility comes an element of control, where the technological age parents have some form of control regarding what their children watch on television (Fahlquist and van de Poel,

2012:291). If the same V-Chip technology was applied to other communication technology devices it could have the same effect: parents would have some element of control in terms of what their children access.

Fahlquist and van de Poel emphasised how parenting goes beyond the measures of tasks and elements of control: parenting touches on a parent as a person. Is the kind of person they are or aim to be in sync with good parenting? It is not too concerned about the kind of actions parents perform, but more on the kind of parent a person is in order to carry out good actions to begin with. This said, Fahlquist and van de Poel, like Jonas (1985), would view responsibility as a virtue that a parent should have in order to be a good parent. A virtue which Fahlquist and van de Poel attach to responsibility is care (2012:294). Care as a virtue is a character trait that parents would want. With care comes a number of important ingredients required for parenting: love, nurturing, protection, development, education etc. Regarding education of children, Shutte pointed out that educating children comes in two forms: formal and informal. Education is formal in terms of taking them to school, and informal in terms of enlightening them through knowledge on how to live life on a day to day basis (1993:156).

4.14 Conclusion

This chapter's aim was to explore the impact that virtual ontology has on the responsibility of the parent, especially in the context of globalisation that has introduced ICT devices into the home. The chapter commenced with the context of family. It was seen that parenting conforms to different structures, but the most popular are nuclear and extended family structures, where the former is associated with Western households and the latter, African households. These family structures inform parenting styles. Nuclear family parenting styles tend to gravitate towards a model of independence. African parenting styles tend to adopt an authoritarian parenting model, where hierarchy informs order within the household. It can be seen that parenting in general, no matter where it is in the world, is faced with the challenges of globalisation. Technology, as a by-product of globalisation, seems to be keeping African parents on their toes, as values such individualism and rationalisation are not compatible with the African parenting style based on collectiveness and respect for elders. This is unlike the Western parenting style which complements globalisation. It allows the child to develop as an individual, to rationalise and to carve their identity as an autonomous agent. It was also seen that the responsibility of the parent in this technological age is challenged by the nature of

technology, where parenting out of task and control can deviate from parenting out of care. The next chapter provides insight on the methodology of this research and explores the research design, study population, sampling, methodological approach, etc.

CHAPTER FIVE:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

Re-actions of the digital natives: "The Millennials"

"The Millennials are confidently able to navigate technology because they have only ever known a world with cell phones, Internet connectivity and email. They use and manipulate technology intuitively, as if they were wired for it." (Bush and Codrington, 2008:30)

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter explained technology and its effects on parenting, particularly in the African context. Another element mentioned was the digital divide within the family between the digital natives, digital immigrants, and digital strangers. The previous chapter also served as a backdrop for this chapter, which voices the thoughts and opinions of the digital natives from focus groups conducted by the researcher. Being children in high school, these digital natives are of "the millennial" breed as mentioned by Bush and Codrington, a generation of children born between the years 1990 and 2000, years in which technology started gaining incredible maturity as far as development is concerned (2008:28).

Research studies on this topic are relatively scarce in the African context, particularly studies using fieldwork as a method of data collection. The purpose of this chapter is to take the reader through the research methodology of this study on the virtual ontology of teenagers on communication technology device platforms and the responsibility of their parents. The fieldwork was conducted in an African context. The research objectives and ways in which they have been achieved are provided. The research design is outlined by way of discussing the methodological approach study area, methodology, study population sample, and trustworthiness. After these are outlined, the focus group interviews conducted by the researcher will be analysed, where the answers given by the teenage interviewees will serve as a framework to understand what is beneath the phenomena of teenagers and their agency within virtual ontology. To do this, the researcher will present the questions posed to the teenage interviewees from the focus group as themes, themes which will provide deeper insight on the underlying issues surrounding teenagers and their experiences, which in turn will shed light into their agency that will further be explored in the analysis chapter.

5.1 Type and context of the study

5.1.1. Epistemology

Epistemology entails the essence of knowledge, the way humans perceive knowledge, and how humans use knowledge to understand their experiences and the world around them (Crotty, 2009:8). With diverse societies, cultures, traditions, practices, etc. come different informants of knowledge and hence different perceptions of the world. This introduces different paradigms of understanding the world, which is why it will be important to specify the paradigm or theoretical perspective in which this study will be embedded. Crotty identified constructivism as one of the paradigms of knowledge upon which research is founded (2003:3). Constructivism is based on the idea that the behaviour of individuals can be informed by the social norms and ideas which have been adopted by members of that society (Barkin, 2003: 326). Being interdisciplinary, the constructive epistemology of this study is embedded mainly in philosophical, ethical and sociological disciplines.

5.2 Theoretical perspective

Qualitative research methodology, which is the primary methodology in this study, urges the researcher to go beyond describing and to provide an explorative rendition of a theoretical perspective. What is required is a theoretical approach which will provide explanations of human behaviour through the spectrum of human culture and history (Crotty, 2009:67). Understanding that social phenomena have a historical and cultural understanding requires a level of depth in interpreting social phenomenon. This, then, introduces a theoretical perspective coined interpretivism, which is more aligned with the explorative nature of understanding human phenomenon. Its aim is to debunk the surface to explore a deeper meaning of social interaction, rather than to provide a clinical, descriptive approach which brushes over the surface and fails to provide depth of understanding on society and social interaction.

5.3 Research methodology

5.3.1 Study area

The unit of analysis in this study is the human subject: namely teenagers and parents. This study is set in KwaZulu-Natal, a province situated in the Eastern region of South Africa. This

study is specifically located in the central part of KwaZulu-Natal, in the small city of Pietermaritzburg. This was chosen because it is the area where the researcher resided, worked and studied. Two high schools were randomly selected, one from a Pietermaritzburg township and another from a Pietermaritzburg suburb. The choices of township and suburban high schools was informed by the desire to hear from participants from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Fundokuhle Secondary school is a public high school located in the township of Imbali in Pietermaritzburg. Considered a previously disadvantaged school, it was part of the low level of Bantu education system and school management during the apartheid era.

Alexandra High is a public high school in Pietermaritzburg suburb of Pelham. It is considered a 'Model C' school which is classified as an advantaged school, historically and currently, as it provides adequate sporting facilities and computers for students. Children in this school are not only diverse in race but also in socio-economic backgrounds; there is a combination of township and suburban pupils from working class (parents with wage labour) to middle class families (salaried labour).

5.3.2 Population of the study

Adolescent youth formed the population for this research, specifically those between 16 and 18 years, who are less vulnerable for research than those who are younger. Both schools had mixed demographics in terms of gender; both girls and boys participated in the research. Fundokuhle High School provided Zulu speaking teenage interviewees with a few Sotho and other ethnic groups. In terms of socio-economic status, being based in a township, meant these teenage interviewees were predominantly from the working class, with a blend of lower middle class households. Alexandra High School, it is a racially diverse school, with both girls and boys from grade 8 to grade 12 between the ages of 14-18 years. However, only black pupils were interviewed from both schools. Parents of pupils between the ages 16-18 years old were also interviewed.

5.4 Sample and sampling technique

The study population was selected through sampling. Babbie noted two kinds of sampling methods: probability and non-probability sampling (2013:127). Babbie defined probability sampling as a method of selecting participants based on a "random selection mechanism". The reason for township and suburb locations was to include socio-economic diversity within the sample which was useful in this research (2013:132). Socio-economics can play a role when it

comes to the kind of communication technology devices that participating pupils had access to and how they engage in social networks. With both schools, the researcher got access of the students through the school headmasters, who connected the researcher with the guidance teacher of the school. The guidance teacher was then able to schedule slots for meeting with students in the school between 16-18 years old. This age group choice was purposive, making this purposive sampling, a strand of non-probability sampling.

When it comes to non-probability sampling, Babbie argued that non-probability sampling entails sampling that is not based on chance; it is based on purpose (2003:128). The researcher purposively selected pupils (girls and boys) between the ages of 16-18 years. They are a more mature group amongst high school pupils who should be able to interact well in focus groups. The numbers for the focus group which would be manageable were at most ten students per focus group, which equated to about 20. In terms of parents, purposive sampling was used to select parents from the school PTA with children from 16-18 years from the high schools participating in the research. Individual interviews were held with each parent. A snowballing sampling technique was also used for parents in the community of Pietermaritzburg, whereby parents from the PTA recommended parents they knew from the community. The aim was to get ten parents from both township and the suburbs. As these were not focus groups but individual interviews, the researcher chose 10 parents to interview on a one on one basis. No translator was required for either focus groups or the structured interviews as the researcher can speak both English and isiZulu which are the common media of instruction in KwaZulu-Natal.

5.5 Research methods

5.5.1 Focus group

A focus group was conducted with students from each school, ranging from the ages of 16 to 18 years. There were ten students in each group. Each focus group lasted approximately 45 minutes. Questions used to guide focus group discussions can be found in Appendix 1.

5.5.2 Interviews

A total of ten individual interviews were conducted with parents with children between the ages of 16 and 18 years old. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. Questions used to guide interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

5.6 Data presentation and analysis

It has already been established that this research was qualitative in nature, though the methods of presenting the data were both quantitative and qualitative. The reason for an integrated presentation of data was inspired by David Morgan, who asserted that combining methods is effective and strengthens the findings of the study (2004:67). Combining methods helps to make conclusions in research more convincing. Observing findings from two methods and receiving the same result solidifies the study (Morgan, 2014:67; Tashakkori and Teddie, 1998). This is important because the study can attain the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative and produce findings which are convincing.

Presenting data in an integrative manner suggests that the researcher also analyses the data in an integrative manner. Data captured from the responses provided by teenagers in focus groups and parents in individual interviews was coded.

5.6.1 Coding

The importance of coding is mentioned by Sven Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale who argued that coding is an essential step for a researcher to take before making meaning of data. Data is placed into categories that enable the researcher to undertake a content analysis and make better sense of the meaning behind the data (2015:227).

Bearing in mind the integrated approach in presenting and analysing this data, this research commenced with the quantitative aspect of observing data. Coding data in this regard calls for nominal data; quantitative data involves counting phenomena and placing them into categories (Denscombe, 2008:227). The data captured from the teenager focus groups and the parent interviews were categorised so that similar answers were placed in the same category. For example, for the question "Which feature on your smartphone do you spend most of your time?" the answers were categorised according to the feature. It was then easy to analyse which feature was most popular amongst those teenagers according to the number who had chosen that feature. In the parent interview, with the question "Which features of smartphones are you familiar with?", the answers were categorised according to the number of people that chose each feature.

Coding data does not end there. The coded data is then presented in the form of bar-graphs suitable to the data presented (Denscombe, 2008:244). Bar-graphs are also useful for small-scale research (Denscombe 2008:244) such as this study.

The data was also analysed from a qualitative dimension, where content analysis and a critical approach were used to analyse the coded data.

5.6.2 Content analysis

Content analysis was instrumental for the qualitative element of the research. Duriau, Reger and Pfarrer (2007) described key factors which could be used to describe content analysis. They defined content analysis as a qualitative research methodology tool that is important in "understanding the cognitive schema of people (research participants)" (2007: 6). The choice of words, for instance, that participants use in answering questions reveals underlying themes in that research. This was useful for the researcher when analysing the interview content according to themes in order to provide a neatly packaged report of the data collected.

5.6.3 Critical approach

After gathering the data into themes and arranging it into graphs, a researcher can embark on a critical approach. Knorringa and Staveren stated that social relations are not restricted from exhibiting negative factors, such as the negative factors that mobile communication technology use can have on family relations, especially parent-child relations (2007:3). The critical approach dimension of this research are explored in the analysis chapter (Chapter Seven). This will be achieved with the use of the theoretical frameworks to assess the ethical implications of mobile communication technology use on moral responsibility of African parent and the moral agency of teenagers.

5.7 Validity, reliability and rigour

In the case of empirical research, it is important for a researcher to provide means that will account for the validity, reliability and rigour of the research. Starting off with <u>validity</u>, it is important to ensure that consent forms are given to participants before conducting interviews with them, so that participants do not feel forced to participate. Consent is required from the participant to show the participant had participated (See Appendcies 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 introductory letters requesting consent, informed consent forms and permission letters from schools). It is also important that the researcher respect the confidentiality of the information from participants; pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

With <u>reliability</u>, in order to get reliable data when dealing with research entailing technology, it would be of the benefit to capture views of parents and children from different socio-

economic settings. This will allow consideration of whether or not "having and not having" certain kinds of communication technology devices in the household has an influence on the moral responsibility of parents for their children's agency in a virtual world. This socio-economic setting will take into account the kind of knowledge that parents have regarding communication technology devices which can also influence their moral responsibility. This is why research was done in a township school and a school in the suburb, with parents from each community interviewed. Reliability also includes how accurately data was captured. Data has been captured in this research through recordings. Clive Seale and David Silverman stated that "transcripts of recordings provide an excellent record of naturally occurring interactions" (1997).

When it comes to <u>rigour</u> in research, Krefting in her paper "Rigor in qualitative research: the assessment of trustworthiness" noted how rigour of research is linked to trustworthiness. Trust/trustworthiness has to come from both the researcher (even when interpreting data) and the participants (1991:215). There needs to be a relationship of trust. Going through the right channels with research ethics is part of building trust between the researcher and the participants. Entering the research space with a permission letter, respecting the identity of participants and respecting the confidentiality of the information provided, and also accurately capturing data in order to bring out the authenticity are all part of creating a trustworthy relationship between the researcher and participants.

5.8 The profile of a typical South African smartphone user

The typical South African smartphone user has been described by Cornelius Bothma and Melanie Gopaul. They revealed that 53% of smartphones owners in South Africa are below the age of 35 years, 78% are black, 74% speak an African language, 48% are from high school, (teenagers), 55 % are from urban areas (Bothma and Gopaul, 2015:204).

The teenagers interviewed in Pietermaritzburg are reflective of the above statistics. These statistics are also important because they highlight that in the greater population, digital natives are unsurprisingly the age group with the highest number of smartphone users in South Africa. Having outlined the profile of the typical smartphone user in South Africa, the following section will consider more deeply the profiles of the teenage interviewees.

5.9 Focus groups with teenagers

Tables 5.1 and Table 5.2 provide character profiles of the teenager respondents from Fundokuhle Secondary School as well as Alexandra High School. The ice breaker of the focus group involved brief introductions by each respondent. These introductions were helpful in compiling a profile for each student.

Table 5.1: Fundokuhle Secondary School respondents

No.	NAME	AGE	GENDER	DESCRIPTION
1.	Andiswa	16	Female	Shy student who resides in Imbali township, not too far from school. She stays with her working single mother and younger brother.
2.	Busisiwe	17	Female	Calls herself a socialite because she is quite fond of socialising on social media and with her friends. She is the middle born of three sisters, stays with her grandmother, mother and her two sisters in Imbali township.
3.	Entle	17	Female	Stays with her single mother and an older sister. She is quite close to her older sister, as a result asks older sister advice on a lot of things, including fashion, boys, friends, etc.
4.	Nomcebo	16	Female	Stays with her grandmother, mother and younger twin brothers. They reside in Imbali township
5.	Patrick	16	Male	Stays with both his parents in Imbali township. He describes himself as a very honest and open guy. He is passionate about cooking, would like to be a chef and own a restaurant.
6.	Peter	17	Male	Helpful student, who helped with setting up the venue for the focus group. He hails from Imbali township, across the road from school. Resides with his grandmother in Mvumbukazi rural township.
7.	Reneiloe	16	Female	Member of the Fundokuhle Secondary School Choir. She was excused from choir rehearsals as she had volunteered to participate in the focus group discussion. She resides in Imbali with her mother, aunt and grandmother.
8.	Sam	16	Male	Soft spoken, small male student with an admirable academic record. He is also part of the School Representative Council (SRC), but is not an office bearer. He resides in Imbali township with both his parents.
9.	Thabiso	18	Male	One of the mature students in this focus group. He plays for a local soccer team and would like to pursue sports rather than school. Stays with both his parents in Imbali township
10.	Themba	18	Male	Tall, talkative student who is the president of the SRC. Amongst the focus group peers he is known as 'the popular guy' that displays charisma and leadership qualities. He stays in Edenvale, a suburb dominated by lower middle class families. Raised by a single mother, he has three siblings slightly older than him.
11.	Zonke	17	Female	Close friend to Andiswa. Also quite shy but warms up with time when she feels comfortable. She resides with her grandmother and aunt in Imbali township.

Table 5.2: Alexandra High respondents

No.	NAME	AGE	GENDER	DESCRIPTION
1.	Connie	17	Female	Only child that stays with both her parents in the suburb Pelham. She is quite interested in fashion and would like to study fashion design when she is done with high school.
2.	Jessica	18	Female	A responsible final year student who is prepared to go to university the following year. Mentioned that her mother teaches her to be disciplined with use of social media if she wants to maintain pleasing grades for university entrance.
3.	John	18	Male	Quite articulate, reserved and attentive male student. Stays in the suburb of Bisley with his mother and stepfather.
4.	Jonathan	16	Male	Quite laid back male student who says he spends more time with friends than he does at home. He stays in Scottsville with his single mother.
5.	Londiwe	18	Male	Has a strict demeanour about her. She stays with both her parents and is an older sister to a younger brother and sister. She resides in Scottsville with her parents. She wants to study at UKZN [local university], as it is close to her home so she can continue staying with her parents and be there for her younger siblings.
6.	Mary	16	Female	Stays with both her mother and father in Pelham. She states that she is a 'fashionista' and would not mind owning her own boutique one day.
7.	Mbali	16	Female	An outgoing student, extrovert, and has a bubbly personality. She has a close relationship with her single mother. They reside in Bisley.
8.	Mpho	16	Female	Stays with both her parents in Imbali. Stated that she has quite a number of accounts on social media: Facebook, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and BBM.
9.	Sipho	18	Male	Interested in sound engineering and would love to pursue this after high school. He stays with both his parents as well as his and younger and older brother. As a family, they reside in Scottsville.
10.	Siya	17	Male	Stays in the suburb of Hayfields with his single dad. He loves reading books, especially books about historical events such as books about famous wars.

Each question in the focus groups is discusses below. The answers are presented as themes developed by the researcher.

5.9.1 Theme 1: 'Smartest' phone as a popularity and acceptance accessory

In the focus group discussion, when asked about the latest smartphone that attracts peers, Sam and seven other pupils stated that the latest Samsung smartphones most attractive. Sam eagerly described Samsung Galaxy Note in particular as an eye-catching smartphone with impressive features. He briefly mentioned some of the features: in addition to the essentials, it glows in the dark and is quite advanced as it allows the user to personalise typing (use own handwriting) when typing on the phone, with the use of a unique smartphone pen designed to write on the

screen. Sam came across as a consumer, who enjoyed exclusive functioning of a smartphone, something special that other smartphones do not offer. Essentially, it seemed Sam was impressed by how 'smart' a smartphone is, what functionality it can provide. That is the kind of phone that attracts peers, according to Sam. Themba, Andiswa and 11 other pupils claimed that the iPhone is the most attractive phone on the market according to their peers. Themba seemed to be impressed by how, because of its purchase price, the iPhone is not easily affordable making the iPhone exclusive and "in a league of their own". For Themba, it seems that exclusivity and status are what makes a phone, not necessarily the 'smartness' of the phone.

In the second focus group, the whole group unanimously agreed that Samsung S6, iPhone, Samsung 6 Edge, iPhone 6, Samsung Edge 6 are the phones they think would attract their peers. What needs to be noted is that these interviews were conducted at the end of the year 2015The two most attractive phones are graphed in Figure 5.1below: Samsung and iPhone, where from 21 pupils, the former was identified by 8 pupils and the latter by 13 pupils as the most attractive phone.
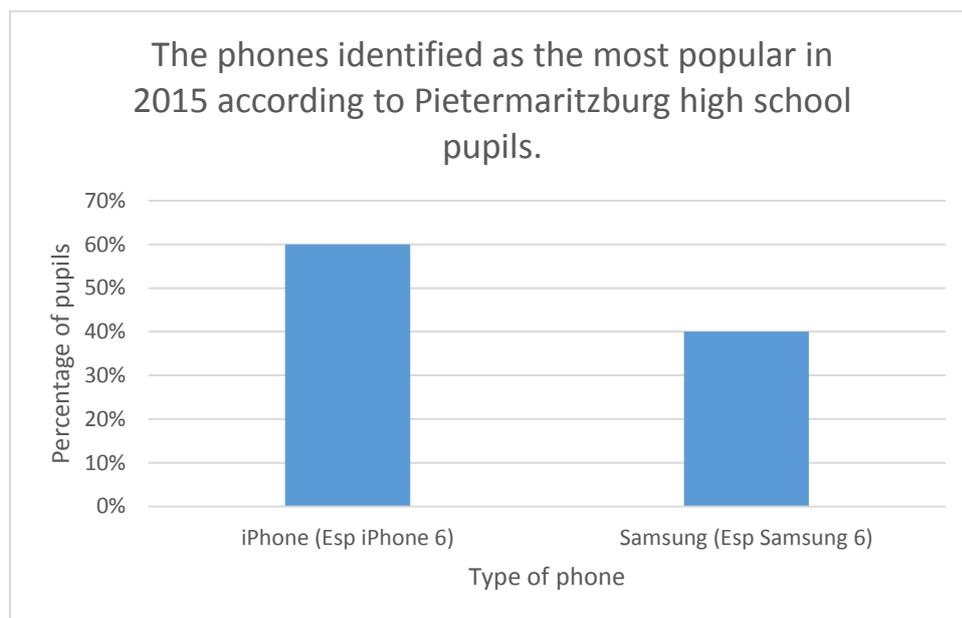
Figure 5.1: Most popular phones

The reply which stood out during the discussion of the first question is Themba's response regarding the latest smartphones which attract peers: "*Usually people want to have something that other people don't have. It means you are in your own league, a higher level.*"

If peers find a certain phone attractive, it not only makes teenagers look important and popular, but it could also be a form of acceptance. Jai Li, Catherine Snow and Claire White (2015)

supported this notion of popularity and acceptance within teenagers, even regarding smartphone ownership, in the context of this focus group discussion. They claimed that the use of smartphones amongst modern day teenagers has become part of their culture. Smartphone use is so entrenched in their way of life that teenagers update themselves on daily trends via smartphones, communicate with each other on smartphones, and even use such technology as a way of acceptance within teenager culture. It has reached a point that without smartphones, a teenager is left out of the wired loop and hence longs for acceptance amongst fellow teenage peers (Li et al., 2015:4).

With so many teenagers in this technological age being so involved in communication technology device interactions, it has become a trend amongst the teenagers as peers to be in touch through such devices for peer conversation, sharing music, pictures, games, fashion trends, etc. It goes without saying that peer group interaction is reliant on technology. Being a member of a peer group is essential in the development process of teenagers (Santor, Messervey and Kusumar, 2000:164), as this is a process which allows teenagers to explore their likes and dislikes with their peers whilst blending in with their peers. This can in turn influence the identity of teenagers (Santor et al., 2000:164). When a group of teenage friends all have iPhones, and there are one or two friends within the group who do not have smartphones with Internet access, those friends will be left out of group chats which require iPhone features. This illustrates the theme of popularity and acceptance by teenage peers when it comes to smartphones. Bearing in mind the response provided by Themba, being in possession of the latest, expensive smartphone provides an even more pleasurable and 'respected' way of enjoying the perks, features, and the kind of service and applications that the latest smartphone can offer. It makes the statement that you are not only part of the wired generation, but that you are wired at first class level.

A research study conducted by David North, Kevin Johnston and Jacque Ophoff (2014) at a South African university provided a contrary view on acceptance and popularity in smartphone usage. This could be because the study was not conducted amongst South African teenagers in high school but had respondents who were South African undergraduate students at the University of Cape Town. The differences in age and the stages in life could arguably be the reason why popularity and smartphone ownership have a different influence on identity, as well as acceptance and popularity amongst peers.

North et al.'s study explored the role of smartphone usage amongst university students at the University of Cape Town. Their findings revealed that a majority of the interviewed students used their smartphones for socialising, followed by using their phones for private chatting with friends. Here, the students noted that bypassing the family members of their friends to access them was easily done through smartphone connections and provided a chance for private conversations with friends. In terms of safety, with easy access to friends, respondents were able to contact friends on speed dial whenever they faced any danger. Using smartphones as a popularity and acceptance accessory or a status symbol was not important for these respondents, (North et al., 2014:132).

Could this mean that the perception of smartphone usage and functionality thereof are dependent on one's stage of life? In adolescent years, whilst teenagers are grappling with peer pressure and discovering who they are in terms of identity, identifying themselves through expensive smartphones is hardly surprising. University students interviewed by North et al. were older, starting their careers and facing life outside high school gave them a different perception of who they were and what they wanted in life. Owning a smartphone for popularity and acceptance purposes was generally not their priority.

Popularity and acceptance are not the only matters which attracted discussion on the use of smartphones by teenagers. Also important was the access which teenagers have through their smartphones, as this can determine their virtual experiences.

5.9.2 Theme 2: Access and virtuality

Access and the kind of virtuality that teenagers on average spend most of their time engaged with is another theme that surfaces from the focus groups with the teenage respondents. When asked the question: Which feature do you use most on your smartphone and what do you do on that feature?", Themba replied the social media platforms he uses to chat with his friends. He seemed to see applications (or "apps") as an asset on his phone, because they introduced him to more services which can be accessed via smartphones, such as downloading the latest games, music picture editors, etc. It seemed that Themba set the tone for this discussion, as a majority of the pupils mentioned the use of applications as one of the most used features on their smartphone. These applications are downloaded from the Internet making the Internet itself a feature that about a quarter of the interviewed pupils mentioned. This makes the study done by Madden et al (2013) applicable in a South African context as well: applications seem to be a popular feature amongst teenagers. If this answer were to be analysed in terms of gender, the

researcher noticed that it was mostly girls who spoke about browsing the net for fashion trends, as well as keeping up with celebrity gossip. Only a few girls did not elaborate on applications, and seemed to enjoy browsing the Internet, searching for the latest fashion trends or lyrics to songs, and listening to music on their smartphones, etc. Londiwe and Jessica were the only two pupils who mentioned using the Internet to do school work. Considering they both mentioned the desire of pursuing further education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, it followed that academics were in the list of priorities.

The answers provided were categorised into the following: Internet, camera, music, social media and other applications. The categories with the largest numbers of students were Internet and music, making those features of the smartphone, the most popular amongst the interviewed Pietermaritzburg pupils. Combined, there were 11 pupils from both popular categories, accounting for approximately 25%. These categories are followed by applications, such as social media and other applications, with about four pupils per category. The category with the lowest number of pupils, which turned out to be the least popular was the use of camera (only three students viewed the camera as a popular smartphone feature). These results are graphed below in Figure 5.2.
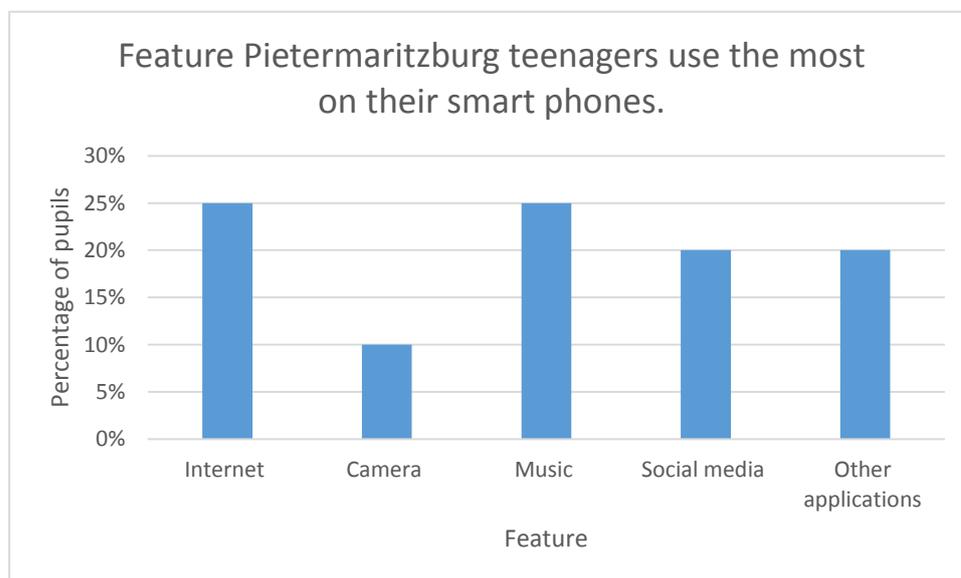
Figure 5.2: Popular smartphone features

Mary Madden, Amanda Lenhart, Sandra Cortesi and Urs Gasser conducted a study amongst teenagers in the USA in 2013. Their study explored not only access in terms of teenagers having access through smartphones, but a specific kind of access (smartphone applications) into the

virtual world. The teenage respondents which Madden et al. interviewed ranged between 12 and 17 years old, comprised of 79 boys and 62 girls. Madden et al. (2013:3) revealed that 58% of teenagers in the USA have downloaded applications on their smartphones, particularly free applications. Examples of free applications downloaded by teenagers are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, mobile phone games, music applications, etc. These are all platforms of virtuality which teenagers access either for free or at an affordable cost. The interviewed teenage respondents have smartphones with access to Internet because Internet access allows for downloading of music, social media platforms and other applications which are not necessarily social media. This, however, does not translate to equal opportunity for these respondents. What needs to be considered are the other multi layers which access unfolds, one of which is socio-economic background.

Mark Warschauer, Tina Matuchniak, Nichole Pinkard and Nicole Gadsden presented access regarding technology as multilayered as it touches on the social economic status of family in the household, the educational qualifications of the parents, the kind of schools that teenagers go to (private or public schools), the facilities in the community, etc. (2010:182). Socio-economic backgrounds are important to consider as they play a huge role in the purchasing power that parents have (or don't have) when buying smartphones for their children. With less money comes less variety to choose from and hence less power to purchase. This, by default puts parents of lower income on the periphery, which compromises the access of their children when it comes to smartphones and marginalises their access in comparison to their teenage counterparts who could be from more affluent households. The marginalisation does not end there, it also applies to parents who purchase smartphone devices for their children. Even if the parents are middle class, there is no guarantee that their digital literacy is advanced. This exposes the idea that marginalisation when it comes to access has a ripple effect, which seems to affect the lower class and the illiterate more negatively.

These issues of access which Warschauer et al. highlighted are important to bear in mind in the discourse of technology and the digital divide mentioned in Chapter Three. This is because this digital divide is not a phenomenon which is only international, national and household based, but it is a divide which can play a role in the smaller scale relations which teenagers have with each other on the technology front. Teenagers from middle and upper class families, because of access, have a head start over other teenagers in terms of exposure to better facilities, better access to lucrative phones and hence access to a more advanced experience of technology than fellow peers who are not from the same background. One may find that in private schools or

private institutes, the divide is accentuated, where pupils and students from these educational settings get further in the way they experience education on a technological front.

The theme of access touches links with the theme on what kind of virtuality teenagers are exposed to. With more advanced phones, teenagers get more options, more variety in terms of games they can play the virtual platforms they can access, more options in terms of how they can navigate their virtual space, more options in terms of how they experience their virtual space. Warschauer et al. mention that in something as recreational as gaming, teenagers who were from upper class households had played more technologically based games than children from lower income households (2015:194).

The results show that gaming was not specifically mentioned in the answer categories, and there was no mention of games during the focus group interview. This would mean that most of the teenage students are from lower income homes. Gaming requires good picture quality, and so does camera usage. Expensive phones can afford teenagers this. As a result, it could be the case that the camera as a feature is the least used because most of the students interviewed are from government schools, meaning most of them could be a range between working class and lower middle class. The teenage respondents mentioned the importance of camera quality when taking pictures. It could be the case that the purchasing power of their parents did not afford teenagers the kind of smartphones which could give them the picture quality that would encourage them to use the camera feature of their smartphones more often.

The mention of "picture quality" reminds one of the nature of smartphone technology, it suggests that there is room for improvement. That "picture quality" can be improved ushers in opportunities for an improvement of the camera lens, the camera of the phone itself, the screen of the phone, the phone itself. The improvement of one element of a smartphone can easily lead to the development of the whole smartphone, in other words there is always room for improvement and development when it comes to technology. This leads to the next theme: the exponential development of smartphones.

5.9.3 Theme 3: Exponential development of smartphones

The previous theme provided insight into why the more developed the smartphone, the more options it provides for the user, especially if the user is a digital native. This is a fitting opportunity to introduce the term "Apparatgeist" by James Katz and Mark Aakhus. This term is a metaphoric description of how information communication technology (and other technologies) possesses a machine-like spirit. This spirit capacitates the designers of

technologies and the users thereof, but at the same time commands the user to use that technology in a particular way, and hence can restrict human action (2002:305). From this, it follows that even with its constantly developing nature, technology consistently and simultaneously enables and restricts the user. Marais, van Niekerk and von Solms (2011) noted how communication technology through smartphones has become so advanced that teenagers can communicate to a large number of peers in a short space of time. Despite the large gap between the rich and poor in South Africa, teenagers in South Africa have access to some form of platform on smartphones that can afford them this ability (2011:227). Teenagers because they can do much more with phones than previous generations and they are constantly exploring the developing nature of communication technology devices. The question: "What feature does the latest smartphone have?" was the springboard for this discussion.

Many interviewed pupils mentioned the camera as an important feature of the latest smartphone. This is not surprising as contemporary teenagers appear to take photos constantly. With good picture quality in a smartphone with an inbuilt camera that fits in the pocket, there is no reason a teenager would not capitalise on this. Andiswa was impressed that even though new smartphones are bigger in capacity, they are thinner and light on the pocket, giving teenagers more reason to carry a phone around everywhere they go. With faster Internet on smartphones, as mentioned by Siya, teenagers are able to rely on the Internet efficiency to share high quality pictures with friends and family via social media. As Andiswa shared, "…we like showing off our fashion and uploading pictures on social media and the latest smartphones will help with that." Mary added to Andiswa's point and stated that new smartphones have an inbuilt Instagram icon, which provides an easy start to sharing pictures. It was interesting to note that it was only the female pupils who were contributing to the discussion of pictures, until Themba mentioned that he also took a lot of pictures, but just for the fun of it, not for sharing or showing off fashion. He took many pictures, looked through them with his friends and siblings, laughed about them, then deleted those pictures. Themba's use of the camera was less serious than that of the girls. One male pupil, Peter, was fascinated by the technicality of picture taking with Samsung 6 in particular, arguing that he was impressed by its ability to take pictures in the dark that appeared as if they were taken in daylight.

Answers were then grouped into categories according to the features of the latest smartphones. Based on the answers provided by Pietermaritzburg pupils, the categories included camera, Internet, headphones, Instagram and physical aesthetics. The most popular feature was the camera, where 37% of the students stated it is a popular feature on 2015 smartphones. The

camera seemed to be popular in this feature because it is identified as a feature in the latest smartphones and the latest smartphones have a more advanced camera system. Being from working class with only a few from upper middle class families, makes such phones ones they aspire to own, and if they did own them, they would clearly make more use of the camera feature. With more advanced features, it is unsurprising that Internet came second, with 25% of pupils stating Internet was their favourite feature. With more advanced features such as a big touch screen, the Internet browsing experience would be better. Physical aesthetics of the latest smartphones ranked third (14%). Instagram and headphones were the least popular feature according to the features mentioned by these pupils with 12% each. See Figure 5.3.
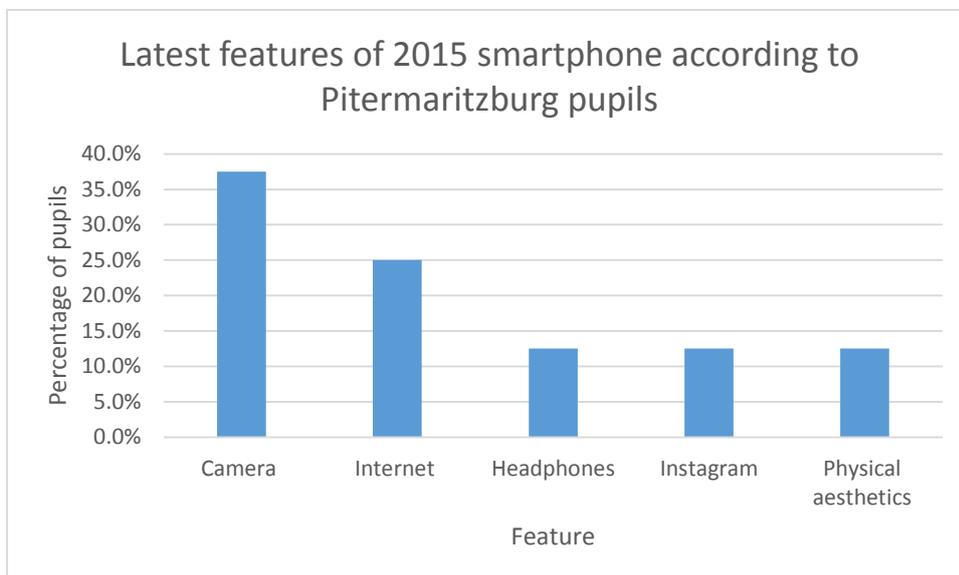
Figure 5.3: Popular smartphone features

With the camera being identified by the interviewed Pietermaritzburg students as the most popular feature in the latest smartphone, it becomes necessary to mention the bigger screen through which an image is captured. This big screen also comes with the perk of having more navigation space for exploring the virtual world. Phones that are constantly developing and expanding the virtual canvas for teenagers, may bring a more advanced challenge to parents. Introducing parents into this equation allows for an in-depth description of the Apparatgeist. Mariek Van den Abeele (2014) noted that Apparatgeist is not restricted to the user with a high level of digital literacy, such as the designer of technology and the digital native. This term also encompasses "users", "non-users", "anti-users" (Katz and Aakhus, 2011:305), where it does not limit technology usage to digital literacy or illiteracy (van den Abeele, 2015:3). In the

case of this research, Apparatgeist is applicable even to South African parents who are digitally literate or illiterate, in middle class or lower class. Marais et al. (2011) stated that in South Africa, there are measures available for middle class parents to monitor the behaviour of their children on social media. But this applies only to a minority of the population, as most South African parents have lower incomes and do not have the means to monitor their teenagers. Expensive monthly subscriptions with services providers provide parents with a means to monitor the sites their teenagers visit (Marais et al., 2011:227).

This theme links to a characteristic which Bush and Codrington (2008) mentioned as a challenge which comes with the rapid pace of technological development. They argued that the more rapid technology develops, the more children disengage from parents (Bush and Codrington, 2008:38). This theme is crucial in that it provides an exposé of what the rapid rate of communication technology such as smartphones can do to the relation that a child has with their parent. It echoes the sentiments of the third objective of this study, which is "to identify the ways in which mobile communication technology devices have disrupted and reconfigured parenting practices in post-colonial Africa." This theme and objective will be revisited in the closing of Chapter Six, after exploring data captured from the parent interviews.

Horsfield (2002) contributed to the theme of access by highlighting the idea that access regarding virtual [ontology] technology is an issue of power. With power comes the issue of who has the access to these technologies, the question of what benefits these people have, what consequences result from the use of these technologies. These questions are not limited to the power of an individual or a class but can be considered on a global and local scale as well as in a political and economic capacity (2002:13). Linked more specifically to the economic capacity is consumerism, which conditions individuals to exist as consumers first before they are humans. This translates on an economic level as well as emotional, psychologically and in terms of time consumption. The theme of consumerism is dealt with in the next theme.

5.9.4 Theme 4: Smartphones and consumerism

The theme of smartphone consumerism is derived from the question: "How often do you use your smartphones?" This is because the following answers provided by the teenage respondents suggested that the usage of smartphones by these teenagers was quite regular.

The pupils were open and honest about their regular usage of smartphones. Andiswa bluntly stated that she did not even hide using her phone even during class. Peter and Siya re-iterated what Andiswa had said, with Siya claiming he used his phone every second. With the exception

of Jessica, Londiwe and Reneiloe, it seems the interviewed pupils 'over-indulge' on smartphone use on a daily basis. As millennials, the use of technology is what they were born into and have are accustomed to. Jessica shared how her mother confiscated her smartphone, in order for her to focus more on her studies and less on her social life. Jessica was not forbidden from all smartphone use, but was not allowed to use her own; she used her mother's smartphone for homework research, or to contact friends. Her conversations with her friends would be monitored though as she was using her mother's phone. Londiwe had a structured schedule for her smartphone use with not more than four hours of smartphone time every day. Reneiloe had a structure based on days off the smartphone rather than set hours; her smartphone days were holidays and weekends. All three exceptions from smartphone addiction were ladies. What does this difference in smartphone usage tell us about our respondents (girls and boys)?

A reasonable starting point in answering this question would be that girls and boys could be inclined to use different features on smartphones. The discrepancies would be aligned to which features are more popular to boys and which to girls. In the case of this focus group in particular, Madden et al. (2013:4) claimed that boys between the ages of 14-17 years tend to use applications more than girls of the same age. This could be the reason why boys in this focus group spend more time on their smartphones than the girls. Applications are more technical at times, especially regarding downloading and updating, something that boys generally master more quickly than girls.

The answers were categorised into the following categories: all day, every day, few hours a day and lastly, weekends and holidays. Half of the pupils spent time on their smartphones daily, whereas the least number of pupils spent time on their smartphones on weekends and holidays only. This means that the category with the biggest percentage is "everyday", revealing that 50% of the interviewed teenagers were on their smartphones every day. This is followed by 28% of students who were on their smartphones all day. This means that the former and latter figure of pupils, which is a total of almost 80%, spent time on their smartphones every day. Just over 10% of the pupils spent a few hours a day on their smartphones, and lastly just over 5% of pupils used their smartphones during weekends and school holidays. Figure 5.4 below illustrates the results.
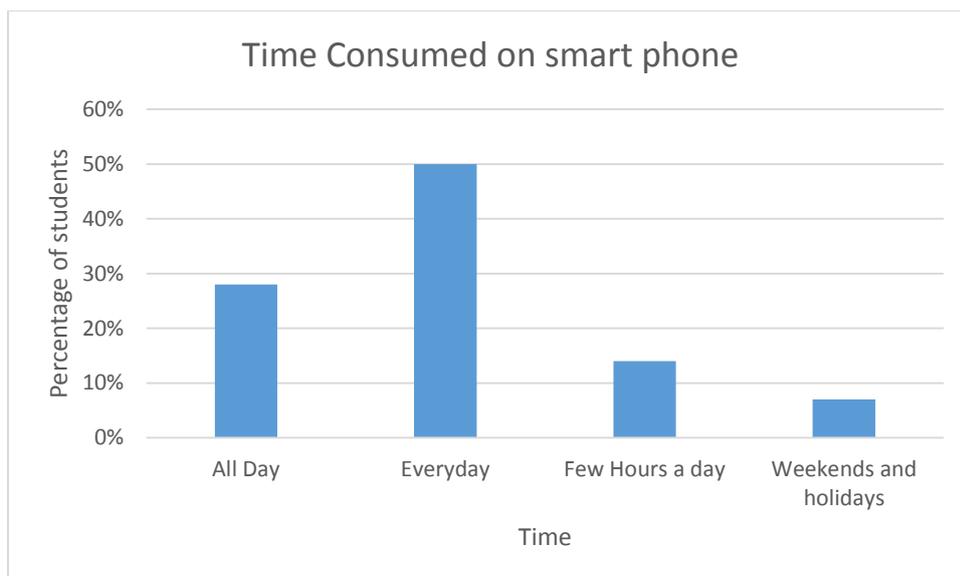
Figure 5.4: Time spent on phone

Interviews revealed that almost 30% of pupils seem to be over indulgent in terms of smartphone consumption, with some pupils from the focus group interviews revealing that "I use my smartphone even when I am not supposed to use it", or "I use my smartphone during school lessons". The idea of not being able to live without a smartphone was expressed. Its mobile nature enables it to be carried around all the time and everywhere. Helen Sweeting, Abita Bhaskar and Kate Hunt defined consumerism as a form of consumption which presents a product (or service) as a source of happiness and fulfilment, to a point that it becomes detrimental to the well-being of the consumer (2012: 802). This introduces the concept of "Uses and Gratification Theory" (UGT), which is a theory premised on the consumption of ICT and its related services for fulfilment of particular needs. With teenagers, in particular, these needs include a sense of belonging and a need for affection (North et al., 2014:117). The time which teenagers consume on their smartphones can be understood according to UGT: as they spend most of their time online, it makes sense to get affection and/or a sense of belonging from a place or space where they spend most of their day. About 80% of interviewed pupils constantly fill this void through smartphone consumption using social media platforms. But it seems the void gets bigger and bigger, resulting in a constant need to fill a void that cannot be filled. This was the more intrinsic, personal dimension of consumerism. The next dimension is more related to purchasing power of the consumer.

As a consumer, the pupils, if they had things their way, would keep up with the smartphone trends in the market and always have the latest smartphone. This is what the researcher noticed in the focus group interviews, where one pupil jokingly hinted at being rewarded the

smartphone which the researcher was using to record the interviews. The students assumed that the researcher was using a Samsung 6 when it was in fact a Samsung 5 (it has a remarkable resemblance to the Samsung 6). This observation was an indication of the consumerist nature of the pupils: their knowledge of what the latest smartphone range is. As peers on social media platforms, entrenched in social media culture, teenagers all know what the latest trends are, from smartphones, to fashion, to music. That is what they share with each other on social media.

Teenagers sharing the latest trends with each other not only illustrates their consumerist nature, it also indicates how their identity as teenagers feeds their consumerist behaviour. According to Siegfried Zepf, in order to understand why consumers purchase particular products, one needs to understand what influences them. He argued that this is also built into the identity of the consumer (2011:145). When it comes to purchasing a smartphone, it would be important to analyse what drives teenagers to want a particular phone.

To do this, a Samsung 6 advertisement (a smartphone desired by the interviewed teenagers) from the Samsung Mobile website (2015) was analysed. With fancy graphics, high quality, detailed picture and young people, the advertisement would certainly entice teenagers. With catch phrases such as "For you this is much more than just a phone, it is the hub of your life", "entertainment experienced like never before", "never miss a moment … photos in all light conditions … next is now", this advertisement really taps into the mind of the digital native, in a language that they will understand. By identifying with the advertisement, teenagers as digital natives, are influenced to purchase this product because of the experience they think they would get using the product. Zepf confirmed this claiming that when products are advertised today, it is not so much the instrumental value of the product that is emphasised; what is emphasised is the experience that comes with utilising the product (2011:145).

Fortunately for smartphone companies, Bush and Codrington described digital natives as "screen hungry", because of the amount of time they spend on their smartphones (2009:31). Prensky (2001) also noted the "screen hungry" nature of teenagers, stating that teenagers of this technological age are so addicted to their screens that they use up all their leisure time on on-screen activities such as playing video games or listening to digital music players. The Samsung advertisement capitalises on this screen hunger, enticing them with a gadget that aims to feed that hunger by emphasising the largeness of the screen, an incredible entertainment experience and an unforgettable graphics experience. Bearing in mind that almost 80% of

teenage pupils interviewed spend a considerable amount of time on their smartphones daily, it would be ideal to purchase a smartphone that would make that daily experience worthwhile.

This daily experience of the user was further articulated by Bothma and Gopaul. They claimed that the experience of the smartphones user is grounded in two phenomena, namely the user's needs and intentions, as well as the context of the user in their smartphone interactions, (Bothma and Gopaul, 2015:212). In terms of the former, smartphone users have different objectives, which range from gathering information to gain knowledge about a particular topic to recreational purposes, such as playing games. Designers of smartphones, such as Samsung, need to keep in mind the needs and intentions of the user (Bothma and Gopaul, 2015:212).

In terms of the context of interactions, one needs to consider whether the user is in a private or public space when engaging with a smartphone. This also covers the amount of time that users spend, their digital literacy, as well as the quality of Internet that the user has at their disposal, (Bothma and Gopaul, 2015:212). These are the factors which need to be considered regarding the amount of time spent by teenagers in their smartphones. There seems to be a correlation between the context of the teenagers as users of smartphones and the amount of time they spend on their smartphones. This will be discussed further in this chapter as part of the ninth theme on alienation and technology. The current theme of discussion requires some attention on the anonymous users in virtual ontology. In their daily encounters on smartphones, teenagers often come across anonymous users online who may ask them for Twitter follows, WhatsApp invitations or even friend requests on Facebook. Sometimes teenagers themselves are anonymous users. Anonymity can be a blessing or a curse, depending on how it is used. With anonymity, accountability needs to be considered. The next theme explores anonymity and accountability for teenagers in their smartphone use.

5.9.5 Theme 5: Anonymity and accountability

The theme of anonymity and accountability raises many ethical concerns, such as the concern of not having an identity in social media agency. The question from which this theme was derived as follows: How important is it to use your real identity on social media, and why?

The responses the pupils provided gave quite a mixed view of anonymity on social media. Both Sipho and Andiswa felt that when one comments on the music video of a celebrity on YouTube, it does not really matter whether you use your real name or not. The recipient is not interested in the particulars of the commenters, but rather the actual comment. Jonathan added that if the recipient found the comment offensive, at least one's identity would be protected. Themba

opposed this, stating that it was important to reveal one's identity on social media. He felt that the inability to use one's real name on social media is an indication of unhappiness about one's self. People who are not happy with their own lives use fake names or are anonymous so they can get away with portraying a fake life that is different from their real life. Sam noted how using a fake name or hiding identity can take considerable effort. Being true to one's self and using one's real name makes it easier to portray who one really is without making an effort to be someone or something one is not. Some pupils thought being anonymous could be good, especially if the social media users did something online that they later regretted. Mary thought that this can protect the identity of the user. She further argued that when chatting with friends or people that one knows, the use of real identity is required. So, for Mary, certain cases require use of one's real identity whereas other cases do not.

The total number of responses have been categorised into groups, where each category represents the level of importance regarding teenagers revealing their identity on social media. As shown in Figure 5.5, the category with the biggest percentage (11 of 21 pupils) was "it is important" for teenagers to reveal their identity on social media, followed by nine pupils thinking that it was not important, and only one pupil stated that revealing identity depends, there are exceptions to the rule.
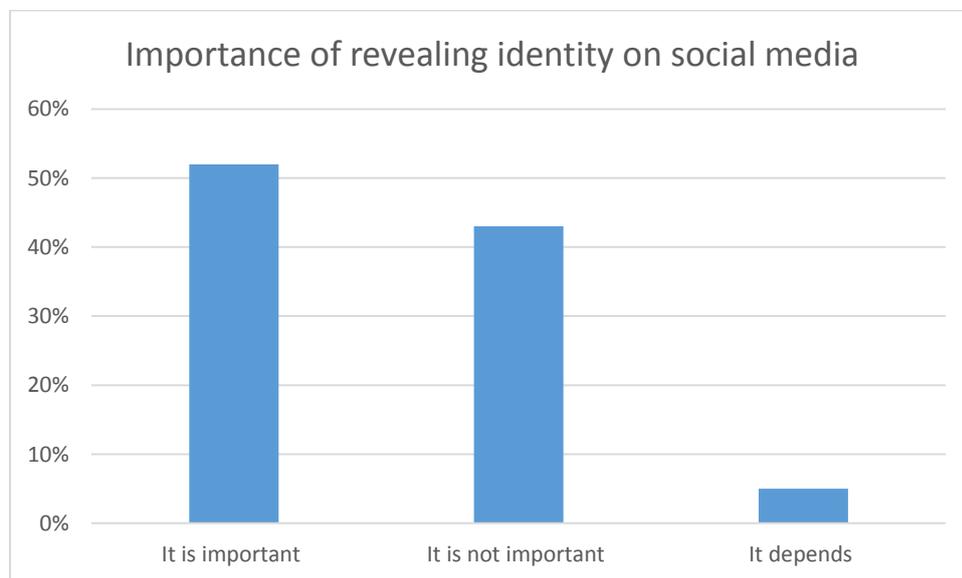
Figure 5.5: Importance of revealing identity on social media

Of the teenagers interviewed, 52% argued that the use of real identity was important in social networks. Some of the reasons the teenagers provided were based on how using real identity makes a social network user accountable for anything bad they say or do on social media. This

was followed by 43% of teenagers who argued that identity was not important because as teenagers, they could get up to mischief on social networks, so they would rather do so with a fake identity so that this does not ruin their reputation in future when they are adults. Only 5% felt it depended on the situation. On platforms like WhatsApp, they argued that real identity was important but on other social networks, the use of real identity was not seen as that important.

The interviewed teenagers revealed that anonymity gave them the leverage to behave unethically. Being unidentifiable means being untraceable whenever there is unethical conduct. When identity is revealed, the teenager as a social network user becomes more conscious of their behaviour on social media. Their actions can be attached to their face, their name, their identity and hence there is accountability. With accountability, the pupils understood that there was no room for irresponsible behaviour on social media. The nature of social media in itself presents a structural vacuum (Papacharissi, 2009:201) that is unlimited in terms of space and time, with no form of authority policing the behaviour of any person behaving unethically. Social media users can easily get away without being disciplined or reprimanded in any way. This will be further explored in Chapter Seven, when agency and structure are integrated into the research findings.

Virtual ontology being so intangible, so immeasurable, so unrestricted, uncensored, ungovernable assumes that this space is not operating in the same paradigm as the physical, tangible, measurable space. As a result, virtuality provides a different orientation for humans, which is not an orientation that allows for authentic face to face dialogue. Buber mentioned the importance of the "Other" when in dialogue, and how this makes one accountable and respectful when in the authentic face and presence of the Other (in Doriza 2005:315). Accountability and respect seem to thrive when the self and the Other have a face, which helps both parties to not only identify each other but to recognise one another.

Accountability was defined by Joan Feiganbaum, Aaron Jaggard and Rebecca Wright as the act of an individual(s) being liable to or answerable to an act that does not abide by a given policy (2011:47). This definition seems quite straightforward, but applying it in virtual ontology is not feasible for the following two reasons: 1) In the context of anonymity or the use of false identity (which is quite popular in virtual ontology), it becomes challenging to identify the individual(s) who do not have faces because they do not have an identity. Without

an identity, how is a person held accountable? 2) Another issue which emerges is the fact that there are no tangible policies one can identify as applying to any virtual ontology behaviour. Regarding the first issue of anonymity and accountability, Siya raised a valid point during the focus group discussion:

> *"I think it is really important [to reveal identity on social media] because people will use whatever name they want to use and because you can't trace them they can say whatever they want. And usually they hurt people on purpose knowing that you can't trace them. It allows people to do whatever they want to do to other people."*

An anonymous person cannot be traced and will therefore never be punished for bad behaviour. This feeds into cyberbullying which is also associated with anonymous perpetrators (Hutson, 2016:62). Anonymity in this case is used in a harmful, irresponsible manner, which is quite common even amongst teenagers. It allows endless possibilities for bad behaviour that in most cases remains unaccounted for. Even though the discussion of cyberbullying did not surface in the focus group discussion, it is important to mention this as it is one of the most popular forms of misconduct in virtual ontology.

Anonymity and privacy can, however, work together positively. Kimberly Christopherson argued that this occurs when an individual uses social media but wants to create some form of boundaries to protect himself or herself from harm. In other words, anonymity can be a security measure used by individuals on social media (Christopherson, 2006:3040). In the case of teenagers, anonymity can protect them from cyberbullying, the danger of being stalked, or can help them to freely engage with online support groups. Anonymity in this case can assist teenagers to open up but at the same time as setting boundaries on their personal details. This can reduce the fear of being ridiculed. In the case of online support groups, even if all the members are anonymous, they can identify themselves through each other, as they are all in a support group to overcome similar problems. They function as an anonymous community with a known objective, which is to be supportive of each other.

In terms of the second issue of accountability, "abiding by policy", this is a quagmire for virtual ontology, as highlighted by James Moor (1985). He stated that with computer technology (such as smartphones), there is a "policy vacuum" because there are no computer technology based policies that users can refer to. In as much as there are measures which could be used to curb risks on social media, such as tightening security measures where possible, there need to be lawful policies which can be referred to should the need arise. With no such policies, people

can do as they please with no repercussions, especially if using a fake or anonymous identity. This issue of identity will be discussed in depth in the theme that follows.

5.9.6 Theme 6: Identity and the Other

In response to the question ''What is your take on teenagers/ friends of yours who don't use their real identity?'' the general consensus from the focus group was that it is not bothersome if their friends or other teenagers did not use their real identity on social media. Entle expressed how, as long as she knows what her friends' fake names are on social media, does not see anything wrong with them using these. Peter agreed with Entle, but argued that because he himself did not use his real name, he was not bothered if friends or other teenagers did the same. Andiswa felt that as long as she had good face to face relationships with her true, close friends, she was not bothered by what her other friends and teenagers did on social media, whether they used their real or fake names. A small percentage of the focus group differed in opinion, such as Patrick, who stated it was important to use one's real identity on social media, especially when interacting with others, because then one knows the users are being themselves and are not hiding behind a false name or identity.

The above replies are categorised quantitatively according to the responses provided by teenagers regarding their friends' identity on social media. A majority of students revealed that it did not bother them if their friends did not use real identities when on social media. The rest of the pupils were either bothered or were indifferent about the issue. Figure 5.6 illustrates these responses as a bar graph: 68% of pupils were not bothered by the hidden identity of their teenage friends on social media, 16% of pupils were and the remaining 16% were indifferent.
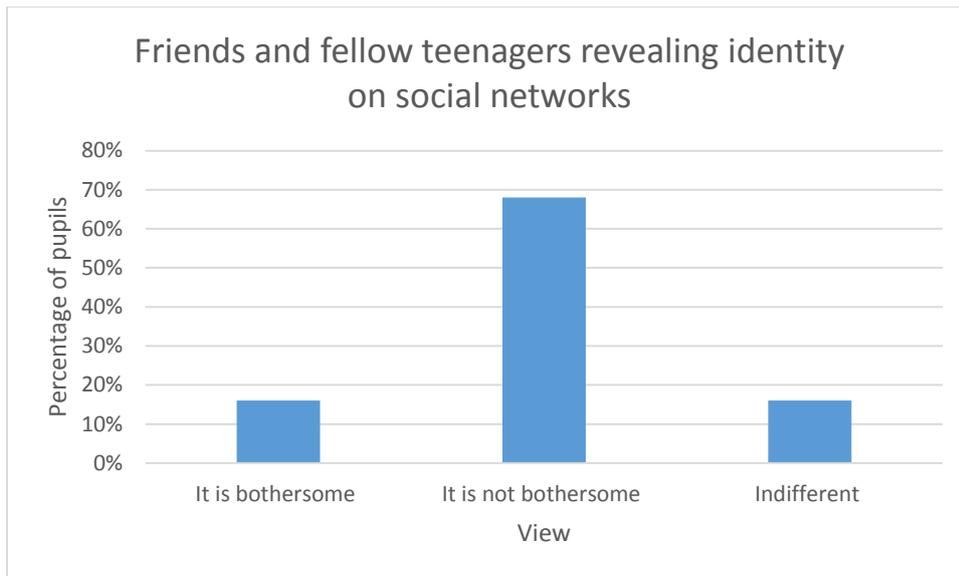
Figure 5.6: View of revealing identity on social networks

According to Kwame Appiah, identity, even in the virtual world, can take on an existential nature, where "existence precedes essence" (2005:17). This idea of identity captures the nature of individual identity even in the virtual world, where because of the nature of that space, the individual exists first in this virtual world (i.e. creates an account on a social media platform), and from there that identity is constantly constructed through the complex, technological architecture. The architecture is designed in such a way that the social network user has the option of anonymity, to not be recognised by others and so does the Other. Both parties can withhold their true identities and operate through a carefully structured character that they can constantly create on social media. Tanja Staehler confirmed this by referring to the "neutral or anonymous multiplicity" of individuals on social media (2014:230). This can be problematic, because without a face in most cases, this identity usually does not resemble the true identity of the user. This creates an existential problem for the 'actors 'within the virtual space, and can provide a complex idea of who the Other is. It can compromise treating the other with respect and dignity when interaction occurs in virtual space.

Edward Casey's view introduces the importance of respect and dignity of the Other even in virtual ontology. This view is supported by the notion of 'obligation', where in seeing the face of the other, one is not only obliged to notice the Other that is in anguish and pain, but one is obliged to act in such a way that will assist the Other (Casey, 2006:76). But it does not end here for Casey. He argued that recognising the anguish should not only make one act but should most importantly let one think about the anguish experienced by the other. This moment is a glance into the present, the pinnacle of ethical life. It allows one to absorb that present moment,

allows one to not only "apprehend" but also "comprehend" that moment as largely significant, (Casey, 2006:77). This idea by Casey seems to acknowledge the Other as a dignified being, worthy of respect, worthy of being in the present and worthy of ethical consideration. Through relations which teenagers have with each other frequently on social media, can this ethical consideration occur where the anguish of the Other is not seen in person?

According to Barbara Davy (2007:39), it is important to know the ethics of face to face relations and restore these kind of relations. On the other hand, now that technology and social networks are integral to this contemporary world, it is also necessary to apply ethical principles when it comes to faceless-to-faceless relations. This stance by Davy can be helpful for African parents to keep up with their children. Restoring of ethics and permeating these into the virtual world seems to have merit. The argument which could be used here is that, simply because the user of social networks does not see the face of the Other, it does not mean that ethical interaction is inapplicable. Seeing the face of the Other introduces some vulnerability, but it is not morally permissible to compromise the dignity and respect owed to the Other because a face is not visible.

Teenagers on social media could be getting away with engaging in relations with others on social media without acknowledging the user's dignity. Anonymity and escaping accountability are not the only reasons behind this; teenagers might also behave unethically on social media because there is no presence of a moral authority that keeps a watchful eye on their every move. Parents generally lack the power to keep their online children in check. There is also no court of law in virtual ontology, which can sentence teenagers who aren't behaving the way they should. This lack of moral authority gives teenagers the liberty to do as they please on social media.

5.9.7. Theme 7: Lack of moral authority on social media

Pupils became quite passionate about this theme. It was introduced with the question: "How would you feel about being connected to your parents on social media?" The majority of the pupils were totally against the idea. Siya and John conveyed similar views, claiming they were engaged in bad activities on social media. Siya did not specify his activity, but John shared that he had pictures of him and his friends trying out marijuana showing how 'stoned' they were. Andiswa revealed that being friends with her parents on social media would bust her strategies of going out. When she went out with her friends, she would tell her parents that she was going for group study at a friend's house. On Facebook, she posted pictures of herself and her friends

at parties. If her parents were to find out what really happens on her Facebook, they would never trust Andiswa whenever she would ask to go out with friends, even when she genuinely needed to study with friends.

Connie claimed she would not want to be friends with her parents on Facebook. Her parents call the shots when she's at home and she felt she deserved privacy on Facebook. She enjoyed not being censored or controlled to behave in a certain manner. Themba supported Connie's view; he argued it was inappropriate for parents to be following or befriending their children on social media. He did not accept friend requests from his parents because he felt that social media was for him and his friends. It is a space where he shares things with his friends, not his parents. He feels that parents who want to be part of what their children do or share with friends are crossing the line in the parent-child relationship.

Responses given by pupils on this topic are presented in three groups, based on their views regarding befriending their parents on social media. Answers included 'good idea', 'bad idea' and 'mixed feelings'. The category with the most replies was 'bad idea' for teenagers and parents to befriend each other on social media, with 13 pupils of 21, or 62%. This was followed by five students (a little over 20%) and only three students (about 10%) who had mixed feelings. Figure 5.7 illustrates this data.
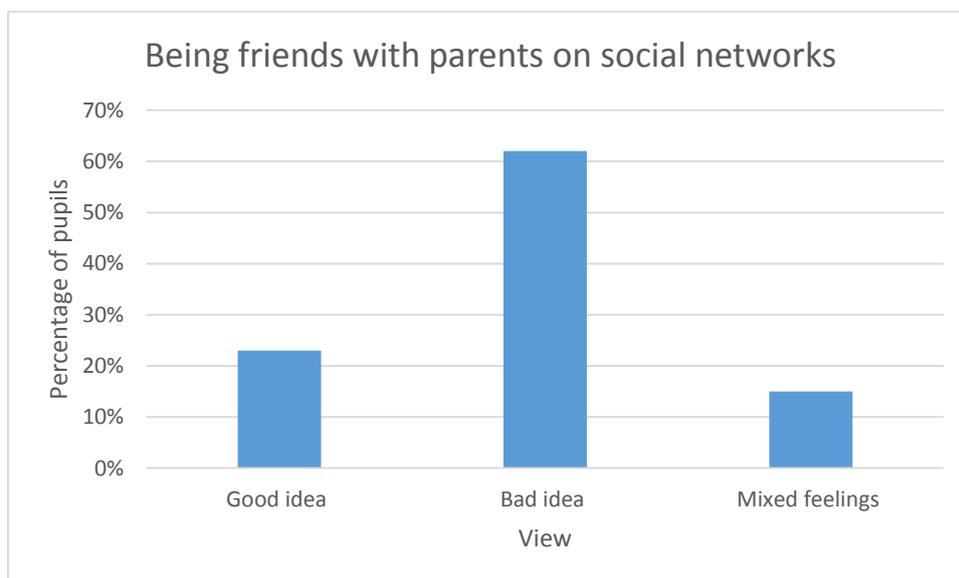
Figure 5.7: Views on being friends with parents on social networks

Having a parent as a friend on social networks could be seen as an intrusive figure of authority in a 'social space'. This could be empowering for parents in terms of being able to monitor the

behaviour of their teenagers on social networks. It can be disempowering, however, for teenagers who want freedom on social networks.

Moira Burke, Lada Ademic and Karyn Marciniak (2013:41) noted that during adolescent years, teenagers seem to gravitate more towards independence. When this independence is translated onto social media, away from the parent's disciplinarian eye, it is quite easy for teenagers to get involved in online behaviour that can easily get them bad names. This might even reduce the chance of getting decent employment in future. The concerns of parents about social media and their children being involved in it centres on such issues. The views of Siya and John in this regard can be linked to the argument raised by Burke et al. Without the watchful eye of the parent, teenagers can easily translate this into a freedom without responsibility and accountability. Hence, the chances of them uploading pictures or expressing views which are inappropriate are quite high.

The presence of parents on social media is not only about the presence of authority, but is also the changing the dynamic regarding the issue of privacy and parents' duty to ensure the safety of their children. Westermann noted that the dynamic of the issue of privacy, trust and to some extent "equal citizenship" that parents and children have on social media such as Facebook cannot be equated to the kind of privacy, trust and equality in the home space (2011:8). What makes the relations different in the different space could be the fact that parents are not an authority in virtual space but are responsible for what happens under their roofs at home. Without any form of ownership from parents, government or any legal authority, social networks have a void of authority and consequently are susceptible to uncensored behaviour.

One of the main issues emerging from the responses in the focus group discussion was the idea of privacy: some felt that they would feel watched by their parents on Facebook or any other social network, and they were opposed to the idea of befriending parents in such a space. This is why Westermann stated that young adults would view a friend request from their parent as an invasion of privacy (2011:20). Although parents could be seen as invading the privacy of their children by insisting on being their Facebook friends, there is also the issue of safety. Parents may feel that social networks are spaces which do not always complement the values they instilled in their children, and hence expose their children to dangers that that they cannot oversee as parents. This translates to a necessity to oversee children's social network activity. This is where the trust between parents and children is important. Not being present to watch

every move of children suggests that the parent needs to learn to let go and trust that they have already instilled good values in their children.

One of the factors which could be seen as building a relationship of trust between parents and children is the communication between them. In the technological age, teenagers have developed a social media language they use with their peers. Some parents could crack the code of this language if their children shared this with them; other parents would have no idea of the meaning of this language. The next theme deals with language and smartphones in more depth.

5.9.8. Theme 8: Teenager language and social media

The question used to introduce and explore the theme of teenager language and social media was: "How different is the language you use on social networks compared to the language you use with your parents?":

Mary stated that the language she uses on social media with her friends was quite different from the language she uses with her parents. Phrases such "you suck dude" are phrases which Mary uses only with her friends and never with her parents. She claimed that the respect that she has for her parents will always supersede the respect she has for her friends. John and Peter confessed to using vulgar language on social media. Jonathan added that he spoke differently with parents and friends because with friends he could say anything that was on his mind without thinking about it.

Reneiloe and Nomcebo claimed to use the same language with their parents and their friends. Reneiloe mentioned that she was close to her father and felt free expressing herself to him. She respected her father as an adult and saw him as someone she could relate to the way she does with her friends. Nomcebo also felt free with her family. They knew how she was around her friends and she was like that with them as well. A third view came from Entle, who claimed it depended on the mood that she was in. When she was very angry she did not filter herself on Facebook or at home. She further stated that the upside of being confrontational on Facebook when she is angry was the lack of physical access to her at the time.

All the responses of the pupils were categorised into three categories regarding the language the teenagers use when they are on social media and when communicating with their parents. The categories are: same, different or it depends**.** The category with the biggest percentage was "different", with 13 pupils out of 21 (62%) using a different language on social media from when talking to their parents. About five pupils (about 25%) used the same language on social

media and with their parents. Three pupils (13%) felt that it depended on the situation. These figures are illustrated in Figure 5.8 that follows.
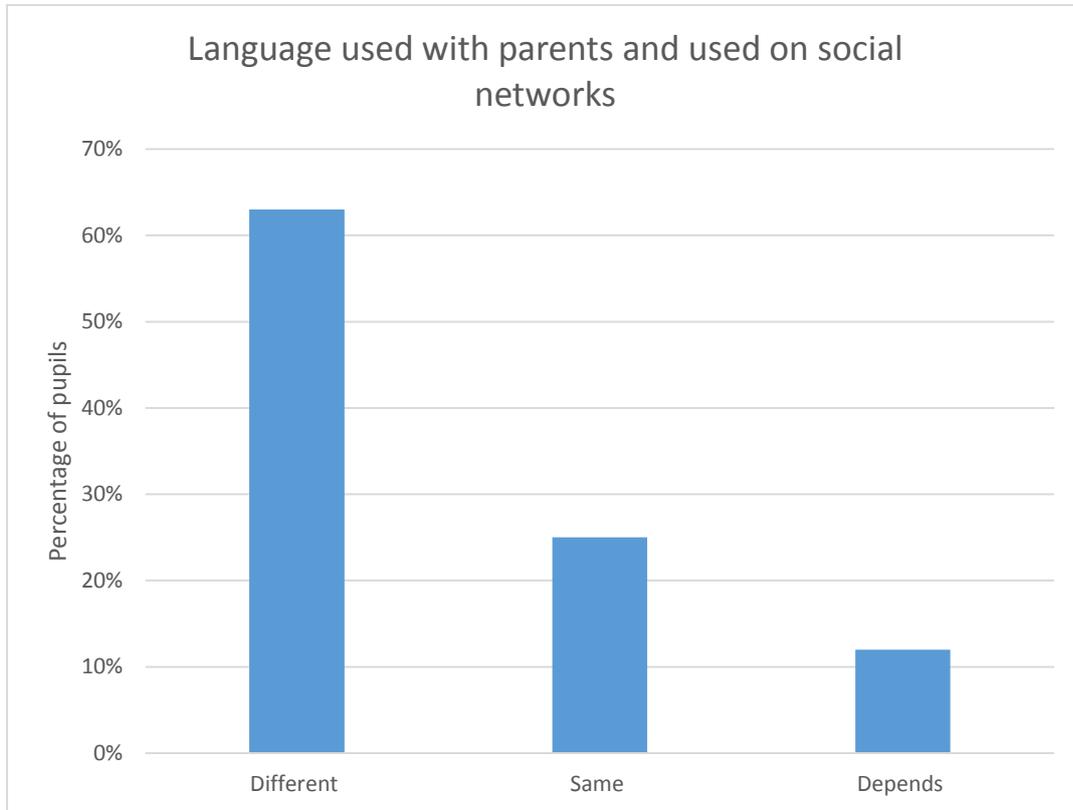
Figure 5.8: Language used on social media and with parents

Sadlier and de Beer have described the language that teenagers /children use on social media that their parents would not understand (2014:147):

@   at

<3   heart

2day   Today

2moro   Tomorrow

2nite   Tonight

4ever   Forever

Ab/abt   About

Atm   at the moment

B4   before

b/c   because

bf   boyfriend or best friend

bff   best friend for ever

brb   be right back

btw   by the way

cud/cld   could

DM   direct message

These and other abbreviated phrases are quick to type and contribute to the instant, trendy information and communication which teenagers engage with on a daily basis through social media. Jacob Eisenstein mentioned that abbreviated, short phrases and acronyms are there because of character limits on social media platform; Twitter, for example, limit characters to 140 per tweet (2013:359). Abbreviating words on Twitter becomes one of the ways in which its users are able to express their thoughts without exceeding the limit. It is also a means of saving time to type and saving time for users to read. Instead of a Twitter user tweeting: "Check your inbox for the direct message sent yesterday", the user can type: "check yesterday's DM."

Varnhagen et al. (2009:721) argued that this language used by teenagers on social media is derived from the English language and has been mixed with contemporary slang. It consists of abbreviations and shortening of words, unconventional spelling, as well as acronyms (2009:719). The use of this language could be symbolic of a youth culture on social media with their 'cool' youth language. Reneiloe said her father was "cool" so she speaks to my father the same way she speak to her friends. This social media language seems to be peer language used amongst teenagers. Some teenagers do not view their parents as peers and, according to Mary, they would not speak to them in the same way. It seems some teenagers would not entertain the idea of using the same language with their parents and friends when it is vulgar, or derogatory. Being free with a friend should not justify reducing them to a level where there is lack of censoring that leads to addressing each other with derogatory terms. This view point taps into the question of what is it is that constitutes human relations or makes communication ethical.

For some teenagers, communicating with friends on social media requires undivided attention, which suggests that teenagers would prefer to be in a space that allows this to occur. Teenagers

would therefore tend to isolate themselves from their family members, go to their bedrooms and chat privately in the comfort of their rooms. This raises the last theme for the focus groups, which is alienation and technology.

5.9.9 Theme 9: Alienation and technology

In closing the focus group discussion, the researcher posed a last question to the pupils, regarding their preference of location when chatting with their friends via smartphones. More than half of the pupils preferred to chat in the comfort and privacy of their rooms for reasons relating to privacy, freedom of expression physically and vocally; others stated they wanted to focus on the chat and not anyone else in their surroundings. Teenagers thus remove themselves from their family setting, hence becoming somewhat alienated.

The answers of the pupils were divided into categories, namely 'bedroom', 'bathroom', 'anywhere', and lastly, 'it depends'. Twelve of 21 pupils (about 58%) preferred to chat with their friends in the privacy of their bedrooms. This was followed by five pupils (26%) chatting with their friends on their smartphones anywhere. The rest of the pupils were equally divided between chatting in the bathroom or 'it depends'. One of the pupils, Themba, claimed that chatting on his phone depended on who was at home. When he is home with his siblings, they all chat on their smartphones in the lounge, otherwise he chats in his room when his mother is around. The data is shown in Figure 5.9 below:
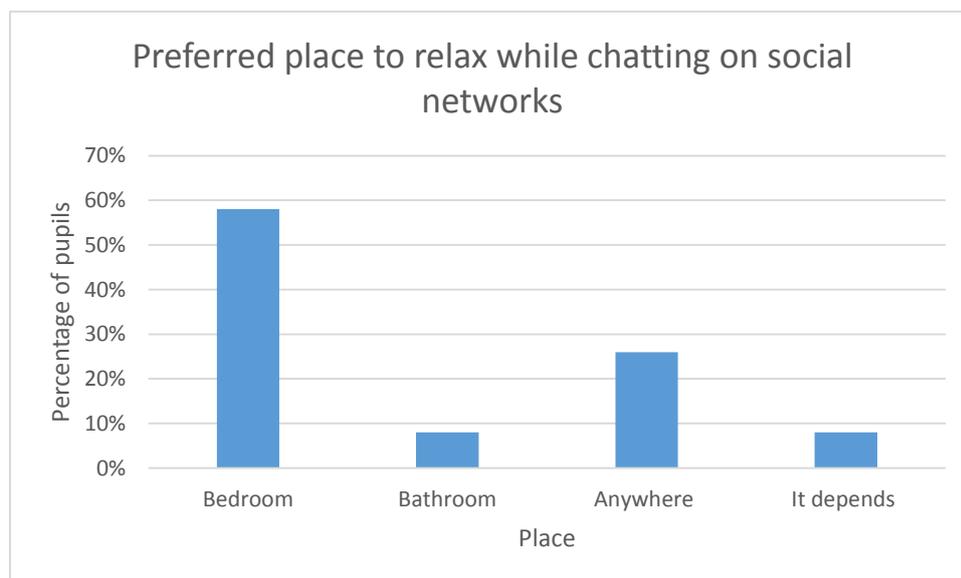
Figure 5.9: Preferred place for social networking

With most teenagers chatting with their friends online from the comfort of their rooms suggests that these teenagers shut themselves away from the rest of their family members. This can affect their face to face relationships and can have a negative impact on the quality time that could be spent with loved ones at home. Mike Healy drew on arguments from Marx regarding alienation. He stated that, according to Marx, alienation is the product of capitalism (2014:22). Even the case of teenagers consuming so much time on a product that is sold to make profit, and consuming this product in isolation, affirms Marx's idea of alienation. This idea links with the theme of consumerism, where this isolation or alienation is not only about the consumption of a product in an isolated space, but it is also consumption of time away from loved ones.

Capitalists thrive on such consumerist behaviour, providing a constant demand for their products; even in the development of the product, a consumer of this kind can easily be a constant variable in the future sale of improved and better smartphones. With so much time consumed by a smartphone, there is less time spent with loved ones and alone. Healy emphasised the alienation not only from others but also from the self (2014:22). Teenagers can also get so caught up with the use of social media that it impacts on their school work.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology of the study by describing the research area, which was identified as the city of Pietermaritzburg in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Two schools were selected, one in the township and one in the suburbs. Ten participants between the ages 16 and 18 years were chosen from each of these schools for focus group discussions on smartphone technology. This chapter laid out the answers to the questions posed to the pupils from both high schools. The importance of these focus groups was to not only provide a platform for pupils, as millennials, to voice their views on smartphone technology, but also to use the answers to develop a framework in the form of themes. From the revealed themes, a much deeper understanding of the millennial behaviour has developed, and this will be analysed in depth in Chapter Seven. Before this, Chapter Six discusses the perception of parents on the behaviour of their teenagers in virtual ontology. The reactions of the teenagers and the perceptions of parents together help to establish the complexities of the agency of teenagers and the responsibility of the parents.

CHAPTER SIX:
PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS/ STRANGERS

"The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." Alvin Toffler (1972)

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the views of the digital natives in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Several themes arose from these views, which revealed ethical concerns regarding the use of smartphones by digital natives, the millennials. This could potentially translate to further ethical concerns regarding the manner in which these teenagers are parented, and the kind of relationship they have with their parents. The literature review diagnosed the source of the concern as a digital divide between digital natives and their digital immigrant/ stranger parents. This divide is created by rapid technological development and advancement. The Toffler quote above highlights the pace of technological development in ICT which was articulated in the previous chapter. Modern communication technology has developed so rapidly that technological literacy has become almost essential for survival. This implies that those who are not technologically savvy become pushed to the periphery, as technological incompetence in a technological age is clearly a liability. Simply put, 21st Century literacy boils down to: the ability to learn quickly, unlearn quickly and relearn quickly. This can be very challenging for digital immigrants and strangers. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a platform for the perceptions of the digital immigrant/strangers to the responses of the digital natives in the previous chapter. It then becomes possible to identify the ways in which mobile communication technology devices have disrupted and reconfigured parenting practices in post-colonial Africa.

6.1 Profile of the parents

The researcher asked parents to provide brief descriptions of themselves. All parents resided and worked in Pietermaritzburg. Their profiles are an indication of the diversity in parents. A racial element of this study was not very important, but there was racial diversity as well.

Rachel is white and Rajesh is Indian, the rest are black. These profiles are summarised in Table 6.1 below

Table 6.1: Pietermaritzburg parent respondents

No.	NAME	AGE	JOB TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1.	Jacob	50	A doctor in Social Sciences, who is a senior lecturer	A husband, reverend and father to two daughters, one teenage daughter who is 16 years old and a younger daughter in primary school. He is involved in community work in the area, working with vulnerable populations in the community such as orphaned children.
2.	Jessica	38	Senior administrator	A married mother of three daughters. Youngest is 2 years and oldest is 16 years.
3.	John		Businessman	A PhD candidate, married with two kids. Wife is constantly travelling back and forth to Asia for work purposes, so he is the one at home with the kids. They have a 16 year old daughter and a son under the age of 10. He is also currently building a new house for his wife and kids to move into in the near future.
4.	Lindokuhle	45	Cleaner	A devoted Christian, single mother of two, 17-year-old daughter and a 9-year-old son.
5.	Naledi	36	Executive officer to the Dean	Single mother with teenage son that is 17 years old. Has a close relationship with her son although son stays with grandparents in a different city. She is a young mother in her early 30s, and has a relationship with her son that resembles a friendship.
6.	Pedro	45	Full time PhD student	A reverend doing PhD in theology, married with three children, two girls and a baby boy.
7.	Rachel	63	Post graduate research mentor	Single mother of two. Very active academic that regularly travels overseas for international conferences. She is passionate about writing poems and short stories.
8.	Rajesh	42	Finance manager	Devoted Hindi, husband and father to a son that is excelling academically in high school. Is supporting and encouraging his 18-year-old son that can't wait to pursue a career in accounting.
9.	Ruvimbo	48	Lecturer	Doctor in Social Sciences. Wife and mother to two daughters, one is 17 years and the other is 21years.
10.	Samuel		Professor	Husband and father of two daughters. He is passionate about helping less privileged communities.

6.2 The parent interviews

The parent interviews have been presented in themes. These themes were derived from the questions which the researchers drafted before scheduling parent interviews.

6.2.1. Theme 1: Parents' view on smartphones

Each individual interview with parents began with the question: What do you think about teenagers and smartphones?

Jessica claimed that her teenage daughter is so attached to the smartphone that it has affected their communication. She worried about whether her daughter made enough time to study. Lindokuhle viewed the smartphone as an object that has driven her daughter away from her. She mentioned WhatsApp, texts and calls and claimed that her daughter was constantly distracted and did not do her school work. Ruvimbo echoed the point on distraction from study and school work. She felt that children need to be educated about the risk and dangers of smartphones, as well as the utility and convenience thereof. Like Ruvimbo, John and Samuel were quite open-minded and objective about the issue of smartphones and teenagers, highlighting that, like everything else in life, smartphones usage by teenagers has both the good and bad. The good entails smartphones being a useful source of information, entertainment and a medium to communicate with friends. The bad is that smartphones can be abused and expose children to inappropriate material. In raising her concerns about smartphone and teenagers, Rachel found it difficult to tell what drives teenagers to be so glued on their screens. It is difficult to tell whether it is something which is specific to age, class, intelligence or intuition.

Parents' responses were categorised as either a negative response, positive response or mixed feelings towards smartphones. Seven of the ten interviewed parents provided negative views, and three had mixed feelings. It was interesting to note that there was no parent who gave purely positive feedback on teenage usage of smartphones. This could be an indication that these parents interviewed in Pietermaritzburg are not comfortable with the smartphone as an addition to the family, especially when it is in the hands of their teenage children. This introduces the theme about the perception of parents regarding communication technology device usage by their teenagers. The responses are graphed in in Figure 6.1 below:
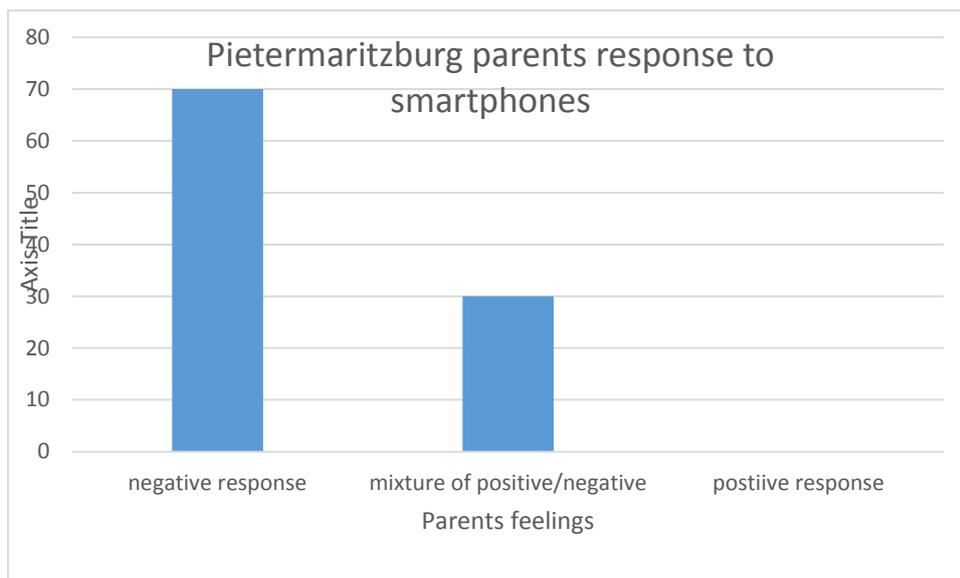
Figure 6.1: Parents' responses to smartphones

Kerry Devit and Debi Roker (2009) conducted a study in the UK about the role that mobile phones play in the family. The two researchers commenced their study with an open mind, acknowledging both the good and bad influences that mobile phones potentially play within the family. The main objective of the study was to investigate whether or not the presence of smartphones in the household impacts family communications and relationships, by looking at both the positives, the negatives, as well as any other issues that come with this new item within the family (Devit and Roker, 2009:189). Structured interviews were conducted with 60 families; both parents and teenagers were involved. The findings revealed that the smartphone was an essential tool for the household, in that family members are easily able to keep in touch at any place and time. Parents expressed the concern around their teenagers' security. Rachel seemed to capture the sentiments raised by Devit and Roker:

> *"Smartphones have caused a social evolution. They facilitate communication and depend on competence, intelligence and intuition. Children are quite dependent on them, they absorb information quite well. They come across stuff inadvertently which alters their outlook on life – put simply, these smartphones can take their innocence at a young age."*

The smartphone is a double-edged sword: parents viewed them as empowering for teenagers in terms of communication with family and friends, yet at the same time they are concerned about the dangers and harm that smartphones can expose their children to. Dangers and harm

are a click away, at the tips of teenagers' fingers. It only takes curiosity and a click for teenagers to place themselves in danger that their parents cannot always protect them from.

Gustavo claimed that some of the issues which need to be considered when it comes to parents and their adolescent children are that, in addition to getting older and hence getting more independent, their teenage children start to spend more time with friends and less time with parents (2003:1039). With communication technology devices in the equation, time used up on friends becomes greater, as they constantly communicate via their mobile communication devices are carried everywhere they go. This draws attention and time away from parents, and teenagers often become more invested in online relationships with their friends. As previously mentioned, one of the interviewed parents, Jessica claimed communication between her and her daughter had been negatively impacted by her daughter's use of smartphones. Like Jessica, Pedro spoke about how his teenage daughter becomes so absorbed in her smartphone that she does not even bother about what happens around her, including spending quality time with her parents.

What needs to be kept in mind though is that these online relationships do not always translate to good quality meaningful relationships. Essentially, the very relations they invest in online can end up not being worthwhile, and the relations with their parents that they neglect can suffer in vain. Introna and Brigham put this into perspective by illustrating that engagement with people is founded on communal ties; by constantly engaging in virtual ontology, teenagers are engaging in a virtual community (2007:168). Engaging with such a community entails inhabiting the community's way of doing things, such as language, values, beliefs, etc. (Introna and Brigham, 2007:168). This is not uncommon amongst teenagers on social media communities, who have adapted a specific way of communicating with each other. This was established in the previous chapters, where teenagers were observed using their own language on social media, and from language comes practices and a culture.

Parents seem to be unaware of details of the social media culture that teenagers engage in daily. Many parents wonder what their teenagers are actually doing on their smartphones the whole day. This is why it is necessary to discuss Theme Two which considers parents' views on what their teenagers do on smartphones.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Use of smartphone by teenagers

In terms of parents' views on what their teenage children are up to on their smartphones, while parents all knew that their teenagers were in touch with their friends on social media, they also

acknowledged that there was more to it than that. Rachel's viewpoint was teenagers' engagement with their smartphones can depend on their level of sophistication. Their sophistication can determine want kind of fashion trends they search for, what kind of music, etc. This sophistication, she argued, can also be influenced by whether the teenager is a male or a female, from the upper class or working class. Samuel seemed cautious regarding the issue of privacy when it comes to teenagers' usage of smartphones. He claimed he did not want to be too consumed by what his daughters do on their smartphones and felt they needed privacy. He did, however, feel it was important to share words of caution with them. He reminded them of the dangers and harm that smartphones bring to people who are naïve and irresponsible. Lindokuhle stated that the only social media platform she was aware of was WhatsApp. She did not know much about smartphones as she had never owned one herself. In summary, the perception of parents regarding smartphone usage by their teenage children is that a smartphone is a very useful device when it comes to assisting teenagers with homework, but this same resourceful device distracts them from school work.

The overall responses were divided into three categories according to the kind of response the parents gave. The categories were aligned with whether parents thought the activities of their children on smartphones were good, bad or a combination of the two. The overall responses revealed that three of ten parents (30%) gave their teenage children the benefit of doubt when it came to smartphone usage. Another three of ten (30%) felt their teenage children were up to no good on social media. This was followed by two of ten parents (20%) arguing that their teenagers engage in both good and bad content. And the last 20% were indifferent as to what their teenagers engage in on smartphones. See Figure 6.2 below.
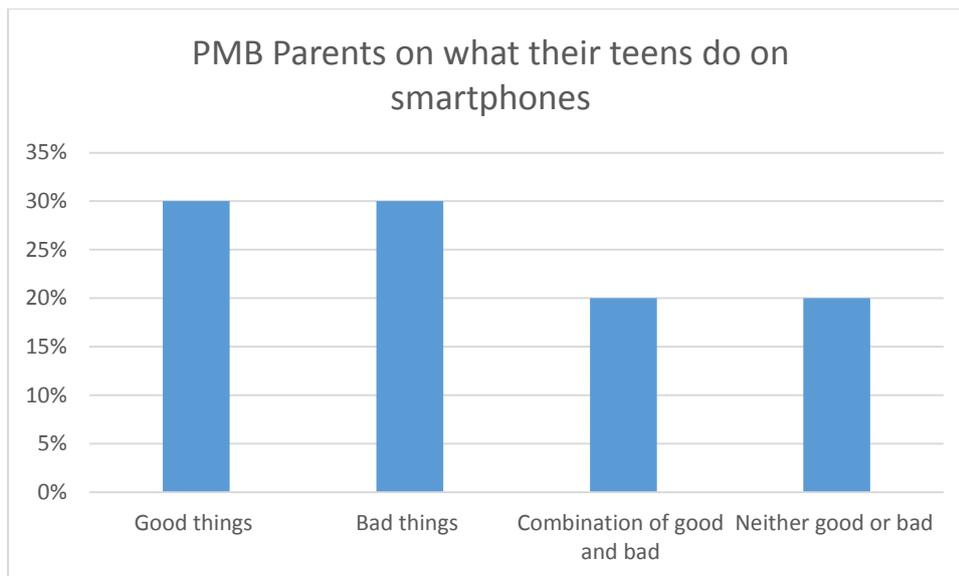
Figure 6.2: Parents' perceptions on what smartphones are used for

Riazuelo, Chaudoye and Cupa (2015) claimed that communication technology devices open up a world to teenagers that is far removed from parental supervision. This world is literally at the fingertips of teenagers and they have access to it on a daily basis (2015:174). Different possibilities open up in terms of the kind of material that teenagers have access to in virtual worlds with implications regarding fears and hopes for parents on the use of smartphones by their teenagers. Their supervision as parents is compromised and they cannot be sure that their children are safe. There are positive implications: children benefit as they can stay in touch with family and have access to educational platforms which can assist with school learning.

Porter et al. (2012), like the interviewed parents, acknowledged that the access to knowledge that these smartphones provide to teenagers is impressive and can be used to do homework and other useful research for school. As a result, the smartphone can no doubt be classified as a tool of empowerment in this regard. Porter et al. described different perceptions of smartphones by single mothers and or guardians in South Africa. The study revealed that single mothers perceived the smartphones of their teenage girls as gifts from older working men. Single South African mothers raised concerned about their daughter owning smartphones that they didn't even purchase for them. Guardians, teachers and parents have raised eyebrows regarding young teenage girls' ownership of smartphones when the family was clearly not able to provide the phones. In addition, these parents, guardians and teachers felt that their surveillance over these young girls' behaviour or activities on the smartphones was compromised (Porter et al., 2012:157).

Considering the economic landscape of South Africa, where a majority of the population is working class, coupled with a high unemployment rate, teenage girls receiving smartphones from older men is a no-brainer. With the unmonitored conversation that these younger girls have on their smartphones, there are opportunities to secretly meet up with the men who provide them with accessories, fashion items, smartphone etc. This can easily change the behaviour of these teenage girls. Lindokuhle clearly stated in her interview:

> *"I do not know who my daughter constantly chats to on her smartphone. All I know is that I feel I have lost my daughter ever since she got access to WhatsApp on her phone. She has become a stranger to me, shown me bad behaviour I never thought she had."*

There is no solid evidence that Lindokuhle's daughter was involved with an older guy that bought her things, but according to her mother there is a high correlation between her time on WhatsApp and her change of behaviour. Her mother, not being able to access the smartphone space, felt pushed away. With the daughter on the other hand, having no boundaries regarding her privacy could be one of the factors which compromised her safety. Boundaries can therefore be seen in two ways: as creating a barrier between parents and children and as unsafe for the teenage user.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Boundaries when it comes to smartphone technology

The issue of boundaries is a complex phenomenon when it comes to smartphones, teenagers and their parents. A dilemma arises between the privacy of the teenager and the duties of a parent. Parents were asked what they thought regarding boundaries and smartphones. Samuel's answer exposed various dilemmas in this theme of boundaries. He encouraged dialogue in situations where there seemed to be a power struggle, whether it was between teenagers and their parents, or the producers of smartphones and the consumers thereof. Samuel mentioned the importance of conceptualising privacy from the context of the self first. Even at this level, privacy has its limitations. A large majority of the parents stated that there are no boundaries when it comes to smartphone use (by teenagers). This view has its validity on the basis of virtual space, how it cannot be quantified or spatially limited. With this, the nature of virtual ontology makes the boundary issue complex for the teenager navigating the virtual space, as well as boundaries and the issue of access when it comes to access parents have to their children in virtual ontology. Ruvimbo, Rajesh and John emphasised how the parent should be the one showing the child what boundaries should be set. The teenage child will then understand the

boundary as structured by the parent, which can assist in making the issue of boundaries and smartphones between parent and child less complex.

The answers which the parents provided were categorised into three: either as a negative response (which entailed parents who said there are no boundaries), positive response, and then a mixture of positive and negative responses. Seven of ten (70%) of parents gave a negative response, providing quite – a disheartening view on boundaries from either the parent's side or the teenager's side. Three of ten (30%) parents had a little faith in the power of parents to draw the line and establish the boundaries. There were no parents who approached the boundary issue with a purely positive response. The results are illustrated in the Figure 6.3 below.
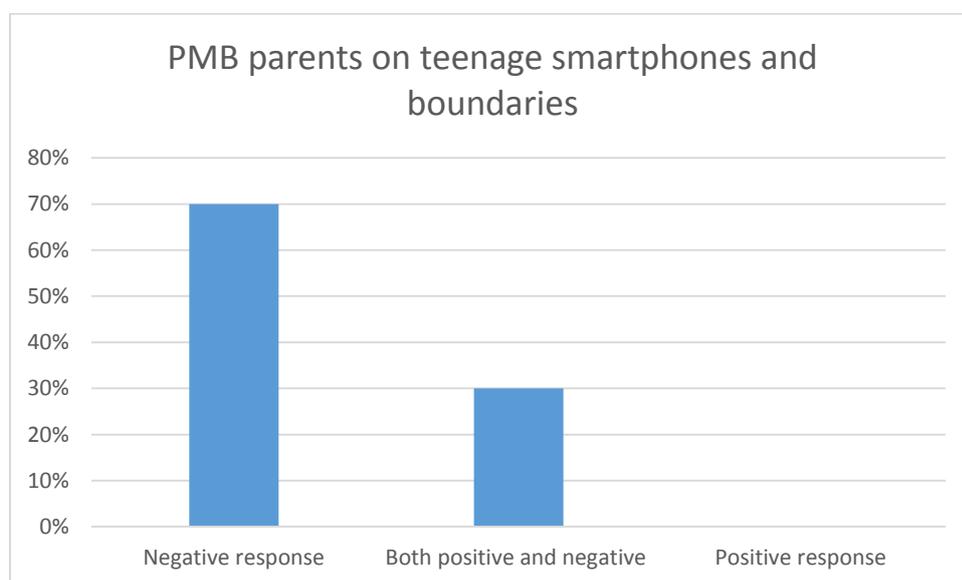
Figure 6.3: Teenage smartphones and boundaries

Burke, Adamic and Marciniak established that as children grow into their adolescent years, they become acquainted with an independence which they usually do not handle well, (2013:41). This independence can be seen as one of the phenomenon which creates boundaries between parents and teenagers. When this independence is not handled well by teenagers and is translated into social media, it creates a boundary for parents because that independence is explored in a space which parents do not own. It is different when teenagers use their independence poorly in their parents' house, but on social media, the control of parents is challenged, and that is a boundary that marginalises parents. It is therefore not surprising that all ten parents who were interviewed either had purely negative responses regarding smartphone use of their children and boundaries, or had mixed feelings about this. This touches

on what Samuel pointed out regarding boundaries and access which support the views of the interviewed parents:

> *"The issue of access is also a boundary issue: access to people, information: access enhanced is information enhanced. Technology should enhance their access, access that allows anyone: blind or illiterate."*

Adding to Samuel's point on access, the absence of parental authority in the social media space of teenagers is a result of both the issues of access and boundaries working together. Parents are excluded from that space and have no power regarding the actions of their teenage children in a space they do not have access to. As Rachel claimed, even for parents, "smartphones present discrimination on many levels: intuitively, class wise, intelligence wise, sophistication".

The issue of boundaries seems to be restricting for parents but not for their teenage children. This was illustrated by Smedts, who felt that the introduction of technology comes with an incongruent meaning of boundaries, where boundaries are not geographical but intangible. These intangible boundaries restrain human behaviour within virtual space, space which confines humans to the kind of agency suitable for this space. In Heidegger's words, technology "enframes us" into a space which sets a different way of being a human (Smedts, 2008:124). This 'enframing' on the part of teenagers seems to be the order of the day and a survival mechanism within virtual communities. In this context, 'enframing' can be used in the same way as conformity, as conformity entails people assuming the behaviour that they frequently observe in society (Claidiere and Whiten, 2012:126). Conforming to social media or virtual space, culture could be a boundary in terms of the customs practised within that community, but conformity can be liberating in that it can be a tool through which an agent can experience their 'being'. That seems to be the case with teenagers in virtual ontology, without adult supervision and legal authority, conformity to the culture on Internet or social media platforms can be seen as a boundary. But without adult supervision and legal authorities monitoring their behaviour teenagers feel a sense of liberty.

6.2.4. Theme 4: Digital literacy of parents

Most parents appeared to have some form of digital literacy. Most of the interviewed parents, with the exception of Lindokuhle who had never owned a smartphone, have communicated or are communicating with each other via WhatsApp and or Facebook. A father like John took advantage of his presence on Facebook. He encouraged his children to add him as a friend on Facebook, so they could keep in touch should they be physically far from each other when he

travels. The digital literacy of Samuel was not specialised in social media. As a professor, his digital literacy was more geared towards research, accessing research tools and being able to utilise them efficiently. Samuel viewed any form of computer technology as a tool to either make work easier, to get more knowledge or to implement a task efficiently. In general, again with the exception of Lindokuhle, all the parents interviewed were familiar with the Internet, as this is where WhatsApp downloads are found and where Facebook is accessed. Samuel used the Internet to access research platforms for information. It appeared, however, that the children knew more about the use of smartphone technology than the parents; all appeared to rely on their teenage children to assist them with technology based problems on smartphones.

The responses of the parents were categorised according to the features of smartphones they were familiar with: social media platforms, Internet, applications, other and not familiar with much. Three of ten parents (about 30%) used features which are purely social media platforms. Another three of ten parents were familiar with using the Internet. This was followed by two of ten parents familiar with applications, and lastly another two of ten parents who were not familiar with much. The results are illustrated in the Figure 6.4 that follows.
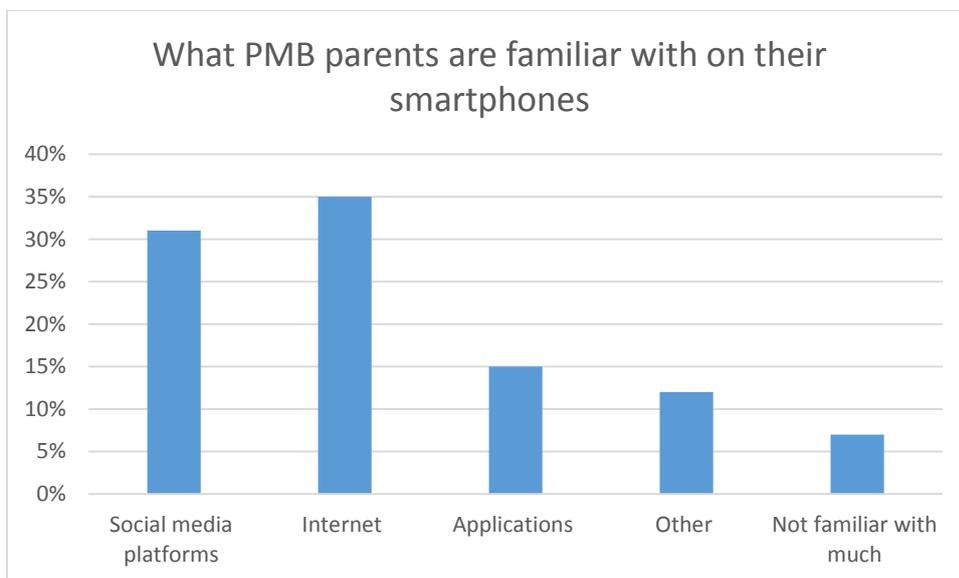
Figure 6.4: Parents' familiarity with smartphone features

The responses from Pietermaritzburg parents showed that they were mostly familiar with Internet and used it for activities such as email. Even parents with Internet access through their work appeared to be less 'techno savvy' than their digital native children. Digital natives are most likely inclined to be more techno savvy than their digital immigrant or stranger parents, across all classes. This was made evident in the interviews, where Samuel who is a professor

and Lindokuhle who is a domestic worker, were both not too familiar with certain technology platforms. Zur and Zur (2011) would classify Samuel and Lindokuhle as digital immigrants who are avoiders, as they are comfortable either in their technology-free life or with minimal engagement with technology. They were not active on any social media platforms and did not regard themselves as missing out in any way (2011:1). It was also interesting to note that in as much as there is a digital divide when it comes to class and access, Samuel and Lindokuhle in this regard were united by their digital indifference to social media.

Jacques Marais revealed that South African middle-class parents can have a measure of control in terms of monitoring what their teenage children do online (2012:5). This control measure assumes that the teenagers' smartphones are contract phones. Even if the phones were contract phones they would not specify the kind of interactions teenagers engage in on social media; there would simply be an indication of the sites visited. As parents usually pay for the smartphone, the bill is delivered to the parents. This a feature which lower class parents cannot use because of the financial implications. While Samuel could afford to monitor both his daughters through this system, he does not have the technological savviness required. Thus, even a middle class parent cannot avoid some form of marginalisation.

The parents who are most familiar with the Internet are classified by Zur and Zur (2011:1) as the immigrants who are reluctant adopters. They are adapting to the technological age, as well as the technology that comes with it, but one wouldn't say that they are technology geniuses. About 35% of the parents interviewed fall within this category. These parents, unlike the previous category, show more interest in the use of technology and are willing to learn some aspects of it. They are simply not ready to be called the experts in technology yet, but they have some level of confidence when navigating the virtual world. Only two parents were familiar with many applications on their phones and were what Zur and Zur (2011:5) would classify as "enthusiastic adopters". In this enthusiasm, Zur and Zur mentioned these are the digital immigrants who can easily blend in with the digital natives on a social media platform. They are relatively agile in their social media movement and can easily fit into the Internet or social media culture. Amongst the interviewed parents, Rachel seemed to fit best into this category of digital immigrants. She not only showed interest in how things were done by the digital natives, but was able to use advanced software to edit her pictures.

Even though there may be some parent such as the "enthusiastic adopters" who seem to understand and adapt to the way of understanding technology like digital natives, challenges

persist when it comes to the relationship between parents and teenagers in the midst of smartphones. The next theme will therefore explore some of these challenges.

6.2.5 Theme 5: Challenges faced by parents

When asked about the challenges that parents face when it comes to their teenagers' use of smartphones, the parents poured out their hearts. Jessica expressed her concern for the safety of her daughter. When her daughter receives a call, she exits the house and speaks outside. This was clearly a concern for Jessica, as she did not know who the person on the other side of the phone was. Naledi, on the other hand, because of the small age gap between her and her son, seemed to be on the same wavelength as her son about many things. Despite facing challenges with her son regarding technology usage, their friendship made Naledi more approachable for her son. The age gap between Rachel and her 18-year-old son is big and when she was her son's age, smartphone technology did not exist. Naledi, being such a young mother, had known mobile phones when she was a teenager, but these were quite basic and mainly used for calling and receiving calls. Rachel, watching her child growing into a generation that is so immersed in the technological way of doing things is something she cannot relate with from her youth. It makes her feel helpless. What all the parents shared regarding these challenges is that they all had the same kind of fears, fears related to their children's safety, what their children do on their smartphones, and fears of their children losing innocence.

The challenges mentioned by the parents were used to categorise the answers into the following challenges: privacy, explicit content, safety, other, financial pressure on the parent. Privacy was the challenge for 21% of the parents, another 21% stated it was explicit content, 21% raised concerns regarding smartphones being a distraction from doing homework, 17% of the parents raised the issue of safety, 17% stated the challenge was other. Sometimes teenagers put financial pressure on their parents to get a more up to date smartphone and thus, the last concern was financial pressure. The data is illustrated in Figure 6.5 below.
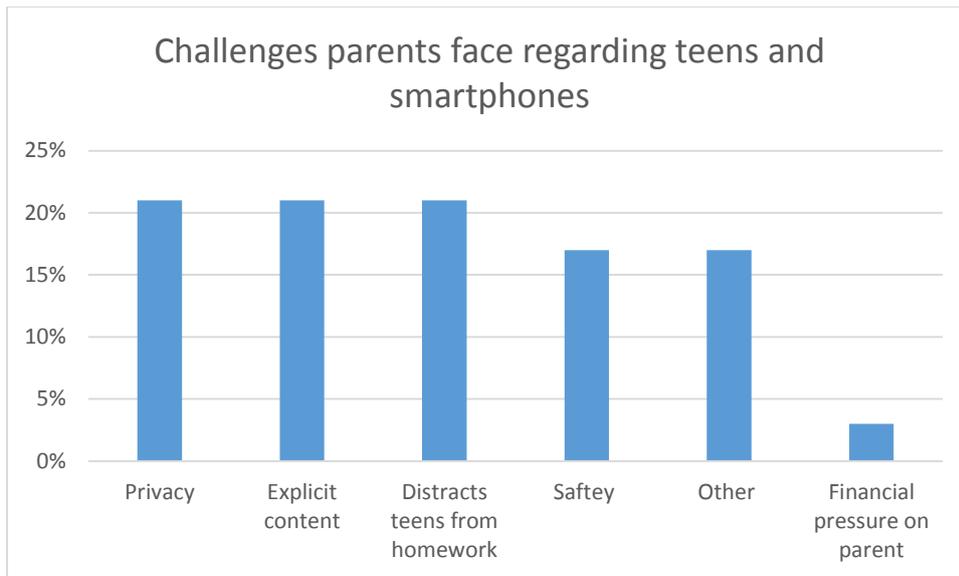
Figure 6.5: Parents' challenges regarding teens and smartphones

There are endless challenges which parents experience regarding the use of smartphones by their teenage children. The most obvious challenge, observed from both the teenager focus groups and individual parent interviews is the excessive use of smartphones by teenagers, whether they are at home with their families or during classes at school. That in itself is a challenge which has been confirmed by both parents and teenagers interviewed. Having access to smartphones for such a long period can easily increase the chances of teenagers compromising their safety on social networks.

Hutson noted that constant exposure to social networks, which teenagers have from their phones, can increase the chances of being cyberbullied (2016:60). Social networks are a platform through which teenagers can share their pictures and opinions with an audience that is often bigger than they anticipate. The larger the audience, the higher the risk of a person attacking the image or opinions of teenagers. With the absence of authority on such a platform, the brutality of these attacks can be quite extreme. The safety of teenagers in this regard is then out of the hands of their parents, which makes them more vulnerable to the attacks. This is why some of the interviewed parents raised the issue of safety regarding the use of smartphones by their teenage children.

One of the other challenges parents experienced was not so evident in the interviews with parents but arose in the teenage interviews: teenagers tend to express their feelings on social media instead of talking to their parents. This was raised by Westermann (2011:51) who discovered that teenagers experiencing any challenge in life were more likely to update about

the issue on Facebook than talk about it with their parents. Naledi revealed this as a challenge she faced as a mother; she discovered the feelings and moods of her son via social media instead of hearing them directly from her son at home. The absence of parental authority has been identified as a feature of social networks and it can allow teenagers to feel freer to express themselves without feeling embarrassed or restricted by their parents' input. This though, does not make teenager's ability to express themselves less of a challenge for their parents when it comes to teenage smartphone use. It highlights that social networks can serve as a barrier between parents and teenagers when it comes to intimate conversations. Also, it seems to indicate that the technological age has provided a different platform for expressing feelings compared with teenagers of previous generations.

It is not only feelings which teenagers express on different platforms to previous generation teenagers; they are also able to circulate explicit content on social network platforms such as Facebook, BMM and WhatsApp. This includes pornography and or nude pictures of themselves. This is becoming quite a trend and could almost be considered as one of the cultural 'norms' for teenagers as far as their digital lives are concerned (Ringrose et al., 2012:25). This has been one of the main worries raised by the interviewed parents; some felt their children were "losing their innocence", being tempted to practise the explicit content they are exposed to. Parents monitoring the presence of explicit content on the phones of their teenage children raises the issue of privacy, which will be elaborated in the next theme.

6.2.6 Theme 6: ICTs and teenage privacy

Parents were asked the question: What are your views on monitoring teenagers on their smartphones? Parents like John, who was quite liberal, did not restrict his daughter in any manner. He constantly tries to advise his daughter in virtual world navigation. Another parent, Jacob, claimed he trusted his children's self-discipline and has taught them responsibility. Samuel raised a conceptual and yet practical quandary about privacy. He asked the following questions: "What is the definition of privacy?" and "For whom is the privacy created?" Ruvimbo mentioned that the issue of teenage privacy and smartphones is influenced by how a child is raised. A majority of parents (eight of ten parents, or 80%) were in favour of monitoring. One parent was not keen on monitoring and one was indifferent. See Figure 6.6 below.
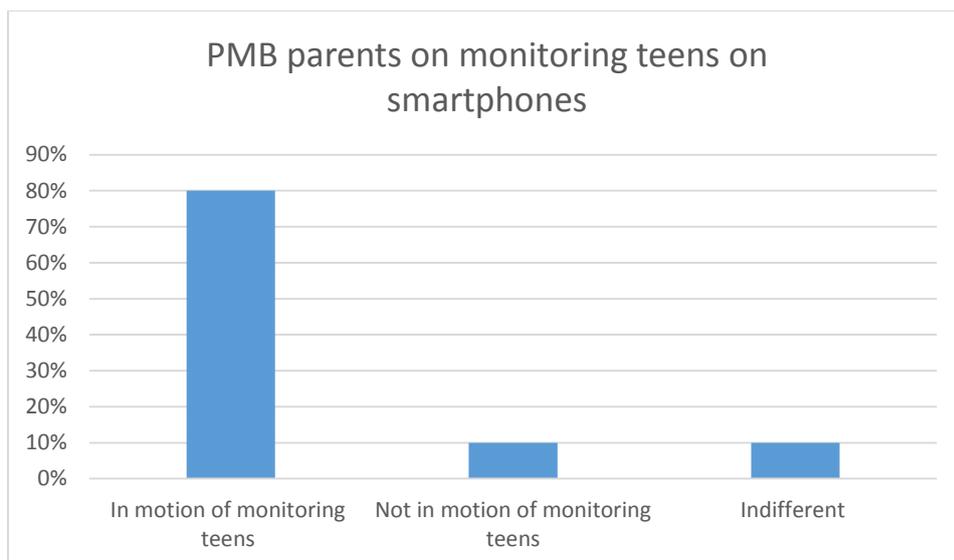
Figure 6.6: Monitoring teens on smartphones

Madden et al. showed how parents may forge relationship connections on social media or ask for friend requests from their children in order to get an idea of what their children are up to on social media (2012:3). Naledi confirmed this and was friends with her son on Facebook:

> *"I know what goes on with his social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, he doesn't mind giving me his phone, my tablet is always with him. I go through his phone. I understand the issue of privacy but I have to make sure there is no pornography on his phone."*

The upside of Naledi's parenting style is that she is openly linked to her son's Facebook page and does not have to forge relations with her son's friends. She reported enjoying the open relationship she has, claiming that whenever he was not feeling well or felt depressed, he expressed what he really felt at the moment he felt it. Naledi later addressed this with her son when he was ready to talk to her about it. She granted her son privacy but when disciplining him is required, she steps in. Balancing both the respecting of privacy of teenagers and also playing the role as a parent that guides is an admirable virtue for parents in the technological age.

Naledi's case is an example of positive handling of privacy; sometimes privacy is handled less well. In terms of limited privacy, Constance Milton noted that while many people talk of the importance of their own personal privacy, they themselves are often violating the personal privacy of others (2014:283). This links to what Samuel's questions regarding privacy: At what point does a person lose their right to privacy? Is it at the point where they violate the right of

another? This could mean that Samuel's idea of "limits of privacy" has some grounding in this regard. It could also mean that 1) Privacy could be something that needs to be earned, and also 2) Earning of privacy comes with a level of responsibility.

This chapter closes with an important theme, the parent's responsibility in the midst of the smartphone technology.

6.2.7 Theme 7: Parental responsibility

For this final theme, parents responded to the question: "What is your take on parent's responsibility when it comes to what their teenagers do on their smartphones?" All parents felt they had certain responsibilities regarding the smartphone use of their children. In general, they felt it was important to communicate the advantages and disadvantages of smartphone usage.

Figure 6.7 shows that 100% of parents felt a sense of responsibility regarding their teenagers' use of smartphones.
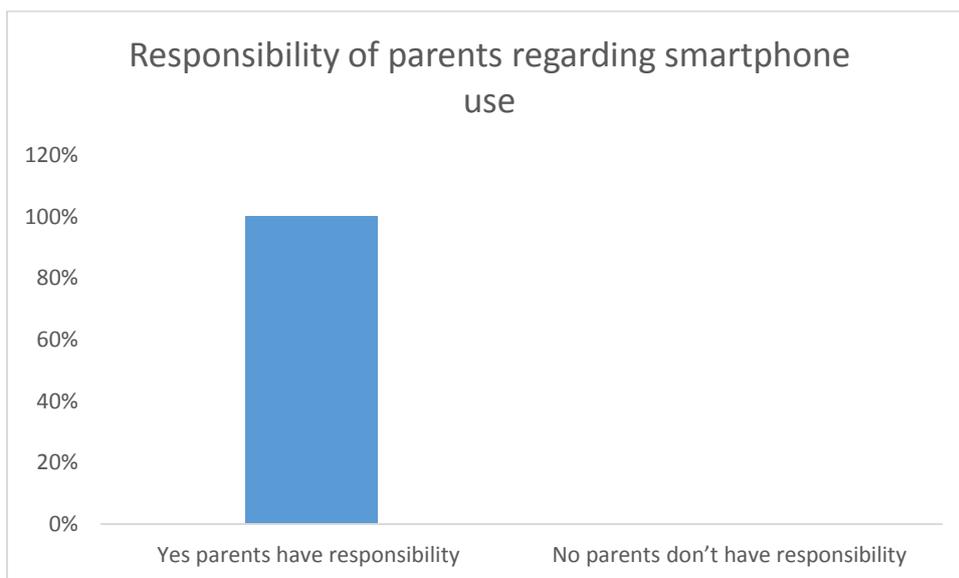
Figure 6.7: Parental responsibility

The context of this study is important; it is an African study, based specifically in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and the expectations of parents in the African context need to be considered. Ndegwah and Kroesen (2012) claimed that African parenting was centred on three pillars: respecting elders, belief in a higher power and community-centred life. The previous chapter and this chapter have explored the responses of the digital natives and the perceptions of the digital immigrants. The third and final research objective can now be

considered, which is to identify the ways in which mobile communication technology devices have disrupted and reconfigured parenting practices in post-colonial Africa.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the perceptions of the parents regarding the presence of the smartphone in the household and described some of the ethical issues this device has brought into the family. The themes provided starting points for what will be explored in more detail in Chapter Seven regarding the African parents' challenges of deconstructing and reconstructing moral responsibility. All themes are linked to the exponential growth of smartphone technology. To a certain extent, this growth seems to be moving the target that African parents are trying to reach in their three pillars of parenting noted by Ndegwah and Kroesen (2012). The millennials seem to be far from the grounding orientation desired by their parents. This is why a deconstruction and a reconstruction of moral responsibility by the African parent is needed, in order to keep up with the exponentially changing technology that plays a role in the actions of teenagers in virtual worlds. Chapters Seven analyses the interviews and focus groups in more depth, which is then geared toward exploring a way forward for both the African parent and the African teenager.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter revealed the perceptions that parents have regarding their teenage children and smartphone technology. Many parents appear to be still grappling with how to handle the smartphone technology that has entered the home. All interviewed parents acknowledged a sense of moral responsibility regarding their teenage children and smartphone use. This chapter seeks to analyse the data of Pietermaritzburg interviewees from Fundokuhle Secondary School and Alexandra High School, in the light of the theoretical frameworks introduced in Chapter Two, namely agency theory and theory of consequentialism. These theories will be used in the analysis of the teenager focus groups. The theory of responsibility is used to analyse the interviews with parents. While this theory appears to offer a reasonable foundation for an ethic of responsibility for both parents and teenagers in this technological age, this chapter will reveal why it falls short for an African context.

7.1 Analysing data through agency theory

As noted in Chapter Two in terms of the theory on agency, Kant (1873) explained how agency is a force behind an act, the intention or rather will behind an action which drives the actor to behave in a certain way. Furthermore, O'Connor (1971:20) claimed that such acts are premeditated, deliberated by the actor before they are acted out. This requires the actor to take responsibility for his or her action. According to Aristotle, such actions are voluntary, with the actor aware of the circumstances surrounding the act and internally deliberating prior to performing the act (Ross, 1999:36). In the context of this study, teenagers who perform actions within virtual ontology, would be doing so voluntarily. By virtue of being human, teenagers could be seen as possessing both free will and reason when performing an act, knowing the repercussions, circumstances and consequences of an act when carrying it out. Responses from the teenager interviewees during the focus group discussions supported the idea that free will, reason and knowing the repercussions of actions or consequences of actions are evident, yet they still choose to perform certain actions. For example, consider the response given by John: "My mother would kill me if she knew what I was up to on Facebook". From the above action, it is clear that John was aware of his actions and that his mother would not be impressed with his actions on Facebook. It is also worth remembering Siya's views on teenagers who do not

reveal their identity on social media: "… people will use whatever name they want to use and because you can't trace them … they hurt people on purpose knowing that you can't trace them".

With reference to the above responses and starting with John, he was knowingly engaging in activities which are not appropriate in the eyes of his parents. He knew the circumstances and implications of his actions but continues to choose them. There is no sense of coercion, only of choice. During the focus group discussion, he mentioned that the "activities" he was involved with on Facebook were with his friends, friends he chose to be around and chose to be influenced by, and he chose to use virtual ontology in the manner he was using it. Hence, there appeared to be no coercion, only free will despite knowledge of repercussions (his mother would "kill him").

Another key point was shared by Siya, who emphasised the power of free will, choice and reason that teenagers have in virtual ontology. "Hurting people on purpose" is an indication of choice, it exposes the will behind an action, a deliberated action that is aimed at achieving a will. The failure of being traced here is the will behind the action in this case, where hurting people comes with no identity, and hence no accountability. However, with an identity, the decision to hurt others would either be reduced or the teenager would choose to act differently. This view of agency assumes that the teenagers in this study are not coerced to act in the manner in which they do when they are operating within virtual ontology. Whatever choices they make to act, they do so with reason and have an idea of the consequences that will follow. By virtue of being human, possessing free will and reason, teenagers have the inbuilt capacity to empower themselves when navigating virtual ontology, and can do so in a responsible manner.

Navigating virtual ontology suggests that teenagers are operating within a structure, an intangible structure created by graphic designers, information technology specialists, etc. This introduces the agency/structure dualism, where the agency of teenagers is understood in the context of the structure through which they operate. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the agency/structure idea of Anthony Giddens appears useful here. Giddens acknowledged the agent/structure dualism. He firstly echoed the sentiments of the philosophical perspective of agency by Kant, propounding the view that free will and rationality are integral components of agency (Giddens, 1979:24). Furthermore, he points out that free will and rationality are important instruments which enable the agent to monitor the conduct of his or her actions within social structures they function in (Dornan, 2002:307).

In the context of this study, Giddens' ideas on agency/structure are useful in describing the agency of teenagers within the structure of virtual ontology they access through their smartphones. This can be demonstrated through the following three themes from the focus group discussion with the teenage interviewees from Pietermaritzburg: "Smartest" phone as a popularity and acceptance accessory, access and virtuality, and lastly, the exponential development of smartphones.

7.1.1 'Smartest' phone as a popularity and acceptance accessory

The first theme which will be used to evaluate the agency and structure relationship is the theme "'smartest' phone as a popularity and acceptance accessory". In terms of agency, the teenager as the user of the smartphone, has agency as mentioned by Kant and Giddens above. This view of agency assumes that the free will and rationality of teenagers are a priori virtual ontology accessed through their phones. That said, even within virtual ontology teenagers continue to have free will and be rational. The smartphone is a popular platform which teenage interviewees use to enter virtual ontology. The smartest phone would then be the one which provides more technologically advanced exposure to the virtual world than other phones on the market. Expensive front seat tickets at a concert can provide a better experience of watching the concert. A smartphone as a more expensive phone option provides a better and 'smarter' experience of virtual ontology than other phones. This better experience would be what most teenagers aspire to, which makes the 'smartest' phone a form of popularity and acceptance accessory. In addition to providing a better experience of virtual ontology, the 'smartest' phone could also have implications on the agency and structure relation proposed by Giddens.

With a phone being so 'smart', does it in any way compromise the rationality of the individual as an agent? Does it not do most things for the agent to the point that the agent becomes passive to the 'smartness' of the phone, allowing virtual ontology to be negotiated by the 'smartness' of the phone? One is reminded of what was mentioned in Chapter Five about the "Apparatgeist", that spirit inside the machine that empowers human action through technology but at the same time restricts it (Katz and Aakhus, 2002:305). The human, as the user of technology in this case, is simultaneously active and passive, where the former is established through free will and reason and the latter is recognised through 'spirit of the machine' that takes over where needed. The 'spirit of the machine' in the case of a smartphone is the 'smartness' of the phone while the functions of the phone are 'what a phone can do'. These 'do's' of a smartphone include: storing and organising data, serving reminders, capturing and storing pictures and videos, etc. which are based on the memory of the phone, 'what the phone remembers'. These

could be some of the reasons why such phones are called 'smart' phones. Essentially, the 'smartness' of the phone arguably allows the user to forget because it remembers on their behalf, and allows the user to be disorganised as it organises. Furthermore, with its help feature, the smartphone can also guide the user when help is required. These are some of the common means through which the 'smartness' of the phone influences the experience of the user. The other means are determined by the applications which a user has on the smartphone, which also assist (and restrict) the user in many ways.

When observing phone applications such as social networks, the agency and structure relationship can be likened to the teenagers and social network relationship. Teenagers as agents navigate the architecture of social networks. The navigation of social media architecture that is virtual, to a certain extent tests the free will and character of the teenager. Hence, the danger of discussing the agency of teenagers in the context of the structure of virtual ontology experienced through smartphones falls prey to Archer's notion of "the fallacy of central conflation" (1982) which was mentioned in Chapter Two. This is where the teenager as an agent and virtual ontology are easily conflated into a unit instead of two separate items. But, one needs to keep in mind that in this research, the conflation does not deny the fact that the agency of the teenager and virtual ontology are separate entities, but acknowledges that in this technological age, the former and latter interact more than in previous years. Another two phenomena which seem to be in interaction regarding smartphone technology and its use are access and virtuality, which will be discussed in the following section.

7.1.2 Access and virtuality

Access discourse in the context of technology encompasses issues relating to class, the economy, literacy of an individual, development, and even race, amongst other things. In this study, the discussion on access touches mostly on the socio-economic backgrounds, where the profiles of the teenage interviewees revealed that a majority are from single headed households. To be more specific, their family units were mostly comprised of single mothers, or grandmothers, though some did have both mother and father in the household. South African family units were outlined in Chapter Four, showing that the African unit is typically not comprised of a nuclear setting. Family members often come on board to assist single mothers and or grandmothers who take care of the children, making the family unit a communal one.

A working-class status in the discussion of access (and virtuality) showed that the purchasing power of these parents was limited, and hence they could not get the latest smartphones for

their teenagers. This restricts teenagers from the virtual ontology experience of those from middle class families. Nicole Stephens, Stephanie Fryberg and Hazel Markus noted how parents from the working class do not only have less economic means but also more constraints in the environments in which they operate in and less control than the middle class (2011:34). This is simultaneously a matter of access, agency and (virtual) structure, where these teenage interviewees, who are mostly from working class, have restricted access to the virtual structure. As a result, they could have less control over how they navigate virtual structure because of compromised agency.

This realisation about class, agency and structure reveals how agency is not purely about freedom and reason. Freedom can be strengthened by monetary power and resources which remove restrictions and provide access. Teenagers from middle class homes have their freedom strengthened by their socio-economic background which provides them better experiences of virtual ontology through better phones. With better access, these teenagers have more leeway to use their agency to explore virtual ontology.

In terms of parents, it is class as well as digital literacy of parents which influence how they perceive access and virtuality of their teenagers in virtual ontology. Most of the parents interviewed were literate, and had an idea of what their children are accessing in virtual ontology. One parent that was not literate did not know much about the content that her daughter was accessing on the smartphone. This made her more frustrated as she failed to understand what it really was that changed the behaviour of her daughter when she was on the smartphone. She surmised that her daughter was surrounded by the wrong friends who introduced her to platforms on social media that could affect her negatively.

Another factor that influences parents in terms of the access and virtuality of their teenagers could be the amount of interest and willingness to learn about the functioning of digital gadgets such as smartphones. The interviewed parent that was a professor did not seem interested in the virtual ontology that his daughters were constantly engaging in. Thus, he seemed indifferent about several issues posed in questionnaire. He was one of the few parents who thought it was right for a parent to grant teenage children privacy when it comes to smartphone use. Parents adopt this interest in it should not be short livened to be interested on a long-term basis, as the development of smartphones is exponential there is always more to learn. This leads to the next theme for discussion, the exponential development of smartphones.

7.1.3 Exponential development of smartphones

The exponential development of smartphones is inevitable. Designers of smartphones are constantly re-inventing and introducing new smartphones with changes to both the external and internal functioning of the smartphone. An external function, the camera, continues to offer more megapixels and better picture quality. This feature was the most popular amongst the teenage interviewees. The more developed a camera, the more teenagers are encouraged to capture and share pictures with each other. Could this mean that the development of smartphones is producing a generation of teenagers who are living for the moment, the moment that needs to be captured and shared on social media? The camera appears to be playing the role of a register, to show peers there were moments worth capturing. Pictures play the role of receipts for teenagers to show each other who was present at that fun party, that night at the club, etc.

This exponential development of the camera contributes to teenagers' screen addiction. Teenagers are being lured into the habit of capturing every moment they feel needs to be remembered. Virtual ontology through social media platforms seems to thrive on 'life through images', with teenagers constantly sharing their lives through the pictures they post or share with friends and others. To elaborate on this point, Riazuelo et al. demonstrated that digital natives leave a pictorial trail of their lives on social media (2015:175). These pictures serve more than just a trail, but communicate on behalf of these teenagers. The images they post represent who they are, what they stand for, and how they would like to relate to those observing their pictures. Riazuelo et al. further argued that communication through images is pivotal in virtual ontology, to a point where it is perceived as a form of language that digital natives use (2015:76). Bearing in mind the idea of images as a form of communication, Riazuelo et al. also exposed the nature of images on social media, how they can be presented and perceived in many ways, revealing the malleable nature of social media (2015:176). Images without words leaves interpretation open in terms of both the photographed and the viewer of the image. These images then can be seen as representing symbols which are interpreted accordingly.

Bush and Codrington, acknowledging this, claimed teenagers in the technological age have adapted to living in the moment and are prone to instant gratification (2008:34). This instant gratification can play a considerable role in the agency of teenagers in a virtual world. To explore this, Bush and Codrington noted that in the midst of smartphone technology that provides teenagers with instant information from google, instant downloads, instant messaging,

there are technologies such as microwaves which warm up food in about two minutes and lunch is ready (2008:35). These teenagers are then easily susceptible to this instant gratification to a point that most of them are not used to being patient, they do not give time for deliberation when acting, and hence do not have time to exercise reasoning. They gravitate towards impulsive action, which they use to satisfy the hunger of instant gratification.

Instant gratification can be labelled as "habitus", the term by Bourdieu mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis, where instant gratification is a mental structure of teenagers that unconsciously influences guides (or misguides) their agency in virtual ontology. The habitus in this regard could also be social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, platforms where teenagers instantly share pictures with their friends directly after capturing those pictures and instantly get comments on those posted pictures. It then follows that the exponential development of smartphones comes with a development of smartphone features, such as the smartphone camera. Features such as the smartphone camera supports the instant gratification that teenagers get from using their smartphone. This instant gratification further influences the reason and free will of teenagers in virtual ontology, and hence, as a structure, instant gratification compromises the agency of teenagers. One of the side effects of instant gratification is consumerism, a theme raised in Chapter Five from the focus group discussions with the teenagers. An analysis of consumerism follows, using the second theoretical framework of this study, consequentialism.

7.2 Analysing data through consequentialism

Consequentialism is an important framework in this study, as it is the consequences resulting from the manner in which teenagers use smartphone technology that inspired this research. In Chapter Two, consequentialism was described as judging an act by its outcome. The aim is to achieve an outcome which is good or pleasurable for the greatest number of people. This comes across as a convenient ethical theory for teenagers in this technological age, who are part of the 'culture of globalisation' mentioned by Akopyn (2014:112) in Chapter Four of this thesis. The global trend of constantly engaging in virtual ontology has become a way of life for teenagers, and in this virtual ontology they act in such a way that they achieve pleasure, regardless of the moral status of the act. The two themes which will elaborate on this in more detail are: smartphone and consumerism, as well as alienation and technology.

7.2.1 Smartphone and consumerism

From the interviews with the teenagers, 78% appeared to use their smartphones either all day and or every day. They were all customers or consumers of the smartphone as a product. This makes these teenage interviewees consumers in terms of money and time. With regard to money, it has been established that most of the teenage interviewees were from the working class. As a result, all these teenagers were in possession of a smartphone that was not necessarily expensive, but has Internet for downloading social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp which all claimed to use. The purchasing power of the working-class home is the affordability of a communication technology device that can provide some access to virtual ontology. Teenagers usually ask their parents or guardians to purchase smartphones. The advertisements of smartphones lured these teenage interviewees to insist on certain phones, whether or not the purchasing power of their parents or guardians enables this.

One of the many advertisements that have lured teenagers into requesting smartphones from their parents is the Samsung advertisement mentioned in Chapter Five. Through this advertisement, one becomes aware of how consumers are made to believe that the product being advertised will give them pleasure and a desirable experience when using the product. Young Ha and Sharron Lennon affirmed this by stating that advertisements are designed to capture the eye of a potential customer, and do this by making the customer believe that their will gain pleasure and satisfaction (2010:146). Chasing pleasure is what utilitarianism as a variant of consequentialism is after. Young people chase pleasure as both customers and as natives of the digital age. The digital community allows teenagers to chase this seemingly 'unlimited' pleasure in this unlimited world; the more they have it, the more of it they want. The pleasure that teenagers are exposed to affirms their identity as consumers who go out and purchase the smartphone product and consume it. With this in mind, it becomes easy to claim that teenagers as consumers can easily fall into hedonism.

Hedonism not only relates to the monetary aspect of consumerism, but also to the amount of time consumed. Teenage interviewees consumed large amounts of time consume on their phones, with some mentioning that even during class time they are on their phones, regardless of their teachers' reprimands. The majority of teenage interviewees appeared to be literally glued to their phones and they could thus be labelled as smartphone hedonists. This hedonistic behaviour of teenagers over smartphone use also makes teenagers consumers of smartphones. They take on consumerist behaviour, where as consumers of the smartphone product, they chat to their friends (and family) for long periods of time. A majority of the teenage interviewees

revealed that they chat in the privacy of their rooms, which means that they physically and socially alienate themselves from their family members. This leads to 'technology and alienation from family' as the next theme of discussion.

7.2.2 Technology and alienation from family

Alienation of teenagers from families is a consequence of great concern linked to the introduction of smartphones into the household. Glued to their smartphones, teenagers are removed not only from their teachers in the classroom but also from their parents at home, where they are mostly chatting in their rooms. Chapter Five showed that 78% of the interviewees were constantly on their smartphones and this could be indicative of what is happening on larger scale in South Africa. Thus, alienation of teenagers can be a challenge faced by many households in South Africa. If the teenage interviewees are chatting during school hours and at home in their rooms, it follows that their teenage friends are also chatting to them during school hours and at home in their rooms. These friends could be in their town, province or scattered around the country. The digital community filled with digital natives is very widespread. This feature of a community of digital natives conforms to the idea of consequentialism, of pleasure being achieved by a greatest number of people in this digital community. Most teenagers constantly feed their pleasure through engaging with each other, abiding by the consequentialist theory of greatest happiness or pleasure for the greatest number of people. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Mulgan (2001:17) noted that Nagel had pointed out that consequentialism "ignores the separateness of persons". This criticism of consequentialism has implications on the individual identity of the teenager. When teenagers identify themselves collectively, their identity as individuals is absorbed into this group identity of being a digital native in a digital community.

The collective identity of teenagers in the digital community can compromise the individual identity of teenagers. Nagel coined this "agent neutral" as the collective identity of teenagers in the digital community has precedence over the individual (1986). Teenagers easily fall prey to peer pressure. They are at a vulnerable stage in their lives where they are still understanding themselves and which paths they would like to take in life. Being submerged in a collective identity can easily cripple their independence and their ability to make their own decisions. This then reveals the "agent neutral" idea by Nagel, where teenagers are so caught up in the collective that individual agency is taken for granted. In the context of this study, free will and reason which are the crucial components of agency, are left dormant.

When human agency is dormant, humans qualify as commodities and this also fits the agent neutrality of teenagers in the digital community. Haralambos and Holborn identified 'commodity' in this context as a means through which modern day capitalism encourages agent neutrality [amongst the youth] by encouraging youth to be absorbed into the culture of the digital community (2008,740). Within this culture, the survival mechanism is rationalisation, as mentioned by Scott (1997) who identified this as an integral part of Max's work on modernity. Rationalisation in this regard could be interpreted sociologically as the idea of people not paying attention to their feelings and to exercising self-control, in the sense of how one presents and carries oneself on a daily basis (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:309). What stands out of this definition in the context of teenagers in virtual ontology is that their self-control in the absence of moral authority is not necessarily for good conduct but is more disciplined through conforming to the status quo of virtual ontology. Hence, Turner (1992:177) identified rationalisation as important too, according to Weber, for surviving in the structure of modern society, including virtual ontology, which in the context of this study is a by-product of modernity.

Within the theme of technology and alienation from family, Turner highlighted Weber's notion of rationalisation as "alienation as the basis of calculation and discipline"', where the individual is isolated from society to meet the demands of modernity (1992:177). In the context of teenagers' bodies, they are physically isolated from their family when they remove themselves from their family to converse with their friends on smartphones. The bodies do this habitually. This not only disciplines the individual, but also makes the individual's body a commodity. The teenager's body becomes a commodity in that it religiously indulges in smartphone usage instead of spending quality time with family. Sharp argued that what makes human a commodity is that his body is reduced to a machine that constantly labours to produce maximum output (2002:292). The bodies of these teenagers from Pietermaritzburg, who are constantly on their smartphones, are reduced to machines, which relate to other machines (smartphones). This is in preference to assuming their humanity and remaining at the human level of their family members and nurturing family relationships.

In terms of the actual engagement within virtual ontology, even in their disembodiment the teenagers are isolated from their families as they become absorbed into the digital community. In terms of the body as a commodity, their disembodiment is 'embodied' in that they require bodily presence to use a smartphone in order to have a virtual presence in virtual ontology. Silberstein and Chemero (in Manetti and Caiani, 2011:vi) offered an account of agency which

is founded on intentionality that is linked to the disembodiment via mental interpretations of the agent. In other words, the mental systems of the agent are a structure which are an extension of the agent. These mental structures which are responsible for calculating the intention of the agent's action require embodiment for actions to be executed. This idea of disembodiment linked to mental representation can be applied to the actions of teenagers in virtual ontology. In their disembodiments, this idea by Silberstein and Chemero (in Manetti and Caiani, 2011) would suggest that teenagers in virtual ontology are engaged in two structures simultaneously. The first is their mental structure, which could take on the label of Bourdieu's 'habitus' and the second structure is the virtual ontology structure. The former structure would be required to explore the latter structure, and they are mutually inclusive. These structures could be seen as spaces of escape for teenagers when it comes to alienation from family members.

The interviewed teenagers mentioned their use of Instagram and Facebook, both media platforms which allow for many picture displays. Pictures displayed by the teenagers on social media platforms also take them away from family space, to a space where they have to meet up the expectations of those who will be looking through their social media pages. Hence, their embodiment and disembodiment become mutually inclusive, resulting in teenagers being alienated from family in both their embodied and disembodied spaces.

Alienation in both embodied and disembodied spaces has another layer identified by West (1969). West argued that alienation "carries with it the assumption that the dignity of the [teenager] cannot be maintained unless… process allows autonomy, responsibility, and self-fulfilment" (1969). Moreover, being detached from family in order to engage with a non-human device such as a smartphone can affect the dignity of teenagers. This is because the opportunity cost of isolation in the bedroom to chat all day with friends over nurturing human relations with family which can bring self-fulfilment is not worth it. Losing that fulfilment from spending time with family, and also having agency and or autonomy compromised in the process because of the nature of virtual ontology, and finally not taking responsibility of actions within virtual ontology, ticks all the boxes in West's notion of an unmaintained human dignity. From the focus group interviews, it appeared that most of the teenagers were at risk of a bruised dignity, which puts more pressure on the moral responsibility of their parents. As mentioned previously, constantly engaging with a device (machine) can reduce a person to the level of a machine which also affects dignity. Another theme emerging from this analysis is language and social media which will be discussed next.

7.2.3 Teenager language and social media

The language teenagers use in virtual ontology is one of the phenomena that unites them within their digital culture. Similarly, as language in a culture generally captures much of what the culture is about, so does digital native language on social media platforms. Bearing in mind the criticism that Nagel poses to consequentialism on 'agent neutral', the language teenagers use on social media is one which conforms to the neutrality of agency. To elaborate, Anders Klitmøller, Susan Schneider and Karsten Jonsen stated that language carries more weight in terms of social categorisation than any other demographic qualities (2015:272). The language that teenagers use on social media unites them, removes demographic boundaries and qualities, and give them a collective identity which conforms to 'agent neutrality' and hence can easily affect their individual agency. Technology places them out of the reach of their parents. The friends they chat with are not restricted by demographic boundaries and qualities, but the parents of teenagers are restricted. The digital community removes teenagers from their parents and those around them in the household, as well as from their teachers at school. Without parents and teachers around them, teenagers are more able to behave unethically towards each other and others in virtual ontology. Thus anonymity, the Other and moral authority are three phenomena which are interlinked in terms of unethical behaviour of teenagers in virtual ontology. The interlinking nature of these phenomena will be discussed as a theme in the section that follows.

7.3 Anonymity, the Other, and lack of moral authority

These three themes are crucial in the discussion of the agency of teenagers in virtual ontology. Not only are they intertwined with each other, but they feature strongly in the agency/structure frameworks as well as the consequentialism framework. This will be demonstrated in the sections that will follow. The structure of virtual ontology has been demonstrated in previous chapters as complex, unlimited, enticing for teenagers, and addictive. There are several ethical implications for teenagers within such a domain, particularly if they are anonymous.

7.3.1 Anonymity

Anonymity in virtual ontology is an important feature in this study. It has implications on the agency of teenagers, especially in virtual ontology where teenagers are 'disembodied'. There were both positive and negative views on anonymity from the teenage interviewees – 50% were not in favour of anonymity on social media platforms and felt teenagers needed to be held accountable for their actions towards others, good or bad. When it comes to agency, this

accountability affirms that an agent acts out of reason (and free will), and should be held accountable for his or her actions which are deliberated and not instinctual. What is implied is that structure does not play a sufficient role in the actions of the teenagers in virtual ontology. Reason and free will which the teenagers possess by being rational does not necessarily align with structure as a cause of action. Having a true identity and not being anonymous in virtual ontology could essentially bring out the positive side of consequentialism, as mentioned by Mulgan (2001:14) in Chapter Two. This would make teenagers more cautious of their actions, more likely to deliberate on them and would ensure more positive consequences, and hence lead to a positive experience of virtual ontology for themselves and fellow teenagers.

The remaining 50% of interviewees were in favour of anonymity; without an identity, they were able to 'get up to mischief' on social media and they had no wish to expose their identities in a virtual ontological space.

Appiah (2005) considered identity in the context of ethics. He explored the ethics of individuality and the idea that individuals have values which are "internal to their identity" (2005:1). An individual with a particular identity takes on particular values, thus teenagers in virtual ontology will take on particular values (2005:24). With anonymity, the values of teenager as an individual and teenagers as a group of friends, become essential, because their values can influence their accountability, and their accountability in virtual ontology is influenced by their identity. An anonymous teenager has nothing to lose in behaving unethically, whereas a teenager using a real identity can be easily held accountable for his/her actions. For instance, a teenager that is openly involved in cyber bullying using his/her real identity can be easily be labelled as a bully.

In discussing identity in the form of 'labelling', Appiah (2005) drew on Ian Hacking who highlighted the phrase "kinds of person" and argued that individuals "are brought into being by the creation of labels for them" (2005:65). Appiah translated this argument to the idea that what one does intentionally is dependent not only on the concepts (or values) that one has at one's disposal, those concepts (values) are moulded by the kind of person one is and the behaviour appropriate to that kind of person (2005:65). What is problematic about the 'kind of person' idea is that it provokes the virtual ontology and home upbringing interface (values) even further and brings about a contradiction: virtual ontology structures versus 'the kind of person' one is. Depending on the values instilled in a teenager, their interaction in virtual ontology can easily create tension with the 'kind of person' they are at home. This takes on a

different twist to the idea of 'value tension' mentioned by Lassman in Chapter Three. In Chapter Three, the value tension is explored between the different generations within a household, which involves the views of the digital immigrants and strangers in relation to the conventional teenagers

Another ethical challenge that could be linked to the anonymity of teenager's agency in virtual ontology lies in the following two concerns: Firstly, the structure of virtual ontology seems to be in favour of teenagers who are anonymous and engage in inappropriate behaviour and get away with it. By giving teenagers the option of being anonymous, virtual ontology gives teenagers the option of performing displeasing actions without being accountable. Secondly, by providing the option of anonymity in human action, virtual ontology as a structure opens the door for teenage agency to be reliant on structure when it comes to action, and hence teenagers can fall victim to the "fallacy of conflation" mentioned by Archer in Chapter Two of this study. With the consequentialism framework, anonymity has already been established for raising ethical concerns, which highlights that acting from anonymity can create bad consequences, such as cyber bullying. Cyber bullies can easily hide their identities and get away with verbally abusing other users on social media. If teenagers had no option in terms of their conduct within virtual ontology, perpetrators posing as anonymous users on social media would be caught out or be limited in their unpleasant conduct. The issue of anonymity becomes tricky when considering the presence of the Other in virtual ontology. This will be elaborated in the following section.

7.3.2 The Other in virtual ontology

In terms of the Other, the responses of the teenage interviewees revealed that almost 70% were not bothered by the anonymous or fake identities of their friends or fellow teenage peers who were online. When the Other does not have an identity, how can one see the humanness in a faceless, anonymous Other? After all, this is the essence of ethical relations in the work of Levinas. When it comes to the identity of the teenage self, teenagers' individual identity is already compromised by the collective identity they have with each other on social media, where they share their social media language, share interests, music, pictures, etc. The teenage self and the teenage other are both faceless in this case, resulting either from being engulfed by a collective identity or being faceless because of anonymity or a fake identity. In Levinas' terms, this kind of human relation nullifies ethics in the relation between self and the Other. The agency of both parties is at stake, which means that deliberation and free will in action are

also compromised. What seems to be triumphing is the structure of virtual ontology which accommodates facelessness and a collective identity.

Could this mean, in this case, that the structure or virtual ontology takes precedence over the teenager as an agent? In Chapter Two, Archer in Jacobs and Hanrahan (2005:20) shared the idea that structure taking precedence over the agent leads to the "death of man". Man is metaphorically killed by the dominance of structure, where agency and reason in action become barren. This eradicates the very essence of humans when it comes to action. With this, virtual ontology can easily become a vicious space, where it is difficult for users to see dignity and respect in the Other when it is not acknowledged on the level of self.

When using consequentialism as a tool of analysis, the actions resulting from an individual that cannot be identified and held accountable are not pleasing. Even considering the consequences of actions that maximise pleasure and minimise pain, such actions have a totally different meaning in the virtual world. With the option of not being held accountable for unethical conduct, pleasure and pain could easily acquire a different meaning in virtual ontology. Unethical conduct for an anonymous person who keeps getting away with punishment because of an inability to be traced or identified could be pleasurable for the anonymous perpetrator. Pain can also acquire a different meaning in virtual ontology, which entails users censoring themselves and not causing any verbal harm or cyber bullying to other users. This may come as a restriction for users in virtual ontology, as there is no moral authority in this space that rewards them for good conduct or punishes them for unethical conduct. The next section discusses the lack of moral authority in more detail.

7.3.3 Lack of moral authority

With no parental supervision in virtual ontology, teenagers are faced with the temptation of behaving irresponsibly and getting away with it. A little over 60% of the teenage interviewees did not want their parents to befriend them on any social media platform. Virtual ontology as a structure does not really have a moral authority or court that can sentence or punish teenagers with unethical conduct. Befriending parents or having them as followers on social media would be introducing a form of moral authority in virtual ontology which has never been in existence in that space before. Teenagers would not have the liberty to enjoy their freedom from their parents on their social media platforms. Freedom in this case takes on a different vantage point from the freedom which Kant associated with reason when it comes to human action. The freedom here was outlined by Alan Carter, who established that freedom can compromise

155

morality (2003:161). This argument by Carter further exposed that attaching value to freedom is what makes Kant's link of freedom and reason in acting a valid premise. But what about freedom that has no value attached to it? (Carter, 2003:163)

In the case of the teenagers in virtual ontology, their freedom, which they explore outside of their parents monitoring and presence, is the kind of freedom which has no value attached to it. That is to say, this freedom with no value is one which teenagers use carelessly, without deliberation, when conducting any form of action. To follow the argument by Carter, with no value, it turns out the interviewed teenagers from Pietermaritzburg do not find the need to conform to a freedom they cannot explore without pleasure. Furthermore, they may want to enjoy this so called valueless freedom away from the censorship of their parents. So, this absence of moral authority together with the valueless freedom translates to agents who are conforming to the virtual ontology structure. This structure provides the teenager as an agent to have the option of not being monitored by their parents, and also allows teenagers to not value their freedom so that they do not use it with reason and deliberation. From an ethical perspective, the agency of the teenager is under threat, as it is the structure of virtual ontology that takes precedence over their ability to freely reason and deliberate before acting.

From a consequentialist point of view, the absence of moral authority can result in teenagers engaging in unethical conduct, resulting in bad consequences. This also conforms to the definition of indirect consequentialism, introduced by Harris (1974:265), stating that it involves the failure of an agent to prevent unethical conduct. Teenagers as agents in virtual ontology fail to prevent unethical conduct within the confines of virtual ontology. The failure to prevent unethical conduct could also apply to the teenagers failing to resist the temptation that virtual ontology brings their way. For example, the interviewed teenagers who claimed they did not want to have their parents on social media because of their activities or statuses is an illustration of the constant temptation to be inappropriate when parents are not there. Resisting that temptation is success in terms of preventing unethical conduct, but the failure to resist that temptation is what leads to indirect consequentialism.

All three issues discussed above: anonymity, the Other and moral authority touch on the boundary idea between parents and their teenagers, and also pose a question on whether or not parents have a responsibility when it comes to their teenagers' use of smartphones. The next section attempts to address this.

7.4 The responsibility of parents

Satu Perälä-Littunen and Marj a Leena Book (2012) introduced modern parental responsibility from two perspectives which are both applicable for this study. These perspectives are mutually inclusive in their applicability. The first perspective established that modern day parental responsibility is unlike the old and there seems to be a disintegration in terms of parenting and family today. Things are quite different now (Perälä-Littunen and Leena, 2012:925). The second perspective entails taking on social norms and conventions which come with modern times, such as the demands of parenting brought on by this technological age. These two mutually inclusive perspectives are important to consider for African parents in this technological age, who are faced with the challenges of their teenage children navigating virtual ontology outside of their parents' supervision. The virtual ontology provided by smartphones does not complement traditional African values. This gives African parents more reason to assume responsibility for their teenagers' use of smartphones, as was affirmed in the parent interviews.

All interviewed parents agreed that they were responsible for their teenagers' smartphone usage. Many South African homes do not have a typical nuclear structure. Holborn and Eddy (2011:6) argued that on average, South African families are not characterised by typical nuclear family setting but by single-parent households. One of the historical factors that has contributed to this norm in South Africa is the migrant labour system which was common before 1994. Moreover, since then, most black families, especially in the rural areas, have been headed by mothers (Holborn and Eddy, 2011:1). Fathers relocated to the city for work to assume their duties as breadwinners while mothers would stay at home to look after the children. This trend of the single parent is common even in contemporary South Africa, where in black families in particular it becomes convenient for single mothers to stay with extended family to get assistance to look after their children. Grandparents are the typical extended family in South Africa who help raise grandchildren (Holborn and Eddy, 2011:1).

Considering the responsibility of parents in this context is challenging, as the South African context is one which has about three generations living under the same roof. With this comes differing technology literacies and different understandings thereof. The idea that is common for all parents and teenagers who were interviewed is that they are confronted by different paradigms. The parents are immersed in the local, African paradigm which shapes their understanding and view on life. Mentioned previously in Chapter Six, it is the paradigm where the world is seen through the lenses of respect, belief in a higher power and a community

centred life (Ndegwah and Kroesen, 2012). Teenagers, however, are in a different paradigm, a more global and technological one that exceeds geographic boundaries. They are caught up in the digital which does not require them to be respectful, to believe in a higher power or to have a community centred life (that exists outside of virtual ontology). In addition to the digital divide, this local and global paradigm needs to be addressed so that parents can actively do something to assume practical responsibility for their teenage children's agency and behaviour in virtual ontology. This research suggests that the starting point which parents need to take is to firstly assume responsibility, then construct their moral responsibility which will play a role in their parenting style during this technological age. To do this, aspects from Jonas' theory of responsibility were used to analyse the interviews with parents.

7.5 Analysis through a theory of responsibility

Tenets from a Theory of Responsibility by Hans Jonas were used to analyse the interviews conducted with the parents. These tools of analysis, described in Chapter Two, include: normal and substantive responsibility, totality, continuity and the future.

7.5.1 Formal versus substantive responsibility

Jonas proposed a move away from formal responsibility, which he mentioned was a responsibility which goes as far as an agent being held accountable for his or her past actions and consequences. He argued that this was not sufficient as it carried only a legal and not moral significance (1984:90). This idea of formal responsibility seems to have been the kind that featured in parenting styles, law or even past ethical theories. When parents teach children responsibility, they do so in a manner which makes the child see that the consequences of a bad act need to be punished, demonstrating a retrospective element to the child. This is a view that responsibility is about making right the wrong from the past. As parents, their responsibility towards their teenage children regarding smartphone use, should rather be more forward looking, directed to the human good of the teenager, not referring to the past to make a past wrong right.

One of the parents interviewed, Ruvimbo, seemed to be taking this stance on responsibility: she mentioned that she talked to her children about avoiding bad consequences when using technology. Engaging in unethical conduct leads to repercussions. Facing these repercussions involves dealing with an unethical act from the past and learning from it to make things right. Pedro and Rachel were parents who also displayed a form of formative responsibility. Pedro

argued that government need to play a role as far as bad use of smartphone technology by teenagers is concerned. He required government to have laws or policies to address these issues to help parents as far as dealing with teenagers and smartphones is concerned. Rachel, on the other hand, wanted smartphone providers to have a binding contract signed with teenagers stating they would be monitored and held accountable for any inappropriate conduct on social media platforms.

Jonas' point was that responsible conduct should not come from a retrospective view, where negative consequences from the past are made right by punishing the agent. This is because accountability that is not attached to the consent of the agent cannot be ruled as sufficiently moral, as this might not necessarily mean that the agent is being accountable of their own free will (1984:92). Signing a contract with a service provider or having government involved with the smartphone use of teenagers does not give the teenager free will to decide whether or not their engagement on smartphones is acceptable or not acceptable. Rather, Jonas proposes substantive responsibility as a starting point within his theory of responsibility.

7.5.2 Substantive responsibility

According to Jonas, substantive responsibility is premised on the 'ought-to-be' and 'ought-to-do' where the former is applied to the object and the latter to the subject (1984:93). In the interviews with parents, the researcher gathered that parents had a preconceived idea of what 'ought-to-be' as far as their teenagers and social media were concerned. One of the means through which this was revealed could be seen in a response by Rachel, who argued that "the youth of today have rights and privileges that previous youth didn't have". Furthermore, it becomes difficult for parents to relate as teenagers of today are the only people who know how to handle adolescent problems they are currently faced with. Rachel's views seem to be based on this idea of 'ought-to-be': teenagers of today 'ought-to-be' like the teenagers of the previous generation. Parents appear able to easily relate to teenage experiences that are similar to their own, not the experiences of their teenagers from this technological age. The 'ought-to-be' view is futuristically orientated, giving parents a forward-looking point of reference in terms of the kind of responsible citizens or adults they want them to be. The 'ought-to-be' is accompanied by the 'ought-to-do'. Parents need to know what they ought to do for the 'ought-to-be' to come to pass. They need to portray this through love and care as they guide their teenage children. In the case of this study, parents can be futuristic in deconstructing to construct their moral responsibility.

7.6 Analysis through the three principles of responsibility: Totality, continuity and the future

The remaining tenets of the theory of responsibility by Jonas mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis, which will be used to analyse the interviews with parents, are totality, continuity and the future.

7.6.1 Totality

Totality embraces the objects in its fullness, its totality. Everything and anything involving the object are acknowledged (Jonas, 1984:101). For Jonas, totality as a principle in parenting could be helpful to parents altering their moral responsibility for teenagers in a technological age. It could assist parents in realising that the teenager in his or her totality, needs to be assisted on many levels regarding the teenager's use of smartphones. It has been observed from the teenager focus groups and parent interviews that there are many levels of this totality that parents need to be aware of, such as the consumerist elements of being a teenager, the curiosity of being a teenager, a perception issue and the experience that their teenage children have in virtual ontology. Yang Feng and Wending Xie noted these aspects were all part of the online life of teenagers. Moreover, they showed how the online life of a teenager comprised many risks, such as the risk of being exposed to strangers, making friends with people they have never met, the risk of being stalked, cyber bullied, etc. (2014a:153).

Mixed responses surfaced regarding teenagers and smartphones: some parents believed time on smartphones benefited teenagers with knowledge and school work, whilst other parents were concerned about explicit content and sites that were not beneficial for their children. Parents need to realise that the issue here is not only about the content that their children are engaged in; it is more about the fact that they are now not merely dealing with children but also with consumers. Even though parents themselves are the ones who purchase the smartphones for their teenagers and introduce them to a product to consume, the behaviour of teenagers on smartphones is also compromised by consumer behaviour. The interviewed teenagers, as consumers of the smartphone product, revealed that they chat with their friends through their smartphones. Moreover, they expressed that they do so in the privacy of their rooms, where they are physically and socially alienated from their family members. Even though the smartphone experience can be disheartening for parents, Jonas would encourage parents to embrace children in their totality. This would be achieved by parents giving their teenagers all

the love and support they need. Teenagers would then come to know that with the support of parents, there are rational means to deal with any situation.

Although there could be solutions to the disheartening consequences of smartphone usage by teenagers, the researcher noticed that the negative behaviour parents observed from the smartphone usage of their own children, played a role in their perception of smartphone as parents. This introduces yet another theme which requires attention, which is a theme based on the perceptions parents have of the smartphone usage of their teenage children. In a study done by the Centre on Media and Human Development, 37% of interviewed parents perceived smartphone usage by teenagers in a positive light, whilst the remaining 63% either had a neutral or negative perception (2014:19). These American figures are not very different from the figures obtained by the researcher in the Pietermaritzburg study, which revealed that about 30% parents had positive perceptions, 30% had negative perceptions and the remainder were either indifferent or had mixed feelings. It follows that regardless of how parents perceive the smartphone usage of their children, they are not exempted from this element of totality in their parenting. They need to embrace their children in totality, knowing that their children's experience regarding technology affects them. This reminds parents of the continued responsibility they have over their children, even in the midst of technology. Continuity is discussed next.

7.6.2 Continuity

Continued care and love touch on the continuity element of responsibility. Jonas argued that this care given by a parent to a child, for instance, is constant: it does not cease at any given point (1984:105). As the child continues to grow so should the care they receive from their parents. The parent is then faced with a two-fold responsibility, which on the one hand has to do with the growth of the child as an individual with their own personal heritage, history, aspirations, etc. On the other hand, the parent has the responsibility of ensuring the child is ready to partake in society and become a responsible citizen (Jonas, 1984:105). Parents in this technological age need to continue caring for their teenage children, regardless of how responsible or irresponsible their children are in using technology. The aim of parents, in caring for their children, is to envision them in future, how they would like their children to be, the good impact they will have on society as adults who are responsible citizens. Nevertheless, this is challenged by the idea that parents feel excluded or removed from the virtual activities and lives of their children.

The interviewed parents tended to feel excluded or far removed from their children. Samuel articulated this by stating that the idea of access was a boundary issue, where denied access translates to a restriction or boundary and enhanced access translates to more knowledge. This touches on two themes simultaneously from the parent interviews, the first being the issue of boundaries when it comes to teenage smartphone usage, and the other theme being the issue of digital literacy of parents. Seventy percent of the interviewed parents in this study gave negative feedback regarding boundaries when it came to their teenagers' use of smartphones. The general idea that the researcher became aware of after intervening all parents was that they were challenged by the two-fold nature of boundaries: on the one hand, there are no boundaries in virtual ontology for their teenagers. They have access to any site at any time of day, any explicit content is easily available at their convenience, anyone and everyone within the virtual world has access to them and that can be dangerous. Also to consider, in terms of boundaries, is that the smartphones set a boundary between the Pietermaritzburg parents and their children. This boundary cuts them off from their children's presence and behaviour on social media but strangers in virtual ontology have access to this part of their children's lives. As a result, parents are deprived a chance to be a moral authority to their children on this platform.

Robert Weisskirch combined these two themes into one word: control, which he stated was difficult for parents to manage when it comes to smartphone technology (2011:447). Teenagers have compromised the control of their parents through boundaries they have established, some of which they have established through security settings on their social media. Furthermore, the digital literacy of their parents as digital immigrants/strangers does not usually outsmart theirs as digital natives, which is another restriction that teenagers use to compromise the control of parents.

Compromised control is not the only challenge parents face. The top three challenges faced by the interviewed Pietermaritzburg parents included privacy, explicit context and distraction from homework. Feng and Xie stated that privacy has several dimensions. One of the dimensions of privacy entails the person to whom privacy is owed, in other words the manner in which a person controls information about them or related to them (2014b:154). When this particular dimension of privacy is directed to teenagers in particular, it makes it valid for parents to find the issue of teenagers and privacy a challenge for them because parents do not know how much information their teenage children are revealing in virtual ontology. With this space being so vast, teenagers can easily release information about themselves to strangers who can use that information to harm them. As a result, 80% of the interviewed parents felt very

162

strongly about monitoring their teenagers on social media platforms. Parents are challenged by this as there is only so much they can do to protect their children from the dangers within virtual ontology.

The protection from harm is not always only physical but also emotional and psychological. Teenagers can expose explicit content about themselves, such as suggestive pictures or inappropriate pictures about themselves and get bullied based on their appearance. On the other hand, teenagers themselves end up having access to explicit content, which one of the interviewed parents revealed can take away the innocence of teenagers at a young age. Ringrose et al. argued that with digital technology such as smartphones, the problematic aspect is that explicit content such as pornography can be easily shared amongst teens (2012:25). Furthermore, such content is easily accessible as it is on their smartphone, something they carry with them every single day. The easy access and the easy spread of pictures of such nature can quickly compromise the innocence of teenagers instead of being beneficial and educational.

This introduces the third challenge in the top challenges Pietermaritzburg parents face, which is also a threat to the educational benefit of the teenagers as pupils. This challenge entails the idea that smartphone usage by teenagers is a distraction that takes away valuable time for homework. Teenagers spend so much time on their smartphones that they struggle to make time for their school work. Weisskirch noted that teenagers were in conflict with parents when parents wanted to track whether or not they were up to date with their school work (2011:447). Teenagers know how much time they spend on their smartphones. According to the Pietermaritzburg teenagers, about 78% used their smartphones all day every day meaning they had little or no time for school work. Parents need to be aware though that the virtual ontology that their children are constantly engaging in is a community all together, which comes with a collective identity, and an exclusive language within that community. They are not only dealing with their teenager that is chatting with friends in the privacy of the bedroom, but are dealing with a member of a digital community that has adapted to a different culture, practises, language etc., different from that which they have been taught in the home. This community does not thrive on the importance of the individual and uniqueness of individual identity, but accommodates anonymous users who are not monitored by a moral authority. In such cases, parents would need a responsibility that would make them futuristic. They need to focus on the future, how they would like their children to be regardless of the digital community they are entrenched in. This positive aspect of the 'future' feature was not evident in the interviews

conducted with the Pietermaritzburg parents. Nevertheless, this future feature will be discussed in more detail as yet another tenet of responsibility by Jonas.

7.6.3 Future

The future is an important focal point which anchors the responsibility that parents give to their children. Even if it may seem that there is a point where children outgrow the care they receive from their parents, it does not mean that the responsibilities that parents have towards their children ceases. By future, the parent needs to be aware that it is the future of their children in entirety, not till they reach a specific age or stage in life (Jonas, 1984:107). The future is an important principle when you consider the moral responsibility which parents have towards their children. Likewise, in this study, parental moral responsibility entails parents being in it for the long haul. It is not something parents can walk into and out of at any given moment. With the changing nature of technology, it is seen that parents need more reason to be committed in this responsibility, with the understanding of the future, what it holds for their responsibility and how they will make it effective even at that point in the future. As mentioned in Chapter One, parents need to consistently deconstruct to reconstruct their moral responsibility. That said, the agency of their teenage children, who will not be teenagers forever, needs to be kept in mind. In addition, parents need to be cognisant of the idea that even after the teenage years, they need to maintain the mind-set of totality in how they see children. This will in turn complement parents' ongoing and continued responsibility for their children, keeping them on the path of being morally responsible parents.

With regard to the future, all interviewed parents agreed that they had a moral responsibility regarding the use of smartphones by their teenagers. Bearing in mind the kind of consequences that the introduction of smartphones brings in the household, parents are encouraged to be pro-active. They need to intervene and assist their teenagers in the manner in which they use smartphone technology. Bush and Codrington claimed that because of the different paces of life between parents and children, the gap between modern day parents and children has widened (2009:101). It is the responsibility of parents to pay attention to this gap and intervene before the gap becomes too wide for it to be fixed. This notion of future when it comes to responsibility is important, when going forward, considering the gap between parents and their children which needs to get narrower and narrower.

7.7 Why some tenets of the theory of responsibility fall short

The theory of responsibility is admirable in its aim to focus on an ethic that is applicable for a technological age. Jonas' project is important in that it deals with a contemporary relevant topic which will assist in dealing with a worldly phenomenon. For the sake of this study, it may have to be more refined to suit the context of Africa, bearing in mind African families as systems influenced by African communitarianism. There are also the digital natives, digital immigrants or stranger parents to consider. These are some of the finer details which Jonas would have to account for regarding his theory of responsibility in order for it to be a one-size-fits-all theory. All the different cultures in the world would have to be accommodated by the theory of responsibility, when in fact they all have different challenges and background which could positively or negatively affect the application of the theory. What would be a suitable recommendation in this study is a perspective which deals with both the responsibility of the parent in the technological age and also the kind values that African parents use to run the family as a unit. The researcher therefore recommends 'The ethics of systematic coherence: Deconstructing to reconstruct the moral responsibility of the African parent'. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there are implications that come with the use of mobile communication technology on the parenting style of African parents, in this case South African parents in Pietermaritzburg. The focus group discussions with teenagers as well as the individual interviews with parents affirmed these implications. Within the themes derived from each of the interviews, agency theory and consequentialism and a theory of responsibility served as frameworks revealing that there is more to the teenager than a compromised agent. Parents need to be aware that they are responsible for a teenager that is also a consumer, a member of a digital community that does not always complement its agency, that the teenager is alienated from the family, etc. These are some of the facets to a teenager engaged in virtual ontology. These facets may be evident outside of virtual ontology, but what makes them complex in virtual ontology is that they are not easily accessible to their parents in that space. This plays a role in the moral responsibility of their parents. This chapter also revealed that all interviewed parents acknowledged a sense of responsibility regarding how their children use smartphone technology. The researcher was therefore inspired to develop a framework or perspective, or ethic of systematic coherence, which will be discussed in detail in the next

chapter. This perspective could assist parents with accommodating constantly developing mobile communication technology into their parenting style. In order to do this, parents are called to deconstruct in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility when it comes to the use of smartphone technology.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
TOWARDS A HOLISTIC PARENTAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE AFRICAN FAMILY – THE ETHIC OF SYSTEMATIC COHERENCE

8.0 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the data gathered from the focus group interviews with teenagers as well as the individual parent interviews. The general overview gathered from this chapter revealed that there are existing ethical implications surrounding the use of smartphone technology by teenagers. The primary ethical concern entails the agency of teenagers in virtual ontology, which can be compromised because of the nature of social media platforms. The absence of moral authority on such platforms that should monitor the behaviour of teenagers introduces parental responsibility. All interviewed parents unanimously identified this responsibility as being a necessary contribution parents could make in this regard. In this chapter, the researcher suggests a perspective which aims to assist African parents in deconstructing in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility towards their children in the technological age. This holistic ethical perspective is referred to as the ethic of systematic coherence.

8.1 Motivation for the perspective

The researcher drew on two important influences regarding the development of the perspective for the ethic of systematic coherence. This first motivation came from the introduction of the mechanical clock into society, and the second influence is the mechanism of the mechanical clock.

8.1.1 Introduction of the mechanical clock

The mechanical clock offers a key metaphor for this perspective. On the one hand, it embodies the transitioning of human life into a routine lifestyle, one which is confined to a mechanism that submits itself to modern day social structures. Some of these social structures entail capitalism, bureaucracy, output, and consumerism, to name a few. On the other hand, the mechanical clock could portray the idea of time crossing paths with modernity, which is an essential premise for the ethic of systematic coherence. Nancy Bradbury and Carolyn Collette claimed that the idea of the mechanical clock could be easily associated with moving away from 'church time' and adapting to 'merchant time'. It was during the Enlightenment Era where

science and reason were the preferred epistemological stance and religion and culture started to fade (2009:352). This idea of the replacement or shift of time could be seen as a misconception; different times (whether it be 'church time' or 'merchant time') exist simultaneously without replacing each other (Bradbury and Collette, 2009:352).

These different views of times can be represented by the different experiences of the digital native and the digital immigrant/ stranger who also exist simultaneously without necessarily replacing each other. With this concurrent existence, it is possible that there could be some form of tension between the 'time of the digital native' and the 'time of the digital immigrant/ stranger'. To fit the metaphor of time by Bradbury and Collette (2009:352), the digital native could be seen as living within 'merchant time', a time which complements global interaction, a time which is commodified, and a time which enables those operating within it routine, even if this comes with alienation. The parents as 'digital immigrants' or 'strangers' fit into 'church time' or 'God time'. This could be seen in African values acknowledged and complemented by the church, which are respect, belief in a higher power and a community centred life (Ndegwah and Kroesen, 2012).

8.1.2 The mechanism of the mechanical clock

The internal functioning of the mechanical clock is another inspiration for the ethic of systematic coherence. David Moline, John Wagner and Eugene Volk described the internal mechanism of the mechanical clock as one which is based on the technology of escapement mechanism, a rhythmic ticking of the clock from a suspended pendulum, which keeps the hands of the clock in motion (2012:599). This, as a whole, could be seen as the first wheel of the mechanical clock. There are two other parts of the mechanical clock: the second wheel, which is the main dimension of the clock that regulates energy, and the third wheel which is also in motion as it forms part of the functioning of the clock (Bradbury and Collette, 2009:359). The three wheels of the mechanical clock work independently on an individual level, as well as depend on each other to contribute to the functioning of the mechanical clock as a whole. The former and latter tell an important story about the coherence of this system. For this holistic coherence to occur, there needs to be coherence within individual structures first before coherence of the structure as a whole is achieved. All systems within the mechanical clock submit to same rhythm initiated by the suspended pendulum. This can be likened to the systems in which the digital natives and the digital immigrants/strangers operate.

8.2 Application of the ethic of systematic coherence

The application of the ethic of systematic coherence encourages a re-engineering of the household. Obelensky defined re-engineering by stating that (in the context of this research) it entails changes in the organisational structure (of the household) by moving away from the internal processes and controls that complement the traditional vertical structure to a modern horizontal structure (1994:15). Hammer and Champy (1993) added that this horizontal structure is a re-invention (of the household structure), where the structure complements technologies and the changing of time for the internal structure to function as it moves with the times. Instead of having industrial work that is broken into fundamental tasks, it has presents a structure that complements markets and technologies and aims to achieve impressive results (Hammer and Champy, 1993:2). This engineering in the household is one which acknowledges the values and principles that a household may be grounded upon, but also acknowledges that outside the household, there are modern phenomena that influence what happens within the household. The smartphone has proven to be one of those modern phenomena. With the smartphone, an external modern phenomenon, entering the household, the family needs to re-engineer the household system in a way that will acknowledge and complement modern development outside the household. How this could be achieved is to keep in mind the functioning of the mechanical clock, how all its wheels are independent in themselves but are dependent on each other for the functioning of the mechanical clock as a whole.

8.2.1 First wheel – Digital natives operating on a global system

Like the mechanical clock which is comprised of three wheels/ systems functioning coherently as individual systems and as a whole, the digital natives and the digital immigrants/strangers operate in different systems within the system of the household or family. The former operate on a global system while the latter operate on a local system. As Soraj Hongladarom puts it, a global system is global because it is comprised of an intangible domain which can be accessible from all over the world, setting up a platform where people from different backgrounds, values and cultures are able to interact with each other and end up creating and sharing values within that diverse space (1997:239). This global system is one where digital natives thrive; as they navigate virtual ontology, they do so in the midst of many other teenagers and people all over the world. The feature of virtual ontology being so vast and physically uncontainable feeds into the global system that is equally vast and usually uncontainable. As mentioned in Chapter Three of this thesis, these teenagers enter a digital [global] community where they are disembodied. This disembodiment comes with faceless relations and ethical nihilism, which is

problematic, as both phenomena encourage most teenagers to become self-destructive. The system of virtual ontology from the perspective of the teenager can easily lead to a system which can potentially fall short of sound systematic coherence, and hence affect other structures in society from functioning systemically.

8.2.2 Second wheel – Digital immigrants/strangers operating on a local system

One of the systems which this virtual ontology of teenagers can affect is the system which informs the values and views of their parents. Parents are not immersed into virtual ontology because they were not born into such advanced technological advancement. Rachel, one of the interviewed parents from Pietermaritzburg, affirmed this, stating that smartphone technology gives the current day generation too much independence, to the point that they see themselves as independent of the authority of their parents in the household. As a result, Rachel claimed that many values have been eroded over the years and this has resulted in modern day teenagers having problems with authority as they have certain rights and privileges that teenagers from previous generations did not have. Instead, previous generations embraced the values instilled in them from the household, and understood that the authority in the household needed to be respected.

In Chapter Four, respecting authority is discussed in the authoritarian family model which is commonly associated with Asian and African parenting. In such a setting, teenagers as children knew their place, as the hierarchically influenced household structure placed teenagers in a position where they knew their role and function in the household, which was to respect authority, respect elders and to carry out the role of a child (Ntukula and Liljestrom, 2004:126). Unlike the digital native that is constantly engaged in a system where there is disembodiment and ethical nihilism, the digital immigrant/stranger is influenced by a different system from their youth. This youth was not exposed to the advanced virtual ontology of today as there was no Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. They were instead in touch with the authentic, personal means of communicating with their friends. Posting handwritten letters, for example, was authentic and personal: seeing a friend's handwriting on paper, touching that letter that the friend was touching before posting the letter, the patience that came with waiting for that special message from a friend made it worthwhile when the letter finally came. Previous generation teenagers were also more exposed to face to face relations with their friends, as there were no smartphones for hanging out in virtual space. In other words, there were no smartphones where teenager's space of interactions was virtual; instead they interacted and enjoyed each other's company in a physical space.

8.2.3 Third wheel – The African family as a functional system

This face to face idea brings in the notion of proximity, which is one of the important features of African communities, and hence introduces the third system which exists simultaneously in the digital native and digital immigrant/ stranger realms. This third important system locates the study, which is the African society or community. The digital native and digital immigrant in this study are both located in an African setting: Pietermaritzburg in South Africa. Modern day African families are confronted by the same dynamic: the system of the digital natives and that of the digital immigrants and strangers living in the same house and experiencing some form of systematic coherence, which should be the case in an African community where proximity is one of its founding features. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Four, Ntukula and Liljestrom claimed that in African communities, it is with proximity that the collectiveness of the African community flourishes (2004:126). This proximity further embraces the values of African communities, which entail an "ethic of reciprocity", "intersubjectivity", "cooperation", "collective existence", and "collaboration and solidarity" amongst others (Ntukula and Liljestrom, 2004:126). These values in African communities inform the parenting style of African parents which need to be creatively applied as far as the moral responsibility of the technological age parenting is concerned.

Bearing in mind the holistic functioning of the mechanical clock, one of the results which would show that the moral responsibility of the African parent is being deconstructed to be reconstructed would be if the perspectives of the digital native and immigrant were on a par with each other, with each of them complementing each other in their attempt to accommodate the demands of the modern technological age. What needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed are the phenomena which distract the system, make it lose rhythm and keep it out of time. These phenomena which seem to have emerged during the Pietermaritzburg interviews with parents and teenagers include poor communication between parent and child, and the constant compromise of teenage agency in virtual ontology. If the systems involved are not coherent, this could be compared to a pendulum that is not suspended and thus fails to contribute to the motion of the hands of the clock. There are three steps which African parents need to consider as they deconstruct their moral responsibility towards their children in this technological age.

8.2.3.1 Take initiative

Taking initiative is the starting point for the ethics of systematic coherence. This involves parents, as digital immigrants/strangers, reaching out to their digital native children to resolve

the tensions preventing systematic coherence. The focus of attention in this regard is addressing the digital divide in the household. Zur and Zur mentioned that in as much as there has been an established digital divide between the digital native and digital immigrants, the two groups are not as clear cut or black and white as presented; there are grey areas in between (2011:1). Within each group there are more divisions. The first group which will be discussed are the digital immigrants, who can be divided according to the following categories: the avoiders, those who make a conscious decisions to not get involved in technological engagements and do not have any social media account; the reluctant adopters, who in their adoption of technology are reluctant to dive into technological use completely, using the Internet and computers here and there but not as experts; and the enthusiastic adopters who show an interest in technology and are willing to learn and know more about it. They understand that there are benefits to the use of technology in this day and age (2011:1).

These categories will be discussed in the context of South African households, particularly the households of the interviewed parents. As noted, nine of ten parents interviewed were literate, with reasonable digital literacy, but not at the same level as the digital natives. The nine literate parents, from their profiles, seemed to be making a comfortable salary and had exposure to virtual ontology from work facilities, so access and literacy played a role in their reasonable digital literacy. They could easily be classified as reluctant adopters, because their exposure to the digital world was due to their jobs which entailed working with a computer and Internet. However, exposure to the digital does not necessarily imply an interest in the digital world. The interviewed parent who was a professor was an illustration of this observation. Despite his education and many years of exposure to the Internet and other computer platforms, he has not been interested in venturing into social media platform although his daughters engage in that space as young people.

When it comes to the interviewed teenagers, it seems that digital literacy is more informed by their socio-economic backgrounds, as captured in their profiles in Chapter Five. A majority of the teenagers reside with either their single working class mothers, or their grandmothers, or both. The nature of working class employment does not necessarily imply a constant engagement or exposure to Internet; it implies long working hours at work for low wages and less time at home to spend with children. Such parents could be avoiders of the Internet, because most of their time is spent at work; when they get home, they rest and prepare for the next long day ahead. The avoidance in this case is circumstantial and not really a matter of indifference. Grandmothers in the household are also avoiders of digital literacy. Being two

generations before the digital native, grandmothers of the interviewed teenagers are the most likely to be digital strangers (Brown and Czerniewicz, 2010).

Furthermore, the interviewed teenagers did not share anything about teaching their parents about technology or their parents asking about how it works. They commented instead on how their families were not happy with the amount of time they spent in their rooms on smartphones instead of with family. In such cases, the digital divide encourages incoherence in the family between parents and children because there is a lack of showing initiative on part of the parent. On the teenager side, no interest is shown to meet the parent halfway to make them understand where they are coming from.

Teresa Correa shared a case study of a 50-year-old hairstylist and single mother from Chile. Regardless of her age, gender and socio-economic status, this mother of two showed interest in improving her digital literacy, asking her 18-year-old daughter and 22 year-old son to assist her with using the Internet and opening a Facebook account (2014:103). It benefited the mother to do this because she can now link with professional hairstylists. This single mother is an enthusiastic adopter, who realised how technology could be an asset to her profession, enabling her to create networks more easily than she would have if there was no technology. This is an indication of how parents can negotiate their space to create systematic coherence within the family. Interest is one of the means through which parents can take the same step as this Chilean mother. By showing an interest in the digital world, parents as digital immigrants are negotiating their spatiality; they are removing themselves from their comfort zone and trying to understand the world of their children. Parents also understand that they cannot remove themselves from their space completely, in the sense that they were not brought up in a world where technology was at its peak or developing as quickly as it is today. This has influenced the manner in which they understood adolescence and their experience of it. Teenagers of today experience their adolescent years with social media, an environment which can be a harsh and brutal because of phenomena such as cyber bullying and media pressure on what is it that a "cool" teenager should look like or how they should dress.

In their aim to deconstruct and reconstruct a new moral responsibility, African parents can be like the above mentioned single mother from Chile. Simply by showing interest and taking initiative when it comes to digital literacy, this mother of two has taken a step forward in deconstructing to reconstruct a new moral responsibility. Knowing even a little about this domain that her children constantly engage in, this mother has made it easier for her children

to reach out to her and help her. In as much as African parents adopt an authoritarian parenting style, they need to deconstruct the idea that being an authority in the life of one's child does not mean that learning is one-sided from parent to child. Sometimes it requires the parent to show interest and take initiative in order for the child to provide responses that will create a healthy and meaningful dialogue between mother and child. The key aspects of African communitarianism, such as the 'ethic of relatedness' mentioned in Chapter Four of this thesis, affirm relatedness as a reciprocal practice that should exist between the African parent and child. Taking initiative as an African parent would go a long way to achieving an ethic of systematic coherence. There is a second step that the African parent needs to follow to achieve this coherence. This step is nurturing and educating.

8.2.3.2 Nurture and educate

Once parents have shown interest and taken initiative as far virtual ontology is concerned, they can nurture their children as they educate them regarding the use of smartphone technology. Nurturing and education are not quick processes; when it comes to technology use, parents need to start as soon as the child is able to access the Internet or be in possession of their own smartphone. The sooner a child is nurtured and educated, the better. African values are largely based on proximity and physical attachment between mother and child from infancy, as mentioned by Ntukula and Liljestrom (2004:126) in Chapter Four of this thesis, who argued that proximity and collectiveness are of major importance in African communities. Oral communication and transferring of values by storytelling, as mentioned by Mushengyezi (2003: 13), are embedded in African culture. Mushengyezi further mentioned that these orally told stories featured folktales, myths, idioms, etc. had valuable life lessons and values that African grandparents passed down to their children and grandchildren. Traditionally, the setting for this was around the fire, but physical proximity is not restricted to that setting. Making time to sit together as a family creating opportunities for oral communication is still relevant for modern day parenting. Parents need to be aware that with proximity as one of the values of African communities, comes nurturing and educating their children.

In this modern, technological age, African parents, particularly from the city, have neglected some elements of African communitarianism in their parenting style. The single parents of the interviewed teenagers are caught up in their working lives as single mothers (and fathers), trying to make a living. Parents can become so occupied that it is easy to neglect the element of proximity in parenting which comes with nurturing and educating children. It is therefore not a surprise that teenage children are consumed by their smartphones and are not given

nurturing and education regarding its use. The interviews with the Pietermaritzburg parents revealed that a majority of parents are concerned about the content their teenagers are exposed to in virtual ontology, such as pornography. A couple of the interviewed parents advocated openly communicating with their children, such as John and Ruvimbo, but the majority were concerned about explicit content possibly because they had not openly talked to their children about sex education, as this is relatively taboo in African culture.

Renee DePalma and Dennis Francis (2014:548) have explored the concept of systematic silence in South Africa when it comes to sex and sexuality. Because parents do not often talk to their children about sex, they find it easier to learn about it from the Internet or their peers. Parents were also concerned about the amount and kind of music their teenagers listened to on their smartphones, which also can be responsible for various attitudes towards sexuality. Not teaching children about things at home means that there is a chance they will be exposed to it from the street or social media in a manner that parents would not like. In order for there to be a systematic coherence within the family structure between the digital natives, digital immigrants/ stranger, African parents need to deconstruct the culture of silence when it comes to sex education in the household. The proximity found in the African communitarian lifestyle needs to be embraced in order to nurture children into being responsible adults. Moreover, in nurturing, parents need to create space where they can communicate with their children and educate them about sex. This will assist African parents to construct their moral responsibility towards their children's use of smartphone use, and will help provide guidance for their teenagers.

8.2.3.3 Provide constant guidance

Nurturing and educating children is followed by a last important step in the ethic of systematic coherence. This step entails parents providing their children with constant guidance regarding smartphone technology usage. It is based on the same premise as the theory of responsibility by Jonas, in that it is grounded on substantive responsibility. It acknowledges the very important relationship between the 'ought-to-do' and the 'ought-to-be'. With this in mind, parents already envision how their African teenagers 'ought-to-be', and as parents they should further use this as goal posts to guide them on what they 'ought-to-do' as parents. Their teenage children 'ought-to-be' responsible when engaging in virtual ontology, regardless of the fact that they are not under the supervision of their parents. This is where the values instilled in children are important, as children carry their values everywhere they go, even in virtual ontology. African teenagers need to remember that their values are informed by the African

values of 'collective existence'; 'ought-to-do' is an indication of a long-term commitment on the part of parents. For them to keep this commitment, African parents need to put time and effort into their moral responsibility so that with time they start seeing results. Good results show need to be maintained; parents should not become passive.

Maintaining good results can be dependent on the good values that parents instil in their children. For African parents, the responsibility is to remind their children of their African values even in the midst of technological advancement. In the home setting, African parents need to make their children aware of the how the values of 'intersubjectivity', 'cooperation', 'collective existence' mentioned by Ntukula and Liljestrom (2004:126) need to be applied. Teenagers, in their over-indulgent usage of smartphones, need to be reminded by their parents that in the setting of an African home, children should not physically and emotionally remove themselves from the rest of the family to be on their smartphones. Parents need to think of a creative way for their children to balance time with family and with friends. Moreover, parents can set house rules stating the time allocated to spending time with family, such as meal times, and time when teenagers can engage with their friends on social media. This could deal with the alienation that teenagers succumb to when it comes to smartphone usage. Alienation does not complement 'intersubjectivity' or 'collective existence'. Instead, it is one of the phenomena that create incoherence in the family system, which seems to be the case in the homes of the interviewed teenagers. Over three quarters of them revealed they over-indulge on smartphone usage at home, and about 60% of them remove themselves from their family setting and use their smartphone in the privacy of their rooms.

Alienation and removal from family to interact on smartphones with friends enforces a more individualistic notion for teenagers as social actors, which is popular in Western society, (Pereira, 2010:105). The introduction of smartphones technology within an African household comes with the introduction of a system that does not draw its values from the same source as African values. Pereira claimed that globalisation has emerged as an additional space (in the household) which is accompanied by its own set of values (2010:99). There is no guarantee that these sets of values match up to the value system of families, and in the case of Africa, these values do not always complement each other. It is therefore appropriate to suggest an ethic of systematic coherence to deal with this challenge.

8.3 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to recommend an ethical perspective that could be useful for African parents parenting in the technological age. These parents are faced with concern over their teenagers' use of smartphone technology. Furthermore, this concern is informed by how smartphone technology provides teenagers access to virtual ontology, wherein the agency of teenagers can be easily compromised. In addition to this, virtual ontology such as social media platforms operate in the absence of moral authority. This absence could be seen as an instigator when it comes to teenagers compromising their agency. All the interviewed Pietermaritzburg parents acknowledged that they had a moral responsibility in the smartphone use of their teenagers. This responsibility entails deconstructing in order to reconstruct moral responsibility, which can be achieved through the ethical perspective suggested by the researcher. This perspective, called the ethic of systemic coherence, provides suggestions on how African parents can integrate their understanding of technology with that of their teenage children. Moreover, this integration is not only essential for the coherent functioning of the family as a unit, but is also integral in enabling parents to deconstruct in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility.

CHAPTER NINE:
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

9.0 Introduction

This last chapter concludes the thesis by providing a summary of all the chapters. The main goal of this research was, in the light of virtual ontology, moral responsibility and agency, to explore the ethical implications of mobile communication technology use on parenting style in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Discourse on mobile communication technology amongst scholars revealed that although there is some good that comes with this kind of technology, there are also some challenges when it comes to the relationship between parents and children. In the context of South Africa, it can be seen that authoritarian parenting style, which is founded on proximity and relatedness, is a popular form of parenting style. These features, proximity and relatedness, seem to be compromised by teenagers alienating themselves from families whenever they utilise their smartphones. Focus group interviews conducted with teenage pupils from two Pietermaritzburg high schools confirmed this. Even the interviews with parents revealed the challenges that smartphone use by teenagers has introduced challenges in the household. As a result, the ethic of systematic coherence conceived by the researcher was recommended for South African parents, to assist parents to deconstruct in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility regarding the smartphone use of their teenage children.

9.1 Summary

Chapter One introduced the plan for this study by addressing the key areas of the research. The researcher was motivated to undertake this study by the rapid and pervasive introduction of mobile communication technology into the household. On the one hand, parents have responsibility over their children; on the other hand, there is the issue of children's agency. At what point can parents be responsible for the use of their child's use of mobile communication technology without infringing on the agency of children? Striking this balance seems to be a challenge which is linked to the parenting style that parents need to adopt, especially because mobile communication technology is constantly developing. In the context of post-colonial Africa, this may come as a challenge, as it may require African parents to alter their parenting style that is grounded in intersubjectivity, communitarianism and interdependence. These qualities are different from what mobile communication technology, such as smartphones,

introduce into the household. They isolate teenage children from the communal setting in the household and alienate them into the privacy of their rooms to chat with their friends. This is what has inspired the researcher to explore the ethical implications of mobile communication technology on the moral responsibility of parents.

Chapter One also provided information on the research methodology. Respondents were selected through sampling: purposive sampling for the teenagers, as the researcher is specifically targeted pupils between 16 and 18 years old. These pupils were selected from two high schools which were randomly selected, although one was in a township and the other in the suburbs in order to include socio-economic diversity in the respondents. The focus groups consisted of ten pupils each, a reasonable and practical size. The parents were also selected by purposive sampling from the Parent Teachers Association and they were all parents with children between 16 and 18 years old. The parents were interviewed individually. The data gathered from the interviews was analysed through coding, content analysis and using a critical approach.

Chapter Two outlined the theoretical frameworks used to frame the thesis. It commenced with agency theory, which assisted in laying the foundation for understanding the agency of teenagers in virtual ontology. It started off by introducing agency as defined in philosophy and sociology. In philosophy, individual agency in the works of Immanuel Kant is premised on free will and reason, where arriving at a will stems from an individual acting out of freedom and not coercion. This implies that an individual agent as a moral being, has the capacity to reason out of free will and act in a moral manner. In the context of this study, it could be seen that teenagers as individuals have the capacity to act from their own free will and reason as they navigate virtual ontology. Their individual agency is a priori virtual ontology, which suggests that when they enter virtual ontology they have what they require to be passive and not active. The sociological perspective on agency takes a different stance. It considers agency as a phenomenon that co-exists with a structure. Sociologists such as Anthony Giddens reveal that although the two structures co-exist, it should not be seen as a set-up where the human as an agent is submerged in a structure, but that humans use their agency to navigate that structure. As a result, Giddens contended that there is an undeniable interaction between the agent and structure, as agents have the capacity to shape the structures they are operating in.

The theoretical framework which followed was consequentialism, which is based on the idea that an act is judged by the consequences it produces. John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism, which

is a variant of consequentialism, specified that these consequences are beneficial for a majority of people. It further proposed that an act must maximise pleasure and minimise pain. In this study, the use of smartphones by teenagers has introduced certain consequences, especially in the home with parents. It is challenging the moral responsibility that parents have over their teenage children's use of smartphone technology. The final theoretical framework was Hans Jonas's theory of responsibility, which was grounded on responsibility. This theory is different from previous theories in that it aims to present an ethical theory which complements this constantly evolving technological age. Being relatively vast, only certain elements of the theory were mentioned in this thesis, such as the idea that this theory of responsibility is rooted in substantive responsibility, a forward looking and ongoing kind of responsibility. It complements the principles of responsibility mentioned by Jonas, which entail totality, continuity and the future. Parents of teenagers in this technological age may need to assess their moral responsibility using this theory by Jonas as a guideline.

Chapter Three introduced the discourse surrounding ICT, and hence addressed the first objective of this research, which was "to examine discourse surrounding mobile communication technology". It started by introducing the features of ICT, which most teenagers are familiar with, including touch screen, camera, Bluetooth and Internet access. Teenagers use these features to share links, pictures, music, fashion trends, etc. This introduced the nature of virtual ontology, a space that is cast, not confined by space or time, with an architecture that appeals to teenagers. It serves as a canvas where teenagers can be creative. The platforms in virtual ontology which allow this include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram. These are introduced not merely as virtual ontology platforms but also as communities, digital communities. Being born into an advancing technological era makes it easy for teenagers to navigate digital communities, which is why Prensky called them 'digital natives'. Their parents, who are not as advanced in navigating virtual ontology, are labelled 'digital immigrants' or 'strangers', depending on the level of their digital literacy. This suggests that the digital community is divided into the digital natives, digital immigrants and digital strangers. This division is clear in many households, where parents are not able to understand the habits of their teenage children who are constantly glued to their smartphones. Parents tend to be concerned about the safety of their children, as they do not know who they children are constantly chatting to. This raises other issues between parents and children, such as trust and privacy.

Chapter Four anchored this study in the context of South African families. Various types of family structures were introduced, including nuclear and extended families. Extended families are common in South Africa, particularly amongst the working class. South African history has played a role in this, through migrant labour, where working class fathers would relocate from their rural homesteads to work in the city. Thus, there were many households which were headed by mothers, who often got assistance from extended family. The trend of single mother households continues even today in South Africa. This was confirmed by the profiles of the interviewed pupils from Fundokuhle Secondary School and Alexandra High School, most these pupils coming from working class homes. Parenting styles were also a topic of discussion in Chapter Four, where many South Africans associate with an authoritarian parenting style.

This kind of style is one which relates to a communal setting, which is to be expected in the structure of an extended family. It functions based on 'the ethic of relatedness' within a hierarchical structure that places each member in a role. The role each member plays in the structure plays a significant part in the functioning of the family structure as a whole. The South African family as a structure exists within the structure of South African society, as well as the world as a whole. Chapter Four then shows the relevance of the structure of globalisation and how families are influenced or affected by this structure. Parental responsibility is also mentioned including a discussion on v-chip technology to monitor children. This raised the following ethical issue: Do parents shift their responsibility to an artefact when using devices such as v-chip to monitor their children? The responsibility of the parents was discussed in more depth in Chapters Six and Seven.

Chapter Five was the research methodology and framework chapter. This research was undertaken within an interpretivist theoretical perspective, under the constructivism paradigm. This chapter also described the study area, the sample, the respondents, as well as how the data would be presented. Before presenting the data, this chapter provided profiles of the interviewed pupils from both schools, stating their name, age, gender, and a brief description of each. Following the profiles, the chapter described the responses recorded in the focus groups held with teenage pupils. Several important themes were raised in this research, such as the 'smartest' phone as a popularity and acceptance accessory, access and virtuality, exponential development of smartphones, smartphones and consumerism, anonymity and accountability, identity and the Other, lack of moral authority on social media, teenager language and social media and finally, alienation and technology. These themes were further analysed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six serves as a platform to voice the perceptions of the parents regarding the agency of their teenage children in social media. Like Chapter Five, the profiles of the parent respondents were provided before their perceptions were outlined. Here too, themes were derived which included parents' views on smartphones, use of smartphone by teenagers, boundaries when it comes to smartphone technology, digital literacy of parents, challenges faced by parents, ICTs and teenage privacy, and finally, parental responsibility. The perceptions from parents could be seen as a form of dialogue, following the reactions of the teenage pupils in the previous chapter. In addition to discussions on each of the individual interview questions that parents were asked, graphs were used to illustrate the perceptions that the parents have regarding technology discourse.

Chapter Seven analysed the perceptions of both the teenagers and parents. The analysis tools included the themes derived from the interview sessions, as well as the theoretical frameworks from Chapter Two, which helped to frame the analysis and contain it within the research objectives. This means that agency theory and consequentialism were the frameworks used in this regard. The third theory, a theory of responsibility, was used to make recommendations. In the midst of the teenagers' use of smartphones, where their agency is easily compromised, parents were recommended to consider the theory of responsibility to aid their teenage children. This theory is relevant as it was designed by Jonas to deal with human action and constant development of technology. In this theory, parents are exposed to substantive responsibility, which is a starting point for the kind of responsibility required for approaching technologically related ethical dilemmas that parents face with their children.

Chapter Eight described an alternative perspective which could be of assistance in dealing with the agency of teenagers within the modern era and the responsibility of parents in this regard. Unlike the Jonas's theory, this perspective is more sensitive to the African context. It bears in mind the challenges faced by African parents, who are faced with a tension between traditional communitarian values within the household and the values their teenage children engage with on a daily basis on their smartphones. Their children, through agency, navigate virtual ontology via smartphone technology and do so away from the authority and supervision of their parents. This chapter proposed an 'ethics of systematic coherence' as a proposed perspective to deal with this challenge.

9.2 Encountered limitations

Limited time for focus groups was an issue. Bearing in mind that the research was done within school premises, the focus group time was restricted to school hours that were available within busy school schedules. Focus groups had to be conducted after school so as not to disrupt class time. Some students have sports after school and others have extra mural activities. The headmaster and teachers helped to identify suitable groups. A problem within focus groups involves dominant participants; sometimes it was difficult to create a group discussion rather than a dialogue between researcher and dominant participant. To mitigate against this, the facilitator (in this case the researcher) asked questions of everyone and encouraged other participants to contribute. It was important to make known the idea that everyone's contribution was valuable and important.

9.3 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to address the ethical implications of mobile communication technology use on parenting style in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Each chapter in the thesis contributed to developing a bigger picture regarding this main objective. Each chapter built on the previous one. The research map provided in Chapter One gave the reader an idea of what would be described in Chapter Two (theoretical frameworks), that led to Chapter Three which laid the foundation for a discussion on mobile communication technology. This assisted in understanding the context of the study, which was the family, South African families, with teenagers, in particular. Chapters Five and Six revealed the reactions of the teenagers and the perceptions of parents. Chapter Seven provided an analysis of the dialogues by the teenagers and parents. Chapter Eight recommended a holistic ethical perspective, ethic of systematic coherence, to assist parents with implementing their moral responsibility on the smartphone usage of their teenagers. It is important they do so in a way that does not infringe on the agency of their children, but in a way, that will help them deconstruct in order to reconstruct their moral responsibility to complement the constantly changing nature of smartphone technology.

References

Acharya, U. 2013. 'Globalisation and hegemonic shift: Are states merely agents of corporate capitalism.' *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* 54(3), 937- 970.

Akopyan, K. Z. 2014. 'Culture globalisation.' *Value Inquiry Book Series* 276, 116.

Alsaedy, F. 2015. *Parent-child communication: Tthe impact of globalisation and rapid social transformation in Khulais-Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology.

Alzouma, G. 2005. 'Myths of digital technology in Africa Leap frogging development?' *Global Media and Communication* 1(3), 339-356.

Ameli, S R. 2009. 'Virtual religion and duality of religious spaces'. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 37, 208-231.

Amos, P. 2013. 'Parenting and culture evidence from some African communities.' (Chapter 5) in Seidl-de-Moura, L. (ed.) *Parenting in South American and African context*. Brazil: InTech.

Amuwo, S., Fabian, R., Tolley, G., Spence, A. and Hill, J. 2004. 'Child discipline and family decision making.' *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 33, 153-173.

Appiah, K. 2005. *Ethics of identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Archer, M. 1982. 'Morphogenesis versus structuration: On combining structure and action.' *British Journal of Sociology* 33 (4), 455-483.

Archer, M. 2000. *Being human: The problems of agency*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Arendt, H .1958. *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Babbie, E. 2013. *The practice of social research*. Canada: Wadsworth.

Baer, W.S. 1978. *Communications for tomorrow: Policy perspectives for the 198Os*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Bandura, A. 2000. 'Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy.' *American Sociology Society* 9(3), 75-78.

Barkin, S. J. 2003. 'Realist constructivism.' *International Studies Review* 5 (3), 325-342.

Baumrind, D. 1991. 'The influence of parenting on adolescent competence and substance abuse.' *Journal of Early Adolescence* 11(1), 56-95.

Bennett, S. J., Maton, K.A. and Kervin, L.K. 2008. The 'digital natives' debate: A critical review of evidence. *British Journal of Education Technology* 39(5), 775-786.

Bennett, S. J., Maton, K.A. and Kervin, L.K. 2010. Beyond the 'digital natives' debate: Towards a more nuanced understanding of students' technology experiences. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 26(50), 321-331.

Bergstorm, A. 2015. The context of Internet use: From innovators to late majority. *Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 2 (1), 3-18.

Birch, D. and Buck, P. 1992. 'The information age.' *The Computer Law and Security Report* 8, 74-76.

Bishop, J. 1990. *Natural agency. An essay on causal theory of action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blackburn, S. 2001. *Ethics: A very short introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bornstein, M. H. 2012. 'Cultural approaches to parenting.' *Parenting: Science and Practice* 12, 212-221.

Bothma, C. and Gopaul M. 2015. *E-marketing in the South African context*. Cape Town: Juta.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bradbury, N. M. and Collette, C. P. 2009. 'Changing times: The mechanical clock in late medieval literature.' *The Chaucer Review* 43(4), 351-375.

Brady, F.N. and Dunn, C. P. 1995. 'Business meta-ethics: An analysis of two theories.' *Business Ethics Quarterly* 5 (3), 385-398.

Brinkmann, S. and Kvale, S. 2015. *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). California: Sage.

Broderick, C.B. 1993. *Understanding the family process: Basics of family systems theory*. California: Sage.

Brooks-Gun, J. and Markman, L. 2005. 'School readiness: Closing racial and ethnic gaps.' *The Future of Children* 15(1), 1-196.

Brown, A., Gourdine, R., Waites, S. and Owens, A. 2013. 'Parenting in the twenty-first century: An introduction.' *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 23(2), 109-117.

Brown, C. and Czerniewicz, L. 2010. 'Debunking the 'digital native': Beyond digital apartheid, towards digital democracy.' *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 26(5), 357-369.

Burke, M., Adamic, L. A. and Marciniak, K. 2013. 'Families on Facebook' in *Proceedings of the Seventh International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 41-50.

Bush, K. and Codrington, G. 2008. *Future proof your child*. South Africa: Penguin.

Carter, A. 2003. 'Morality and freedom.' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (211), 161-180.

Casey, E. 2006. 'The ethics of the face to face encounter: Schroeder, Levinas, and the glance.' *The Pluralist* 1(1), 74-97.

Centre on Media and Human Development School of Communication, Northwestern University. 2014. *Parenting in the age of digital technology. A national survey.* Northwestern University.

Chang, Y. F., Chen, C. S. and Zhou, H. 2009. Smart phone for mobile commerce. *Computer Standards and Interfaces* 31(5), 740-747.

Chen, W. and Wellman, B. 2004. 'Minding the cyber-gap: The Internet and social inequality' in Romero, M. and Margolis, E. (eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Inequalities*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Christopherson, K. 2006. 'The positive and negative implications of anonymity in Internet social interactions: "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog".' *Computers in in Human Behaviour* 23(6), 3038-3056.

Claidie`re, N. and Whiten, A. 2011. 'Integrating the study of conformity and culture in humans and nonhuman animals.' *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(1), 126-145.

Cocking, D. and Oakley, J. 1995. 'Indirect consequentialism. friendship and the problem of alienation.' *Ethics* 106(1), 86-111.

Cooper, E. 2012. *Virtuality, reality and phenomenological spirituality*. Massachusetts: Rockport.

Correa, T. 2014. 'Bottom-up technology transmission within families: Exploring how youths influence their parents' digital media use with dyadic data.' *Journal of Communication* 64, 103-124.

Crotty, M. 2009. 'The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.' London: Sage.

Crystal, D. 2001. *Language and the Internet*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Czeskis, A., Dermendjieva, I., Yapit, H., Borning, A., Friedman, B., Gill, B. and Kohno, T. 2010. 'Parenting from the pocket: Value tensions and technical directions for secure and private parent-teen mobile safety.' *Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security,* 1-15.

Davy, B J. 2007. 'An other face of ethics in Levinas.' *Ethics and the Environment* 12 (1), 39-65.

Denscombe, M. 2003. *The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects*. England: Open University Press.

DePalma, R. and Francis, D. 2014. Silence, nostalgia, violence, poverty… What does 'culture' mean for South African sexuality educators? *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 16 (5), 547-561.

Devit, K. and Roker, D. 2009. 'The role of mobile phones in family communications.' *Children and Society* 23, 189-202.

DiMaggio, P. and Hargittai, E. 2001. From the 'digital divide' to 'digital inequality': studying internet use as penetration increases. *Working Paper Series* 15, 1-23.

Doriza, G. 2005. The rise of the I-it world in Flannery O'Connor's monologic community. *Literature and Theology* 19 (4), 311-326.

Dornan, J. 2002. Agency and archaeology: Past, present, and future directions. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 9(4), 303-329.

Dreyfus, H. L. and Spinosa, C. 2003. 'Further reflections on Heidegger, technology, and the everyday.' *Bulletin of Science Technology and Society* 23, 339- 349.

Duriau, V. J., Reger, R. K. and Pfarrer, M. D. 2007.'A content analysis of the content analysis literature in Organization Studies.' *Orgnaisational Research Methods* 10(1), 5-34.

Eisenstein, J. 2013. 'What to do about bad language on the Internet.' Proceedings of NAACL-HLT, 359-369.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., and Lampe, C. (2007). 'The benefits of Facebook-friends: Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites.' *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, 1143-1168.

Ess, C. and Thorseth, M. 2011. *Trust and virtual worlds*. New York: Peter Lang.

Fahlquist, N. and van de Poel, I., 2012. 'Technology and parental responsibility.' *Science & Engineering Ethics* 18, 285-300.

Feiganbaum, J., Jaggard, A. D. and Wright, R. N. 2011. ''Open vs closed systems of accountability.' *Proceedings of the ACM Symposium and Bootcamp on the Science of Security* 4, 1-11.

Feng, Y. and Xie, W. 2014a. The Role of social networking site in seeking health information online from a longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Health Communication* 20 (1), 60-68.

Feng, Y. and Xie, W. 2014b. Teens' concern for privacy when using social networking sites: An analysis of socialisation agents and relationships privacy-protecting agents. *Computers in Human Behaviour* 33, 153-162.

Finkel, E., Eastwick, P., Karney, B, Rei, H. and Sprecher, S. 2012. 'Online Dating: A critical analysis from the perspective of Psychological Science'. *Psychological and Scientific Public Interest* 13(1), 3-66. doi: 10.1177/1529100612436522

Giddens, A. 2009. *Sociology* (6th ed.). London: Wiley.

Giddens, A. 1979. *Central problems in social theory: action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. 1984. *The constitution of society.* Cambridge: Polity.

Giddens, A. and Sutton, P. 2011. *Sociology* (6th (ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gould, C. and Ward, C. 2015. 'Positive parenting in South Africa: Why supporting families is key to development and violence prevention.' *Institute for Security Studies Policy Brief* 77, 1-8

Grillaert, N. 2006. 'Determining one's fate: A delineation of Nnietszche's conception of free will.' *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 31, 42-60.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. 1995. 'Individual agency, the ordinary, and post-modern life.' *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, 555-570.

Gupta, S. 2015. 'Appearance vs reality in Indian society.' *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies* 2(4), 1-4.

Gurstein, M. 2003. 'Effective use: A community informatics strategy beyond the digital divide.' *First Monday* 8(12), 1-9.

Gustavo, SM. 2003. 'The family and the Internet: The Israeli case.' *Social Science Quarterly* 84 (4), 1038-1050.

Gwemende, K. 2006. *Impact of globalisation on parenting in Buhera district*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Stellenbosch.

Ha, Y. and Lennon, S. J. 2010. 'Online Visual Merchandising (VMD) cues and consumer pleasure and arousal: Purchasing versus browsing situation.' *Psychology and Marketing* 27(2), 141-165.

Habermas, J. 1990. *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Translated by Lenhardt C. and Nicholsen S.W.)

Hammer, M. and Champy, J. 1993. *Re-engineering the corporation*. New York: Harper.

Hampton, K. N., Goulet, L. S., Rainee, L. and Purcell, K. 2011. *Social networking sites and our lives*. Pew Research Centre's Internet and American Life Project.

Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. 2008. *Sociology themes and perspectives*. United Kingdom: Collins.

Harris, J. 1974. 'Williams on negative responsibility and integrity.' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 24(96), 265-273.

Head, J. 2011. 'Body and technology: Reframing the humanistic critique'. *The Heidegerrian Critique of Technology* 12(1), 22-38.

Healy, M. 2014. *Alienation and information communication technology*. Unpublished PhD thesis, De Montfort University, Leicester.

Heathcote, P. 2003. *'A' level ICT* (3rd ed.). Northgate: Payne-Gallway Publishers.

Heidegger, M. 1977. *On the question concerning technology*. London: William Lovitt, Garlan Publishing.

Hodgson, D. L. 2001. *Gendered modernities: Ethnographic perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holborn, L. and Eddy, G. 2011. *First steps to healing the South African family*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race.

Hongladarom, S. 1997. 'Global culture, local cultures and the Internet: The Thai example.' *Proceedings: Cultural Attitudes Toward Communication Technology*, 231-245.

Horsfield, P. 2002. *The ethics of virtual reality: The digital and its predecessors*. Paper presented at 'Virtual reality and communication ethics' conference, Urbana Champaign, USA, 2 November 2002.

Howard-Snyder, F. 1999. Response to Qililbash and Carlson on the rejection of objective consequentialism. *Utilitas* 11(1), 106-111.

Hughes, J. and Lang, R. 2003. If I had a song: The culture of digital community networks and its impact on the music industry. *The International Journal on Media Management* 5(3), 180-189.

Hutson, E. 2016. 'Cyberbullying in adolescence: A concept analysis.' *Advances in Nursing* 39(1), 60-70.

Hyman, J. and Steward, H. *Agency and actions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Introna, L. D. 2001. 'Virtuality and morality: On (not) being disturbed by the other.' *Philosophy in the contemporary world* 8(1), 31-39.

Introna, L. D. and Brigham, M. 2007. 'Reconsidering community and the stranger in the age of virtuality.' *Society and Business Review* 2(2), 166-178.

Jonas, H. 1984. *The imperative of responsibility: In search for an ethics for the technological age.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kakinami, L., Barnett, T., Seguin, L., and Paradis, G. 2015. 'Parenting style and obesity risk in children.' *Preventative Medicine* 75, 18-22.

Kant, I. 1873. *The foundations of the metaphysic of morals*, trans. T.K. Abbott.

Karp, I. and Masolo, A. 2000. *African philosophy as cultural inquiry*. Indiana: Indian University Press.

Katz, J. E. and Aakhus, M. 2002. *Perpetual contact: Mobile communication, private talk and public performance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keller, H., Voelker, S. and Yovsi R. D. 2005. *Conceptions of parenting in different cultural communities: The case of West African Nso and Northern German women.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Kennett, J. 2003. *Agency and responsibilty: A common-sense moral psychology.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Klitmøller, A., Schneider, C. S. and Jonsen, K. 2015. ‚Speaking of global virtual teams: language differences, social categorization and media choice.*’ Personnel Review* 44(2), 270-285.

Knorringa, P. and van Staveren, I. 2007. *Beyond social capital: A critical approach*. London: Routledge.

Krefting, L. 1991. ‘Rigour in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness.’ *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 45(3), 214-222.

Lassmam, P. 2000. ‘The rule of man over man: politics power legitimation’ in Turner, S. (ed) *The Cambridge companion to Weber*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Latour, B. 2002. (translated by Venn, C.). ‘Morality and technology: The end of the means.’ *Theory, Culture and Society* 19(5/6), 247-260.

Law et al. 2010. ‘To control or not to control? Parenting behaviours and adolescent online aggression.’ *Computers in Human Behaviour* 26, 1651-1656.

Lei, J. 2009. ‘Digital natives as preservice teachers: What technology service is needed.’ *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education* 5(3), 87-97.

Lenhart, A. and Madden, M. 2007. *Social networking websites and teens*. Pew Internet and American Life Project.

Leung, L. and Lee, P. S. N. 2011. ‘The influences of information literacy, Internet addiction and parenting styles on Internet risks.’ *New Media and Society*, 1-21.

Levy, P. 1998. ‘Becoming virtual: Reality in the digital age.’ Michigan: Plenum Trade, University of Michigan.

Lewensky, M. 2016. ‘Meet the new emoji tool to combat cyberbullying.’ *Vanity Fair*, 1-3.

Li, J., Snow, C. and White, C. 2015. ‘Teen culture, technology and literacy instruction: Urban adolesecent students’ perspective.’ *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology* 41(3),1-36.

Liau, A. K., Khoo, A. and Ang, P. H. 2005. ‘Factors influencing adolescents’ engagement in risky Internet behavior.’ *Cyberpsychology and Behavior* 8(6), 513-520.

Light, B. and McGrath, K. 2010. ‘Ethics and social networking sites: A disclosive analysis of Facebook.’ *Information Technology & People* 23(4), 290-311.

Llanos, R. A., Orozco, C. M., and García, O. S. 1999. ‘Relationship between the social networks and the family dynamics of low income working women.’ *Journal of Community Psychology* 27 (3), 243-255.

Lo, S-K., Hsieh, A-Y. and Chiu, Y-P. 2013. 'Contradictory deceptive behaviour in online dating.' *Computers in Human Behaviour* 29(4), 1755-1762.

Locke, L. M. and Prinz, R. J. 2002. 'Measurement of parental nurturance and discipline.' *Clinical Psychology Review* 22, 895-929.

Lopez, K. A and Willis, D. G. 2004. 'Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contribution to nursing knowledge.' *Qualitative Health Research* 14(5), 726-735.

Luck, M. and D'Inverno, M. 1995. 'A formal framework for agency autonomy.' *ICMAS 95: proceedings First International Conference on Multi-Agent.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Mabovula, N. N. 2005. 'The erosion of African communal values: A reappraisal of the African Ubuntu philosophy' in Waghid, Y. and Van Wyk, B. (eds.). *African philosophy of education. Reconstructions and deconstructions* Matieland: Stellenbosch University Printers.

Mabovula, N. N. 2011. 'The erosion of African communal values: A reappraisal of African Ubuntu philosophy.' *Inkyayiso Journal of Human Science*, 38-47.

Macedonia, M. and Rosenblum, L. 2001. 'Projects in VR: The future of VR interfaces.' *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications*, 10-15.

Madden, M., Lenhart, A., Cortesi, S., Gasser, U., Duggan, M. and Smith, A. 2013. *Teens: Social media and privacy.* Washington, DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project.

Manetti, D. and Caiani, S. Z. 2011. 'Agency: From embodied cognition to freewill.' *Journal of Philosophical Studies* 15 [online edition].

Mangaliso, M. P. and Damane, M. B. 2001. 'Building competitive advantage from "Ubuntu": management lessons from South Africa' [and executive commentary]. *The Academy of Management Executive* 15(3), 23-34.

Marais, J., van Niekerk, J. and von Solms, R. 2011. *Mobile parental control: South African youth at risk.* The 6th International Conference on Pervasive Computing and Application (ICPCA6), October, South Africa.

Marx, K. 1867. *Capital, Volume 1: The process of production of capital.* Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, K. 1964. 'Existence and consciousness.' in Bottomore, T. B. and Rubel, M. (eds.) *Karl Marx: Selected writings in sociology and social philosophy.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Mathis, K. and Shannon, D. 2009. *Efficiency instead of justice? Searching for the philisohpical foundations of economic analysis of law.* London: Springer.

Mbiti, J. S. 1969. *African religion and philosophy.* London: Heinemann.

Mboya, M. 1995. 'A comparative analysis of the relationship between parenting styles and self concepts of black and white high school students.' *School Psychology International* 16(1), 19-27.

McCann, H. J. 1998. *The works of agency: On human action, will and freedom*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Merchant, C. 1992. *Science and worldviews in radical ecology: The search for a liveable world*. New York: Routledge.

Mesch, G. S. 2006. 'Family relations and the Internet: Exploring a family boundaries approach.' *The Journal of Family Communication* 6(2), 119-138.

Mill, J.S. 1879. 'Utilitarianism.' *Frazers Magazine*, A Penn State Electronic Classics Series Publication, 1-69.

Milton, C. L. 2014. 'Ethics and social media.' *Nursing Science Quarterly* 27(4), 283-285.

Minimol, K. T. and Angelina, J. M. 2015. 'Balancing social network sites usage among teenagers with parental involvement: Effects on academic motivation.' *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology* 6(1), 57-62.

Mkhize, N. 2005. 'The context of career counselling: Lessons from social constructionism and hermeneutics.' *Perspectives in Education* 23(3), 93-105.

Modise, A. M. 2015. 'Resourcing single parents in a South African community rural setting: An exploratory study.' *Journal of Psychology in Africa* 25 (2), 110-113.

Mogotlane, S. M., Ntlangulela, J. T. and Ogunbanjo, B. G. 2004. 'Mortality and morbidity among traditionally circumcised Xhosa boys in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.' *Curationis* 27(2), 57-62.

Moline, D., Wagner, J. and Volk, E. 2012. Model of mechanical clock escapement. *American Journal of Physics* 80(7), 599-605.

Montag, C., Błaszkiewicz, K., Sariyska, R., Lachmann, B., Andone, I. Trendafilov, B. and Markowetz, A. 2015. 'Smartphone usage in the 21st century: who is active on WhatsApp?' *BMC Res Notes* 8 (31), 1-6.

Moore, H. 1996. *Space, text and gender: An anthropological study of the Marakwet of Kenya.* New York: Guilford Press.

Morgan, D. L. 2014. *Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: A pragmatic approach.* California: Sage.

Morris, T. 2014. *Hans Jonas' ethic of responsibility: From ontology to ecology*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Moyo, A R. 2012. *The influence of parenting styles and practices on the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners in the Western Cape*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Western Cape.

Mthembu, T., Beets, C., Davids, G., Malyon, K., Pekeur, M. and Rabinowitz, A. 2014. Influences of social network sites on the occupational performance of adolescents in a secondary school in Cape Town, South Africa: A phenomenological study. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal* 61, 132-139.

Mulgan, T. 2001. *The demands of consequentialism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Munch, R. 1982. 'Talcott Parsons and the theory of action. II. The continuity of the development.' *American Journal of Sociology* 87(4), 771-826.

Murdock, N. and Gore, P. 2004. 'Stress, coping and differentiation of self: A test of Bowen theory.' *Contemporary Family Journal* 26(3), 319-335.

Mushengyezi, A. 2003. 'Rethinking indigenous media: Rituals, 'talking' drums and orality as forms of public communication in Uganda.' *Journal of African Cultural Studies - Special issue focusing on the media in and about Africa* 16 (1), 107-117.

Myskja, B. K. 2008. 'The categorical imperative and the ethics of trust.' *Ethics and Information Technology* 10, 213-220.

Nagel, T. 1986. *The view from nowhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nardie, B. 2015. Virtuality. *The Annual Review of Antrhropology* 44, 15-31.

Ndegwah, D. J. and Kroesen, J. O. 2012. 'Technology transfer and the soul of Africa.' *Conference paper at African Technology Policy Studies Network*. Addis Abba, Ethiopia.

Nobles, J. 2011. 'Parenting from abroad: Migration, non-resident father involvement, and children's education in Mexico.' *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73(4), 729-746.

North, D., Johnston, K. and Ophoff, J. 2014. 'The use of mobile phones by South African university students.' *Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology* 11, 115-138.

Ntukula, M. and Liljestrom, R. 2004. *Umleavyo: The Dilemma of Parenting*. Spain: Grafilur Artes Graaficas.

O'Keeffe, G. S., Clarke-Parsons, K. and the Council on Communication and Media. 2011. 'Clinical Report. The impact of social media on children, adolescent and families.' *American Academy of Paediatrics* 127, 799-805.

Obelensky, N. 1994. *Practical business re-engineering*. London: Kogan Page.

Olssen, M. 2003. 'Structuralism, post-structuralism, neoliberalism: Assessing Foucault's legacy.' *Journal of Education Policy* 18(2), 189-202.

Ong, W. J. 1982. *Orality and literacy*: *The technologizing of the word*. London: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. 2009. 'The virtual geographies of social networks: A comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and a small world.' *New Media and Society* 11(1/2), 199-220.

Perala-Littunen, S. and Book, L. M. 2012. 'The beginning of the end of parental responsibility-Finnish parents' views.' *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 43(6), 925-941.

Pereira, J. 2010. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child: Samoan perspectives on responsible parenting.' *New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences* 5(2), 98-109.

Peterson, M. 2003. 'From consequentialism to utilitarianism. *The Journal of Philosophy* 100(8), 403-415.

Pick, J. B. and Sarkar, A. 2015. *The global digital divide*. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.

Pippin, R. B. 1991. *Modernism as a philosophical problem: On the dissatisfaction of European high culture.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Popovac, M. and Leoschut, L. 2012. Cyber bullying in South Africa: Impact and responses. *Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention Issue Paper*13, 215-232.

Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Abane, A., Munthali, A., Robson, A., Mashiri, M., and Tanle, A. 2012. 'Youth mobility and mobile phone in Africa: Findings from a three-country study.' *Information Technology for Development* 18(2), 145-162.

Prensky, M. 2001. 'Digital natives digital immigrants.' *On the Horizon* 9(5), 1-6.

Quante, M. 2004. *Hegel's concept of action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rachoene, M. and Oyedemi, T. 2015. 'From self-expression to social aggression: Cyberbullying culture among South African youth on Facebook.' *Communication* 41(3), 302-319.

Railton, P. 1984. 'Alienation, consequentialism, and the demands of morality.' *Philosophy and Public Affairs*13 (2), 134-171.

Rhaikan, S., Mondakhmet, M., Ryskeldy, M., and Alua, M. 2014. 'The interaction of globalisation and culture in the modern world.' *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences* 122, 8-12.

Riazuelo, H., Chaudoye, G. and Cupa, D. 2015. 'The place of the body in young adults' use of the new technologies: Virtual bodies?' *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*79 (2), 174-186.

Richte, L. and Morrel, R. 2006. *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Ringrose, J., Gill, R. Livingstone, S. and Harvey, L. 2012. *A qualitative study of children, young people and 'sexting': A report prepared for the NSPCC*. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, London, UK.

Robinson, W. I. 2009. 'Saskia Sassen and sociology of globalisation.' *Sociological Analysis* 3(1), 5-29.

Sadlier, E. and de Beer, T. 2014. *Don't film yourself having sex and other legal advice for the age of social media.* South Africa: Penguin Books.

Sagan, E. 1977. *Freud, women and morality: The psychology of the good and evil*. New York: Basic Book Publishers.

Salomon, D. 1993. 'Moving on from Facebook: Using Instagram to connect with undergraduate and engage in teaching and learning.' *College & Research Libraries News*, 74(8), 408-412.

Santor, D. A., Messervey, D. and Kusumakar, V. 2000. 'Measuring peer pressure, popularity, and conformity in adolescent boys and girls: predicting school performance, sexual attitudes, and substance abuse.' *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 29(2), 163-182.

Sarjat, B. and Aslam, M. 2010. 'Role of authoritative and authoritarian parenting in home, health and emotional adjustment.' *Journal of Behavoural Sciences* 20, 47-66.

Scheiffler, S. 1994. *The rejection of consequentialism: A philosophical investigation of the considerations underlying rival moral conceptions*. South Carolina: Clarendon Press.

Schlyter A. 2009. 'Body politics and the crafting of citizen in peri-urban Lusaka.' *Feminist Africa* 13.

Schull, J. 1992. What is ideology? Theoretical problems and lessons from Soviet-type societies. *Political Studies*, 728-741.

Schurgin, G., O'Keefe, G. S. and Clarke-Parsons, K. 2011. 'The impact of social media on children, adolescents and families.' *Pediatrics* 127(4), 800-805.

Scott, A. 1997. 'Modernity's machine metaphor.' *The British Journal of Sociology* 48(4), 561-575.

Seale, C. and Silverman, D. 1997. 'Ensuring rigour in qualitative research.' *European Journal Public Health* 7(4), 379-384.

Schwartz, S.1990. 'Individualism collectivism: Critiques and proposed refinements.' *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology* 21, 139-157.

Shields, R. 2006. 'Thinking in theories of the present.' *European Journal of Social Theory* 9 (2), 223-237.

Shutte, A. 1993. *Philosophy for Africa.* Rondebosch: UCT Press.

Sigelman, C. K. and Rider, E. 2009. *Life-span human development* (6th ed.). Australia: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Singer, P. 2009. *Speciesism and moral status*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Singer, P. 1994. *Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smedts, G. 2008. 'Parenting in a technological age.' *Ethics and Education* 3(2), 121-134.

Sosa, E. 1993. 'The truth of modest realism.' In Lynch, M. (ed.) *Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*. MIT Press.

Staehler, T. 2014. 'Social networks as inauthentic sociality.' *International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy* 2(2).

Steigler, B. 1998. *Technics and time, 1: The fault of Epimetheus.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Stephens, N. M., Fryberg, S. A. and Markus, H. R. 2010. 'When choice does not equal freedom: A sociocultural analysis of agency in working-class American contexts.' *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 2(1), 33-41.

Storr, A. 1989. *Freud*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stubbs, A. 1981. 'The pros and cons of consequentialism.' *Philosophy* 56, 497-516.

Sweeting, H., Bhaskar, A. and Hunt, K. 2012. 'Consumerism and well-being in early adolescence.' *Journal of Youth Studies* 15 (6), 802-820.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddie, C. 1998. *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Turkle, S. 1996. *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Turner, C. 1992. 'Modernity' (Chapter 7). In Gane, N. (ed.) *Max Weber and contemporary capitalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Turner, B. S. 2005. *The social system*. Talcott Parsons: Routledge.

Van den Abeele, M. M. P. 2014. Mobile lifestyle: Conceptualising heterogeneity in mobile youth culture. *New Media and Society*, 1-19.

Varnhagen, C. K., McFall, G. P., Pugh, N., Routledge, L., Sumida-MacDonald, H. and Kwong, T. E. 2010. 'Lol: New language and spelling in instant messaging.' *Reading and Writing* 23, 719-733.

Vrasidas, C. 2000. Constructivism versus objectivism: Implications for interaction, course design, and evaluation in distance learning. *Journal of Educational Telecommunications* 6(4), 339.

Warschauer, M, Matuchniak, T, Pinkard, N. and Gadsden, V. 2010. 'New technology and digital worlds: Analyzing evidence of equity in access, use, and outcomes.' *Review of Research in Education* 34, 179-225.

Weber, M. 1919. 'Politics as a vocation.' In Gerth, H. H. and Wright Mills, C. (eds.) *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.* London: Routledge, 77-128.

Weigel, G. and Waldburger, D. 2004. *ICT4D – Connecting people for a better world lessons, innovations and perspectives of information and communication technologies in development.* Edited by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP).

Weisskirch, R. S. 2011. 'No crossed wires: Cell phone communication in parent-adolescent relationships.' *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking* 14(7-8), 447-451.

West, E. G. 1969. 'The political economy of alienation: Karl Marx and Adam Smith.' *Oxford Economic Papers, New Series* 21(1), 1-23.

Westermann, D. A. 2011. *Mom, Dad, Let's be (Facebook) friends: Exploring parent/child facebook interaction from a communication privacy management perspective.* Unpublished master's thesis, Kent State University.

Whimster, S. 1987. *Max Weber, rationality and modernity.* USA: Allen and Unwin.

Wiese, C. 2007. *The life and thought of Hans Jonas Jewish dimensions.* Translated by Grossman, J. and Wiese, C. Massachusetts: University Press Waltham.

Wilding, R. 2006. ''Virtual' intimacies? Families communicating across transnational contexts.' *Global Networks* 6 (2), 125-142.

Williams, B. 1985. *Ethics and the limits of philosophy.* Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Williams, B. and Sawyer, S. 2013. *Using information technology: A practical introduction to computers and communication.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Williams, G. 2008. 'Responsibility as a virtue.' *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 11(4), 455-470.

Wolff, E. 2011. 'Responsibility and technics in Levinas and Jonas: Two strategies in response to the disorientation of ethics in the modern world.' *Philosophy Today* 55(2), 127-143.

Yardi, S. and Bruckman, A. 2011. *Social and technical challenges in parenting teens' social media use.* Conference paper, GVU Centre, Georgia Institute of Technology.

Yatani, K. and Truong, K. N 2009. *SemFeel: A user interface with semantic tactile feedback for mobile touch-screen devices.* In UIST proceedings of the 22nd annual ACM symposium.

Yeow, J. 2013. *Bridging the real and the virtual: Exploring virtuality in an ICT enabled project based organising context.* In 29th Colloquium, 4 July - 6 July 2013.

Zepf, S. 2010. Consumerism and identity: Some psychoanalytical considerations. *International Forum for Psychoanalysis,* 144-154.

Zhu, Y. and Proctor, R. 2015. 'Use of blogs, Twitter, and Facebook by UK Phd students for scholarly communication.' *Observatoria* 9(2), 29-46.

Zur, O. and Zur, A. 2011. *On digital immigrants and digital natives: How the digital divide affects families, educational institutions, and the workplace.* Zur Institute. Online publication. Accessed 14 December 2015.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questions for focus groups and interviews

Focus group questions for teenagers:

What is the latest phone which you think will attract your peers?

Which feature do you use the most on your smartphone and what do you do on that feature?

What features does the latest smartphone have?

How often do you use your smartphone?

How important is it to use your real identity when using social media and why?

What is your take on teenagers/ or friends of yours who don't use their real identity on social networks?

How would you feel about being connected to your parents on social media?

How different is the language you use on social networks compared to the language you use with your parents?

Where do you prefer to chat with your friends online and at what time?

Individual interview questions for parents:

What do you think about teenagers and smartphones?

In your opinion what do you think teenagers use their smartphones for?

Do you think there are any boundaries when it comes to teenagers technology use?

Which features of smartphones are you familiar with?

What are some of the challenges when it comes to your children using smartphones?

What are your views about monitoring your teenager on social networks?

What is your take on parent's responsibility when it comes to what their teenagers do on their smartphones?

APPENDIX 2: Letter requesting consent

<div align="right">27 March 2015</div>

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Thando Nkohla, a Doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu Natal. My PhD research study is about the use of smartphone technology by teenagers and how it influences the moral responsibility of their parents. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Beatrice Okyere-Manu (University of KwaZulu Natal)

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach students from your school to have a discussion them regarding the use of smartphone technology. If possible could I also have access to the PTA or any existing parent body in the school to have a focus group discussion about the research topic and hear what their thoughts are surrounding the issue.

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Cell phone number: 081 815 2347

Email: nkohlat@ukzn.ac.za

You can also contact:

My supervisor: HSSREC Research office:

Dr Beatrice Okyere-Manu   Contact person: Ms Phumelele Ximba

Telephone number: (033) 260 5582   Telephone number: 031 260 3587

Email: okyere-manu@ukzn.ac.za   Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Thando

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics

Postal Address: Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 33 260 5540 Facsimile**:** +27 (0) 33 260 5858 Email**:**Mchunua@ukzn.ac.za Website**:**www.ukzn.ac.za

199

APPENDIX 3: Informed consent

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of research:Virtual ontology, moral responsibility and agency: The ethical implications of mobile communication technology use on parenting style in South Africa.

Name of Researcher: Thando Nkohla

Email address: thandonkohla@yahoo.com

For participant:

➢ I agree to participate in the above research that the researcher has informed me about. The researcher has explained the research and I understand what I am partaking in.

➢ I am partaking because I have freely decided to partake.

➢ I am aware that the researcher will interview me and record the interview OR I am willing to partake in the research but I would prefer not being recorded. I rather the researcher make notes as I talk.

➢ I agree that the researchers informed me about this research before the interview schedule I have with her

➢ I have been informed by the researcher that the university name and my identity will remain anonymous

➢ I understand that the information the researcher has obtained will be used in a moral way, to contribute to research in the field and not use this information in ways she hasn't specified to me.

➢ I understand that if for any reason I feel uncomfortable to continue with the interview I can stop at any time and the information gathered at the time of my withdrawal will not be used.

➢ I understand that I can email the researcher at any time after the interview

➢ I understand that I can keep this consent form

➢ I understand the above information and agree to participate in this research

Signature of interviewee.......................... Date...................

For researcher:

I have explained the content of this consent form to the interviewee and ensured that the interviewee understands the content of this form.

Signature of interviewer............................ Date......................

APPENDIX 4: Letter seeking parental consent

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Thando Nkohla. A Doctorate student at the University of KwaZulu Natal. My Phd study is about the use of smartphones/communication technology devices by teenagers and how it affects not only the agency of these teenagers but also the responsibility of their parents. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Beatrice Okyere-Manu (University of KwaZulu Natal).

I am hereby seeking parental consent to conduct focus group interview with your teenage child to have a discussion with him/her regarding the use of smartphones/communication technology devices. The identity of your child will be protected as pseudo names will be used instead of real names. The focus group interview will be conducted within your child's school premises. The head masters of the school will also be enlightened about the research, his/her consent will also be required as the research will be conducted on the school premises.

For further information, please don't hesitate to contact me on my cell phone number: 081 815 2347, or via email: Nkohlat@ukzn.ac.za.

You can also contact:
1) My supervisor Dr Beatrice Okyere-Manu:
   Telephone: (033) 260 5582
   Email: okyere-manv@ukzn.ac.za

2) Ms Phumelele Ximba at the UKZN HSSREC Research office
   Telephone: (033) 260 3587
   Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

Thando

APPENDIX 5: Permission letter (Alexandra High)

ALEXANDRA HIGH SCHOOL

Private Bag X6, Scottsville, 320
Tel 033 394 8252, Fax 033 394 605
53 Alexandra Road, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, 320
www.alexhigh.org.z

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that Alexandra High School is prepared to co-operate with Thando Nkohla as she does research for her Phd.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Graaf
PRINCIPAL
27/03/2015

APPENDIX 6: Permission letter (Fundokuhle Secondary)

FUNDOKUHLE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Postal Address/ Ikheli Leposi
Physical Address/ Sakhe Iapha
Enquiries/ Thintana No
Telephone / Ucingo
Fax No. / Ucingoncwadi

PostnetSuite131, PrivateBagX9005, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
2895 Sinkwazi Rd, IMBALI Unit DD, 3219
Miss/Nksz P.T. Sithole
033 398 3629
033 398 3629

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

31 March 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that Thando Nkohla, a doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, has been granted permssion to access learners at our school to conduct research about smart phone technology.

If you require further information regarding the authenticity of the letter, please contact
Madlala S.W. (HOD Languages)
Telephone: 033 3983629
Cell: 0769100013

Thank you
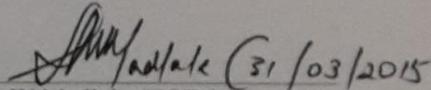
S.W.Madlala (HOD languages)   31 /03 /2015

DEPT OF BASIC EDUCATION & TRAINING
FUNDOKUHLE SECONDARY SCHOOL

2015 -03- 3 1

SUITE 131
P. BAG X9005
PIETERMARITZBURG 3200