Impact of Internet Use on Social Relationships in Teenagers

By

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

Master of Arts

(Counselling Psychology)

In the

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Arts

University of Zululand

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2016

Dedication

This work would not have been possible without my parent's endless support. Mom, Dad, thank you for your patience, your love and understanding throughout this journey, God's purpose of my life was revealed through having phenomenal parents like you. To the rest of my family, Ngiyabonga boThabethe, boMkholo, for being my pillar of strength.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you goes to Prof. J.D. Thwala for sharing his expertise as my supervisor, without his guidance this work would not have been accomplished. I would also like to thank Mrs. N.A. Ndlazi for her support and great input.

I would also like to extend my appreciation and sincere thank you to:

- To all the academic staff in the department of Psychology at the University of Zululand. You have been of great contribution in establishing my career in Psychology, I will never forget you and I am proud flouring under your mentorship.
- Ms Sarah Green who is my current supervisor at the Rhodes Univeristy Counselling centre where I am doing my internship and Mrs Nomangwane Mrwetyana who is the Manager of student wellness at the Rhodes University, thank you listening and for the encouragement when I needed it. Your endless support motivated me.
- To all the learners, teachers and headmasters from different schools in the Umhlathuze area, North of KwaZulu-Natal. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to conduct my research, without you this work wouldn't have existed. I appreciated your contribution a lot.
- Dr Ryan Du Toit from Rhodes University for his assistance with the SPSS program.

Declaration of Originality

I <u>Ms Nokuthula Pricilla Thabethe,</u> Student Number <u>20120042</u> declare that the research study titled "*Impact of Internet Use on Social Relationships Among Teenagers"* is my original work and that all sources used within this research study have been well cited and acknowledged in the bibliography.

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2016

Abstract

This research study aimed to determine the impact of internet use on social relationship among teenagers. The internet is the most widely utilized network tool by children, teenagers and adults. The researcher's main focus was on teenagers and the internet. The researcher explored the different types of internet activities teenagers engaged in, the amount of time they spent on these activities, the role it plays on teenager's academic performance and relationships with family and friends. The research study was conducted at various primary schools and high schools in urban and rural areas in Umhlathuze area, North of KwaZulu-Natal. It consisted of a sample of 132 participants who are all exposed to the internet. The research findings showed a null hypothesis between internet use and teenager's social relationship, that is; internet use among teenagers does not have a negative effect on teenager's social relationship. However, the alternative hypothesis was proven to be true, that is; the internet has a positive contribution to the teenager's academics.

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CHAPTER 1: Impact of Internet use on Social Relationships among Teenagers

1.1. Introduction

Development in a child occurs in various stages and includes different types, one of them being psychosocial development. Psychosocial development is the development of the personality and the acquisition of social attributes and skills from infancy through maturity (Martin E. A., 2007).

In psychosocial development the child's self-identity and awareness as well as his/her manner of response to social cues and formation of relationships is developed (Matas, Arend, & Sroufe, 1978). Freud in his psychoanalytic theory stated that as human beings we operate from three states of being: the id which is the only personality component which is available from birth and seeks self-gratification and operates on the basic human instinct, ego which is the mediator between the id and the superego, and the superego which ascribes to what is morally right (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). Erikson in his theory of psychosocial development states that successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and successful interaction with others, failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further stages and therefore a more unhealthy personality and sense of self (Biehler, 1981: 252-261).

According to Erikson in (Biehler, 1981); the teenage stage of development in an individual's life is a gradual process which is somehow a challenging stage of their growth. There is a lot of transition happening; their physical bodies change, they battle to understand who they are (identity confusion) and they face an adjustment in their various gender roles and sexuality this is according to Biehler (1981). This comes with the ability to form more emotionally intimate relationships which brings about peer pressure and the desire to conform within their social culture.

The internet is the most widely utilized network tool. It is used for a vast number of activities which include research for academic or personal information or knowledge, social networking sites, computer gaming, downloading and listening to music, watching movies and also shopping. When the internet emerged 24 years ago, it was only accessible on computers but now it is also accessible on cell phones, Ipads

and tablets. This development has made life easier for people as they are able to access the internet in the comfort of their own space and at their convenience. Children seem to be spending more time on the internet as opposed to physical interaction; this means they get less time to play or exercise making them prone to eating disorders, psychological disorders and other medical conditions (Sarafino & Smith, 2013). A study done in Taiwan shows that parents are concerned with the amount of time their children spend on the internet and how detached they become from the outside world (Chen & Fu, 2009).

Studies surrounding the impact of internet use in children have been done all around the world where the focus has been on the psychological implications it has for children and teenagers (Kim et al., 2009), the causes of problematic internet use (Li et al., 2013) and the contribution of social sites to teenagers' time on the internet (Almans et al., 2013). These studies have shown that the internet contributes to obsessive compulsive behaviours that teenagers portray, for example wanting to carry their cell phones everywhere they go, always checking their cell phones every second and frequently rushing to the computer to "check something" on the internet. Questions about how internet uses impacts on their social relationships have remained open.

Individuals have different personality traits that play a role in all aspects of their lives and make people who they are and how people view and act towards their surroundings. According to Erikson human beings are not only made up of biological factors but there are also psychosocial factors that contribute to their overall growth (Schultz & Schultz, 2005: 207-238). Although there are a number of factors which impact psychosocial development in teenagers, the researcher has focused on the internet and how its uses affect psychosocial development in terms of teenagers' social relationships.

Marcia (1980) and Waterman (1985) concurred with Erikson that there are a number of different threads which exist in the process of establishing an identity and as individuals our identity formation varies due to the fact that we experience the environment differently. As mentioned above, Erikson's psychosocial development has eight stages; however, this study will mainly focus on one stage which is of relevance to this study. Identity cohesion versus role confusion is a stage occurring

between ages 12 and 18 years in which the adolescents go through an identity crisis often filled with anxiety as they try to make sense of who they are and how they fit in within the societal context (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). People who are successful in this stage develop a strong sense of self identity and those who don't often experience role confusion making them socially withdrawn (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). For individuals in adolescents to develop this strong self-identity they ought to be in close association with their peer group. In his study, Young (2010) states that there are pathological and non-pathological uses of the internet; the pathological uses of the internet are characterized by distancing yourself from virtual friends and finding pleasure and excitement in their cyber friends, pervasive behaviours such as the inability to stop themselves from compulsively surfing the internet and it begins to affect their social, academic and occupational daily functioning.

The non-pathological uses of the internet are the direct opposite of the pathological uses. In American societies half of all the households own a computer and 40% of them have internet access, according to a study by Rong Wong (2005). Recent statistics by Statista (2014) show an increase of 91% households in America with internet access. These numbers have been predicted to increase by 0.2% in 2015. The parents and their children have been said to be using the internet for emailing, shopping, listening to music and acquiring academic information. The parents have stated that their children do well at school as a result of internet access and having a computer at home has improved their children's grades with them obtaining high scores in mathematics and reading (Wong, Bianchi, & Raley, 2005).

The internet as a networking tool proves to make a positive contribution to the psychological development of these children. This is because it functions as a stimulant whereby the accumulation of knowledge becomes fun and exciting through the vast information integrated in one system and the manner in which it is presented. However, this may not be the same for other teenagers who find solace in the internet whether at home or with their peers.

In a study conducted by Kim, LaRose, & Peng (2009) the results show that teenagers turn to the internet to relieve feelings of boredom and loneliness which results in isolation from social activities and their peers which contributes to more loneliness. Teenagers feel comfortable and confident when not verbally

communicating with their peers because they are shy, feel they do not fit in and feel inferior and socially awkward in the presence of their peers leading them to experience anxieties (Kim, LaRose, & Peng , 2009).

Alfred Adler in his personality theory looked at how inferior feelings are a motivational force in behaviour. This explains why teenagers rely on the internet to release feelings of insecurities with themselves and those around them. Adler also stated that it is a common condition to all of us. It is not a sign of weakness or abnormality though the behaviour chosen to compensate for this feeling could prove either beneficial to the individual or exacerbate these feelings of inferiority (Schultz & Schultz, 2005).

The results from multiple studies by Chen & Fu (2009) & Kim et al. (2009) suggest that social networking sites and other recreational activities in the internet are the causes of problematic internet use and they have a negative impact on the psychological and academic achievement of teenagers in high schools.

However, Young (2010) in her study stated that some teenagers become dependent on the internet to the extent that they experience dysphoria without it which is one of the early signs and symptoms of internet addiction, they experience reoccurring thoughts of using the internet and anticipate their next online session, they depict compulsive behaviours when using the internet and are never satisfied, have failed in attempt to cut back, control or stop using the internet for alternative means, they experience mood dysregulation when trying to cut down or stop using the internet, they stay online longer than planned, they lie to their family, friends and teachers to hide the extent of their involvement with the internet and use the internet as their escape and coping mechanism from their problems.

When a teenager begins to present with the above mentioned signs and symptoms then we can deduce that their use of the internet has become of pathological nature and they are slowly falling into an identity crisis as the internet has become their identity which restricts the ego from developing (Durkee, et al., 2012)

Mobile phones have become the predominant source of communication with our African adolescents in rich, poor, rural or urban settings (Napolitano, 2010). This is evident by the number of mobiles phones owned by each resident. In South Africa it

has been observed that each member of a family from a primary school going child to the elderly own a mobile phone. They use these mobile phones to make calls, text, browse the internet for those with WAP browsers, email, social networking sites and keep in contact with one another and significant others. In Africa there has been a rapid growth of subcription of mobile phones with 54 million in 2003 and 350 million in 2008 according to a study by Napolitano (2010). However, in South Africa in 2013 the number of internet users was 8.5 million with a 0.5% increase in 2014 (TNNG, 2013). This is because it is an easy communication tool for people not within the same proximity, allows rapid access of information and it is convinient. The most frequent users of these mobiles phones are younger children compared adult users from the early days when mobile phones were emerging. Compared to other countries in Africa, South Africa has been stamped as the leading country in mobile phones subscriptions with 87% of the citizens owning a cellphone, 9,6% owning landlines and 8,2% owning computers with internet access by international telecommunication union in 2009 and the number has increased since then.

Napolitano (2010) in a non-representative large scale study stated that 96% of teenagers use mobile phones daily while 87% of South African adolescents make and send text messages nearly every day and 68% access the internet through mobile phones. These numbers are high considering the financial situation of our teenagers as they cannot afford this lifestyle without their parents' assistance. These numbers shows how prevelant and rapid internet use has grown to be part of our teenagers' lives more especially in their mobile phones. Although there are a number of studies about internet use and teenagers done in outside countries such as Europe (Durkee, et al., 2012), United States of America (Young, 2010), China (Chen & Fu, 2009) and Taiwan (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013). There are very limited studies done in South Africa especially those involving teenagers, the internet and the role it plays in their social relationships.

1.2. Statement Of Problem

Teenagers have become more exposed to the internet through computer literature at their various schools, research for a school project at their homes and recreational activities on their phones. Internet use may differ from one type of mainstream

school to another. For example private schools and some semi-private school may have more internet exposure compared to schools situated in the rural areas. This may have a contribution on the type of internet uses each individual group of teenagers may engage in and the impact it may have in their social relationships and/or academics. The use of the internet somehow has an impact on their development and social interaction; whether this impact is of positive or negative nature is left to be answered by this research. The results will also compare internet be used to compare duration of internet usage between rural schools, semi-private and private schools. The researcher will also compare the most prevalent internet activities each group of teenagers engage in and the impact it has on their social relationships and academics. Young (2010) in her study showed that excessive internet use has a pathological impact on the psychological well-being of most teenagers in the USA. A study conducted by Chen & Fu (2009) on internet use and academics achievement with Northern Taiwan students reported that when these students use the internet for recreational purposes instead of academic information it yields negative results on their academic performance.

By observation, the researcher can deduce that the internet has become an interesting tool to our teenagers as opposed to physical conversation or visits to the mall, the movie theatre or the library. The problem here lies in the notion that our teenagers now appearing to be spending more time on the internet as opposed to active interaction with their peers. They are reaching a stage whereby verbal communication is no longer a prime factor as part of their development. They spend their time communicating through social networks, following the latest trends and playing computer games. They no longer value their social relationships and interaction as the baby boom generation used to.

1.3. Research Hypothesis

Ho: Internet use negatively affects social relationships among teenagers.

H1: The internet makes a positive contribution to teenagers' school performance.

1.4.   Intended Contribution To The Body Of Knowledge

There are limited studies done about the impact of internet use on the social relationships of teenagers in South Africa (Napolitano, 2010); there has been a rapid growth of teenagers owning mobile phones that have an internet browser feature. Taking into account the increase of internet access in home and school settings and the teenagers being at a vulnerable stage of their development, excessive internet use may prove problematic in some areas of their lives. This study will alert mental health practitioners about the social impact of internet use in teenagers and how excessive internet use may affect their psychological well-being. In that way, should the need arise; they could receive relevant psychological assistance.

According to Liberatore, Rosario, Marti, & Martinez (2011) there is a concern that internet use may be somehow interfering with their achivement of psychosocial development tasks, psychological well-being, peer and family interaction and academic influence. The parents through this research will get to learn more about the internet and how it contributes to their child's social relationships including family communication. This will unable parents to identify the good and bad side of internet use and activities related to it. Parents will also know when to seek help or promote the behaviour related to internet use and various internet activities.

Teachers will be cautioned about behaviours at school that constitute problematic internet use so they are able to intervene in time for the benefit of the learner. They will also be educated on behaviours related to internet use that contributes positively to their academics. Moreover, this research will raise an awareness in our country about the good and the bad of the internet, ways to use it constructively, what constitutes excessive internet use and where to get help should teenagers have a problem or should parents notice someone who has a problem as a result of internet use. In that way we promote safe, healthy and effective ways of using the internet in our society for teenagers.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of change which occurs biologically, psychologically and socially. It has been characterized as a period of "storm and stress" (Steinberg, 2001). As per the researcher's observation, today's teenagers are growing up with exposure to the internet whether at home or at school. They are becoming globally interactive. Tsao & Steffens-Hansen (2008) have labelled teenagers as "generation M" because they are often multi-media tasked and technologically addicted. Grace, et. al. (2014) emphasize that internet based social participation is important for young people's health and well-being because it helps them develop and maintain friendships that helps to them have and to feel a sense of belonging.

For other teenagers it may differ as according to Thuseethan & Kuhanesan (2014) some activities on the internet help teenagers reduce stress because of the entertainment value and for other teenagers it may also help with their academic and personal interests. Gencer & Koc (2012) state that teenagers spend unregulated and excessive amounts of time on the internet, it does not constitute addiction. However, there is a concern that it may be interfering with their achievement of psychosocial development tasks, psychological well-being, peer and family interaction and academic influence (Liberatore K. A., Rosario, Colón-De Martí, & Martínez, 2011).

Hur (2006) states that internet dependency which is caused by regular and excessive internet use is not only associated with routine backgrounds of internet use but there are socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds that may be of influence which are to be considered by the researcher. Most research about internet use and teenagers is conducted in highly developed and digitalized countries. Even though South Africa is still a developing country, most schools and households now have computer and internet access. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the issues that have been raised by previous researchers about the social impact of internet use, more specifically teenagers. The sub-topics covered in this literature review include the following:

I.   The social impact of internet use amongst teenagers

II.   The emotional outcome of internet use among teenagers

III.   Issues of identity and internet use

IV.   The impact internet use has on teenagers and their family relationships

V.   Internet uses amongst teenagers

VI.   Urban areas vs rural areas: teenagers and internet use

2.2. Definition Of Terms

I.   Internet use: pre-exposure to the internet and its various uses or functions.

II.   Identity: sense of self, knowing who you are.

III.   Teenagers: any individual between the age of 13 years and 18 years.

IV.   Personality: the sum total of the behavioural and mental characteristics that are distinctive of an individual (Colman, 2009).

V.   Pathology [pathological]: relating to or arising from disease, the study of disease processes with the aim of understanding their nature and causes (Martin E. A., 2003).

VI.   Social network: refers to an alliance of individuals into specific sets of potential groups and subdivisions (Thuseethan & Kuhanesan, 2014).

2.3. The Social Impact Of Internet Use Amongst Teenagers

Internet use has a more negative impact than a positive one. These finding are not only based on teenagers but also on children of school going age, young adults and also mature individuals this is according to Chen & Fu (2009); Williamson (2001) & Wong, Bianchi, & Raley (2005).

Napolitano (2010) in a non-representative large scale study states that 87% of South African adolescents make and send text messages nearly every day while 96% use mobile phones daily and 68% access the internet through mobile phones. This means quite a large number of teenagers have mobile phones that have an internet browser. This also means they spend a lot of time on their phones as opposed to face to face communication.

Statistics by Statista (2014) show an increase of 91% households in America with internet access since the internet was introduced. These numbers have been predicted to increase by 0.2% in 2015. The parents and their children have been said to be using the internet for emailing, shopping, listening to music and acquiring academic information. Reviewing these numbers, the discrepancy is not that huge considering that America is a first world country with high socioeconomic status and resources while South Africa is a third world country with mostly citizens of low socioeconomic status and limited resources. This is proving the popularity of teenagers and internet use whether accessed on their mobiles phones or in the comfort of their own homes.

Distribution of internet users in South Africa as of December 2012, by age group

Source:
eMarketer
© Statista 2014

Additional Information:
South Africa; December 2012; 15 years and older
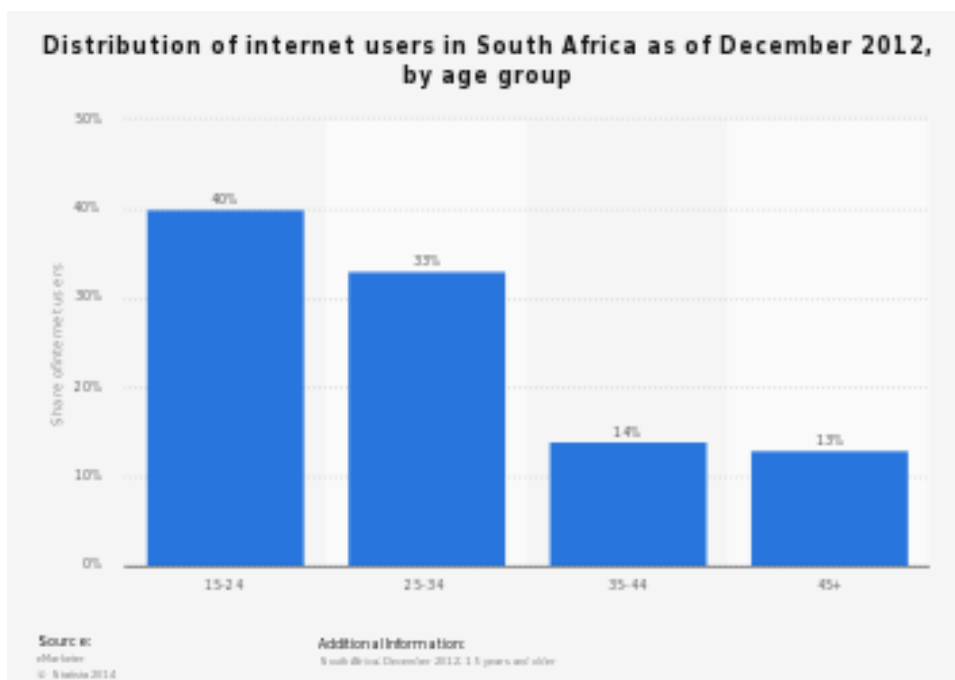
table: 1.1 Extracted from: (Statista, 2012)

In table 1.1 depicted above, a distribution of regular internet users in South Africa is shown relative to various types of age groups. The graph shows that individuals from ages 15 years to 24 years are the most regular internet users in South Africa (Statista, 2014). This age group is a variation of teenagers and young adults.

In a study conducted by Kim, LaRose, & Peng (2009) the results show that teenagers turn to the internet to relieve feelings of boredom and loneliness which results in isolation from social activities. Personality type might be a contributing factor. This is because some people are introverts and other are extroverts. Introverts are individuals who keep more to themselves and enjoy solitary activities,

extroverts are individuals who enjoy people's company and are more outgoing (Freyd, 1924). Introverts find it more difficult to make friends as opposed to extroverts. So when an individual has a more extroverted personality, they are likely to spend time indoors watching television, reading or using the internet in order to release feeling of boredom or as a method of entertaining themselves. This behaviour may lead to further isolation from peers.

Festinger, Pepitone, & Newcomb (1952) established a term called 'disindividuation' which is defined as a psychological state in which inner restraints are lost when individuals are not paid attention to. Most individuals especially introverts may find themselves experiencing this and the internet, if exposed to it, may become their source of comfort amongst other things. Other people who may experience 'disindividuation' are those learners who are far from home. They may be living at the school hostel or with relatives and find it hard to adjust and make friends. If the internet is constantly at their disposal then they may find it easier to relate to it rather than making friends and familiarizing or adjust to the new environment.

According to the social penetration theory by Altman & Taylor (1973) individuals are mostly likely to disclose sexual information to their real life partners. However, self-disclosure of intimate things in teenagers' lives may not be based on whether they know the person or not; it is mostly based on how comfortable they feel with that particular individual (Altman & Taylor, 1973). It may also be based on that they have the liberty to choose their online identity, i.e. whether they remain anonymous or use false identification but still reveal some intimate things about their lives particularly on social media.

This means that teenagers and people in general who engage in any form of social media feel more comfortable discussing their lives with someone who is not in close proximity as opposed to divulging to a friend in face to face contact. It gives them an opportunity to generate content, share thoughts and experiences with one another (Thuseethan & Kuhanesan, 2014).

According to Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo (2013) social networks have become the centre of young people's lives. They influence teenager's social, emotional and psychological development. Teenagers do not mind accepting strangers on their social networks and disclose the most personal details of their lives without knowing

the risks involved in social networks (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013). This can be brought about by what Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo (2013) termed social disinhibition which may have sterm in early childhood as a result of interrupted parent-child attachment from early childhood.

According to the impression management theory by Tedeschi (1985) in alignment with their goals, individuals try and make perceptions in conjunction with those goals. Individuals show themselves off in a way that will satisfy those needs and goals. This representation of themselves may be false and they may be done to obtain approval of other people, making them feel like they belong somewhere (Tedeschi, 1985). This means in real life experiences it may be easier to form false perceptions about oneself and have others believe them. However, maintaining these perceptions over a period of time may prove difficult. While on the internet all individuals can be whoever they perceive themselves to be. They can be accepted and they may never feel like they are living a lie. Such situations may promote excessive internet use because of that need to belong and be accepted for what people may perceive them to be and not who they truly are.

2.4.   The Emotional Outcome Of Internet Use Among Teenagers

The internet has become more than a tool for research and all academic related work. It has also become a form of entertainment especially for the younger children, teenagers and young adults. According to Salgado, Boubeta, Tobio, & Mallou (2014) external processes such as behavioural problems, social isolation, school failure and family problems are some of the things that influences teenager's behaviour which may manifest psychologically. There are also some internal processes such as the emotions attached to internet use. What remains unaswered is whether our society is developing some form of addiction to new technologies, for example the internet and mobile phones (Davis, 2001).

Table: 1.2 Some of the teenagers online activities in Australlia feature the following:

Extracted	from:	www.acma.gov.au	(Raco,	2014)

Table: 1.2.1

Extracted	from:	www.acma.gov.au	(Raco,	2014)
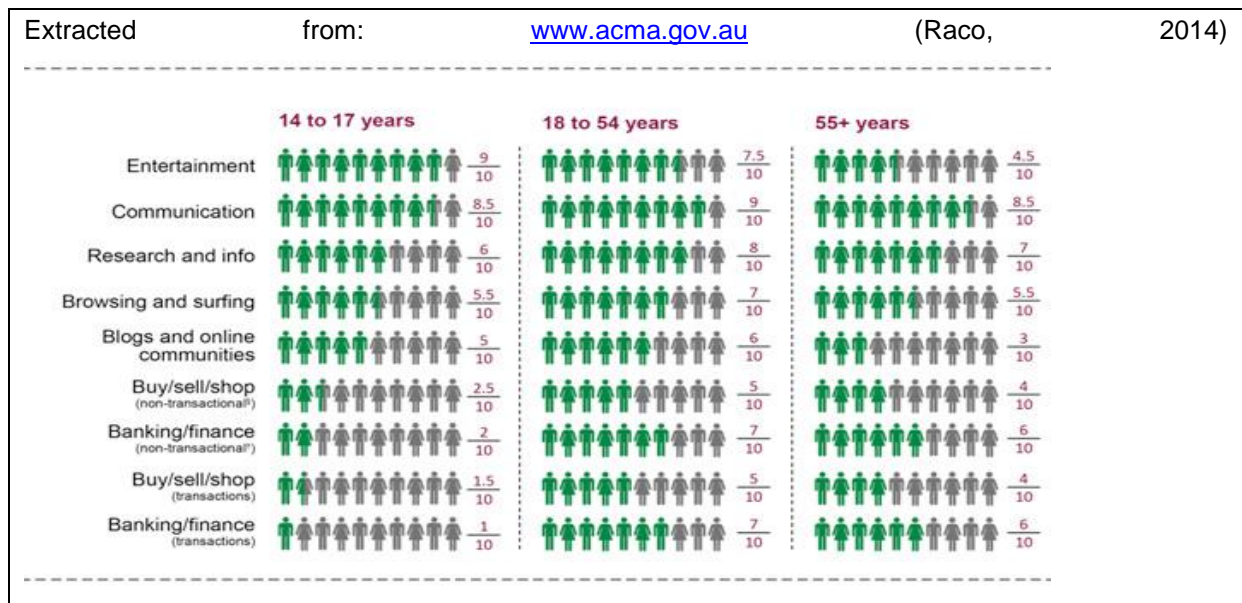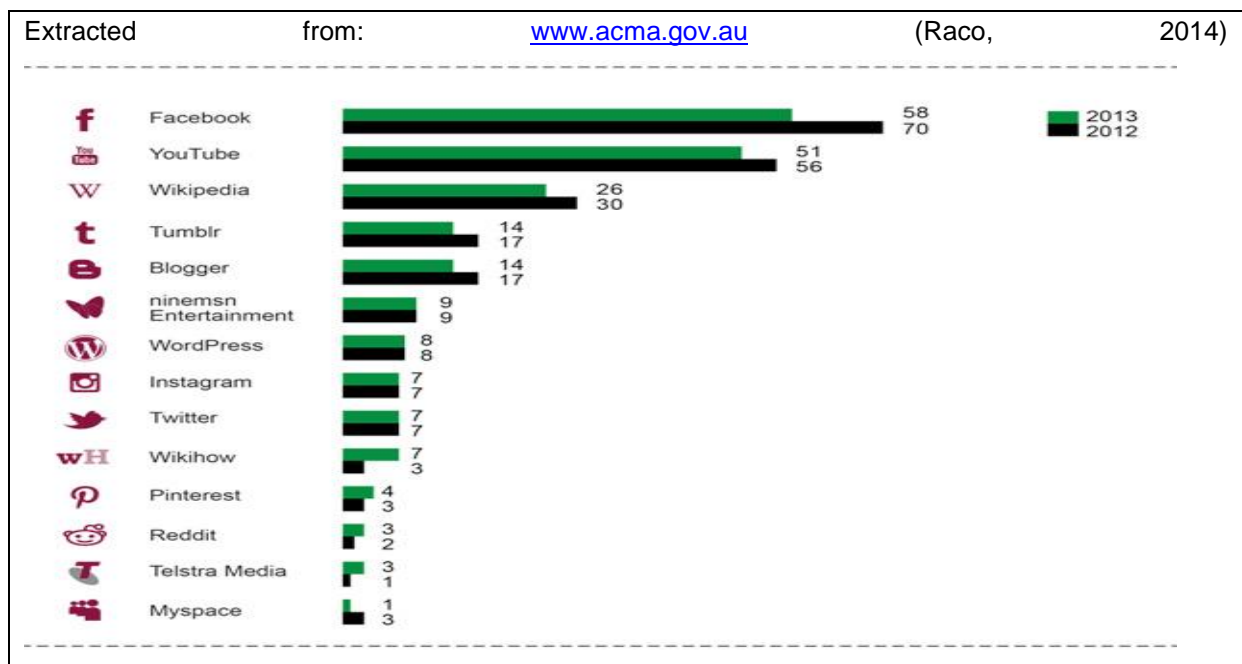
According to Raco (2014) in his findings of the activities Austrialian teenagers mostly engage in on the internet. Teenagers aged 14 years to 17 years spent a lot of time on entertainment activities followed by communication which involves social media. These entertainement activities include facebook, youtube, wikipedia and so forth. The contributing factor may be high socioenomic status in Australia compared to the socioeconomic status in South Africa.

According to Sandu & Rus (2013) excessive internet use can be of danger to health and growth. A number of recreational computer activities such as computer gaming may have an impact on teenagers' creative and imaginative thinking as well as their social skills. Most teenagers due to the use of recent digital media have become computer literate and are especially good at discovering things on the internet. When it comes to computer gaming, Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell (2004) state that adolescence gamers are most likely to be male, swap their gender characters within the gaming profile and may sacrifice their academics to always indulge in computer gaming activities. Agression has been associated with excessive or pathological computer gaming. However, there has been limited research to support this theory (Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell, 2004). Some symptoms of internet gaming addiction are associated with those of substance-related addictions . These includes mood modification when not involve in internet gaming activities, withdrawal symptoms and salience (Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell, 2004).

2.4.1 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying carries with it some emotional implications which may be detrimental to children's identity and self esteem in vulnerable stage of their development such as adolescence. Cyberbulllying comes in different forms but the most popular one is hateful and harmful speech. According to Vanderhoven, Schellens, & Valcke (2014) these statements are usually posted by somebody they know and trust. At most times, it is a total stranger who takes pleasure in hurting other people. Vanderhoven, Schellens, & Valcke (2014) also found that these cyberbullies are usually faced with multiple psychosocial challenges such as poor parent-child relationships, substance use and criminal behaviour which excerbate the problem. This could be as a result of poor father-child relationships as Lie & Wu (2007) view it as a strong predictor of adolescents' school adaptation, coping strategies, socioemotional competence and social interaction amongst peers taking into account anxiety and withdrawal behaviours.

According to Kowalski & Limber (2013) the rate of cyberbullying has increased from 30% to 72% over the years. This rate involves cyberbullying for children in their teen and it is mostly girl teenagers who engage themselves in cyberbullying compared to boy teenagers. Most teenagers who experience cyberbullying stated that it affects

them emotionally and psychologically, bringing about feelings of sadness, low self-esteem and fear mixed with social anxiety (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). They might turn to alcohol or substance abuse for comfort and also increased behavioural problems which feature agression and violence.

In most cases the nature cyberbullying occurs by either name-calling or gossiping (Dehue, Bolman, & Vollink, 2008). Different individuals react differently to this nature of cyberbullying; some ignore this behaviour while others respond by bullying the perpetrator as well, other teenagers avoid the peers victimizing them and some report the matter to someone they trust. According to Hinduja & Patchin (2010) teenagers who ignore cyberbullying develop emotional issues which causes severe emotional distress which may lead to suicide ideation, suicide attempts and complete suicide.

2.4.2 Father-Child Attachment

According to Lie & Wu (2007) a father-child attachment is as important as a mother-child attachment as they are positive indicators for a child's cognitive and emotional development. The internet may become their new attacheement figure as they spend more time on it than communicating with their parents. They may also seek new attachments through social sites which then may affect their existing attachments with their parents.

A research by Li, Li, Wang, Zhao, Bao, & Wen (2013) found that there is a link between how a teenager is treated at school by teachers and friends and their amount of time on the internet. When children are well received at school, they show positive emotions, they enjoy life because they believe they are cared for by teachers and friends. They experience a better sense of belonging and this becomes good for their social well-being. When they experience such positiveness in their lives, the internet does not become their sense of comfort, hence the amount of time they spend on it decreases as their social lives which involves face to face contact increase.

In a situation where a child is living with both parents and there is marital conflict between the mother and father; Wu & Lei (2007)stated that this becomes a motivational factor for the child to turn to the internet as a stress releasor and

comforting tool instead of communicating his or her feelings. A child may depict simliar behaviour its parent-child conflict.

As mentioned previously, activities which teenagers engage on the internet differs from one gender to another. Most male teenagers spend their time playing single user games while females spend most of their time on social networking sites and this was mostly evident in those residing in metropolitan areas (Chen & Fu, 2009). Adolescents not living with their biological parents, and those with low parental involvement and parental unemployment showed a higher relative risk of both pathological and maladaptive internet use. Durkee et al. (2012) also found that adolescents lacking emotional and psychological support are at a higher risk of being pathologically dependent on the internet. This is not a universal study and it can either differ or have some similarities as per country.

Dowell, Burgees, & Cavanaugh (2009) believe that clinicians, educators, health care providers and other professionals need to be informed about internet behaviours in order to be able to assess for children at risk, to make referrals, to intervene and to educate parents.

2.5. Issues Of Identity And Internet Use

A teenager's physical environment is conditioned by personal experiences within that physical and social environment. The internet may offer great entertainment for the teenager and a good escape from reality. However, it cannot replace the live experience of any child and the enriching benefits interpersonal relationships may bring (Dushingtong, 2004). Most parents are very keen to discover their children's potential and abilities through the use of educational programmes on the computer, not taking into account any contribution it may make to their behavioural development (Chen & Fu, 2009). According to Dushingtong (2004) the virtual space provided by the internet allows teenagers to discover more about themselves and who they are.

They develop a sense of autonomy as they become more self confident to express themselves to people in their virtual space. The internet allows them to be their true selves (Dushingtong, 2004). This is subjective to those teenagers with happy,

healthy offline relationships. Teenagers who create and base their identities in cyberspace risk having that same identity stolen especially on social networks where privacy is not a primary factor for users (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013).

On the other hand, Belanger & Berchtold (2011) state that teenagers who are not exposed to or not using the internet can be somehow viewed as being outside the cultural environment of their peers which can somehow affect their self esteem. They might start viewing themselves as having no social identity. Even though the rate of internet access has escalated in South Africa, there is still, however, a digital divide between the lower class, middle-class and upper-class (Napolitano, 2010).

Internet access still remains widely for the middle-class and upper-class, which leaves a huge gap for the lower class which does not get as much exposure in terms of the internet and new technologies (Williamson, 2001). This is where the researchers observes the difference regarding teenagers and their social relationships. The group who are more exposed to the internet may have different ideas about communication, interaction and relationships than the group who are not exposed to these new technologies.

The number of teenage internet users continues to grow. This is not because teenagers are that interested in forming online relationships, gathering information and exploring all the recreational activities the internet has to offer (Lei & Wu, 2007); it is because the internet provides a platform for the teenagers to be free from all the pressures, identity and role confusion that comes with being a teenager. It allows teenagers easy access to a world beyond their families and school, a world where they can be whomever they want to be and be accepted outside their true identity.

2.6. Internet Uses Amongst Teenagers

The internet has expanded into mainstream schools and society. This has led to praise from teachers and parents over it being able to provide quick access to primary and secondary uses that were previously not available, unattainable or time consuming (Friedman & Heafner, 2008). These uses include basic maths skills, language skills, art and creativity. Numerous literature that exists about internet use and teenagers mostly focuses on the recreational computer activities and its

negative outcomes. Friedman & Heafner (2008) argue that there is a lack of evidence in research about technology's impact on students' learning outcome and experience.

Table: 1.3

9 in 10 teenagers have internet access in the **home.**

Nearly 100% with a home internet connection have **broadband.**

69% of teenagers with a mobile phone used a **smartphone.**

74% use a **computer** to go online.

23% go online with **a tablet.**

56% use their **mobile** phone to go online.

72% go online **more than** once a day.
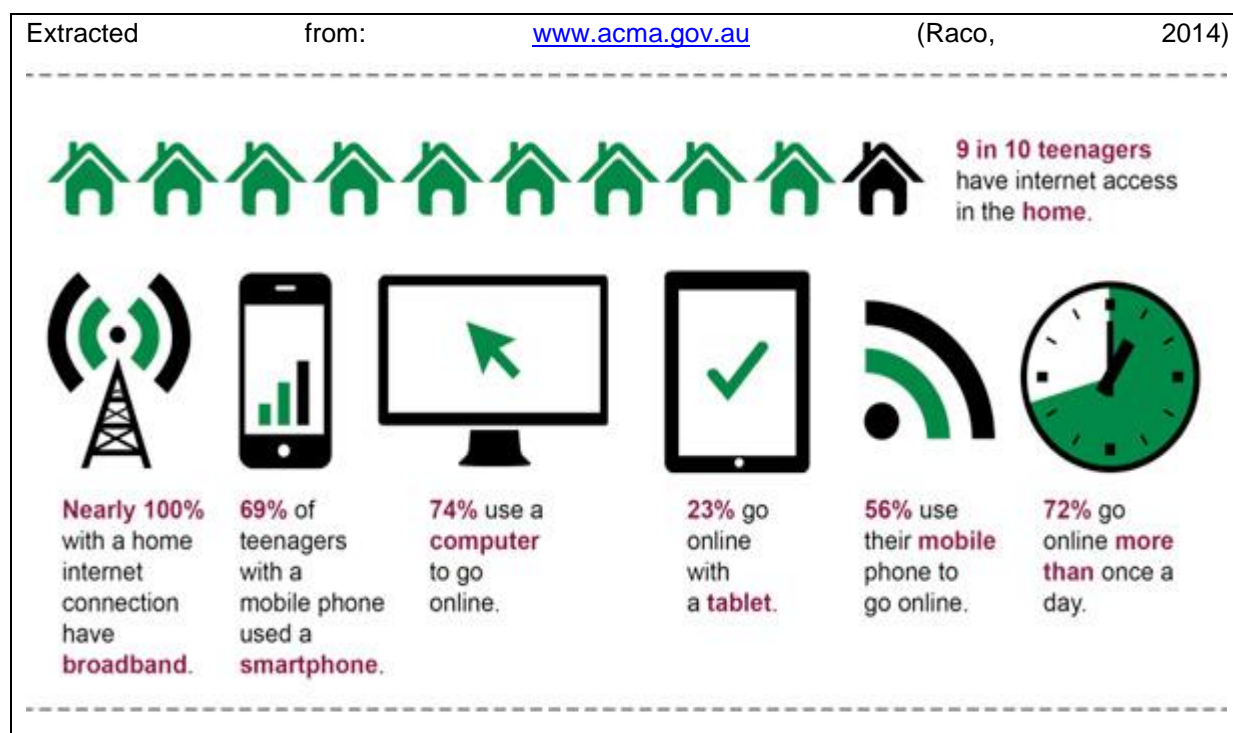
Table 1.3 illustrates the various devices teenagers use to access the internet in Australia. According to Raco (2014) almost a 100% of Australian house holds have access to the internet throught broadband. This means 9 in 10 teenagers have internet access in their homes. The cellphone is the second largest internet access device with 69% of Australian teenagers owning a mobile phone used as a smartphone (Raco, 2014). As mentioned previosly, the activities that most of these teenagers engage in are social networks for example facebook folowed by youtube and wikipedia (Raco, 2014).

Parents have shown great concern over the amount of time their children spend on the internet engaged in recreational activities as opposed to school work as per their agreement when permission to utilize is given by parent to child (Wong, Bianchi, & Raley, 2005) . According to Ng & Wiemer-Hastings (2005) parents are suportive of the educational aspect of the internet and express that it is the primary reason for

allowing their children to use the internet. On the other hand, they are concerned about the risks the internet brings which involve privacy and security, exposure to sexual material and social relationships which are formed through social networks.

According to Kormas, Critselis, Janikian, Kafetzis, & Tsitsika (2011) the internet is an easy tool to use for information retrieval, entertainment and socialization. Studies conducted by Li et al., (2013); Salgado et al., (2014) & Belanger & Berchtold,(2011) suggests that excessive internet use may cause psychosocial problems in teenagers. However, Kormas et al. (2011) suggested that in their adolescent stage teenagers' probability of developing problematic patterns of behaviour is high as they are in a vulnerable stage of their lives. They can be easily influenced, they may be still experiencing identity confusion and have the desire to be accepted by peers and be identified with a certain group of people.

As teengers in this stage of adolescence may be in a journey of self discovery, they might encounter some degree of stress and anxiety when their families and friends seem unsupportive or not as understanding. They may find solence and relief on the internet through social networks or recreational activities. According to Leung (2006) when there is enough social support teenagers are better able to cope with life's stressful events. Stressful life events in children may include one or more of the following: complicated family dynamics such as a divorce or abuse within the family, academic pressure from parents or teachers, birth of a new sibling which may make them question their parents' affection and attention towards them, a death of a family member or pet, changing their caregiver or nanny or favourite teacher or certain illness they may suffer from and so forth (Leung, 2006).

Leung (2006) suggested that a number of research projects in the past show that most teenegers who experience stressful life events turn into substance abusers but since the introduction of new media a few studies have also shown that teenegers do find relief in internet use. (Zillmann, 1988) has better descibed it as mood management; this is whereby individuals seek an optimum level of arousal because they feel their sense of well-being has dropped, they could be experiencing some element of boredom or stress or desire some sort of gratification. They then turn to something that may give them excitement and relaxation which could be the internet

or television or sport. This helps them block anxious thoughts and replace dysphoric moods.

The objective behind mood management is the alteration of moods the individual may not feel comfortable experiencing which then enforces the enhancement of mediocre feelings and to maintain pleasant moods. According to Leung (2006) moods affects an individual frame of mind and behaviour such as their thinking, memory, perception of others and of the self and how they feel about their habitat. This motivates their decision on whether or not they need some form of excitement and relaxation in their lives and what that form might be.

According to Liberatore, Rosario, Colon-De Marti, & Martinez (2011) increase in internet dependence have been described in patients with mental health conditions such as mood and disruptive disorder and with certain personality traits. The non-pathological uses of the internet are the direct opposite of the pathological uses. Most schools now provide good internet access which is like a prerequisite for problematic internet use especially when they are not properly monitored (Liberatore, et, al, 2011). This is because learners in their teens are vulnerable and most things are fascinating to them and they easily adopt good or bad tendencies. Teenagers have free leisure time with fewer commitments; they do not consider time spent on the internet on recreational activities as time wasted (Thatcher, Wretschko, & Fisher, 2008). The amount of time spent on the internet does not constitute problematic internet use but rather what is being done on the internet and the frequency of that activity does.

2.7.   Urban Vs Rural Areas: Teenagers And Internet Use

There might be a digital divide that exists between teenagers from rural communities and those from urban areas (Hollifield & Donnermeyer, 2003). There are numerous public concerns when it comes to the internet and individual's socioeconomic status. This has raised questions such as: How skilled are teenagers from rural areas vs urban areas in using the internet? What do these various teenagers use the internet for? Has having internet access had any form of impact in their life? And who monitors the teenagers during their internet time whether at home or at school and is

that person him/herself computer literate or have awareness about the pros and cons of various uses of the internet? (Hollifield & Donnermeyer, 2003).

From pre-school children, especially those from urban areas are introduced to the internet and teachers even encourage parents to maintain this exposure at home so they gain more computer competency and internet usage skills. They grow up with the knowledge of what the internet can provide for them academically and personally.

According to Hollifield & Donnermeyer (2003) those from the rural areas usually become exposed to the internet at some high school level of their lives or during their adolescent stage where most of them get cell phones from their parents with internet access which then motivates them to start going to internet cafés and libraries for internet access. For an urban child the internet may provide information for homework and projects. They can also download games, music and videos for entertainment and engage in social networks.

On the other hand, for some rural children there could be a lack of skill in using the internet for information; however, they could be efficient in using it for recreational activities such as social networks, videos, music and games (Zheng, Burrow-Sanchez, & Drew, 2008). This could be as a result of the digital divide that may exist between the two environments and also a lack of education about the internet.

As internet access increases in our communities, schools and households, so will the risk of internet dependency amongst our teenagers. Kern & Acier (2011) stated this challenges the effectiveness of a single type of intervention such as that of a parent or school. A multimodal intervention would have to be formulated to provide counselling services when required.

The internet appears to be fulfiling the social defiency needs of teenagers as it allows them to build relationships, maintain their social lives and be socially recognized by their peers (Zheng et al., 2008). The digital divide may exist between the rural environment and the urban environment; however, this could be on an educational level and may be different to their social level. This means that teenagers may be unable to obtain academic information through the internet but they might be more exposed to social networks and other internet based recreational

activities. According to Zheng et al. (2008) the internet carries with it interesting traits such as that it is mediated, non-face to face, interactive and to an extent anonymous. This could explain why teenagers have such an invested interest on the internet especially those who prefer lonesomeness or feels socially inferior.

However, according to Brennan, Moore, & Smyth (1995), Brennan, Ripich, & Moore, (1991) & Gallienne, Moore, & Brennan (1993), the internet functions as a support group tool for individuals with psychological and medical conditions. This could be either affected and/or infected individuals. Teenagers are said to be using these platform to learn more about these conditions pertaining to them, family members and friends. The mostly researched conditions with online support groups include depression, HIV and AIDS, cancer and bipolar. Both teenagers from rural and urban environments utilize this platform.

2.8.   Summary

Adolescent stage of development is a period of tremendous change and these changes occur biologically, psychologically and socially. It has been characterized as a period of "storm and stress". Today's teenagers are growing up with exposure to the internet whether at home or at school. Teenagers have become globally interactive, because it is an important source of information, it offers them psychological escape and it is a good entertainment tool. While using the internet for academic purposes has proven beneficiary for learners out there, recreational activities on the internet may have negative impacts on learners' academic progress and relationships. Recreational activities involve social networking, downloading entertainment and online gaming. Over the years the internet has made online activities so attractive and the epitome of the real world which makes it easier for teenagers to immense themselves in this virtual world, taking into account their stage of development and the vulnerabilities that accompany this stage. Emotional problems are also said to be another cause of pathological internet use where issues of low self-esteem are the motivation for wanting to remain in the created virtual world for longer periods of time than others. Other causal factors may involve peer pressure, environmental distresses, school problems and family dynamics.

Long hours on the internet can cause physical problems as well, for example back strain, eye strain and repetitive stress injury. This could be due to lack of sleep, healthy diet, exercise and lack of constant face to face contact with teenagers of the same age group.

Most research about internet use and teenagers has been conducted in highly developed and digitalized countries. Even though South Africa is a still developing country, most schools and households now have computer and internet access. A study of this nature will be beneficial not only to the teenagers but also parents and teachers as well. Interventions may involve defining the core of the problem while assisting teenagers navigate normal development tasks for identity formation and also assist with social skills which may help boost their self-esteem. Also part of intervening would include family therapy where we get parents to understand the root of the presenting problem, their child and how they can better help their child as well as getting parents involved so that they are psycho-educated as well.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the research methodology that was applied in this research paper. The description and selection of participants as well as the description of procedure used to obtain the relevant data will be discussed in much detail. The researcher will also outline the research paradigm or approach selected for this research study. A description of the questionnaire, data capturing, data analysis, ethical considerations and methodology limitations will be discussed in this chapter.

3.2. Research Paradigm or Approach

A research paradigm is an established research tradition or philosophical framework; this includes accepted theories, approaches, models, frame of reference, body of researches, methodologies (Creswell, 2005). The research paradigm that was adopted by this study was that of a post-positivism approach. This is because it is a quantitative study which aimed to test a hypothesis. It also attempted to determine whether or not internet use has an impact on social relationships among teenagers.

3.3. Description and Selection of Participants

The researcher used a quantitative research design (Carter, 2012). This is because the study aimed to measure the impact of internet use on social relationships of teenagers in the Mhlathuze area in various schools.

3.3.1. Sample Selection

The researcher interviewed learners from six different schools within the Umhlathuze region. The researcher decided on interviewing participants from various school types such as rural schools, semi-private schools and private schools. The reason for the researcher to divide participants was because the researcher wanted to evaluate how different educational backgrounds play a role in the way teenagers view, utilize and understand the internet. The researcher also wanted to determine whether or not different environmental and educational background play a role in the

way teenagers are exposed to the internet. These included two primary schools and four high schools. Participants selected in this researcher study where between the ages of 14 years and 18 years. The participants in this research study where both male and female. This was appropriate for answering the research question.

The targeted sample size was 150 teenagers in various schools who had sound knowledge, experience and understanding of the various uses of the internet, both male and female, in different grades with no focus on a particular race was selected.

3.3.2. Data Collection

The research study was conducted in schools, it was imperative that it consumed as little time as possible for the participants and the teachers as they tried to fit it into their busy schedules.

When the researcher arrived at the various schools, she asked to speak to the headmaster of the school. Some headmasters were available, others were not available. In circumstances were a headmaster was not available, the researcher was then directed to the deputy headmaster. The researcher introduced herself and stated her purpose. The researcher then handed the headmaster a copy of the research proposal, school permission letter from the Department of Education, the ethical clearance letter from the University of Zululand, the school permission letter from the researcher, the informed consent and the questionnaire. After going through each document, the headmaster would decide whether or not to grant the researcher permission to conduct the research at his/her school. Some headmasters granted permission soon after going through each document and connected the researcher to relevant class teachers. Others gave permission, but the researcher was given a designated time and date to return and conduct the research study.

Before the teenagers filled in the questionnaire, the researcher firstly explained who she was and her purpose for being there. The researcher then allowed time for questions from the learners. Upon the researcher's initial visit to one of the schools, the researcher realized that parents would take time returning the signed permission letters to school and other learners would forget to give them to their parents. To eliminate any possible ethical dilemma that could have arose regarding this, such as allowing underage learners (13 years old) to participate according to Annexure 12 of

the HPCSA Psychologists ethical guide, the researcher asked the headmaster to have only 14-18 year olds participating in this study.

After these age appropriate learners were obtained, the inclusion criteria question was asked, "Do you use the internet?" Those who answered "Yes" continued to participate in the research study and those who responded "No" were excused and thanked for their willingness to participate. The random sampling technique was used; hence each member of the researcher's total population got a chance of being chosen to participate in the study. The data took a period of 2 months to complete. Reason being that, he researcher had to wait for permission from the schools.

3.4. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire, which included demographic information, a Likert scale and also close-ended questions, took a maximum of 10-15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was adopted from that of Dr Kim Young used to determine the prevalence of internet addiction. The researcher then changed the questions to suit the current research topic. A pilot study was then conducted to test if the instrument measured what it was set to measure; five participants between the ages of 14 years and 16 years were interviewed at a local rural primary school in the Umhlathuze areas, including 2 females and 3 males. The researcher found that the instrument was indeed suitable to the current research study. Participants were only allowed to select one option per question. The demographic information included aspects such as age, grade, race, gender and school. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of the close-ended questions which are yes or no questions and multiple-choice questions whereby some allowed for multiple responses and others required specific responses. Participants were not required to elaborate on their responses but to give specific answers to the questions asked. The questionnaire consisted of 32 questions. The language used in constructing the questionnaire was made simple for both intermediate phase primary scholars and high school scholars to understand. Ambiguous statements were avoided and questions within the questionnaire were simplified. The researcher also ensured not to ask leading questions which might interfere with the participant's choice of response.

3.5. Data Capturing

Data was captured on the SPSS program for analysis and interpretation. The questions were numbered in ascending order. Each participant was coded differently to avoid repetition of already captured data and to also enable the researcher to match the information with the relevant participant captured in the data should the need arise. Once a participant's data was captured on SPSS, it was marked as "captured". There were a few missing values on the questionnaire, which could be that the learner did not understand the question or they accidentally skipped it or they did not want to respond to it for some personal reason. The researcher had to code these missing values as "none-response" on the SPSS program. This affected the targeted simple size of the researcher. According to the researcher's observation, it did not affect the outcome of the results. The questionnaires with the missing values where still captured and utilized as it had more questions answered which were useful to the research study as opposed to those unanswered.

While capturing the data, the researcher realized that some learners did not specify their age, while others did and some just ticked on the specified criteria. The researcher then coded age in the SPSS program as follows; age categorical (for those who did not specify their age and those who ticked on the specified criteria), and age specific (for those who specified their age). This affected the outcome of the results because the researcher was unable to get the correct measurement of the age group of teenagers that utilize the internet mostly. This was important to the research study because it would have given a clear outline of the teenage age group affected by the internet whether positive and negative and the age of onset.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data was analysed through the use of a statistical program called SPSS. A statistician assisted the researcher in capturing all the participants' questionnaires into the program. The program automatically calculated the number of participants and also gave percentages when commanded. Frequencies on all the questions were calculated through selecting 'analyse', select 'descriptive statistics' then click on 'frequencies', select the relevant question then 'apply' which allows the program to calculate. The researcher also obtained some correlation/associations between two questions to determine any correlation which the researcher suspected it exists.

To obtain correlations the researcher went to the analyse button on the menu bar, selected 'tables' followed by 'custom tables', entered the Y-axis and X-axis by dragging questions from which the researcher wanted to obtain a correlation, then clicked 'apply' and the program calculated and gave percentages. This was done repeatedly throughout the data analysis where applicable.

3.7. Ethical Considerations for the Study

3.7.1 Informed Consent

The researcher ensured that she explained the nature of the study, allowed the participants to ask any questions pertaining to the study and answered those questions. She then distributed informed consent to teenagers aged 14 years to 18 years. The researcher realized that distributing the parental permission form to teenagers aged 13 years may delay to the progression and time to complete the study within its due date. The researcher then decided to start from age 14 years to 18 years as teenagers around this age group appeared more knowledgeable about the internet and the research study was rated low-risk by the University's research committee. The voluntarily nature of the study was explained to the participants and the right to withdraw at any time they feel uncomfortable during the research study

3.7.2. Beneficence

The research study was not harmful to participants. It provided more awareness to the participants and the schools.

3.7.3 Respect for Anonymity and Confidentiality

The nature of confidentiality pertaining to the research study was well explained to the participants and limitations thereto. Participant's responses where kept private as no identifiers such as names where requested. Participants where respected throughout the research study.

3.7.4. Vulnerable group

The participants where well guided throughout the research study. The researcher ensured that they were comfortable. In case one of the participants needed psychological support during the research study, provision was to be made for them.

3.8.   Methodology Limitations

The limitations that the researcher discovered in the methodology were found in the questionnaire. The researcher did not give specific instruction on whether the participants should specify their age or tick on the specified inclusion criteria. Some participants ticked only on the inclusion criteria while others specified their ages. This placed a challenged on the researcher in terms of analysing the data using age as a correlation to some of the participants' responses. Some of the questions on the questionnaire were too broad. The researcher could have made them more specific so as to obtain more information which would have helped to understand the participants' choice of responses better.

3.9. Summary

The selected methodology for this study was able to assist the researcher to obtain relevant information from the specified participants. The headmasters, teachers and learners were accommodated during their school times. Though the researcher obtained a larger sample size of participants than the required number, most of the questionnaires were not completely filled in; however the researcher did not discard them as they still had useful information. This did not negatively affect the results or outcome of the research study. The researcher got assisted by a statistician who is well trained on the SPSS program to capture and analyse the data which made it easier for the researcher to interpret the findings.

CHAPTER 4: Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings of the impact of internet use on social relationships among teenagers will be discussed. An SPSS program was used to analyse the data obtained. Frequency counts and correlations were used during data analyses.

4.2. Analysis of Demographic Information

The target sample size was 150. The sample amounted to 132 participants; 43.9% were males and 56.1% were females. There is no large discrepancy between the two genders. Other schools in the Umhlathuze area did not grant the researcher permission to conduct the research with reasons being unknown to the researcher which amounted to 132 participants instead of 150. This did not negatively affect the research study in any way. Some participants are older but in lower grades, these are participants who started attending school at a later stage of their development because of environmental background and financial constraints. Others have not been performing well academically and have repeated a grade or two. Table 4.2.1 shows the total number of participants and table 4.2.2 shows the number of participants per gender.

Table 4.2.1. Total Number of participants

N	Valid	132
	Missing	0

Table 4.2.2. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	58	43.9%	43.9%	43.9%
	Female	74	56.1%	56.1%	56.1%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

The demographic information also includes age which is divided into two: 'age categorical' where participants who only ticked the inclusion criteria age were grouped and 'age specific' which is where participants who specified their exact age were grouped together. The reason for this is that the researcher was not specific in the questionnaire about whether or not participants should put in their ages or just tick on the inclusion criteria, race, level of study and the type of school which the participants are attending. The data collected featured three types of different schools: rural schools, semi-private schools and private schools. Rural schools are schools located in the rural areas totally subsidized by the government. Semi-private schools are said to be schools within the metropolitan areas that are somewhat subsidized by the government. Private schools are the schools that are totally independent or private organizations and are not subsidized by the government.

Table 4.2.3 Age categorical

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None response	28	21.2%	21.2%	21.2%
	Ticked on inclusion criteria	69	52.3%	52.3%	73.5%
	Age specific	35	26.5%	26.5%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.2.4 Age specific

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None response	98	74.2%	74.2%	74.2%
	14	7	5.3%	5.3%	79.5%
	15	5	3.8%	3.8%	83.3%
	16	7	5.3%	5.3%	88.6%
	17	10	7.6%	7.6%	96.2%
	18	5	3.8%	3.8%	96.2%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

In age categorical 21.2% of the sample did not tick nor specified their age while 52.3% of the sample ticked on the inclusion criteria and 26.5% were specific about their ages. In age specific, 74.2% of the sample size did not specify their ages. 5.3% were 14 and 16 years old, 3.8% were 15 and 18 years old and 7.6% were 17 years old. A total of 25.8% of the sample were specific about their ages, while 74.2% either ticked on the inclusion criteria or left it blank. That is shown in table 4.2.3 (age specific) and table 4.2.4 (age categorical).

Table 4.2.5 Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	94	71.2%	71.2%	71.2%
	White	24	18.2%	18.2%	89.4%
	Indian	11	8.3%	8.3%	97.7%
	Coloured	3	2.3%	2.3%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

On race the category 71.2% of the sample size is Black, 18.2% is White, 8.3% of the sample size is Indian and 2.3% of the sample is Coloured. This is depicted in table 4.2.5 (race).

Table 4.2.6 Level of Study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Grade 8 and below	44	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Grade 9	6	4.5%	4.5%	37.9%
	Grade 10	10	7.6%	7.6%	45.5%
	Grade 11	45	34.1%	34.1%	79.5%
	Grade 12	27	20.5%	20.5%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.2.6 depicts the level of study of the participants. Grade 8 and below and grade 11 had the highest number of participants with grade 8 and below on 33.3% and grade 11 on 34.1%; 20.5% were grade 12 learners, 7.6% were grade 12 learners and 4.5 were grade 9 learners.

Table 4.2.7 School Types

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Semi Private School	17	12.9%	12.9%	12.9
	Rural School	71	53.8%	53.8%	66.7
	Private School	44	33.3%	33.3%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

The research was conducted in five different schools, two primary schools and three high schools. The researcher grouped them into three categories: 53.8% of the sample was collected from rural schools, 33.3% from private schools and 12.9% from semi-private schools and that is depicted in table 4.2.7 (school types).

4.3. Interpretation of results

Table 4.3.1 Q1 Do you use the internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	132	100%	100%	100%

This was the qualifying question to either participate or not participate in the research study. Participants that responded "No" where excluded from participating in the research study and participants that responded "Yes" continued to participate in the research study.

Table 4.3.2 A comparison between genders as to who uses the internet mostly

		Q1_internet_use		
		Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Gender	Male	0	58	0
	Female	0	74	0

Table 4.3.3 An association between the type of school participants attend and the three mostly utilized internet access points

		Q2_school		Q2_phone		Q2_home	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
School	Rural School	0	17	15	2	2	15
	Semi Private School	5	66	45	26	19	52
	Private School	17	27	28	16	25	19

Table 4.3.4 what do you use the internet for mostly?

Internet Activities	Valid Percentage
Academic Information	34.1%
Social networks	53.0%
Online gaming	14.4%
Downloading entertainment	26.5%
Other	5.3%

Table 4.3.5 (A) Association between gender and the internet activities the participants engage in.

		Q3_academic_info			Q3_online_gaming			
		Non Response	Yes	No	Non Response	Yes	No	3
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Gender	Male	1	10	47	1	13	44	0
	Female	0	35	39	0	6	67	1

Table 4.3.5 (B) Association between gender and the internet activities the participants engage in

		Q3_social_networks			Q3_downloading_entertainment		
		Non Response	Yes	No	Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Gender	Male	1	20	37	1	16	41
	Female	0	50	24	0	19	55

In Table 4.3.4, an illustration of the internet activities participants explore on the internet and the frequency of each activity according to each participant has been

made. Social networks appear to be the dominating activity amongst all with 53.0% of participants making it their activity of choice and this is according to the data collected. These social networks include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so forth. According to Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo (2013) young people are the most popular age group that utilize social networks especially facebook in a comparative study done in Columbia and Spain with an age group of 12 years to 15 years. According to the data obtained in this study, participants also utilize the internet for academic information as 34.1% of the participants made that suggestion. Teenagers who use the internet for academic purpose obtained better academic grades compared to teenagers who do not (Chen & Fu, 2009). Participants also enjoy downloading entertainment such as movies, music, videos and games and they are among the 26.5% within this research study. 14.4% of the participants enjoy online gaming such as solitaire, card games, FIFA games, casino games, quiz games and more. The other activities which 5.3% of participants enjoy are online shopping, general internet surfing and exploring a variety of things on YouTube.

An association was found between gender and the activities participants engage in on the internet. This was depicted in tables 4.3.5 (A) and 4.3.5 (B). Females tend to utilize the internet for academic purposes more compared with their male counterparts. On the other hand, more males engage in online gaming compared to females, who seem to enjoy the social networks more than males. Numerous studies conducted on online gaming have found that more males enjoy online gaming than females do (Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell, 2004) & (Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005). Teenagers spend more hours on the internet because of online-gaming. However, there are limited studies about the relationship between gender and social networks as a preferred internet activity. Males and female participants seem to enjoy downloading entertainment equally as explored in this study. A reason for this could be that downloading entertainment on the internet includes a number options such as music, videos, movies, pictures and so forth and such options are enjoyed by most people as it aims to entertain.

Table 4.3.6 Do you prefer these internet activities over friends?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	5	3.8	3.8	3.8
	yes	46	34.8	34.8	38.6
	No	81	61.4	61.4	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.7 An association between gender and preference

between internet activities and friends

		Q4_Internet_over_friends		
		Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Gender	Male	2	26	30
	Female	3	20	51

Table 4.3.8 How much time do you spent on these above- mentioned activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	30min-1hr	60	45.5%	45.5%	45.5%
	2-3hrs	55	41.7%	41.7%	87.1%
	4-5hrs	6	4.5%	4.5%	9.7%
	more than 5hrs	10	7.6%	7.6%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.9 (A) Correlation between time spent on the internet and internet activities

		Q3_academic_info		
		Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q5_time_spent_on_these_activities	30min-1hr	0	18	42
	2-3hrs	1	21	33
	4-5hrs	0	2	4
	more than 5hrs	0	4	6
		0	0	0

Table 4.3.9 (B) Correlation between time spent on the internet and internet activities

		Q3_social_networks		
		Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q5_time_spent_on_these_activities	30min-1hr	0	28	32
	2-3hrs	1	33	21
	4-5hrs	0	3	3
	more than 5hrs	0	5	5
		0	0	0

Table 4.3.9 (C) Correlation between time spent on the internet and internet activities

		Q3_online_gaming			
		None Response	Yes	No	3
		Count	Count	Count	Count
Q5_time_spent_on_these_activities	30min-1hr	0	10	49	1
	2-3hrs	1	6	48	0
	4-5hrs	0	1	5	0
	more than 5hrs	0	2	8	0
	5	0	0	1	0

Table 4.3.9 (D) Correlation between time spent on the internet and internet activities

		Q3_downloading_entertaining		
		None Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q5_time_spent_on_these_activities	30min-1hr	0	16	44
	2-3hrs	1	14	40
	4-5hrs	0	2	4
	more than 5hrs	0	3	7
	5	0	0	1

Table 4.3.9 (A-D) illustrates an association between time spent on the internet and internet activities. Participants seem to spend a maximum of 2-3 hours a day on social networks compared to the activities on the internet such as academic information, online gaming and more.

Table 4.3.10 what do you do in your free time?

Activities in their free time	Valid Percentage
Internet Surfing	16.7%
Visit Friends	35.6%
Go to the Mall	9.1%
Watch TV	45.5%
Other	12.9%

Table 4.3.11 (A) Correlation between gender and activities participants do in their free time

		Q6_internet_surfing			Q6_watching_tv		
		Non Response	Yes	No	Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Gender	Male	0	10	48	0	19	39
	Female	1	12	61	1	41	32

Table 4.3.11 (B) Correlation between gender and activities participants do in their free time

		Q6_visit_friends			Q6_go_to_mall		
		Non Response	Yes	No	Non Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Gender	Male	0	24	34	0	3	55
	Female	1	23	50	1	9	64

Table 4.3.13 How long have you had internet exposure?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non response	3	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
	12 months and below	20	15.2%	15.2%	17.4%
	2-3yrs	30	22.7%	22.7%	40.2%
	4yrs and above	79	59.8%	59.8%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.14 months/years participants have been introduced to the internet and the time they spend on internet activities

		Q5_time_spent_on_these_activities				
		30min-1hr	2-3hrs	4-5hrs	more than 5hrs	
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Q7_internet_exposure	Non response	2	1	0	0	0
	12 months and below	12	6	0	2	0
	2-3yrs	15	10	3	1	0
	4yrs and above	31	38	3	7	0

Table 4.3.13 illustrates the exposure the participants have with the internet for the past months or years. The results on the study show that 59.8% of the participants have been using the internet for four years and 22.7% of the participants have been using the internet for two to three years and 15.2% of the participants have been using the internet for 12 months and below. This shows that participants have been

exposed to the internet from a young age. Schools with resources start exposing their learners to a computer from grade 1 and as they progress with level of education they start learning when, what, how and why the computer is an important tool. Schools with resources include private school and semi-private school situated in the metropolitan areas as mentioned in the literature review of the study.

According to table 4.3.14 participants who have been exposed to the internet for 4 years and above seem to spend a maximum of 2-3 hours on the internet; compared to those who have been exposed to the internet for 2-3 years and 12 months and below. Participants who have had more years of exposure to the internet spend more time online. According to Young (2010) there more time individuals spend on the internet, the more dependency it might create.

Table 4.3.16 Does the internet interfere with school grades?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non response	3	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
	Yes	49	37.1%	37.1%	39.4%
	No	80	60.6%	60.6%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.17 Does the participant's level of study play a role in whether or not the internet interferes with their academics?

		Q8_interfere_with_school_grades		
		Non response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Level_of_Study	Grade 8 and below	2	22	20
	Grade 9	0	0	6
	Grade 10	1	2	7
	Grade 11	0	10	35
	Grade 12	0	15	12

Table 4.3.18 Have your family or teachers ever complained about the amount of time you spend on the internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Yes	46	34.8%	34.8%	35.6%
	No	85	64.4%	64.4%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.19 Does the participant's level of study play role in family or teachers complaining about the amount of time they spend on the internet?

		Q9_family_or_teachers_complain		
		Non response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Level of study	Grade 8 and below	1	13	30
	Grade 9	0	1	5
	Grade 10	0	2	8
	Grade 11	0	17	28
	Grade 12	0	13	14

Table 4.3.18 illustrates whether or not family and teachers have complained about the amount of time participants spend on the internet. According to the data obtained in this study 64.4% of the participants responded "No" and 43.8% of the participants responded "Yes".

Participants in grade 8 and below, grade 11 and grade 12 responded that family and teachers do complain about the amount of time they spend on the internet (table 4.3.19).

Table 4.3.20 Do you find pleasure in using the internet as opposed to any other physical activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non response	3	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
	Yes	45	34.1%	34.1%	36.4%
	No	84	63.6%	63.6%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Participants appear to enjoy more physical activities as opposed to using the internet all the time this is according to the data obtained in this study. Table 4.3.19 shows that 63.6% of the participants responded "No" to the question, Do you find pleasure in using the internet as opposed to any other physical activities? while 34.1% of the participants responded "Yes" to this question. A majority of teenagers love outdoor, physical activities a lot more than they enjoy recreational activities on the internet.

Table 4.3.21 You find the internet more interesting than your friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
	Agree	11	8.3%	8.3%	12.9%
	Sometimes	45	34.1%	34.1%	47.0%
	Disagree	33	25.0%	25.0%	72.0%
	Strongly Disagree	36	27.3%	27.3%	
					100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

According to the results in table 4.3.20; 34.1% of the participants sometimes find the internet more interesting than their friends, while 27.3% disagree saying the internet is not as interesting as their friends and 8.3% of the participants agree that the internet is more interesting than their friends.

Table 4.3.22 You neglect your academic work in order to spend time on the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
	Agree	11	8.3%	8.3%	12.1%
	Sometimes	40	30.3%	30.3%	42.4%
	Disagree	39	29.5%	29.5%	72.0%
	Strongly Disagree	37	28.0%	28.0%	100.0
	Total	132	100%	100%	100%

Participants were asked whether or not they neglect their school work to spend time on the internet (table 4.3.22). 30.3% of the participants responded that sometimes they do neglect their school work to spend time on the internet, while 29.5% of the participants disagreed with the statement and 8.3% of the participants agreed that they do neglect their school work to spend time on the internet. According to the data obtained in this study; this means that even though they do not neglect their school work all the time to focus on the internet, sometimes their school work suffers because of the amount of time they are spending on the internet.

Table 4.3.23 Your friends complain about the amount of time you spend on the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
	Agree	12	9.1%	9.1%	13.6%
	Sometimes	16	12.1%	12.1%	25.8%
	Disagree	42	31.8%	31.8%	57.6%
	Strongly Disagree	56	42.4%	42.4%	
	Total	132	100%	100%	100%

When participants were asked whether or not their friends complain about the amount of time they spend on the internet (table 4.3.23), according to the data obtained in this study 42.4% of the participants strongly disagreed with that statement and 4.5% of the participants strongly agreed.

Table 4.3.24 You often block out distressing thoughts about your life by going online or using the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	18	13.6%	13.6%	13.6%
	Agree	16	12.1%	12.1%	25.8%
	Sometimes	37	28.0%	28.0%	53.8%
	Disagree	31	23.5%	23.5%	77.3%
	Strongly Disagree	30	22.7%	22.7%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.25 Which gender uses the internet to block out distressing thoughts mostly?

		Gender	
		Male	Female
		Count	Count
Q14_Block_distressing_thoughts_about_internet	Non response	0	0
	Strongly Agree	15	3
	Agree	8	8
	Sometimes	13	24
	Disagree	15	16
	Strongly Disagree	7	23

Table 4.3.26 (A) social networks as a coping strategy for distressing thoughts.

		Q3_social_networks		
		Non response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q14_Block_distressing_thoughts_about_internet	Non response	0	0	0
	Strongly Agree	0	7	11
	Agree	0	11	5
	Sometimes	1	22	14
	Disagree	0	16	15
	Strongly Disagree	0	14	16

Table 4.3.26 (B) *downloading entertainment as a coping strategy for distressing thoughts*

		Q3_downloading_entertaining		
		None Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q14_block_distressing_thoughts_about_internet	Non Response	0	0	0
	Strongly Agree	0	6	12
	Agree	0	3	13
	Sometimes	1	12	24
	Disagree	0	7	24
	Strongly Disagree	0	7	23

Table 4.3.26 (C) academic information as a coping strategy for distressing thoughts

		Q3_academic_info		
		None Response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q14_block_distressing_thoughts_about_internet	Non Response	0	0	0
	Strongly Agree	0	3	15
	Agree	0	4	12
	Sometimes	1	10	26
	Disagree	0	10	21
	Strongly Disagree	0	18	12

Table 4.3.27 You prefer spending your free time online

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	14	10.6%	10.6%	11.4%
	Agree	26	19.7%	19.7%	31.1%
	Sometimes	38	28.8%	28.8%	59.8%
	Disagree	27	20.5%	20.5%	80.3%
	Strongly Disagree	26	19.7%	19.7%	100.0
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.28 Do family and friends complain over the teenager's free time spent online?

		Q9_family_or_teachers_complain		
		Non response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q15_Prefer_spending_free_time_online	Non response	0	1	0
	Strongly Agree	1	5	8
	Agree	0	14	12
	Sometimes	0	14	24
	Disagree	0	6	21
	Strongly Disagree	0	6	20

According to the data obtained in this study, participants were asked whether or not they prefer spending their free time online. In table 4.3.27 there is an illustration of participants' responses. There seems to be a relatively even distribution between their categorized responses which are: sometimes (28.8%) disagree (20.5%) and strongly disagree (19.7%). This means that the participants' decision to spend their

time on the internet frequently is situational. There could be situations that may encourage them to be online during their free time which were not determined in this study. According to Kim, LaRose, & Peng (2009), Lei & Wu (2007) & Leung (2006) loneliness, parental neglect, stress and other emotionally distressing situation may prompt teenagers to increase the time they spend on the internet. This is because teenagers have the tendency of using the internet as coping mechanism from these emotional distress instead of verbally communicating their feelings.

However, parents and teachers do complain about the amount of time the participants spend on the internet during their free time. This is according to the data obtained in this study.

Table 4.2.29 You prefer using the internet for recreational activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Disagree	19	14.4%	14.4%	15.2
	Agree	29	22.0%	22.0%	37.1%
	Sometimes	51	38.6%	38.6%	75.8%
	Disagree	24	18.2%	18.2%	93.9%
	Strongly Disagree	8	6.1%	6.1%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.2.30 an association between their preferred recreational activities and whether it interferes with their school grades.

		Q8_interfere_with_school_grades		
		Non response	Yes	No
		Count	Count	Count
Q16_Prefer_using_internet_for_recreational_activities	Non Response	0	0	1
	Strongly Disagree	0	9	10
	Agree	1	13	15
	Sometimes	2	18	31
	Disagree	0	8	16
	Strongly Disagree	0	1	7

When participants were asked whether they prefer using the internet for recreational activities or not, this is how they responded according to the data obtained in the study; 22.0% of the participants responded "agree" which means they do prefer using the internet for recreational activities, 18.2% said they "disagree" which means they do not prefer using the internet for recreational activities and 38.6% of the participants said "sometimes' which mean they do opt for that preference and sometimes they do not prefer using the internet for recreational activities (table 4.3.29).

Table 4.3.31 You walk in silence with your friend while you are busy on your cell phone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	10	7.6%	7.6%	8.3%
	Agree	10	7.6%	7.6%	15.9%
	Sometimes	36	27.3%	27.3%	43.2%
	Disagree	36	27.3%	27.3%	70.5%
	Strongly Disagree	39	29.5%	29.5%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

According to table 4.3.31 participants were asked whether they walk in silence with their friends while they are busy on their phone. There was an equal distribution of responses (27.3%) between those participants who answered sometimes and those who disagreed with this statement. 29.5% of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. This is according to the data obtained in this study.

Table 4.3.32 You experience feelings of loneliness when you are offline

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	12	9.1%	9.1%	9.8%
	Agree	13	9.8%	9.8%	19.7%
	Sometimes	24	18.2%	18.2%	37.9%
	Disagree	31	23.5%	23.5%	61.4%
	Strongly Disagree	51	38.6%	38.6%	100%

Table 4.3.32 You experience feelings of loneliness when you are offline

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	12	9.1%	9.1%	9.8%
	Agree	13	9.8%	9.8%	19.7%
	Sometimes	24	18.2%	18.2%	37.9%
	Disagree	31	23.5%	23.5%	61.4%
	Strongly Disagree	51	38.6%	38.6%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.32 illustrates the participants' responses when they were asked if they experience some feelings of loneliness when they are offline. The participants' responses were as follows: 38.6% strongly disagreed, 18.2% said sometimes and 9.8% of the participants agreed. A majority of the participants never feel lonely when they are offline.

Table 4.3.33 You get bored when you are offline

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	2	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
	Strongly Agree	12	9.1%	9.1%	10.6%
	Agree	14	10.6%	10.6%	21.2%
	Sometimes	38	28.8%	28.8%	50.0%
	Disagree	36	27.3%	27.3%	77.3%
	Strongly Disagree	30	22.7%	22.7%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.34 An association between experiencing boredom when offline and the number of years teenagers have been exposed to the internet.

		Q7_internet_exposure			
		Non Response	12 months and below	2-3yrs	4yrs and above
		Count	Count	Count	Count
Q19_bored_when_offline	Non Response	0	0	0	2
	Strongly Agree	0	6	3	3
	Agree	0	3	3	8
	Sometimes	2	4	8	24
	Disagree	0	6	7	23
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	9	19

Participants in this study were asked whether they feel bored when they are offline. There is a relatively equal response between participants who answered sometimes (28.8%) and disagree (27.3%) while 10.6% agreed (table 4.3.34).

According to table 4.3.34 the participants who sometimes experience boredom when offline are those you have been exposed to the internet for a lengthy number of years (four years and above). This means the internet does to a certain extent build a tolerance if it has been used for a large number of years or months; this tolerance can manifest itself as a negative mood state, for example feeling bored when without it (Young, 2010).

Table 4.3.35 You do not like sharing your internet time with someone else

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	16	12.1%	12.1%	12.9%
	Agree	16	12.1%	12.1%	25.0%
	Sometimes	22	16.7%	16.7%	41.7%
	Disagree	44	33.3%	33.3%	75.0%
	Strongly Disagree	33	25.0%	25.0%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

According to table 4.3.35 of the data obtained in this study, when participants were asked if they do not like sharing their internet time with other people, 33.3% of the participants disagreed with the statement. That means they have no problem sharing their internet time with other people, whether family or friends. There was an even distribution of responses between participants who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement (12.1%), while 16.7% of the participants responded that sometimes they do not like sharing their internet time with someone else.

Table 4.3.36 You snap, shout or get annoyed when someone disturbs you while you on the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	10	7.6%	7.6%	8.3%
	Agree	8	6.1%	6.1%	14.4%
	Sometimes	20	15.2%	15.2%	29.5%
	Disagree	37	28.0%	28.0%	57.6%
	Strongly Disagree	56	42.4%	42.4%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.36 illustrates the participants' responses about whether or not they snap, shout or get annoyed when someone disturbs them while on the internet. A majority of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement (42.4%), 15.2% said sometimes while 7.6% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement. Participants do not become moody when they are disturbed while on the internet.

Table 4.3.37 You often lose sleep due to late night internet use

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	16	12.1%	12.1%	12.9%
	Agree	17	12.9%	12.9%	25.8%
	Sometimes	39	29.5%	29.5%	55.3%
	Disagree	23	17.4%	17.4%	72.7%
	Strongly Disagree	36	27.3%	27.3%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.38 An association between teenager's loss of sleep due to late night internet use and the amount of time they spend in a day on the internet?

		Q5_time_spent_on_these_activities				
		30min-1hr	2-3hrs	4-5hrs	more than 5hrs	5
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Q22_loss_sleep_due_to_internet	Non Response	0	1	0	0	0
	Strongly Agree	8	6	1	1	0
	Agree	5	10	1	0	1
	Sometimes	17	16	1	5	0
	Disagree	8	11	2	2	0
	Strongly Disagree	22	11	1	2	0

Table 4.3.39 An association between gender and late night internet use?

		Gender	
		Male	Female
		Count	Count
Q22_Loss_sleep_due_to_int ernet	Non Response	1	0
	Strongly Agree	11	5
	Agree	5	12
	Sometimes	20	19
	Disagree	7	16
	Strongly Disagree	14	22

In table 4.3.37 participants in this study were asked whether or not they often lose sleep due to late night internet use. By late night internet use, the researcher meant the participants' designated bedtime by authoritative figures in their households. Most of the participants (29.5%) said that sometimes they do lose sleep as a result of late night internet use, while 27.3% of the participants strongly disagreed and 12.9% of the participants agreed with the statement, stating that they do often lose sleep as a result of late night internet use.

Table 4.3.40 You have tried cutting down the amount of time spent on the internet but have failed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	19	14.4%	14.4%	15.2%
	Agree	23	17.4%	17.4%	32.6%
	Sometimes	24	18.2%	18.2%	50.8%
	Disagree	36	27.3%	27.3%	78.0%
	Strongly Disagree	29	22.0%	22.0%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Table 4.3.41 Failure to cut down the amount of time spent on the internet is associated with the number of years participants have been exposed to the internet

		Q7_internet_exposure			
		Non Response	12 months and below	2-3yrs	4yrs and above
		Count	Count	Count	Count
Q23_tried_cutting_down_internet_time_but_failed	Non Response	0	0	0	1
	Strongly Agree	1	6	5	7
	Agree	0	3	5	15
	Sometimes	0	2	4	18
	Disagree	1	3	12	20
	Strongly Disagree	1	6	4	18

Table 4.3.32 You lie about the amount of time spent on the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%
	Agree	12	9.1%	9.1%	15.9%
	Sometimes	22	16.7%	16.7%	32.6%
	Disagree	44	33.3%	33.3%	65.95
	Strongly Disagree	45	34.1%	34.1%	100%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

Participants in the study were asked whether they lie about the amount of time they spend on the internet (table 4.3.32), the majority of the participants (34.1%) strongly disagreed, which means they are truthful about the amount of time they spend on the internet to themselves, family, friends and teachers. 16.7% of the participants stated that they do sometimes lie about the amount of time they spend on the internet and 9.1% of the participants agreed with the statement.

Table 4.3.33 You feel like another person when online

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non Response	1	.8%	.8%	.8%
	Strongly Agree	14	10.6%	10.6%	11.4%
	Agree	11	8.3%	8.3%	19.7%
	Sometimes	24	18.2%	18.2%	37.9%
	Disagree	27	20.5%	20.5%	58.3%
	Strongly Disagree	54	40.9%	40.9%	99.2%
	Total	132	100%	100%	

In table 4.3.33 participants' responses with regards to this study are illustrated when they were asked if they feel like another person when they are online; 40.9% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement, 18.2% of the participants responded that sometimes they do feel like another person when they are online and 10.6% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement. This means a majority of the participants are able to maintain their own identity even when online especially because they are in the psychosocial stage of development which Erikson in Biehler (1981) termed "identity vs role confusion". This is the stage where participants are most vulnerable; these participants show that they have a strong sense of identity and belonging and that they do not need to feel like another person online. They can be themselves and be comfortable in that virtual space.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1. Introduction

The internet is an important and widely used tool worldwide; it has become very popular in South Africa irrespective of it being a developing country. This is evident among the teenagers of the Umhlathuze area in the northern part of Kwazulu-Natal. 132 learners who participated in the research from different schools and from different economic backgrounds have access to the internet. A majority of these teenagers access the internet through their cell phones, while others access it at home, schools, internet cafés, the community library and other teenagers access from all of the above mentioned.

5.2 Discussion of Results and Findings

As mentioned in chapter 3, the questionnaire contained an inclusion/exclusion criterion on Section B which is the first question that says "Do you use the internet?" Those who ticked on "Yes" were allowed to continue with the questionnaire and those who ticked "No" were excused. This is because the study was targeted specifically for participants who use the internet. Table 4.3.1 illustrates the total number of participants who ticked "Yes" and the total number of participants who ticked "No". 100% of the students ticked "Yes" and 0% ticked "No". This is in line with the total number of participants interviewed (table 4.2.1) which means all participants in this study are internet users and they qualify to be part of this study.

Table 4.2.9 shows which gender accesses the internet mostly. Females are seen to be accessing the internet more than their male counterparts. The reason for this could be that there are more female participants in the study compared to males.

Participants were then asked from where they access the internet. The options were given as follows: at school, their phones, the community library, at home, the internet café or all of the above. Some participants selected more than one option showing that they access the internet from various places, while others selected the 'all' which means they access the internet through all of the given options. Table 4.3.2 illustrated the participants' responses.

Table 4.3.3 where do you get internet access?

Internet Access Points	Valid Percentage
School	16.7%
Phone	66.7%
Community Library	3.0%
Home	34.8%
Internet Cafe	3.0%
All of the above	15.2%

According to table 4.3.3, 66.7% teenagers access the internet mostly on their phones, while 34.8% of these teenagers access the internet at home. 16.7% access the internet at school and 3.0% access the internet through the community library and the internet café while the remaining 15.2% access the internet in more than one place, including the school, their phones, the community library, at home and the internet café. In a study conducted by Napolitano (2010) stated that teenagers in Africa obtain internet access mostly from their phone and South Africa has the highest number of teenagers which is 68% who own cellphones with an internet browser and they utilize this browser. Statistics by Statista (2014) show an increase of 91% households in America with internet access since the internet was introduced. These numbers have been predicted to increase by 0.2% in 2015. According to the data obtained in this study South African household in Kwazulu-Natal Umhlathuze area has 34.8% of internet access in the comfort of their own homes. This number could increase if a study was to be conducted in South Africa at large.

Community libraries and internet cafes have made the internet accessible to teenagers and communities at large but only a limited number of teenagers seem to be accessing the internet from these areas. A possible explanation could be that the library may not have enough computers to serve the whole community and that it operates at certain hours and that it could be inconvenient for some teenagers to

utilize this resource. Another possible explanation could be lack of awareness for such services provided for the community of Umhlathuze area Kwazulu-Natal.

An association was found between the type of school the participants attend and their point of internet access. Table 4.3.3 shows that participants from rural schools mostly access their internet from their mobile phones since there could be lack of resources at school and they may not have computers and some of them do not have them at home because of the household's economic, education and employment status as most teenagers who attend rural schools are from the lower-class (disadvantaged background). Semi private school participants appear to be striking a balance between accessing the internet at school and at home. Such teenagers can be grouped with the middle-class as they are from more advantaged backgrounds staying in the semi-urban and urban areas. Participants from private schools maintain a balance between the different points of internet access. They are more advantaged compared to the other two groups of participants and can be placed between middle-class and upper-class. Hollifield & Donnermeyer (2003) stated in their study that there is a digital divide between teenagers residing in rural areas and those from urban and semi-urban areas. Their rationale to this statement is similar to that of the researcher of this study. Hollifield & Donnermeyer (2003) went on to explain that this digital divide affects the academic progress of teenagers in rural schools and teenagers in semi-urban and private schools improve in their academics.

Participants were asked whether they preferred spending time on internet activities as opposed to spending time with friends (table 4.3.6); 34.8% responded "yes" while 61.4% responded "no" and 3.8% did not answer that question. This shows that even though participants utilize the internet and all activities that come with it, they still value much their friends' time. According to data obtained in this study; males appear to enjoy their time spent on the internet activities as opposed to time spent with friends. This can also be associated with the online gaming as they showed that they enjoy it more than females as shown in table 4.3.6 (A) and as illustrated by (Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell, 2004) in their study. Online gaming can create internet dependency which means male teenagers will enjoy spending more of their time online as opposed to studying or spending time with family and friends. Online

gaming affords them the space to choose who they want to be and the confidence to play and be part of a community of online gamers even though it is in a virtual world (Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell, 2004).

Participants enjoy spending their time on the internet and also the activities which the internet has to offer. 45.5% participants seem to spend a maximum of 30 minutes to an hour on the internet, while 41.7% of the participants spend 2-3 hours online. Only a limited number of participants spend between 4-5 hours and more online. This is illustrated in table 4.3.9.

An association between gender and activities of choice by participants was explored in table 4.3.11 (A and B). It was found that both males and females enjoy internet surfing relatively the same way, though their internet activities of choice may differ as shown in table 4.3.11 (A-D). However, female participants enjoy watching more television during their free time compared to male participants. A reason for this was not explored and there are limited studies done exploring this phenomenon. Even though more female participants enjoy watching television compared to the male participants, they seem to equally enjoy visiting their friends. Time with their friends allows them to bond, play, study; watch their favourite TV programs and so forth; this is according to the data obtained in this study. This is needed within their stage of development as they explore social relationships (Biehler, 1981). According to the data obtained in this study, more female participants compared to male participants enjoy going to the mall

Participants in this study were asked whether or not internet surfing including the recreational activities the internet offers interferes with their school grades in Table 4.3.16 shows their responses. 60.6% of the participants responded "No", while 37.1% of the participants responded "Yes", 2.3% of the participants did not respond to the question, for reasons unknown to the researcher. This shows that even though participants enjoy internet surfing and all it has to offer, they ensure that school comes first and the internet does not interfere with that. This could be because of their personal desire to succeed and do well at school, or parental supervision, which is making sure that participants do their required school work before engaging in any internet activities and also teachers motivating participants to commit to their school

work or they might be in trouble at school. Parents have shown great concern over the amount of time their children spend on the internet engaged in recreational activities as opposed to school work as per their agreement when permission to utilize is given by parent to child (Wong, Bianchi, & Raley, 2005) . According to Ng & Wiemer-Hastings (2005) parents are supportive of the educational aspect of the internet and express that it is the primary reason for allowing their children to use the internet.

According to the data obtained in this study, table 4.3.24 illustrates that 28.0% of the participants sometimes use the internet as a coping mechanism when experiencing some sort of distress in their lives, whether being social, academic or family. While 23.5% of the participants disagree, meaning they do not use the internet to block out distressing thoughts about their lives. This could mean they are able to better communicate their problems with others, they have a good support system or they prefer not even dealing with distress and carry on with life. This is a possible area of research worth exploring. 13.6% of the participants strongly agree that they use the internet to block out distressing thoughts about their lives. This could be as a result of a poor support system, lack of social life or the inability to verbalize emotions. This can also differ across genders. As teenegers in this stage of adolescence may be in a journey of self discovery, they might encounter some degree of stress and anxiety when their families and friends seem unsupportive or not as understanding. They may find solence and relief on the internet through social networks or recreational activities. According to Leung (2006) when there is enough social support teenagers are better able to cope with life's stressful events. Stressful life events in children may include one or more of the following: complicated family dynamics such as a divorce or abuse within the family, academic pressure from parents or teachers, birth of a new sibling which may make them question their parents' affection and attention towards them, a death of a family member or pet, changing their caregiver or nanny or favourite teacher or certain illness they may suffer from and so forth (Leung, 2006).

Leung (2006) suggested that a number of research projects in the past show that most teenegers who experience stressful life events turn into substance abusers but since the introduction of new media a few studies have also shown that teenegers do

find relief in internet use. (Zillmann, 1988) has better descibed it as mood management; this is whereby individuals seek an optimum level of arousal because they feel their sense of well-being has dropped, they could be experiencing some element of boredom or stress or desire some sort of gratification. They then turn to something that may give them excitement and relaxation which could be the internet or television or sport. This helps them block anxious thoughts and replace dysphoric moods.

The researcher took three of the internet activities which the participants use mostly according to the data obtained in this study; table 4.3.5 which are social networks, academic information and downloading entertainment. Table 4.3.26 (A-C) illustrates that social networks are the internet activity mostly used by participants when they want to block distressing thoughts about their lives. This could be that social networks allow people the platform to be whoever they want to be and say whatever they want to say (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013); it gives people power and freedom to express their opinions and other people can support them in that virtual space, which could be support they do not get in real life. In social networks, friends are made and relationships are formed and also relationships can be broken through the same medium (Thuseethan & Kuhanesan, 2014). According to Almansa.et.al (2013) when they consider the vulnerable nature of teenagers in this adolescence stage of their development where they seek for social acceptance, reassurance and a sense of belonging. When they feel these needs are not being met they can experience some sort of distress which may lead to them turning to social networks for comfort.

According to the data obtained in this study, table 4.3.38; participants who spend 30 minutes to an hour and those who spend 2-3 hours on the internet do feel that their sleep gets compromised because of the amount of time they spend on the internet. Online gaming, like social networks, can be time consuming, especially because of the desire to win the game and the adrenaline rush players experience when they move from one level of the game to another (Griffiths, Davies, & Chapell, 2004). According to table 4.3.3 of the data obtained in this study; participants mostly access the internet through their mobile phones, this means that teenagers can utilize their phones in the comfort of their own private space, their parents may not be aware of their internet usage or the time teenagers spend on the internet. Teachers can,

however, observe it in their classrooms as it may manifest itself as fatigue and underperforming academically, though they might not be aware of the causes (Kern & Acier, 2011).

As according to the data obtained in this study, the researcher found that participants do sometimes lose sleep due to late night internet use (table 4.3.37). Participants were then asked whether they have tried cutting down the amount of time they spend on the internet with no success; table 4.3.40 illustrates their responses: 27.3% disagreed with the statement, which means they are able to control their urge to use the internet for long hours, 18.3% of the participants said they sometimes fail to cut down the amount of time they spend on the internet and at other times they are successful and 17.4% of the participants agreed with the statement, stating that they find it difficult to control the amount of time they spend on the internet, hence it sometimes affects their sleeping patterns.

According to the data obtained in the study participants who have been exposed to the internet for four years and above are the people who find it most difficult to cut down the amount of time they spend on the internet compared to those participants who have been exposed to the internet 12 months and below (table 4.3.31). According to Kern & Acier (2011) there is a certain tolerance or dependency which the internet creates which is determined by the number of years participants have been exposed to it. The more years participants are exposed to the internet, the higher the level of tolerance. This high level of tolerance has the potential to create some sort of internet dependency for participants in the future especially because digital technology is evolving immensely in South Africa (Kern & Acier, 2011) .

5.3. Summary

According to the data obtained in this study the teenagers seem to enjoy spending time with their families and friends. They also enjoy physical activities compared to the internet. The internet may not affect their social lives; however, it has the potential to affect them in their personal lives. The research findings showed a null hypothesis (Ho) between internet use and teenager's social relationship, that is;

internet use among teenagers does not have a negative effect on teenager's social relationship.

The researcher noticed a gradual build-up of internet dependency within the participants' responses within this study. The pattern is evident in these statements; the teenagers sometimes use the internet to block out distressing thoughts about their lives, it is an activity of choice during their free time, they sometimes lose sleep due to late night internet use and they have failed to cut down on the amount of time they spend on the internet. These are symptoms of internet dependency according to (Kim, LaRose, & Peng (2009). This is evident amongst teenagers who have been exposed to the internet for a lengthy number of years (four years and above) and who spend a lot of hours in a day on the internet (1-3 hours). This means the more the internet is utilized by teenagers for longer periods of a day; the more there is a likelihood of them developing internet dependency (Kern & Acier, 2011).

However, the alternative hypothesis (H1) was proven to be true, that is; the internet has a positive contribution to the teenager's academics. According to the data obtained in this study; parents and teachers are not complaining about the amount of time the teenagers are spending on the internet.

The shortcoming of this study is the gender imbalance; as mentioned on the data analysis section, there are more female participants in this study compared to males, most of the participants ticked on the inclusion criteria, which made it impossible for the researcher to make comparisons in data analysis using the various ages of the participants.

These findings are somewhat similar to those discussed in the literature review. What the researcher found similar is that teenagers are very familiar with the uses of the internet for various things although they might not be as advanced as teenagers from already developed countries like China, United States of America, United Kingdom and so forth. Teenagers in South Africa, north of Kwazulu-Natal, showed in this study through their responses that they are also benefiting academically from the internet as they use it to search for academic information. What the researcher found to be different from this study to other studies across the border, is that though there

are gradual signs of internet dependency with the teenagers in this study, there are no sign of problematic internet usage or internet addiction. Digital technology is amongst the things that are still developing in South Africa (Napolitano, 2010). The internet plays a positive role in teenager's school performance according to the results obtained in this study. Therefore parents and teachers should encourage this tool in teenagers live. The amount of time the teenagers spend on the internet, especially on social networks, should be monitored by parents and teachers.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

The internet is the mostly widely used tool worldwide. It allows people to connect to one another through social networks, shop, and research information, download entertainment and it offers general entertainment especially to the younger generations (Chen & Fu, 2009). The literature review highlighted that most teenagers are now addicted to the internet. According to Durkee, et al. (2012) teenagers display problematic behaviour related to the internet such as identity confusion, attachment with strangers, academic difficulties, lack of sleep and so forth. These are some of the negative impacts the internet has on teenagers. However, the literature also highlighted positive effects the internet carries with it such as; academic success for teenagers, the opportunity to communicate with friends and families away from them, the skill of learning to utilize the tool and a sense of belonging for teenagers experiencing isolation from peers and also 'edutainment' (Williamson, 2001) & (Tsao & Steffens-Hansen, 2008). There was not much research done on the social impact of the internet among teenagers; this is where the researcher saw the gap for the current study in a South African context.

In this study, the researcher found that frequent internet use does not have a negative impact upon teenager's social relationships. Even though teenagers spend a lot of time on the internet and on social networks, they are still able to utilize their free time visiting friends, watching television at home with their families and visiting the mall as well. The negative impact of the internet amongst teenagers that the researcher observed in this study is the gradual internet dependency that is building amongst our teenagers. This area needs further exploration. The researcher observed through the participants' responses that their sleep sometimes gets affected because of the internet, they experience difficulties in cutting down the amount of time spent on the internet, and they experience feelings of boredom without the internet even though they have the option of physical activities. These are the signs to be wary of in terms of internet addiction discussed in the literature review according to Young (2010).

The researcher found positive effects of the internet amongst teenagers of Umhlathuze, north of Kwazulu-Natal, through the teenagers' responses. The internet provides teenagers of Umhlathuze area with the space to search for academic information which, in turn, improves their grades. Hence the internet does not affect their school grades negatively. It seems the teenagers are aware of the benefit the internet has on their education and they utilize it.

6.2. Recommendations

There are limited studies in South Africa regarding the social impact of the internet. The researcher found that the internet does not impact negatively on the teenagers in the Umhlathuze area north of KwaZulu-Natal.

The researcher would, therefore, recommend that workshops be conducted and facilitated by a trained mental health practitioner (preferably a psychologist) who would aim at psycho-educating the teenagers, teachers and parents about the internet, positive and negative effects, signs and symptoms of internet addiction, the importance of monitoring the teenagers' internet times and how to seek help should they suspect internet dependency in their teenagers.

This study was only conducted in one of the many regions in KwaZulu-Natal Province, the researcher recommends further research on this topic looking at other regions in KwaZulu-Natal and also expanding it to other provinces as well. Other research focus could be on how the internet impacts certain individuals' identity.

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UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A PSYCHOLOGY MASTERS RESEARCH

Research topic: Impact of internet use on Social Relationships in Teenagers.

Researcher: Ms N.P. Thabethe

Researcher's Phone Number: 072 516 9439

Supervisor: prof. J.D. Thwala

Supervisor's Phone Number: 072 541 4384

Co-Supervisor: Mrs. A.N.Ndlazi

Co-Supervisor's Phone Number: 084 628 2676

Time limit: 10-15 minutes

Description of the study: The researcher is investigating whether internet use by teenagers has an impact on their social relationships. As a teenager and pupil would you assist the researcher by being a participant in this study and fill in attached questionnaire?

In order to participate in this research study, it is necessary that you give your informed consent. By signing this informed consent statement, you are indicating that you understand the nature of the study and your role in this research and that you agree to participate in this research. Please consider the following before signing:

- I understand that I am participating in a psychological research;

- I understand that my identity will not be linked with my data and that all information I provide will remain confidential;
- I understand that I will be provided with an explanation of the research in which I participated. In addition I understand that I may contact the Psychology Department if I have questions concerning my rights as a participant in a psychological research or to report research related injury;
- I understand that participation in this research is not required but is voluntary and that I can withdraw anytime without any penalties.

By signing this form I am stating that I am over 13 years of age, and I understand that the above information and consent to participate in this study being conducted at the University of Zululand.

Signature:………………………………………………………..

Date:……………………………………………………………

       (Of participant)

Signature:………………………………………………….

Date:…………………………………………………………

       (Of researcher)

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPACT OF INTERNET USE ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN TEENAGERS

Background information of respondent

1. **Age:**
   - ☐ 13-18 years
2. **Gender:**
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female
3. **Level of study within the school**
   - ☐ Grade 8 and below
   - ☐ Grade 9
   - ☐ Grade 10
   - ☐ Grade 11
   - ☐ Grade 12
4. **Race**
   - ☐ Black
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Indian
   - ☐ Colored
   - ☐ Other (specify)……………………………………
5. **Name of school:**

Instruction: for each of the following, please tick [**X**] in the box that corresponds with you.

Section A

1. Do you use the internet
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

2. Where do you get access the internet?
   - ☐ At school
   - ☐ Your phone
   - ☐ At the community library
   - ☐ At home
   - ☐ At the internet café
   - ☐ All of the above

3. What do you use the internet for mostly?
   - ☐ Academic information
   - ☐ Social networks
   - ☐ Online gaming
   - ☐ Downloading entertainment
   - ☐ Other (specify)…………………………………………………………

4. Do you prefer internet activities over time with friends?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ no

5. How much time do you spend on the above mentioned activity(s)
   - ☐ 30 min-1 hour
   - ☐ 2-3hours
   - ☐ 4-5hours
   - ☐ More than 5hours

6. What do you do on your free time?
   - ☐ Surf the internet (includes all activities mentioned in number [1])
   - ☐ Visiting friends
   - ☐ Go to the mall
   - ☐ Watching TV

□ Other (specify…………………………………………………………………

7. How long have you had exposure with the internet?
       □ 12months and below
       □ 2-3years
       □ 4years and above

8. Does it interfere with your school grades?
       □ Yes
       □ no

9. Has your family or teachers ever complained about the amount of time you spend in the internet?
       □ Yes
       □ No

10. Do you find pleasure in using the internet as opposed to any other physical activities?
       □ Yes
       □ no

SECTION B

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. You find the internet more interesting than your friends					
2. You neglect your academic work in order to spend time in the internet					
3. Your friends complain about the amount of time you spend on the internet					
4. You often block out distressing thoughts about your by going online					
5. You prefer spending your "free time" online					
6. You prefer using the internet for recreational activities					

7. You walk in silence with your friend while you are "busy" on your cell phone					
8. You experience feelings of loneliness when you offline					
9. You get bored when you offline					
10. You do not like sharing your internet time with someone else					
11. You snap, shout or get annoyed when someone disturbs you while on the internet					
12. You often lose sleep due to late night internet use					
13. You have tried cutting down the amount spent on the internet but have failed					
14. Do you lie about the amount of time spent on the internet?					
15. You feel like another person when online					

Thank you for participating!!!

Ms N.P. Thabethe

P.O Box 170

Mtubatuba

3935

The School Principal

Private Bag….

……………

Date:

Dear Madam/Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL

My name is Nokuthula Pricilla Thabethe and I am a registered Psychology Masters Student at the University of Zululand in KwaDlangezwe campus. The research I wish to conduct for my Master's dissertation involves the impact of internet use on social relationships in teenagers at schools in Umhlathuze area.

The objective of the study are:

1. The study aims to examine how does internet use impact social relationships in teenagers,
2. To determine whether the internet has a positive contribution on the teenager's school work.
3. To identify any negative implication internet use may have on their social relationships

This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof. J.D. Thwala who is the Head of Department of psychology and also Faculty Dean of Arts and also the co-supervision of Mrs. A.N.Ndlazi who is a lecturer and course co-coordinator for the Masters Counseling Psychology program in the University of Zululand KwaDlangezwe campus.

I am hereby seeking your consent to interview some of your pupils in the school as participants for my study.

I have provide you with a copy of my research proposal which includes copies of the research instrument (questionnaire), parental permission and consent forms to be used in the research process as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee.

Upon the completion of the study, I undertake to provide the school with a bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on; cell no: 072 516 9439 or email me at: petronel.mp@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Ms Nokuthula Pricilla Thabethe

Student Counselling Psychologist

Signature………………………….

University of Zululand

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Miss N Thabethe
PO Box 170
MTUBATUBA
3935

Dear Ms Thabethe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research: **"THE IMPACT OF INTERNET USE ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG TEENAGERS AT SCHOOLS IN UMHLATHUZE AREA"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of educatio Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The reaseacher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The reseacher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way frm the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Head of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 October 2015 to 15 September 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survery atht eh school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Uthungulu District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 07 October 2015

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty