PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN'S INTERNET USE

by

ZOE ANN BUTLER

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Supervisor: Professor J.G. Howcroft

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Declaration

Name: Zoe Ann Butler

Student number: 210079843

Qualification: Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology)

Title: Parents' Perceptions of their Adolescent Children's Internet Use

Declaration: I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise is my own work and that it has

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Signature: ....

Date: 26 May 2016

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to Chris my best friend, and husband,

You

are the poem

I never knew

how to write

and this life

is the story

I have always

wanted

to tell

– Tyler Knott Gregson (2013)

I will never forget the moment I realised I loved you.

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"*If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.* "(Newton, 1676).
To my supervisor, Prof. Howcroft, I am not able to better describe the honour and privilege it has been to walk this road with you. You never miss an opportunity to encourage curiosity or to share knowledge and for me, it is like sunshine and rainfall to a growing tree. Thank you for everything.

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To my father, I know you would be so proud.

To my mother, through our bond, I am here today. Thank you, I love you.

To the members of the Department of Psychology, NMMU, Mark Twain (1874) said:
"*The two most important days of your life are the day you are born and the day you know why.*"
Thank you for allowing me to fulfil my 'why'. Thank you for sharing experience and knowledge, and mostly thank you for being an example of the potential of the discipline of psychology.

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Abstract

Parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use significantly influences the parental mediation strategies they choose to use with their children. The motivation for this explorative research study was to understand the impact of psychological and social influences on users of the Internet in South Africa. Both locally and internationally, there is a focus on the use of digital Internet devices to facilitate education. Access of South Africans to the Internet, whether for social or educational use does not exist in a vacuum, exempt from the bidirectional forces of the individual and the environment they use the Internet in, whether it is family or academic.

This study firstly focusses on how parents perceive their adolescent children's Internet use, and secondly, how they parent their children's use of the Internet. The common topics and themes that emerged from this study allow for the development and provision of professional services that individuals, couples, families, and groups require for the use of, or exposure to the Internet.

This study uses an explorative-descriptive qualitative research design with an interpretive paradigm and snowball sampling. The qualitative research design focussed on the concepts of self-reflexivity, context, and thick description while utilizing multivocality of 1) international and South African research on cyber citizenship, including cyberbullying, cyber harassment, and legal consequences, with 2) psychological aspects of the psychosocial developmental challenges of adolescents from the iGeneration including the benefits, risks, and dangers of using the Internet, and 3) qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with parents from Generation X who are raising and educating a generation of children on the other side of the Digital Divide. Tracy's 8 'Big-Tent' criteria for guiding excellence in qualitative research and

Tesch's model of content analysis was used during the content analysis process. Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the participants' narratives included 1) experiences: positive and negative, 2) observations: behavioural changes and gender differences, 3) parenting methods: parental interaction, rules, and limits, 4) concerns: risks, and 5) opinions: personal views.

This research study provides a thick description of South African and international literature and combines the literature with the voices of the participants and the researcher to produce discussions based on the findings of this qualitative study. Conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of this study informed future research on cyber citizenship by providing a detailed understanding of the context of South African parents and children, the psychosocial developmental challenges of adolescents and, how educational programmes can be best created to effectively impact on the generations of parents, teachers and children in South Africa.

Key words: adolescents, cyber citizenship, cyberbullying, cyber harassment, Generation X, iGeneration, Internet, legal consequences, parental mediation strategies, perceptions, psychoeducation, social comparison, social networking

Parents' Perceptions of their Adolescent Children's Internet Use: Introduction

1.1. Foundation

    This chapter will describe and discuss the basis for the present study which arose from the need for research into cyber psychology, more specifically the understanding of cyber citizenship. The following section will describe the rationale for the study. Through providing an understanding of the need for research into cyber citizenship, particularly in South Africa, the present study's research objectives can be contextually defined and understood. This chapter will, furthermore, review the methodological approach used in the study, describing the data collection and analysis process. Important ethical considerations will also be discussed.

1.2. Raionale

    "We are now all connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain" (Hawking, 2014, p.1). There is no doubt that the Internet has changed the lives of many individuals. For many children and adolescents the Internet has always existed, having been born into the online generation. With this electronic world comes the lawless world of the World Wide Web (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2008). "Kids can be cruel. And kids with technology can be cruel on a world-wide scale" (Sullivan, 2006, pp.1).

    In 2012 UNICEF, in conjunction with the social networking platform Mxit conducted research into the mobile phone usage and the youth of South Africa. This research was conducted due to concern over the particular vulnerability of the South African market. South Africa uniquely straddles a Western and African world. Many of Africa's youth have access to mobile devices, and the Internet and yet South Africa struggles economically and educationally.

In a summary of the findings of the UNICEF study, the researchers report that South African adolescents and youth are the first adopters of mobile technology with 72% of the 15 to 24-year age group owning or having access to a cell phone. This study highlighted that the primary risks faced by South African adolescents and young people online are talking to and meeting strangers, cyberbullying and sexting (UNICEF, 2012).

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is currently involved in a multi-disciplinary research study, working in conjunction with the school of Information and Communication Technology. This ten-year plan is in response to a governmental expectation for research at South African universities to be responsive to societal and national needs. The research conducted is directed at the focus area of combating cyber-crimes through the development of cyber citizenship. The aim of this initiative was not only to generate research at NMMU but also to attract researchers from several of the schools at the university to focus on research in cyber-crime. Cyber citizenship is currently a core institutional research theme for the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. By integrating different faculties, this research should have a significant impact and influence on research being conducted on cyber psychology in South Africa.

The motivation for this research study was to understand the impact of psychological and social influences on users of the Internet in South Africa. Both internationally and nationally, there is a focus on the use of electronic Internet devices to facilitate education. Access of South African's to the Internet, whether for social or educational use does not exist in a vacuum exempt from the bidirectional forces of the individual and the environment they use the Internet in, whether it is family or academic.

1.3. Terminology used in the Study

    1.3.1. Perception. This study is focussed on parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use. Perception can be defined as the intake of visual, audio and other information that allows a person to interpret a situation. Perception is also informed by existing information which is salient to the person, for example, value and belief systems and significant previous experiences which may contain facts and emotions (Cherry, 2016). This core knowledge blends with the new input of information and is processed very rapidly by the person to, at minimum conclude the context of a situation or event, and at maximum to make quick decisions. Gaining insight into the perceptions of a person allows for an understanding of why an individual may act and react in a certain manner (Cherry, 2016). Improving the efficacy of psycho-educational programmes highlights the need for qualitative research in particular, as aspects such as *verstehen*, can provide insight and valuable data (Tracy, 2013).

    1.3.2. The Internet. Is defined as an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organisational computer facilities around the world (Merriam-Webster, 2013). The year 2009 marked the 40th anniversary of the Internet. No one owns the Internet. There are organisations that facilitate the development and functioning of the web of connections, and there are telecommunications companies that own parts of the hardware, also known as backbones of the Internet in individual countries (Business Dictionary, 2016).

    1.3.3. Cyber Citizenship. Also known as a *netizen* or a *digital citizen*, a cyber citizen is defined as a person who regularly uses the Internet (Farlex, 2016). The term is associated with certain behaviours in cyberspace, encouraging respectful and thoughtful actions. This set of suggestions for interaction is known as *netiquette*. Developed for educational purposes amongst children and adolescents, adult information based on these principles is becoming a necessary

intervention tool for professionals attempting to foster an online environment free from cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and harassment. The Canadian Government offers the following guidelines on their website aimed at adult users of the Internet: 1) Don't be a cyberbully; 2) Think first, act second; 3) Protect yourself and those around you; 4) don't "steal" information; 5) Share your knowledge (Government of Canada, 2015, p.1).

1.3.4. Online Communication. This broad term refers to the ways that individuals can communicate with each other on the Internet, not the technical 'how' but the websites and web-based technology that exist to facilitate communication. As technology is developing at the same time the current author is compiling this treatise, only established and recognised online communication will be described in this section. Omissions are due to the current author's lack of familiarity with the new, developing technology.

The first widely used commercial application of the Internet for most individuals was email. Email is similar to posting a letter using registered mail; the sender can be assured of delivery of the communication at the very least (Dictionary.com, 2016). VOIP, the acronym for Voice Over Internet Protocol is the way that popular communication systems such as Skype operate. This can be compared to a phone call over the Internet (PCMag, 2016). An aspect of online communication that remains popular is community gathering websites in the form of forums and chat rooms. Usually dedicated to a certain topic or theme, these sites allow individuals to ask questions, share knowledge and media such as photos and video, or discuss topics. The privacy settings on these types of sites differ from being closed to open for any person. Often users will represent themselves with avatars (pictures that represent them, instead of actual descriptions) and user names, or handles that allow the individual to remain anonymous and within a range of degrees, role play a personality other than their own. This freedom and

anonymity may be beneficial and detrimental (PCMag, 2016). Placed in between forums and web pages are sites that provide video sharing services, probably the most recognised is Youtube with the slogan 'Broadcast Yourself' (Youtube, 2016). This type of online communication permits the creation and publication of original or existing audio video material on any imaginable topic. These videos are uploaded to the host's server and are accessible to any person that has an Internet connection (Christensson, 2009). Privacy settings are available to limit public access to the material.   The final type of online communication to be discussed in this section is the use of web pages, including blogs. Individuals, groups or organisations that have their own developed web pages often allow visitors to the site to leave commentary regarding the products or topic of the web page. Personal web pages often contain blogs, a contraction of the word weblog. Blogs are a version of online journaling and are typically updated often, sometimes a number of times a day. Blogs allow individuals to directly share opinions, thoughts, personal experiences, and ideas. Blogs can allow comments from readers, but this is a feature that can be disabled. Video blogs, or vlogs, have gained popularity in the last ten years. Social media will be discussed in the following section.

1.3.5. Social Media. The years of 2002 and 2003 saw the shape of social media start to form with earnest for example with sites such as Linkedin, MySpace, and Friendster. However, it was with the 2006 public opening of Facebook that social media had arrived in the world to change human connection (Digital Trends, 2014). Defined as a means of communication, based on the Internet, it focusses on the establishment and maintenance of relationships through the sharing of personal or professional information (Dictionary.com, 2016). In 2012, smartphones and tablets became an international commercial triumph with 450 million sold between the years of 2012 – 2014 (Statista, 2016). An article by Business Tech in 2014 reported that the number of

South African smartphone users in 2014 as 20 million; the article does warn that the data used for the report may have been skewed. The article further reports that 78% of the world population have televisions, and 73% own a mobile phone. (Business Tech, 2014).

The popularity of smartphones has meant that applications specifically designed for mobile communication purposes have also reached high levels of popularity. Such applications include WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat, the last two mentioned image sharing sites have recorded a massive 20 billion images from release in October 2010 to 2014 (Digital Trends, 2014).

1.3.6. Internet Devices. For the purpose of this study the description of Internet devices will be limited to computers, tablets, and smartphones. Virtual reality and wearable technology will not be discussed. Computers are simply defined as "a programmable usually electronic device that can store, retrieve, and process data." (Merriam-Webster, 2016, p.1). Desktop personal computers and laptop computers are the two largest categories recognised commercially. Other than computers, smartphones and tablets are described as the most used devices to access the Internet. These devices have changed the way that social media and social networking integrate into one's life. The online communication that previously relied on a computer is now available in a completely mobile manner, providing the functionality of a computer, a phone and a camera into one mobile device (Digital Trends, 2014).

1.4. Objective of the Study

This study firstly focusses on how parents perceive their adolescent children's Internet use, and secondly, how they parent their children's use of the Internet. The common topics and themes that emerge from this data will allow the development and provision of professional

services that individuals, couples, families, and groups require for the use of, or exposure to the Internet.

1.5. Research Methodology

The present study used an explorative-descriptive qualitative research design with an interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research values concepts of self-reflexivity, context, and thick description (Tracy, 2013). If explorative research functions to provide the 'why' of an occurrence or topic, then descriptive research tells the 'how, with whom and when,' allowing the researcher the tools to describe the words and impressions of participants, to the reader (Neuman, 2003).

This research design was identified as the most suitable for the broad exploratory nature of the research topic. Participants would be able to describe their perceptions and parenting techniques in their narrative. The objective of this study was to explore 1) how parents perceive their adolescent children's Internet use, and highlights their understanding of the benefits and risks of having adolescents online, and 2) to identify mediation techniques use by parents to manage their adolescent children's Internet use.

1.5.1. Data collection. The data collection process consisted of individual, semi-structured interviews. Interviews were guided by an interview schedule that made use of open-ended questions that encouraged the participants to expand upon the descriptions of their perceptions about their adolescent children's Internet use.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device to ensure that the data obtained in the interview was accurately captured and available to the researcher at a later stage. The

interviews were then transcribed, by an experienced external transcriber, into a text format. This data was used during the analysis process.

1.5.2. Data analysis. The analysis process of this present research study made use of Tesch's (1990) eight steps of qualitative data analysis. In these eight steps, the data is reviewed in a broad to a more specific process, whereby categories are identified, followed by themes and sub-themes within the data.

To meet the sub-criterion of member reflections, an independent coder was used to simultaneously analyse the data using Tesch's eight steps (Tracy, 2010). Member reflections is a step used throughout the research process and utilises the seeking of input and expertise from experienced relevant professionals in order to strengthen the credibility of the study (Tracy, 2010).

Once the data analysis process was finalized, and no further categories, themes or sub-themes emerged, the research participants were contacted telephonically to verify the information obtained from the interviews.

1.5.3. Ethical considerations. The researcher is bound by ethical research practices that inform responsible, honest, respectful, and professional behaviour during the research process. The researcher took the following steps in order to maintain integrity and prevent ethical misconduct: obtaining informed consent from the participants to ensure that deception was avoided; accurately collected data; maintained the confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of participants and their families; accurate dissemination of findings, and the maintaining of competence within the researcher's professional role.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants through the use of a written contractual agreement that included the aim of the study, the researcher, research procedures, potential risks, confidentiality, dissemination of results, and confirmation of the participants' voluntary involvement, specifically the right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were encouraged to ask questions regarding the study, and to request clarification with regards to any part of the research study.

All efforts were made to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the participants and their families, with any information that may lead to the possible identification of participants omitted from the findings. Documentation collected during the research process was securely stored by the researcher.

The risks for potential psychological distress and discomfort was considered to be low, with no areas of concern identified by the researcher, the researcher's supervisor, or institutional committee. However, the researcher adhered to all ethical guidelines regarding the avoidance of harm.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide an overview of the focus of the study, as well as the methodological process, including data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations. The researcher also sought to provide a brief description of terminology used in the study.

Chapter two follows with a description of the Internet. The researcher aims to provide literature that will contextualize the medium of the Internet including the benefits, risks, and dangers. Chapter three will provide a description of the generational differences, and the relevant characteristics of the parents that participated in this study and, their children. This chapter hopes

to provide an understanding of how much the world has changed, and the challenges this brings to the first generation of parents that are having to mediate their children's access to the Internet as adolescents. In this chapter, the researcher includes a South African perspective. Chapter four details the methodology used in this study. The qualities of a qualitative research design are described in relationship to this topic. This chapter further discusses sampling procedures, as well as, data collection and analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations are discussed. Chapter six provides the findings and discussion of the study. This chapter honours the voices of the participants, researcher, and literature in a relevant description of the research topic. The researcher attempts to provide insight into the context of the participants, as well as providing a perspective from the lens of a psychologist and researcher. This chapter is organized into a broad category, main themes, and sub-themes. Chapter seven concludes the study with a summary of the salient outcomes and highlights important details regarding the process of the study. The methodology used to determine the findings is also described. This final chapter includes the limitations of the study and the researcher's personal reflections. The chapter concludes with the implications of the present study, including recommendations for future areas of research related to this study.

The following chapter will introduce a literature review of the Internet, including the benefits, risks, and dangers of being online.

Chapter Two: The Internet: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

2.1. Introduction

The most significant innovation of the twentieth century has been the invention and development of the Internet (Aldrich, 2013). Once confined to a stationary desktop personal computer attached to a telephone line, the Internet is now accessible from smartphones, laptops, tablets, game consoles, and other electronic devices. With the growth of the Internet, access to the World Wide Web has become an available resource for most urban South African adolescents. Never before has the human race been so connected, and South Africans are amongst the highest percentage of Internet consumers in Africa (Internet World Stats, 2015).

As Internet users, South Africans may appear to be an ageless online community but according to a survey conducted by SurveyCompare ZA in 2014, 40% of South African Internet users are aged 15-24 (SurveyCompare, 2014). This large subgroup is known as the 'iGeneration' has never known the world without the existence of the Internet (Carr, 2010). In comparison, their parents form part of the 'Before and After' group also known as Generation X. These Internet users remember the experience of a time without the Internet and have adjusted to the rapid evolution of an online world.

This chapter will describe the differences between the medium of the Internet versus the content available on the Internet. It will further explore literature on the advantages, disadvantages, and risks of Internet use. Opinion and literature from both Internet enthusiasts and sceptics will be discussed in order to highlight how the communication medium has evolved and can affect online users.

2.2. The Internet

In 1977, Ken Olsen, CEO of Digital Equipment Corporation stated: "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." (Strohmeyer, 2008. p. 1). Ken Olsen's famous prediction is understandable, it must have been staggering to imagine how society would evolve into a digital online community, and how quickly this could happen. Four decades later society struggles to justify why anyone would not want a computing device. Even critics of the Internet can see the benefits for education and communication (Carr, 2010). However, it is Clifford Stoll's 1995 Newsweek article, *Why the Web won't be Nirvana,* which clearly highlights how much the Internet, and Internet users, have changed in 21 years. Stoll predicted that the Internet was nothing more than an 'oversold community' and that people would never choose rather to purchase goods online, or read their daily news on the web. He managed to swing and miss at every possible target, claiming that human beings value personal interaction far too much for any of it to become digitized. He felt strongly that sexual needs would never be satisfied in a virtual manner (Stoll, 1995). To quote Mr. Stoll (1995) commenting about the potential usefulness of the Internet on the first page of his infamous article "Uh, sure."

The conclusion to be drawn from these two well-known examples is that even the experts can get predictions about technology very wrong. It is difficult to imagine what will happen in the future when we have nothing in our history to compare the Internet to except the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in 1436 (Oregan State University Libraries, 2012). The most comprehensible way to ride the wave that is the Internet is to remain firmly planted in the present, in other words, what is happening online at this time.

2.2.1. Legal consequences in South Africa. In Sadleir and De Beer (2014), the authors explain the possible legal consequences that South African parents, and their children, could face when using the Internet. The misconception that cybercrime has a legal realm of its own is a myth. The South African' constitution and law applies to cyber activity in the same manner as it does to face-to-face behaviour. Therefore, acts such as hate speech, defamation, harassment, to mention a few could result in serious consequences (Sadleir & de Beer, 2014).

In South Africa children as young as 10 years of age may be considered legally responsible for their behavior online, including criminal acts. From the age of 14 adolescents are considered to have full legal capacity, and are held responsible for their online behaviour. In 2011 legal precedent was set in the case of le Roux and others versus Dey, a case that continued all the way to the Constitutional Court of South Africa. The case involved two adolescent school students (aged 14 and 17 at the time of the offense) who digitally altered a photo to represent the face of their school's deputy principal, on the naked bodies of men in compromised sexual positions (Brenner, 2011). This image was circulated around the school on mobile phones. Both adolescents were charged criminally, and sued for defamation of the deputy principal's character. They were found liable in the South African High Court, and the verdict was upheld in the Supreme Court of Appeal. Finally, the Constitutional Court of South Africa also upheld the verdict (Brenner, 2011). The current author selected the above case due to the significant case law it created, and to illustrate that legal consequences for online behaviour has been developing for a number of years in South Africa, and is now a far more common occurrence.

Besides criminal prosecution, online actions could result in disciplinary action by education institutions, and could be as serious as expulsion. "Every parent (and future parent) …needs to accept one thing: your children's life will be forever entwined with digital

technology." (Sadleir & de Beer, 2014., p. 171) The authors emphasize the reputational harm that could result from risky online behaviour by children and describe the permanency of information on the Internet (Sadleir & de Beer, 2014). "The conversations that your children will have with their classmates will not take place on the playground, or on a scrappy note changing hands in third-period Geography, but rather in front of the whole world. "(Sadleir & de Beer, 2014., p. 172)

Parents' understanding of their adolescent children's reputation and legal capacity online, could alter and affect mediation strategies. These mediation strategies are discussed in chapter three of this study.

2.2.2. Medium versus content. In 1964, with the publishing of his book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* Marshall McLuhan wrote: "The electric technology is within the gates" and "the medium is the message." (Carr, 2010, p. 18). McLuhan was prophesying about the impact of electronic media, and it is unknown if he expected a revolution the likes of the Internet, but his commentary regarding the importance of understanding the impact of the medium versus the content is very relevant to a contextual understanding of the Internet's impact for both sceptics and enthusiasts. How Internet users experience and perceive the Internet is often attributed to the content on the Internet, and in a limited degree to how the content is delivered, in other words, how the Internet works means it is integrated into individual's lives (Carr, 2010). A medium is defined as "a third-party or element through which a message is communicated." (Rouse, 2005, p.1). In electronic communication, the medium can be either a physical means of transmitting the information, such as optical fiber, or the manner in which it is presented, such as multimedia or advertising media (Rouse, 2005).

McLuhan (1964) described radio as an intrusive medium, which imposed itself on the listener, whereas television drew in the watcher. The Internet can be described as being both invasive and distracting. The content is provided by devices and technology and is available to individuals whenever they chose to access the content (Harris, 2014). The way the Internet works provides unlimited amounts of information to be presented to users. This appeals to the curiosity of human beings, and at the same time allows unrequested information to be communicated (Harris, 2014). Web and social media sites provide both the information sought for by the user, as well as other advertising or news information that is presented on the same page (Harris, 2014). Search engines use personal information 'mined' from individuals social networking profiles, online searches, and other sources to 'filter' not only search responses, but also that further information is often presented as 'this may also be of interest to you', thereby luring the Internet user to other sites and topics (Carr, 2010).

Knowledge about how the Internet functions should not only be focussed on the content of the Internet, but also on the bidirectional interaction between the individual and the medium of the Internet. This facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of Internet use (Carr, 2010). The benefits of Internet use will be discussed in the following section.

2.3. The Good.

The Internet has been heralded as the "golden age of access and participation" (Carr, 2010. p 21). Individuals can communicate globally, in real time, experiencing immediate reactions and interactions with people continents away. At the touch of a screen, they are able to share their briefest thoughts, emotions, beliefs and opinions with the Internet world.

2.3.1. Knowledge, the give and the take. Individual's continents apart can share and collaborate on projects and initiatives like never before in history. Journalists such as Heather Pringle from *Archaeology* magazine is quoted as saying "Google is an astonishing boon to humanity, gathering up and concentrating information and ideas that were once scattered so broadly across the world that hardly anyone could profit from them" (Pringle, 2009; Carr, 2010. p. 32). Bruce Friedman, a pathologist in the faculty of the University of Michigan Medical School, is quoted in the book *The Shallows* as saying that he has never been as creative as he is now, since having access to all the information and people on the Internet (Friedman, 2008; Carr, 2010. p. 35). Philip Davis, Ph.D. Science Communications, said in 2008:

> The Internet may have made me a less patient reader, but I think that in many ways, it has made me smarter. More connections to documents, artifacts, and people means more external influences on my thinking and thus on my writing (Davis, 2008; Carr, 2010. p. 38)

2.3.2. The Social experience. There is recognition by the Internet enthusiasts that they are making sacrifices, but the journalists, doctors, and communication specialists mentioned above are of the opinion that the Internet has a positive influence on their minds and work. But what does the Internet do for the social needs that human beings experience?

2.3.3. Social capital, social interactions and social relationships. Social capital is understood as the connections, similar and shared values, and one's ability to function in relationships with individuals as well as within a group. It is the individual's social well-being and ability as human beings to perpetuate their existence (OECD, 2007). Social interaction is considered to be the process by which the individual acts and reacts with other people they are in contact with in their lives (Moffitt, 2016). Social relationships are defined as the sum of an

individual's social interactions over a period of time (Psychology Dictionary, 2016). These relationships can be positive, or negative and are comprised of aspects such as social support, social integration and negative interaction. Social support and social integration are seen as positive aspects of social relationships and, thereby act as a protective factor against negative interactions. For the purpose of this study it is important to recognize that the Internet, as with any other means of human interaction, can be an agent for the positive or negative development of social capital, social interaction and social relationships (Cohen, 2004).

A study by Lee (2009) investigated four dominant hypothesis of social capital, social interactions, and social relationships in an attempt to establish whether the Internet has significant negative effects on adolescent's social development.

2.3.3.1. Displacement hypothesis. This hypothesis is based on the premise that the Internet may be harmful to adolescent's psychosocial development because of the amount of time they spend using the Internet. Essentially this hypothesis states that if an individual is doing one action, it must be in replacement of another action. Therefore, no allowance is made for the individual being socially inactive at any time (Lee, 2009). Researchers report that according to the displacement hypothesis the more time that is spent on the Internet, the less time will be spent with valuable face-to-face relationships such as family (Kraut, et al., 1998; Lee, 2009; Mesch 2003; Nie, Hillygus & Erbring, 2002). The researchers further reported that interaction online has less social value than face-to-face interactions (Cummings, Butler & Kraut, 2002; Gross, Junoven & Gable, 2002; Parks, 1996; Lee, 2009; Mesch, 2003, 2006). However, Lee (2009) urges caution in the interpretation of the findings from these studies as firstly, the quality of time is not taken into account, therefore adolescents may spend more quantity of time on the Internet, and less with their families but the quality of the interactions with their family may be

high. Secondly, even though face-to-face interactions are preferred for social relationships, Internet use may be additional to existing face-to-face relationships and is therefore adding to social interaction, not replacing it with online communication (Lee, 2009).

2.3.3.2. Increase hypothesis. This hypothesis has a positive argument for online communication. This hypothesis proposes that Internet use increases the amount of social interaction of adolescents, as well as the size of their social networks and perception of closeness with other individuals. The research findings describe that adolescents use the Internet to maintain social relationships and initiate new social contacts (Lee, 2009). The findings of earlier research by Kraut et. al (1998) were used in support of the displacement hypothesis. However, subsequent research with the same sample of participants, in 2002, reported that the new findings did not continue to support the original findings, and that Internet use could no longer be shown to have a negative effect on family relationships. The researchers argued that the participants were older and more mature. They considered these factors to be determinants of the differences between their findings. Age and developmental maturity may also have affected how the participants used and perceived the Internet (Kraut, et al., 2002). In addition to these findings Lee (2009) adds that the Internet as an interactive medium could facilitate social relationships. The research suggests that characteristics such as anonymity and the lack of social cues may be positive factors in connecting to new relationships online. As a communication medium the Internet is able to surpass the barriers of time and space and connect individuals from across the world (Lee, 2009).

In their research on how the Internet affects social capital, Wellman, Hasse, Witte, and Hampton (2001) claim that the Internet is a supplementary form of face to face interaction. Their research argued that social relationships on the Internet are more likely to be stronger if the

relationship existed in a face-to-face manner first. In other words, the Internet is not as useful for creating brand new relationships that could rival the intensity and quality of face-to-face relationships.

   2.3.3.3. Rich-get-richer hypothesis. This hypothesis is recognized as an extension of the previous, increase hypothesis, and was proposed by Kraut, et al. (2002) based on the findings of their second study of the same sample of adolescents. The researchers suggest that individuals with strong, developed social skills and networks benefit most from the Internet. It is reported that adolescents with strong social skills gain further social connections online, but individuals with poor social skills, and a lack of social networks experience an increase in loneliness and negative effects from communicating online (Kraut, et al., 2002). This research is supported by Gross, et al (2002) who reported that adolescents with high levels of social interaction at school, and strong social networks, use the Internet to continue interaction with their existing social contacts. This further supported the findings of Kraut, et al., (2002) by reporting that adolescents with weak social networks and negative social interactions at school experienced social anxiety and feelings of loneliness when attempting to communicate online. This communication was mostly with strangers as these adolescents lacked the existing face-to-face social networks (Gross, et al., 2002).

   2.3.3.4. Social compensation hypothesis. This hypothesis is proposed as an alternative to Kraut, et al (2002) rich-get-richer hypothesis, and states that the Internet is beneficial for socially anxious and lonely individuals. McKenna and Bargh (1999) suggest that online communication is less distressing for individuals who experience social anxiety. They report that due to Internet use, personal social networks can increase and feelings of loneliness can decrease. A study in 2006 by Goby supports this hypothesis with findings that indicate that introverts are more likely

to use online communication with other people, whereas extroverts prefer face-to-face interaction. Individuals that identify with being shy report lower levels of shyness online, and lower levels of sensitivity to rejection. These individuals reported that they felt more socially competent online, and due to higher levels of self-disclosure online the relationships were perceived as closer and therefore, more established when moved into a face-to-face situation (Goby, 2006).

2.3.3.5. Summary of hypotheses. The four abovementioned hypotheses suggest two possible outcomes for adolescents that communicate online. Firstly, that those with strong social skills and networks will benefit from online interaction, strengthen their existing relationships, and grow their friendship circle. Secondly, adolescents who struggle to integrate socially, and have weaker face-to-face social networks will be able to feel more competent in their ability to communicate with more freedom and confidence online. A study by Lee (2009) with a sample size of n=1312 adolescents aged 12 to 18 years explored all four hypotheses, discussed above, combined with other social variables such as social ties, parent-child relationships, friendships, and school connectedness. The findings of this study reported that both themes of the four hypotheses had merit. Adolescents with strong social integration and interaction, extended this behaviour on the Internet and benefitted from their existing social networks. These individuals are able to gain more access to their social networks on the Internet, and use the additional contact to enhance their social networks (Lee, 2009). It was also found that the medium of the Internet facilitates individuals management of their online interactions by allowing Internet users to maintain anonymity thereby giving the individual an opportunity to establish a relationship with another person or group before revealing personal information (Lee, 2009).

The Internet also allows for individuals to control the communication online by providing an opportunity for Internet users to consider responses or construct communication in a manner that is more difficult in face-to-face interactions due to the distress and feelings of awkwardness a shy individual may experience when in conversation with another person. Lee (2009) reports that adolescents that experience social anxiety and who perceive themselves as shy and introverted, experience a sense of competence and lowered inhibitions online, allowing them to communicate more freely, develop relationships that they perceive as high in closeness, and are then able to extend these connections into a face-to-face context. In conclusion, according to the study by Lee (2009) it is possible for the medium of the Internet to extend the social capital and connection of individuals by providing a means for adolescents that are more extroverted or introverted to use the features of the Internet to connect with other individuals.

2.3.4. The Other Internet. The Internet has provided the ability for any person to remain anonymous in their communication and interactions with others. This aspect has produced two salient benefits for adolescent users in particular.

2.3.4.1. Avatars and usernames. In the context of the Internet and online communication, an avatar is defined as a small picture or icon that represents an individual online, whether in a game, or in forums and chatrooms (Merriam-Webster, 2016). In the most practical and original sense, the term username, refers to the word used to describe an individual on a computer system. Usernames existed before the Internet (TechTerms, 2016). On the Internet however, they develop the mystery of old-fashioned code names, assigned to secret operatives. Individuals use avatars and usernames to both remain anonymous but also to represent themselves in a way that they choose to be seen.

The significance of the freedom of anonymity provided by the medium of the Internet is that adolescents can share, with varying degrees of truth, information about themselves. It also provides the ability to form connections or join groups of other individuals that have similar interests, regardless of the alternative or taboo nature of the area of interest (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Adolescents can explore their curiosities without fear of exposure and shame. This has proven to be beneficial for adolescents exploring their gender and sexuality (Hillier & Harrison, 2007).

Internet use can be both beneficial and risky. These risks will be discussed in the following section.

2.4. The Bad.

The previous section described the potential benefits of Internet use. However, the same aspects of the medium of the Internet that can be positive for the social and psychological development of adolescents, may also present negative consequences.

In 2015, a topic discussion, known as a 'thread' was started on the powerhouse Internet discussion forum Reddit (with more than 11 million registered users). The question asked was "what do you miss about life before the Internet?" Five of the most salient themes included: 1) experiencing sleep disturbance, 2) being 'always on', 3) a recognition of being more distracted during interpersonal interactions, including during work hours resulting in a change in work ethic, 4) a sense of disconnection in face-to-face situations due to the presence of digital technology, and 5) an awareness of the emotional response resulting from social comparison (Willet, 2015). The present author has integrated the comments made by Reddit contributors

with relevant literature published by researchers, journalists, and authors in order to provide a multi-dimensional expression of opinion regarding the concerns about Internet use.

2.4.1. Sleep patterns and disturbance. "Actually going to sleep when I go to bed" (PM_ME_UR_KNITS, 2015, p.3) This Reddit contributor described how they would go to bed at a certain time, but use social media or browse the Internet until much later. They recognized how this behaviour results in a lack of sleep and has an effect on functioning the next day. A 2015 study of 324 adults aged 18 – 58 found that in addition to Internet use, social networking sites specifically appeared to contribute negatively to patterns and quality of sleep, thereby influencing the individual's ability to function cognitively during the day (Xanidis & Brignell, 2015). In 2014, a large (n=1212 adolescent participants) research study in Turkey explored the connection between high levels of Internet use and sleep problems in adolescents. The findings of this study support studies from other countries that high levels of Internet use are linked to sleep issues such as poor sleep quality, lower perceived health, and tiredness upon waking (Ekinci, Celik, Savas & Toros, 2014). Sleep disturbance is noted as a negative aspect of Internet use for adolescents. (Choi et al., 2009; Punamaki et al., 2007; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

2.4.2. Online overload. 'Social media burnout' and 'always on' are two descriptions of the phenomena that has developed due to exposure to digital technology. Most users are available to other people 24/7 (Harris, 2014). Reddit contributors described this as the difficulty of 'going off the grid' and getting away from civilization, escaping and 'disconnecting 'completely. Author Michael Harris completed a month without technology while writing his book (The End of Absence) about living in a world of constant online connection. To celebrate the release of his book Penguin Publishing sponsored Analogue August, promoted as a pro-people digital detox (Yang, 2014). On its website Penguin Publishing included a step by step

instruction guide for how to digitally disconnect and reconnect with people. In his book Harris discusses the difficulties he had letting go of the social community umbilical cord and, how he has a different appreciation for his life and himself after the experience (Harris, 2014).

In 1978 researchers Larson and Csikszentmihalyi suggested that adolescents that spent, at least moderate amounts of time alone showed better levels of adjustment to stressful life situations. According to the findings this amount of time was defined as one to two hours. It is strongly suggested that future research explores the effects of being 'always on' and connected (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). The Reddit contributors also commented how they felt like they were now being tracked by their phones, always contactable and locatable (Willet, 2015). Social psychologist, Dr. Sherry Turkle comments: "It's a great psychological truth that if we don't teach our children how to be alone, they will always be lonely." (Turkle, 2016., p1)

A different aspect of being 'always on' and connected to others is the theme of being informed of other people's personal opinions and preferences. "I miss not knowing the political and religious opinions of most people I am acquainted with." (PartyRob, 2015, p. 7). Due to the lower levels of inhibition experienced by Internet users, and higher levels of self-disclosure, most personal opinions and beliefs are openly stated on social media sites for all of an individual's contacts to read (Goby, 2006).

The transfer of information is a two-way street online and with the Internet providing a super highway of information, there is also the very strong possibility that personal information about individuals is available for access. Technology giants Apple, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft have all been found accountable for trading information of their users. On the Internet it is known as the 'price of free'. Included in the End User License Agreements (EULA) of these corporations are clauses that permit discreet but effective sifting, also known as data mining, of

information for relevant data about an individual's interests and online habits (Hachman, 2015).

As previously mentioned, this information is sold or used to advertise products and services to

the Internet user, according to the profile developed from online use and information data mined.

At the Mobile World Conference in Barcelona in 2014, the head of Deutsche Telekom said:

"There isn't anything for free. The moment something is free, you are the product." (Hottges,

2014., p.1)

A Reddit contributor posted that they miss innocence. It is very difficult, if not

impossible to use the Internet and not be exposed to controversial material (Willet, 2015). The

Internet contains the most knowledge that has ever existed, but not all that knowledge is for

sensitive viewers (Carr, 2010). The same freedom of the Internet that allows individuals to

express themselves and to create without limits, also permits the manufacture and distribution of

content that is potentially dangerous, and to some people offensive. Internet culture has a term

called Rule 32 that states if something can be said with text, it can be said with a picture on the

Internet (Urban Dictionary, 2016). Rule 34 also exists. This rule states that if something exists,

somewhere on the Internet there is a sexual version of the topic or subject (Urban Dictionary,

2016).

2.4.3. Distractibility and work ethic. The many applications available on phones,

tablets, and computers make staying focussed on just one task, conversation or person more

complicated than it was before the mobility of digital technology. The need to check for emails

or messages while someone else is talking is a behaviour that most Reddit readers consider

habitual (Willet, 2015). In his book about the Internet *(The Shallows)* author Nicolas Carr (2010)

discusses the changes the Internet has brought in so short a period of human history. He includes

descriptions of his personal difficulties in concentrating on one task at a time and the unending

distractions that come from his phone, tablet, and laptop. Associate editor of *World of*

Psychology, Margarita Tartakovsky, comments on information overload and her own use of digital technology:

> As a writer for the web, I'm well acquainted with information overload. One bit of information leads to five facts, which leads to three articles, which leads to an interesting interview you must listen to right now, which leads to 10 pages in your browser. I've always loved the scavenger hunt research requires. Every clue leads to another. Every clue uncovered is a prize in itself: learning something new and interesting and getting one step closer to the carrot (such as the answer to your original question). But there's always one more thing to look up, learn and digest. (Tartakovsky, 2013., p. 1)

This level of distractibility doesn't only interfere during personal time, as Reddit contributor Scrappy_Laue (2015) states, "90% of my Internet use at work is not business related, and those hours cannot be made up. I am not as productive as I once was, and I'm lucky I own the place. Otherwise I'd fire [myself]."

In 2007 Dr. Norman Doidge published the book *The Brain that changes itself.* Within this book, Dr. Doidge began discussing and exploring the manner that Internet use could have a biological, psychological, and social influence on an individual's brain with the neurological changes that can accompany online addiction, and other perceptual and emotional irregularities resulting from a high level of Internet use (Doidge, 2007).This book was followed by Nicholas Carr's (2010) book titled *The Shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains,* and in 2014, Michael Harris added *The End of Absence: Reclaiming what we have lost in a world of constant connection.* Social scientists like Dr. Sherry Turkle report findings that digital technology offers individuals the ability to pay attention to the things that interest them, when they want to, and as

much as they want to, thereby dispensing of the boring parts of conversations, information, and people (Turkle, 2012).

2.4.4. The digital disconnect. "I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship." (Brown, 2010., p1).

Figure 1: Digital disconnect

Figure 1. This image depicts dinner guests absorbed in digital media. (Ferrara, 2013., p.1)

Reddit readers described the loneliness of the experience of individuals sitting at a table in a restaurant interacting with their phones or tablets instead of each other (Willet, 2015). Dr. Turkle discusses the use of digital technology to 'simplify' human interaction, suggesting that the findings of her research show that face-to-face conversations do not offer individuals the control they would like over the content and length of interpersonal interaction. Therefore, digital communication is more appealing (Turkle, 2012). "At the same time, digital technology

can provide the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship, without the demands of intimacy" (Turkle, 2016., p.1).

The 'disconnect' produced by digital devices prompted performer Kate Bush to publish the following request on her web page in 2014:

I have a request for all of you who are coming to the shows:

We have purposefully chosen an intimate theatre setting rather than a large venue or stadium. It would mean a great deal to me if you would please refrain from taking photos or filming during the shows. I very much want to have contact with you as an audience, not with iphones, ipads or cameras. I know it's a lot to ask but it would allow us to all share in the experience together.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Respectfully yours,

Kate. (Sean, 2014, p. 1)

Figure 2: Disconnect through devices
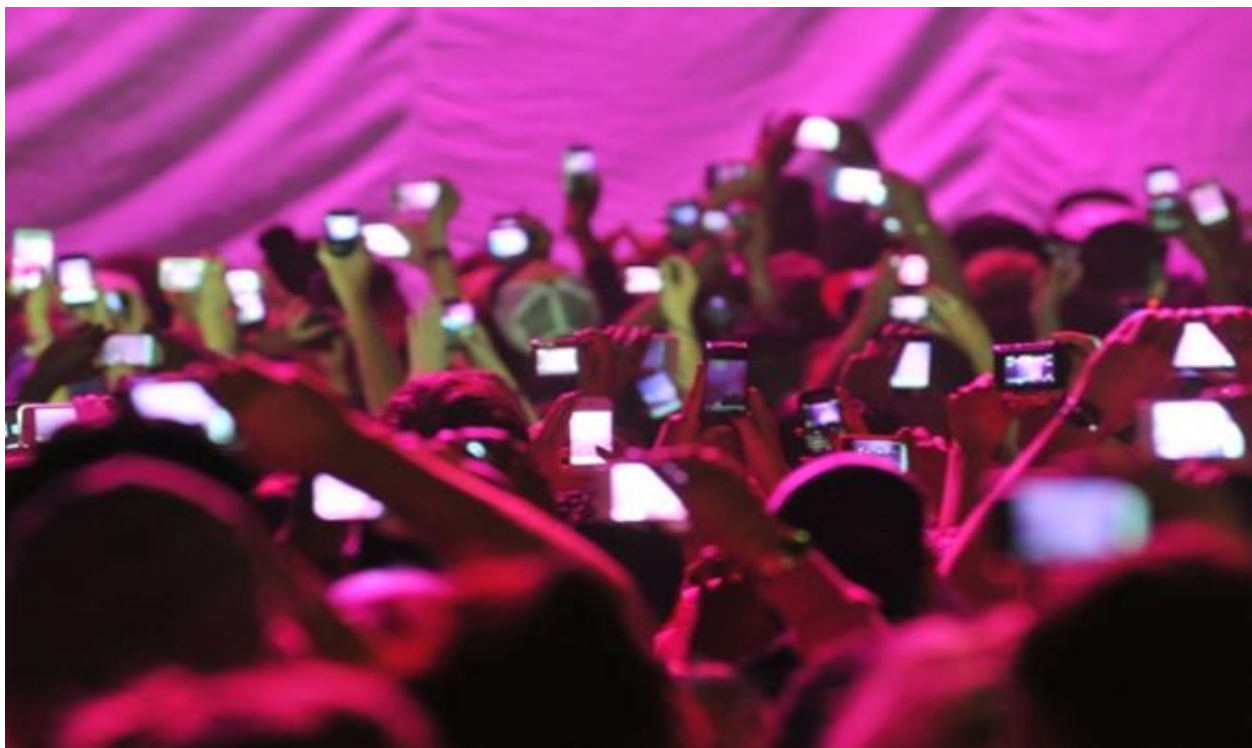
Figure 2. Digital recording at a Kate Bush concert (Sean, 2014., p.1).

The request had an international media response with Bush heralded as brave due to her willingness to make a comment about the 'digital disconnection'.

Dr. Turkle further comments on the disconnect that digital technology can create between children and parents: "Children say they try to make eye contact with their parents and are frustrated because their parents are looking down at their smartphones when they come out of school or after-school activities." (Turkle, 2016., p1)

2.4.5. Social comparison. On the Internet forum, Reddit, contributors identified the fear of missing out, also known by the Internet slang and acronym FOMO as an aspect of social networking that caused emotional stress. The contributors described emotional reactions when viewing photos or comments by other people (friends or strangers) who were at social events and or activities that the viewer did not attend (Willet, 2015). The contributors described the comparison that occurred between their own lives and the lives of the individuals or groups displayed on the social networking sites. The individual viewing these comments or photos described strong emotional reactions including feelings of envy, sadness, and despair with a sense of emptiness. Contributors added that the emotions they experienced remained for extended periods of time (Willet, 2015). Adolescents in particular report feelings of sadness and loneliness when viewing images of events on social media that they were not invited to (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Social science researchers have investigated how an increased degree of social comparison appears to be connected to the use of the Internet (de Vries & Kohne, 2015; Fox & Moreland, 2015; Lee, 2014; Lim & Yang, 2015; Lup, Trub & Rosenthal, 2015; Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles & Franz, 2015).

The medium of the Internet provides unlimited access to information and images of other people, whether these individuals are celebrities, or strangers on social networks, or

acquaintances and friends. This level of access to other individual's profiles and information online is an opportunity for social comparison. Social comparison theory was originally posited by Festinger in 1954 and has been expanded upon by numerous social scientists including Gibbons and Buunk (1999), Mussweiler, Ruter and Epstude (2006), Schachter (1959), and Thornton and Arrowood (1966). The theory states that the need for social comparison is due to a desire for people to compare their own lives with others. This comparison results in the creation of a base for self-perception (Festinger, 1954). If the individual perceives other individuals as being better than themselves or more successful, the result may be a negative self-perception. The reverse is also true. If the individual views the other person as worse off, the individual's self-perception may be impacted upon in a positive manner (Festinger, 1954).

The current researcher recognizes that the social comparison theory has more in-depth constructs describing social comparison, but for the requirements of this current study, the basic description of Festinger's theory is sufficient to provide a basis for the understanding of the theory.

2.4.5.1. Social Comparison Orientation. Individuals differ in how they engage in the comparison of themselves to others. This variation is called social comparison orientation, also known as SCO (Vogel et al. 2015). Research findings indicate that individuals high in social comparison orientation tend to be more sensitive to, and aware of other people. This level of sensitivity may result in more uncertainty about themselves and instability regarding their self-concepts (Buunk & Gibbons, 2006; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Vogel et al. 2015). Of significance are research findings that indicate that individuals with higher SCO are more likely to be heavier users of social networking sites and are therefore more exposed to the opportunity for social comparison on these online sites (Vogel et al., 2015).

2.4.5.2. Polished presentations. Social networking sites provide users with the unique opportunity to edit and present the best version of themselves if they so desire.

> So that's the bottom line. Texting, email, posting, all of these things let us present the self as we want to be. We get to edit, and that means we get to delete, and that means we get to retouch, the face, the voice, the flesh, the body -- not too little, not too much, just right. (Turkle, 2012., p.1)

Internet users can construct a profile of themselves and present rich amounts of information, including details about their daily lives, but all this information can easily be carefully edited to create a positive image (Vogel et al., 2015). Due to this ability to control what is presented online, some researchers have found that relationships and interactions based on social networking sites are different to face-to-face relationships, this is mostly attributed to the heavily positive presentation of individuals online (Chou & Edge, 2009; Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Vogel et al., 2015).

2.4.5.3. Passive browsing. Research participants in a study by Lee (2014), n=199 (62% male, 38% female), of university-aged students (18 – 29 years of age) reported that they mainly used social media for the browsing of other people's profiles without interaction, viewing photos and posts for the purposes of social comparison (Lee, 2014). Passive browsing is non-interactive and studies have found that individuals who make use of a high level of passive browsing may experience more negative outcomes in social comparison, mostly due to the conclusion that the individual whose profile they are browsing is more satisfied, successful, and happy than they are themselves (Lim & Yang, 2015).

2.4.5.4. Quantification. A unique aspect of social networking is the ability of users to rate images, posts or photos posted on sites by individuals. 'Liking,' 'sharing' and 'friending or unfriending' are tools that have been found to have psychological weight and bearing (Turkle, 2012). Research findings report that the quality of feedback plays a part in the development of self-esteem, with positive feedback enhancing feelings of well-being and negative feedback resulting in the opposite (Lup, et. al., 2015). Adolescent research participants report that if a number of people 'share' or 'like' something an individual has posted on an Internet site, there is a sense of gratification and an increase in feelings of self-worth for the individual (poster) (Harris, 2014; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

The amount of 'friends' or 'followers' an individual has is another aspect of quantification in social comparison. This appears to be most significant amongst adolescent Internet users. Research participants compared getting 'friends' on Facebook to an 'arms race' , opposing countries attempting to create and store weapons, with the number of social networking friends being related to popularity and social success (Fox & Moreland, 2015). However, participants from the same study also reported that attaining a large amount of friends still subjected the individual to ridicule, with individuals with high numbers of friends known as 'friend-sluts.' Other participants commented that they felt as if the attaining and maintaining of numbers of contacts consumed their time (Fox & Moreland, 2015).

2.4.5.5. Romantic social comparison. A particularly significant aspect of social networking is the announcement and presentation of romantic relationships. The social comparison is not limited to the individual's relationship status to others, but also the comparison of previous romantic partners to new romantic interests. Male participants in a study by Fox and Moreland (2015) reported that they use social networking sites to passively browse their ex-

partners profiles to gather information about any new relationships, and also to browse the profile of their ex-partner's new romantic interest. Some participants report browsing through photos of their ex-partners in an attempt to find unattractive photos with the new love interest in order to criticize or mock the couple. Participants reported that this behaviour temporarily improved their sense of well-being but delayed the healing process after the romantic breakup (Fox & Moreland, 2015). Participants also reported that with social networking they experience feelings of inadequacy when comparing themselves to their ex-partner's new relationship and that this experience was not as significant before the popularity of social media because the opportunity for comparison was less (Fox & Moreland, 2015).

All participants further reported that feelings of mistrust are elevated when they view other people, especially old romantic partners, on their current romantic partner's social media networks, and that they regularly compared themselves to those individuals with regards to achievements and physical attractiveness (Fox & Moreland, 2015).

2.4.5.6. The effects of social comparison on social media. Research indicates that individuals with a high social comparison orientation are more likely to report lower levels of self-esteem and more negative self-perception (Vogel, et al., 2015). Although findings across studies were inconsistent in certain aspects, findings did suggest that individuals with high SCO are more likely to be heavy users of social networking sites. These individuals appeared to use social networking sites passively more than actively. Passive use known as 'browsing' or 'lurking' is described as an Internet use that limits their online activity to viewing other individuals social networking sites versus active use such as commenting, 'liking' and 'sharing' and participating in another individual's social network. This type of social comparison pattern that includes heavy but passive use of social networking sites is suggested to lead to an increase

in symptoms of depression, feelings of negative self-perception, and an increase in levels of low self-esteem, therefore impacting on users mental well-being (Lee, 2014; Vogel, et al., 2015).

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to social comparison as they are developing and strengthening their individual identities and levels of self-esteem, and are particularly drawn to social comparison (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Adolescents describe experiencing distress when images or information is uploaded to the Internet by another individual, for example, photos taken at a party or event where the adolescent is not the owner of the photo but is featured in the image. This material may include unflattering or indiscreet images. Adolescents describe feelings of frustration as they lack the control to edit or remove the images and this information may be available to a multitude of contacts on the other individual's social networking site (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Due to the high popularity of image uploading sites such as Instagram, this type of distress may be common and forms an aspect of social comparison as adolescent's may view themselves negatively (unattractive or engaged in undesirable behaviour) in the photos. Their perspectives of these images can be used in comparison of themselves to their peers. (Digital Trends, 2014; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). The emotions resulting from negative social comparisons may have a significant impact on their self-esteem. In particular, female adolescents report feeling more negative about their own body image after looking at attractive women on websites or social media (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). According to Festinger's theory of social comparison, one of the reasons for social comparison is to assist the individual in improving their own lives by viewing how well others are doing and wanting to achieve a similar result (Festinger, 1954). However, Internet users who have high SCO may not be aware that their increased use of social networking sites increases the opportunity for social comparison and therefore, that they may experience negative consequences (Vogel et al., 2015).

More than negative consequences and disadvantages, the Internet may be used by individuals to harm others. The potential dangers of Internet use are discussed in the following section.

2.5. The Ugly. "All evil starts with 15 volts" (Zimbardo, 2008, p. 1)

This quote by Philip Zimbardo describes the social psychology experiment conducted by Stanley Milgram in 1961 (Blass, 2007). Zimbardo discusses this famous experiment in social obedience during a TedTalk to introduce his theory of human social behaviour called the Lucifer Effect. In the book, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*, Zimbardo explores and describes the fact that people who are measured as good by society's standards can also participate in acts or behaviour deemed as bad or evil (Zimbardo, 2008). Aggressive and harmful behaviour is commonplace on the Internet, with individuals and groups threatening and endangering other individual's reputations, occupations, and lives with apparently very little regard for the severity of the harm inflicted.

2.5.1. Cyber aggression. The 'ugly' side of the Internet includes harassing behaviours, most notably cyberstalking, and cyberbullying.

2.5.1.1. Cyberstalking. Cyberstalking is described as online stalking in which the Internet is used by an individual or group to harass and distress another person (Merritt, 2015). The use of false accusations, the illegal monitoring of a person's Internet activity or physical movements, threatening statements, the release of private information such as an individual's address, phone number or bank account details online to a non-secure, uncontrolled community, and identity theft are commonly associated with cyberstalking. This behaviour is more often than not perpetrated by someone the individual knows and not a stranger (Merritt, 2015). This aggressive

and vicious behaviour can affect and destroy significant domains of an individual's life including relationships, careers, self-image, and confidence.

    2.5.1.2. Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is similar to cyberstalking and is more often perpetrated by children. The Cyberbullying Research Center defines cyberbullying as a deliberate or willful, repeated behaviour of harming another person through posting photos, videos or comments that cause distress, embarrassment or damage to the person's character, including the spreading of rumours or threats (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2014).

    2.5.1.3. Cyberbullying in South Africa. According to a survey conducted by Vodafone in 2015, it is reported that one in five South African children have experienced cyberbullying. 84% of children report knowing someone else who has experienced cyberbullying, and more than 50% of the children surveyed considered cyberbullying worse than face-to-face bullying (Gilbert, 2015). In a global survey conducted by YouGov, South Africa ranked the fourth highest group for adolescents' cyberbullied, in the online study of 11 countries and 5000 adolescents aged 13 – 18. The South African percentage for this age group was 24%, compared to the average of the other countries in the study of 18%. The countries that reported higher rates of cyberbullying in this age group were first New Zealand, second the USA, and third Ireland (Gilbert, 2015). These statistics highlight the severity of online harassment in South Africa. However, research into the extent and prevention of cyberbullying in South Africa remains limited.

    2.5.1.4. Cyberbullying internationally. Statistics published in 2016 by the Department of Justice in the United States reports that 16.6% of male children of school going age, and 25.1% of female children of school going age report being cyberbullied. In that same sample, 17.5% of

boys and 21.3% of girls admitted to being a cyberbully and victimising other children (Statistic Brain Research Institute, 2016).

   2.5.1.5. Online harassment amongst young adults. The Pew Institute in 2014 reports a summary of findings regarding online harassment amongst adult users of the Internet. This survey was conducted over a period of one month, and 2849 participants completed self-administered surveys. The findings reported information from participants that had experienced at least one incidence of online harassment (Duggan, 2014) with young adults aged 18 – 29 being the most likely to experience online harassment. The relevance of this study to the current research literature is that if the Internet is a high-risk environment for young adults to experience harassment, it is highly unlikely that adolescents are not experiencing similar interactions.

   Of the participants, 60% reported witnessing another person being called names that are offensive, and 50% observed deliberate attempts by someone to embarrass another person. A quarter of the participants reported witnessing a person being physically threatened online, and 24% of participants observed another person being harassed for a sustained period. Nineteen percent of participants reported witnessing someone being sexually harassed, and 18% of participants have observed someone being stalked.

With regards to the findings of at least one direct experience by participants: 27% of participants reported having been called offensive names, and 22% have been the recipient of another person deliberately attempting to embarrass them. Eight percent of participants personally experienced physical threats, and 8% had been the victims of stalking. Seven percent of participants reported experiencing sustained periods of harassment and 6% report experiencing sexual harassment online.

In the survey as mentioned above, two clear sets of experiences by participants appeared from the data. The first set of experiences was labelled as less severe. 55% of the participants reported less distressing, more annoying online harassment, mostly describing name-calling and embarrassment. The participants reported that the emotional discomfort caused by these incidences was fleeting. They mostly dealt with this type of online harassment by ignoring the behaviour.

The second set of experiences was described as more serious online harassment; that had a longer lasting and deeper reaching impact on the participant's life and emotional state. Forty-five percent of participants reported that they have been victims of physical threats, harassment sustained over a period, stalking and sexual harassment.

In summary "40% of Internet users have personally experienced online harassment, from the mild to the severe; 73% have witnessed it happening to others" (Duggan, 2014, p. 1).

The large discrepancy between the witnessed acts of online aggression and the reported acts may be due to the victims not experiencing the same level of severity as the witnesses, or that shame and stigma may have prevented them from reporting the harassment.

2.5.2. The slippery slope of evil. The above-mentioned report by the Pew Institute thoroughly covers the effect of online harassment on victims, and what actions they chose to take, but does not comment on whether those that witnessed online harassment of others intervened or not. Zimbardo states that there are certain precursors and social processes that mostly facilitate the Lucifer Effect. He reports that it is most likely to occur in new and unfamiliar environments (Zimbardo, 2008).

"So what are the seven social processes that grease the slippery slope of evil? Mindlessly taking the first small step. Dehumanisation of others. De-individuation of self. Diffusion of personal responsibility. Blind obedience to authority. Uncritical conformity to group norms. Passive tolerance of evil through inaction, or indifference" (Zimbardo, 2008, p.1).

The medium of the Internet provides a unique environment. Whether it is new content, websites, social networking applications or digital devices, the best and the worst aspect of the Internet is that it is always new and unfamiliar. It is reasonable to conclude that the medium of the Internet is a breeding ground for the worst of human behaviour (Zimbardo, 2008).

In the following section, the current author will present examples of Internet behaviour that may be likened to the social processes listed by Dr. Zimbardo as precursors for good people to do evil deeds. The Lucifer Effect is partly based on research findings from the Milgram Experiment where average, everyday people compliantly participated in what they understood to be the inhumane electrical shocking of other people. When questioned before the study 40 psychiatrists reported that only 1% of the participants would increase the intensity of the electric shocks to the maximum of 450 volts, from 15 volts. After conducting 16 experiments, the outcome showed with a mixed gender group of participants between 60% and 90% were willing to max out the voltage (Zimbardo, 2008).

2.5.2.1. Mindlessly taking the first step. In the Milgram Experiment, it was 15 volts. Evil starts out small (Tomasulo, 2010). On the Internet, it may be as simple and mindless as 'liking' another individual's cruel, but amusing, comment on another person's social media. Adding one more to the number. Adding support to a bully.

The Like is the wordless nod of support in a loud room. It's the easiest of yesses, I-agrees, and me-toos. I actually felt pangs of guilt over not liking some updates, as though the absence of my particular Like would translate as a disapproval or a withholding of affection. I felt as though my ability to communicate had been somehow hobbled. The Like function has saved me so much comment-typing over the years that I likely could have written a very quippy, War-and-Peace-length novel by now. (Seiter, 2015, p.1)

On social networking sites, 'sharing' or forwarding an image or text involving the embarrassment or shaming of another person can be one action by one person but collectively, it is the sum of single actions that add to the emotional distress of another person. In 2008, 18-year-old Jessica Logan committed suicide after being cyberbullied following the circulation of a naked photo of her that she had sent to her boyfriend (NoBullying, 2015). According to reporters, the image was distributed to hundreds of adolescents in seven different high schools in the same area. Cyberbullying was targeted at Jessica through Facebook. MySpace, and text messages. It took hundreds of mindless first steps to circulate the image to hundreds of different people and to keep it in circulation.

2.5.2.2. Blind obedience to authority. Blind obedience can be described as the unquestioning following of orders issued by a person or group perceived as being in authority. Historical examples include the followers of Jim Jones, the People's Temple cult, who committed murder and suicide by drinking poison on order of their leader (Tomasulo, 2010). In the online context, this type of blind obedience to authority can be highlighted with examples of how groups of, especially adolescent females, harass and bully. It is recognized in cyberbullying literature that females are more likely to bully using rumour-mongering, exclusion, and direct group harassment (Favela, 2010). The groups have a hierarchy of individuals who direct others

and require obedience. The threat of also being excluded or targeted for not participating or following orders is a serious concern for most adolescents, for whom fitting into a group is very important (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). However, these groups are mostly formed in face-to-face situations like school or university and transfer allegiance online where the bullying behaviour is amplified.

2.5.2.3. Uncritical conformity to group norms. This precursor to evil can occur in both online and face-to-face situations. It is understood as a group of individuals following the expectations that are required for them to remain part of the group, regardless of how informal, because they fear expulsion from the group, and also because they perceive a feeling of loyalty and acceptance from the group (Tomasulo, 2010). This is observed in online communities who have a common purpose, such as a moral or values system, or a shared interest in activities such as online gaming. Membership of these groups becomes an aspect of the individual's identity. Research into social networking sites and adolescent psychosocial development reports that adolescents can bridge the dual needs for the development of individuality, and the need to integrate socially, by joining groups on the Internet (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). An online gaming community, identifying themselves as #Gamergate has since 2014, launched destructive, personal and cruel attacks on a handful of female game designers and journalists. The group used cyber and physical threats in an attempt to destroy the lives of people that it considered being worthy targets. In 2014, Brianna Wu, a game designer became the target of attack for the group after she commented on social media that women are grossly underrepresented in the gaming industry. The consequence was a cyberattack that consisted of thousands of threatening messages, including threats of sexual assault and physical harm and the release of her personal and financial information online. The threats and stalking became so severe that she and her

husband moved from their house to reclaim privacy (Hathaway, 2014). This group has been accused of other, equally vicious cyber-attacks on individuals who contradict the group's opinion.

      2.5.2.4. Passive tolerance of evil through indifference and inaction. This type of passivity has perpetuated throughout history. Generally emerging in institutions and facilities, cruelty and inhumane treatment between groups of individuals often becomes the norm, and is not challenged by the group involved. The Willowbrook State School is an example, where living conditions and treatment of people with intellectual disabilities were allowed to disintegrate and perpetuate for nearly a decade until challenged by a journalist in 1972 (Tomasulo, 2010). On the Internet, this type of passivity and inaction is often seen in the form of officials, teachers, parents or the police not taking a victim seriously, or dismissing the behaviour because it occurs online. The parents of bullying victim, Jessica Logan (mentioned above) took legal action against her school and other authorities. The cyberbullying that Jessica experienced was repeatedly reported to officials, but no action was taken. After Jessica committed suicide in 2008, her parents fought to help other victims and their families by having legislation changed in the area (NoBullying, 2015). Most of the victims of cyber harassment mentioned in this section sought assistance from authorities during the time they were being attacked, but either the laws did not exist to be able to assist or officials were passive and did not act (Hathaway, 2014).

      2.5.2.5. Dehumanisation of others. By creating a divide of 'us' versus 'them,' the dehumanization of others can be created. Examples of this have been seen during some of the darkest times of human history. During the Second World War, it was part of the propaganda used by the Nazi's against races and groups of people considered to be lessor than the ideology. In South Africa, it was used by the National Party government to promote and segregate races

while excusing the inhumane treatment of non-white South Africans. Dr. Zimbardo describes the assignment of numbers as identification to the 'inmates' during the Stanford Prison Experiment, and how it is recognized that it contributed to the dehumanization process. An example of #Gamergate was presented in the previous section, and as groups are created there is the risk of the dehumanization of one group of people by others, with the members of the more powerful group desiring continued inclusion, and as a result, they may not contradict the actions of their group. A specific example of this behaviour online is the story of Christopher Hermelin, a writer living in New York. In 2012 he began writing short stories on his old-fashioned typewriter in Central Park for people as they waited, to earn money. A photo was taken of him and posted on an individual's Facebook page (MessyNessy, 2014). The image went 'viral' overnight, and Christopher became the target of severe cyberbullying and harassment. Everything about him was denigrated and dehumanized, for no reason other than his behaviour was unique. He became so distressed due to the physical threats that were posted about him, that he did not return to the park for more than a month (MessyNessy, 2014).

2.5.2.6. De-individuation of the self. "The research shows that over-reliance on social technology may be causing us to become disconnected from our sense of self." (Turkle, 2016., p1. De-individuation of the self is highly relevant to online behaviour. De-individuation is understood in social psychology as the loss of self-awareness, and in an environment of anonymity, the concern for self-evaluation with regards to social norms diminishes drastically (Chang, 2008).

In 1973 anthropologist, John Watson published an article based on the hypothesis of Philip Zimbardo, that de-individuation of self leads to aggressive behaviour amongst people (Watson, 1973). In the TedTalk about the psychology of evil Zimbardo explains that Watson

surveyed 23 cultures across the world for two factors: 1) Do they change their appearance to fight? 2) Do they torture, mutilate and kill? Of the 23 cultures, 15 met the criteria of changing their appearance and 13 met the criteria for torturing, mutilating and killing their opponents. However, only 1 out of 8 of the cultures is shown to torture, mutilate or kill if they do not change their appearance and 12 of 13, 90%, will commit lethal and cruel acts if they are wearing masks or have changed their appearance (Zimbardo, 2008).

On the Internet, anonymity or the changing of one's appearance is a powerful liberator and motivator. With increased levels of self-disclosure and lowered levels of inhibition behaviour, communication can change, for both the better and the worse (Goby, 2006; McKenna & Bargh, 1999). "When we are anonymous, we are more violent." (Tomasulo, 2010., p.1)

All the examples of cyber harassment and cyberbullying mentioned so far in this section are made more possible by the mask of the Internet, and serves as examples for this section. The anonymity provides a sense of security and a willingness to go beyond the individuals regular behaviour.

2.5.2.7. Diffusion of personal responsibility. Sections of the present study highlight the benefits of adolescents and Internet groups but warn about the need for 'fitting in' and acceptance. These needs could lead to unhealthy group behaviours that allow for adolescents to not necessarily participate in harassment behaviour, but to stand by as witnesses and do nothing to prevent the cyber aggression. According to research on face-to-face bullying, the victims of bullying perceive the bystanders or witnesses as being aligned with the bully, and the lack of action by bystanders is considered to be one of the largest predictors of how severely the bullying behaviour is perceived by the victim (Breakstone, Dreiblatt & Dreiblatt, 2009). The quote from the Pew Institute research is worthy of repeating: "40% of Internet users have

personally experienced online harassment, from the mild to the severe; 73% have witnessed it happening to others" (Duggan, 2014, p. 1).

It is possible that the discrepancy between the percentage of individuals that report being harassed or bullied online and the amount of individuals that report having witnessed such behaviour can be explained by the different perceptions of Internet users. An individual may not consider themselves a victim of harassment whereas another individual may feel that the behaviour they witnessed was bullying behaviour. However, there is a 40% overlap where individuals admit to experiencing online harassment and witnesses report observing the harassment. According to information available on the behaviour of witnesses of bullying in a face-to-face environment and an online context it is highly likely that there are a number of occasions on social media sites and web sites that individuals passively observed other people being bullied and harassed and did not take action (Breakstone, Dreiblatt & Dreiblatt, 2009; Kowalski, et al., 2008).

In his book, The Lucifer Effect, Dr. Zimbardo uses the example of the infamous case of Kitty Genovese who was murdered in front of her apartment building in 1964. While 37 tenants witnessed the act, no one called the police or attempted to assist. It is reported that the witnesses all believed that someone else would do something about it (CBS, 2014). As with many of the social processes listed by Dr. Zimbardo, this face-to-face behaviour has translated accurately to the online world.

> "That line between good and evil is permeable, any of us can move across it....I argue that we all have the capacity for love and evil--to be Mother Theresa, to be Hitler or Saddam Hussein. It's the situation that brings that out…You don't need a motive, all you really need is a situation that facilitates moving across that line of good and evil." (Dittman, 2004; Zimbardo, 2008).

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter described the medium of the Internet, with a discussion of the literature that highlights the benefits and risks of the online world. The information reported from existing research highlights the importance of focussed future research into specific areas of Internet use to inform facets of education, psychosocial development, and human interaction. At this time, the Internet provides opportunities for the best and worst of human nature, and although there are communities online that regulate behaviour in an attempt to maintain a safe cyber environment, the majority of the Internet remains ungoverned. The researcher is not promoting the governance of the Internet in totality. However, insight and awareness of the challenges of human nature need to be continuously brought to the forefront of the media and society. It may never change the nature of the brutality of the wild Internet, but perhaps the promotion of cyber citizenship can influence individuals to treat each other with respect and dignity, and promote the very best of what is human.

In summary, it is clear that a number of the themes are universal, and already the focus of research. However, critiques of the Internet such as the works of Michael Harris, Nicholas Carr, and Dr. Norman Doidge highlight the need for further research into cyber psychology, not as an emerging topic of research but as a current and relevant topic of study.

The following chapter will discuss the generational characteristics of the 'iGeneration' and 'Generation X' and how these differences relate to parents and adolescents. Furthermore, parenting styles and parental mediation techniques for Internet use will be discussed.

Literature Chapter Three: Parenting in the Web: The Igeneration

3.1. Introduction

"The Internet is the first thing that humanity has built that humanity doesn't understand, the largest experiment in anarchy that we have ever had." (Schmidt, n.d.)

Through each age of humanity one generation has been tasked with teaching the next. Researchers suggest that not only has the technology and the Internet changed this pattern, but that education, work, and social interaction needs to be reassessed for the viability of functioning with the latest generation of young adults (Johnston, 2013). From 2008 to 2012 over 1500 South African university students from seven universities participated in separate research studies to create an understanding of the differences between generations, and how to approach closing the gap between the age groups to improve education strategies. The results of a review of all seven studies done by Johnston (2013) concluded that academics, mostly from the Baby Boomer or Generation X age group, underestimated student's preference and affinity for interactive and online learning. Students were positive about the use of mobile phones and social networking to improve learning methods, with mobile phones ranked highest in both student's daily Internet activities as well as the use of technology related to education (Thinyane, 2010).

This chapter will describe what parenting in the cyber world looks like, and the challenges for adolescents and parents. Parenting styles and mediation strategies will be discussed according to existing research and literature. In conclusion, this chapter will create a context for how parents possibly form perceptions about their adolescent children's Internet use. The chapter furthermore describes the characteristics of the Generation X in a South African context and highlights aspects of the iGeneration. These two different generations could partly be

the reason why parents perceive children's Internet use in a certain manner, or there could be other major factors to consider, such as parenting styles.

3.2. The Generations

Generational labels are used to describe similar characteristics of individuals born in groups of time. These specific generations are identified and unified by events and circumstances that are historically shared (Howe & Strauss, 2007; Johnston, 2013). However, it is important to note that because a person is born in a certain time parameter does not mean that person will share the characteristics of their generation; generational labels are generalisations (Johnston, 2013; Rosen, 2011). Table 1 identifies some of the general characteristics ascribed to the generations.

Most significantly are the strong influence of the Internet and social networking on the Net Generation and iGeneration. Both these generations know the world with Internet at home, school, and work. This is significantly different from the earlier generations, who knew life without the Internet. The gap that this evolution of technology has forged is of interest, in particular, for how parents from Generation X, and the adolescents from the iGeneration, understand and function in relation to each other.

It is essential to recognise the difficulty of integrating first world research on cyber psychology and South African data. Although broad similarities exist, there are significant differences with regards to access and the cost of Internet use in South Africa. Research is often conducted with university students, and these findings cannot be accurately generalised to the population of South Africa.

Table 1: Summary of the characteristics of each generation

	Matures	**Baby Boomers**	**Generation X**	**Net Generation**	**IGeneration**
Birth Dates	1900 - 1942	1943 - 1960	1961 - 1981	1982 - 1991	1992 -
Description	Greatest generation	Me generation	Latchkey generation (Distinct differences for South Africans	Millenials	Plurals – no majority race, dominant media or family unit
Attributes	Command and control, self-sacrifice	Optimistic, workaholic	Independent, sceptical	Hopeful, determined	High expectations, items tailored to wants and needs
Likes	Respect for: authority, family, community involvement	Responsibility, work ethic, can-do attitude	Freedom, multitasking, work-life balance	Public activism, latest technology, parents	Multitasking, communication technologies, virtual social worlds, brands, advertising
Dislikes	Waste, technology	Laziness, turning 50	Red tape, hype	Anything slow, negativity	Failure, and unhappiness

Table 1. A Guide to Educating Different Generations in South Africa. (Johnston, 2013., p. 262).

In 2010, Brown and Czerniewicz concluded that age did not play a significant factor in separating generations of South Africans with regards to Internet use. The gap existed due to access to technology. The Pew Research Center released the main findings of a survey conducted in 40 nations, including South Africa among 45,435 respondents from March 25 to May 27, 2015. The South African data is displayed in the table below.

Table 2: Percentage of South African's that use the Internet and the differences in age, education and income groups.

Total % of Internet users	42%		
Age	18 – 34 years	35 + years	Difference
	52%	33%	19%
Education	Less	More	Difference
	24%	61%	37%
Income	Lower	Higher	Difference
	22%	57%	35%

Table 2. Smartphone ownership and Internet usage continue to climb in emerging economies (Pouster, 2016., p 1).

Table 2 highlights that in South Africa the largest gap between Internet users is not a generational gap but an economic and educational divide. It is, however, crucial to map how much the Internet user base has increased in only five years. In 2012 the marketing research company World Wide Worx released the findings of a study called *Internet in South Africa 2012.*

This study reported that South Africa's Internet user base had increased from 6.8 million in 2010 to 8.5 million people in 2011 (World Wide Worx, 2012). International social media and communications company We Are Social reports that 24.9 million South Africa were connected to the Internet in 2015. It would be safe to conclude that more South African's are slowly gaining access to the Internet, and this means that South Africa may be approaching a similar profile to the international descriptions of generational gaps between the IGeneration and older generations.

Figure 3: Digital trends in South Africa
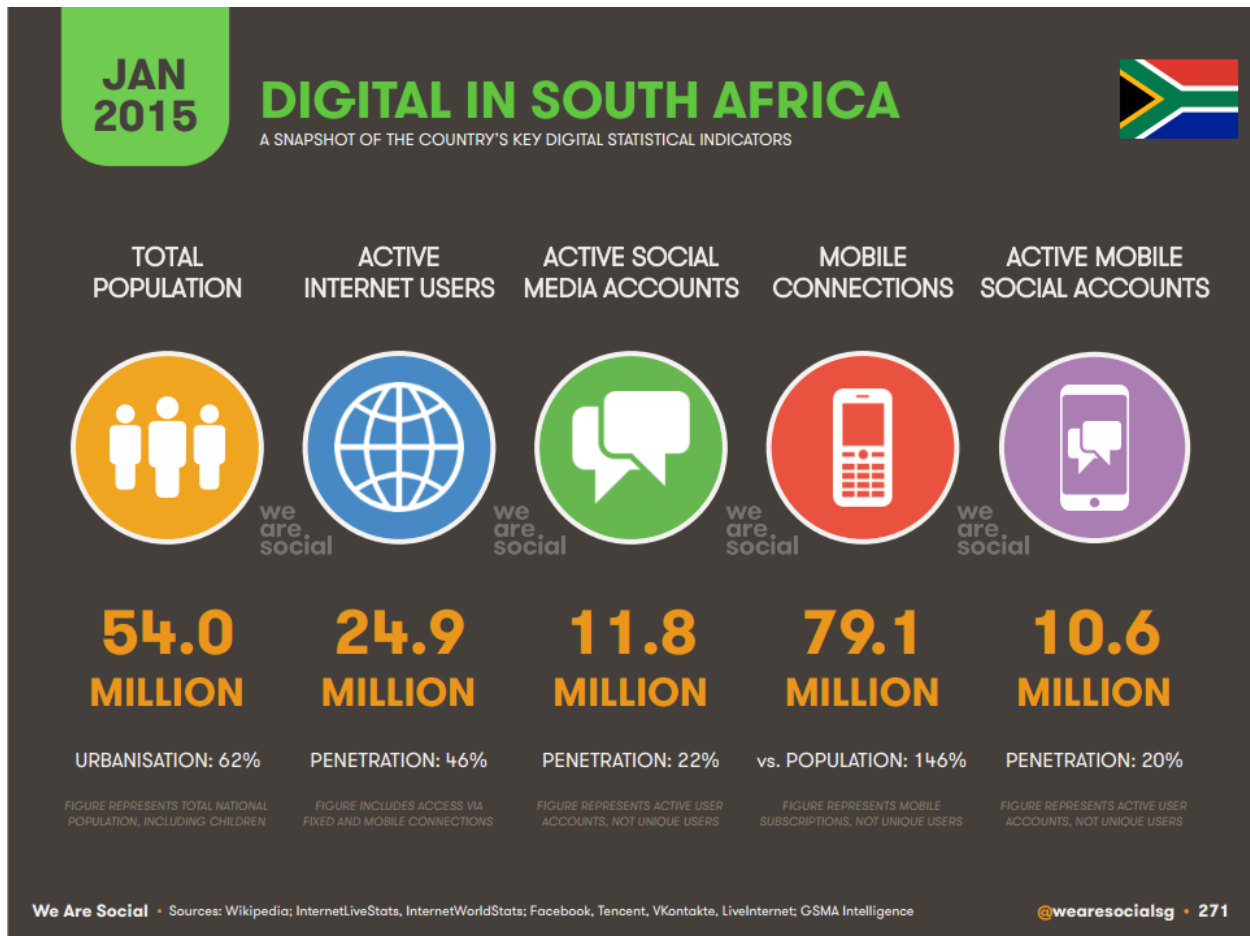
Figure 3: What do South Africa's 24.9 mil Internet users spend most of their time doing online? (Shezi, 2015., p.1).

   3.2.1. The iGeneration. "They expect technology to be there, and they expect it to do whatever they want it to do. Their WWW doesn't stand for World Wide Web; it stands for Whatever, Whenever, Wherever." (Rosen, L., 2011, p. 12)

The iGeneration is described as individuals born in the years 1992 to present. Labelled as the iGeneration because of "their use of iPhone, iPad, iPod and (iEverything)", this group has

become infamous for an apparent overwhelming need for technology to communicate socially, and for interpreting their world (Waldron, 2012, p. 2-3).

Larry Rosen, a psychologist who has spent a career researching media, wrote in 2011, "Just as we don't think about the existence of air, kids don't question the existence of technology and media." In the same magazine article, he explains how he has noticed a significant difference between how his children used and interacted with technology. This resulted in him developing an interest in understanding the differences between the generations. Rosen remarks about how he is continuously hearing about how the preadolescent children of his family, friends and colleagues can "just use and understand" technological hardware and software as if they have all the instructions already. He claims that this is the norm, and not the sign of super intelligent, wonder children. However, to earlier generations, that is exactly how it appears. Near the end of the article, he writes "The iGeneration is immersed in technology. Their tech world is open 24/7." (Rosen, 2011, p. 14)

In comparison to the data from 2010, The Pew Research Center released a report on adolescent social media and technology use in 2015, and teens are still sending and receiving an average of 30 texts a day.

However, due to the sharp increase in the ownership of smartphones, 24% of adolescent's report being on the Internet 'almost constantly'. 70% of the 1060 teenagers aged 13 to 17 report owning a smartphone, and 85% state that they have access to a smartphone (Lenhart, 2015).

The use of a cell phone is so natural to the iGeneration that when the Harris Interactive sampled 2089 teenagers in 2008 in the US, 47% could compose a text message blindfolded (Harris Interactive, 2008).

Table 3: Preferred communication technology across generations

Matures (1900 – 1942)	Face-to-Face and telephone
Baby Boomers (1943 – 1960)	Face-to-Face, telephone and email (when necessary)
Generation X (1961 – 1981)	Embrace Cell phones and email, with some instant messaging accepted
Net Generation (1982- 1991)	Cell phones used minimally for calling but mostly for instant messaging, emailing and social networking. Skype also well accepted
iGeneration (1992 – present)	The average adolescent in the US sends and receives 3 339 text messages a month. This equates to 6 messages every waking hour. In contrast, an average of 191 phone calls are made in a month (Nielsen Wire, 2010).

Table 3. Educational Leadership (Rosen, 2011., p1).

Besides the apparently natural affinity for technology and dependence on the use of social media, the way adolescents of this generation use technology is different. Since the earliest days of the home Internet psychologists and educators have warned parents about allowing their children to have the technology in the privacy of their bedrooms. Allowing children these 'techno-cocoons' inhibits parental monitoring and could impact on the safety that adult supervision could provide. Studies by Larry Rosen in 2010 show that more than 90% of adolescents have access to the Internet on the cell phones in their bedrooms, and more than 80% have use of their tablet devices in addition to their mobile phones. The findings of an anonymous survey in 2010 showed that adolescents reported spending more than 20 hours a day on social

media and the Internet. The 20 hours are an accumulation of time spread across devices and applications, not consecutive hours (Rosen, 2010).

"A really big discontinuity has taken place. One might even call it a "singularity" –an event which changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back. (Prensky, 2001, p 1)

With the establishment of Internet giants like YouTube and Facebook, the creative world of media and advertising has had to very quickly play a game of catch-up. Strategic brand consultant, Chris Ingram, wrote an article for Marketing Week in 2007 warning media and marketing companies that they need to start adapting or become obsolete in the face of the iGeneration (Ingram, 2007). Ingram writes "consumers now want to create their own messages and media…they want to collaborate, like with Wikipedia." He quotes Charles Leadbeater by saying "It's the era of 'we-media.'" (Ingram, 2007, p. 19) He further describes iGeneration consumers with the statement "If this community doesn't like your product…they can destroy your reputation in a matter of days. Word of mouth is now the most powerful medium." (Ingram, 2007, p.19)

The iGeneration writes more words, text-based or formal writing, than any other group in history. They are also the largest consumers of the written word, albeit online content as well as traditional literature. The iGeneration has grown up with the highest volume of available information in history (Rosen, 2010).

To emphasize the influence of the iGeneration on the world at large; in 2009 the word 'unfriend', the term meaning to remove someone as a contact on social-networking sites such as Facebook,

was word of the year for the New Oxford American Dictionary, moving it from Internet slang to a part of the American English language (Reuters, 2009).

   3.2.2. The I in iGeneration: Adolescents and Identity. "Don't laugh at a youth for his affectations; he is only trying on one face after another to find a face of his own." (Gruwell, 2007, p. 159)

The World Health Organization identifies adolescence as the stage of human development that succeeds childhood and precedes adulthood, described in age as years 10 – 19. This period of growth and development is marked by significant and critical emotional and physical transitions and is recognised by the movement towards independence, sexual maturation, the development of the psychological self (identity), and the increase of vulnerability to social pressure and risk-taking behaviour (WHO, 2015).

Researchers are only starting to scratch the surface of how the influence of facing these developmental steps in a cyber world is affecting adolescents. Previous research was based on the effects of watching television and playing video games, but the socially interactive and connected world of the Internet is resulting in new findings of the psychosocial challenges adolescents face.

   The developmental stage of adolescence is often described and measured by the changes in the individual's identity formation, the biological and psychological bridge from being a young child to moving rapidly towards adulthood. Oyserman, Elmore and Smith (2012) describe identity as "the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is." (p.69) Identities can be based on a past reflection of the individual, or what is currently true, or what someone would like to be, or feels pressured to be in the future.

Aspects could also be based on what the person fears they may become in time. The purpose of identity is to provide a 'meaning-making lens' and orientate the person to aspects of themselves that are salient in the context (Oyserman et al., 2012). The father of psychosocial developmental stages, Erik Erikson, emphasised how the task of developing a firm sense of identity is crucial (Erikson, 1968). Shapiro and Margolin (2014) state that the two main tasks of adolescent identity development are labelled as the development of an individual identity, and becoming a part of the peer group, that is, 'standing out' and 'fitting in' (Brown, 2008). Individuals who do not succeed in the adolescent challenges of identity development may experience feelings of distress, and display symptoms of anxiety and depression across their lifetime (Berman & Weems, 2012; Berman, Weems & Petkus, 2009; Cyr, Berman & Smith, 2014; Weems, Costa, Dehon & Berman, 2004). In 2010, Berman and Wilson published data from 2 separate studies collected five years apart, the first in 2004 and the second in 2009. The studies both investigated the same subject: identity development in adolescents aged 16 – 18. The results suggested that the group of adolescents sampled in 2009 were significantly less developed in their identities and reported significantly higher identity distress coupled with symptoms of anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.

"Although seemingly divergent goals, the interplay between the need for one's personal identity and the need for close personal ties and strong group affiliations permeates all domains of adolescents everyday lives" (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014, p. 2).

Adolescents of the iGeneration can potentially develop the aspects of trust, self-disclosure, and loyalty that form part of adolescent identity formation through friendships on social networking sites. Through the use of online persona's they can increase certain virtues and attributes about themselves and detract from the less desirable parts (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). It is recognised

that most adolescents will openly share, with varied levels of truthfulness, information with online friends that would possibly be more suitable for private conversations with individuals (Brown & Larson, 2009; Collins & Steinberg, 2006; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). A 2015 study explored whether technology usage and preference for using communication technology in social situations are related to adolescent development with regards to peer relationships, identity development, and psychological adjustment. The findings indicated that communication technology is related to identity and relationship problems and linked to greater maladjustment, even after controlling for identity and relationship difficulties (Cyr et al., 2015). The authors' further suggest that the possibility exists that the immediacy of feedback and ease of access to peers may contribute to aspects of identity formation that could be problematic. Because of the virtual communication, lacking non-verbal and verbal cues, adolescents may be misinterpreting feedback from others regarding behaviour and opinion. The possibility of creating false personas, allowing for misrepresentation, fosters an environment that is vulnerable to aggression and harassment. The consequences for this type of unacceptable behaviour are completely lacking (Cyr et al., 2015).

> So it's like if a tweet gets retweeted a couple of hundred times, that must mean that my thoughts are worthy. If my Facebook photo is 'liked,' that must mean I am good looking. One of the things that concerns me about a media diet that is overly online, is that we lose the ability to decide for ourselves what we think about who we are. (Harris, 2014, p.1)

In the quote above Michael Harris (2014) discusses the quantification of personal worth through social media communication. This critique of social media and online interaction echoes the researchers who have warned about the possible negative effects that communication technology can have on identity development, leading to identity distress, existential anxiety, and a lack of

identity commitment with adolescents rapidly changing their online representations to present what they understand the online to community to admire (Cyr et al., 2015).

Not all researchers report communication technology to be negative for adolescent development. Shapiro and Margolin (2014) highlight that evidence does exist that online social connections are of value to the developing adolescent. Adolescents can affiliate with groups of people, thereby allowing them to explore aspects such as gender and minority groups. Research also supports evidence that social networking appears to benefit adolescents with well-established friendship relationships, and that adolescents that are socially skilled can enjoy the social networking world (Lee, 2009). However, emerging research supports existing studies that suggest that adolescents with poorer social skills and higher levels of social anxiety do not experience the cyber world as a remarkably positive environment (Lee, 2009). Research by Forest and Wood in 2012 used trained, objective undergraduate coders to rate participants Facebook status updates, including the responses to the posts. Participants with low versus high self-esteem were rated as low in positivity and high in negativity. These participants were also rated as less likeable by the trained coders. This research supports a study by Valkenburg, Peter and Schouten in 2006 that examined the Facebook postings of Dutch adolescents identified as having low self-esteem. The messages by the participants were assessed as being negative in tone and the responses from peers were less positive. It is interesting to note that the adolescent participants felt comfortable with disclosing information on Facebook despite negative responses and they did not appear to recognise that they were exposing themselves to potentially harmful comments. The researchers' identified the cyclical nature of postings that were negative in nature and which therefore received less positive responses, and that in turn impacted on the poster's self-esteem. In the previous chapter, this was discussed as one of the possible outcomes of the

rich-get-richer hypothesis. This hypothesis, support by Kraut et al., (2002), states that individuals who have better face-to-face connections will have stronger online connections, and individuals who identify as having weaker social integration in person, will extend this to online relationships. Therefore, individuals who struggle to make face-to-face connections will have less success online.

3.2.3. X marks the Spot: Generation X. "Today we are a beeper generation in a smartphone world." (Lancaster, 2012, p. 6)

As much as the iGeneration forms part of the 'global village' due to the freedom and ability to connect with other people worldwide, exchanging information and ideas, the polar opposite was true for the Generation X in South Africa. There is a significant difference between the international description and characteristics of Generation X and the generation of South Africans that were born and raised during that era. However, some similarities do exist. To add context to the participants of this research study, both the international and South African environments will be described.

3.2.3.1. The South African Context. South Africans born between the years of 1961 and 1981 were forced into the darkest period of world history. While the Generation X of the US were being characterized as being a 'slacker', disinterested group, South African's were living in a hyper-politicised environment, a brutally divided country, choked by paranoid censorship, and marked by political struggle (The National Library of Norway, n.d.) as the dying monster of Apartheid was taking its last breath (Schenk & Seekings, 2010). As young black South African's fought for freedom and equality against an oppressive and cruel government, young white men were forced to perform two years of national service in the armed forces. Some of these men experienced conflict on the borders of South Africa and were forced to enforce martial law on

their fellow South African's in the country's informal settlements and township areas (Schenk & Seekings, 2010). The method employed by the armed services entailed a policy of brutal humiliation and submission to routine. The ideology of the young, white South African male's masculinity and citizenship being represented by conscription faded rapidly in the 1980's with increasing numbers of eligible men refusing to take part in a fight that they didn't believe in and angered by the sacrifice of two years of young life. As the passion for the promise of a new future was growing among black South African youth with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1981, discontent for the restrictions and censorship was growing amongst white South African youth (Schenk & Seekings, 2010). The government strictly controlled all media, and international sanctions and boycotts crippled the country financially.

As much as this was the beginning of an era of transformation in South Africa, culturally it was an era where the desire for free expression and thought was expressed by all South African youth. However, one of the most dominant emotions in the country at the time was fear. Fear spread through the media by the government about the horrors that would befall white South Africans at the end of Apartheid, and the fear that the state attempted to use to control the struggle of black South Africans for equality and freedom. The government used all its power to keep a country divided. This is the description of Generation X for South Africans that are the parents of the iGeneration (Schenk & Seekings, 2010).

> All I had to hold on to in that whirlpool of meaningless motion was the comfort of that immense symbol represented by Mandela. Without having him to refer to, perhaps many more might have lost their minds in the going over. (Krueger, 2010, p. 72)

3.2.3.2. International Context. Internationally Generation X witnessed many global changes. During the 1960's and 1970's divorce rates increased dramatically, with the statistics in

the US reporting a 300% increase from 1940 to 1980. This resulted in many children being raised in blended families or by single parents. Researchers argue that Generation X is strongly independent and individualistic because of this reason (Ho, 2010). The term 'latchkey' kids was coined to describe children returning from school to an empty house because both parents were at work. Having both parents working was also a significant shift from the earlier generations.

Generation X saw the discovery of the HIV. By 1980, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus had spread to 5 continents and heralded the start of many eras of fear and death (Avert, 2016). All of these social factors had a significant role to play in making Generation X different to the Baby Boomers.

Innovations in technology also separate Generation X but in this case from the next group, the Millennials or Generation Y. Generation X is the last group to remember the world before the existence of the Internet in homes. They are digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001).

According to Marc Prensky (2001), digital immigrants are the generations that have had to adapt to the Internet, instead of being born into the world where the technology was part of life. He describes being a digital immigrant as having an 'accent', and even though they adapt sufficiently to their new environment there are tell-tale clues that they are not natives. He listed behaviours like printing out emails or turning to the Internet for information second and not first. He admits in his article, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants* that his examples sound amusing, but the seriousness of the matter is that digital immigrants and teaching and parenting digital natives in an outdated language may cause misunderstanding. Prensky strongly urges the older generations to adapt more rapidly to be able to more comprehensively understand their children and students (Prensky, 2001). Because of this digital generational divide parents of adolescents have to be more industrious and more vigilant in their parenting to be able to monitor and guide

their children. Research has shown that these variables significantly contribute to how parents mediate their children's Internet use (Lee, 2012; Nathanson, 2001; Shin & Hur, 2011; Valkenburg, Kremar, Peeters & Marseille, 1999). Studies have consistently found that parents underestimate the negative and age-inappropriate content that their children access, and the risky behaviours associated with online activity. However, research also shows that parents do not need to be as technology savvy as their children to be able to provide the support needed, this is informed by parenting styles and parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use (Liau, Khoo & Ang, 2008).

3.3. Parenting through the web of the Internet

Parental perceptions affect parental insight (Sobring & Lundin, 2012). Parental perception refers to how parents think, understand, and thereby feel about the Internet, and explores how parents' perceptions of the Internet affect their attitudes towards Internet use and expectations of their children. Furthermore, parental insight is a stronger predictor of positive parental mediation of Internet use (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Most parents perceive the Internet as a positive tool to assist in the academic success of their children. The exploratory survey conducted by Ortiz, Green and Lim (2011) in Southern California states that "parents place a high value on computer usage and see it as vital to job success and academic achievement" (p.202). In 2008 parents participating in a study on parental awareness and monitoring of adolescent Internet use stated that their primary reason for investing in the Internet was for education purposes (Liau et al., 2008). This research study has shown that up to 73% of parents perceive the Internet as being able to make a significant difference in their children's academic success by allowing their children to acquire useful and valuable knowledge. Children and adolescents who use the Internet without parental mediation are more likely to be exposed to

age-inappropriate online content. Adult participants reported that they were concerned about online dangers, personal and interpersonal risks to their children such as being isolated from other people, viewing violent images or making contact with strangers who are not appropriate contacts online (Clark, 2011; Shin, 2015; Shin, Huh & Faber, 2012). Therefore, parents who want to provide their children with the educational advantage of having access to the Internet have to implement measures to help protect their adolescents. This includes involved mediation from parents which is often difficult because of the superior Internet user skill adolescents possess. (Clark, 2011; Shin, 2015; Shin, Huh & Faber, 2012).

Most parents start with good intentions of guiding their children's Internet use as found in the European study (SAFT project, 2004). The found that rules are more stringent, and monitoring more actively applied directly following the acquisition of the Internet in the home. However, mediation strategies lessened significantly after the family had accessed the Internet for extended periods (Bjornstad & Ellingsen, 2004). International research studies also report that parents with younger children are more likely to implement monitoring and be involved in parental mediation as perceptions are influenced by the age of the children (Livingstone, Haddon, Gorzig & Ólafsson, 2011; Nathanson, 2001; Shin, 2015; Warren, Gerke & Kelly, 2002). Parents are aware that young adolescents are vulnerable to the Internet and data collected suggests that parents are most concerned about the adolescent age group 13 – 15 years. Adolescents of this age, however, reported the least amount of concern about being active on the Internet and consider themselves to be safe and knowledgeable about the risks (Lenhart & Madden, 2015; Liau et al., 2008; Lim, Khoo & Williams, 2003; Livingstone, 2003; Livingstone & Bober, 2004). Older adolescent children reported that they did not have significant concerns

about being online, and 77% of the adolescents stated that they have never been inappropriately contacted or felt nervous or afraid while using the Internet.

Research studies show that specific concerns stated by parents regarding adolescent Internet use were more diverse than only excessive use, and include Internet addiction, negative influences on academic performances and possible problems with social and interpersonal development (Cho & Bae, 2010; Lee & Jeon, 2011; Lee, 2012). However, parents were able to identify the positive attributes they considered the Internet to provide and viewed the Internet as having more positive effects on their children than negative influences. The Internet as an unlimited information resource was regularly identified by parents as a positive aspect of cyber activity (Shin, 2015).

Parents were able to recognize the online risks for younger adolescents, however children's gender did not feature as a significant variable in parental perception. Liau et al., (2008) suggest parental gender does affect perception as results indicate that mothers have a better awareness of their adolescent children's Internet use than fathers. Even though mothers are reported as being more in touch with their adolescents regarding their Internet use, studies have consistently found that parents of both genders underestimate the negative and age-inappropriate content that their children access and the risky behaviours associated with online activity (Sobring & Lundin, 2012).

Parents' confidence and trust in their children's abilities to use the Internet with discretion influence their parental strategies. Sobring and Lundin (2012) found that parents reported they considered their children's Internet skills superior to their own and this reinforced feelings of trust. This is the effect of being a digital immigrant that Prensky (2001) describes in his research. Studies by Liau et al. (2008) and Caskey (2003) suggest that some parents are

anxious and insecure about the possible risks their children face on the Internet but are daunted by possible ways to implement safety measures, rules and limits considering their lack of cyber expertise. Kerawalla and Crook (2002) report that adolescent children report that although home computers and the Internet are purchased and installed for academic purposes, they spend most of their online time playing non-educational games. This statement highlights the broad divide between what parents intend their children to use the Internet for and what is happening in reality.

There are large discrepancies regarding what parents believe they are doing to monitor and guide their children's online use and what the adolescent reports to researchers (Lenhart, 2005; Livingstone & Bober, 2004; Wang, Bianchi & Raley, 2005). Adult participants expressed concerns regarding possible cyber bullying, access to inappropriate content, and online privacy violations, and 86 % adults believe that they do not allow their adolescent children to disclose personal information online. However, 49% of adolescent children report that they do not provide personal information on the Internet leaving a difference of 37% of adolescents that admit to providing personal information online. (Livingstone & Bober, 2004).

Lenhart (2005) reports that as part of findings in the Pew Study, 67% of parents state that they check up on their children's Internet histories and use. However, only 33% of adolescents in the same study report that their parents monitor their online activity and use. The Pew Study is supported by Dowdell (2013) who reports that 63% of boys and 72% of girls state that their parents did not check their online activity, and all the parents of the children who participated in the study report that they audit Internet use. Wang et al., (2005) found that while 61% of parents stated that they had rules for their adolescent's regarding the Internet, only 38% of their children reported having restrictions regarding their Internet use.

Parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use are further affected by their Internet use. Most parents use the Internet at their place of work, for official communication purposes at home, or social networking. Parents may not have the same affiliation for spending time online as their children (Lee, 2012). This contradicts the earlier finding by Cho and Cheon (2005) who report no relationship between parents' Internet skills and their perceived control with regards to their adolescent children's Internet use.

In further contradiction to parents reported perceptions of the monitoring of their children's Internet use, data gathered from parent and youth surveys about parent-child interactions regarding Internet use and cyber safety indicate that children describe discussions regarding Internet security as brief and rare, with simple instructions issued by parents to not provide names or not interact with strangers (Turow, 2001). In a study on children's computer use at home and at school, Kerawalla and Crook (2002) reported that adolescent children consider their parents to be uninterested in their activities online and rarely participate or regulate the content. Livingstone et al. (2011) found that of 50% of adolescent children who have had interactions on the Internet that are described as unpleasant, none of their parents believed that the negative interactions occurred.

A possible explanation for the discrepancy between what parents perceive as their mediation of children's Internet use and what adolescent children report as levels of mediation may be due to parents considering brief visual monitoring as effective. This strategy may have been more beneficial with television viewing and video game playing but falls short of the more interactive strategies required for the dynamic and complex cyber world. Active and interactive mediation is time-consuming and requires parents to remain updated and knowledgeable regarding the Internet (Liau et al., 2008; Mitchell, Finkelhor & Wolak, 2001).

3.4. Parenting styles and Mediation Techniques

"The family is the factory where personality is made" (Parsons, 1955, p.17)

In 1966, Diane Baumrind published her first paper on parenting styles. This focussed on the effects of authoritative parental control on child behaviour and in 1967, she followed with another research paper called "Child care practices anteceding three patterns of preschool behaviour." In these two papers, Baumrind identified three parenting styles, namely authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. This research was based on pre-school children and the collective ways that parents attempted to socialise and control their children. Baumrind's research established a core from which decades of other researchers have developed studies and further theories. In 1983, Maccoby and Martin added the fourth recognised and accepted style: uninvolved parenting. These four parenting styles remain highly relevant in ongoing research on parenting techniques and how they affect children.

3.4.1. Parenting Styles. Parenting styles are described as a set of consistent behaviours and actions by which parents interact with their children. These sets of behaviours are specific to context and can, therefore, change slightly from situation to situation. However, the behaviours are seen as relatively uniform (Brand, Hatzinger, Beck & Holsboer-Trachsler, 2009). Some research studies have concluded that parenting styles are related to children and adolescents psychological well-being. In 2003 Wolfradt, Hempel and Miles published findings from a sample of 276 high school students. The findings supported the hypothesis that perceived parental pressure is correlated with levels of anxiety and problematic identity formation. Perceived parental warmth was found to be correlated with active coping styles and low levels of anxiety amongst the adolescent participants. This study supports research by Wagner, Cohen and

Brook (1996) who found that adolescents who perceived a supportive parenting style, high in

warmth, were less likely to suffer from symptoms of depression after stressful life events.

   3.4.1.1. Authoritarian (Punitive) style. The authoritarian style is recognised as the most

controlling parenting style. Parents with this style expect strict obedience to rigid rules. These

parents are described as being very demanding of their children with regards to academic and

sporting achievement but do not respond to their children's needs for warmth and nurturance.

Authoritarian parents consider children who seek affection as needy.

Figure 4: The Social Control Window
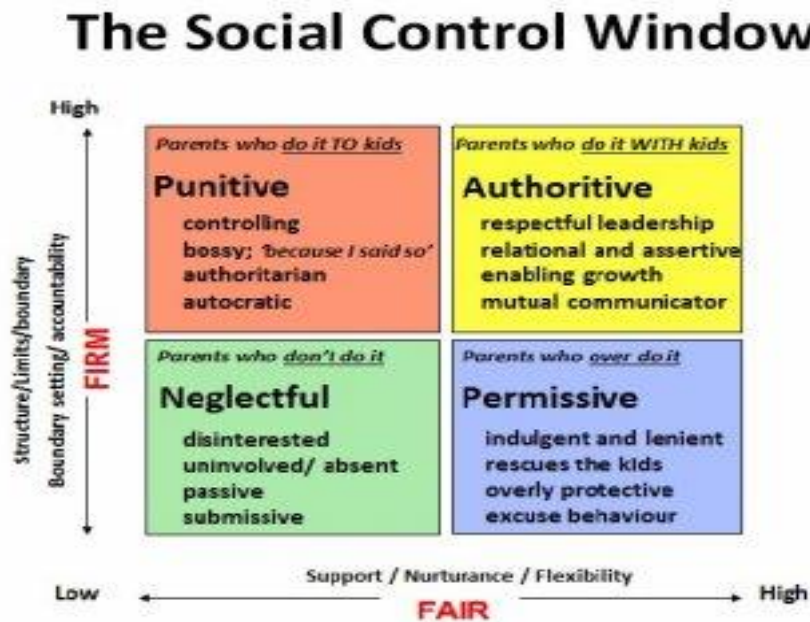
Figure 4. Introduction (Le Messurier, 2016., p.1).

   Punishment is used without providing a context to the child, and feedback is provided

mostly for negative behaviours. Positive behaviour is an expected norm. Children are not

allowed to make choices of their own and are not allowed options for behaviour or consequences

(Cherry, 2014).

The effect of authoritarian parenting styles include children that are often shy or fearful in public but who are also aggressive when separated from their parents. Children and adolescents may have low self-esteem and struggle in social situations due to a lack of healthy socialisation. Children raised by authoritarian parents associate obedience and success with attaining love and affection, and may show high levels of conformity but also be vulnerable to symptoms of anxiety and depression (Cherry, 2014).

3.4.1.2. Authoritative style. This style is characterised by parents who are engaged and connected to their children. Displaying high levels of involvement and strong boundaries, authoritative parents foster a relationship characterized by warmth, nurturance, and respect. This parenting style is strongly linked to the encouragement of children to be independent and develop individual styles. Children are allowed to express opinions and discuss options, but there is a high expectation for positive behaviour with clear consequences for breaking the rules. Discipline is fair and consistent (Baumrind, 1967; Cherry, 2014).

The authoritative parenting style is considered to have the 'best' outcomes for children's emotional and social well-being. Children and adolescents are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-confidence, be healthier and happier in general, and develop good social skills. The development of a child or adolescent with balanced emotional control and regulation is the distinctive marker of this type of parenting style (Cherry, 2014; Maccoby, 1992).

3.4.1.3. Permissive parenting style. One of the original parenting styles identified by Diane Baumrind in 1966, this style is characterised by a lack of rules and parental guidance, primarily due to the parents shifting roles to a friend status with the child. Boundaries and rules are inconsistent and parents may use techniques such as bribery to coerce children's behaviour. This style is high in loving and nurturing behaviour towards the child (Dewar, 2010).

Although permissive parents are often very loving towards their children, the lack of boundaries and consistency often results in children that have poor social skills, low levels of impulse control, and children that can be demanding and self-involved. Children raised with this parenting style can experience feelings of insecurity due to the lack of boundaries and structure (Cherry, 2014).

3.4.1.4. Uninvolved parenting style. Uninvolved parents are well described by the name of the parenting style. These are parents that are emotionally distant from their children. They offer low levels of support or supervision. Although there are many expectations placed on their children, there are very low levels of warmth, love and nurturance displayed. These parents are often absent not only from their children emotionally but may avoid spending time with their children or even attending school events. It is suggested that parents who display this style of parenting are overwhelmed with their personal problems and do not have the capacity to care emotionally for another person (Cherry, 2014).

Children from homes with uninvolved parents may fear emotional relationships with others, are often emotionally withdrawn and have learned to be independent from a young age. They have a high likelihood of delinquent behaviour during adolescence and an increased vulnerability for substance use in their life span. They may also experience symptoms of anxiety, fear, and depression due to the lack of family support (Dewar, 2010).

3.4.1.5. The link between parenting styles and parental mediation strategies. Parental mediation strategies develop and are related to the way in which families communicate, how children are socialized, discipline practices, and other family dynamics, like roles of family members and parents' perceptions of the Internet. These factors contribute to the guidance or, more rigid expectations of family values, practices, and media literacy. These aspects of

parenting are strongly considered to impact on the parental mediation techniques that parents use with regards to their children's Internet use (Austin, 1993; Eastin, Greenberg, & Hofschire, 2006; Kunkel & Wilcox, 2001; Nathanson, 2004; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). In the following section mediation strategies for Internet use will be described.

3.4.2. Mediation strategies. Mediation strategies can be understood as the direct actions used by parents to intervene in their adolescent children's Internet use and online behaviour; it is a set of rules or structure provided by the parents. During the data collection part of most studies parents report that they understand that engagement, monitoring, and supervision is important, however, parents appear to be unaware of the degree of supervision and interactive monitoring their adolescent children require (Liau et al., 2008; Livingstone & Bober, 2004).

The combined aspects of parenting styles, parents' perceptions of their children's ability to use the Internet, and their personal beliefs about the Internet can influence parent's mediation strategies. These interlinked factors form part of the influence parents may have on their children's development as cyber citizens. Parents influence and parenting styles form part of the basis of how their children interact interpersonally in the non-digital world. Shin (2015) proposes that parents face unique challenges regarding parenting in the digital age. Before the digital revolution, during parents' formative years, children had tangible social arenas such as school, after school activities, and social gatherings involving parents (Sobring & Lundin, 2012). This allowed parents to be involved and assert control in environments that were familiar and accessible. Shin (2015) reported that although most parents stated that they previously restricted content and duration of viewing for television and video gaming, they did not have such concrete restrictions on Internet usage, and parents' perceptions can be different regarding television and the Internet. However, the manner in which parents perceive media in general may have an

influence on how they understand and mediate their children's Internet use (Livingstone et al., 2011; Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010; Shin, 2015).

Primary caregivers and parents are encouraged to be online behaviour role models, and socialisation agents to their adolescent children by educators and psychologists. Parental Internet skills are indicated as a strong influence on what mediation strategy parents use (Lee, 2012). As previously discussed, parents are at a digital disadvantage compared to their iGeneration children. Technical skills and Internet knowledge are often more advanced in children of school going age than in parents of working age as children learn from each other as well as from information technology classes at school (Tripp, 2001; Shin, 2015). Adolescent Internet users are no longer confined to the use of a personal computer at home or school, but can access the Internet from their own mobile devices, or those of friends. The personal and mobile nature of these devices increase the level of difficulty parent's face in monitoring and mediating Internet use (Clark, 2011; Shin, 2015). As previously discussed, parents perceive the Internet to be a valuable resource for their children's educational progress, however with the introduction of smartphones and other devices, parents increasingly perceive a lack of control over their children's use of these devices.

As an alternative method of maintaining control Lee (2012) recommends that parents have a significant influence on adolescent's access to and use of the Internet and have the opportunity to manage their children's risk online as most parents financially support their adolescent children and provide computers, cell phones, and other devices. Lee (2012) suggests parents use financial restrictions to assist with increasing involvement in their children's Internet use. Sadleir and de Beers' recent book educating and describing the consequences of inappropriate cyber behaviour in South Africa strengthens the need for parents to exercise

effective mediation strategies related to their children's Internet use. This is discussed in chapter two of this study (Sadleir & de Beer, 2014).   In the book dealing with South African laws relating to cyber behaviour the authors discuss the consequences of online harassment, hate speech, sexting, and the consequences of online behaviour such as expulsion from school or even possible criminal charges for children from the age of ten (Sadleir & de Beer, 2014). These authors also emphasize the long-term consequences that posting information, images or videos on the Internet can have on future career prospects.

Parents who perceive the media as having possible negative effects on their children's thoughts and behaviours are more likely to utilize various mediation strategies to minimise influence. The most reported strategy reported was restrictive mediation, such as limiting adolescent's access to content and restricting time spent online (Lee, 2012; Nathanson, 2001; Shin & Hur, 2011; Valkenburg et al., 1999). This research is supported by Lee (2012) who found a positive association between parents who have negative perceptions about the Internet and the use of restrictive parenting mediation strategies. Similarly, a research study by Shin (2015) highlights the opposite consequence of parental perception affecting mediation and reports that parents who had positive perceptions of their children's Internet use and expressed confidence about their children's online skills were less engaged in their children's activities online including discussions of online activities and behaviour, and appeared to be less interested in updating their own Internet skills and knowledge, therefore reducing the possibility of actively monitoring their children's online activity. It is noteworthy that international research differs on whether gender influences parents' specific mediation strategies, with a study by Eastin et al., (2006) reporting that parents are more likely to restrict online time and content with their sons than with their daughters, but that parents are more concerned that their daughters will be

targeted by sexual predators. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) on the other hand reported that gender was not a significant factor in mediation strategies.

International research regarding parental mediation strategies highlights the role of the parent in two main forms of intervention, namely, actively mediating children's Internet use through talking and discussing appropriate use with their children including co-using which requires the parent to use the Internet with their children, modeling appropriate behaviour but without meaningful discussion regarding Internet behaviour (Shin, 2015), and restrictive mediating through setting rules about Internet use. Parental mediation strategies are considered an important part of the socialization of children on the appropriate use of the Internet and the degree to which parents monitor, and are actively involved in their children's Internet use is linked to a decrease of both cyberbullying and exposure to age-inappropriate Internet content (Mesch, 2009; Shin, 2015)

3.4.2.1. Restrictive Mediation. Restrictive parental mediation refers to parental techniques used to limit and influence children's Internet use and includes passive parenting through the use of programmes that limit access to websites with particular subject matter or images associated or labelled as inappropriate according to the restriction parameters of the monitoring software. This mediation strategy may also include the sharing of computers in a common living space and asking permission from parents to access the Internet (Lee, 2012). Parents implementing restrictive mediation report that they regularly check their children's browser histories, and have password access to accounts or websites that their children frequent. Prohibitive software may lessen exposure to inappropriate online content. However, according to studies by Khurana, Bleakley, Jordan and Romer (2015) focussing on adolescents that use the Internet, employment of monitoring software does not improve or increase self-regulation online,

or aid in preventing children and adolescents from attaining means to circumvent software with parental controls. Shin (2015) reports that participants stated that they more commonly used time restriction than content restriction with their children as they perceived too much time online as being potentially more harmful.

Caskey (2003) discussed the reality of parental vigilance with regards to online exposure. The findings suggested that the style of parental mediation with a younger age group of children was reported as more restrictive, whereas the mediation strategy with adolescents required reassessment or more leniency, especially as parents report that restrictive mediation with adolescents is met with resistance. Younger children are more likely to conform to parental authority (Lwin, Stanaland & Miyazaki, 2008, Shin, 2015). Khurana et al., (2015) report that selective indirect restrictive mediation techniques like time limitations and content regulation may be protective factors for adolescent children using the Internet. However, households with high levels of restrictive mediation were less likely to have Internet access in adolescent children's bedrooms, and therefore, the protective factor of this type of parental mediation exists because the hard connection to the Internet is limited. Because of this, the opportunity for adolescent children to influence their access to the Internet with superior cyber skills is not possible (Khurana et al., 2015).

More recently parents have had to attempt to restrict their adolescent children's Internet use on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. These devices complicate keeping the Internet in a space that is open to the family, and it is unlikely that adolescents will be sharing such mobile devices. Controlling and restricting time is more difficult if the device and the adolescent child are not in the company of the parents. Even if parents can maintain the same restrictive mediation strategy, their child may be exposed to online content through a smartphone

or tablet belonging to a friend at school (Sobring, 2014). Installing software to restrict and monitor adolescent children's mobile online use is nearly impossible. Restrictive mediation is highly associated with authoritarian parenting styles. Online use research reports that although 70% of European parents of adolescent children implement restrictive mediation techniques, and discuss Internet use and Internet activity with their children, they rarely discuss Internet content or initiate conversations based on Internet-related matters with their children. Only 58% of European parents remain in the vicinity of the Internet device while their children are online (Livingstone et al., 2011; Shin, 2015).

Shin (2015) reports that the most regularly employed mediation strategy employed amongst research participants is time restriction. Empirical research indicates that strict, restrictive methods of mediation of use through time limits and denial of access are less likely to be effective in the online use habits of children and were found to be less effective in reducing children's addictive tendencies in relation to the Internet (Cho & Bae, 2010; Lee & Jeon, 2011, Lee, 2012). Lwin et al. (2008) concludes that restrictive mediation techniques may be effective with younger children who seek out adult company and are more likely to be obedient However, the positive results of restrictive mediation with adolescents is limited and contradictory with parents reporting higher levels of satisfaction with the techniques and adolescents reporting unmonitored access to the Internet, and creative means to circumvent time restrictions. In contrast, parents interviewed stated that they believe communication is an essential aspect of parental mediation, however, research highlights that parents do not follow through on discussions regarding the Internet. Parental participants in the research study by Liau et al., (2008) reported that although they considered their restrictive mediation strategies to be effective, they were concerned that they were not always in control and that the methods they

used were possibly going to be ineffective as the Internet and children's Internet skills were evolving and changing daily Shin (2015).

3.4.2.2. Active Mediation. Active mediation, based on conversation and critical discussion, is used to stimulate critical thinking skills in children. Highly associated with the authoritative parenting style, this style of mediation has repeatedly been identified, by researchers as the most effective mediation strategy used by parents and has been shown to reduce negative media effects on children (Fujioka & Austin, 2003; Laible & Thompson, 2007; Nathanson, 1999; Shin, 2015). Active mediation further encourages mutual reciprocity that may assist children in integrating and internalising their parents' guidance, and having a more positive attitude and level of acceptance towards rules and expectations. In a study by Cho and Cheon (2005), parental participation in children's cyber activities was identified as a positive factor in assisting parents to gain more holistic insight into their children's online behaviour and the cyber world. A study by Khurana et al., (2015) report that the effect of active mediation and monitoring is mostly direct and shows an impact 26 times greater than restrictive mediation. However, the effectiveness of active mediation is dependent on the strength and openness of the parent-adolescent relationship (Khurana et al., 2015) and requires a high level of commitment and time involvement from parents. Considering the busy households common to most families, these expectations may be difficult to meet.

3.4.2.3. Barriers to mediation. Besides the discrepancy between what parents believe their adolescent children need regarding beneficial and effective mediation strategies for online use, and what they are actually implementing, the developmental stage of the adolescent using the Internet is a third component that may form a distinct barrier to meaningful parental mediation strategies. Livingstone and Bober (2004) found that 66% of adolescent Internet users

have implemented a strategy to protect their online privacy on their home PC's from their parents, and 63% of the adolescents reported that they were able to attain access to the Internet away from home, without their parents' knowledge. Adolescents report the Internet as being a space where they feel free and can express themselves, this makes cyberspace an appealing environment, especially when not monitored and limited. Juvonen and Gross (2008) report that 33% of adolescent children fear that their parents will remove or further restrict their Internet access if their parents were aware of the content they are accessing and what Internet material is available. Wang et al., (2005) discussed the difficulty parents report in implementing preventative and safety measures on the Internet when they are less knowledgeable about the cyber world than their children. Dowdell (2013) reported that adolescent children stated that they regularly erase their Internet history and do not believe that their parents are aware of this practice.

3.5. Conclusion

The generation gap between parents and adolescents, parenting styles and mediation techniques all form part of the complex difficulties parents of the iGeneration face. This aspect of modern parenting appears to be filled with contradictory beliefs and misguided attempts by parents to apply older techniques established for television watching and video gaming to the very interactive and open world of the Internet.

For example, parents using restrictive mediation strategies believe that communication between parent and child regarding Internet use is important. However, the implementation of this mutual exchange very often does not exist (Shin, 2015). Parents further report that they consider their children to be mostly secure and protected online and did not fear for their current cyber safety as they perceived the restrictive mediation strategy as effective and therefore did not

feel any need to add, alter or deviate from their current strategy. Liau et al., (2008) found that parents overestimate the degree of parental monitoring, effectiveness of restrictions and extent of parental engagement, supervision, and communication regarding their adolescent children's Internet use. They further found that parents underestimate the type of websites their children are viewing and visiting online, and the level of risky behaviour these adolescents participate in online. This level of misguided confidence handicaps parents from being able to grasp the cyber world in which their children are citizens.

Research shows that adolescent children that have positive, interactive relationships with their parents are willing to disclose more information regarding their Internet activity, and that parents trust their adolescent children more online if they perceive an open relationship with high levels disclosure, thus making this desired situation difficult to attain and maintain if both parties are not mutually committed to a relationship (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Park, Kim, and Cho (2008) reported that the participants in their study indicated that the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship was more important than the quantity of time spent together.

Education of parents regarding the Internet is of utmost importance. Caskey (2003) reported that parents who previously reported apprehension about their ability to monitor and mediate the adolescent children's Internet use and who have negative attitudes towards technology and the Internet found that with exposure to, and involvement with, education programmes developed for parents, benefited from interaction with their children and had a more positive perception of the Internet.

The following chapter will describe the methodology used to collect, analyse and explore the data in the current study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

"I tried to call deep on my courage. And I thought, you know, I am a storyteller. I'm a qualitative researcher. I collect stories; that's what I do. And maybe stories are just data with a soul." (Brown, 2010, p.1).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and describe the research design and methodology including the three core qualitative concepts of self-reflexivity, context, and thick description (Tracy, 2013). 'Self-reflexivity' outlines the researcher as the instrument for qualitative research and how the researcher's life experiences and paradigm worldview form an integral part of qualitative research within the field of psychology. Interest in the relevance of the second concept of 'context' was initiated by Geertz (1973), when the focus of immersion of the researcher in the situation of the participant to gain understanding became recognised as an important part of qualitative research. The third term, 'thick description', is the topographical map to the researcher's global understanding of the research topic. To analyse, interpret and describe the research study in a language so that readers may fully appreciate the impact of the study, it is important for the researcher to be familiar with the nature and context of the research study. The nomenclature of the field will form part of the interviews with participants and be an integral part of the literature on the topic. Therefore, to be able to provide a thick description of the research the researcher requires a familiarity with the field of study (Tracy, 2013).

The paradigm worldview, qualitative research design and sampling method used is described in this chapter including a brief description of the participants sampled, the interview schedule, and the process of ensuring the credibility of this research.

This chapter will serve as a navigational map to introduce and guide the reader to how the gathered information was qualitatively understood, to most effectively allow the researcher to share the interpretation and communicate the impact of this research study.

4.2 Objective of the Study

The literature reviewed in chapter two and chapter three of the present study highlights some aspects of Internet use, and possible contributions to how parents perceive their adolescent children's Internet use. The amount of people who gain access to the Internet in South Africa is growing each year, and this population is dominated by children and adolescents who are exposed to the Internet not only at home but at school. These factors determine that more research is required to understand the factors that influence how parents perceive the Internet, and how their perceptions influence their children's behaviour with regards to the Internet.

This study specifically aimed to explore and describe:

1. How parents experience their adolescent children's Internet use based on their perceptions, including their understanding of the benefits and risks of having adolescents online.

2. To identify mediation techniques used by parents to manage their adolescent children's Internet use.

The findings of this study would assist in promoting an understanding of the benefits and concerns of parents who have adolescent children that use the Internet, assisting in the further development of cyber security and education strategies. The study will provide further research in the very relevant area of cyber psychology in a South African context. Understanding the relationship between humans and the Internet, and the effect of Internet use on society is vital to facilitate future developments in psychology.

4.3 Research Design

     4.3.1. Qualitative research design. This study made use of a qualitative research design. Qualitative data informs the analysis of words and is appropriate for interpreting and describing perceptions of parents within the context of their environments, taking into account how much has changed regarding technology. This research design appropriately allows for the description of the contrast in the childhood experiences of the research participants versus their perceptions of their own adolescent children's experiences. This qualitative study uses an explorative and descriptive research design with an interpretive worldview paradigm. The interpretation of the research involves an empathic understanding of the participants and their environments as well as the perspective of the researcher (Tracy, 2013). The objective remains to take a practical or phronetic approach to the research and to emphasise the importance of conducting research that matters and has relevance for individuals, society and psychology (Tracy, 2013).

     4.3.1.1. Exploratory Research. The objective of exploratory research is to assist in the explanation of why something occurs and how to predict possible future outcomes and therefore to identify salient issues and key variables (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The descriptive study aims to describe the details of people, situations, and events, providing an accurate 'snap-shot' of the participants and the phenomena (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Exploratory research informs the researcher's curiosity, the viability of further studies in the future, and to develop methods that could be used in future studies (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). How Internet use impacts on children, adolescents, and adults from a psychological perspective is a grossly under-researched topic in South Africa, in comparison to international research. To guide future research, studies such as the present study are essential. South Africa is a unique country, with significant historical considerations and present obstacles that affect current and future

generations of Internet users (de Vos et al., 2011). Exploratory research may be broad in the topic and may not result in concrete results, therefore due to the nature of this research no direct causal links were established. The value of this research is that it studies the topic broadly, and generally enough for topics and themes to emerge that may result in questions for future research studies.

4.3.3.2. Descriptive Research. Explorative and descriptive research share commonalities and the process may overlap during the research process as explorative research requires description to provide information (de Vos et al., 2011). The use of descriptive research aids in producing a richer description of the research data by allowing the researcher to describe the layers of data and to add depth to information regarding the participants. The descriptive aspect of research presents the data in a context that draws a picture for the reader about the specific details of the study (de Vos et al., 2011; Moustakas, 1994).

4.3.3.3. Paradigm Worldview. Each philosophical paradigm attests to a particular frame of assumptions that are formed and described with language that remains similar across disciplines. These frameworks allow for readers and fellow researchers to recognise through which lens this researcher viewed this study (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Tracy (2013) ascribes the researcher as the instrument in qualitative research. Therefore, the understanding of this paradigm adds to the richness of the interpretation and communication of the impact and value of this research study.

The interpretive paradigm as applied to this research study is identified and described by terms such as the German word *verstehen* (Platt, 1985). The term verstehen illustrates a researcher's attempt to gain insight into the participant's personal experience, as well as how that is blended with the participant's life, values, and beliefs within their culture and society. The researcher

attempts to step into the shoes of the participant and use that understanding, woven with their observation of the situation as the participant has described it, to allow the information to form deep, rich layers from which to interpret and analyse. With this paradigm, both the experience and perception of reality for the participant and the researcher is important and informs the interpretation of the data. Socially constructed is another important term for the interpretive paradigm. This term means that the researcher embracing an interpretive paradigm values the language and interaction with the research participant as an experience that shapes the reality of the study. In psychology, the relationship that exists between the client and psychologist is suggested to be the most powerful influencing factor in the efficacy of the interaction (Herman, 1998). Additionally, the term *hermeneutics* is also associated with the interpretive paradigm. Hermeneutics is defined as a holistic method of interpretation, attempting to include as many aspects of the information as possible to aid in the broadest and most inclusive interpretation (Tracy, 2013). Providing a thick description of the research participants will assist the researcher to translate and describe the experience with a hermeneutic interpretation for the reader.

The following section will detail the process of how this research was conducted, including the sampling and inclusion criteria used for the selection of participants. A description of the interview schedule used during the interviews is also provided. The data collection process, analysis, and interpretation of the data will be discussed before the criteria for excellence in qualitative research is used for reviewing the methodology.

4.4. Sampling Procedure

4.4.1. Non-probably, purposive sampling. The sampling method used for this study is purposive, non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling focusses on the relevance of the sample about the research (Neuman, 2003). Use of this sampling method meant that participants

were selected using the subjective judgement of the researcher and requirements detailed in the biographical questionnaire. As a result, not all individuals in a population were offered the same opportunity to form part of the research sample. Non-probability is a limitation of this type of sampling (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). The participants in the present study had socioeconomic statuses or ethnic backgrounds that are similar. All of these factors potentially have an impact on this study (Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton, 2010). Due to the homogeneous socio-economic backgrounds of these participants, the diversity representative of a South African population is not appropriately represented. Valuable data may be lost due to this method of sampling and the researcher regrets the limited nature of the study. However, due to the cyber focussed nature of the research and the extreme lack of Internet availability in South Africa, due to the high costs and lack of infrastructure, the sample was limited. This is further discussed in the limitations section of this study. This study is aimed at being a catalyst for further research into cyber psychology, and the emphasis will be on future research studies representing the South African population accurately.

4.4.1.1. Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is utilised to identify individuals with specific characteristics (de Vos et al., 2011). For this explorative and descriptive study participants were recruited who had adolescent children who had access to the Internet both at home and at school. In South Africa having this amount of access to the Internet is a luxury due to the high cost of Internet bandwidth. Initially, the researcher identified prospective participants who met the inclusion criteria through professional contacts within the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area. These early contacts provided contacts for other participants that met the inclusion criteria. The individuals were contacted and requested to partake in the study. This sampling method continued until the data saturation point was reached. Theoretical saturation

was indicated by the repetition of significant themes in the data by individual participants. New predominant themes were unlikely to emerge with further interviews. (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). Theoretical saturation was reached at five participants.

Due to the qualitative nature of research study, the sample was based on saturation and is not representative or statistically determined (de Vos et al., 2011). Although limited in the representation of the South African population, the sample provided data that allows the findings of this present study to be generalised to international research findings. This informs and highlights topics for future research that may be of value and benefit to the entire South African Internet user population.

4.4.2. Selection criteria. Inclusion criteria did not have a requirement for gender, ethnicity or age. The following inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were identified:

1. Participants must be able to communicate in English
2. Participants were limited to persons residing within the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area
3. Participants were required to be parents of adolescent children aged 10 – 19 years
4. Participants children would need access to the Internet through personal computers or devices at home, not only at school or public spaces.

The inclusion criteria were monitored through the use of a biographical questionnaire (Appendix B) that was presented to participants first telephonically, and secondly before data collection commenced. The sample contained five females, all born between the years of 1961- 1981. Four of the participants were married, one participant was divorced, and all participants had two children aged between 10 – 19 years. All participants resided in the Nelson Mandela

Metropolitan area, and all participants met the requirements of Internet access. All participants could communicate fluently in English. A thick description of participants in provided in the Findings and Discussion chapter.

4.5. Data Collection

4.5.1. Setting. Letters of participation were sent to individuals that expressed interest in this study. A template of the letter of motivation for co-operation can be found in Appendix A. Possible participants were contacted telephonically to establish whether they met the inclusion criteria. Appointments were set up at the homes or offices of the participants. All participants volunteered a private space at their homes or offices where the interviews could be conducted without interruption and with confidentiality. This data collection allowed the researcher to experience the context of the participants in their environment. Four participants were interviewed in their homes and one participant at her office. This opportunity to experience the research participant in their context and environment added valuable depth to the qualitative research, allowing the researcher to immerse herself into the participant's life. With prior knowledge and permission of all participants, interviews were recorded with the use of a digital recording device and participants were notified of when the recording started and ended.

4.5.2. Research procedure. Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and after transcription to text, thematic analysis was completed by both the researcher and an independent coder. Appendix D includes the questions asked during the semi-structured interviews. Informed consent was granted by all the participants and additional information regarding the study was provided verbally and in writing. An explanation of how anonymity and confidentiality were going to be maintained when describing the participants in the study was also provided. A semi-structured interview was conducted through the use of open-ended

questions and participants were encouraged to elaborate on their answers. The questions of the semi-structured interview schedule are included in Appendix D. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and one hour. However, the time spent with the participants establishing rapport exceeded the formal interview time. All interviews were conducted in English. Recordings were transcribed into text before coding by an experienced external transcriber.

It was important for the researcher to establish rapport with the participants as the relationship between a qualitative researcher and the research participant forms part of the research process. The researcher is the instrument of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Tracy, 2013) and, therefore, the collection of qualitative data is not merely the asking of questions and recording of answers, it critically requires the researcher to recognise the perspective of the participant.

4.5.3. Biographical questionnaire. A short biographical questionnaire (included in Appendix B) was developed by the researcher. This questionnaire included information relevant to the present research study. Although the researcher recognises that including information that could enrich the context of the participants is beneficial for the research study, requesting information that was irrelevant to the subject of this present research study was considered to be invasive and unnecessary. The researcher felt that it was inappropriate to request information that did not directly inform the data and possible findings of the research study. Further information would develop through the interview process, with the participants disclosing the information they felt comfortable with discussing. The questions on the biographical questionnaire included the primary language of the participant, the number and age of children, and whether the children had access to the Internet.

4.5.4. Semi-structured interviews. The researcher developed a set of predetermined questions aimed at inviting a conversational exchange between the researcher, as the interviewer and the participant. The interview schedule is included in Appendix D. Questions were developed to be open ended. Through the use of these questions, the interviewer hoped to elicit open and free dialogue from the participants with regards to their perceptions about the Internet, and their parenting methods directly related to their children's Internet use.

The establishment of a relationship between the researcher, as the interviewer and the participant, is as much a tool as the use of the semi-structured interview schedule. As the researcher was in the participant's setting, the researcher established rapport through conversation, both casual and related to the nature of the research study before and after the recorded semi-structured interview. This conversation was led by the participants and, the researcher, as a clinical psychologist, is trained and experienced in establishing rapport in a relationship. The researcher has experience as both a registered counsellor and as a clinical psychologist with training in techniques for developing rapport and establishing a relationship. Working as a clinical psychologist required the honing of skills to build rapport quickly in acute situations, working in trauma environments where establishing a trusting relationship within minutes is essential. From supervisory feedback, this ability was noted as a particular strength for the researcher. The participants were informed when the recording of the interview would start and end, thus starting the semi-structured interview. As informed consent was signed as the researcher arrived at the participants' home or office, the participants were informed that field notes may be used to record information throughout the entire interaction of the researcher and the participant.

4.6. Data Analysis Procedure

Due to the qualitative nature of the present study, data analysis was a non-numerical examination and analysis of collected data with the intention of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship (de Vos et al., 2011). Throughout the data gathering and analysis process, the researcher wrote down thoughts and salient themes in a reflective journal (Appendix E). Writing down thoughts and feelings about the research process allowed the researcher to reflect on personal aspects through the lens of a psychologist and, thereby gain insight into the lives of the participants through a psychological lens.

Tesch's (1990) eight steps of qualitative data analysis were used for the purpose of analysis in this study. The first step was to read through all the data to understand the body of information as a whole, noting any data that appeared salient. Step two required reading one transcript document and identifying meaning within the participant's responses; this procedure was repeated through all the transcripts. Once completed step three required the making of columns on paper and noting the recognisable categories from the different participants in each column. This allowed for a simple comparison between participants' data. The data was identified into groups of similar topics. Step four entailed the assignment of codes (abbreviations) to the topics identified within the data. These codes were then marked in the transcripts where the topics appeared. Step five built on the coding from step four by identifying descriptive words within the topics and then allocating these words into categories. Step six was deciding on the separate categories and recognising that certain data could fit into more than one category. During step seven, the subject of the research study was kept in mind while the data was analysed for themes and sub-themes within the categories. Step eight required a decision about the need to recode the data. The researcher was satisfied with the categories, themes and

sub-themes and did not recode the data (Theron, 2015). Simultaneously, an independent coder

also analysed the transcriptions also using Tesch's (1990) eight steps. This procedure ensured the

credibility of the process of data analysis and the findings obtained from the research.

4.7. Credibility

Tracy (2010) proposes 8 'Big-Tent' criteria for guiding excellence in qualitative research:

1) worthy topic, 2) rich rigor, 3) sincerity, 4) credibility, 5) resonance, 6) significant contribution,

7) ethical, and 8) meaningful coherence. This researcher has integrated these criteria into the

relevant areas of this study. Of importance to the research design and methodology chapter is the

criterion of credibility. Tracy (2010) discusses the credibility of qualitative research to have four

requirements and aspects. To illustrate the credibility of this research study the following section

will expand on the use of the four sub-criteria of *thick description*, *triangulation*, *multivocality*,

and *member reflections*. Credibility is described as "trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and

plausibility" of a qualitative research study, and is marked as an important requirement in the

research community (Tracy, 2010, p.842). All data gathering procedures are well documented

and clearly described within this study.

4.7.1. Thick Description. "Things get bigger, not smaller and tighter, as we understand

them" (Gonzalez, 2000, p.629). The use of *thick description* in a qualitative research study

provides in-depth detail that describes the research study. Further, the participants, contexts, and

culturally situated circumstances involved in the data collection process are also described in

textured layers to provide a picture of the data. This depth of description allows the reader to

draw perspective from the research data opposed to the findings being dictated by the researcher.

Throughout this treatise, the researcher uses every relevant opportunity to add detail that can

enrich the reader's understanding of the importance of the study, the context and voices of the

participants, and invite the reader to form a personal interpretation of the data. Specifically, in

the findings and discussion chapter the researcher provides thick descriptions of the participants,

including information highlighting their cultural background and current context. A structural

description of the research process is detailed in the research design and methodology chapter.

Non-verbal behaviour gathered during the interviews was included to emphasise and

highlight the participant's experience. A *thick description* aims to prevent the neglect of

information and details that may be considered assumed or implicit by going below the surface

of expected descriptions (Tracy, 2010). The researcher's proficiency in information technology

and familiarity with online Internet communication and interaction enhanced her ability to add

thick descriptions of the context of online behaviour and Internet use.

4.7.2. Triangulation. As the name suggests, *triangulation* is the utilisation of more than

one source of data or theoretical framework to focus aspects of the research study (Tracy, 2010).

In the literature chapters the researcher has described the body of relevant, modern, and

international research. This process has allowed the researcher to explore the data collected from

participants and explain both the contrasts and commonalities between the themes and topics

noted during the research study and data collected by other researchers. The utilisation of

Tesch's steps of data analysis ensured that the findings are based on multiple sources of evidence

and that data was collected systematically (de Vos et al., 2005). Additionally, an independent

coder identified and clarified themes within the data gathered from participants.

Credibility is increased if different researchers converge on similar conclusions (Denzin, 1978;

Tracy, 2010). In the findings and discussion chapter, the researcher drew together the contrasts

and similarities between the findings of this research study and the international body of research.

4.7.3. Multivocality. Linked to the concept of *verstehen* or the attempt to analyse qualitative research from the participant's perspective, is the sub-criteria of *multivocality*. This construct requires the individual participation of various voices in the research. A *thick description* of the participants and inclusion of the perceptions of the researcher is needed, illustrating the importance of the empathic understanding of the participant's context. The voices of the participants and the researcher are clearly described in relevant sections of this research study, particularly in the introductory section, chapters on findings and discussion, and conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

4.7.4. Member Reflections. Tracy (2010) recommends one final step to the addition of credibility for the qualitative research study. She strongly advises that the seeking of input during the analysing, producing, and communicating of the research will strengthen the excellence of the study. Before initiating this research study, the researcher proposed the study to the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The proposal of the study was academically and structurally critiqued before submission to the Faculty Post Graduate Studies Committee (FPGSC) at the same university. This provided the addition of further professional opinions, and voices of objective parties to this research study.

This research study has been conducted, analysed and produced under the supervision of a professor of clinical psychology. Finally, the researcher has reflected upon the research process with fellow psychologists who have all completed research studies.

4.8. Ethical Considerations

The researcher is bound by ethical research practices that include the responsibility to be honest and respectful to all individuals involved or affected by this research study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006). Research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises, and well-accepted conventions, and expectations between all parties involved (de Vos, et al., 2011). Researchers have two basic categories of ethical responsibility:(1) to responsibly conduct research in a manner that ensures the welfare and dignity of the participants of the research study, and (2) to ensure that the reported evidence of the research is accurate and honest (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006).

The present researcher referred to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2010) that provided the researcher with guidelines of ethical principles to establish a harmony between values, the quest for knowledge and the rights of the individuals involved in the research.

Ethical considerations that were recognized as essential to the process of the present study included: (1) institutional approval and clearance, (2) informed consent, (3) beneficence and non-maleficence, (4) avoidance of deception, (5) privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, (6) accurate dissemination of findings, (7) competence of the researcher, and (8) debriefing (American Psychological Association, 2010).

4.8.1. Institutional approval. A proposal for the present study was presented to the researcher's current university department (Department of Psychology, NMMU). Once approved the proposal was submitted to the Faculty Post Graduate Studies Committee. This committee approved the proposal and further review and approval from the Research Ethics Committee: Human of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University was not required.

4.8.2. Informed Consent. A researcher had an ethical responsibility to make clear to the participants what the research entailed, including any possible risk to the participant, and to respect the dignity and rights of the individual during the research experience (Feldman, 2011).

By informing the participants of all possible risks and benefits the researcher allowed the research participant to make a voluntary decision whether they would participate in the study. The following relevant information was outlined in an informed consent document (included as appendix C) which was explained to the participant in detail as the first step of the interview, and required the participant's signature: (1) the purpose of the research and details of the researcher, (2) research procedures, (3) potential risk from participation in the study, (4) confidentiality and limits to confidentiality, (5) access to the study and dissemination of findings, (6) confirmation regarding voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw from the study (American Psychological Association, 2010).

4.8.3. Avoidance of deception. "Psychologists strive to benefit those with whom they work and take care to do no harm" (American Psychological Association, 2010, p.3). This core ethical principle extended to this research study, and the researcher was cognizant of the potentially sensitive areas of the research topic. The researcher was further aware that deception could include misleading the participants in a way that they are unaware of the nature of the study, the financial sponsoring of the study, or how the findings will be utilised. Therefore, the researcher provided the participants with the required knowledge regarding the study to allow them to make an informed decision.

4.8.4. Avoidance of harm. The awareness of the potential impact of investigating sensitive topics, during a qualitative study should be essential to the consideration of the researcher when designing the study (de Vos et al., 2011). No potential psychological risks were

identified by the researcher during the design of the study, nor were any risks identified by the researcher's supervisor or the faculty committee that accepted the proposal of the study. During the interview process, the researcher ensured that discussion did not cause psychological distress or discomfort for the research participants. The researcher remained aware, throughout the interview process, and if any psychological distress or discomfort were noted the researcher would have addressed the situation in manner, based on professional training and experience, that would provide psychological support to reduce the discomfort or distress of the research participant.

4.8.5. Privacy and confidentiality. "Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be reported" (Willig, 2008, p.266). Privacy was maintained through the use of pseudonyms that protected participant's identity, therefore providing confidentiality. In the present study, it was important to the researcher that not only the anonymity of the research participants was directly protected but also the anonymity of the research participant's children. Any and all information that could pertain to specific scholastic, extra-mural, occupational or geographical information that could facilitate the identification of the research participants or their children was encrypted in the information quoted in this research study.

All information gathered during the research process will be held as strictly confidential and the anonymity of the participants protected. Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the research participants was preserved at all times. Identifying information is only known to the researcher to preserve the anonymity of the participant. The recorded data will be kept in a safe and secure location for six years where the information will not be available to others not involved in the research study.

4.8.6. Accurate dissemination of findings. All participants expressed an interest in the findings of this research study. The researcher informed the participants of the findings in an objective manner, and the findings of the research study will be made available to the research participants once the study has been completed and accepted by the researcher's institution of study. The final research study will be submitted in the form of a treatise, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts degree (Clinical Psychology). The treatise will be submitted to the library of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

4.8.7. Competence of the researcher. Psychologists conduct research with populations and in areas only within the limits of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience (American Psychological Association, 2010).

The researcher worked according to the structure provided by the faculty-approved research proposal, under the guidance of an experienced senior researcher and supervisor. The researcher maintained ethical principles and reported any concerns or questions to the supervisor.

The researcher used the training and experience from a qualification as a registered counsellor, and as a clinical psychologist. Extensive experience from 12 years of work experience with interviewing and interacting with people before the researcher's tertiary education and training was also utilised. The researcher completed a systematic review on the topic of cyberbullying amongst children and adolescents in 2013, and this research was presented at the African Cyber Citizenship Conference in 2014. The article was published as part of the conference proceedings. In the researcher's supervised training as a clinical psychologist, the work with both the clients within an acute setting, and the relatives of the clients provided the ability to quickly establish rapport and a relationship with strangers in a distressing and

emotional situation. The researchers training within a highly integrative modality based tertiary institution allowed the researcher to use the most appropriate evidence-based techniques to establish rapport with the research participants and conduct the interviews in an ethical and responsible manner.

4.8.8. Debriefing. The American Psychological Association (2010) states in the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct that debriefing is an opportunity for participants to gain information and feedback regarding the research study they have participated in unless it is established that the participant may be harmed by the disclosure of this information. If the researcher becomes aware that the participant has been harmed by the research process, the researcher will be able to take reasonable steps to minimise the harm. Due to these reasons, debriefing is an important part of the research process and was implemented in the present research after all the interviews had taken place. Further debriefing will occur once the findings of the present study have been disseminated to the research participants.

4.9. Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the study's methodology including qualitative research design. Additionally, a brief description of the participants and sampling procedure were provided. The interview procedure, the process of analysing the data, and interpretation of the findings was detailed. Measures to ensure the credibility of the study were illustrated and discussed. A section on how the research findings will be communicated, whether through feedback to the participants or dissemination of the findings is included. This chapter was concluded with a detailed description of the ethical considerations that were upheld by the researcher throughout the process.

The following chapter will present the findings and discussion of this research study.

Chapter Five:

Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The qualitative research design of this study is focussed on interpreting and describing parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use, and the parenting methods they use. Important to the analysis of the participants' interviews, is the framework provided by the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm emphasizes the researcher's effort to gain insight into the participant's experience, life, and values and belief systems within their cultural context. This allows for the researcher to analyse the interviews at richer and deeper layers. The participant's perception informs reality for both the research and the participant. As described in the previous methodology chapter, the interpretive concepts of *verstehen, socially constructed,* and *hermeneutics* were used to guide the descriptive process and to communicate the findings.

The present researcher attempts to describe the interpretations of the data using the lens of training in clinical psychology, and although immersed in the subject matter and research data, objectively communicate the findings of this study. The researcher has remained aware of any pre-conclusions or pre-judgements that may exist, and through the seeking of input from professionals has maintained the facet of member reflections that ensure credibility in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010).

This chapter includes both the findings of this study and a discussion of the findings.

5.2 Operationalisation of the Study

The participants of this study met predetermined inclusion criteria. All the participants were selected because they are parents of adolescent children, between the ages of 10 – 19, and their children have regular access to the Internet. Participants reside within the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan area. A final requirement was that participants were comfortable with being interviewed in English.

All participants volunteered to participate in the study. Once it was established that the prospective participants met all the inclusion criteria they participated in face-to-face, semi-structured qualitative interviews. The present researcher reached data saturation at five participants and due to the nature and limitation of snowball sampling, the participants in this sample were all female. All participants clearly indicated that the parental Internet mediation techniques, rules, and limitations were decisions made by both parents, with participant 5 indicating that the parental Internet mediation techniques, rules and limitations were formalized in a parenting plan during the divorce procedures. Parents reported that both parents played roles in their children's Internet mediation, however as the participants interviewed are the mothers of the adolescent children, the interview narrative is mostly from the perspective of the maternal parent unless indicated otherwise.

The interviews were conducted in private environments that the participants identified as private areas where they were able to participate in the interviews freely and openly. The participants identified the interview locations as comfortable and confidential.

Following the expression of interest in participation in the study initial contact was made by email, and then followed up with telephone calls to discuss the inclusion criteria, and to arrange a time and place for the interviews. Selected participants were then contacted by text message on the day prior to the interview as a reminder of the appointment. All non-secure communication

was non-specific, and at no time was the anonymity or confidentiality of the participants breached.

Preceding the recorded interview informed consent was gained, the procedure of the interview was explained, and the nature of the research briefly detailed by the researcher. Any questions the participants asked regarding the aim, objectives or purpose of the study were answered with as much relevant detail as possible in order to provide the participants with the context of the study. The atmosphere prior and during the interviews was warm, interactive and informative. The participants expressed an interest in the topic of the study and were requested feedback on completion of this study.

As per the inclusion criteria, all interviews were conducted in English. An interview schedule, included in Appendix A, consisting of 4 questions was used to explore parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use. It was essential to the nature of the qualitative research process that the questions introduced an aspect of Internet use and culture, but were in no manner prescriptive or directive. The questions were designed in order to allow participants the greatest opportunity to contribute through their own experiences by responding to the open-ended questions. As described in chapter four (research methodology) of this present research study, establishing rapport through open and free conversation before and after the recorded interviews, was essential to facilitating a relationship between the researcher and the participants that was not solely based on the semi-structured interview. This aided in easing the perception of the process as a clinical interview, and more of an open dialogue. This process allowed the researcher the opportunity to gain insight and understanding of the participant's context, known as *verstehen.* This is an important aspect of the interpretive paradigm and qualitative research process. All participants were encouraged to freely contribute opinions or experiences, and the interviews retained a conversation rhythm.

During the process of selecting participants, the necessity of recoding the interviews was explained, and this information was repeated during the process of informed consent. After each interview, the researcher noted observations about the interviews, including non-verbal behaviour. On completion of the data gathering stage of the research process, the digitally recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher repeatedly listened to the interviews, as the participant's recordings added an additional layer to the immersion process.

The process of analysis operationalized Tesch's (1990) eight steps of qualitative data analysis. Firstly, the researcher listened to and read through the transcript's many times to gain a sense of the interviews within the context of the subject matter and research topic. The next step was to read through one transcript, identifying the most salient topics or descriptions expressed by the participant, and noting these with comments on the transcript document. This step was repeated with the four remaining transcripts. A summary of the broad topics and themes that emerged from the individual transcripts were listed in columns on a sheet of paper. This step aided with the comparison of the topics from the individual participants. These topics were assigned codes, and the codes were used to mark the data in the transcripts. The topics were grouped together into categories, and the categories explored for sub-themes. The main category was identified as: 1) how parents perceive the Internet. While the themes and sub-themes were coded, cognizance was given to the possibility that some data may be relevant to more than one theme. Nearing the end of the analysis process, the categories were explored individually, while remaining aware of the research topic, and the themes and sub-themes clearly marked. Finally, the research was evaluated to see if re-coding was required, or if sufficient clarity existed. The researcher did not find it necessary to re-code the data (Theron, 2015).

The researcher found that the live interviews, researcher notes, recordings, and transcriptions formed part of the interpretive concept of hermeneutics, which is the attempt to include as many

aspects of information to aid in the broadest, most inclusive, holistic method of interpretation (Tracy, 2013).

5.3 Biographical Descriptions of the Participants

The thick description of participants in a qualitative research study allows the researcher to provide perspective and context to the reader. According to Tracy (2010), the use of thick description is one of the required aspects of establishing credibility to a qualitative research study. The interpretive paradigm term, *verstehen*, describes the researcher's attempt to gain insight into the participant's personal experience. In order to communicate this insight to the reader, a rich description of the participants is essential. As the researcher describes the data gathered during the research process, the information will be hollow without a detailed description of the participant who provided the data (Herman, 1998).

The following information was gathered from the participants' biographical questionnaires, interview data, and research observations. The five participants were White female South Africans. Demographics are important to note in this study as the cultural context, including values and belief systems, are part of how an individual's perceptions are formed. International research findings have reported that mothers have a raised awareness of their children's Internet use compared to fathers (Liau et al., 2008). Three of the participants described themselves as first language Afrikaans speakers, but are fluent in English and communicate in English in their professional and occupational contexts. All the participants completed tertiary education (in English), with two of the participants having two degrees. All five participants were professionally employed in full-time careers. Four of the participants were born in South Africa, with one participant born in the United Kingdom. Two of the participants have lived internationally (Europe) with their children for more than one year. The participants can be described as being in the middle to upper socio-economic groups. All participants had two

children of adolescent age, between the ages of 10 – 19 and, their children have access to the Internet both at school and home. The participants' children were enrolled in English language medium public schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan area. Four of the participants were married, one participant was divorced. All participants were born between the years of 1961- 1981, therefore forming part of the group known as Generation X (Johnston, 2013). All participants described themselves as Internet literate, and all make regular use of social media to communicate with their children and other people.

Table 4: Biographical information of participants

Participant	Gender	Race	Generation X	Education	Marital Status	Employed	Internet Literate	Use Social Media
1	Female	White	Yes	Tertiary	Married	Full time	Yes	Yes
2	Female	White	Yes	Tertiary	Married	Full time	Yes	Yes
3	Female	White	Yes	Tertiary	Married	Full time	Yes	Yes
4	Female	White	Yes	Tertiary	Married	Full time	Yes	Yes
5	Female	White	Yes	Tertiary	Divorced	Full time	Yes	Yes

Table 5: Participants' adolescent children: relevant information

Participant	1		2		3		4		5	
Number of children	2		2		2		2		2	
Age	14	16	12	14	14	14	12	14	14	17
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female
Internet Access School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Home	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

It is noteworthy that all five participants volunteered to participate in this research study and made a considerable effort to accommodate the researcher in their personal space in order to assist in furthering this research. The participants appeared to have an understanding of the value this type of research can provide for future studies and its implications for education, health and

wellness, and information technology. Their spirit of willingness forms an important part of the contextual picture that describes the participants in this study.

5.4 Findings and Discussion

This research study was conducted in order to explore and describe parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use. Analysis of the data identified one main category. Data gathered was guided by the participants' discussion, descriptions, and responses. The main category was identified as: 1) how parents perceive the Internet. Divided into this main category were the main themes that described how these participants thought about the Internet, their children being online and, what parenting methods were employed. Further analysis produced sub-themes that added more dimensions to the main themes.

The findings of this present research study will be discussed according to the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the main category within the data. This category and main themes are illustrated in table 6.

5.4.1 Parents' perception of the Internet. The objectives of this research study were 1) to understand how parents feel about their adolescent children's Internet use, and 2) how they use parenting mediation strategies and techniques. This category includes data informing both of these objectives with the main themes of 1) experiences and 2) observations, 3) parenting methods, 4) concerns and, 5) personal opinions, illustrated in table 6. Each one of these main themes includes sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes are illustrated in table 7.

5.4.1.1. Experiences. The first objective of this research study was to understand how parents feel about their children's Internet use, including their understanding of the benefits and risks of having their adolescent children online. The first main theme identified in the analysis of

the interviews was that all of the participants reported experiencing positive and, negative aspects of Internet use and social media connectivity in relation to their children.

Table 6: The main category of parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use

Parents' perception of the Internet:	Experiences Observations Parenting methods Concerns Personal opinions

Table 7: Main themes and sub-themes

Main theme	Sub-theme	Participants
Experiences	Positive experiences	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	Negative experiences	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Observations	Behavioural changes	3, 4, 5
	Gender	1, 2, 3, 4
	General observations	1, 2, 3, 5
Parenting methods	Parental interaction	2, 3, 4, 5
	Rules	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	Limits	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	Affecting change	2, 3, 5
Concerns	Risks	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Opinion	Personal	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

This main theme, therefore, includes the sub-themes of 1) positive and 2) negative aspects that parents have described during the interview process.

5.4.1.1.1. Positive experiences. This first sub-theme, positive aspects, was strongly dominated by the participants' belief that their children's ability to complete academic tasks was significantly improved by the availability of Internet in the home. Education is stated as a primary reason for many parents to invest in Internet at home (Liau et al., 2008; Livingstone, 2003). All participants described themselves as satisfied with their children's academic

performance, with degrees of achievement ranging from top academic awards to average results. The researcher noted that all participants' adolescent children participated in extra-mural activities and, were recognized in their respective schools for scholastic, and/or extra-mural achievements. The researcher further observed the pressure resulting from the high degree of time commitment and scheduling that was required by the participants in order to facilitate full-time careers, family life, and their children's activities. It is the researcher's opinion that a busy lifestyle could impact on parental mediation strategies for Internet use, due to time constraints and emphasize the convenience of the Internet for academic purposes.

P2: *There is no way they can get their projects done if there is no Internet because they need to do that.*

P1: *It definitely makes learning for school and, umm, like the research and that, is so much easier because you can do it at home and you don't have to go to the library like in our day…Trying to work out where else you can get it from and the moment you know your homework, you belt out of class like a lunatic trying to get there before anyone else.*

P5: *With school projects…especially when they forget to do it, you know, the night before, the Internet is always there. Even in the sense of homework assignments, if they struggle with things somebody would take a photograph of the work that needs to be done and send it.*

In addition to the perceived academic benefit, participant (P4) emphasized the improved avenues of communication social media offered with her children's schools. The participant experiences the social media groups created by the teachers as offering her children more access to their teaching professionals and increased opportunities to gain knowledge and ask questions.

Adolescents that use online communication report feeling more connected to their school (Lee, 2009; Shklovski, Kraut & Rainie, 2004; Wellman, Haase, Witte & Hampton, 2001).

P4: *From the school point of view it is nice to have…communication…a programme that the schools use that they send you messages and homework and stuff. It is also like a live communication feed from the school, and the teachers also like to use WhatsApp groups with the kids now.*

Beyond the structured school focussed activity, homework assignments and projects, the Internet was positively regarded as a gateway to knowledge. Both for improving the ability to facilitate formal education by empowering parents to assist their children with homework, and because parents perceive their children as gaining an additional level of independence through being able to work on their own. Parents reported that they observed a beneficial degree of independence from their children in the way that they would use the Internet to search for information, improve their vocabulary and, demonstrate autonomy regarding their schoolwork. However, parents did not perceive the Internet as improving their children's work ethic. Parent's reported that children that are focussed on achieving academically use the Internet as a supplementary tool to improve their ability to achieve scholastically.

P3: *It is such a useful tool, we speak Afrikaans at home, they're in English schools, so sometimes they come home with things that I don't even understand, and we can quickly Google it. I don't have to phone my neighbor that is English about a word or a concept that we don't understand.*

P3: *It gives them a level of independence that I do quite enjoy.*

P4: *They learn a lot, I think, they go and try to figure things out for themselves. If they need to*

   find out stuff they go and look. I think they use it for research. My son likes to build stuff so

   he will go and he will Google "How does this work?" and that is why he uses YouTube.

P5: *I like the way that they use it for knowledge, and that's empowering. Especially my oldest*

   daughter, she likes words, so she uses a lot of synonyms for this, antonyms for this, what does

   that mean, she searches words all the time, and it's so accessible so anywhere she will access

   it for that purpose.

All the participants discussed the role of social media communication in their children's lives. The children that were identified as seeking interpersonal (face-to-face) interaction, were reported as enjoying the benefits of connection through social media applications such as WhatsApp. For an adolescent, social networking sites can offer added means of communicating with friends and gaining psychosocial support. This is crucial in this stage of development, and can assist in the establishment of age-appropriate relationships (Brown & Larson, 2009; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

As with the academic work ethic, it appeared that children who were actively social in face-to-face situations were the most likely to have active Internet-based communication behaviour patterns. These descriptions by participants are similar to findings from research on social networking, which found that adolescents with stronger personal ties and the ability to connect to other people benefit the most from online communication, as this is an extension of their offline interpersonal behaviour and existing ability to form social ties (Lee, 2009).

P1: *If it wasn't for social media…they send photos or whatever and…this one is this one's friend and so and you know yes, it's just like when you see how many people are following them or whatever you calling …I don't have that you know, I mean they've hundreds of friends.*

P5: *I think especially in South Africa, where kids can't walk to each other's houses and visit so their social lives have actually become quite limited.*

South Africa is a large country, often friends and family do not live in the same areas. Three of the five participants (P1, P2, P5) have also lived overseas and have friends and family in these countries. These participants commented on the benefits of Internet communication allowing their children long distance relationships, not only with friends but also with family. When participants were adolescents, letter writing and expensive long-distance phone calls would have been the only means of communication with relatives and friends who lived far away.

P1: *My daughter's best friend is leaving… and going to…next year, so I mean they'll probably stay better friends because of the Internet than they would do otherwise because then they probably would see each other 2 or 3 times a year.*

P2: *We lived in Germany for three years so they, this social media we actually agreed to because of that. That's the way they keep track with their friends, because they won't write letters and emails.*

P2: *What I also didn't consider at the time [of getting the Internet] but it made a huge difference with the boy's relationship with their grandparents, because now Grannie has got firsthand information about the boys and she can comment directly to them. So for the first time where they didn't have such a good relationship because we didn't see them that often now suddenly there's a bond which is a very positive effect.*

The ability for participants to remain in contact with their children, when travelling or apart, was noted as a positive aspect to having Internet access. Children sharing photos and information from where they were allowed parents to feel part of their children's stories and adventures. A sense of comfort and security was provided for participant 2 when her youngest son recently travelled overseas.

P2: *I knew that if he was in trouble he could contact me, umm, now that's not just Internet, that's technology overall but also the Instagram, he posted a lot of pictures…he posted one from Hamburg from the flat where they were staying…again not with the friends…from the flat onto the rail tracks and things, it was a beautiful picture.*

She shared how having the ability to stay in touch with her son made her reflect on how different her own childhood was, compared to the connection the Internet now offers, and how her parents coped with being separated from their children. This is an example of what Michael Harris termed the 'before and after' generation. This generation can look back at the world where technology and communication meant very different things to when they consider their current lives. He describes it as being able to speak two languages, the one from before the constant presence of the Internet, and the current one of technology (Harris, 2014).

P2: *I said to my husband, "how did our parents do it when we went away and there was no way of communicating?" Because at least I could send a message…and Whatsapp.*

    5.4.1.1.2. Negative experiences. The second sub-theme identified in this main theme is the negative aspects of the Internet in relation to their adolescent children. Parents openly discussed their negative experiences of Internet use and online communication.

The following discussion is focussed on participants' negative experiences of Internet use, mainly incidents that happened with their children. This section focusses more on the medium of the Internet, that is, the way that the information or communication is provided by the unique vessel of the Internet (Rouse, 2005).

Although all the participants' children were born in the age that classifies them as the iGeneration only two sets of participants' children, have had access to the Internet as preadolescents. Therefore, participants' observations that access to the Internet, and social media, is intruding on family life and behaviour, can be attributed less to normal developmental adolescent behaviour and more to social media and Internet access, as the participants have experience of their children before permitting the use of social media. For some participants, this enabled them to compare their children from a few months' prior (age 13), when Internet access was restricted, to present (age 14) when they are allowed open access to the Internet. With participant 4, the children are limited to Internet and social media access only on weekends, thus allowing the participants an opportunity to observe a clear distinction between behaviour associated with Internet use, and day-to-day adolescent behaviour. Participants are not all qualified child developmental professionals, but they are in the best position to comment on changes to their children.

Two participants (P1; P5) discussed how children's access to their friends, through social media intruded into family time and other social activities. Participant 1 perceived her daughter as more secluded, remaining in her room communicating with her friends on social media.

P1: *What it does do is it does disjoint the family a bit. Because now she will spend, my daughter, most of her life in her room…So it [social media/the Internet] is there all the time.*

P5: *One of the ones that I have a personal problem with is that it interferes with family time so the most positive thing that it makes their friends accessible is also one of the problems so now when we are driving to school, rather than speak to me, which is building our relationship, they might be on the phone.*

Peer pressure to remain in constant contact is being identified by researchers as similar to the level of peer pressure to be involved in risk-taking behaviour. Adolescents are feeling a requirement to be 'always-on' in order to not disappoint or offend friends and peers (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Participant 1 commented on the expectation of constant availability, because of Internet access, throughout the interview.

P1: *They have to switch off in school but I mean I'm talking about their phones now and everything but they still have Wi-Fi so the stuff is still coming through on the iPad that they have to use for school and all that so they are actually never really switched off.*

Participant 1 notes how her daughter's social network is not only comprised of friends but also of other adolescents that are less positive in her daughter's social group. The participant perceived that staying in contact with these girls appeared to be a necessary relationship.

P1: *It basically gives them 24 hour access to their friends and frienenemies, I call them, so the ones that say they are their friends and they are not, they're your frienenemies so they say keep your friends close and your enemies closer.*

Int: *Yes, I suppose they wake up in the morning and they read the messages from after they went to bed so they're going to school the next day already emotionally loaded with things that have been said*

P1:   *I don't know, I think it's a bad thing because their friends are in their room even when they are not in their room.*

The adolescent's daily task of developing their individual identity, while establishing a place, or fit, in a group of peers, is ongoing and, although new challenges have arisen since the evolution of social networking, this struggle has always been recognized as significant in this stage of life (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

The generational gap, between the social norms of Generation X, and the iGeneration are highlighted by the behaviour that participant 1 mentions in her description of social gatherings.

P1: *You know what I found when they were younger which really used to irritate me is that you'd have a braai and all us grownups are outside chatting away and you walk inside and there are 5 kids sitting the lounge all on their cell phones not talking to anyone and they are not even talking, and they're talking to people that aren't in the room. And these are kids that only see each other say every second week or something so they should have loads to say to each other yet they are talking to their own friends on their phones.*

Similarly, P4 remarked that she has noted a physical, or face-to-face disconnection between her son and his friends when they play online games together. Although this behaviour appears dissimilar to participants born in Generation X, the communication and relationship development during online gaming is positively connected to the strengthening of social ties and friendship (Lee, 2009).

P4: *He actually plays with people overseas [Xbox], all over the world and stuff like that. Not lots because it chows our Wi-Fi. I find that is the going thing at the school at the moment, is that instead of them visiting each other, they play with each other online so nobody actually physically communicates.*

In contradiction to the headlines in popular media regarding the rapid decline of face-to-face social interaction, participant 1 remarked that the children's behaviour has changed as they have matured and she has observed them seeking interaction with each other at social functions.

P1: *As they got older it got less…now I see when they are together they are actually together, they actually watch a movie or chat together…I'd say this as late teenage years as opposed to the early ones.*

Participant 3 related that her children also recognize that other adolescents are disconnected in face-to-face communication. This can be reasonably attributed to participant 3's rules with her own children and that her children were not socialized to the Internet from a young age. Participant 3 also describes her daughter's preference for face-to-face interaction, and that her children do not participate as readily in iGeneration social norms.

P3: *We've been in conversations where other people's kids will sit on their phones…and I sometimes use the other kids as examples and tell them, "no that's not on"…my daughter…she'll come from somewhere and she'll say "no, they were all on their phones."*

The previously mentioned experiences dealt more with the adolescent children's behaviour online focussing on the Internet as the medium. The following comments by participants relate to incidents that occurred in relation to their children's use of the Internet, therefore commenting on the content on the Internet.

Participants acknowledged that the possibility existed that their children could be exposed to topics deemed inappropriate for their age and value or belief systems. Participants expressed that they are very concerned about this, and it formed a large part of the negative aspects of Internet use.

P2: *They were playing at some stage, they played Clash of Clans. [My husband], ummm, he found that there were adult chat going on, ummm, and the one guy asked the other guy "are you working a lot of overtime lately? Änd it was the littles one's game. And he [father] said to him, "you must be very careful who you play with". I don't think we were aware of the possibilities there.*

Participants also shared their worries about what their children would be exposed to by other children (peers).

P3: *I sometimes feel that or I can't say I'm worried about it but thought's that are concerns are things like that my kids will be, umm..."bloodgestel'' [exposed] to things of an age that they shouldn't be exposed to.*

P4: *When my daughter was younger she was exposed to photos which concerned her, and she came to me and I took it further with the school...I said "it is on your school property, sort it out, my child doesn't even have a phone."*

Another negative aspect that participants described as a serious concern was the possible damage other children or adult's online behaviour could have on their children's reputation. Participants were perturbed by what they noticed their children innocently associating themselves with online.

P2: *I am concerned about not as much what my kids do on there, but what other people have access to and I am concerned about what other people post that they see that they may not be ready to see...once we went into our son's Instagram and the pictures that the girls...post as selfies and I looked at this and I said "is she a good friend? And he said "no, he knows her" you know, I said "do you think that this is the type of image you want your friends to portray*

to the world because this is Instagram…because when people look at your account this is what they see what you associate with."

P2: *My son is really into sport big time, so he is a member of a lot of sport groups and things and sometimes the language and things that go on there…one of his friends posted a joke but I think it was on Facebook…he thought the joke was funny so he liked the page and then the rest of the jokes that came through on that page was really questionable.*

Participant 2 discussed her understanding of the complexity of adolescent relationships and how much harder it was for the children to end the relationship if the negative influence was related to a group of friends. This participant also described the difference between navigating issues with undesirable content as an adolescent, and as an adult.

P2: *We [adults] are able to say ok, I'm now going to you know discontinue from this group or from this page but I think for adolescents it's a lot harder. Because, especially if the friends are in that group*

Agreeing with the concerns expressed by some authors and journalists that share constructive critics of the Internet (Carr, 2010; Harris, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2008), were participants who had experiences of their children being exposed to inappropriate content on the Internet through browser searches. Many countries have websites dedicated to services and information for parents who are concerned about their children accessing offensive or illegal material online (Australian Government, 2016; United States Department of Justice, 2015). Participant 4 described an Internet search that resulted in the installation of Internet software to provide online content filters.

P4: *I remember when [my daughter] was smaller she Googled "bunny games" and some stuff about bunny games came up, if you know what I am saying? So we got a Net Nanny on and stuff like that, and that was fine but you can't put it on these things [pointing at tablet] which is a problem…or cell phones.*

This participant related her frustration regarding a lack of control over the content online, especially now that her children use tablets and smartphones. Unlike laptops and desktop computers, mobile devices are much harder to filter content by using parental controls and, Internet software programmes designed to prevent inappropriate content. The researcher noted that this participant, in particular, expressed that she (and her husband) were trying to keep up with technology but found the lack of education for parents significant. The researcher's purpose was to gain insight into the participants' context, but the researcher was also aware that conversation about the negative aspects of the Internet could be distressing for participants that already felt slightly unprepared to deal with the digital world of the Internet. Therefore, it is the researcher's opinion that sharing knowledge accumulated from research and, also the researcher's own expertise as an experienced user of the Internet, was relevant during the interview process.

P4: *You can't block stuff like that, so that is my concern because there is not enough knowledge and people don't tell you how you can filter it for their age. But I mean [son] is 12 and there is stuff that he doesn't need to see but you will be exposed to and I know he will be exposed to it.*

P4: *Which is, how do you block it?*

Int: *Yes, it is difficult because you know like on YouTube for instance there are links that will come up that…you innocently click on.*

P4: *They can click on that and they don't know what they are in for.*

P4: *There is no control.*

Int: *As far as YouTube is concerned I have noticed that the YouTube community is quite good with reporting things that are…inappropriate sexual content and that kind of thing.*

Although participant 3 expressed that violent games have been available and popular for decades, she described her concern that her son was able to access games with these themes, for free, online. This participant stated that she perceived an excitement in him, to want to be part of the online activity, and this is more than with what she is comfortable. The participant explained that she had to discuss this behaviour with him. The fear of missing out, known by the acronym, FOMO, is triggered by the human desire to remain involved in their community and originated from the earliest days of human origin when knowing what your group was doing, or where they were, was a matter of life or death. Individuals still want to be included and not excluded from human groups. Social media and online communication with friends can stimulate feelings that cause levels of emotional stress (Sanz, 2015). As a developing adolescent, the desire to be part of a group is very important and developmentally appropriate. However, when the fear of missing out triggers feelings of stress or emotional outbursts, it may require parental moderation (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

P3: *A concern that I sometimes do have is that…my son uses the Internet a lot, well not a lot but sometimes to access games or he downloads free games now he knows he needs to come and show me what it is but I think there's a lot of games that are actually not so, umm, that's got*

a lot of violence and fighting and the one game he likes is like tribes fighting each

other…and I had to almost like make him realize that this is just, it's because he would get

excited about, he wants to see what's happening and while he was there something happened

so it can become quite addictive.

Two participants (P2; P5) discussed their concerns for the permanence of content on the Internet. Both recognized that innocent actions could have long lasting, and potentially damaging consequences online. Participant 2 shared an account of how the permanence of the Internet has had lasting repercussions for a family friend.

P2: *We lived in Europe…there was a sportsman whose kids were friend with my sons, and umm,*

they were in Germany for that time as well, and I remember his wife saying to me…when

they were just married and he just started making it in the American sports arena…they

came to visit them in the flat, the newspaper you know, and they took a picture of her

bathing her little girl. Now there's nothing, you know, it was cute, it was in the magazines

and everything…that daughter is now 16…and the moment that you Google her husband

[the father] this picture comes up of this little girl being bathed…and at 16, that is not what

you want…and even if you Google the little girl's name because it appeared in the picture,

this baby picture of her in the bath comes up. And I said to him [son] "this is quite innocent

but this is how it's linked" so I think that was quite real for them.

This event has resulted in participant 2 becoming more vigilant of her children's online behaviour, and has served as an unfortunate but valuable lesson for her children to understand, first hand, how an image can live forever on the Internet. The researcher discussed the publication of books in South Africa that formed part of the research that they researcher did for

the literature chapters of this present study. These books deal with Internet use and are specifically written for parents and their children.

P5 expressed her concern regarding how normal adolescent curiosity and development is open to potentially exploitative, and distressing consequences because of the way information can travel on the Internet. She also discussed how she recognized the difference between her generation's ability to be curious, and the possibility of more serious affects for the iGeneration.

P5: *I think one of my biggest concerns…is when kids…going through ages where they start exploring sexually and they don't understand the permanence of the Internet and the damage that can be done and now what we [Generation X] might've explored very tentatively, you know writing a sexual note to somebody has become naked pictures and very explicit interactions.*

Int: *Yes, that little note that got passed in class saying, "do you like me" is now…a topless picture.*

P5: *Yes, with much more provocative um, because they kind of feel like they are anonymous even though they are not, their name is there but yes, so that is concerning.*

"The permanence and reach of social media mean that what goes on on Saturday night is no longer 'outside of school hours.' It's on Instagram on Monday morning". (Sadleir & De Beer, 2015, p. 186). Once an image or text has been sent from a device, on the Internet, it is permanently in cyberspace, even if the sender deletes the data. This is a very real concern for any person who uses the Internet.

All the participants have experienced both the positive and negative effects of parenting adolescent children who access the Internet. Whether the intention is to gain knowledge, for interaction or communication. The participants' awareness of possible risks and rewards range in optimism and realism, with none of the participants describing any significant distress with their own children, nor fully embracing their children's online activity. This may be a result of the generational differences between Generation X and the iGeneration, or it may be that one will observe similar divergent attitudes towards the Internet in every generation of parents and children due to the duty and desire of parents to care and protect, and the developmental needs of adolescents to explore and investigate.

5.4.1.2. Observations. In addition to the positive and negative experiences participants shared in the previous theme, it was evident that participants were involved and observant of their children's Internet use, and the effect of being online. In the main theme of observations, three sub-themes emerged namely 1) behavioural changes, 2) gender differences, and 3) general observations made by participants of their children's Internet use. Within these sub-themes participants discussed changes they noticed in their children's behaviour, differences between their sons and daughters cyber attitudes, and other shifts in the way their children used the Internet. As briefly discussed in the previous theme, participants attributed these changes to Internet use, however it would be unreasonable for the researcher to not consider adolescent development as a factor in addition to parents' conclusions. Participants also discussed aspects of their children's Internet use that they considered unexpected when generalized to the iGeneration.

5.4.1.2.1. Behavioural changes. The first sub-theme describes the behavioural changes participants have noticed and attributed to Internet use. Therefore, although participant 1 described her children as becoming more interested in socializing with others as they matured, she still observed that her daughter prefers to spend her time in her bedroom, where she has an Internet connection and is able to enjoy the entertainment of her choice. Amongst others, researchers such as Dr. Sherry Turkle have identified adolescents need for time spent alone, for self-reflection and contemplation, however, this need may be more difficult to fulfil when the Internet facilitates constant connection (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1978; Shapiro & Margolin, 2014; Turkle, 2016). Although adolescents may not want alone time, it is something that has been shown to help develop emotional regulation skills and a sense of self-efficacy that assist them in dealing with psychosocial challenges (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

P1: *Like the 12, 13, 14 it's much more me, myself and my cell phone, and as they get older they definitely moved away from that and now they spend time with the person that is with them.*

This observation from participant 1 is similar to the findings and conclusions from research conducted by Kraut et al., (2002) who reported that as adolescent's developed their social use of the Internet changed, and maturation can explain the differences in adolescent social interaction.

P1: *Because that is where the Internet is [her room], and if she is finished working or whatever then she'll maybe download a movie or now she doesn't want to watch what we want to watch.*

Participant 4 observed changes in her son's emotional state after he spent time playing games online, and this has resulted in strict rules and limits regarding Internet access in their home.

P4: *It definitely has…on my son, I can see…he becomes more agitated, more aggressive, more*

short-tempered, once he is out of it [Internet use] he is fine, normal but the Internet definitely

does take them that is why we say only limited time.

    5.4.1.2.2. Gender. Many of the observations made by the participants, during the

interview process were about the differences in Internet use between their sons and daughters.

Three of the participants have two children of different genders. Of the remaining two

participants, who have pairs of same gender children, only one participant remarked that she

noticed a clear difference in Internet use between her daughters. The observations concerning the

difference between male and female children will be discussed first, followed by the comments

regarding the age differences. The present researcher has chosen to omit literature on the

difference in Internet use patterns based on genders as current cyber psychology research

findings are diverse and highly specific to context and Internet content. Examples of such

research discovered during the literature review for this study include a study by Chua and

Chang (2016) focussing on adolescent females and the impacts of 'selfies', the study by

Fardouly, Diedrichs; Vartanian and Halliwell (2015) measuring the impact of Facebook on the

image concerns and mood of young women, the study on mood management and social

comparisons on social networking sites by Johnson and Knobloch-Westerwick (2014), the study

comparing social grooming and body image on Facebook by Kim and Chock (2015), the study

on how parents can influence the well-being of their adolescent daughters by Larsson, Sundler,

Ekebergh and Bjork (2015), the study focussing on the influence of gender, religion and

parenting styles on risky adolescent online behaviour by Lau and Yuen, (2013), the study by Liu,

et al., (2013) on parental relationships with their adolescent children and pathological Internet

use, the study about 'selfies' by Qiu, et al., (2015), a study on parenting dimensions and identity

styles by Smits, et al., (2008), and Spurr, Berry and Walker's (2013) study explorative study of the influence of the media on adolescent body image. As the focus of this present research study was not gender differences, the researcher did not continue to explore existing research in order to identify consistent findings and themes that, if included, may inform the present study.

The comments from the three participants (P1, P3, P4) with both male and female adolescent children, strongly indicated that they observed a difference between the genders. They perceived their female children as being more independently able to use the Internet. Whether this is due to a more focussed interest in the technology or a more mature, or developed work ethic, is undetermined. The researcher noted that the participants expressed an understanding that their children were different to each other and did not express any preference for certain behaviour. Where relevant, the participants did express concern that certain behaviour may be riskier than others, for example, conversing with game players from another country. It is the opinion of the researcher that from observations made during the conversations with the participants, they encouraged the individuality of their children but remained aware of areas and issues that may be of concern.

P1: *My daughter, she uses it for study purposes. My daughter will be working till like 23:00. She is usually working way passed me going to bed.*

The researcher noted that participant 1 did not stipulate that her son avoided the use of the Internet for academic purposes, or that she had concern's regarding his academic performance. The participant was commenting freely about her observations of her two children, with her daughter being more likely to dedicate time to her studies.

Participant 3's children are twins (of different genders), and she reported that she employs two separate approaches when managing her children's different attitudes to the Internet.

P3: *I see that more in my daughter though [independence], she's got a little laptop in her room, and she does all her research on her own, and she needs less guidance. Where my son needs a little bit more guidance, and help with some of the things…she could do the project, get it all done and she would be fine. My son would sit in front of the computer and not be able to filter, so with him I would then print out the articles. It's difficult to sift the information especially for my son, my son finds it harder than my daughter*

P3: *My daughter, for instance, uses her umm technology more often… so my son has a cheaper phone…because he doesn't really do so much, she wanted an iPhone as part of her birthday present.*

P3: *And that's also something where I see the difference between my son and my daughter is my daughter's a lot more interested [in the Internet] and therefore…when I don't know how to do something I'll ask her. I won't ask my son because he probably doesn't know as well. She wants to know and she is on top of it…he's not really putting in the effort to really get to know it because …it's not that big a concern. We, for instance, have said that my son's iPad for the exams is going into my cupboard. My daughter can manage her time, and he understands that, we can tell him that, listen you playing games all the time on your iPad while you are supposed to learn.*

Of the two participants that have children of the same gender, P5 related that her parenting mediation style has changed with her oldest daughter, as she has matured and

displayed more responsible online behaviour. P5 did indicate that she has not had to use the same restrictive methods of online mediation with her youngest daughter.

P5: *I think I have been a lot more restrictive, well I was a lot more restrictive with my first child and my second…there is very little use to restrict because she restricts herself.*

This participant indicated that both her daughters had imposed restrictions on themselves regarding their online contacts. For her oldest daughter this is a change from her behaviour as a younger adolescent, but for her youngest daughter, it has always been her decision.

P5: *She [older daughter] has very limited interactions just with people she knows, but this is not the way it used to be. And my second child only interacts with people that she knows on the Internet.*

When discussing non-academic Internet use participants (P1, P3, P4) observed that their sons were more likely to play games, and their daughters appeared more focussed on social media. In 2015, the Pew Research Center published information from a survey regarding social media use between the genders. Statistics on adolescents were not available. In 2010, there was a 15% difference reported between the social media use of women (68%) and men (53%). In 2015, the gap has closed to 7%, with adult women (80%) still reported as being the highest users of social media, but with the numbers of men (73%) significantly increasing (Anderson, 2015).

Of the two participants with the same gender children, participant 2 said that both her son's played games on the Internet, while P5 did not indicate whether her daughters played online games.

P1: *My son, he is more of a gamer…yes, he uses it for playing on his iPad, and things like that.*

P3: *My daughter likes interaction*

P4: *My daughter, she uses the cellphone. She does Snapchat, Instagram and she does a lot of*
Whatsapp, and also she reads books on the Internet. My son…he like to do YouTube. He is
big on YouTube.

Although both participants provide descriptions of their son's communication styles, participant 3 observed that her son is less verbally interactive on social media. This participant does not indicate whether he is less interpersonally communicative than her daughter in face-to-face interactions.

P3: *Boys are very different…my son is a very happy boy…they're on a less emotional level than*
the girls. I just find that he doesn't really…type lots. My son when he types on Whatsapp and
I ask him if he goes somewhere and "hoe gaan dit daar?" [how is it going?] "Goed"
[Good]…"het julle lekker geeet?" [Did you enjoy your meal?] "Ja" [Yes]. So there is not a
lot of conversation that goes on the media.

Participant 4 also describes the different communication styles of her son and her daughter. This participant describes her son as less likely to verbally communicate directly.

P4: *My boy, who is the concern, my daughter will ask questions, she is quite, she just has a more*
open mind, she is very open and I think she is very scared to do something that is not right.
Whereas my son, that is why I am very, we don't know always, you don't always know what he
is doing and that is my concern.

She discusses how this has heightened her awareness, that her son may require a different level of monitoring with regards to his online behaviour.

P4: *Yes, you don't know, he knows he mustn't do it but he is still doing it? You know, and there is trust and I don't want to say "I don't trust you" because he has to learn. So it is a catch 22 hey.*

     5.4.1.2.3. General observations. The third sub-theme identified is the general observations made by participants. During the interview process participants described interesting observations about their children's attitudes to, and use of the Internet. Some of these general observations highlight the differences between a generation of parents that lived their childhoods and teenage years without the Internet and, their children who have been born into the world that is fundamentally connected by the World Wide Web.

Participant 2 comments on how her sons use the Internet as their photo albums, communicating their successes and interests with their friends and family.

P2: *My younger son posts a lot of nature pictures [on Instagram] where he takes pictures of the dogs or a tree or whatever he finds interesting. My son now he won his first medal…and what he posted [on Instagram] was not them with the medals, he posted the medal.*

The participant further observes her son's curiosity, and expression of creativity with information and knowledge gathered from other people, continents away.

P2: *The little one loves the YouTube videos…he watches a lot of Minecraft and the crazy Russian scientist…then he comes to do the experiments in the house, I am waiting for him to burn the house down.*

Participant 1 discussed her surprise at her daughter's (and peers) decision to use printed media. The participant describes the practicality behind the decision, highlighting that the motivation behind adolescent decision making is not necessarily dictated by modern trend and convention, but as the adolescent's individual personality develops, a healthy autonomy can be achieved.

P1: *Although I find out that, which is quite interesting, at my daughter's school has brought in now, umm, eBooks, so they have the textbooks available either in hardback or eBook, and you would think that their generation go straight for the eBook and they don't. My daughter has just requested all hard copies for grade 10… I was expecting her to order all eBook but she didn't…It is very difficult to flip from one chapter to the next…so there is a place where the Internet does not help you, but it actually hinders you.*

While participant 1's daughter and classmates display a mature level of practicality, P5 describes her oldest daughter's disdain at the behaviour of her peers. Instead of approving of the popular behaviour of posting selfies and photos online, this participant stated that her daughter recognizes the risky behaviour of her online contacts. Her daughter's comments indicate an understanding of the dangers of revealing personal information online.

P5: *My oldest [daughter] for instance has mentioned a couple of times that kids now getting their car licenses are posting photographs of their license and they're posting this as profiles, and on Whatsapp and it's got ID numbers and it's got everything you need to know about that person, and a photo, and you can just print it and this is of great concern for her.*

Participant 5 further comments on her youngest daughter's similar level of responsible online behaviour, and understanding of the consequences of Internet use.

P5: *[Youngest daughter] she's very conscious that it's a footprint. She is very driven so she doesn't want anybody to find anything like that [negative] of her.*

Participant 3 describes a potentially unpleasant situation that her daughter chose to manage in a manner than is not expected of the iGeneration. Even though the behaviour of the other individual was orientated to an online exchange, this participant observed that her daughter displayed the ability to make independent decisions and handle conflict in a manner that is rarely observed in adolescents who make use of social media to communicate and disagree. In a survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2014, 32% of adolescent females compared to 20% of male adolescents reported participating in conflict using a social networking application. Most of the conflict reported was the result of comments, images or photos posted on social media sites (Lenhart, 2015).

P3: *The other day my daughter actually had an incident…something happened with her and a friend…and the friend made remarks on Whatsapp, then she [daughter] actually phoned this friend because she wanted to speak to this friend, and she told this friend she actually wanted to speak to her because she doesn't want to talk this out on the thing [Whatsapp]…in the end the friend didn't want to…she discussed it with me…she decided she'll discuss it with her the next day…they discussed it the next day at school and they sorted it out there.*

Although participants did not consider the changes in their children's behaviour significant enough to warrant intervention beyond established parental mediation, they did perceive the trends as salient. The researcher noted that participants observe the varied attitudes and use patterns between their children such as frequency of use and type of Internet use. Only participant 2 did not remark on any noticeable differences between her two sons. The variables between the participant's children are numerous, including age, gender, personality types, and

communication styles. So although the most obvious differences were highlighted when commenting on the variations between children, it is not possible to accurately posit reasons for what participants are observing. However, it was apparent that the more autonomy and strong work ethic demonstrated by the adolescent, the higher the level of Internet independence that was granted by the participants.

5.4.1.3. Parenting methods. The second objective of this research study was to identify mediation techniques, of Internet use, by parents of adolescent children. Within this theme, four sub-themes were identified: 1) parental interaction, 2) rules, 3) limits and 4) affecting change.

5.4.1.3.1. Parental interaction. The first sub-theme of parental interaction illustrates how parents interact with their children regarding Internet use. Do they actively participate in Internet use? Do they instruct their children on appropriate online behaviour without enforcing or monitoring? Do they combine an interactive and instructional approach with parental monitoring techniques to mediate their adolescent children's Internet use? What degree of discussion about online behaviour and content happens between participants and their children? In this section, participants openly and frankly discuss their interaction with their children with regards to cyber citizenship.

In general, all participants indicated that they had an open dialogue with their children regarding Internet use. A relationship between parents and children based on trust and not suspicion, facilitated by an open invitation for discussion is of importance when developing insights into teenager's lives and developing mutual respect (Sobring, 2014; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). It was noted by the researcher that participant 4 and participant 5 did not easily accept the role of 'policing' their children online, as they considered it as an interference in developing a relationship between parent and adolescent. However, even though reluctant, both participants

understood the need for parental monitoring of Internet use and had developed strategies and techniques for mediation of Internet use. In the researcher's opinion participants 1, 2 and 3 integrated the monitoring strategy for Internet use into their parental role and did not express any concerns regarding this strategy interfering with their parent-adolescent relationships. Research indicates that the perceived relationship by the adolescent is the strongest predictor of positive or negative relationship outcomes (Larrson et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2013). Therefore, how parents perceive their role as mediators of Internet activity is relevant to the parents' own sense of efficacy and well-being but not necessarily an influence on the parent-child relationship.

Participant 1 described their discussions about social media activity as limited but present when relevant and necessary. Participant 2 and participant 3 indicated that they have regular but not routine discussions. P4 described her son's more reserved nature regarding his social media and Internet activity and highlighted that her daughter is more forthcoming in discussing her friendships and online activity. P5 describes a continuous, open dialogue with her daughters, with conversations often focussed on social media activity and cyber citizenship.

P1: *I am not really a watch dog over what they're doing, I suppose I should maybe be a bit more but I just trust them so …they more chat about what their friends have said or that sort of thing or show me like of check this out, this person posted this or did that or whatever have you. We discuss that…will discuss like who sent what like if they've sent some pictures*

P2: *It's not a regular thing that we say sit once a week or once a month, we kind of use opportunities when they arise. We don't check that often, we talk about it a lot.*

P3: *Maybe two or three times a week they'll mention something of this one did this or they saw this one doing that.*

P4: *She tells me and she…she is also showing me [social media].*

P5: *They show me a lot, we share a lot of it…we talk a lot about it, even about what their behaviour is on the Internet, what they believe should be out there, what shouldn't.*

Participant 2 highlights the parental position that she values in her relationship with her two sons.

P2: *Although we are quite open to with our kids and we talk about anything, they know they can come discuss anything with me, I'm still mom. My sons are very mature. It's because of the time we spent in Europe, they had to grow up fast.*

The description of direct monitoring levels by participants varied from very rarely to frequent. Direct monitoring introduces opportunities for participants to discuss cyber citizenship with their children and forms an important part of the interaction and level of trust developed between adolescents and their parents. However, researchers have found that as adolescents mature direct monitoring may damage the parent-child relationship (Vaterlaus, Beckert & Bird, 2015). Therefore, it is a fine balancing act, very restrictive and active monitoring may leave adolescents feeling a lack of trust from their parents, or fearing consequences if they do disclose to their parents. In one study, a third of adolescents reported that they feared telling their parents about a distressing incident that happened to them online because they worried that their Internet use will be restricted (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Sobring & Lundin, 2012).

P1: *I don't really monitor their Internet use, I sort of trust them.*

P2: *Umm, it happened when the Springboks lost against New Zealand the other day, my son's phone was lying there and a message came through, and it was a Whatsapp chat between on one of his groups and it was open…I read it and…I called him and I said do you see what this person said? It was very degrading…and we had a whole discussion about the morality*

around what the boy said…we talked about remember whatever you put out there is there

forever, even if you delete the post, it's on someone else's phone now so it is there forever.

P3: *I trust my kids, so I'm quite comfortable with them using the Internet. And we've got certain*

measures in place, you can call it rules. I'm quite objective about the fact that there are a lot

of dangerous things on the Internet. When they started using Internet I would go with them, I

would see that I would be there. They have Instagram on their phones, and on their iPad's I

think, I actually don't know if it's on their iPads but their phones I can, I have access to their

phones. So they know that I can have a look what's going on there and I do that from time to

time, I go and check and see what comes up. Something that I've actually wanted to do is also

be their friend or whatever on Instagram so that I can see their profiles and what they put on.

P5: *The parental watches on some of the, at one point I had on the computers. She [oldest*

daughter] had free access on her phone so I would on occasion, if it was indicated, have a

little browse and look at what she's using, but…when she because more responsible and I did

look there was nothing to indicate any concern.

Participant 4 characterized their style of parental mediation as restrictive opposed to direct

monitoring, as the children are only allowed Internet access on the weekends. She relates a high

degree of trust in her daughter's online behaviour mainly because of established and open

patterns of communication initiated by her daughter. This participant distinguishes her son's

online use as very different to her daughter's with it being focussed on gaming. She comments

that both her husband and she will directly (visually) monitor her son's online gaming.

Participant 3 and participant 4 indicated that interactive use was a mediation technique

they used. Participant 3 described her involvement as far higher when her children were younger,

and she did not work full time, whereas participant 2 and participant 4 said that their husbands regularly interacted online with their children, and they used the Internet together.

P3: *I haven't always worked full time as well, so I was home when they were home in the afternoons. So we always did the Internet thing together. I would sit with them and show them how to Google something.*

P4: *I am not a big Youtuber so I don't go on but he [son] will sit and watch YouTube with his dad and they will go on and watch Crazy Cops and some funny things*

P2: *My husband plays with them, all their games, he doesn't have his own so he would sometimes play their games as them*

All participants realistically discussed the actual control they have over their children's online activity. The mechanisms in place appeared to be based on a level of trust established by their children's overall manner of behaviour, not only online. Research findings indicate that parents trust in their adolescent's reasonable online behaviour is related to these parents developing a higher degree of insight into their children's experiences online. It is likely that this finding is bidirectional (Sobring & Lundin, 2012).

The researcher noted that the participants in no way expressed naivety about the risks of online use, but they explained that, as with other aspects of parenting an adolescent, there is a limit to what your control and involvement can be, in order to allow the child to develop their own identity.

P1: *I think you have to do it when they are smaller, yes then I used to limit the amount of time, and no you can't have it here, there or there and now sort of as they're in high school then I think ok, I've got two fairly good kids, if there's homework to be done they do it, and if there*

is no homework to be done and they want to play some idiotic game on the iPad well if that is their downtime then they must just do that, I don't mind.

P2: *I think they're keeping themselves fairly safe, umm, but once again that's something you've got to reiterate…that Instagram is quite open…they take responsibility for their actions, knowing they will have to carry the consequences of whatever decision they take. It's my job to make sure my kids can handle it when they see it [questionable content] and take appropriate action but it's not a decision I can make for them every day.*

P4: *The thing is…my kids don't have it [open access to Internet] here at home but if they go somewhere else they can be exposed to it so but they know, we have told them, this is what can happen so they are quite aware of it…I think open channels are good to have with your kids which we do.*

P4: *We are very open with our children…and she is quite responsible…and we call a spade a spade because unfortunately if we aren't going to say it it is going to be said at school and it is going to be interpreted wrong. So with the Internet as well, we also explain to them, you can't go on everything and anything. These are things that you don't need to see and don't want to see.*

P4: *You can only prepare them, the decision at the end of the day is theirs.*

With participants relating their efforts to develop responsible cyber citizenship in their adolescent children through encouraging differing degrees of autonomy and independence, participant 3 commented on her mutual decision-making process with regards to the social media platforms her children use:

P3: *When they turned 14 I actually asked them "do you want to open Facebook accounts?" And*

they said no.

Participant 1 described an established discipline technique adapted for modern technology. This participant recognized that her children's desire for Internet access is at a level where confiscating a device is enough to cause a correction in behaviour. But this participant also highlighted that her children's cellphones are as important to her as they are to them. During the interview, she sketched a detailed picture of how busy their family lives are, and how mobile phones assist her in managing additional activities and demands.

P1: *As punishment, as teenagers taking away their money or their iPad is way worse…If I feel*

they are not giving 100% best or if they've been rude or if they've, you know then, then

obviously you take their phone or their Internet access so, and that is just disaster for them

so that shows you how high they rate it.

P1: *The Ipad much longer than the phone because like it is almost like kicking myself in the teeth*

if I if they don't have a phone because I need it to be able to contact them…so but the iPad

which is definitely my son's games and stuff like that then it is that can go away for weeks at

a time but the phone, umm, usually a 24 or 48-hour thing.

In addition to participants describing the use of various parental techniques to mediate their children's Internet use, participant 4 states that in order to impress the severe consequences of risky online behaviour, she uses the media to show her children examples of what could happen. She describes this as part of her set of tools to educate her children on online risks and behaviour.

P4: *We have shown them programs of the girls that have gone onto the Internet and made friends*

with guys on Facebook that, and things, and they get kidnapped. [My daughter] didn't know

that, but you have to, unfortunately, we have to teach them, our children in that line. So she

knows, I said to her, you don't make friends with anybody on the Internet because you don't

know who is one the other side, you do not see that face, they can put any photo there.

5.4.1.3.2. Rules. The second sub-theme that was salient during the analysis process of

these interviews was the use of rules with regards to what the adolescent children are allowed to

view or participate in online. All the participants make it apparent that they use rules as part of

their parenting methods, however, certain rules are strictly enforced, and more clearly defined to

their children, and other rules are more flexible.

All participants expressed that one of the strict rules enforced with their children is that

parents have access to their devices at any time. From participants' descriptions, the rule about

checking devices is a clear requirement from when their children started accessing the Internet.

P2: *Because one of the things is we check, we ask you know, at any time that was the rule with*

the cell phones, we are allowed to check any time. When we ask, where do you know this

friend from? No we know this one from church, and we know this one from youth group and

we this one from so they can always link that up.

P3: *I guided them on how to use the Internet so I realized the dangers but I'm quite comfortable*

as this stage with them using the Internet because of the rules that we've got in place I can

check at any time what they do

P4: *Every now and again I try to do a history search on their on their iPad to see what they do.*

They have to give me access to their phones and that.

In addition to the rule about having open access to devices and browser history, participant 1, participant 2, and participant 3 stated that their adolescent children are only allowed online contacts that they know. Participant 3 specified that she discussed the risk of accepting or sending friend invites to strange men with her daughter. Participant 2 related that she will ask who the contacts are on her son's devices, and will, when necessary, reiterate that they are only permitted to interact with online contacts that they know face-to-face. She explained that this extended to online gaming too.

P2: *We made a rule that you can make clans but you cannot join a clan where you don't know the other players. I think that was a ruling that was made by quite a few of the other moms.*

P3: *I've also, with the Instagram, I've told them they are not allowed to be friends with people they don't actually know. I've like with my daughter I've explained to her you can't just have a friend…a male person…you can't just befriend them.*

Included in the rule of face-to-face contacts only, is the further restriction that contacts that were older were not permitted, even if the participants' children did know the older person (P1, P2 and P3).

P1: *Mine know that they are not allowed to, umm, they're not allowed to accept anyone that they don't know…they're not allowed to accept anyone older than themselves*

Participant 4 has rules in place regarding certain social media platforms. She requires inclusion on her daughter's contact list and groups, in order to monitor activity.

P4: *The condition of Instagram and Whatsapp is that I am friends with her so I can see what gets posted on her stuff and I will go to say…that is not appropriate to put on and she will ask me why and I will explain to her why…with that comes responsibility and she has to learn that.*

Some (P1 and P2) participants have defined and detailed rules regarding particular activities, or websites that are not permitted.

P2: *The little one is not allowed to use Facebook*

P1: *You can download things from the Internet…but you obviously don't allow anything over 18 and all that sort of stuff, So they know that they know what things they're not allowed to watch and stuff like that, it is all age-related*

P2: *They are not really allowed [Internet gaming]…most of the games they play through the Xbox and that is not connected to the Internet*

Participant 3 and participant 4 have strict rules about the ages at which their children were allowed independent online access and mobile devices. As twins, participant 3's children received Internet privileges at the same time, however, they do not have the same mobile devices, as participant 3 explained in a previous section, her daughter makes far more use of her smartphone, and her son is interested in other, mainly outdoor activities. So her daughter received a smartphone as a birthday gift, and her son uses an older phone with limited functionality. The researcher noted that participants 3 and 4 strictly adhered to rules regarding 'coming of age' access to technology by their children, regardless of strong societal pressure for children to have digital technology (Sadleir & de Beer, 2014).

P3: *They only got iPads at the age of 13. Up to then they only had access on my computer. When they did projects the laptop, but my daughter as as well…only when she was 13. So we have only allowed this open access since the age of 13. The phones have also got Internet now, so they can get Internet on the phones as well.*

Participant 4 also has age restrictions on when the children were allowed Internet devices such as smartphones and tablets.

P4: *He doesn't have a cellphone, she only got a phone at 13, he only gets a phone at 13. But that was our rules. He gets one next year. He doesn't have an iPad.*

Participants (P3, P4, and P5) have rules specific to their families and were not generalized across the sample. Participant 4 enforces rules about Internet access during the week for non-academic use.

P4: *Our kids are not allowed Internet usage in the week, so that's also not, well, that is just our rule. No iPad, cellphones in the week, only Friday to Sunday.*

Participant 3 specified that as part of parental mediation strategies her children were not allowed to purchase anything online without their parent's assistance. Participant 1 explained that even if their children saved up and wanted to use their own money they were only allowed to buy online if the parents performed the purchase on their behalf. The researcher noted in her reflective journal that this restriction may appear obvious and easy to enforce, but the researcher is aware of a pre-adolescent child using a parent's saved details on online profiles to purchase digital games without the parent's knowledge. The researcher can't confirm whether this is a common occurrence or not, however, the management of such behaviour could be incorporated into parental mediation strategies.

P3: *My kids can't buy anything on their own…they are not allowed to…because they don't have access to accounts so if they want to access anything that costs money they have to come to us so.*

Participant 5 has a rule about the use of mobile phone in the car while they are travelling to any destination, whether it is school or a visit to family.

P5: *With my oldest I actually had a rule that she was not allowed to be on the phone while we were driving because that was our time. I haven't instituted it with my youngest but it seems to be going that way.*

    5.4.1.3.3. Limits. The third sub-theme was identified with descriptions from participants regarding limitations they placed on their children's Internet use at home. It ranged from physical placement of the family computer in an open living space to having limited amounts of bandwidth and data available for use by the family.

P5: *For the longest time there was only computer access in the dining room…so I could walk passed and I could look.*

P3: *Something else that we have is we have limited so by the 25ᵗʰ of the month the thingy actually comes on and it says, ok our data is running low now. We'll know that they are downloading stuff that they shouldn't be downloading.*

The participants in this study reflected on the reality of Internet use and their children's cyber citizenship with pragmatic levels of concern and understanding, however, this sub-theme was identified during analysis as describing what would be a catalyst for a change in the manner in which participants currently manage and mediate their adolescent children's Internet use.

Participant 1 considered emotional distress for her children to be a tipping point, and could result in drastic change.

P1: *If they started getting attacked on it then I would limit it, you know like it's been becomes stressful to them…then I would take it away*

Participant 2 and participant 3 expressed that exposure or use of inappropriate websites would be a deciding factor in a change of their current mediation styles. For participant 2, dishonesty about visiting websites that have been banned would be a definitive cause for change.

P2: *If they start visiting sites and things that we've discussed as inappropriate, and they try and hide it from me, if they lie to me. Lying to me is a deal breaker*

P3: *I do realise that there are dangers, I think if I get too comfortable and not check their things anymore. My biggest fear would or not biggest fear, a concern would be if they get onto pornography for instance on the Internet without realizing they're onto this. That…would be a bad thing.*

Participant 3 also identified that a significant change in online activity would be a reason to cause them to change their parenting and Internet policy.

P3: *That would be a concern for me, if one of my kids would sit on the Internet for hours.*

Participant 5 noted that due to her conservative and strict attitude towards the Internet and her children's use of the Internet, the largest shift in her perceptions about the Internet would be to become more liberal in her restrictions and, more accepting of the iGeneration's different attitude towards the technology. Participant 5 emphasized that if something serious and distressing happened she could possibly react in a drastic manner.

P5: *I think my view has already drastically changed or I'm quite conservative…so the most drastic change for me couldn't actually be in a more conservative side, it would have to be*

into the free side of using…obviously if something as severe as a child abduction or

something like that would happen…one could have a knee jerk reaction then not allowing

anything.

Accounts from the participants, observations by the researcher and information from field notes indicate that all the participants presently or, at some time, implemented restrictive mediation in the form of monitoring, Internet software, and restrictions on time and availability of the Internet. Active mediation is also practiced by all participants with discussions regarding Internet use and cyber citizenship. As participants' children mature, active mediation appears to be the dominant mediation technique. From the interviews, it was salient that entire families were involved in implementing mediation strategies. Participants strongly emphasized the value of the relationships with their adolescent children and are receptive to their children's changing needs and development.

5.4.1.4. Concerns. During the interview process, some of the participants shared their own online experiences, and other general concerns relevant to participating in an online world. The risk of being online and the consequences that could result formed the most prominent sub-theme of this theme.

5.4.1.4.1. Risks. The possibility of being associated with undesirable activity online through 'liking', 'sharing' or participating in another person's cyber activity through a Facebook page or Tweet has legal and reputational consequences in South Africa.

Publication is making content available to one other person, whether in writing, verbally

or otherwise. So it doesn't make a difference whether you publish it to a WhatsApp group

of five people, or your 500 friends on Facebook, or your five million followers on

Twitter. You're on the hook for it all…The rule in South Africa is that every single person who is directly or indirectly responsible for that publication can be held legally liable for it. (Sadleir & DeBeer, 2015, p.20)

P2: *I ended up in the same trap. I joined, when we were in Europe, on Facebook one of these Proudly South African sites, and some of the language and opinions that were stated there was offensive to say the least, and I had to unfriend her but I mean you've got to make that mistake first and I can handle it as an adult.*

Identity fraud, phishing and criminal online activity like scamming is no longer headline news in the media, whether it is due to the common nature of the occurrence or the lack of sensationalism. Participant 5 relates how she experienced identity theft:

P5: *My ex-husband's identity was already stolen and a policy paid out and the Internet kind of played a role there, so I mean serious enough things happen.*

Throughout the interviews and analysis of the data, the topic of cyber aggression and harassment, especially in the form of cyberbullying was not mentioned as a present or past problem that participants have had to actively manage. It is the researcher's opinion, based on a systematic review by the researcher (international and South African research, that is unlikely that the participants' adolescent children have not experienced or witnessed cyberbullying of some degree. Findings from the research also indicate that children often do not report cyberbullying to their parents because of fear that their Internet privileges may be curtailed (Butler, 2013; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Participant 1 discussed her expectation of the existence of cyber bullying due to the 'always-on' nature of the iGeneration.

P1: *Obviously there is the cyberbullying…and obviously it is more prevalent in girl's schools. I think they are more exposed to bullying because of the Internet and because of the Facebook use and all that sort of stuff. Because they are on it all the time, where we as kids would only go to school from say 9 – 4 and then the rest of the day you can't hear what anyone else is saying about you where they are exposed to almost unless they are sleeping.*

This participant discussed the permanence of the Internet communication, in contrast to how she grew up. This is an example of how Generation X parents attempt to understand their children's situation's in order to provide support.

P1: *All that stuff that's been there from the previous day or is still there from today. I suppose that's just the life they've grown up in, though we didn't have that life*

She further commented on the measures that were requested from her children's schools, due to the risk the schools identified with children not getting adequate amounts of sleep.

P1: *When we first went to school they said, umm, you must take they phones away at night because as they get teenagers then you think they've going to bed meanwhile under the covers they're like for hours and then the teacher can see… I do close their doors at night and I do, when we go to bed sometimes open and check, you know make sure no-one's [on their phones]… so but I've never had a problem with that so I haven't really monitored it but I supposed if I did then I would.*

It is the opinion of the researcher that the concerns over risks that users of the Internet are exposed to should be more legitimately treated, without media type fearmongering. In chapter two of this present study the victims of cyber harassment described the difficulties in engaging authorities in the crimes that were being perpetrated against them, yet in the aftermath of a

cyber-related tragedy, events are often highlighted in the media, causing severe reactions. Despite this, policy change is not being adequately affected (Hathaway, 2014; NoBullying, 2015). The participants in this study describe their own concerns as well as those of schools. During the interviews participants' willingness to participate in open, honest discussions highlighted how invested they are in healthy, appropriate Internet use for their children.

5.4.1.5. *Opinion.* Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, and the rapport established between the present researcher and the participants, personal opinions were mentioned by the participants. As the objectives of this research study are to understand how parents feel about their children's Internet use and how they are parenting directly in response to the cyber world, it is important to listen to, and note the opinions of the participants.

5.4.1.5.1. Personal opinions. The sub-theme identified in the main theme of opinions, was that they are of a personal position. These opinions add value and depth to a qualitative study telling the stories of parents born in a different generation to their children. Not since the generation of people born and raised during the Great Depression and World Wars contrasted to the Baby Boomer generation has one evidenced such an extreme difference in childhood experiences and world views between parents and children.

The current researcher noted more emotional tone and expression from the participants while they discussed these opinions than in other parts of the interviews. This could be attributed to the personal nature of the discussion, but also to the authentic nature of the participants, and the openness with which they were willing to describe their lives.

The pressure of modern life and time management was often mentioned by participant 1 with her opinions of the benefits of technology in her life. Her earlier comments about her

daughter spending more time in her room, choosing what media that she enjoys, instead of watching with her family are further detailed here.

P1: *I do try to enforce like family suppers and stuff because otherwise…the only time we have to spend together is in the evening… It [technology] seems to have taken over from TV watching somewhat…It [technology] definitely gives you more time. You basically do everything from home…I run my business from home.*

As much as social media is an important part of her children's social lives, participant 1 expresses her enjoyment of being able to connect with her distant family.

P1: *I WhatsApp my cousin in England every single day so she sends me a message in the morning to tell me what's happening and what she is doing and without that…you have absolutely no clue what is going on in anyone's lives so it is good for that aspect.*

However, her opinion is not only positive, she comments on the very real frustration of being in an 'always-on' world. It is possible that this degree of availability is more difficult for Generation X, creating a sense of vulnerability and emotional stress, than for the iGeneration where staying connected is a societal norm.

P1: *I still don't like it is that you're like 24/7 contactable these days because of the Internet…You can never get away from anyone, I mean I'm sitting at a…competition and the phones are pinging left, right and center. You just can't switch off unless you switch it off*

Of all the participants, participant 1 described the presence of technology in her children's lives from a young age. In combination with the highly demanding modern lifestyle, children's natural curiosity, and the undeniable entertainment properties of television and the Internet, it leads to the propensity of children growing up to spend more time watching television

or playing online games, than doing other more traditional activities such as playing outside, or playing with toys.

P1: *We almost instill it in them, you switch on the virtual baby sitter so…you can sit them in front of it…so you can chow or do whatever so you, it's like giving them an iPad, sticking it in their hand and telling them this is a good thing*

The understanding that, as a generation, parents of the iGeneration are playing technology 'catch up' was evident in participant 3's opinion on her own cyber knowledge and participant 4's opinion that her children know more about the Internet than she does.

P3: *A concern for me is also not knowing enough. I think I should know more*

P4: *They [children] are teaching us*

Dependence on the Internet and cyber technology was alluded to in the section on parenting where participant 1 detailed how effective using prohibitive discipline is with adolescent children who enjoy the Internet. She further shares her opinion on her own reliance, and the stress that can result when the Internet is out of order. The current researcher would like to note that at the time of the interview the participant's home Internet had been under repair for two days. This may have made the participant more cognizant of her dependence on the Internet.

P1: *It is an absolute disaster if it crashes, like it did the last 2 days, you must see how distressed they get when it is the broadband…yeah we are dependent on it these days to do your banking…and it has actually become like a phone, you are as dependent. I would say that if a phone line goes down it is less bad than if the Internet crashes you know.*

In a previous section participants' observations on how their daughters and sons differ with regards to Internet use and attitude was described. During the discussion on these observations, participant 2 added a personal opinion in response to a question by the researcher. The current author feels the inclusion of this opinion would add to the societal context, as well as an understanding of parents' perceptions. This opinion was not generalizable to the other participants.

P2: *I think lots of things would be different if it was girls because as I say if I see what my sons' female friends, especially the selfie thing, is to me, it makes my hair stand upright. I think we would've been much stricter although I know there's perverts following boys and things like that as well. I think the risk is a lot bigger for girls, yes, I think it would've been different. They would've had access to the Internet I think we would've controlled it even stricter.*

All the participants described a pragmatic attitude about their children's use of the Internet, and the amount of control and monitoring they are able to administer. Participant 5's opinion of her parenting strategy and responsibility reflected aspects expressed by the other four participants in varying degrees and specificity. Her opinion summarizes the feeling of all the participants that they can only do as much as they can, and from there they need to trust their children and their relationship.

P5: *You really can't safeguard them, and you really can't fool yourself that even with restrictions and discussions that you know what they're doing out there, you know the scary thing about it, and when you fully understand that and you can't fool yourself anymore. You actually have to release it and you have to just say at which point do I trust it, you know, you do everything right and then at a point you must trust and I believe that in parenting through*

the ages has always been like that. The kids go out there and they do what they do, and you're fooling yourself if you think that you can restrict it or you can't stop them or they're going to be different, you know, they're not. And they're going to make those mistakes, even with the talking, even with the restrictions, even and you think they're being open but for every one thing that they show you, three horrific things have happened that day but it's too bad to show you, they are censoring. Even the good kids are censoring what they're sharing and what they tell you.

5.5. Conclusion

This findings and discussion chapter attempted to describe the participants' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use, and what parental methods they use. All the participants discussed negative and positive experiences of the Internet, and what they have observed about their children and their Internet use. They further discussed their interactions with their adolescent children regarding the Internet, and what rules and limits they implement. Participants described what events would cause them to change their mediation techniques, and then they related their own concerns and opinions.

It appears simpler to describe the participants parenting techniques for Internet mediation than to capture their perceptions about their adolescent children's Internet use. Participants clearly stated that they supported their children and valued their relationships with their children, but at times were apprehensive for what waits behind the screen of the cyber device which may interfere with their trusted, responsible teenager.

The following chapter will conclude the research study with a discussion of the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

Chapter Six:

Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises the implications and outcomes of the present research study. The outcomes focus on the findings that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data as well as the methodology used to operationalize the researcher's goals. Included in this chapter are the limitations of the present study, the researcher's personal reflections on the process while conducting this research study, and the recommendations for future research and other applications such as psychoeducational programs.

6.2. Summary of Methodology

In response to a national call by the South African government, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is currently involved in multi-disciplinary research focussed on the theme of cyber citizenship. To gain understanding about the online use habits and behaviours of South Africans, the present researcher identified the need for insight into the iGeneration. From a psychological perspective, parents (caregivers), parenting styles, and a child's family (primary care) environment has significant psychosocial influence in a bidirectional manner on both the child and their familial (primary care) relationships (Erikson, 1968). Recognizing the broad base from which this research needed to be explored, the present researcher proposed a research study aimed at exploring and describing parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use. The objectives of this study were to explore and describe: 1) how parents feel about their adolescent children's Internet use based on their perceptions, including their understanding of the

benefits and risks of having adolescents online, and 2) to explore and describe mediation techniques used by parents to manage their adolescent children's Internet use.

An explorative and descriptive design with an interpretive paradigm was used throughout the research process with emphasis on the qualitative concepts of self-reflexivity, context, and thick description (Tracy, 2013). The qualitative processes are further enhanced by the interpretive paradigm concepts of *verstehen, social construction, and hermeneutics.*

Participants were selected using a non-probability, purposive sampling method. Participants who met the inclusion criteria (through the use of a biographical questionnaire) were interviewed using face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. In order for the present researcher to provide a thick description of and gain insight into the context of the participants, the face-to-face interviews were arranged in an environment most suitable for the participant. Informed consent was sought from the participants after a thorough explanation of the research study and ethical considerations. It was important that the participant could engage with the researcher in an open manner in a private environment that provided confidentiality for the participants. Time was spent before and after the interview session for the participants to converse with the researcher, in order for the process to have more of an interactive narrative and less of a clinical interview setting. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed to text by an experienced transcriber. After transcription the researcher and an independent coder separately used Tesch's (1990) eight steps of qualitative data analysis to identify a category, themes and sub- themes from the data.

Of importance to the present researcher were the four sub-criteria of the main criterion of credibility, as described by Tracy (2010). Thick description, triangulation, multivocality, and member reflections were highlighted by the researcher throughout the qualitative research

process. The present researcher strove to present not only a thick description of the participants, their perceptions, and parenting Internet mediation techniques but also of the body of research and literature relevant to the present study. Through providing the rich layers of information that build thick description, the sub-criterion of triangulation was enhanced, as multiple sources of data were provided in as much pertinent detail as the researcher could incorporate while maintaining relevance. The researcher triangulated data from multiple sources including South African and international, peer-reviewed academic research articles, books, articles, and other media sources, and individual users of the Internet who shared their stories online, with the rich data provided by participants through the interview process. This process allowed the present researcher to identify commonalities between the findings of researchers, the opinions of Internet experts, and the themes and sub-themes identified in the data from participants.

The sub-criterion of multivocality was achieved through the provision of relevant opportunities for the voices of the participants and researcher to be heard through, primarily, the findings and discussion section of the study.

The final sub-criterion of member reflections was met through the utilization of the formal research approval procedure of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University during the proposal process, and secondly, throughout the research process by feedback and guidance from the researcher's supervisor, and discussion with fellow psychologists and researchers. Receiving feedback and critique during the research process allows for perspective to be maintained by the researcher (Tracy, 2013).

Regarding the present study, the findings were found to be mostly consistent with existing literature and previous research.

6.3. Outcomes of Findings

The findings have been presented according to the main category, themes, and sub-themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the participants. The findings highlight the parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use and describe the mediation strategies they employ with their children regarding Internet use.

The first main theme that emerged was the experiences of parents, related to their adolescent children's Internet use. Within this theme, two sub-themes were identified, namely the positive and the negative experiences of online use. Participants perceived the Internet as an important and necessary part of their children's academic tools due to the vastness of information accessible on the Internet and the convenience of having access whenever required. When the children were younger, most participants assisted with the use of the Internet for academic purposes. However, as the children matured, most participants perceived an increasing degree of independence and autonomy with regards to Internet use, including a proficiency at finding information for academic tasks. With regards to social networking, participants recognized the benefits of online communication, specifically through social media and in particular interfamilial communication. Participants perceived a higher degree of current pragmatic contact with their children than before, with for instance arranging extra-mural activities. However, this aspect of Internet use also featured heavily in the perceived negative aspects of Internet use.

Some participants perceived social media as a contributor to disconnection in family activities. One participant, in particular, identified the pressure of needing to be 'always on', and she perceived this as an aspect of social networking that may cause emotional stress. Some participants described the negative aspects of Internet use for activities such as online gaming and as with social media, could facilitate contact with strangers online. The risk of exposure to

inappropriate content and behaviour online by their adolescent children was perceived as the most negative aspect of Internet use by the participants. Participants related their understanding of the permanence of content online and how this could have detrimental effects for their adolescent children. Participants further perceived the negative aspects of the Internet mostly with concern about strangers or peers exposing their children to inappropriate material or interactions online. They also recognized that undesirable content was available on the Internet. Although they perceived their own adolescent children's behaviour as a possible risk, participants expressed varying degrees of trust in the responsibility of their adolescent children, and belief that the bidirectional communication channels of their parent-child relationships would buffer risky online behaviour. All participants could be described as both supporters and critics of Internet use for their adolescent children.

The second theme identified from the analysis process was observations by participants, of their adolescent children's Internet use. Three sub-themes emerged namely behavioural changes, gender, and general observations. The observations participants reported were based on their perceptions of their adolescent children's online use, and therefore adolescent psychosocial development was considered by the researcher but limited to brief inclusion in the findings, as understanding what behaviour the participants attributed to Internet use was relevant and part of the objectives of the study. Amongst behavioural changes that participants observed, were the changes in face-to-face social interaction by the adolescents as they matured. At a younger age participants reported that their children appeared to be more enticed to use technology while in the social company of their peers, whereas as they matured their desire for face-to-face interaction appears to have strengthened. However, one of the participants observed that her eldest child displayed a preference for spending time in her room, alone, when at home. The

participant attributed this behaviour to the adolescent having access to the Internet in her room, and that she could watch or do what she preferred opposed to sharing TV watching time with the family. Another participant observed and attributed a change in her youngest child's emotional state after exposure to Internet use. The participant reported an increased level of agitation and aggression in her child after Internet use (mostly gaming) and the participant describes the behaviour as dissipating soon after access to the Internet was removed.

Most of the participants discussed observing differences in Internet use between their male and female children. Participants perceived their female adolescent children as more focussed on academic tasks and social networking, while their male adolescent children made use of the Internet for academic tasks but appeared less adept, possibly through lack of interest, at digital technology use and more likely to utilize the Internet for gaming purposes, or not at all and participate in other activities. One of the participants, with same gender children, mentioned observing a difference in use patterns between her two children. The participant attributed the differences to age, maturity, and identity development.

In general, participants observed that their iGeneration adolescent children did not always prefer digital technology to paper based, for instance, text books. Participants also observed how access to social media and the Internet has allowed their children to be creative in another medium. Some participants described observations of how their adolescent children chose to resolve conflict in a face-to-face situation versus online, and how their children recognize risky online behaviour by their peers. Most of the observations described in this sub-theme stem from a base of generational difference. This suggests that participants born in Generation X perceive that adolescents from the iGeneration will prefer all interaction, communication, and information to be digital.

The third theme identified is the parenting methods used by participants to mediate their adolescent children's Internet use. The first sub-theme described parental interaction. All participants described open dialogue with their adolescent children regarding Internet use, activity, and behaviour. All participants indicated that this type of communication was established for all aspects of the parent-child relationship, and existed before the children gained access to the Internet. Therefore, it is an extension of existing behaviour and communication patterns. In describing how they discussed social media and the Internet within their families, participants reported a variation in approaches with regards to the individual needs of their children. The individual differences between their children influenced the need and frequency of formal conversations about online use and behaviour. All participants utilized direct monitoring of their adolescent children's Internet activity by viewing online activity and checking devices, but the frequency and intensity varied amongst participants. Participants indicated a decrease in direct monitoring as their adolescent children matured. Some participants highlighted the interactive use of the Internet with their children, for instance, browsing YouTube together to watch videos, playing online games together, or assisting with homework tasks by guiding Internet searches, particularly if the topic may potentially lead to inappropriate search responses on the Internet. Participants indicated that they used the removal of digital devices as a discipline technique.

In addition to direct monitoring, most of the participants practice restrictive mediation, whereby Internet access is permitted at specified times and amounts at home. All participants observed the challenge as parents, to allow online access and develop trust in their adolescent children, but included that they understood the necessity for the development of independence, responsibility, and autonomy.

The second sub-theme that emerged from the data was that all participants had a rule about having access to their adolescent children's digital devices and passwords for applications and websites. This permitted the participants to implement further rules regarding their adolescent children's online activity. Most of the participants did not permit their children to have contacts on their devices that were people that their children did not know from face-to-face relationships. This extended to online gaming too. In addition, participants extended the rule to include no online contacts that were of an older age. Some participants had rules regarding which social networking sites their children were permitted to use. Some participants had specific rules, customized to their family, including no digital devices used during car trips, no online purchases without parental assistance, and no Internet use during the week, only on weekends.

The final sub-theme of this section focussed on the limits that participants set on their adolescent children's Internet use. These limits were more flexible than the rules and participants observed that the limits changed more over time than the rules. Some of the limits were physical, such as placement of a computer in a family living space, or a limit on data for use in a month. Participants also reflected on what would be a likely catalyst for a change in the parental methods used at present. Participants identified events that had the potential to cause physical or emotional harm to their adolescent children such as cyberbullying, abduction or high-risk Internet use.

The penultimate theme that emerged from the data concerned the risks of Internet use. These included concerns that participants had due to their perceptions of the Internet and information from other sources including the media and first-hand accounts. Participants expressed concerns about the legal consequences of risky online behaviour and the impact such behaviour could have on their children. Participants expressed concern about

cyberbullying and, one participant described her concern about disturbances of adolescent sleep patterns.

The final theme identified from the data was collectively interpreted as the personal opinions of the participants. Opinions are important to the study as they are informed from the perceptions of the participants regarding their adolescent children's Internet use. Participant's opinions included the ability to use digital communication to connect with family members in distant places, the pressure of modern life, and digital technology's positive and negative role. One participant, who has two male gender children, expressed the opinion that if she had female children, she would most likely be stricter and more conservative. The opinions that dominated this theme were about the lack of control participants felt about the Internet and in response, their opinions on understanding that because they have limited control online they have to develop the pragmatic sense that they have done what they can to protect and continue protecting their children.

6.4. Strengths of the Present Study

The present study allowed for several strengths of the research process to be identified. An identified strength was the use of an explorative and descriptive design with an interpretive paradigm. The broad nature of the topic was particularly suitable to an explorative design, even though objectives of the research study were identified, the participants and the researcher were able to explore perceptions openly through the use of semi-structured interviews. This style of interviewing allowed the participants to freely discuss the open-ended questions asked by the researcher. Participants provided rich descriptions of their perceptions regarding their adolescent children's Internet use, and due to the nature of the interview, the participants and the researcher

were able to converse in a manner that allowed for the participant's voice to be clearly expressed in the data.

Following the explorative nature of the design, the descriptive process integrated with the qualitative concepts of context, self-reflexivity, and thick description. The use of Tracy (2010) criterion of credibility with the four sub-criteria of thick description, triangulation, multivocality, and member reflections also guided the researcher in the research process, encouraging the provision of a thick description, requiring the use of self-reflection to gain insight and understanding into the contextual world of the participants and using the resources available to the researcher through access to literature, research, and a research supervisor.

The interpretive paradigm requires the researcher to integrate the concepts of *verstehen, social construction, and hermeneutics.* The researcher attempted to gain insight into the participants' context. This permitted the researcher to empathically interpret the participants' perceptions and describe the participants' reality as constructed from their personal experience, perceptions, and context. The researcher's use of numerous sources of literature and information, including her own professional experience as a researcher of cyber psychology to provide a holistic interpretation of the data, is another strength.

Finally, the researcher's training and experience as a registered counsellor and a clinical psychologist intern are a strength of this study. Training in an institution which requires a constant awareness and adherence to ethical practice, encourages evidence-based integrative techniques, which places an emphasis on the training of self-reflection, and requires a holistic approach to psychology benefitted the researcher throughout the research process as the qualitative research process is enhanced by these skills.

Although this study will inform the growing body of research in cyber psychology in South Africa, it has limitations. These limitations will be discussed in the following section.

6.5. Limitations of the Present Study

While some aspects of this research are considered strengths of this study, limitations have also been identified. The first limitation is related to the sampling method used to identify potential participants. The nature of snowball sampling results in not all individuals in a population being offered the same opportunity to form part of the research sample (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). This sampling method resulted in a homogenous sample of participants with similar demographics. The study was conducted in Port Elizabeth, in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan area of the Eastern Cape. Five participants were interviewed. All participants were white, adult females, who spoke English as one of their primary languages. Due to this demographic representation the researcher acknowledges that this sample only represents a partial sub-group of persons in South Africa that could meet the inclusion criteria of the study and consequently, there is a possibility that the sample of participants in the study did not accurately represent the total population.

The researcher was unwilling to comment on the possible parenting styles of the participants interviewed due to the lack of collateral information, limited interview time (one face-to-face session), and the researcher's inability to provide an objective perspective due to the nature of the researcher's role during the qualitative research process. Identifying the parenting styles of participants would have added a layer of perspective to the descriptive and interpretive process. This is a limitation, however, the parental styles of participants was not an objective of the study, it would have informed an aspect of the second objective of identifying mediation techniques used by parents to manage their adolescent children's Internet use.

Research into the topic of cyber psychology is unpredictably complex as international research has been conducted into this field for more than a decade. However, due to the incredibly fast-paced growth and change of the Internet, research conducted ten years ago may be considerably outdated as the focus may have been on the use of outdated digital technology. The massive growth in popularity of social networking has presented many diverse research questions that are different from research conducted on Internet use before the creation of sites such as YouTube (2005), Instagram (2010), and Facebook (2004). Although some research remains very relevant, regardless of age, the rate at which the Internet and therefore, its users change, is seen as a limitation when searching for literature and information. Furthermore, journal articles are expensive due to a majority of the articles being controlled by large international publication companies. Most of these companies require payment for the researcher to access the article for a restricted period. With the exchange rate of the South African Rand the researcher found this a limitation to the access of certain peer-reviewed articles.

6.6. Personal Reflections

Conducting research into cyber psychology in South Africa allowed me to combine some my personal passions including the Internet, understanding human relationships and behaviour, adolescent development and South Africa. Each one of these aspects is unique; we are a country like no other, filled with people who have many stories. The Internet is vast and fascinating, and I can't begin to attempt to understand the 'magic' of it, but it tempts people to behave in certain ways, both good and bad and my desire to know whether that is who we are all along, or whether there is something online that flicks a switch in us fills me with curiosity. In particular, I am interested in working with the adolescent population, so this research study provided me with intense satisfaction in both its creation and completion. At the start of my internship year,

training as a clinical psychologist I started keeping a self-reflective journal, and during this research process, I have actively used it to honestly confront my perceptions of the Internet. Being from Generation X, I have had a productive but ambivalent relationship with the Internet and social networking. Through this research and separating the content of the Internet from the medium, I have embraced digital technology with a new degree of knowledge, and therefore power. Also, I have instituted self-regulated digital shut off times at home, not quite Analogue August but more of a Wi-Fi-less Weekend.

Significantly the most salient theme that has been identified in my journal is my pride at completing a qualitative research study. As a clinical psychologist intern, the relationship between client and psychologist is a powerful tool and the language, and non-verbal behaviour of a client is incredibly valuable, but more so is the context of the person, the unique stories, and experiences that have brought this person to that point in time. That is the information I am most privileged to experience. I recognize the value of other research methods but, personally, qualitative research is the descriptive process of what I believe to be psychology – a study of the mind.

In the conclusion of my personal reflections, I need to include the influence of my research supervisor, who with a kind but firm guidance assisted me as I have walked this journey and I consider myself enriched by the experience. He encouraged independent thought and creativity at all times but was always available to discuss and stimulate new ideas. There is a need for the essential existence of the master and apprentice/ mentor and student relationship throughout history. There is no value that can be placed on the experience, both professional and personal that my supervisor has imparted to me, and how I have grown from this experience.

6.7. Recommendations

To the researcher's knowledge, this study is one of the few studies focussing on parental perceptions of Internet use in South Africa. From the initial proposal of this research topic, the researcher aimed at conducting a broad research study that would highlight areas of need or interest for future research. This research study can be replicated in different contexts, with varied samples of participants to produce findings that may be more generalizable to the South African population. By including a measure of parenting styles, the understanding of parental mediation techniques may be improved.

It is recommended that future research studies include the perceptions of the adolescent users of the Internet in order to integrate the findings from the parents' perceptions with that of adolescents Internet users. This will allow for the identification of discrepancies between the reports of parents and adolescents with regards to Internet use, experiences, and management. Furthermore, the researcher recommends research specifically aimed at exploring the possible effects of sleep disturbance due to the use of social networking or the Internet, and how this may impact upon adolescent mood regulation and academic performance.

Finally, the researcher recommends the development of a psychoeducation program aimed at providing information to parents and adolescents, relevant to a South African context and focussing on cyber citizenship and the consequences of risky online behaviour. The researcher recommends workshops of smaller groups of individuals, developed in an interactive manner.

6.8. Conclusion

The present study has attempted to provide a rich, descriptive interpretation of parents'

perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use. This qualitative, exploratory, descriptive

study incorporated an interpretive paradigm and made use of snowball sampling. Data was

gathered using face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and analysed using Tesch's (1990) eight

steps of qualitative data analysis.

The aim of this study was to explore and describe parents' perceptions of their children's

Internet use to gain insight and understanding of how parents perceive the Internet including the

benefits, risks, and dangers. Further, the aim was to identify mediation techniques used by

parents to manage their adolescent children's Internet use. Themes that emerged from the data

analysis included parental perceptions, observations, parenting methods, concern, and opinions,

and provided valuable insight into how parents perceive their adolescent children's Internet use

and how they manage and mediate their children's Internet access.

With the present study, it was the researcher's intention to tell the stories of the

participants, allowing their voices to be heard in a scientific context, integrated with

contributions from other users and researchers of the Internet. Although this present study does

have its limitations, it is the goal of the researcher to use the findings to inform educational needs

and develop psychoeducation programmes that may assist parents and children to become

productive cyber citizens.

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Appendix A: Participant information letter

LETTER OF MOTIVATION FOR CO-OPERATION
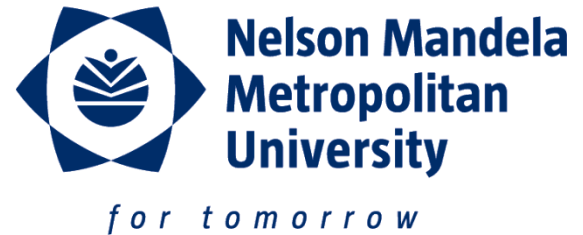
Faculty of Health Sciences

Department of Psychology

NMMU (South Campus)

Tel: (041)-5042330

Email: zoebutler@axxess.co.za

21 October 2015

Dear Participant

I am conducting research as part of my master's degree in clinical psychology at the Nelson

Mandela Metropolitan University. The title of my research treatise is: "Parents' perceptions of

their adolescent children's Internet use." The aim of the research is to explore and describe this

topic in order to contribute to current strategies in cyber security and education, and increase the

body of research knowledge in cyber psychology in South Africa. I am inviting you to participate

in this research study. Your involvement in the research will be to participate in a once off

interview with myself. You will be required to complete and sign a consent form. This consent

form verifies that you understand and agree to participate in the study. There is no remuneration

for participation in this study.

You will be participating in a voluntary manner and have the right to withdraw your participation

from the study at any time. Please note that if you do withdraw from the study it will be

beneficial to arrange for a final discussion in order to terminate the research in an ethical manner.

You have the right to query concerns regarding the study at any time. Please raise any concerns

or questions with the researcher.

Telephone numbers of the researcher are provided. Please feel free to phone or email if you have

any questions.

Your identity will remain strictly confidential in any research produced.

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Butler   Prof. Greg Howcroft

RESEARCHER   **SUPERVISOR**

Email: zoebutler@axxess.co.za

Mobile: 0733792336

Appendix B: Biographical questionnaire

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A:

1. Language:_____

2. Number of children: _____

3. Age/s of your children: _____

Section B:

Please indicate your answer by ticking the applicable option provided:

4. Do your children have access to the Internet?

   Yes_____/No_____

Appendix C: Participant consent form

INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCHER'S DETAILS	
Title of the research project	Parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use
Reference number	
Principle investigator	Zoe Butler
Address	Uclin Psychology Clinic Lower Ground Floor, Building 7 South Campus Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Port Elizabeth
Postal Code	6001
Contact number	073 3792336

A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPANT		INITIAL
I, the participant and the undersigned		
ID number		
or		
I, in my capacity as		
of the participant		
ID number		
Address (of participant)		

A.1 HEREBY CONFIRMS AS FOLLOWS:		INITIAL
I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project		
that is undertaken by		
from		
of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University		

THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, THE PARTICIPANT:			INITIAL
2.1	Aim:	(1) To explore and describe parents' perceptions of their adolescent children's Internet use	

		(2) To inform future research, education and health policy in South Africa		
2.2	Procedures:	Individuals selected via predetermined criteria		
		Complete a biographical questionnaire		
		Semi-structured interview		
		Information captured using an audio recorder, and transcribed thereafter		
2.3	Risks	Possibility for participants to be overwhelmed by the content provoked by the questions Participants could experience negative feelings associated with the discussion of lived experiences		
2.4	Possible benefits	Assisting in a research project that may influence or inform future research and education and health policies.		
2.5	Confidentiality:	• Avoidance of harm by keeping the identity of the participant strictly confidential in any discussion, description or scientific publications • Use of pseudonyms in the transcription process		
2.6	Access to findings:	• Via the researcher (report summary) – to participants • Complete treatise in the NMMU (South Campus Library).		
2.7	Voluntary participation/ refusal/ discontinuation	My participation is voluntary	YES	NO
		My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care / employment / lifestyle	TRUE	FALSE

3. THE INFORMATION ABOVE WAS EXPLAINED TO ME/THE PARTICIPANT BY:		INITIAL
Zoe Butler (researcher)		
in	English	
and I am in command of this language and understand this is part of the above-mentioned selection criteria		
I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.		

4.	No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalization	

5.	Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself	

A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE MENTIONED PROJECT:			
Signed/confirmed at	on	20	
	Signature of witness:		
Signature of participant	Full name of witness:		
B. STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)			
I,	Zoe Butler	declare that:	
1.	I have explained the information given in this document to		
2.	He was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;		
3.	I have detached Section C and handed it to the participant	YES	NO
Signed/confirmed at	on	20	
Signature of interview	Signature of witness		
	Signature of witness		

C. IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE PARTICIPANT/REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PARTICIPANT

Dear participant/representative of the participant
Thank you for your/the participant's participation in this study. Should at any time during the study:
- An emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- You require any further information with regard to the study, or
- The following occur

(indicate any circumstances which should be reported to the investigator)

Kindly contact	Zoe Butler
At telephone number	073 379 2336

Appendix D: Participant interview schedule

<u>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>

In your own words, describe your perception of your children's Internet use.

What do you consider positive factors?

Do you have concerns about their Internet use?

Do you limit their use of the Internet? If yes, could you explain how?

In your opinion, what would change the way you view your children's Internet use?

Appendix E: Extract from Researchers Reflective Journal

SE → ↑

⑫

♂ ♂✝
♀ ♀✝

Percepts: ↑ Nop → overseas
→ europe

Self-reflective ↑

Values ↑ — contexts of
growing up environments
in South Africa?
/girls?/
school
High activity — sport
family ++

parents → high level IT knowledge

↑ interactive

Interview ↑ interactive

parenting { monitoring — dispersed
↑↑↑ interaction

BSE. roles a consq.

Relationships — parents
— friends
— grandparents
europe

Lou Harvey