

**THE USE OF CELL PHONES BY HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS IN THE MAHIKENG
AREA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree MA in Communications

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At the

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Submitted by

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In the

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to:

- My parents, the late Patrick Joe Cele (1946 – 2005) and Josephine Cele (1950), who both never had an opportunity to receive a formal education in their lives. They both taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

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Apart from my own efforts, the success of any project depends largely on the encouragement and guidelines of many others. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the people who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this study.

My appreciation goes to the Chief Operation Officer of the Department of Education in the North West Province, Dr M.A. Seakamela and to the then Director for Communication Directorate in the same Department of Education, Mr C.M. Raseala. Thank you very much for allowing me to visit schools in your Department. I believe that the results of this study will be of great importance to the province and the country as a whole.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr William Heuva who was enormously helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance. Thank you once more for the contribution and guidance throughout the study.

Dr J.I. (Jabu) de Jager has been a brilliant co-supervisor in this study. His astute advice, insightful criticisms, and persistent encouragement aided the writing of this study in innumerable ways.

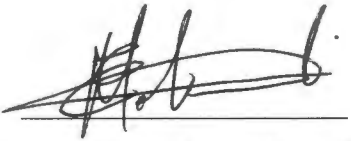
Also my special thanks go to all the principals of the six high schools who participated in the study, for allowing me to frequent their schools many times to gather data. I am confident that the outcome of the study will reach your offices as requested.

My warm gratitude goes to all parents of learners of these six schools and teachers who sacrificed their time after school to attend the focus groups. I am very grateful to the learners who participated whole heartedly in the study. Thank you very much; without your participation this study would have not been possible.

Finally, without the support of my wife Lesego and my children, Sipiwe, Jabulile, and Sizwe, I would never have succeeded. Although they often had to endure my absence they seldom complained. I hope they will enjoy the effort being completed. Although, hardly aware of their stimulating role a word of gratitude is also expressed to the other members of my family and my friends. Unfortunately, my father is no longer with us to celebrate the completion of my dissertation.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Elias Mhlupheki Malindi hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other university before, for the purpose of obtaining a degree. All sources of information I have used and consulted are, as far as is humanly possible, recognised as such.



Elias Mhlupheki Malindi

19/09/2013

Date

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to examine how high schools learners in the Mahikeng area use their cellular phones. This study will further explore whether educators and parents have the necessary skills to understand how the learners use their cellular phones. Six schools had been identified for the study, three in urban parts of this town (Mafikeng High School, Golfview Secondary School, Mmabatho High School) and three in rural parts of the town (Barolong High School, Danville High School and Saint Mary's Secondary School).

The study addresses social problems such as pornography, abduction and rape which have become prevalent since the advent of the new Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) devices, such as the Internet, Twitter, Facebook and MXit. These new technologies have made communication easy by eliminating spatial distances. Learners are now able to communicate with strangers whom they have never met in person, and this poses a threat to their lives.

This study has adopted the qualitative research method. It deals with opinions and perceptions of learners, teachers and parents, and a qualitative methodology will be more suitable for this data.

The data revealed that all learners in all schools which participated in the study have cellular phones. The data further revealed that learners from the schools which participated in the study have seen pornographic images from the cellular phones. With regard to teachers the data revealed that all schools had cell phone policies. In terms of the parents the data revealed that 60 per cent had cellular phones with Internet access and 40 per cent of parents said their phones did not have access to Internet.

The study highlighted that some learners do not sleep at night due to MXit, as they chat throughout the night and only sleep for two hours per night. They end up feeling sleepy at school and cannot concentrate in the classroom.

DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Terms and concepts in this study are clarified in order to prevent misconceptions arising from their usage.

Cellular Phone

A mobile radiotelephone, often in an automobile, that uses a network of short-range transmitters located in overlapping cells throughout a region, with a central station making connections to regular telephone lines (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com> accessed 30 September 2012).

SNS

Social Networking Site (SNS)

SMS

Short Message Service

Effect

Effect is defined as some circumstance that would not have occurred without the presence of some other circumstances. An effect, then, requires an agent and a reactant in a relationship (Windall 1992: 191).

Technology

Communication technology, also called telecommunications technology, consists of electromagnetic devices and systems for communicating over long distances. In more recent times, there has been the addition of communication among computers – which is what happens when people “go online” on the internet. In this context, online means using a computer or some other information device, connected through a network, to access information and services from another computer or information device (Williams and Sawyer 2007:5).

Mass Communication

Mass communication involves a large variety of messages sent (usually) by an institutional group or a collective communicator. The messages are distributed and transmitted (usually) by means of technological media channels to reach large heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences who may interpret the messages in a variety of ways (Fourie 2001: 213).

MXit

MXit is a mobile instant messaging application developed locally and runs on cell phones with GPRS/3G/HSDPA. It uses a java application and you can send and receive text messages (chatting) while you are logged into the MXit Java application on your cell phone. (<http://groups.google.co.za/group/ict-4-champions/web/Mxit%20-%20definition%20and%20articles>, accessed on the 29th August 2009).

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This study seeks to investigate the use of cell phones by high school learners in the Mahikeng area. Mahikeng is the capital city of the North West province in South Africa and has a mixture of urban and rural characteristics. The study seeks to understand the use of cell phones by learners attending high schools in the urban and rural areas of Mahikeng.

The study will further examine if the educators and parents understand how the learners use their cell phones. Six schools have been identified for the study; three in urban parts of this town (Mafikeng High School, Golfview Secondary School, Mmabatho High School) and three in rural parts of the town (Barolong High School, Danville High School and Saint Mary's Secondary School).

Similar studies on the use of cell phones by learners at high schools were reviewed and gaps in these studies have been identified. Many of these studies were conducted in First World countries such as America, where the social and economic situations differ from those in Third World countries like South Africa. The studies from the developed world did not address the disparities of learners living in urban and rural areas, which the present study has done.

The present study focuses on social problems such as pornography, abduction and rape, which have been on the rise and which are partly associated with the advent of cell phones. An increasing number of media articles have recently been focusing on social problems experienced by learners when they use these cell phones. This study did not address the learning process, but focuses only on learners themselves and how they use their cell phones. Cell phone usage by learners has become a major concern for the Department of Education, teachers and parents.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study seeks to examine the effects cell phones have on learners from the selected high schools in the Mahikeng area. It addresses social problems such as pornography, abduction and rape, which have become prevalent since the advent of the new Information and Communication

Technology (ICTs) devices, such as the Internet, Twitter, Facebook and MXit. These new technologies have made communication easy by eliminating spatial distances. Learners are now able to communicate with strangers whom they have never met in person and this poses a threat to their lives. Sometimes these strangers communicate with them with the intention of harming them.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has been guided by the following overarching objective:

- To examine how high school learners in the Mahikeng area use their cell phones.

This overarching objective is divided into three specific sub-objectives:

- To evaluate various ways in which learners use cell phones.
- To examine learners' awareness of the threats and dangers associated with cell phones
- To determine teachers' and parents' understanding of the use of cell phones by learners.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The following main research question guided this study:

- How do high school learners in the Mahikeng area use their cell phones?

The question is divided into three sub-questions:

- In which ways do learners use their cell phones?
- Are learners aware of threats and dangers associated with cell phones?
- Do teachers and parents understand the use of cell phones by learners?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will be very significant in terms of raising awareness amongst the learners themselves to understand how to use their cell phones responsibly. The findings will

also help the teachers and parents to understand how to monitor cell phone usage by learners. Furthermore, the findings of the study will go a long way to assist the School Governing Body (SGB) Committees to understand the extent to which learners are exposed to dangers associated with cell phones and assist the Committee to monitor the learners. The National and Provincial government will benefit from the findings in developing cell phone policies for learners in schools.

1.6 DELIMITATION

The study will be confined to those children who attend school within the six identified schools of Ngaka Modiri Molema District in Mahikeng area. Teachers who participate in the study are those teaching at these schools and the parents are those whose children attend these schools.

1.7 CONFIDENTIALITY

The participants will be given the assurance that all the data they provide will be used only for the purpose of the research and their identities will be treated with confidentiality.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The proposed structure of this thesis is as follows:

- **CHAPTER ONE** provides an overview of the study, focusing on the introduction and background of the study, statement of the problem, research objective, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and confidentiality.
- **CHAPTER TWO** presents the theoretical framework and literature reviews relating to the use of cell phones by learners.
- **CHAPTER THREE** addresses the methods used to collect data.
- **CHAPTER FOUR** deals with data analysis and the interpretation of results.
- **CHAPTER FIVE** deals with the research results.

- **CHAPTER SIX** provides the findings, conclusion and recommendations

1.9 CONCLUSION

The overarching objective for this study was to examine how high school learners in the Mahikeng area use their cell phones. Mahikeng is the capital city of the North West province in South Africa and has a mixture of urban and rural characteristics. The findings of the study will be very significant in terms of raising awareness amongst the learners themselves to understand how to use their cell phones responsibly. The findings will also help the teachers and parents to understand how to monitor the cell phone usage by learners.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with a literature review. It examines a few literature items published on the subject, notably research done on the usage of cell phones by learners at high schools. Findings of five studies are analysed and the strengths and weaknesses in each of these studies are identified. The chapter also discusses how the present study differs from the five others reviewed, in terms of findings as well as by addressing issues that have not been adequately addressed in these studies.

2.2 THE FIVE STUDIES REVIEWED

2.2.1 TEEN PERCEPTIONS OF CELLULAR PHONES AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

The first study that has been reviewed is “Teen perceptions of cellular phones as a communication tool” by Jonas (2011). The purpose of this study was to determine perceptions of cellular phones as a communication tool by teens in a suburban Central Middle School in a Midwest suburban community in the United States of America, and to evaluate how cellular phones influence communication in their daily lives and at school. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the research set these questions: “What is the current level of cellular phone ownership and usage by middle school level teens in a Midwest suburban community?”, “What opportunities or distractions are generated through cellular phone use?” The study comprised only one middle school and students who took part in the study were representative of the middle school level student population, Grades 6-8, from a suburban community.

The main findings of the study were that cellular phones significantly impact the lives of teens in Central Middle School, as a large number of teens own cellular phones. The researcher found that focus group perceptions reported 80-100% cellular phone ownership by friends of participants. Findings revealed differences in access to technology between white students and

female students of colour, and the results suggest differences between ethnic groups, and how cellular phones are used to communicate between males and females. Results revealed that cellular phones created some distractions for middle school teens in the study, yet data suggested a desire to use cellular phones in positive ways, for example as a learning tool in school.

The strengths of the study were that the study only focused on one middle school within a suburban area, and an electronic survey instrument was used in the study. The weakness of the study is that it only used the population from a single suburban middle school located in the Midwest in America which is a First World country. Focus group perceptions were reflective of the members selected by the building administrator to participate anonymously in the panel, and the effects the moderator may have had on the environment. The researcher was a middle school level assistant principal and former technology teacher, therefore objectivity in the study was questionable. The current study will specifically investigate the usage of cell phones in six high schools which are situated in both the urban and rural areas of Mahikeng. The proposed study will investigate the use of cell phones by learners from Grade 8 – 12, who attend school in six different high schools. The researcher observed one similarity, that the reviewed study investigated cell phone ownership amongst the learners.

2.2.2 ADOLESCENT IN-SCHOOL CELL PHONE HABITS: A CENSUS OF RULES, SURVEY OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS, AND FERTILITY IMPLICATIONS

The second journal article that was reviewed is titled “Adolescent in-school cell phone habits: A census of rules, survey of their effectiveness, and fertility implications” by Redmaynea, Smith and Abramsona (2011). The main objective of the authors was to assess the adolescent’s ownership of cell phones which have become ubiquitous over the last few years. They explored school cell phone rules and adolescent exposure to cell phones microwave emissions during school with a census and survey, respectively. The study highlighted that there were several reasons that young people were more vulnerable than adults to environmental stressors, so concern has grown internationally over their increasing levels of exposure to this radiation due to possible adverse health effects. The study found that adolescents preferred to use the Short Message Service (texting), and inevitably this has meant that a majority of students take a cell phone to school, often into class, and use it there.

The main findings of the study through the combination of survey and census were that approximately 20% of adolescents fell into a 'high exposure' category. They carried and used their cell phones during lessons irrespective of school rules and the active phone was in a side-pocket or hand throughout the day at school. This pattern was positively associated with the highest overall texting rates and with keeping an active phone close by at night. The study shows that the highest use of cell phones among adolescents is associated with health-risk behaviours.

The findings of the study were that there were possible adverse effects from chronic cell phone exposure on reproductive integrity which were still poorly understood, but early indications of a relationship between duration of cell phone ownership and sperm damage should be taken seriously until further explored.

The strengths of this study lie in the high level of participation in the census providing highly representative results. This also applies to the survey which had an 85% participation rate. However the design introduced a couple of limitations. Asking students to report on their use of cell phones in class risked both under-reporting due to lack of trust, and over-reporting due to rebellious excitement or peer pressure. The current study will assess the use of cell phones by the learners in both urban and rural areas of Mahikeng. This study will examine whether the teachers and the parents know how to monitor the use of cell phones by learners. It will not focus on the health aspect of cell phone use by learners, but rather the social aspects of cell phone use by learners.

2.2.3 ICT LITERACY: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

The third study that has been reviewed is "ICT Literacy: An investigation of the digital divide in middle and high school classrooms" by Fazioli (2010). The study highlighted that information in the twenty-first century was presented in abundance on the Internet, which was communicated not only in written words, but also in pictures, sounds, and video. While the concept of ICT literacy is relatively new, value is becoming increasingly affixed to it, as technology remains omnipresent in all facets of life. In order for students to become increasingly literate and be able

to adequately function in today's world, they must be skilled in new literacy requiring educators to adjust pedagogically.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how ICT literacy had been incorporated in teacher pedagogical practices in the middle and high school setting. Specifically, this study examined the pedagogical, ideological and external factors that influence teachers' incorporation of ICT literacy in the middle and high school settings. Quantitative research methods in the form of a descriptive online survey were used in order to collect data. Participants were representative of the target population of middle and high school teachers in the United States, between 21 and 65 years of age, with varying degrees of years of experience in grades 6-12.

The main findings of the study were that teachers with more experience in using computers at home were more comfortable with, and placed higher importance on, reading about current trends in pedagogy and ICT, as well as with learning new versions of common software programs. Teachers have often expressed they have a lack of time, with constantly changing demands in curriculum, state and federal mandates, and related professional development. Finding time to learn new ICT, or its applications, is daunting in the face of these many demands. Regardless of the amount of time the computers are used in classrooms, teachers cannot squeeze in personal learning. It is at home during free time that teachers can explore the Internet and look for information related to what they deem important related to ICT in their classroom. Teachers who use the computer more are also more familiar with search engines on the Internet.

The weaknesses of the study were that the nature of the survey was an online questionnaire with closed-ended questions, which restricted participants from answering the questions in more detail. Additionally, the researcher was unable to pose follow-up questions or ask for clarification of answers given. Survey research cannot encapsulate the complexity and depth of participant answers to questions. Answers are restricted to available options that may be devoid of meaning, nuances in language, or lived values. Therefore, the current study is specifically seeking to investigate the usage of cell phones by learners in six high schools of Mahikeng area. The study will be conducted in South Africa which is a developing country and the population of

the study will be learners, teachers and parents. The study under review used only teachers as participants, which limited the findings of the study. The study used the quantitative research method to gather data, while the present study will use a qualitative research method to gather data. In qualitative research participants are able to provide their views and comments on the subject, unlike in quantitative research where they are only counted.

2.2.4 MOBILE COLLABORATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN: READING AND CREATING STORIES

The fourth study reviewed was “Mobile collaboration for young children: reading and creating stories” by Fails, (2009). The main objective of the study was to focus on supporting collaboration among mobile users, specifically children aged six to ten while collaboratively reading and creating stories. The results of the formal study show children were more mobile while creating stories than when reading and sharing them. As for task effectiveness, children read more pages when they were closer, and created more pages when they were further apart and more mobile. Children were closer together when they read using the content split configuration. While creating their stories, children rarely used the collocated collaborative configurations and used verbal collaboration instead.

The contributions of this work are that, through the use of Mobile Stories, mobile collaboration was investigated in its effectiveness for supporting collaboration and mobility. Mobile Stories’ interface was designed with children in order to be child appropriate and to support collocated mobile collaboration. While some have proposed collaborative interactions, no detailed discussion of what happens when people come together with mobile devices has been proposed or analyzed. The collocated collaborative concepts of splitting content and sharing space, evaluations of their usage, and discussions of user preferences are all major contributions.

Participants were recruited from the area using e-mail server lists, word-of mouth, and several hundred flyers distributed to neighbourhood schools. As participation was voluntary this was a convenience sample of those who could come and participate in the study. All participants were siblings or friends. There was an attempt to make the gender distribution somewhat equal with

relative success (11 girls, 15 boys). While the sampling was somewhat random, the sample does not necessarily represent a complete by random sample of children in the United States. In order to more specifically define the scope of this study, children of ages 8 and 9 participated thus eliminating age as a factor of analysis. As such the results may be less relevant to children of other ages.

The main findings of the study were that it would be beneficial to get mobile devices into the hands of children, so they could “own” the device and observe how the collaborative story software is used in everyday life. How frequently they would use it in actuality and the way they would chose to use it differ from that which was observed in the collaborative story study. Another item that was observed throughout various sessions was that children occasionally swapped mobile devices with one another. The reason for swapping seemed to be a functional one in that either one or the other, or both children wanted to see what was on the other device, even though they had the same data and could connect with one another. The study found that adult users view their mobile phones as a very personal item – mostly because of the amount of personalization and personal information that they have on them. Children tend to use current mobile devices for entertainment purposes, and do not necessarily have the same amount or kind of personal information on their phones or devices.

The weakness of the study was that there was no specific age target of children who participated in the study. All participants were siblings or friends and this raises a strong question about the objectivity of the study. The current study investigates the usage of cell phones by learners in high school. The study targets learners who reside in the rural and in urban areas of Mahikeng area and who are doing Grade 8 – 12, who are in high school, while the reviewed study targeted children who are 6-10 years old.

2.2.5 EXPLAINING WHY YOUNG ADULTS USE MYSPACE AND FACEBOOK THROUGH USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

Another study by Urista, Dong and Day conducted in 2008 and titled “Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through Uses and Gratifications theory”, was also reviewed.

The main objective of the study was to investigate why MySpace and Facebook were two leading online social networking sites (SNS) that were popular with young adults. This study has observed that individuals could develop their own home page to include their favourite music, television shows, and photos. These SNS attracted millions of members who socialize with other people on the Internet including and sometimes supplanting traditional socialization agents (family, school, peer groups and environment). MySpace and Facebook enable individuals to play an active role in the socialization process and in constructing their own identity. The primary research question of this study is: how do members of these SNS use the sites to fulfil their wants and needs? Answers to this research question are expected to help better understand why young adults have been reported to be so addicted to these SNS.

This study seeks to understand the factors that motivate individuals to use SNS to fulfil their needs and wants. SNS have become a central component of many users' lives for the simple reason that members desire to engage in forms of interaction online. The study seeks to reveal the motivations behind these desires and also the tactics employed by members to fulfil their needs and wants. In order to investigate why individuals use SNS, the focus group method was selected due to its advantages in exploratory studies. This qualitative approach provides insights into the thoughts, ideas, perceptions, and attitudes of individual SNS members who use the online source to fulfil their needs and wants. This inductive process fits this investigation well in that focus groups facilitated the collection of rich data for answering the research question.

A total of 50 undergraduates from a university in Central California participated in one of six focus groups. Students were selected using convenience sampling to participate in these focus groups. As a motivation for participating in the study, extra credit was offered for students, who were enrolled in a large general education class at the university. In order to avoid selective bias, the researchers paid great attention to selecting broadly representative focus groups for the investigation in terms of gender, ethnicity, and major subject. The main criteria for selecting these students included: 1) being either members of MySpace or Facebook; and 2) wanting to share their thoughts and experience about using the SNS with other students.

The main findings of the study are that this study has developed a Uses and Gratifications Theory that posits that individuals use SNS to experience a selective, efficient, and immediate connection with others for their (mediated) interpersonal communication satisfaction and as an on-going way to seek the approval and support of other people. Such uses are only now possible through new technology offered by the Internet. Today's young adults are heavy consumers of digital products and consequently are influenced by computer technology, becoming impatient and more demanding for fast results. These young adults constantly text-message and call others in order to find out current information or to know "what's going on." SNS are a useful and convenient tool for staying connected with the events of a friend's life with ease. Compared to calling a person and having a conversation, members of SNS can visit a member's profile or send them a quick message to find out what they want to know. Moreover, SNS users can update their profile to convey impressions of themselves and occurrences in their lives to a large audience without contacting each member of that audience on an individual basis.

These findings also suggest that many young people use SNS to make themselves look attractive and to increase their social capital. This study's findings on Scene Kids suggests that many young people today are using SNS to create a virtual identity that resembles an idealized self that will boost one's status and self-esteem in both the online and "real" world. In short, SNS are a convenient and efficient way to tailor one's appearance from the comfort of one is home. Accordingly, many members are using SNS to make them aesthetically more appealing to others with the intention of gaining admirers and friends. Finally, this study suggests that there is a noticeable distinction between online friends and "real" world friends. Many participants cited incidences where statements made by online friends appeared disingenuous and superficial. Consequently, this demonstrates that there should be a deeper examination of what it means to befriend online compared with being a friend in the "real" world.

The limitations of the study are that only five focus groups were conducted. While focus groups produce a wealth of information, the small number of participants in each focus group does not provide a large enough group to be a relevant sample of the population. The population of participants is also problematic insofar as each participant is a student at a four-year university. Consequently, the data collected comes from the viewpoints of college students. This makes it

problematic to generalize findings to the entire population of SNS members who have diverse backgrounds and levels of education. The current study has observed similarities in both studies in that both are investigating the use of social media by young people and both studies use the Uses and Gratification Theory. Both studies apply the focus group methodology to gather data from the participants. The difference is that the present study will investigate the understanding of the usage of cell phone by teachers and parents of learners. The study seeks to identify the gap between the usage of cell phones by learners living in both urban and rural areas.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with a literature review. It examined a few literature items published on the subject, notably research done on the usage of cell phones by learners at high schools. The first study that was reviewed was “Teen perceptions of cellular phones as a communication tool” by Jonas, 2011. The purpose of this study was to determine perceptions of cellular phones as a communication tool by teens in a suburban Central Middle School, in a Midwest suburban community, United States of America, and to evaluate how cellular phones influence communication in their daily lives and at school.

The second journal article that was reviewed is titled “Adolescent in-school cell phone habits: A census of rules, survey of their effectiveness, and fertility implications” by Redmaynea, Smith and Abramsona, 2011. The main objective of the authors was to assess the adolescent’s ownership of cell phones, which have become ubiquitous over the last years. The study highlighted that, there were several reasons that young people were more vulnerable than adults to environmental stressors, so concern has grown internationally over their increasing levels of exposure to cell phone radiation due to possible adverse health effects.

The third study reviewed is “ICT Literacy: An investigation of the digital divide in middle and high school classroom” by Fazioli, 2010. The study highlighted that information in the twenty-first century was presented in abundance on the Internet, which was communicated not only in written words, but also in pictures, sounds, and video. While the concept of ICT literacy is relatively new, value is increasingly becoming affixed to it, as technology remains omnipresent in all facets of life. In order for students to become increasingly literate and be able to adequately

function in today's world, they must be skilled in new literacy requiring educators to adjust pedagogically.

The fourth study reviewed was "Mobile collaboration for young children: reading and creating stories" by Fails, 2009. The main objective of the study was to focus on supporting collaboration among mobile users, specifically children aged six to ten while collaboratively reading and creating stories. The results of the formal study show children were more mobile while creating stories than when reading and sharing them.

The last study, by Urista, Dong and Day conducted in 2008 and titled "Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through Uses and Gratifications theory", was also reviewed. The main objective of the study was to investigate why MySpace and Facebook were two leading online social networking sites (SNS) that were popular with young adults.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general theoretical framework for the use of cell phones by high schools learners in Mahikeng area. This study has been guided by the Uses and Gratification Theory to examine the effects cell phones have on learners from selected high schools in Mahikeng. Uses and Gratification Theory can be viewed as a psychological communicative perspective which focuses on how individuals use media and other forms of communication such as interpersonal communication to fulfil their needs and wants.

3.2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The new communications technologies have become omnipresent in the world today. They are critical to commerce, essential to entertainment, and intertwined in our interpersonal relationships. In short, communication technology is the nervous system of contemporary society, transmitting and distributing sensory and control information and interconnecting a myriad of interdependent units. Because these technologies are vital to commerce, control, and maintaining interpersonal relationships, any change in communication technologies has the potential for profound impacts on virtually every area of society. One of the hallmarks of the information revolution is that new communication technologies as mechanisms of control play an important role in almost every area of the production and distribution of manufactured goods. These communication technologies have evolved throughout the previous several decades at an increasingly rapid rate. This evolution shows no signs of slowing down, so an understanding of this evolution is vital for any individual wishing to attain or retain a position in business, government, or education (Grant and Meadows 2008: 1).

My research study has been informed by the Uses and Gratification theory. The latest form of the telephone is the cell phone which has provided mobility and immediacy to society. The user does

not need to be at home or at the office to receive and convey the messages. The user is now able to answer the cell phone anywhere and anytime, for example in the taxi, bus, car, shopping mall, park, etc. It has made communication easy for everybody to communicate with someone who is far away, and at any time of the day. There are no restrictions for communication to take place; even children can use a cell phone. The internet can be accessed on a cell phone and through that a user is able to communicate through Facebook, Twitter or MXit.

The cell phone has provided a range of services to the user, which the user can decide to use anytime. The cell phone has widened the boundaries of the user. The user may communicate with one or more callers at the same time. The user has access to see who calls, and even display the face of the caller. The user is able to store a large number of contacts in the cell phone; no more note books to store contacts. The user has a variety of choices to use when they communicate with another person, and may decide to use a voice call, texting, video call, send picture messages, social media, etc. The needs and wants of a user could be addressed immediately through the use of a cell phone; hence it has provided mobility and immediacy to the user. Uses and Gratification theory is a theoretical communication perspective that examines how individuals use mass media. As an audience based theory, it is grounded on the assumption that individuals select media and content to fulfil their needs or wants. These needs are expressed as motives for adopting use of a particular medium, and are connected to the social and psychological makeup of the individual. Based on the perceived needs, social and psychological characteristics, and media attributes, individuals use media and experience (Stacks and Salwen 2009: 137).

According to Fourie (2001: 397) the Uses and Gratification theory highlights the fact that the media gratifies the need for information about both the immediate and distant working world and circumstances. Media users need and get information about issues that can affect them directly or indirectly.

Cell phones have mixed characteristics of communication, unlike the old telephones which were limited to interpersonal communication. Cell phones have broken the boundaries of interpersonal communication and integrated it with other forms of communication such as reading news, texting, Twitter, Facebook, MXit, conference calls, Internet, weather, maps, etc. The Uses and Gratification theory is very important to this study because learners have a choice in using cell

phones to gratify their wants and needs. The learner chooses the form of communication through the cell phone to satisfy his/her needs either in sending or receiving information.

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a general theoretical framework for the use of cell phones by high school learners in Mahikeng area. This study has been guided by the Uses and Gratification theory to examine the effects cell phones have on learners from selected high schools in Mahikeng. Uses and Gratification theory is a theoretical communication perspective that examines how individuals use mass media. As an audience based theory, it is grounded on the assumption that individuals select media and content to fulfil their needs or wants. These needs are expressed as motives for adopting particular medium use, and are connected to the social and psychological makeup of the individual.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals mainly with the research methodology that was used to carry out the study. It will mainly focus on the following: methodology, research design, population and sampling, instrumental development, data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration and conclusion.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted the qualitative research approach. The study deals with opinions and perceptions of learners, teachers and parents and a qualitative methodology will be more suitable than a quantitative one.

A qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live. A number of different approaches exist within the wider framework of this type of research, but most of these have the same aim: to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures. Researchers use qualitative approaches to explore the behaviour, perspectives and experiences of the people they study. The basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretative approach to social reality (Holloway 1997:1).

The characteristics of all forms of qualitative research are that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Given the goal of this research, the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive, would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analysing data. Other advantages are that the researcher can expand his or her understanding through non-verbal as well as verbal communication, process information (data) immediately, clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation and explore unusual or unanticipated responses (Merriam 2009: 15).

According to Holloway (1997:1) qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live. A number of different approaches exist within the wider framework of this type of research, but most of these have the same aim: to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures. Researchers use qualitative approaches to explore the behaviour, perspectives and experiences of the people they study. The basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretative approach to social reality.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey questionnaire is the most common instrument used for data collection in a survey research. In the investigation of this study, a questionnaire with closed-ended and with open-ended questions was designed and employed for data collection. The researcher used a video recorder to record the deliberations of the focus group sessions.

The researcher watched and listened carefully to the video records and read the complete transcripts for key concepts and key ideas related to the research question. Next, main themes were identified. Direct quotes were then extracted for the purpose of elaboration on each theme related to the research question and categorized under the appropriate theme. Finally, based on the key concepts, themes and direct quotes, answers were provided for the research question. All the analyzed information became the findings of the study.

4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The study population comprised all high schools learners, teachers and parents in the Mahikeng area. The investigation was carried out at the six high schools, three from the urban area namely: Mafikeng High School, Golfview High School and Mmabatho High School. The other three high from the rural area are Barolong High School, Saint Mary's High School and Danville High School.

The sample comprised 120 subjects. These participants consisted of 60 learners; two learners per grade, per school, from grade 8 to grade 12. The total number of learners participating per school in a focus group was 10. The study involved 30 teachers (five per school) and 30 parents (five parents per school) from all the identified schools.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

A focus group discussion guide was used in each focus group investigation. Questions on how high school learners in the Mahikeng area use their cell phones and the sub-questions were asked and participants were encouraged to elaborate on statements that were relevant to the research questions. The researcher who was the moderator in this study, directed the sessions. During each focus group session, learners, teachers and parents were provided with drinks and snacks to create a relaxed and comfortable setting for the researcher to become familiar with each participant. The focus group discussions were video recorded and transcribed by the principal researcher.

The sessions for focus group ran for approximately 1.5 hours each with between 6 and 12 participants. Each was controlled by the facilitator, who was the researcher, and all the sessions were digitally recorded. The programme had four parts:

- **Introduction**

Set out the background and aim/objectives for the session, as well as the ‘game rules’ and procedures to be followed.

- **Ice – breaker**

Focus on the issue at hand and promote a constructive approach to generate solutions rather than to tabulate “criticisms”.

- **Generation of solutions**

This was the main part of the focus group during which the information had to be generated, firstly with regard to “trouble – shooting” and secondly with regard to likely solutions.

- **Summary**

This concluded the proceedings and the facilitator used this to integrate/summarize the session's proceedings to provide participants with an understanding of the session as one of the building blocks towards the overall solution, and to explain how their input would be used in the bigger picture (Jansen, 2000: 12).

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell 2007:148)

The researcher watched and listened carefully to the video records and read the complete transcripts for key concepts and key ideas related to the research question. Next, main themes were identified. Direct quotes were then extracted for the purpose of elaboration on each theme related to the research question and categorized under the appropriate theme. Finally, based on the key concepts, themes and direct quotes, answers were provided for the research question. Qualitative data was analyzed through inductive data analysis. Inductive data analysis means that categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data collection (McMillian and Schumacher, 1993: 502).

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher did not force anyone to participate in this study. Permission was obtained from the Department of Education management to collect information from the learners, teachers and parents.

Participants were informed about objectives of the study and they were given an opportunity to raise their concern before taking part. The researcher did not force anyone to participate in this study but participation was on voluntary basis.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt mainly with the research methodology that was used to carry out the study. This study adopted the qualitative research approach. The study dealt with opinions and perceptions of learners, teachers and parents and a qualitative methodology was more suitable than a quantitative one. The study population comprised all high schools learners, teachers and parents in the Mahikeng area. The investigation was carried out at six high schools. Three were from the urban area namely: Mafikeng High School, Golfview High School and Mmabatho High School and the other three high schools from the rural area were Barolong High School, Saint Mary's High School and Danville High School. A focus group discussion guide was used in each focus group investigation. The researcher watched and listened carefully to the video records and read the complete transcripts for key concepts and key ideas related to the research question.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data gathered from the learners, teachers and parents is in related to the research objectives. This chapter discusses the results of the closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires responses by 120 participants. In this chapter the researcher has consolidated all responses into one, per category.

5.2 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

QUESTIONS:

5.2.1. Do you have a cell phone?

Figure 1

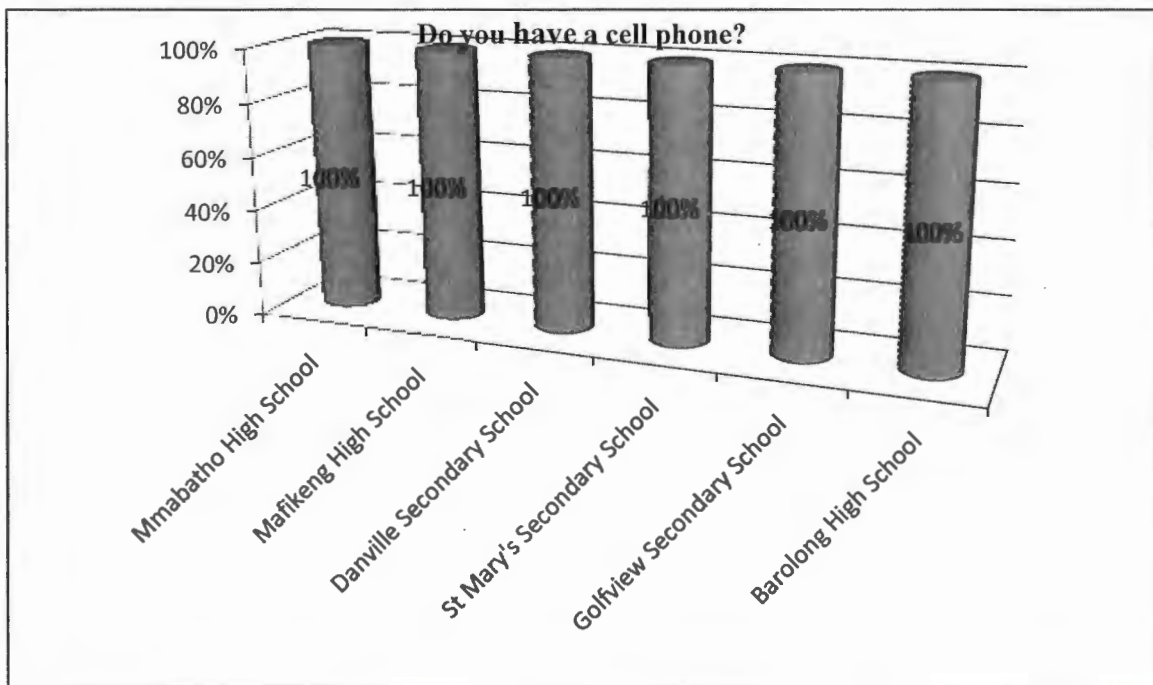


Figure 1 above indicates that all the different groups of learners in all schools which participated in the study reported that they all had cell phones.

Probes: Does it have internet access?

Figure 2

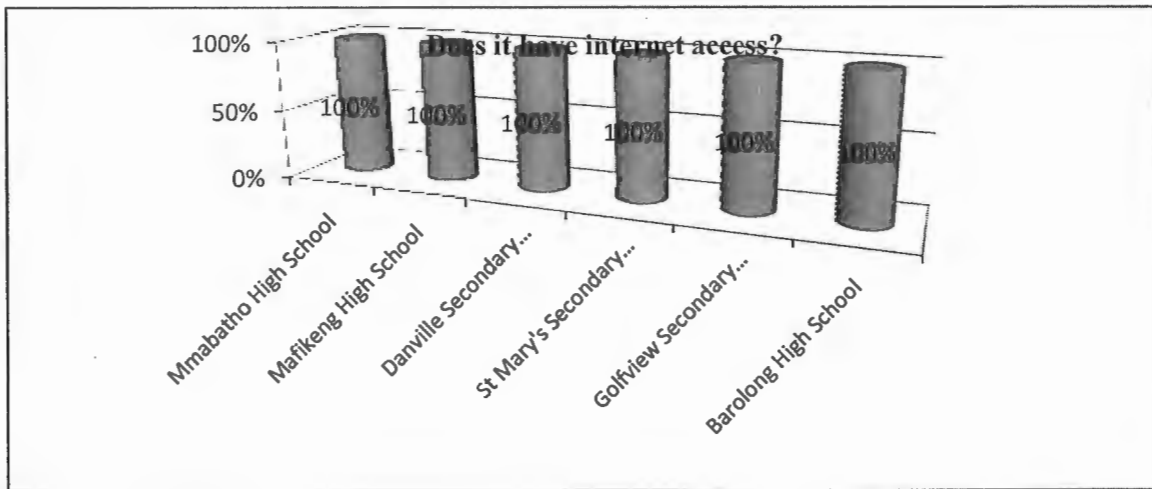


Figure 2: All learners indicated that their phones had Internet access. They said that, nobody would allow their parents to buy them a cell phone without Internet access. They said a cell phone without Internet was almost like a toy.

5.2.2 Do you know of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices?

Figure 3

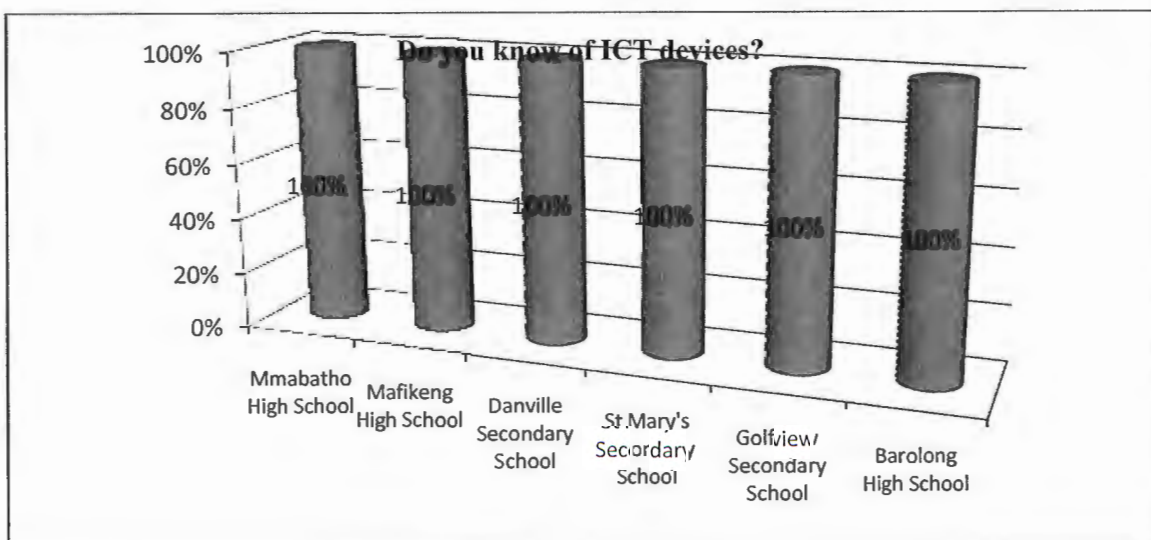


Figure 3: 100% of learners per school said they knew about Internet Communication Technology devices.

Probe: ICT devices I mean are:

Figure 4

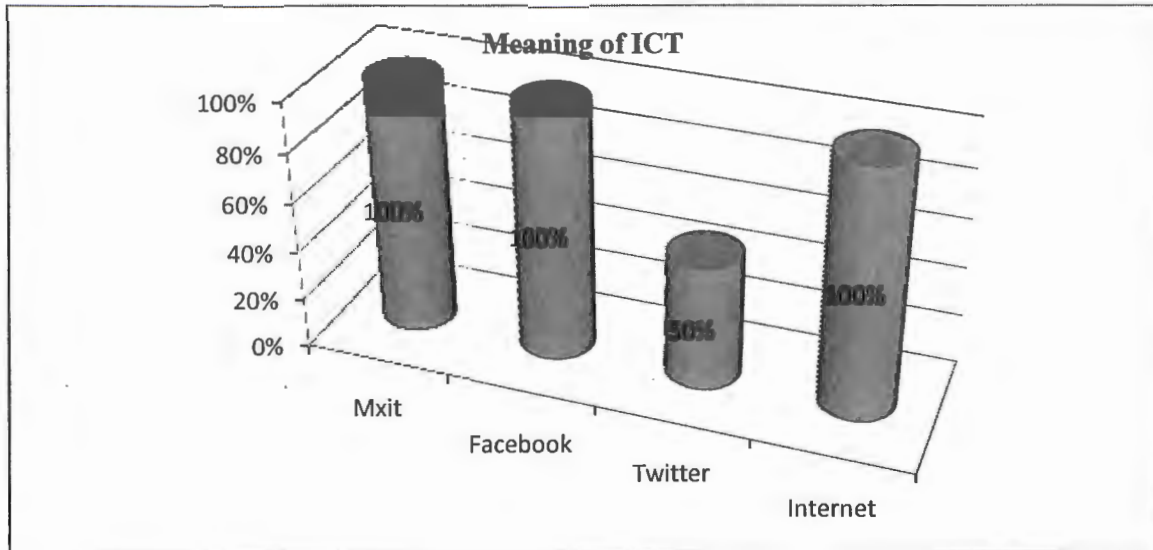


Figure 4: The above illustration indicates that all schools which participated in the study, reported that 100% learners per school agreed that they know MXit, Facebook and Internet and while 50% of learners in all schools said they did not know Twitter.

5.2.3 Are you able to use these ICT devices?

Figure 5

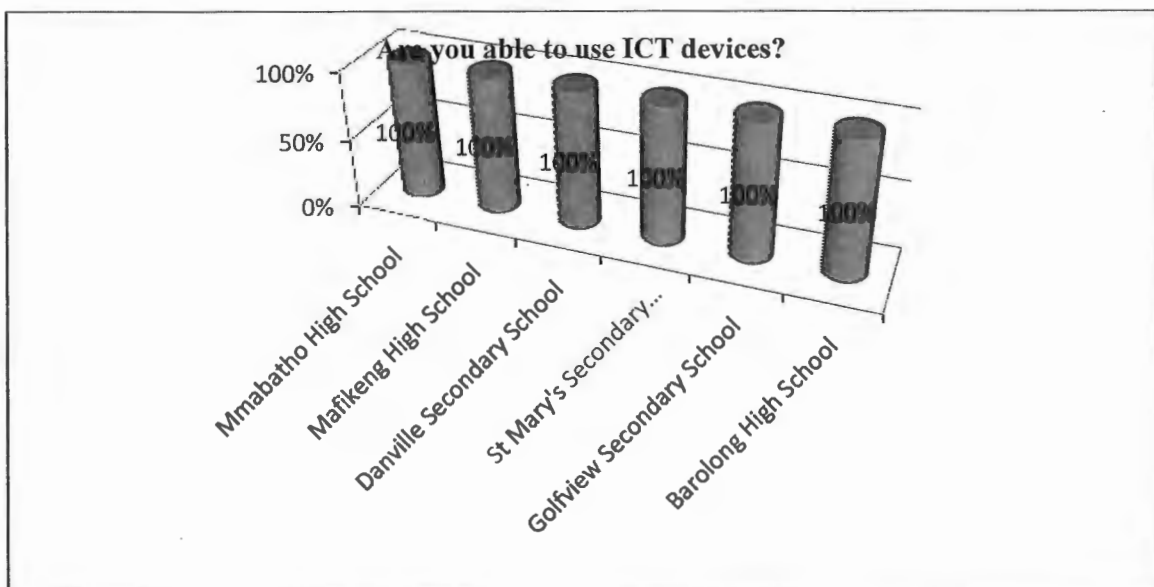


Figure 5 indicates that 100% learners per school who participated in the study said they knew how to use ICT devices.

Probe: What are you able to use them for? (Specify)

Figure 6

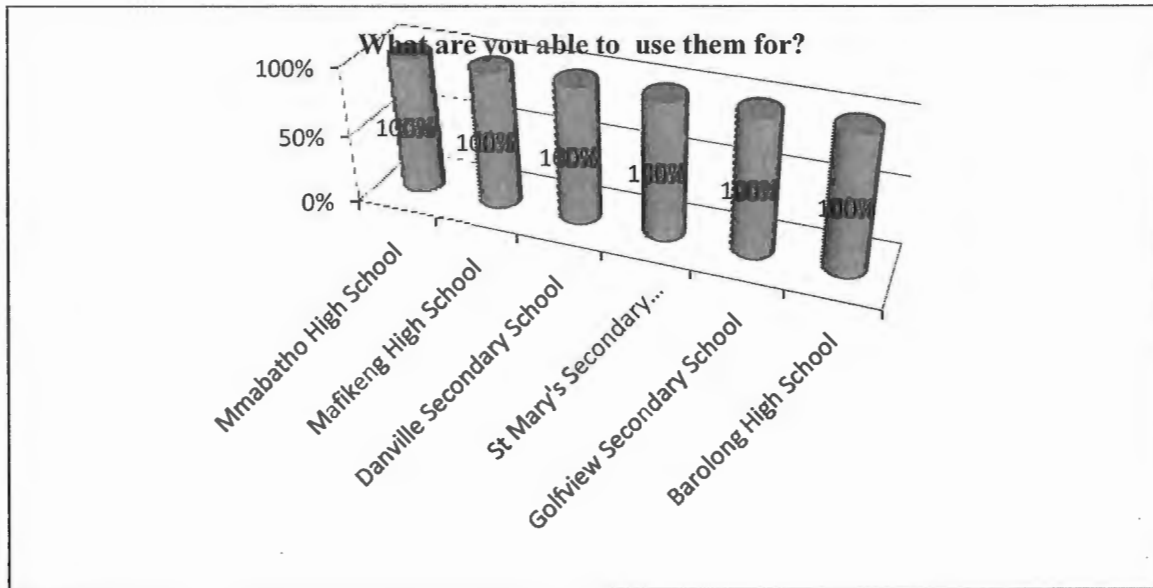


Figure 6 indicates that all learners said they used it for research and chatting with their families and friends.

What do you chat over?

- **MXit:** One learner said sometimes when she was unable to attend school on a particular day; her friends were able to make her aware on what was done at school on that day. Learners said it was very cheap to use MXit, as to send a Short Message Systems only cost them 2 cents.
- **Facebook:** The learners said it helped them to chat with friends mostly who are far away from them. They explained that, it was not cheap like MXit and it was less expensive when a person accessed it through Opera Mini than directly on Internet.
- **Internet:** The learners explained that they used it for research
- **Twitter:** The learners highlighted that Twitter was very expensive and they did not use it.

Do you have friends online?

Figure 7

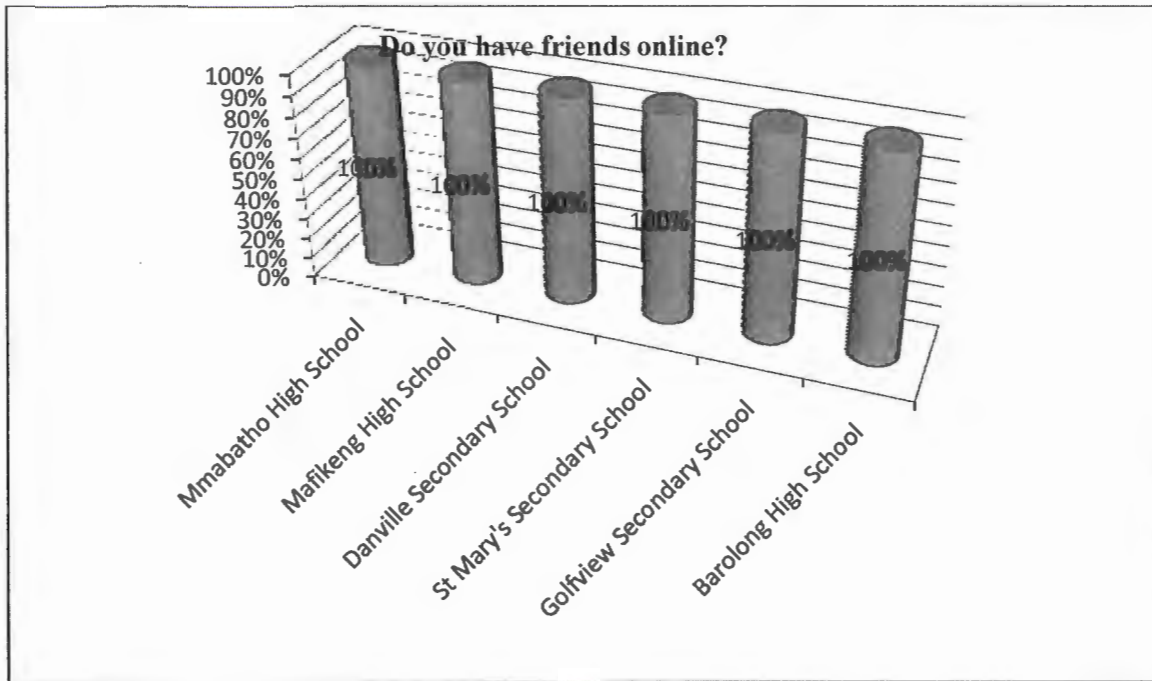


Figure 7 illustrate that 100% of learners who participated in the study said that, they did have friends online.

Are they people that you know?

Figure 8

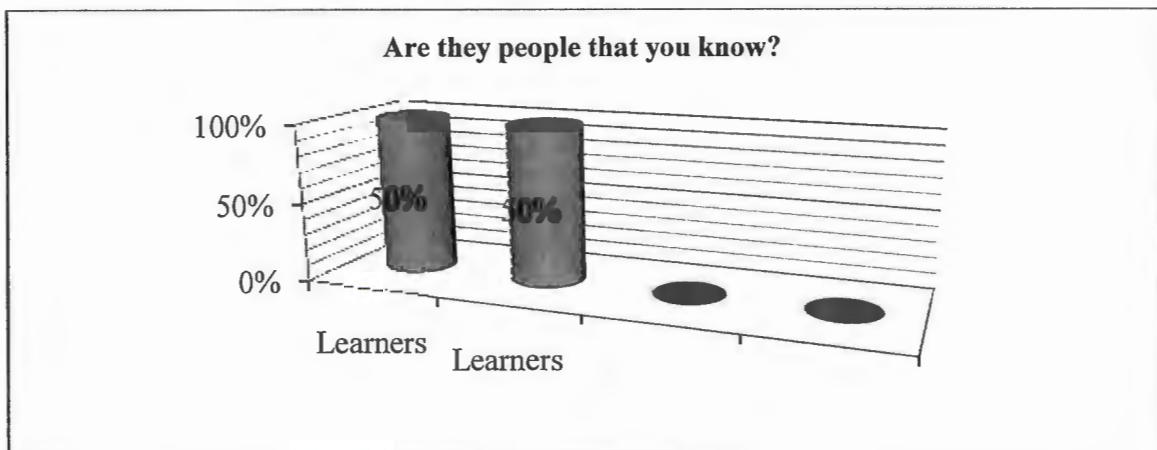


Figure 8 indicates that, 50% of learners had friends online that they did not know. Another 50% of learners said they mainly communicated with people that they knew online.

If yes, what do you chat about?

- The learners said they communicated about their feelings or their experiences. They said the most important thing that they did before they communicated with somebody that they did not know was to check the profile of the person. They said it helped them to know and understand the interest of the person.
- One learner said that she found negative comments on Toilet Social Network about herself from people she did not know. She said since she was a Pastor’s daughter, people commented that she pretends to be clean but in reality she was doing dirty things.
- Another learner said she did not prefer to write on Toilet Social Network because one person told her that, if another person found out that she wrote negative things about the person, that person could lay a charge.
- They said they chatted about life, everyday activities, latest events and home work’s.
- They all said they chatted about personal experiences, homework, advising each other. Boys liked to chat about girls and girls liked to chat about boys. Another learner said sometimes his parents thought he was crazy because he sometimes laughed out when he chatted with his friends. Another learner said he felt better chatting about his problems to a stranger than someone he knew because a person who knew him would be judging him from what they would have discussed.

5.2.4 Are you aware of the advantages of using these devices?

Figure 9

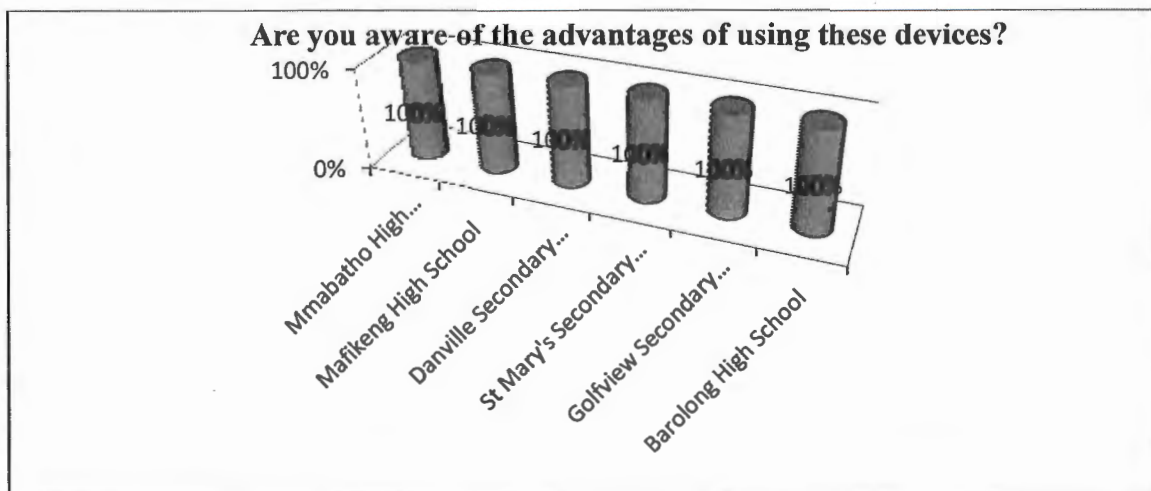


Figure 9: All learners from different schools mentioned that they were aware of the advantages. They said the devices helped them to share problems they experienced at school, with families and with their love lives.

Probes: Mention a positive scenario that you are aware of:

- One learner said that it had made life to be easy
- It helped to make people to know many people.
- Learners were able to save time and money by going to the library but they still used the internet on the phone.
- One learner mentioned that her friend who went to the tertiary the previous year was able to communicate with her on regular basis by updating her about courses and careers offered at University Johannesburg Campus.
- Another one said strangers who had various experiences in certain fields did help them by advising them on which career to choose.
- Reduced the costs of communication
- Another one said many people were able to know about his music
- They made communication to be easy and faster
- Facebook was able to update one about date of events
- Free, fast and a good way to keep contact with friends and to meet new people
- It helped them with research and school work
- Advertising events online was cheaper than advertising through the radio or newspaper.
- Access to conduct research on Internet without going to the library
- Facebook was able to remind people that they must not forget about a particular event.
- Facebook enabled people to track their long lost relatives. The additional advantage was that one could see the pictures of the person he/she was looking for. One learner mentioned that her family was looking for one relative whom they had not seen in a long time. She said through Facebook they were able to trace that person.
- Another learner who was affiliated to the gay organizations mentioned that through the ICTs he was able to get the latest information about the gay community.
- The other learner said one day they were writing a test and he and his friends were able to send each other answers in the examination room and that was the advantage brought by the advent of these ICTs.
- Through MXit, one was able to alert somebody about a danger which he/she was not aware of.
- One learner said he had registered with a news network and so he did not watch TV, instead he turned to his cell phone for news.

Do you think they have brought any positive change to our lives?

Figure 10

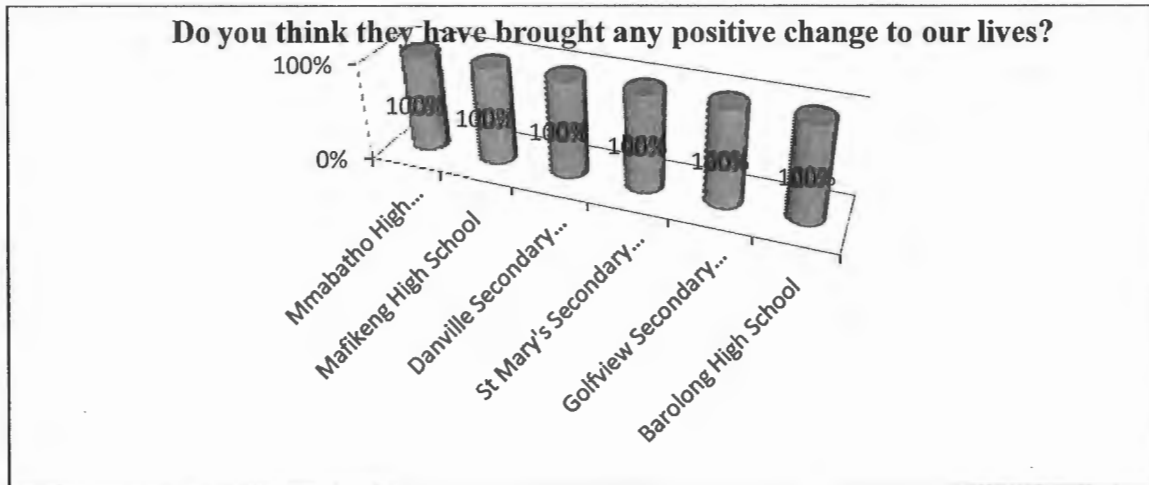


Figure 10 illustrates that 100% of learners per school agreed that ICT has brought many positive changes to their lives and it had made life to be more simple. One learner said the introduction of MXit and Facebook helped them a lot because during the recession everything became expensive so ICTs provided them with an alternative to making telephone calls directly.

5.2.5 Are you aware of any negative effect posed by these ICT devices? (Rape, pornography and kidnapping).

Figure 11

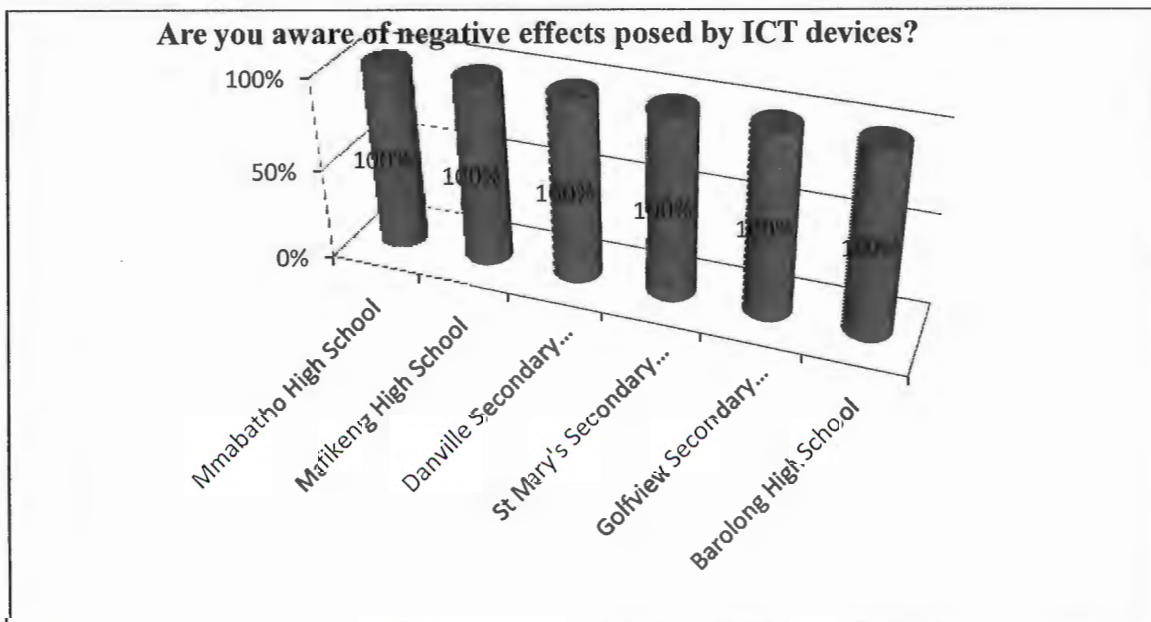


Figure 11 indicates that 100% of learners in all the participating schools agreed that they knew about the negative effects posed by ICT.

Probes: Mention any negative scenario that you know of:

- One learner said the disadvantage about Facebook was that some people might access your personal information and use it negatively for their personal interests without the knowledge of the user.
- The disadvantage of chatting with the strangers was that sometimes a young person might be chatting with a serial killer who only wanted to kill him/her.
- When one chats a lot, that can damage the buttons of the phone
- Some learners did not sleep due to this MXit, they chatted throughout the night and only slept for two hours per night. They ended up feeling sleepy at school.
- 50% of learners indicated that they used to chat throughout the night but then they had stopped that behaviour.
- One learner confessed that she chatted the whole night and the following day she became so impatient, tired and sleepy at school.
- Another learner said that boys used to ask her what she was wearing at night, can she post them her naked picture or can they have her for a night.
- Chatting continuously with phone requires the battery to be charged and that damages the phone.
- Some young people were so addicted to these ICTs such that they were able to concentrate on the phone for 5 hours.
- Learners pretended to their parents they were asleep when they were not, in the middle of the night they logged on to MXit to chat with friends
- They said the reason for them to chat late was that in the afternoon and in the evening they were busy with domestic chores and their school work hence they logged on late to the ICTs.
- The other learners said they used contract phones which were fully paid by their parents on a monthly basis and they were not prepared to state how much the contract cost.
- Another learner who was doing Grade 12 said he failed Grade 8 and he squarely blamed MXit and Facebook. He said he used to sleep at 03:00 and 04:00 and that made him not to be interested in his studies.
- The other learner said his addiction to MXit and Facebook led him to damage his eyes. He said presently he uses spectacles because of the constant exposure to the phone light.
- ICTs make people to lie about themselves or pretend to be different from the way they were. Old people would pretend to be young whereas they were too old.
- They all agreed that they had seen pornographic images from the phone especially from school.
- Learners from St Mary's agreed that there were learners who distributed the pornographic material at school the previous year. They said that it was images of the learners from the school and they were people known to everybody.

- The other one said sometimes when a boy and a girl were involved in a relationship when they had sexual intercourse they both agree to record the incident. When they separated the boy circulated these images to everybody at school as revenge.
- The other girl said there was this boy who proposed her through Facebook. She said, she told him that she was not interested in becoming involved with him, all she was interested in was only in chatting with him online. To her surprise the boy kept on sending her his nude pictures and a picture of his erect private parts. The girl said on her Facebook status she did not hide her telephone numbers, this boy used them to stalk her.
- They said after they had seen these pornographic pictures of their colleagues they ended up losing respect for the individuals.
- ICT's escalates the rate of human trafficking and kidnapping
- People become addicted to pornography
- Cyber bully and date rape always occurred due to ICTs.
- ICT's were addictive and sometimes they took young people's time when they had to study
- Another learner said her friend was raped (after she got a blackout) at a party and the culprit recorded the incident on the phone. Then later this rape was circulated in the community through the use of Facebook.
- She also said her cousin used to sell pornographic pictures through Facebook and his account was terminated by Facebook managers.
- They said some guys downloaded girl pictures that they found on Facebook then later boasted that those girls were their girlfriends.
- Learners mentioned that they were aware of the incident that happened at Jules High School.
- They mentioned that many learners in their school had cell phones which possessed pornographic images. The girls said that these images were possessed by boys not girls. They all agreed that they knew that pornography was addictive and once one became exposed to such images they could be addicted.
- Another learner said according to her perspective pornography was dirty and what was circulated on pornography was disgusting. She said she felt pity for the poor girls who were the victims of porn stars.
- Another learner said young people did not want to discuss their problems with their parents or sisters. They relied on their online friends. This eventually created problems for them because they were misguided by their online friends.
- One learner spoke about an incident of kidnapping that happened at unit 8 Mmabatho. She said a 14-year-old girl used to chat through MXit with a Nigerian International guy who was in Johannesburg. She said one day this guy and the girl agreed that the girl would visit him in Johannesburg. Then the guy came to Mafikeng to collect the girl and she never told anyone at home that she was leaving with this guy. She packed the bags and joined the guy who was waiting at Unit 7, Star Shop. On arrival in Johannesburg the

guy changed and it became a kidnapping. His friends called the family of the girl and requested ransom money. They raped the girl while they were waiting for the ransom money. The parents eventually paid the money and the girl was released.

- When one registers on MXit or Facebook, one is required to post his or her contact numbers. Then that gave criminals an advantage to stalk their victims.
- They said MXit and Facebook were consuming most of their time because when one was supposed to study, his/her friend would chat about a particular girl and the conversation would proceed throughout the night until the other one goes to sleep.
- They said they did not prefer to chat directly to their friends but they rather preferred to chat online. They said when one was online there were many things to be discussed. They said conversation online just comes, they said there were so many things to be discussed.
- They said girls used online chatting sometimes to dump their partners. They said girls did not prefer to reject the boy in person but rather resorted to MXit or Facebook.
- They said online communication was a good space for them to express their feelings and emotions.
- Another learner said his friend spent a lot of time on pornography via Internet. He said he browsed different pornographic sites and he always thought about it.
- Another girl confessed that she was addicted to MXit and Facebook, she said she was unable to cope if she did not chat on her phone.
- The girls said they were addicted in such a way that even when they were in a bath washing, they were able to chat
- Girls said that mostly boys were requesting them to send them their nude pictures through Facebook. The other boy said girls sometimes would request for airtime from them and they would say in return 'I will send you my nude picture'.
- The learners spoke about the Jules High School incident; they said they were used to such incidents in their school. They said when it was sports days or when there were huge events at their school, some learners took a chance by hiding themselves at the toilets or behind the classrooms and had sex. They then record the incident and distribute it to school. Then sometimes the girl claims to be raped.
- The other girl learner said sometimes when the teacher was not in class, the learners, a boy and a girl would kiss and cuddle each other, then other learners would record the incident into their phones. Sometimes this would be a girl to girl; they would kiss each other at the toilets and circulate these pictures through their phones to the entire school.
- The other learner said one boy and a girl went behind the block of classes, they then had sex. They thought there was nobody who saw them only to find that there was someone who followed them. This learner recorded the incident and circulated the images at school.

Have these ICT devices ever affected you personally negative?

Figure 12

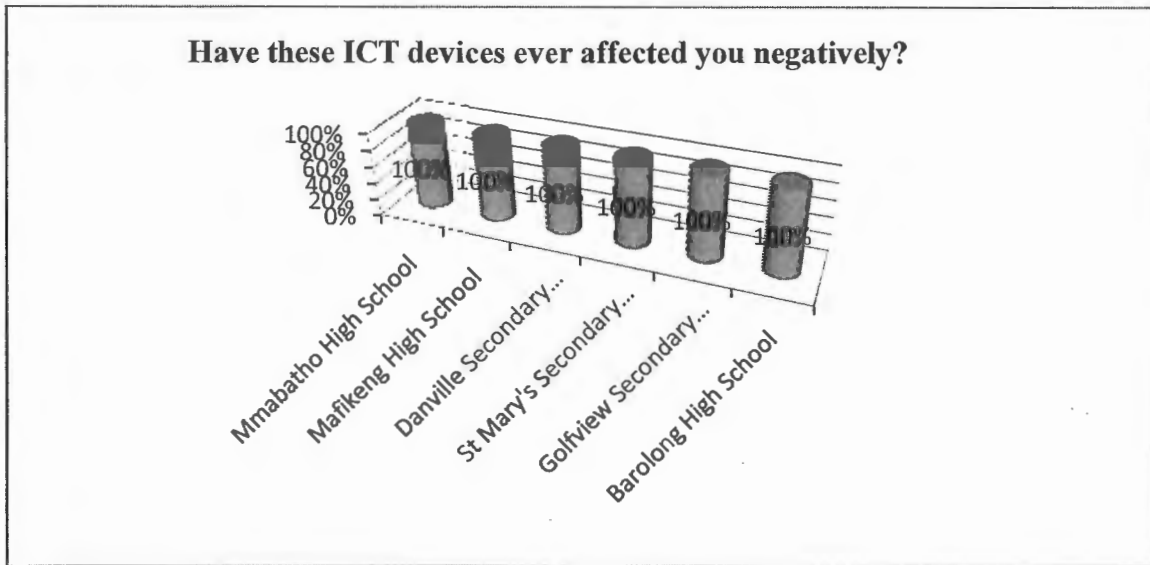


Figure 12 illustrates that 100% of learners from the different schools agreed that ICTs did affect them negatively in their life. Another learner said on her Facebook status there was an old man who was always nagging her. She said one day she received his message and he said to her “can I have you only for one night”. She said she refused and later when she checked the age of this man, he was 49 years old. Another learner mentioned that, four years ago her friend downloaded her picture from her phone and did not tell her and she did not think that she would use it. To her surprise she learnt that her picture had been circulated around the school to people she did not want to see her pictures.

5.2.6 The way you use your cell phone, would you say you are using it responsibly?

Figure 13

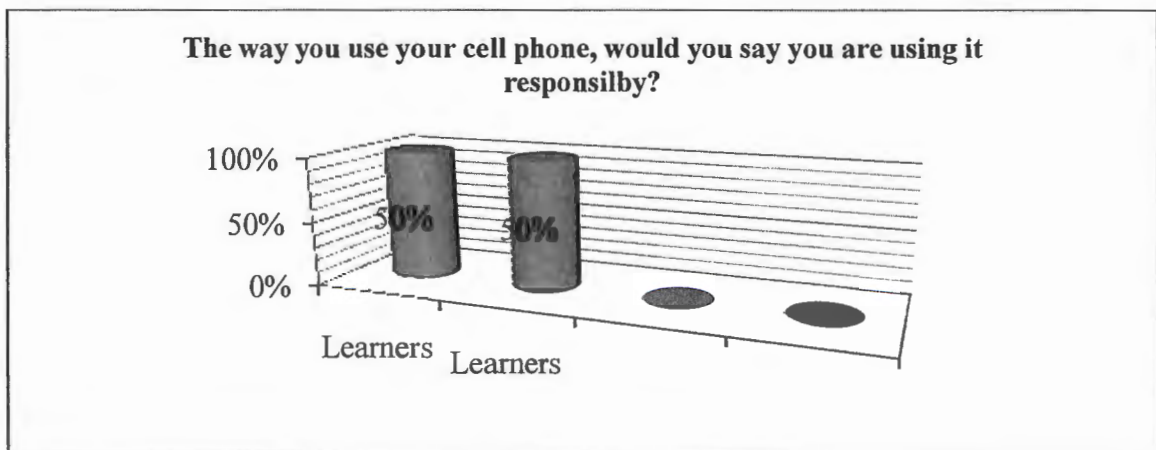


Figure 13: 50% of learners said they were using their cell phones responsibly and 50% said they were not using them responsibly because they sometimes did not do their homework on time as they concentrated on their cell phones.

Probe: Would it be acceptable to both your parents and teachers?

Figure 14

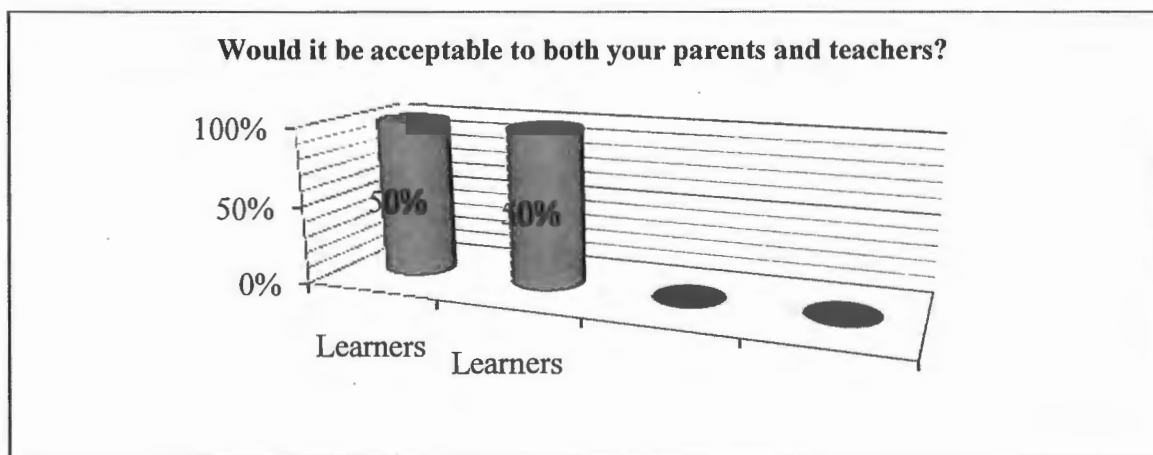


Figure 14 illustrates that 50% of learners agreed that would be acceptable to both their parents and teachers, and 50% said it would not be acceptable to their parents and teachers.

5.2.7 Have you ever seen any pornographic images on the cell phone?

Figure 15

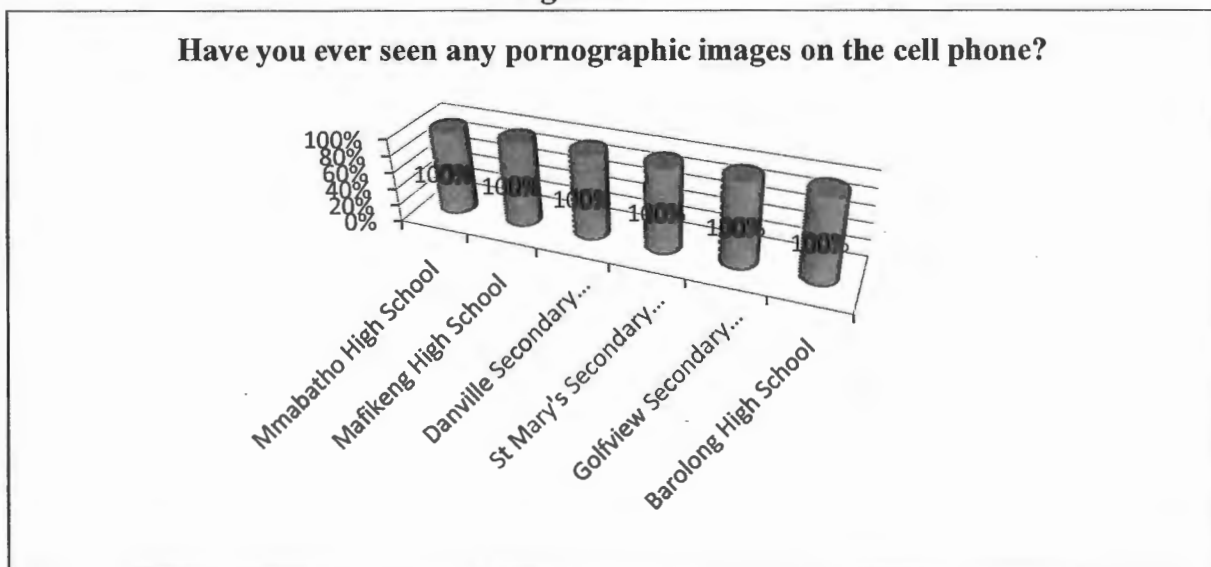


Figure 15 illustrates that 100% of learners from the schools which participated in the study said they had seen pornographic images from the cell phones.

Probes: Do you and your friends circulate such images at school or out of school?

Figure 16

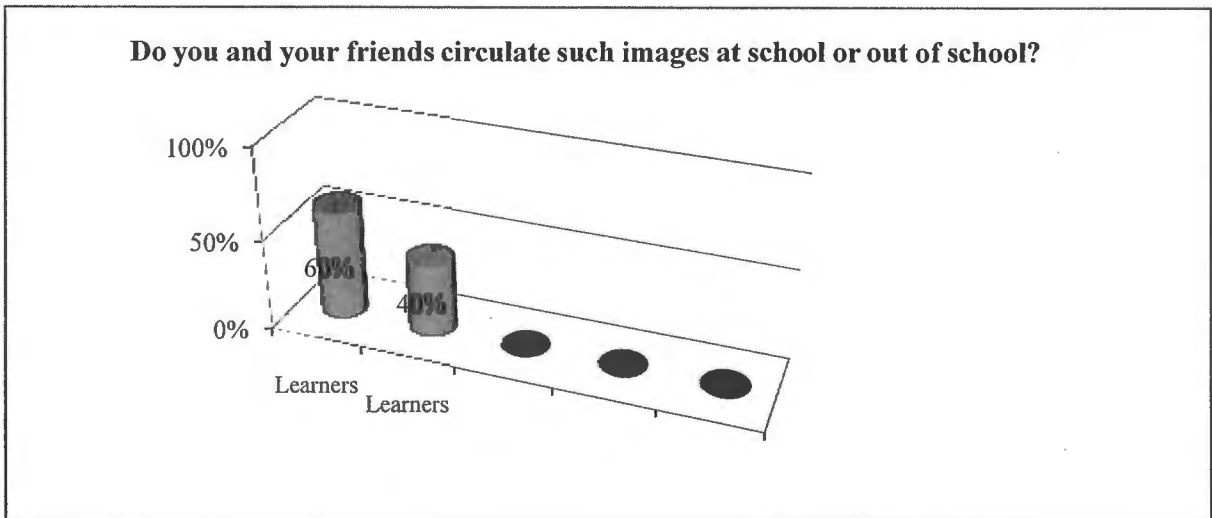


Figure 16 indicates that 60% of learners did circulate pornographic images to their friends and 40% said they had never circulated such images to their friends.

5.2.8 Do your parents have access to your cell phone?

Figure 17

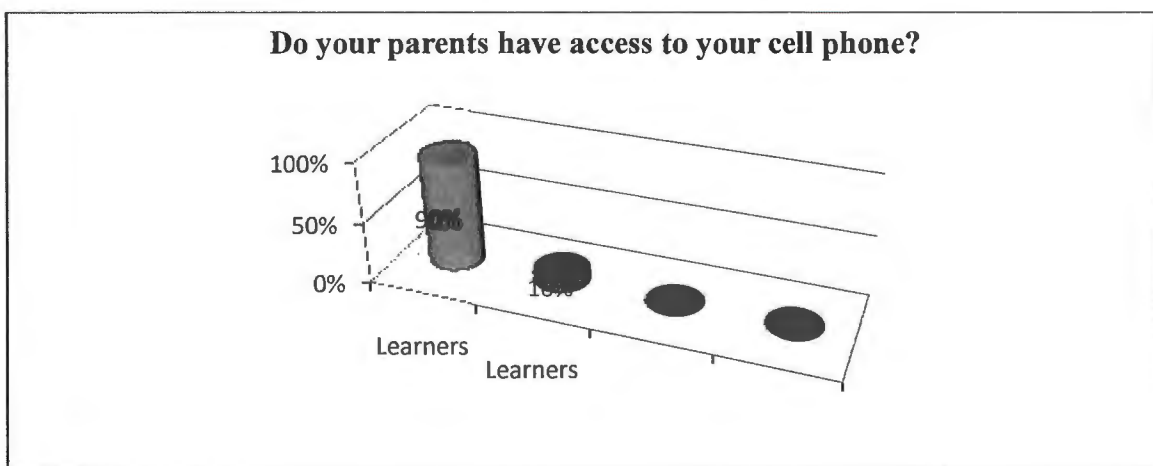


Figure 17 indicates that 90% of learners said that their parents did not have access to their phones. The reason was that they did not understand MXit and Facebook. They said they had passwords which blocked their parents from accessing their phones. 10% of learners said they

did not have a problem for their parents to access their phones. They said they were able to chat in front of their parents and that was because they did not have anything from hide to their parents.

Probes: Do they know how to use these ICT devices?

Figure 18

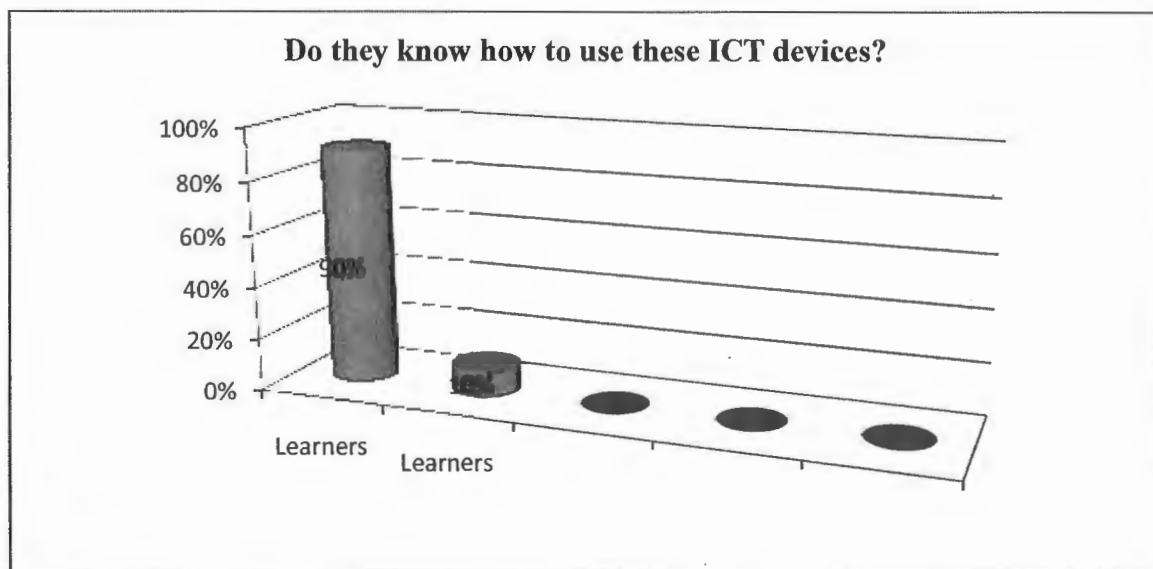


Figure 18 illustrates that 90% of learners said their parents did not know how to use ICTs and 10% of learners said their parents knew how to use the ICTs.

Would you allow them to see what you access with your cell phone?

Figure 19

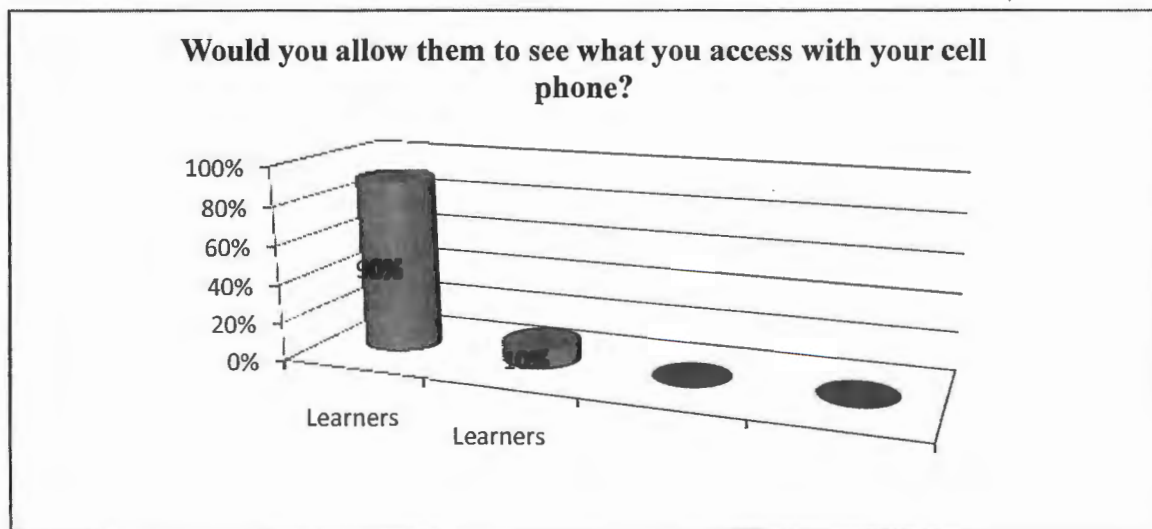


Figure 19 illustrates that 90% of learners would not allow their parents to access their phones, while 10% of learners said they would allow their parents to have access to their cell phones.

5.2.9 Do you take your cell phone to school with you?

Figure 20

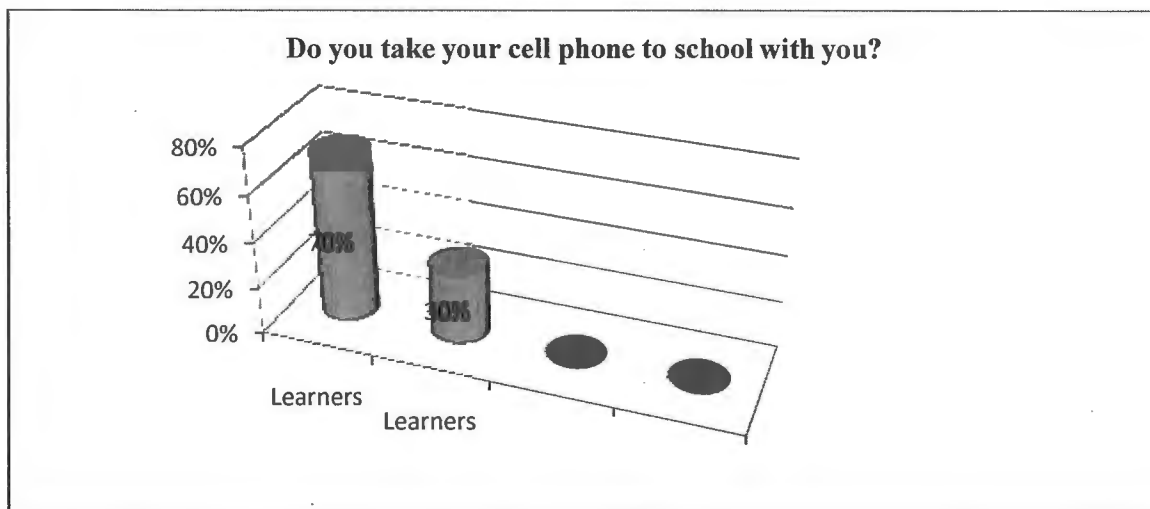


Figure 20 illustrates that 70% of learners said they take their cell phones to school, while 30% of learners said they did not take their cell phones to school.

Probes: Does it interfere with the schooling processes?

Figure 21

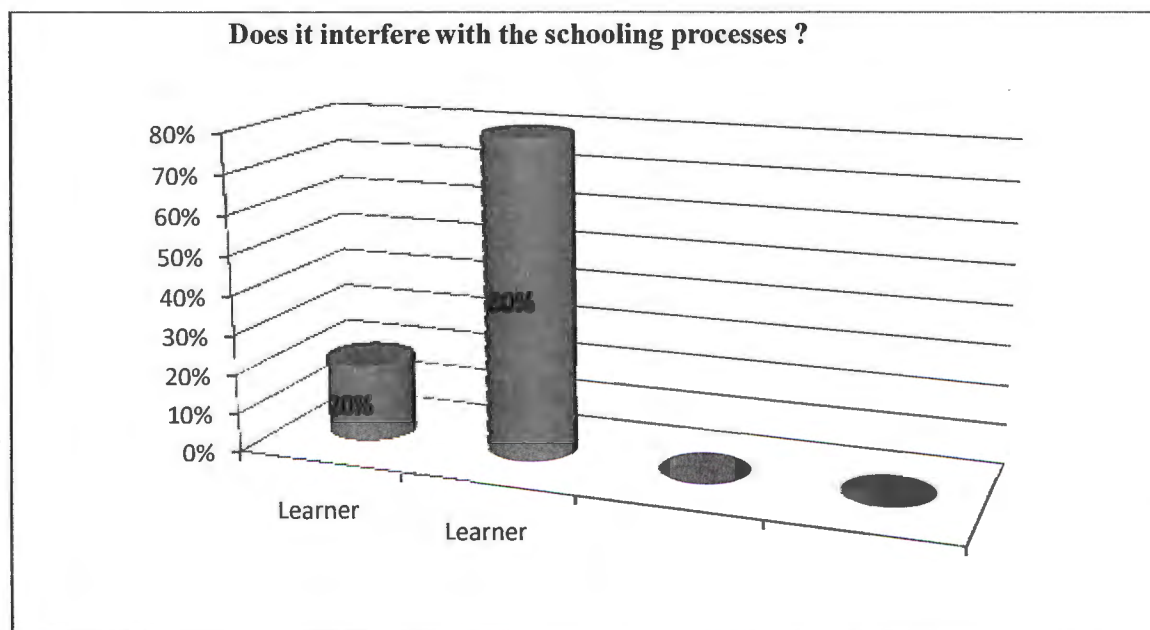


Figure 21 indicates that 80% of learners said cell phones did not interfere with the schooling process and 20% of learners said they did interfere with the schooling process.

5.2.10 Are the teachers affected by the cell phone use at school?

Figure 22

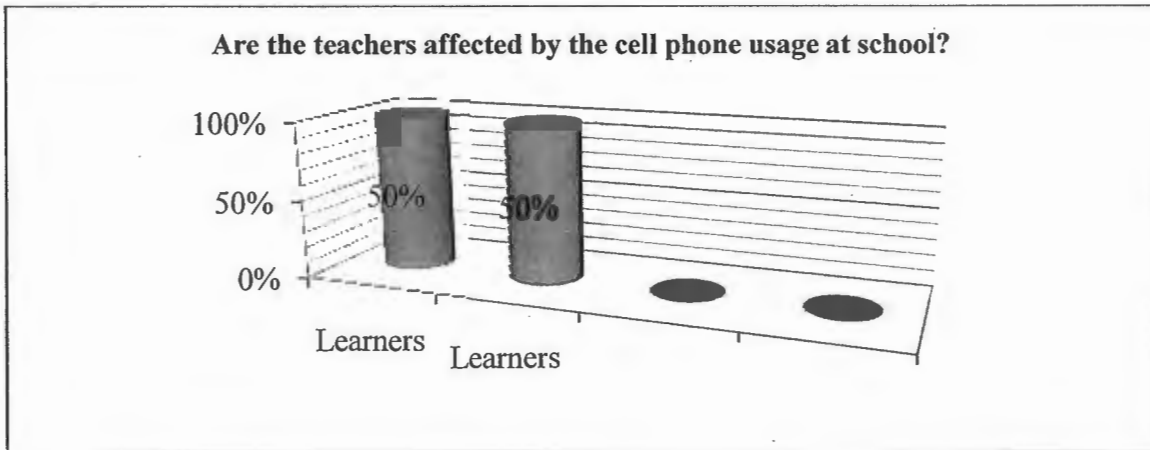


Figure 22. Learners were asked whether the teachers were affected by the use of cell phones at school. 50% of learners said they were definitely affected by cell phones. 50% said they were not affected by cell phones.

5.3 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

QUESTIONS:

5.3.1 Do you have a cell phone?

Figure 1

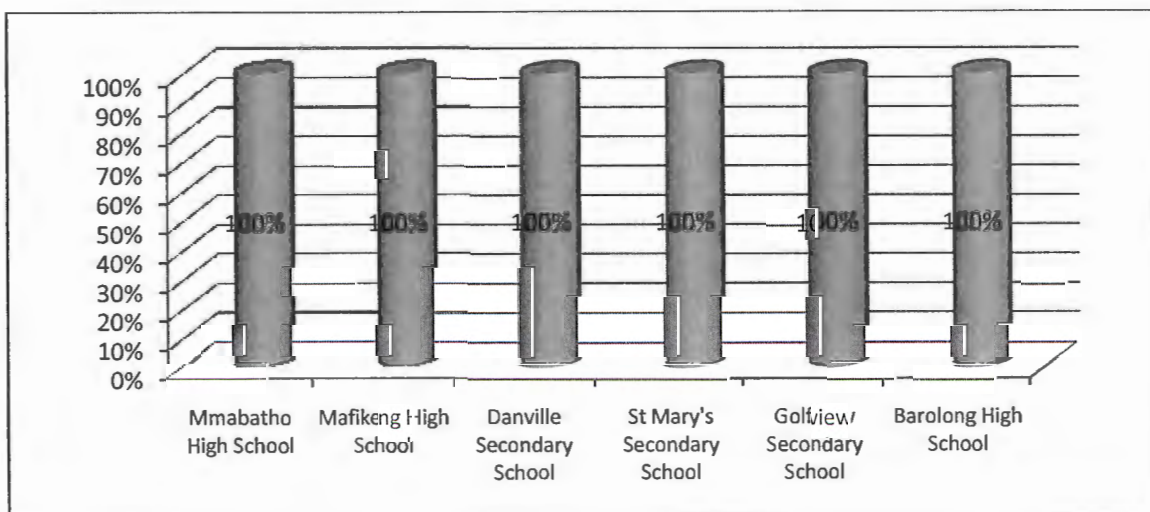


Figure 1 illustrates that all teachers who participated in the study agreed that they had cell phones.

Probes: Does it have internet access?

Figure 2

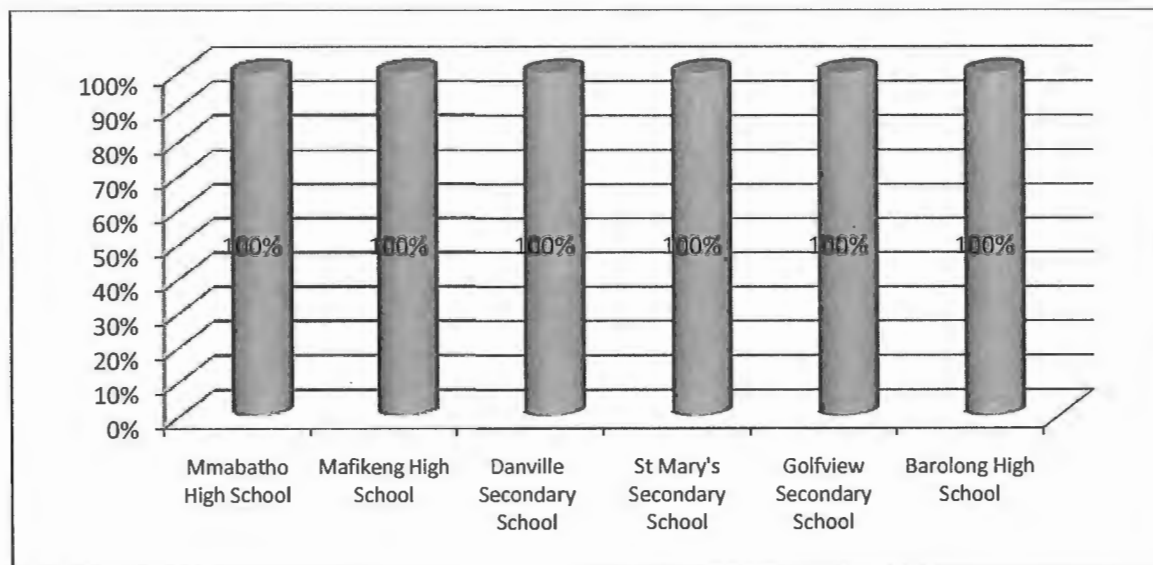


Figure 2 indicates that 100% of teachers said their cell phones had access to internet.

5.3.2 Do you know of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices?

Figure 3

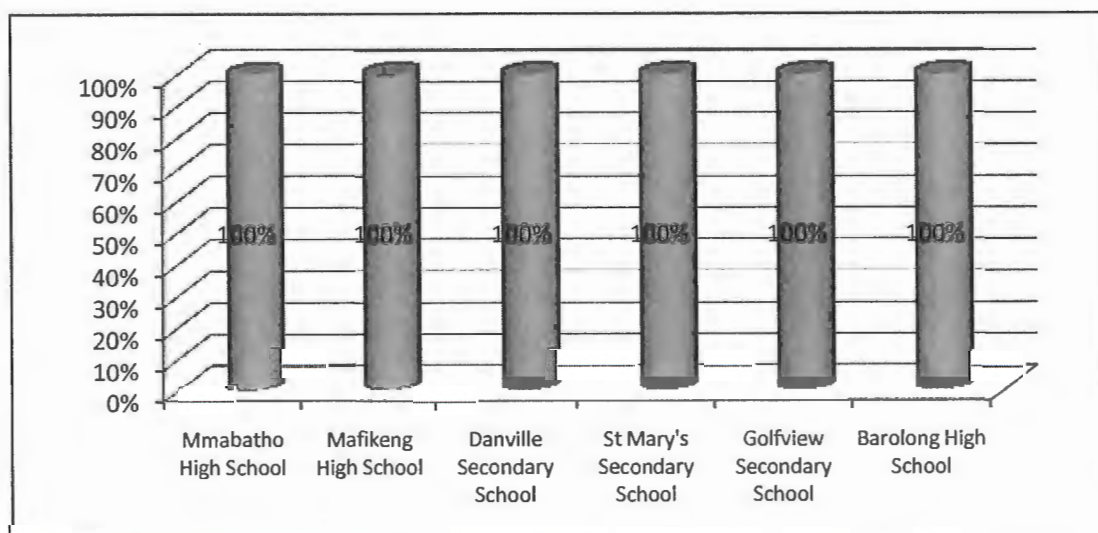


Figure 3 illustrates that 100% of teachers agreed that they knew the ICT devices.

Probe: By ICT devices I mean MXit, Facebook, Twitter, and Internet

Figure 4

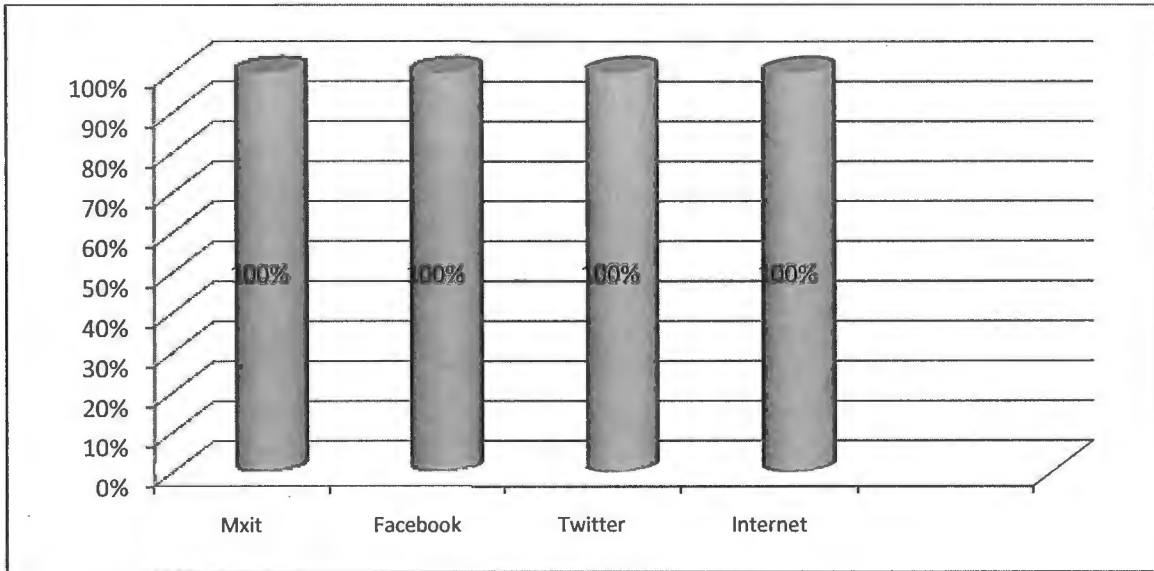


Figure 4 illustrate that 100% teachers agreed that they knew the ICTs devices stated above.

5.3.3 Are you able to use these ICT devices?

Figure 5

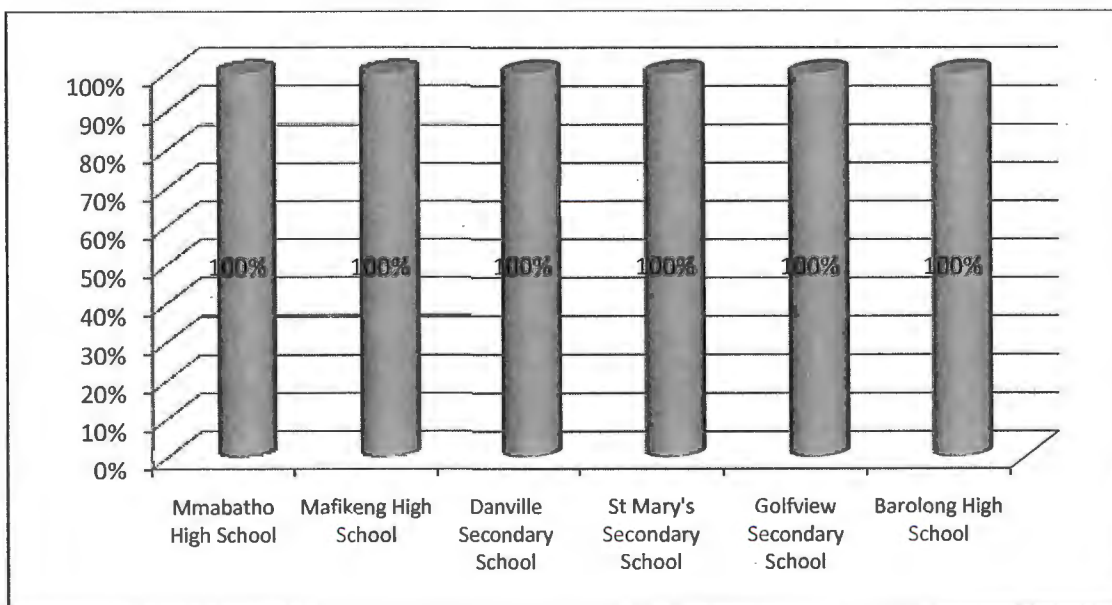


Figure 5. 100% teachers in all participating said they were able to use these ICT devices.

Probe: If yes, mention what you use it for?

- MXit: they use it for chatting
- Facebook: they use it for chatting
- Twitter: they use it for chatting
- Internet: they use it for research and internet banking

40% of the younger teachers said they were able to use all the ICT devices while the 60% of older generation of teachers said they were only able to use internet. The younger generation said the advantage with the ICT devices were that one was able to save costs when calling during the day.

5.3.4 Do you think that there are any positive advantages for the learners in using these devices?

Figure 6

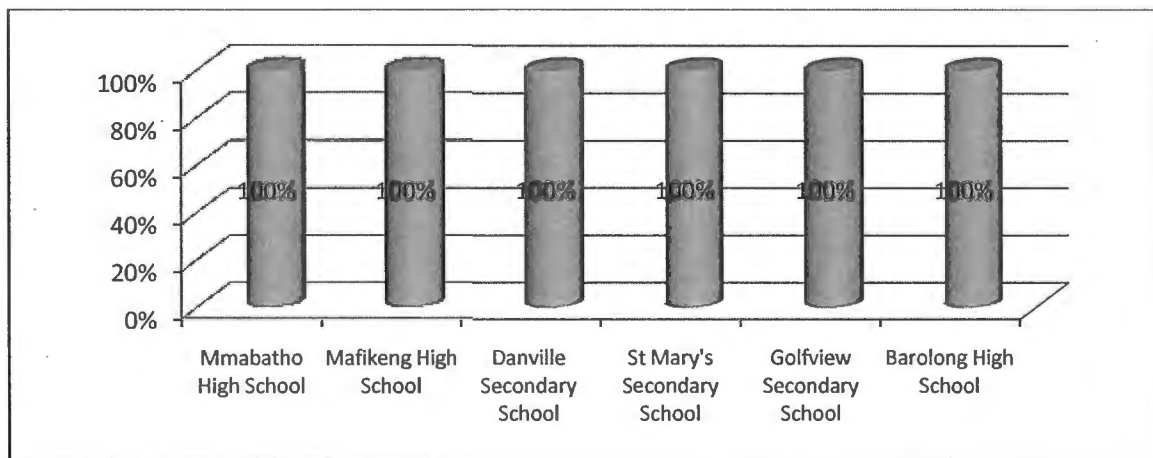


Figure 6 illustrate that 100% teachers per school cagreed that these devices had brought positive advantages to the learners because whenever they were given assignments, they were able to conduct research through their cell phones.

Probes: Mention a positive scenario that can benefit the learners? (If there are any)

- Teachers mentioned that cell phone Internet saves time for learners rather than going to the library. One teacher mentioned that last year she tasked learners to write the biography of President Jacob Zuma, and learners researched it through the cell phone and finished the assignment quickly.
- Another teacher mentioned that he gave learners an assignment to investigate why Mr Cyril Ramaphosa was a successful businessman. He said learners managed to use their

cell phones to research about Mr Ramaphosa and all submitted a good and correct assignment.

Another teacher said if they wanted learners not to open 'illegal' sites, they should create the 'my class' site, whereby teachers would be able to discuss amongst themselves on how to tackle problems they experience on different subjects.

Do you think they have brought any positive change to the learner's lives?

Figure 7

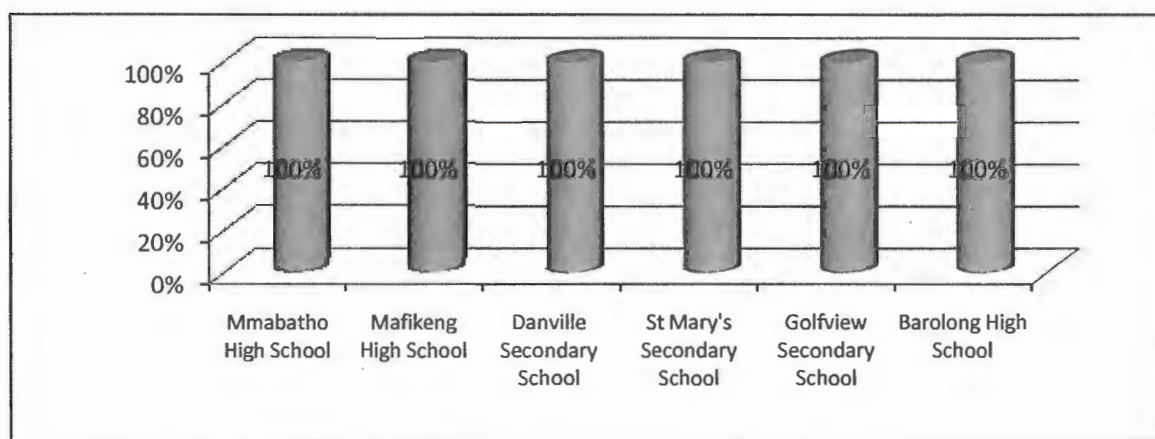


Figure 7 illustrates that 100% teachers per school said if they were correctly used, they had brought positive change to our lives.

5.3.5 Are you aware of any negative effect posed by these ICT devices to the learners? (Rape, pornography and kidnapping).

Figure 8

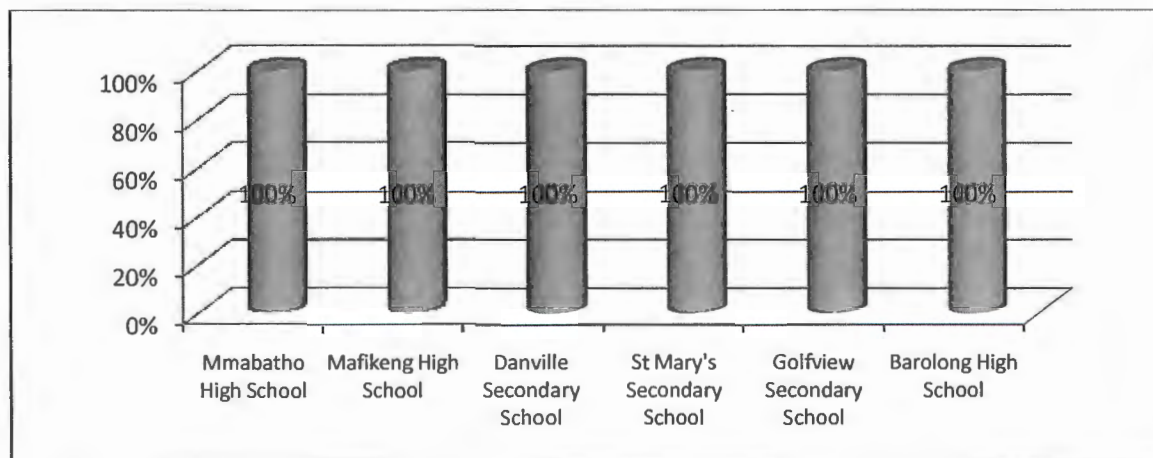


Figure 8 indicates that 100% of teachers agreed that they were aware of the negative effect of ICT devices.

Probes: Mention any negative scenario that you know of? (If there are any)

- During exam time, if learners wrote the exam before another school they sometimes circulated answers to other learners through Mxit and SMS telling other learners about the content of the question paper. It enabled the other learners to prepare specifically for that particular question.
- Another teacher said he knew of an incident whereby learners during the break went to the toilets and had sex and there was another learner recording the incident through the cell phone and those images were circulated in school.

Has these ICT devices ever affected you personally in a negative way?

Figure 9

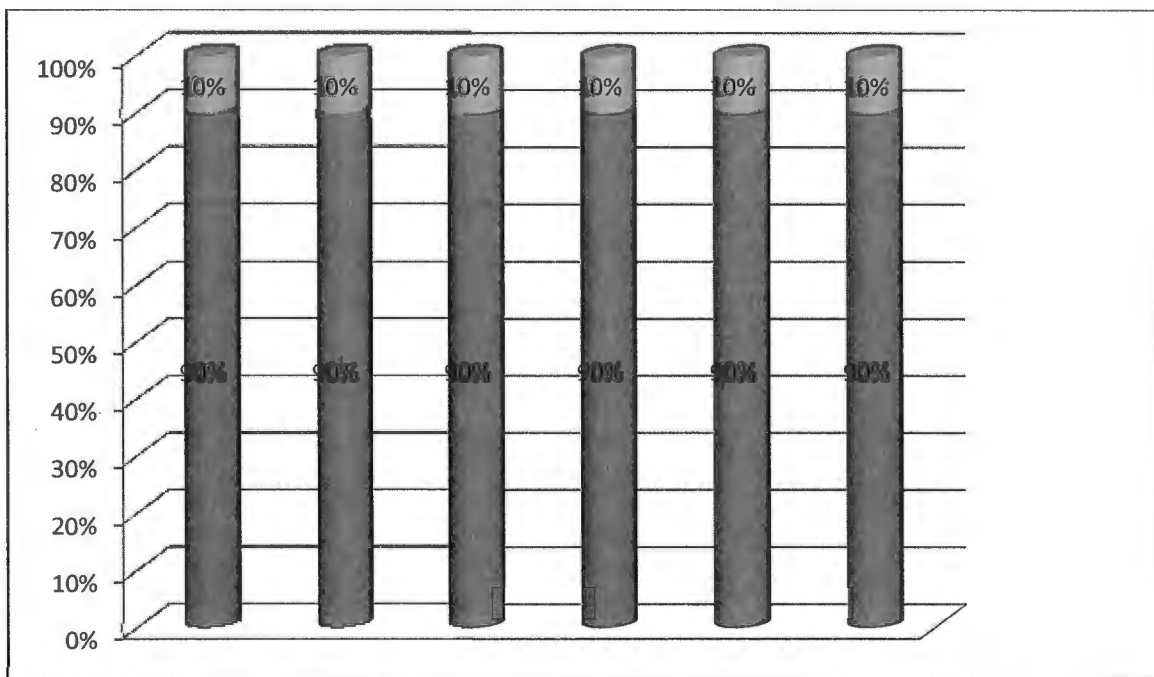


Figure 9 indicates that 10% of teachers highlighted that they were threatened by strangers on Facebook. 90% said they had never been negatively affected by these ICT devices.

5.3.6 Do you think these learners are safe as they use their cell phones?

Figure 10

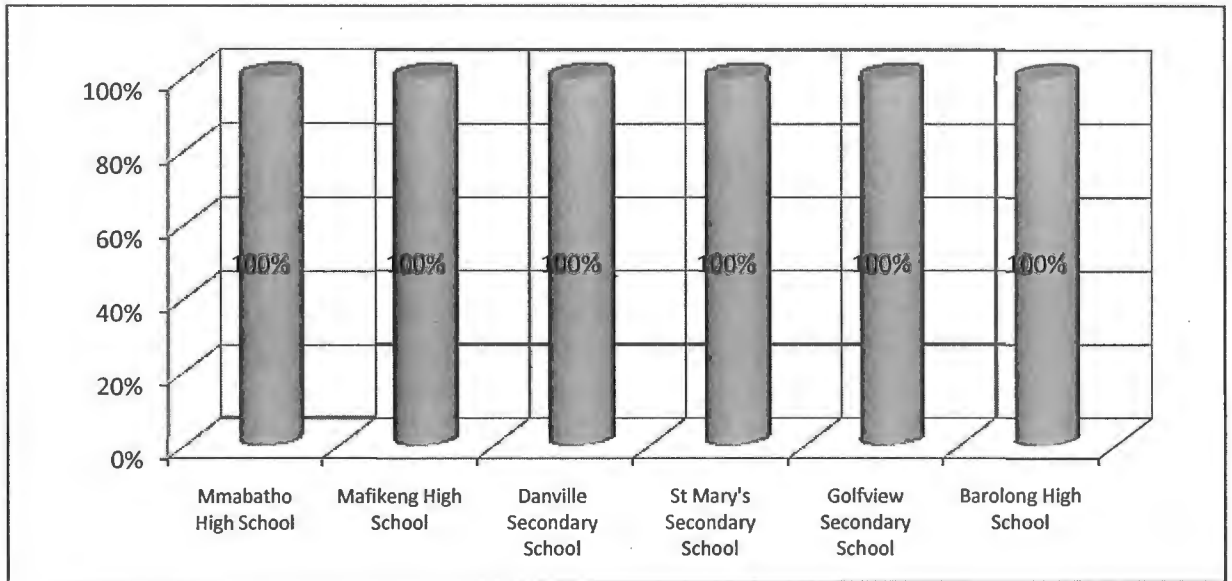


Figure 10 indicates that 100% of teachers per school highlighted that learners were not safe when using these cell phones because they might be kidnapped by strangers.

Probes: Does the school allow them to use cell phones at school?

Figure 11

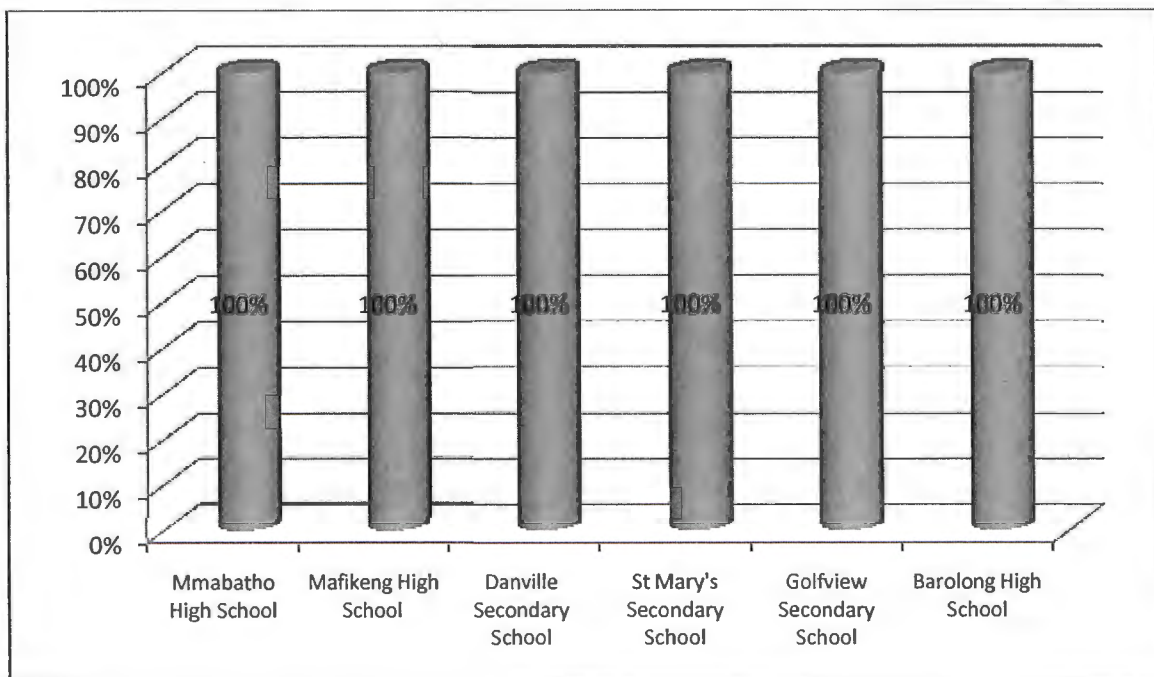


Figure 11 illustrate that 100% of teachers agreed that learners were not allowed to bring cell phones to school.

5.3.7 Are you able to monitor them when they use cell phones?

Figure 12

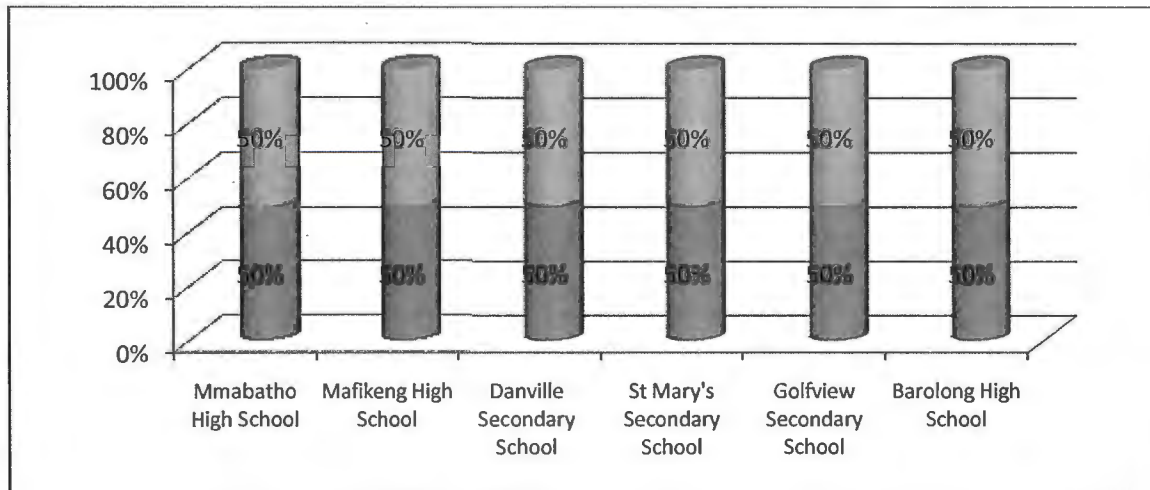


Figure 12 illustrates that 50% of teachers were able to monitor learners' use of cell phones while 50% of teachers said they were unable to monitor the use of cell phones by the learners. This was because learners were able to hide their cell phones and teachers would be unable to know who had one and who did not have.

5.3.8 Does your school have a cell phone policy?

Figure 13

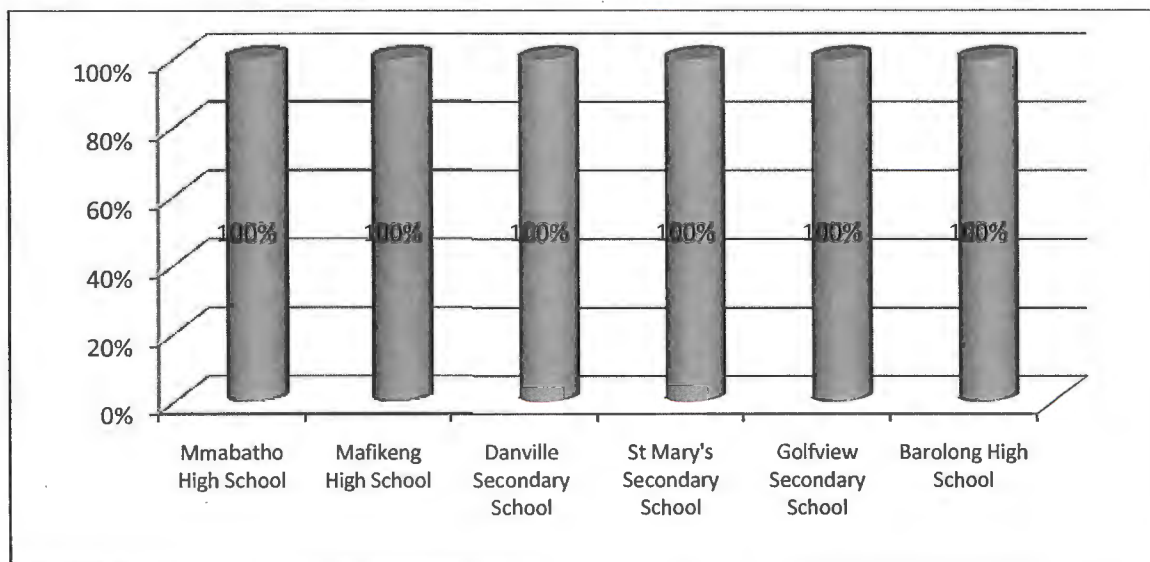


Figure 13 indicates that 100% of teachers agreed that they had cell phone policies in their respective schools. They said if a learner was found with the cell phone at school, it was confiscated by teachers and the learner would pay R200, 00 to release it at the end of the quarter.

- Another teacher said the previous year they were able to collect 17 cell phones. He said the money went straight to the coffers of the school.

Probes: Is the policy effective to controlling the use of cell phones?

Figure 14

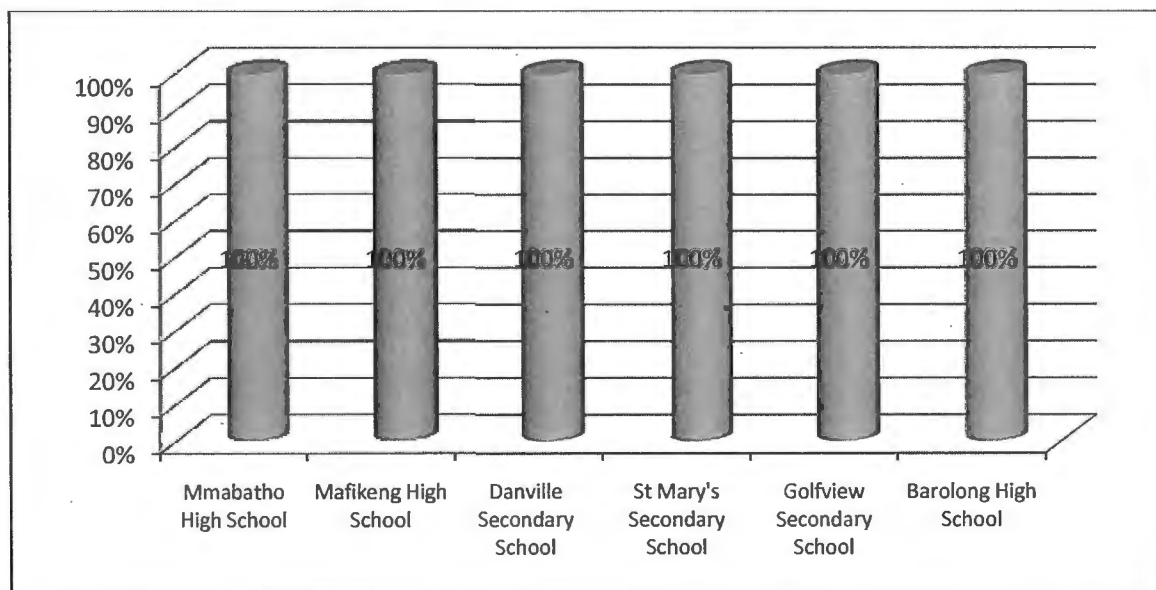


Figure 14 illustrates that 100% of teachers said that the cell phone policy in their respective schools was effective.

5.3.9 Suggest ways how learners can use their cell phones at school

- Learners who had serious reasons in using their cell phones at school should write letters requesting for permission from the principal.
- The teachers suggested that Department of Education must come up with a national legislation on cell phones.
- Intercom systems must be installed in all schools, so that when parents wanted to call the school and pass the message to their children, the principal would be able to call the learner at that specific class to come to the office.
- Implementation of policies was the problem; some schools implemented their policies while others did not have the policies.

- Another teacher suggested that parents should at least have a safe at home. He said that parents must collect the phones at 07:00 pm and lock them inside. Then release them on the following day after school, this was because learners slept late chatting through MXit with friends. These cell phones delayed them from doing their homework.

5.4 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

QUESTIONS:

5.4.1 Do you have a cell phone?

Figure 1

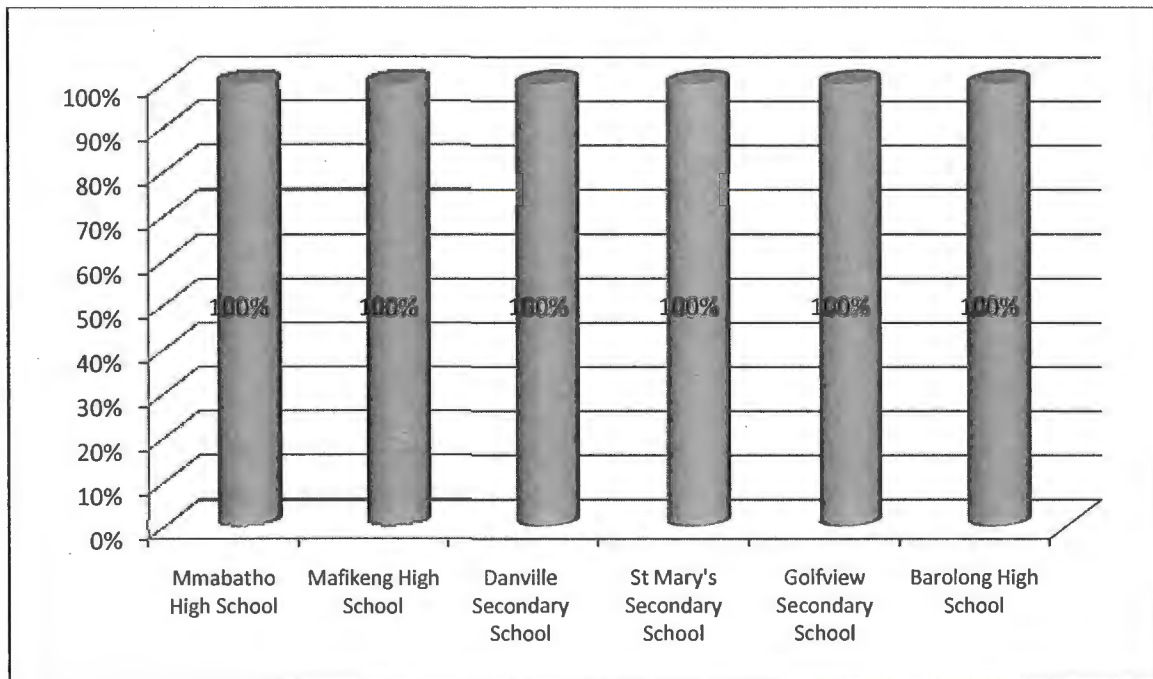


Figure 1. 100% of parents who participated in the study agreed that they had cell phones

Probes: Does it have internet access?

Figure 2

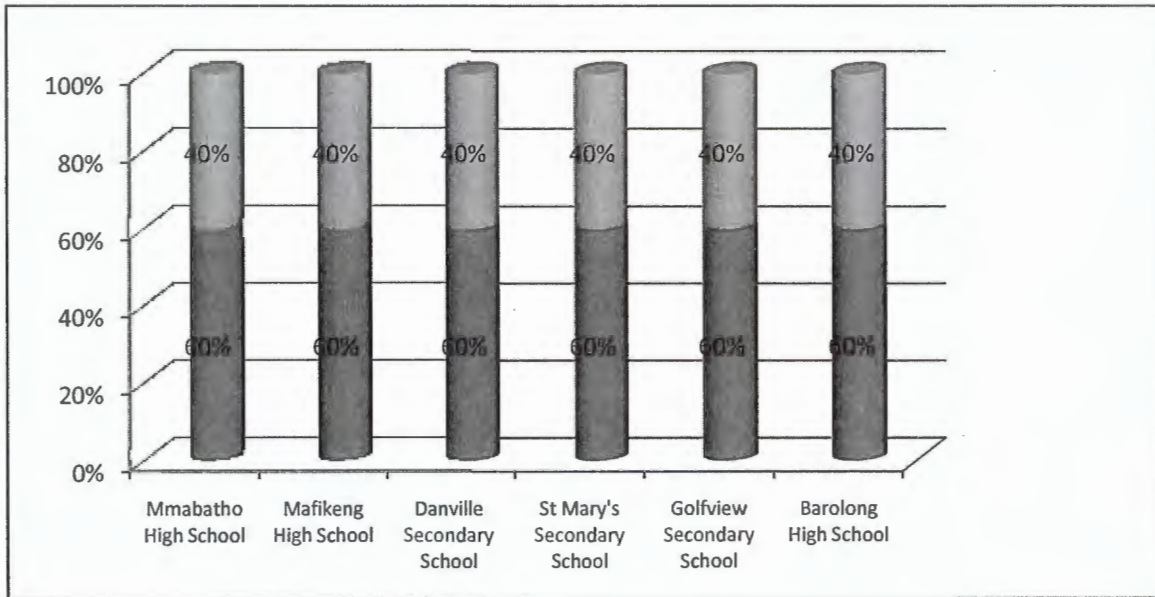


Figure 2 illustrates that 60% of parents agreed that they did have cell phones with Internet and 40% of parents said their cell phones did not have access to Internet.

5.4.2 Do you know of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices?

Figure 3

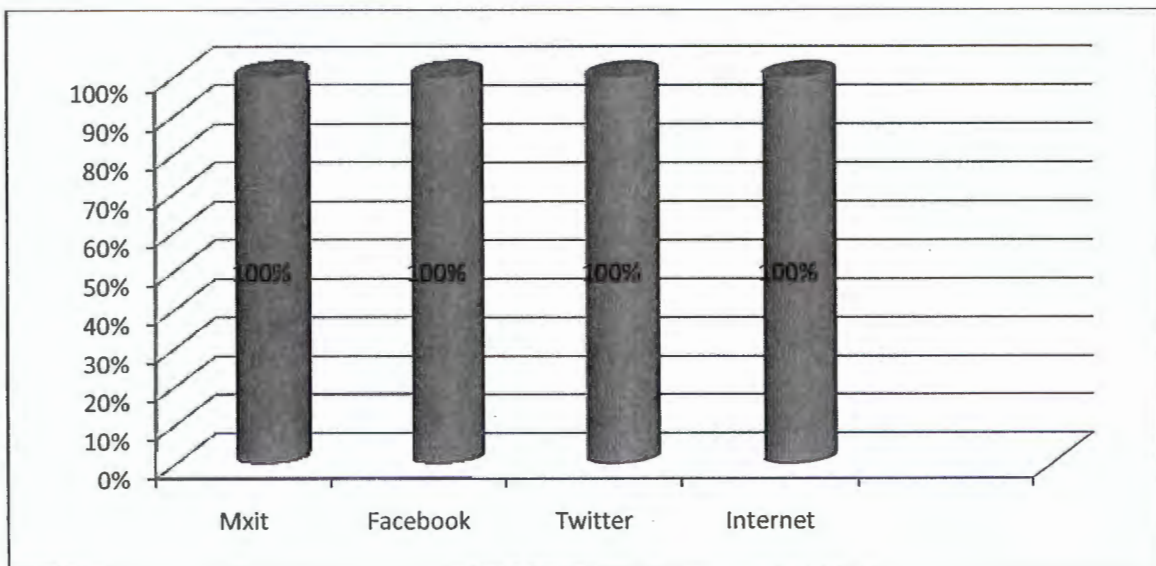


Figure 3 indicates that 100% of parents said they knew about ICT devices.

Probes: By ICT devices I mean MXit, Facebook, Twitter, and Internet

Figure 4

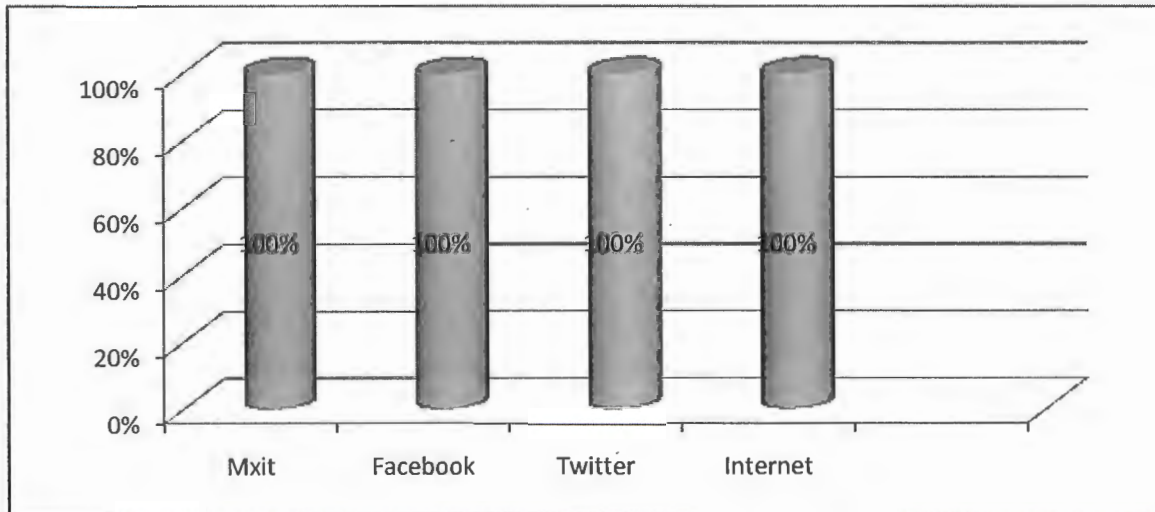


Figure 4 illustrates that 100% of parents agreed that they knew the ICT devices stated above.

5.4.3 Are you able to use these ICT devices?

Figure 5

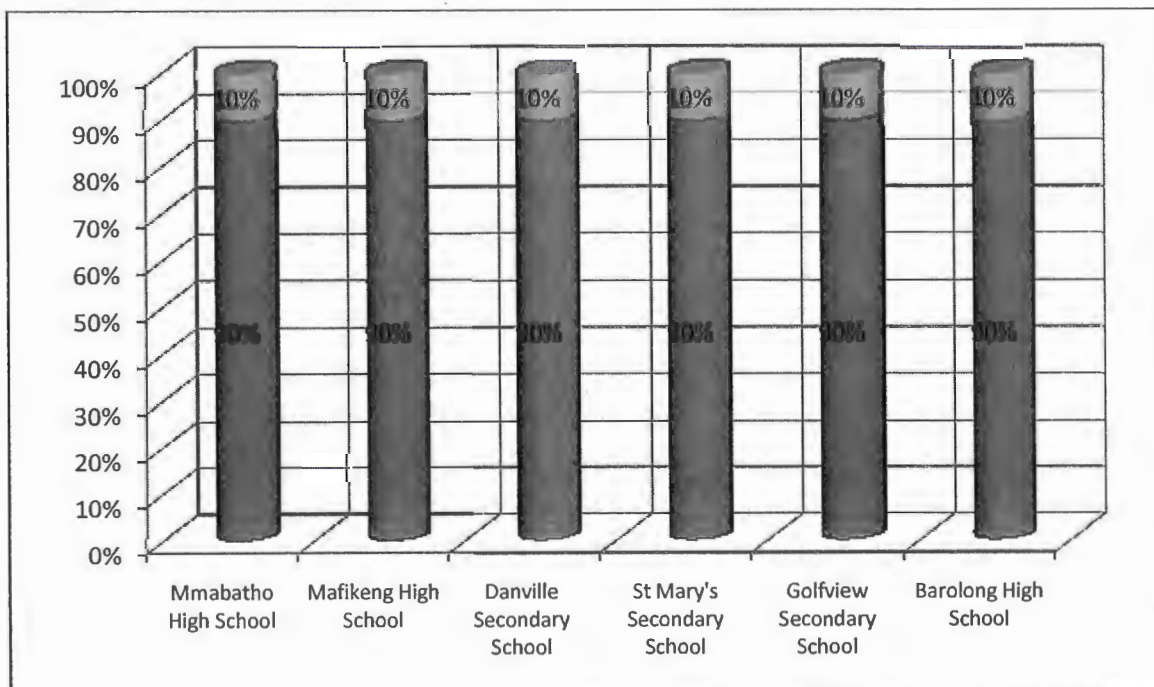


Figure 5 illustrates that 90% of parents said they did not know how to use ICT devices while 10% said they knew how to use these ICT devices.

Probe: If yes, mention what do you use it for?

- To monitor their children's profile and behaviour online
- Communicating, socializing and information access

If no, mention why?

- They said they did not know how to use it
- They said they did not have time to spend using their cell phone texting non-stop
- Not interested in knowing how ICT works
- Their phones are old fashioned and had no access to internet

5.4.4 Does your child have a cell phone?

Figure 6

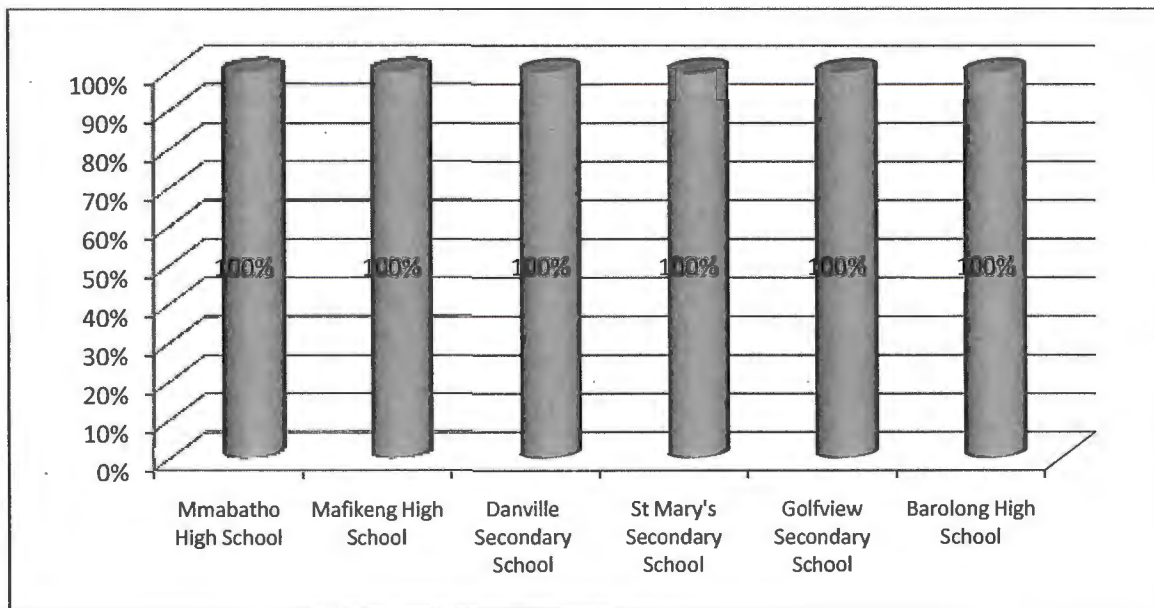


Figure 6 indicate that 100% of parents agreed that their children had cell phones.

Probes: Does it have internet?

Figure 7

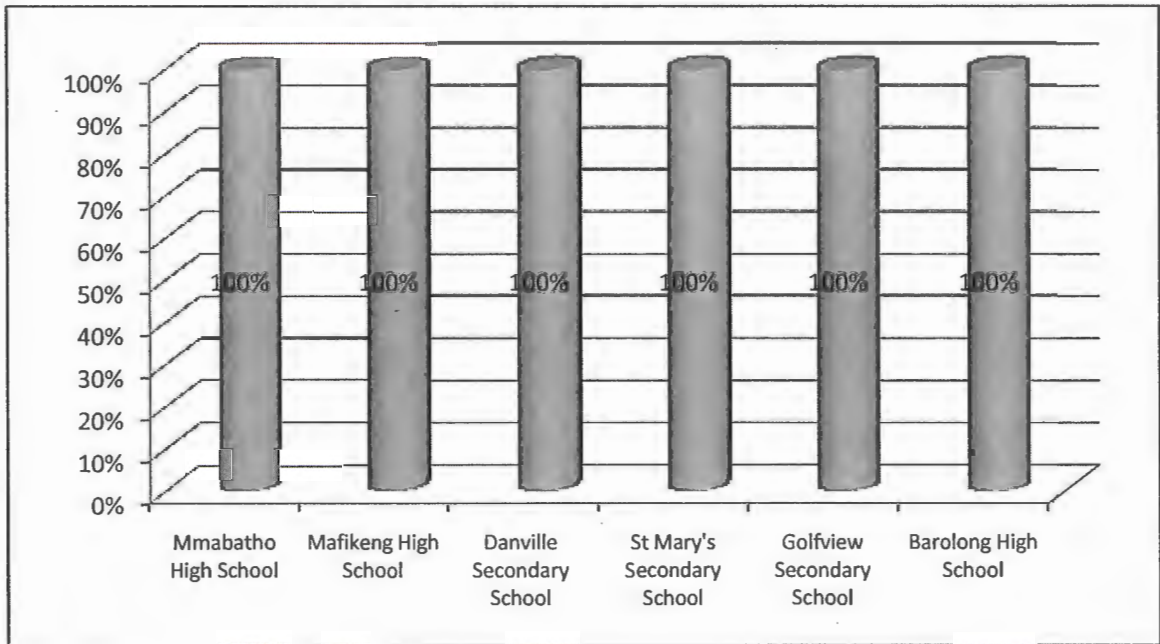


Figure 7 illustrates that 100% of parents agreed that their children's cell phones had internet access.

5.4.5 Do you think that there are any positive advantages for the children in using these ICT devices?

Figure 8

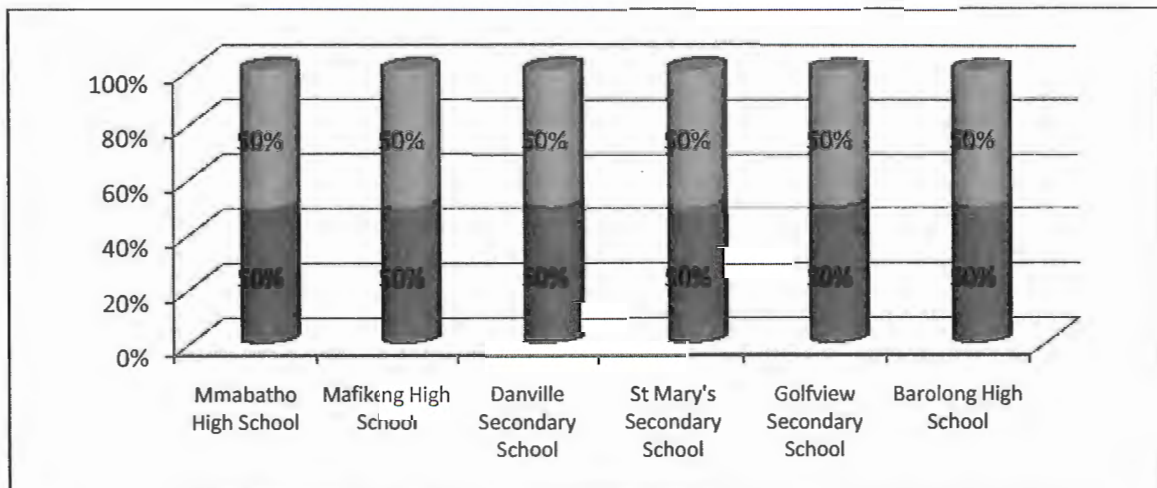


Figure 7 indicate that 50% of parents agreed that there was a positive advantage for children in using ICT devices, while 50% of parents said there was no positive effect in children using the ICT devices.

Probes: Mention a positive scenario that can benefit the children? (If there are any)

- They can communicate at little cost
- They were able to socialize and save the money to buy airtime
- They were able to get latest information like news from these sites
- Easy to find information for school projects

5.4.6 Are you aware of any negative effect posed by these ICT devices to your child? (Rape, pornography and kidnapping)

Figure 9

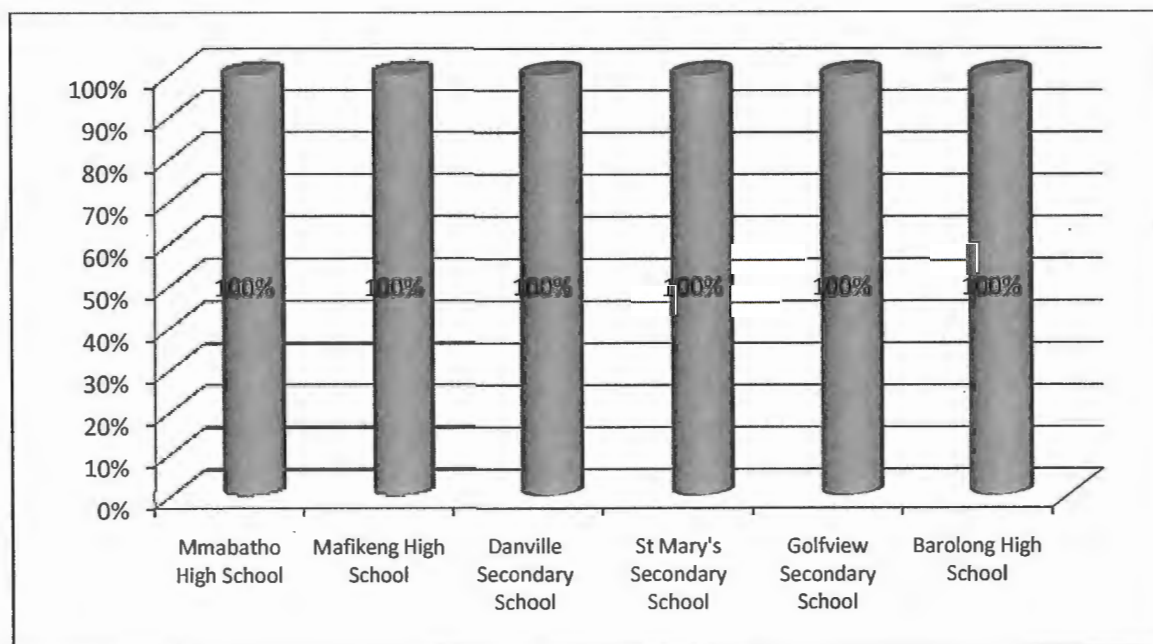


Figure 8 illustrates that 100% parents agreed that they were aware of the negative effects posed by these ICT devices.

Probes: Mention any negative scenario that you know of? (If there are any)

- ICTs took a lot of children's time for studying and for doing households duties
- The other parent said sometimes as the children chatted to strangers the danger was that these strangers would invite them and harm them when they meet in person.

- The parents said their children did not want to listen to them when they warn them about their use of cell phones. They said children always responded by saying ‘I know what I am doing, just leave me alone’.
- Children did not want to listen to anybody at home about their use of cell phones, even if they were reprimanded by their fathers.

Have these ICT devices ever affected your child negatively?

Figure 10

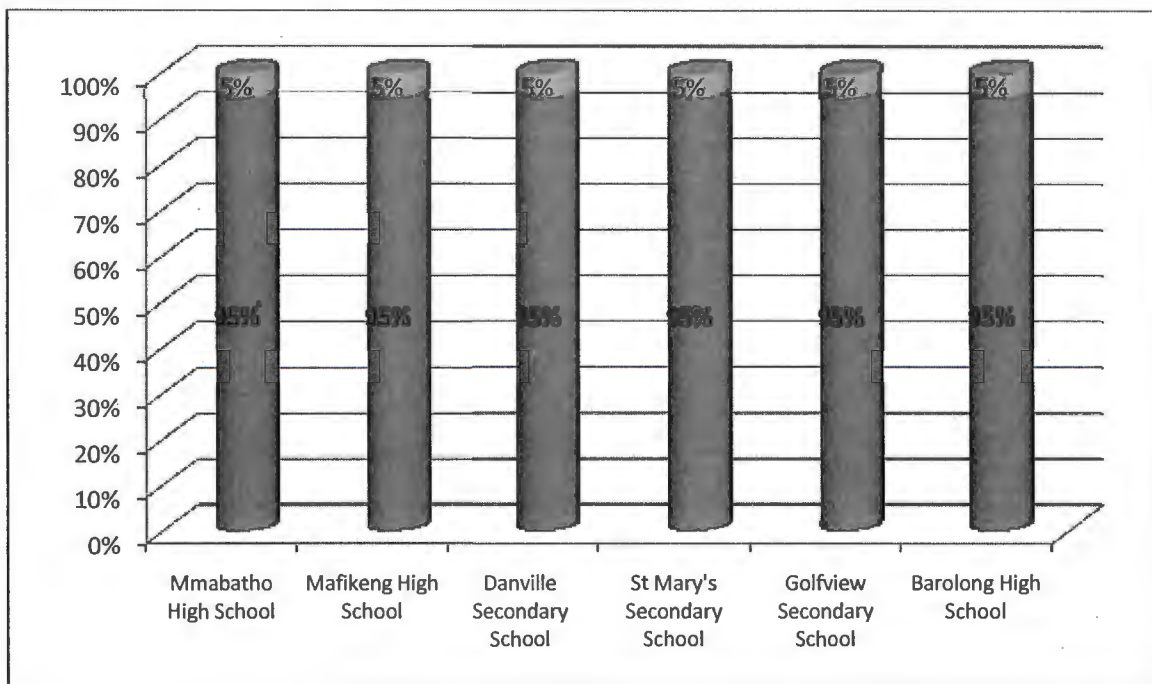


Figure 9 indicates that 95% of parents had never been affected negatively by ICT devices while only 5% agreed that they had been affected negatively.

- Another parent said her daughter posted her nude pictures and everyone saw them at school
- Other parents requested not to talk about those incidents.

5.4.7 Do you think your child is safe when he/she uses a cell phones?

Figure 11

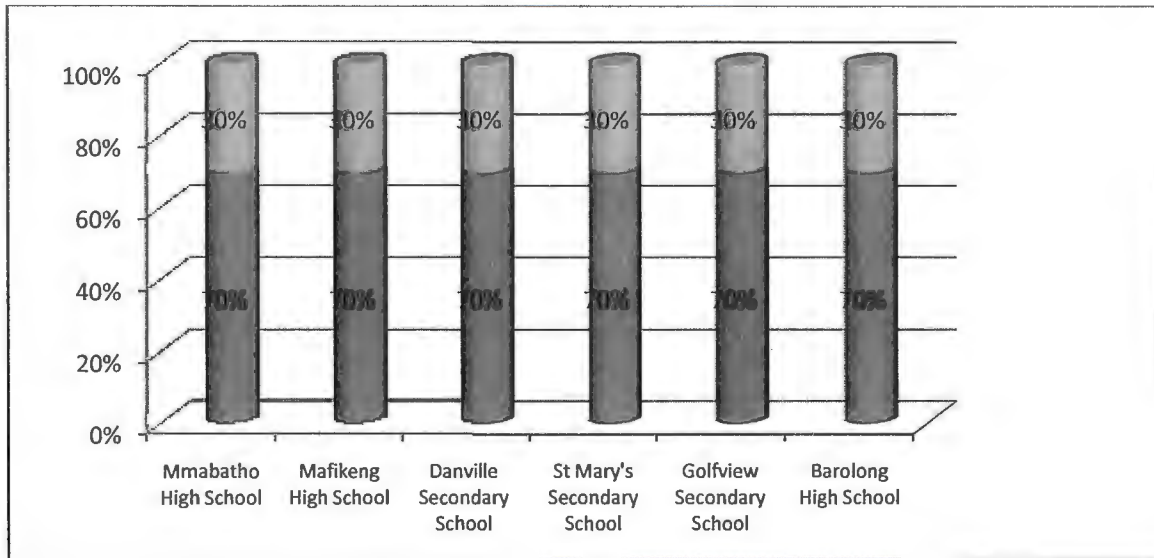


Figure 8 indicates that 70% of parents said it was the children's responsibility to use their cell phones responsibly to keep them safe. 30% of parents said their children were safe provided they used them under the guidance and supervision of their parents.

Probes: Is there any negative threat your child might experience when using his/her cell phone?

Figure 12

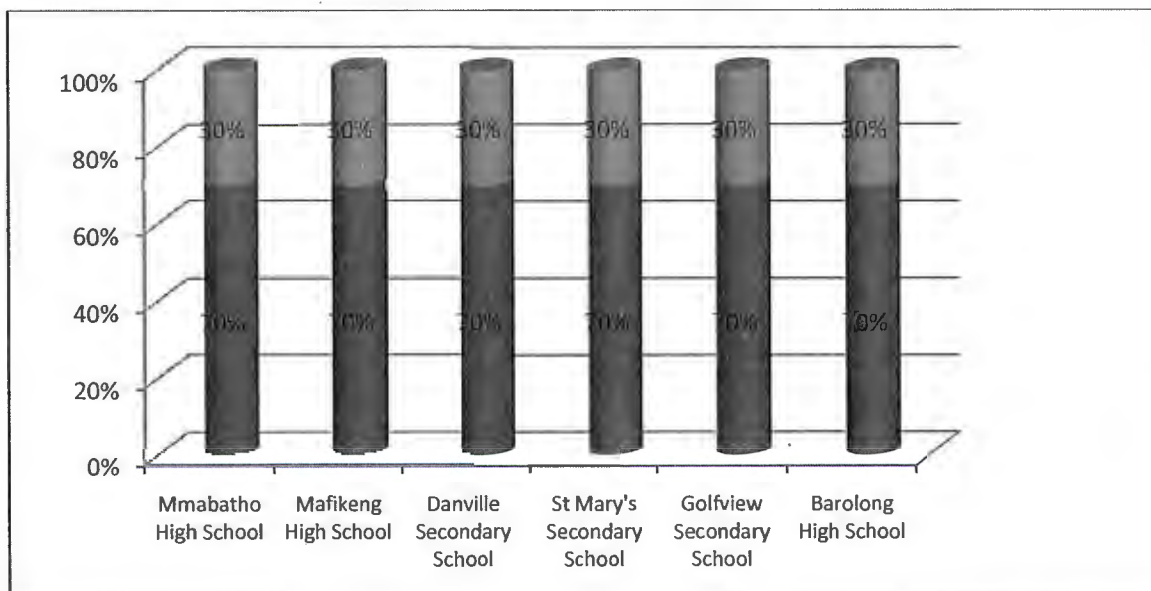


Figure 9 indicates that 80% of parents said there were lots of threats faced by their children because sometimes other children got killed due to cell phones. Girls were very young and vulnerable, they could be kidnapped easily. 20% said they were not sure that their children could end up in trouble.

5.4.8 Does your child take his/her cell phone to school?

Figure 13

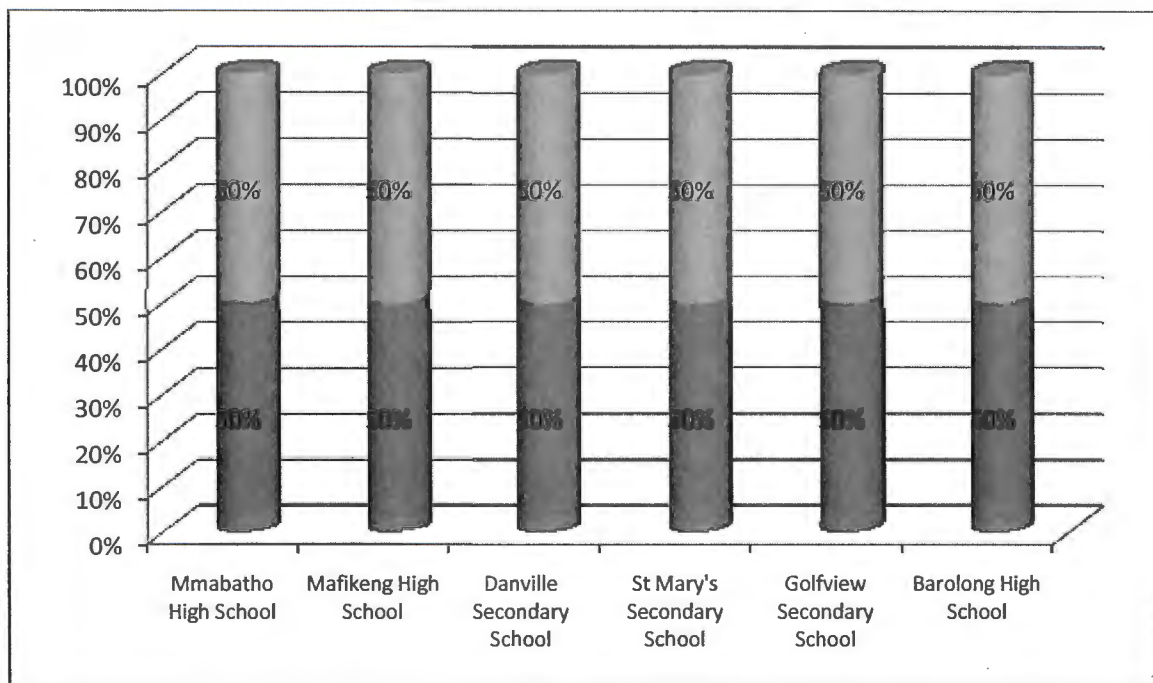


Figure 10 illustrates that 50% of parents agreed with the question that their children took their phones to school and the other 50% denied that their children took their cell phones to school.

Probes: If yes, mention why is he/she taking it, specify?

- Parents might want to communicate with them during the day
- For communication purposes
- In the case of emergency at school

If no, mention why he/she is not taking it, specify?

- To devote all their time to their studies and avoid class disruption
- They must focus on their studies 100%
- Cell phone will disturb them during school hours

5.4.9 Do you know that children are able to access pornographic images over these cell phones?

Figure 14

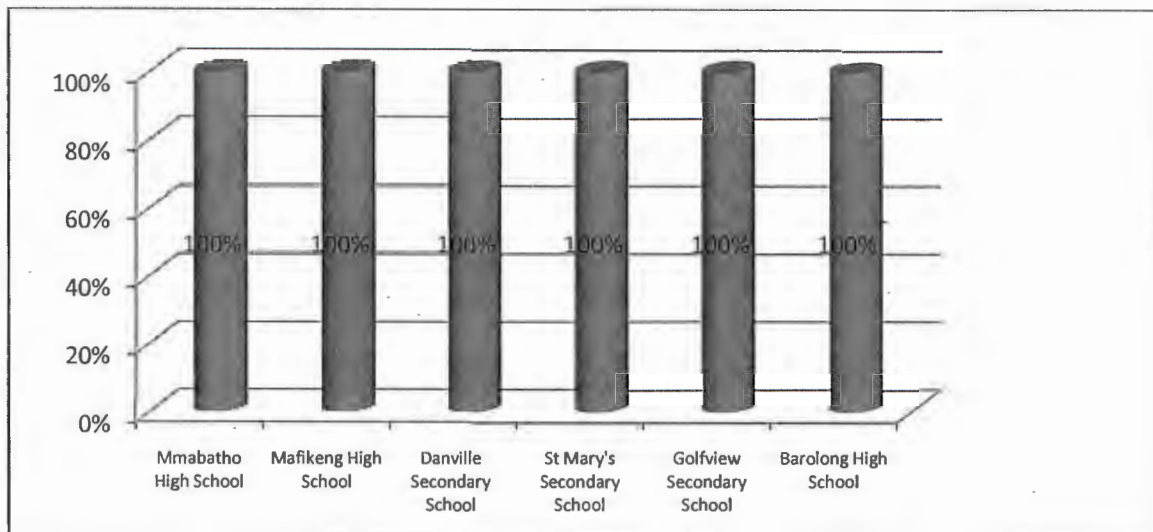


Figure 11 above illustrates that 100% of parents knew that their children were able to access pornography through these cell phones.

- Parents all agreed that their children were not only exposed to pornography through the use of cell phones. They said their children slept late in order to watch pornographic movies.
- The other parent also mentioned that even the upbringing of the child had a contribution on the behaviour of the child. If the parents were not strict even their children would follow suit.

Probes: Do you know that they can be exposed to rape and kidnapping?

Figure 15

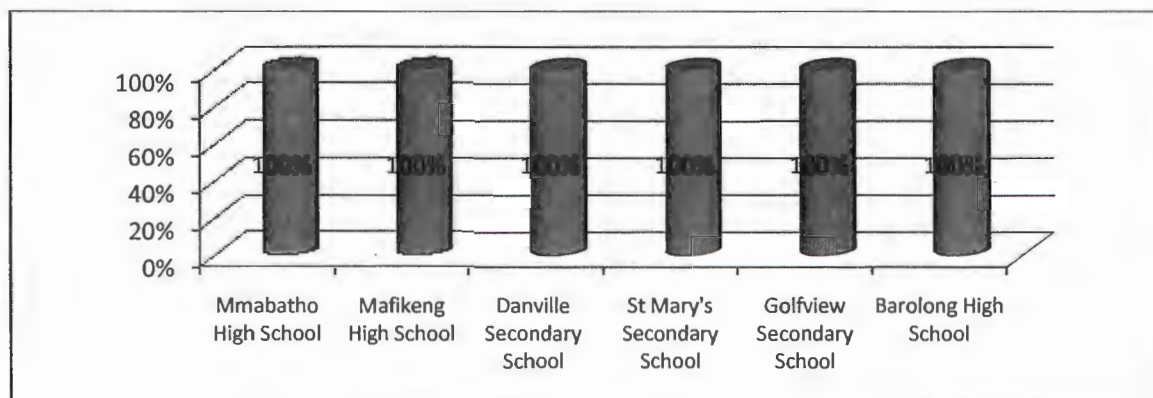


Figure 12 illustrates that 100% of parents said they knew that their children could be exposed to rape and kidnapping through the usage of cell phones.

5.4.10 Are you able to monitor them when they use these cell phones?

Figure 16

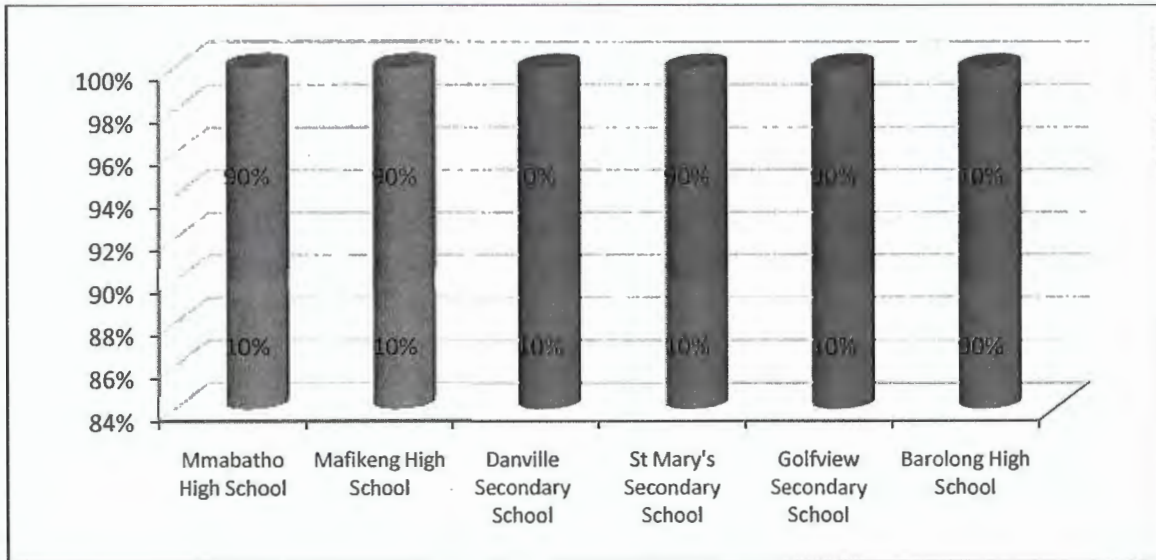


Figure 13 illustrates that 90% of parents said they did not know how to monitor them because their children were advanced or they lock their cell phones, and 10% of parents said they were able to monitor their children through locking their cell phone or their laptop.

Probes: Do you know how to use these ICT devices in order to monitor them?

Figure 17

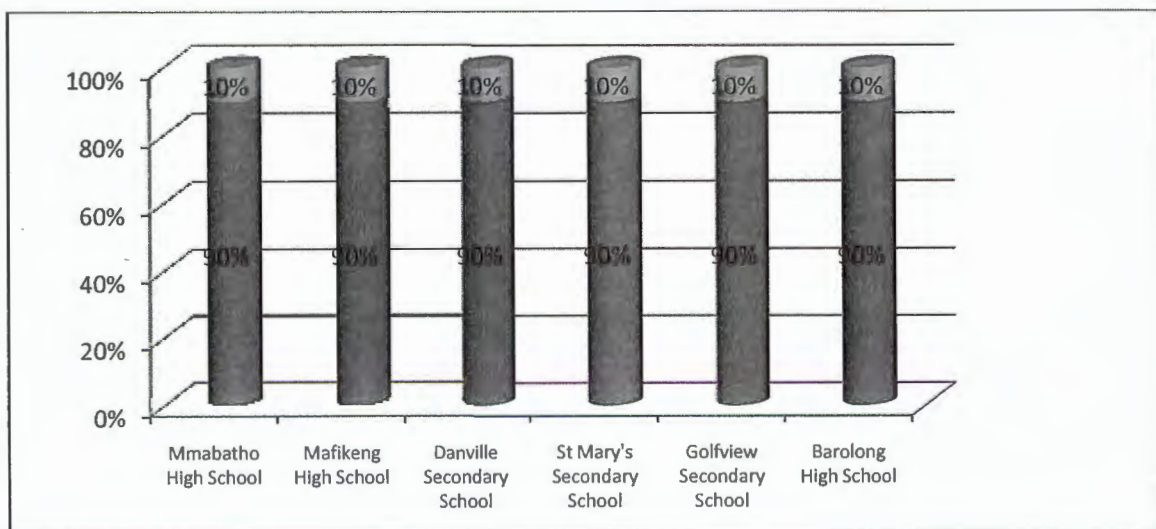


Figure 14 indicates that parents were asked whether they knew how to use these ICT devices in order to monitor their children. 90% of parents said they did not know how to use them and 10% of parents said they knew how to use these ICT devices to monitor them.

5.4.11 Suggest ways how children can use their cell phones responsibly

- Children should not be allowed to bring their cell phones to school
- Children should be taught discipline and should be monitored from time to time
- Children should use cell phones only when they were called by their parents and friends for school work
- One parent suggested that children must be taught to be responsible at all times. If the child was responsible for his/her life it would not be easy to be a victim of ICT devices because at home she has been taught to be responsible.
- The government must introduce a policy that says children must not be allowed to bring cell phones to school.
- Another parent suggested that the government should return the early morning prayers at schools. She said, it was important for children to have the religious values in order to overpower the influence brought by the ICT devices.
- The other parent said the issue of dropping corporal punishment at schools was the one that made these children bring their cell phones to school even if they were told not to do so.

Probes: Does the cell phone interfere with your relation at home?

Figure 18

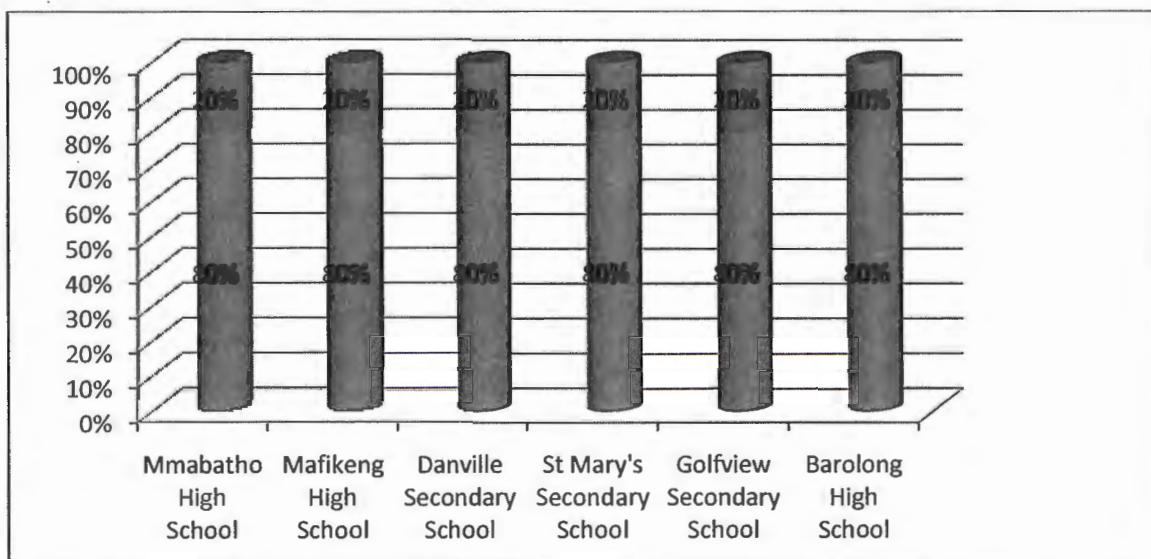


Figure 15 shows that 80% of the parents said they always quarrelled with them for spending more time on their cell phone than on their books, while 20% of the parents said the opposite. They said always there were time for family and the children understood that.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the results of the closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires responded by 120 participants. On the findings for the learners the study found that all learners indicated that their phones had an Internet. They said, no learner would allow their parents to buy them a cell phone without Internet access. They said a cell phone without Internet was almost like a toy. On the findings for teachers, the study found that teachers indicated that the current generation of learners were not safe as compared to the previous generations. The current generation was exposed to be kidnapped or raped by strangers that they chatted with through these devices. On the findings from parents the study revealed that all parents who participated in the study agreed that they had cell phones and some parents' cell phones have access to internet, while the majority did not have access to internet.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations towards the responsible usage of cell phones by learners. In this chapter, I will highlight the findings and draw conclusions about the usage of cell phones by learners at high school.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this research highlighted the degree to which the learners use their cell phones. These findings also present the degree of understanding by both teachers and parents on how children use their cell phones.

The problem investigated in this study lies in this freedom: Cell phones provide access to receive and impart information which is emphasized in the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution in Chapter 2 under Section 16. The study identified the effects learners experience due to the use of cell phones.

There are also some positive incidents that the cell phones have brought into our lives. They have made communication very simple, as a text message is enough to give another person a meaningful message. New technology is extremely powerful and has become more so as cell phones become more advanced and affordable. Sending a text message is not only cheap, it is also quick and that makes distribution of information more effective. There are some risks associated with use of cell phones which is mostly targeted at young and vulnerable people by faceless people.

6.2.1 NARRATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The study has shown that that all learners at high schools have cell phones and their cell phones have Internet access. No learner prefers to have a cell phone which does not have Internet access; they put their parents under pressure to be bought cell phones with internet access. All the learners knew how to use MXit, Facebook, Internet, and they feel that Twitter was more expensive. They said MXit was the cheapest device of them all because it only costs them two cents to send a message whereas other means were far much expensive.

The learners said they had plenty of friends online and these were both people they knew and others were those that they did not know. The common thing they indicated was that they most talked about their studies and daily experiences. The study indicates that the advent of social media has brought a platform for boys to interact with girls and also for girls to interact with boys freely without any hindrance. Learners said some of the advantages of these devices were that they help them to share problems which they experience at school, with their families and with their love lives. They were able to save time and money by not going to the library; instead they used Internet on the phone. They said it helped them with research and school work.

They all agreed that they had seen pornographic images on the phone especially from friends at school. Some of the learners agreed that at their school there were three learners who distributed the pornographic material at school last year. They said that it was images of the fellow learners from their school and they were people known to everybody. Another one said sometimes when a boy and a girl are involved in a relationship when they have sexual intercourse they both agree to record the incident. When they separate the boy will circulate these images to everybody at school as revenge on the girl.

Learners indicated that they were aware of the incident that happened at Jules High School, wherein a 15 year old girl participated in a sexual orgy with two boys and later accused them of raping her. The learners spoke about the Jules High School incident; and they said they were used to such incidents in their schools. They said when it was sports days or when there were huge events at their schools, some learners took chances by hiding themselves at toilets or behind the classrooms and had sex. They then recorded the incidents and distributed them at school. Then later the girls claimed to have been raped.

Another learner said young people do not want to discuss their problems with their parents or sisters, they relied on their online friends. This eventually created problems for them because they were misguided by their online friends. One learner spoke about an incident of kidnapping that happened at Unit 8 Mmabatho in Mafikeng. She said a 14-year-old girl used to chat through MXit with a Nigerian International man who was in Johannesburg. She said, one day this guy and the girl agreed that the girl would visit him in Johannesburg. Then the guy came to Mafikeng to collect the girl. The girl never told anyone at home that she was leaving with this guy. She packed the bags and joined the guy who was waiting at Unit 7, Star Shop. On arrival in Johannesburg the guy changed and it became a kidnapping. His friends called the family of the girl and requested ransom money. They raped the girl repeatedly while they were waiting for the ransom money. The parents eventually paid the money and the girl was released.

6.2.2 NARRATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The teachers who participated in the study highlighted various scenarios which could have a negative impact as a result of the usage of the ICT devices by learners. Teachers said if learners during exam time, wrote the exam before the other school they sometimes circulated messages through MXit and SMS telling other learners about the content of the question paper. It enabled the other learners to prepare specifically for those particular questions. Another teacher said he knew an incident whereby learners during the break went to the toilets and had sex and there was another learner recording the incident through the cell phone.

The teachers indicated that the current generation of learners were not safe as compared to the previous generations. The current generation was exposed to be kidnapped or raped by strangers that they chatted with through these devices.

The majority of teachers agreed that learners were not allowed to bring their cell phones to school. They mentioned that it was due to the school policy which did not allow them to bring cell phones to school. They said if a learner was found with the cell phone at school, it was confiscated by teachers and the learner would pay R200 to release it at the end of the quarter. Another teacher said last year they confiscated 17 cell phones. He said the money went straight to the coffers of the school. Other teachers from the former Model C schools said the cell phone

policy was effective at their schools because there were no negative effects amongst learners found with cell phones at school.

6.2.3 NARRATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES

All parents who participated in the study agreed that they had cell phones and 60% of parents agreed that they have cell phones with access to Internet and while 40% of parents said their cell phones did not have access to Internet. All parents said they knew about ICT and the majority said they did not know how to use ICT devices, only few of them knew how to use them because they were taught by their children.

The few parents who said they were able to use ICT devices said they used it to monitor their children's profile and behaviour online and for communicating, socializing and Internet access.

The majority of parents who participated in the study agreed that they were aware of the negative effects posed by these ICT devices to their children. The parents said some of the negative effects were that they took lot of their time from their studies and for doing household, duties. The other parent said sometimes as the children chatted to strangers, the danger was that, these strangers would invite them and as soon as they arrived at that particular place, they could rape or kill the children.

The parents said their children did not want to listen to them when they warned them about their cell phones. They said, children always responded by saying 'I know what I am doing, just leave me alone'. Children did not want to listen to anybody at home about their cell phones even their fathers.

The majority of the parents who participated in the study said they knew that children were able to access pornography through these devices. Parents all agreed that their children were not only exposed to pornography through the use of cell phones. They said children at home slept very late after everybody has gone to sleep. They said they knew that when children use social media they could be exposed to rape and kidnapping

They agreed unanimously that no one was able to monitor these children on how they used their cell phones. The other parent said when children chatted with their friends online, they did that in front of their parents and they refused to show them whom they were chatting with. The parents

said children became extremely angry; they said parents were interfering with their privacy. A majority of parents said they always quarrelled with children at home because they spent more time on their cell phones than on their books.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicated clearly that a cell phone is a crucial communication tool in our life because every learner in high school in the study owns a cell phone. The parents played a pivotal role in some children's cell phone usage because they were the ones who pay for the cell phone contracts. Parents remain the main source for buying cell phones although some learners did not indicate how they accessed them. However there was a difference between how the urban school and rural school learners used their cell phones. The urban area learners did not report many threatening experiences with cell phones, unlike their rural counter parts. The rural school learners reported threatening incidents some of which have happened in their schools. For example learners from St Mary's agreed that there were learners who distributed the pornographic material at school last year. They said that it was images of the learners from their school and they were people known to everybody. Another girl learner said sometimes when the teacher was not in class, a boy and girl learner would kiss and cuddle each other then, other learners would record the incident into their phones. Sometimes this would be girl-to-girl; they would kiss each other at the toilets and circulate these pictures through their phones to the entire school.

The study highlighted that some learners did not sleep at night due to; they chatted throughout the night and only slept for two hours per night. They ended up feeling sleepy at school. Another learner who was doing Grade 12 said he failed Grade 8 and he squarely blamed MXit and Facebook. He said he used to sleep at after midnight at 3 to 4 am and that made him lose note not to be interest in his studies. Another learner said his addiction to MXit and Facebook led him to damage his eyes. He said today he was using spectacles because of the constant exposure to the phone light. All these incidents show that cell phones have a huge impact to the lives of the learners from both urban and rural areas.

All schools indicated that they had cell phone policies and when the teachers confiscate cell phones from the learners, the school fines the learner a nominal amount before the cell phone is released to the learner. Even though the schools impose cell phone policies, learners continued to smuggle their cell phones to school unabated.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study shows that the lack of knowledge on the social effects of the cell phones poses danger for high school learners. The lack of knowledge on how to use these cell phones by both teachers and parents contributes to the lack of monitoring the learners when using their cell phones. Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

6.4.1 Recommendations for Learners:

- ❖ The North West Education Department must include cell phone study into the curriculum so that learners will get a chance to know and understand how they can be used responsibly. This study will make them aware of the irresponsible use of these cell phones.
- ❖ The North-West Education Department must invite experts in cell phone use to schools in order to teach learners how to use these devices responsibly.
- ❖ The North-West Education Department should provide books at schools which deal with cell phone etiquette. These books should be preferably placed in the school library and for schools without libraries, can be managed by educators teaching Life Orientation (LO). They should be made available in all the eleven languages spoken in the country.
- ❖ The North-West Education Department must partner with the South African Police Service through the “Adopt a Cop Campaign”. Each and every police officer who has adopted a school is able to workshop learners about the dangers of using cell phones

irresponsibly. If learners are taught by someone from the law enforcement unit, it is easy for learners to pay attention, unlike if it was someone they are used to.

- ❖ The North-West Education Department must partner with the Department of Health, in order for health practitioners to be able to advise learners about effects of over exposing their eyes to cell phones.
- ❖ The North-West Education Department through its Information Technology unit should organize regular workshops with Religious Leaders Organisations. The workshops would be able to inform Religious Leaders about effects of cell phones on children in general. The Religious Leaders will be able to cascade the message down to their respective churches about the social dangers posed by the social media.
- ❖ The North-West province is a predominantly rural province whereby a large number of areas are still under the authority of the Traditional Leaders. The North West Education Department should partner with Traditional Leaders, so that which regular meetings will be held with them on the effects of social media on learners. The Traditional Leaders in their meetings with the community will be able to warn parents about dangers posed by cell phones.

6.4.2 Recommendations for Teachers:

- ❖ The North West Education Department should partner with the North West University Campuses (Mafikeng and Potchefstroom) in the Province to be able to train teachers ICT using courses. This training will empower them to monitor learners on how they use their cell phones while at school.
- ❖ All schools should be equipped with computer laboratories for learners to be able to research information for assignments and learners to be provided with full monitoring.

- ❖ The Department of Education nationally to introduce a cell phone policy which will be introduced to all schools in the country. The attention of learners while at school will not be diverted by cell phones but kept on teaching and learning.

6.4.3 Recommendations for Parents:

- ❖ Parents must be actively involved in the education of their children so that they can be informed by the school and educators about interference of ICT devices. Parents must attend meetings called by the school and also visit the relevant teachers to monitor progress of the child.
- ❖ Cell phone companies should be contracted to perform the social responsibility act by training all SGB Committees about the effects and how parents can monitor the use of social media. SGB committees should cascade information about cell phones to the parents in general during the parents meetings. For this to be a success all parents meetings called at schools should include the item on cell phones and social media on the agenda. This process will help to create awareness about effects of cell phones to the parents.
- ❖ Schools to invite Cell phone companies to workshop parents so that they can understand how cell phones function.
- ❖ Parents to formulate forums at churches, in the communities, at work, etc, to discuss experiences with other parents about effects of cell phones and how to monitor their children.
- ❖ Parents to be encouraged to establish cordial relations with their children in order for children to be able to open up about how they use cell phones.

6.5 FINAL CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the use of cell phones by high school learners in the Mahikeng area. Mahikeng is the capital city of the North West province in South Africa and has a mixture of urban and rural characteristics. It sought to understand the use of cell phones by learners attending high schools in the urban and rural areas of Mahikeng.

The primary objective of the study was to examine the effects cell phones have on learners from the selected high schools in the Mahikeng area. It addressed social problems such as pornography, abduction and rape, which have become prevalent since the advent of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) devices, such as Internet, Twitter, Facebook and MXit. These new technologies have made communication easy by eliminating spatial distances. Learners are now able to communicate with strangers whom they have never met in person and this poses a threat to their lives.

It examined a few items in the literature published on the subject, notably research done on the usage of cell phones by learners at high schools. The first study that was reviewed was “Teen perceptions of cellular phones as a communication tool” by Jonas, (2011). The purpose of this study was to determine perceptions of cellular phones as a communication tool by teens in a suburban Central Middle School, in a Midwest Suburban community, United States of America and to evaluate how cellular phones influence communication in their daily lives and at school.

The second journal article that was reviewed is titled “Adolescent in-school cell phone habits: A census of rules, survey of their effectiveness, and fertility implications” by Redmaynea, Smith and Abramsona, (2011). The main objective of the authors was to assess the adolescent’s ownership of cell phones which have become ubiquitous over the last years. The study highlighted that there were several reasons that young people were more vulnerable than adults to environmental stressors, so concern has grown internationally over their increasing levels of exposure to this radiation due to possible adverse health effects.

The third study reviewed is “ICT Literacy: An investigation of the digital divide in middle and high school classrooms” by Fazioli, 2010. The study highlighted that information in the twenty-first century was presented in abundance on the Internet, which was communicated not only in

written words, but also in pictures, sounds, and video. While the concept of ICT literacy is relatively new, value is increasingly becoming affixed to it, as technology remains omnipresent in all facets of life. In order for students to become increasingly literate and be able to adequately function in today's world, they must be skilled in new literacy requiring educators to adjust pedagogically.

The fourth study reviewed is "Mobile collaboration for young children: reading and creating stories" by Fails, 2009. The main objective of the study was to focus on supporting collaboration among mobile users, specifically children aged six to ten, while collaboratively reading and creating stories. The results of the formal study show children were more mobile while creating stories than when reading and sharing them.

Another study by Urista, Dong and Day conducted in 2008 and titled "Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through Uses and Gratifications theory", was also reviewed. The main objective of the study was to investigate why MySpace and Facebook were two leading online social networking sites (SNS) that were popular with young adults.

This study has adopted the qualitative research approach. The study dealt with opinions and perceptions of learners, teachers and parents and a qualitative methodology was more suitable than a quantitative one. The sample comprised 120 subjects. These participants consisted of 60 learners, two learners per grade, per school, from grade 8 to grade 12. The total number of learners participating per school in a focus group was 10 learners. The study involved 30 teachers (five per school) and 30 parents (five parents per school) from all the identified schools.

The study found that all learners indicated that their phones had Internet. They said no learner would allow their parents to buy them a cell phone without Internet access. They said a cell phone without Internet was almost like a toy. The study found that teachers indicated that the current generation of learners were not safe as compared to the previous generations. The current generation was exposed to being kidnapped or raped by strangers that they chatted with through these devices.

The limitation of the study was that the study only focused on the social problems such as pornography, abduction and rape, which have become prevalent since the advent of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The study did not address the classroom situation on how cell phones affected learning and teaching time for both teachers and learners. The study did not focus on the Department of Education policies, to verify if these policies were effective or not. Future studies will be able to look into all these limitations not covered.

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APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

TOPIC: THE USE OF CELL PHONES BY SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS LEARNERS IN THE MAHIKENG AREA.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have a cell phone? *Probes: Does it have internet access?*

2. Do you know of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices?

Probe: ICT devices I mean MXit, Facebook, Twitter, and Internet

3. Are you able to use these ICT devices?

Probe: What are you able to use them for? (Specify)

Do you chat over MXit, Facebook, Twitter, and Internet?

Do you have friends online?

Are they people that you know?

If yes, what do you chat about?

If no, what do you chat about?

4. Are you aware of the advantages of using these devices?

Probes: Mention a positive scenario that you are aware of?

Do you think they have brought any positive change to our lives?

5. Are you aware of any negative effect posed by these ICT devices? (Rape, pornography, and kidnapping).

Probes: Mention any negative scenario that you know of?

Has this ICT devices ever affected you personally negative?

6. The way you use your cell phone, would you say you are using it responsibly?

Probes: Would it be acceptable to your both parents and teachers?

7. Have you ever seen any a pornographic image/s on the cell phone?

Probes: You and your friends do you circulate such images at school or out of school?

8. Do your parents have access to your cell phone?

Probes: Do they know how to use these ICT devices?

Would you allow them to see what you access with your cell phone?

9. Do you take your cell phone to school with you?

Probes: Does it interfere with the schooling processes at school?

10. Are the teachers affected by the cell phone use at school?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

TOPIC: TOPIC: THE USE OF CELL PHONES BY SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS LEARNERS IN THE MAHIKENG AREA.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have a cell phone?

Probes: Does it have internet access?

2. Do you know of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices?

Probe: ICT devices I mean MXit, Facebook, Twitter, and Internet

3. Are you able to use these ICT devices?

Probe: If yes, what do you use it for?

If no, why?

4. Do you think that, are there any positive advantages for the learners in using these devices?

Probes: Mention a positive scenario that can benefit the learners? (If there are any?)

Do you think they have brought any positive change to the learner's lives?

5. Are you aware of any negative effect posed by these ICT devices to the learners? (Rape, pornography and kidnapping).

Probes: Mention any negative scenario that you know of? (If there are any?)

Has this ICT devices ever affected you personally negative?

6. Do you think these learners are safe as they use their cell phones?

Probes: Does the school allow them to use cell phones at school?

7. Are you able to monitor them when they use cell phones?

8. Does your school have a cell phone policy?

Probes: Is it effective to control the use of cell phones?

9. Suggest ways on how learners can use their cell phones at school?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

TOPIC: TOPIC: THE USE OF CELL PHONES BY SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS LEARNERS IN THE MAHIKENG AREA.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have a cell phone?

Probes: Does it have internet access?

2. Do you know of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices?

Probes: ICT devices I mean MXit, Facebook, Twitter, and Internet

3. Are you able to use these ICT devices?

Probe: If yes, what do you use it for?

If no, why?

4. Does your child have a cell phone?

Probes: Does it have internet?

5. Do you think that, are there any positive advantages for the children in using these ICT devices?

Probes: Mention a positive scenario that can benefit the children? (If there are any?)

Do you think they have brought any positive change to your lives?

6. Are you aware of any negative effect posed by these ICT devices to your child? (Rape, pornography and kidnapping)

Probes: Mention any negative scenario that you know of? (If there are any?)

Has this ICT devices ever affected your child negatively?

7. Do you think your child is safe when he/she uses their cell phones?

Probes: Is there any positive or negative threat your child might experience when using his/her cell phone?

8. Does your child take his/her cell phone to school with?

Probes: If yes, why is he/she taking it, specify?

If no, why he/she is not taking it, specify?

9. Do you know that children are able to access pornographic images over these ICT devices?

Probes: Do you know that they can be exposed to rape and kidnapping?

10. Are you able to monitor them when they use these cell phones?

Probes: Do you know how to use these ICT devices in order to monitor them?

11. Suggest ways on how children can use their cell phones responsibly?

Probes: Does cell phone interfere with your relation at home?

APPENDIX D: LEARNERS CONSENT FORM

You have been asked to participate in a research study. The form provides you with information about the study. The student who is a principal investigator will also be available to answer all of your questions. Please read the information below. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to leave at any time and there will be no adverse effects on to your school.

Title of Research Study: The use of cell phones by selected high school learners in the Mahikeng area.

Objectives of the study are to:

- To evaluate various ways in which learners use cell phones.
- To examine learners' awareness of the threats and dangers associated with cell phones
- To determine teachers and parents' understanding of the use of cell phones by learners.

Student involvement: Learners will be asked to participate in a discussion group with other students from their schoolmates. They will be asked questions about their use of cell phones and social problems brought by the advent of these cell phones. The setting will be an informal discussion group. The discussion will last approximately 1 and half hour.

Possible benefits: Learners may become more aware about effects posed by ICT devices on learners.

Confidentiality: Learner confidentiality will be protected by eliminating learner's names from all research records. Your consent form will be kept strictly confidential and housed at the University's Communication Department until completion of this project; all consent forms will be shredded. Learner's names will not be used in connection with the research findings. Participants are free to terminate their participation at any time.

Audio taping: The discussion group will be video recorded for the purpose of transcribing the results of the meeting. The recordings will be viewed and heard only for research purposes by the investigator or her associates. Learner's names will then be eliminated from any documented files of the research results.

Contact for questions:

Principal investigator: Elias Malindi

Cell: 0721154855

Email: emalindi@nwpg.gov.za

Signature: I have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures and possible benefits and risks. I understand that I have the opportunity to ask questions at any time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Printed name of learner

Signature of learner

Date

APPENDIX E: TEACHERS CONSENT FORM

You have been asked to participate in a research study. The form provides you with information about the study. The student who is a principal investigator will also be available to answer all of your questions. Please read the information below. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to leave at any time and there will be no adverse effects on the relations to your school.

Title of Research Study: The use of cell phones by selected high school learners in the Mahikeng area.

Objectives of the study are to:

- To evaluate various ways in which learners use cell phones.
- To examine learners' awareness of the threats and dangers associated with cell phones
- To determine teachers and parents' understanding of the use of cell phones by learners.

Student involvement: Teachers will be asked to participate in a discussion group with other teachers from their school. They will be asked questions about their use of cell phones and social problems brought by the advent of these cell phones. The setting will be an informal discussion group. The discussion will last approximately 1 and half hour.

Possible benefits: Teachers may become more aware about effects posed by ICT devices on learners.

Confidentiality: Teachers confidentiality will be protected by eliminating teachers' names from all research records. Your consent form will be kept strictly confidential and housed at the University's Communication Department until completion of this project; all consent forms will be shredded. Teacher's names will not be used in connection with the research findings. Participants are free to terminate their participation at any time.

Audio taping: The discussion group will be video recorded for the purpose of transcribing the results of the meeting. The recordings will be viewed and heard only for research purposes by the investigator or her associates. Teacher's names will then be eliminated from any documented files of the research results.

Contact for questions:

Principal investigator: Elias Malindi
Cell: 0721154855
Email: emalindi@nwpg.gov.za

Signature: I have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures and possible benefits and risks. I understand that I have the opportunity to ask questions at any time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Printed name of teacher

Signature of teacher

Date

APPENDIX F: PARENTS CONSENT FORM

You have been asked to participate in a research study. The form provides you with information about the study. The student who is a principal investigator will also be available to answer all of your questions. Please read the information below. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to leave at any time and there will be no adverse effects on the relations to your school.

Title of Research Study: The use of cell phones by selected high school learners in the Mahikeng area.

Objectives of the study are to:

- To evaluate various ways in which learners use cell phones.
- To examine learners' awareness of the threats and dangers associated with cell phones
- To determine teachers and parents' understanding of the use of cell phones by learners.

Student involvement: Parents will be asked to participate in a discussion group with other teachers from their school. They will be asked questions about their use of cell phones and social problems brought by the advent of these cell phones. The setting will be an informal discussion group. The discussion will last approximately 1 and half hour.

Possible benefits: Parents may become more aware about effects posed by ICT devices on learners.

Confidentiality: Parents confidentiality will be protected by eliminating parents' names from all research records. Your consent form will be kept strictly confidential and housed at the University's Communication Department until completion of this project; all consent forms will be shredded. Parent's names will not be used in connection with the research findings. Participants are free to terminate their participation at any time.

Audio taping: The discussion group will be video recorded for the purpose of transcribing the results of the meeting. The recordings will be viewed and heard only for research purposes by the investigator or her associates. Parent's names will then be eliminated from any documented files of the research results.

Contact for questions:

Principal investigator: Elias Malindi
Cell: 0721154855
Email: emalindi@nwpg.gov.za

Signature: I have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures and possible benefits and risks. I understand that I have the opportunity to ask questions at any time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Printed name of parent

Signature of parent

Date



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**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER:
BRANCH: DISTRICT AND PROFESSIONAL OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

Enquiries: Ms M.J. Mogotsi

To: Mr M.E. Malindi
Masters Student in Communication
North West University: Mafikeng Campus

From: Mr M.A. Seakamela
Chief Operations Officer
Districts and Professional Operational Services

Date: 09 April 2010

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Please be informed that permission has been granted for you to conduct research at six identified Mafikeng High Schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema District. Approval is therefore granted under the following conditions:

- That consultation with schools/learners identified is done
- That any publication of information pertaining to the department should be done with the permission from the department.
- That learning and teaching process is not compromised
- That service delivery is not compromised
- That the department be favoured with the outcomes of the research

Your input in contributing to the betterment of education is appreciated

Kind regards

Duly signed

Mr M.A. Seakamela
Chief Operations Officer
Districts and Professional Operational Services