An exploration of the influence that WhatsApp usage has on family relations among young adults: A case of Mamotitlhane village

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Graduation: May 2024

DECLARATION

I declare that “An exploration of the influence that WhatsApp usage has on family relations among young adults: A case of Mamotitlhane village” is my work, that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged using complete references, and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

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Signature: 

Date : 22 February 2024

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Selina Mabitsela; my son, Tinyiko Carswell Mabitsela; and my sister, Maggie Molepo, for their encouragement and unremitting moral support. This work would only be completed because of their love and continual encouragement.

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First, I thank God for giving me the spirit of resilience and courage never to give up. This dissertation could not have been possible without the support of the following people and institution:

- My supervisor, Professor N.H. Ntombela, I am truly grateful for her guidance, dedication, and endless efforts.
- The research participants: this study would not have been conducted without them.
- The sentinels of Mamotintane village for allowing me to conduct the study in their area and for providing a venue for meetings and interviews.
- The North-West University for allowing me to complete this study.

Abstract

Young adults in South Africa use WhatsApp as a communication tool. WhatsApp popularity has increased because many young people have ported to it. WhatsApp is a communication applications that enable the swift transmission of messages, images, and videos, hence facilitating interpersonal connections. While it has yielded numerous advantages, these advantages have been accompanied by a cost. Individuals allocate an excessive amount of time to engaging in social networking activities, resulting in challenges in maintaining focus on interpersonal , social ,communication skills and academic responsibilities.

There is a monumental gap about the disadvantages of extensive use of WhatsApp among young adults, which results in psychological, emotional, social and health effects. The study aimed to describe and ascertain the experiences of young adults regarding their usage of WhatsApp within their family contexts and determine the challenges they encounter daily in Mamotintane Village. The aim of the study was therefore divided into three objectives, which were: To describe the experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts; to ascertain WhatsApp usage's influence on young adults and their family relations and to determine the challenges that young adults encounter when using WhatsApp on their daily basis within their family setting

The research followed a qualitative research approach , qualitative descriptive design and Atlas. ti. software to analyse the qualitative findings .Twelve (12) participants from the ages of 18 -24 years were selected using purposive sampling. Participants were selected from Mamotintane village in Mankweng. The findings of this study show that WhatsApp influences family relations consisting of loss of family connection and relationship, loss of home guidance and advice and dependency on external others. One of the difficulties young people encounter is social withdrawal, which progresses to a high rate of social isolation. Participants experienced the loss of family culture, whereby WhatsApp usage promoted a culture of individualism.

It emerged from the data that the loss of family traditions and values was one challenge faced by young adults in their family setting. WhatsApp has shifted the way young adults are doing things with their families. It has stolen their social interaction

with their significant other, and all family norms and values, such as communication and interpersonal skills, have gradually faded.

The study also revealed effective strategies to eliminate irregular WhatsApp usage and cope with their challenges: Set boundaries and strict phone rules, WhatsApp education, consistent family gatherings and communications and encourage privacy settings. On the contrary, family meetings foster a sense of autonomy while maintaining family connections and good communication skills.

Keywords: *Young adults, WhatsApp, family , challenges, effective strategies*

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The introduction of digital technology and the proliferation of smartphones have spawned a variety of communication applications that have revolutionised how people interact with one another. WhatsApp, a cross-platform messaging service that has become an integral part of the daily lives of millions of people around the globe (Statista, 2021), is an example of an application that has gained immense popularity. WhatsApp had over 2 billion monthly active users as of 2021, making it one of the most popular messaging platforms (Statista, 2021). Consequently, its impact on various aspects of human communication and relationships has become a subject of growing interest among researchers and academics.

WhatsApp.Inc. was developed in 2009, has become the most prominent and usable texting application, with more than 1500 million users (Statista, 2017). WhatsApp is an instant messaging app many people use to engage with their significant others (Giang ,2019: 503-516). Most individuals utilise it for divergent intentions, but it is vague whether this social network is beneficial or has harmful effects on family relations, unlike other social media platforms. Braghieri & Makarin (2022) found that social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Mxit have negative effects on society as they increase the rate of cyberbullying, human trafficking, depression, and suicide. These social networks have various merits but also have some demerits that affect people negatively. Social networks abuse society by invading people's privacy; some blogs can influence youth to become violent and take inappropriate actions (Shaboor et al., 2021). Facebook, Twitter, Mxit, and Snapchat foster a false sense of online "connections" and superficial friendships, leading to emotional and psychological problems .In 2012, initial evidence indicated that overall Facebook usage was associated with viewing others' lives as better than one's own life (Chou & Edge 2012). Subsequent research supported a direct connection between Facebook usage and negative comparison tendencies (Jang et al., 2016, Lee 2014), particularly among people who are less happy (de Vries & Kühne 2015). In addition, other studies have shown that these effects are especially salient for individuals who tend to compare

themselves to others in general (Vogel et al. 2015, Wang et al. 2017). Combined, a wide body of research has now demonstrated that social comparison orientation acts as a pivotal moderator for comparisons (de Vries et al. 2018, Park & Baek 2018), affirming the power of individual differences in social media effects . The second harm of these social networks is that a person can become easily addicted and take away family and personal time as well as diminish interpersonal skills, leading to antisocial behaviour (Anspach & Carlson,2020).

Ninety- two (92) % of young people in South Africa utilise WhatsApp as a communication tool. WhatsApp is the favourable app to be installed on South African mobile phones, making an effective connection for its users. WhatsApp's popularity has increased because many young people have ported to it (Global WebIndex, 2021). Approximately 90% of young adults worldwide with internet access use the WhatsApp application (Iqbal, 2019). Digital and social media have become important modalities through which young adults explore identity formation and, by extension, learn and transit norms about self-conception, health, and risk behaviours during their developmental stages (Villanti, Johnson, Ilakkuvan, Jacobs, Graham, and Rath, 2017:01). Young adults are actively and interactively constructing and reconstructing their identities; establishing relationships; as well as challenging and transforming cultural norms in online contexts (Steele,Louzada, Millett, Monteiro, & Levy, 2020:15-26).

The current generation is growing up in an ever more connected world with evolving social-media landscapes, which they turn to distort doing things the olden ways. The ubiquitous use of WhatsApp affects their sense of self and others (Dhahir,2020). Hamutoglu, Topal, & Gezgin (2020) point out that an important development factor during adolescence is that young adults become more self-conscious and increasingly concerned about who they are. They are old enough to understand the concept of society and place themselves in society while maintaining their individuality at the same time. They also go through significant bodily changes, which lead to the development of self-concept. Thus, self-concept is an important concern for people of this age because they do not see themselves as fit for society or may find incongruence between their real and ideal selves (Abdelrahman,2020). According to Erik Erikson's Stages of Development, during adolescence, teens may face much psychological discomfort as they go through an "identity crisis". He proposes that

during this stage, teens battle between identity and identity confusion as they struggle to identify personality characteristics that are unique to them. Failing to develop a suitable identity can cause distress and harm their later social functioning. The excessive usage of WhatsApp by the young generation affects their personality factors. Due to this use, the four personality factors that are affected by excessive use of WhatsApp include the need for popularity to feel good about self, unreal standards of appearance, approval-seeking behaviour, social/personality behaviour (e.g., fear of missing out), and increasing depression and anxiety (Ashiru et al., 2022).

This dissertation aimed to describe the influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in Mamotintane Village. The study ascertained how the platform has affected communication patterns, emotional connections, and overall family dynamics in the community. By doing so, the research contributed to the growing body of literature on the social implications of digital communication platforms, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

1.2 Problem statement

Family relationships are integral to the social fabric of any community, and the village of Mamontintane is no exception. In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the use of WhatsApp among young adults in the village, which has significantly impacted family dynamics (Mamontintane et al., 2022). Previous studies have indicated that technology-mediated communication, such as WhatsApp, can positively and negatively affect interpersonal relationships (Smith et al., 2020; Mihailidis & Cohen, 2019). The exponential growth of WhatsApp use globally by young adults has given rise to a number of challenges. One of these challenges is that it affects their social,interpersonal, communication skills and family relationships. However, there is a paucity of research focusing on the specific implications of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in rural communities such as Mamontintane Village. Pimmer (2021) states that the use of WhatsApp by young adults had markedly higher levels of knowledge, greater resilience as well as lower levels of professional isolation . A further interesting result is that the general, day-to-day use of WhatsApp outside of the intervention was linked to higher levels of resilience. Whatsapp has also a profound negative impact on youth and adversely affects their education, behavior and routine lives (Bhatt & Arshad, 2016). It is a particularly common problem among young adults as demonstrated by international studies (Lee et al., 2007; Irfan, 2019 and,

Sharma & Shukla, 2016). The most burning issue in this study arises from young people's rapid escalation of WhatsApp usage, intensifying numerous predicaments. One of the difficulties young people encounter is social withdrawal, which progresses to a high rate of social isolation (Hamzah, 2018:646)

So far, the focus has been placed on understanding the impact of these community networking sites on the learning outcomes (Farooq et al., 2019). However, little has been done to understand the influence and effects on young adults and their family relations. On the other hand, terrific growth in using these websites and devices in South Africa has also been witnessed. However, limited research has been conducted so far to assess the influence of WhatsApp usage on youngsters' social lives, especially the effects it has on their family relations. This thesis contributes to the knowledge gap that has been identified to understand the influence and effects on WhatsApp usage among young adults and their family relations and filling a gap of prior research studies on the topic.

1.3 Aim of the study

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design to describe the experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts; to ascertain WhatsApp usage's influence on young adults and their family relations and to determine the challenges that young adults encounter when using WhatsApp on their daily basis within their family setting.

1.3.1 Objectives of the study

- To depict the experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts.
- To ascertain WhatsApp usage's influence on young adults and their family relations.
- To identify the challenges young adults encounter daily in their family setting.

1.3.2 Research questions

- What are the experiences of young adults subjected to using WhatsApp within their family contexts?
- What influence does WhatsApp usage have on family relations among young adults?

- What challenges do young adults face when using WhatsApp within their family setting?

1.4 Contribution of the study

The study's focal point was to describe the influence of WhatsApp use on young adults and their family relations. It is carried out to ascertain the influences and impacts of WhatsApp usage on young adults and their family . Being acquitted with this information will aid parents, social workers, psychologists, and the government in finding communicable solutions and executing appropriate measures and approaches to assist individuals to prevent the harmful effects of WhatsApp. Humanity may also gain from the study by acquiring accurate information about the predicaments and catastrophic outcomes of the overuse of WhatsApp and how to cope and deal with those experiences. This will increase baseline knowledge about the positive and negative effects of WhatsApp use among young adults on their family relations in Mamotintane village.

The study may also contribute by assisting researchers and policy developers to have knowledge about the subject in their field and discover how WhatsApp use affects young adults and their relations within the context of their families. Society will also benefit from the study by acquiring more information about the subject and learning about the challenges of WhatsApp use and coping measures of WhatsApp addiction. The study may benefit the social work profession by understanding WhatsApp use's challenges, coping measures, and its impacts on young adults. It will help the human and social sciences sectors develop theories and apply relevant approaches and programs to assist young people addicted to social media. It will further help the social work profession in their academic discipline to acquire information that will help them to promote social behavioural change among young adults. It is necessary to increase the knowledge of young people about the dangers lurking on social networks such as WhatsApp and introduce educational programs to solve this problem. By doing so, the research contribute to the growing body of literature on the social implications of digital communication platforms, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

1.5 Type of research

1.5.1 Research approach and design

The researcher used a qualitative approach to acquire information about the influence of WhatsApp use among young adults and their family relations from the research study participants. The researcher acknowledged and understood the participant's experiences as they perceived them from their reality. A qualitative research approach was adopted to outline and investigate the effects of WhatsApp use on family relations among young adults between the ages of 18 to 24 years and to identify the challenges encountered when using the application and ways that can be implemented to ascertain the befitting utilisation of WhatsApp among young adults. The study sought to discover conscious and unconscious experiences of youngsters using WhatsApp within the family setting.

The research design that was used in the study is qualitative descriptive design (QD); According to Laukshear and Kuobel (as cited by Seabi, 2012:81), a design can be defined as a procedure or a guideline for doing something under certain conditions to accomplish a task. QD design aims to provide a complete, understandable summary of specific events experienced by individuals or groups (Sandelowski, 2021:336). In this study, the researcher intended to describe the influence of WhatsApp use among young adults on family relations.

The descriptive study involves a direct investigation of the research background problem and to get the required information needed to carry out the study (Copper, 2021:01). Descriptive studies record the aspect of activity that is happening (Cope & Murray, 2021:01). The researcher implemented the descriptive research method through interviews to acquire relevant information and to discover the emic view or the insider's perspective. Arena & Relieu (2021) state that the emic view means a person perceives the world as the individual sees it. Emic views are shared perceptions of cultural knowledge from the normative perspective (Scarduzio, 2017).

1.5.2 Population

Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 in Mamotintane village formed part of the target population for this study, as they all have something in common and reflect the same characteristics and hold innate identity traits; these include their family relationships, values, norms, and experience of WhatsApp use. Most young adults between the ages of 18-24 in Mamotintane village use WhatsApp to share information

concerning their issues of interest compared to other ages; hence, it might have positive and negative impacts on their family relationships. Some use WhatsApp to communicate with friends, relatives, and classmates; the area will help the researcher reach the right target group for the study compared to other villages. Young adults in this village are a suitable group to focus on. They are the future and are expected to carry their African family values and norms and pass them on to succeeding generations. Mamotintane village is near the University of Limpopo, where young adults between 18-24 have enrolled. The village has many young adults with smartphone access compared to other villages. WhatsApp is popular among university undergraduate students, and students use WhatsApp for personal and social purposes daily and have access to smartphones (Berg & Mudau, 2022:114). Young adults, especially scholars, are the most passionate utilisers of WhatsApp and other social media platforms (Budree et al., 2019).

The researcher selected the village because it consists of the relevant population for the study and will ensure the authenticity of the data whereby it will convey different realities about participants' lives. Participants will give diverse perspectives about the topic. The participants were selected from the village as a study sample to ensure and verify that the study becomes rich, unique and authentic. The village consists of relevant participants who can illuminate the phenomenon being studied. There is a gap in the literature about the study phenomena and insufficient research about the village; due to that, the village is considered suitable to conduct the study to close the gap in the scientific literature about the topic. The area is also selected due to the researcher's view that young people are fervent users of WhatsApp, and the influence of the application can be positive or negative compared to other areas. They will have relevant information about the study and reflect on their lived experiences.

1.5.3 Sample and sampling method

The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, was the intended choice of study participants due to the qualities the participants possess. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants (Obilor ,2023). Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by knowledge or experience. On the other hand, De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport (2011: 392) maintain that this type of sampling method is based on the researcher's

judgement that the participants contain the most characteristics or are the most representative population for the study. In this study, participants from the ages of 18 -24 years were selected. There was no specific gender for participation; all genders participated in the study. The researcher selected participants from Mamotintane village who were fervent users of WhatsApp. The study focus was on 10-12 participants.

Purposive sampling structures were used in choosing participants suitable for the study. The sampling was used to identify if a particular trait or characteristic exists in a group. The purposive technique was adopted to target the right people with the correct information for my study. Hence, the researcher selected relevant people that form the purposive of my study. The sample of this study was made up of young adults in Mamotintane village between the age of 18-24 years (women and men) who are using WhatsApp. Young people, especially scholars, are the most passionate utilisers of WhatsApp and other social media platforms (Budree et al., 2019).

WhatsApp utilisation is prominent among young adults between 18-35 because they use most social media platforms to communicate and interact more frequently than older age groups (Ainin et al., 2018). According to Yun (2019:2), the ideal standard for qualitative sample size to interview to redundancy (Schesul & Le Compte, as cited by Trotter, 2012: 399) (redundancy is the process of sequentially conducting interviews until all concepts are repeated multiple times without new concepts or themes emerging) or to interview to saturation (a point at which all questions have been thoroughly explored in detail, no new concepts or themes emerge in subsequent interviews). The number of participants suggested by the proponents of the nominated sampling is between 10 -12 (Trotter, 2021:399). In the study, the sample size was determined by both redundancy and saturation and by enumerated stance, i.e. in the study, the minimum number of participants was set, and it depended on the redundancy and saturation of information. The targeted number of participants for this research was 12, all of them were interviewed. The sampling size will depended on the saturation of information collected from the participants. The general principle that guided sample size was saturation of data or redundancy of data. At this point, a researcher was no longer encountering new information. The search for further information from participants seems futile, and the researcher ceased the data collection procedure (Gibbs, 2007:151). The reason for selecting 12 participants is

because of the research design of phenomenology, which suggested that the number of participants should be between 5 to 25 (Mckenzie, 2019:6).

1.5.4 Inclusion & exclusion criteria

Participation principles are the main features of the population that the researcher will use to evaluate and examine study questions (Patino & Ferreira, 2018:84). David (2017) defines inclusion criteria as characteristics that potential participants must have to participate in the study. Demographic and geographic characteristics are examples of inclusion criteria (Patino & Ferreira, 2018:84). It is vital to establish inclusion criteria because it assists in ensuring that participants can provide you with relevant information to tackle or answer your research questions (David, 2017).

To take part in this study:

- Participants should be young adults between the ages of 18 and 24.
- Prospective partakers should be individuals who are community members of Mamotintane village and live with families.
- Participants should have access to mobile phones and be fervent users of WhatsApp daily.
- Participants should be proficient in Sepedi and English.

Exclusion criteria are regarded as requirements and similarities that the participants must pertain to the study but do not have differences that make them not qualify to participate. (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). By definition, if a person does not adhere to an inclusion criterion, they will be excluded.

Criteria are set out as follows:

- Participants who are below or above the ages of 18 and 24
- Partakers who are not community members of Mamotintane village and do not live with families
- Participants who do not have access to mobile phones and are not fervent users of WhatsApp on a daily basis
- Participants who are not proficient in Sepedi and English

1.5.5 Research instruments

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to obtain data about the influence of WhatsApp use among young adults in their family relations and identify measures that can be adopted to ascertain the befitting use of WhatsApp among young adults. According to Doody and Noonan (as cited by Bradshaw et al., 2017:4), interviews enable the researcher to discover and uncover the story behind a participant's experiences and thoroughly engage in-depth information around the research questions.

1.5.6 Data analysis methods

According to Creswell (2016), Data analysis is a method used to assess facts or details in a correct method. Thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data. It is usually applied to look at the data to recognise themes, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come repetitively (Caulfield,2021). In this study, facts would be examined or discovered using the Thematic Analysis to discover young adults' views, opinions, experiences, and knowledge through Semi-structured interviews about the research topic. An inductive approach will be used to allow the data to determine themes.

1.5.7 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness or rigour of the study refers to the point of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Conelly, 2016). Maintaining trustworthiness in a prospective study will adhere to the four components of data trustworthiness: Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and Authenticity.

Credibility is defined as a strategy in qualitative studies applied to determine how trustworthy the research findings and data analysis process are (Korstjens & Albertine 20180). The study's credibility depends on how accurate and valid the information gathered by the researcher is. The researcher should ask him /herself that the information gathered is valid and relevant without making any mistakes. Credibility will be ensured by prolonged engagement with participants, persistent observations, and member–checking. Collected data about the impact of WhatsApp usage on family relations will be examined several times to ensure credibility. The researcher will return to some of the participants to ascertain whether the transcribed data was a truthful version of their experiences. The researcher will interview the participants to the point of data saturation (prolonged engagement). The researcher will use an external co-

coder to ensure that collected data and evidence will be examined several times by the researcher and co-coder to ensure its credibility and avoid the risk of bias in the study.

Nowell et al. (2017:1–13) state that dependability means that if anyone can conduct the study many times, it will produce the same findings. The study findings of the research will be consistent and repeatable. Data analysis for the study will be conducted accurately, consistently, and extensively by recording and revealing the analysis methods with enough detail to enable other researchers to determine the study's credibility.

According to Polit &Beck, cited by Connelly (2016:436) is a point where the details in the study are unbiased, consistent, and could be recurring. The steps and details of data analysis will be given or outlined to ascertain the study's accuracy provided by the researcher. The researcher must keep detailed notes of all the decisions made due to data analysis. In this study, the notes /memos will be reviewed by a third-party person to prevent biases from the researcher. This will determine the study's originality and prove that participants depicted all the information gathered.

Based on Polit &Beck (2006), cited by Connelly (2016:436), authenticity is the point whereby the researchers convey the originality and truth about the information shared by the participants about their experiences, perceptions, and opinions in a good manner or how it was portrayed. Appropriate participants study sample will be selected to ensure the provision of accurate and detailed descriptions to ensure the study becomes genuine, credible, authentic, and worthwhile and contributes to the field of study.

1.6 Scope and Demarcation of the Study

Mamotintane village is situated north of Mankweng, in Limpopo province. Mamotintane is a tribal area that falls under the kingship of Makgoši Mamabolo and is ruled by Headman (Induna) Mathosa KS. The population groups are Black.. Most community members speak Sepedi, followed by Xitsonga, Tshivenda and English. The community consists of many young adults enrolled at the University of Limpopo who are fervent social media users, particularly WhatsApp.

The scope of this study was focused on understanding the influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in Mamotintane Village. The research would specifically address the following aspects:

a) The patterns of WhatsApp usage among young adults in Mamotintane Village, including the frequency of use, types of communication (example, text messages, voice calls, video calls), and purposes (example., family updates, emotional support, conflict resolution).

b) The impact of WhatsApp use on communication dynamics within family units, exploring both the positive and negative aspects of the platform on family interactions.

c) The emotional aspects of family relationships, including closeness, trust, and understanding, as influenced by WhatsApp use among young adults in Mamotintane Village.

d) The potential benefits and drawbacks of WhatsApp use on family relationships in the context of Mamotintane Village, with recommendations to maximise positive outcomes and minimise negative consequences.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Limitations

The limitations of the study included the following: Young adults were sampled from one village , which is a predominantly Sepedi-speaking community . Since mostly Sepedi-speaking participants were asked questions, not all South African cultural views were incorporated. The research was focused on one community l in Mankweng and did not include any other participants from other provincial areas. This could limit the ability to generalize.

Delimitations

The study was conducted in Mamotintane village in Mankweng and never focused on other surrounding villages.

- Only young adults who were community members of Mamotintane village were included in the study.
- All members were under 18-24 and living with families.
- The study focused on young adults, not all age groups.

1.8 Ethical Consideration

The following process was adhered to conduct the study:

- The ethics committee of North West University approved the study**,** Ethics Number: NWU-00079-22-S1
- The researcher approached the two sentinels of Mamotintane village, namely the Induna of the village and the community councillor. The researcher met face-to-face with them to request legal permission to conduct the study. The researcher received approval letter to conduct the study im Mamotintane village.
- The researcher discussed with the fieldworker from Mamahlo Home-based Care; with the field worker's approval, she was informed that she would be the negotiator between the researcher, participants, and community. The field worker was selected as an independent person because she is neutral. The mediator was a Social Worker from an NGO (Centre for Positive Care) in Polokwane; the Social Worker was selected because she had no influence on participants and had extensive knowledge of presentations and research processes.
- The researcher briefed the mediator about the study and informed consent so that it would not be difficult to understand when she explained it to the gatekeepers and community members. The mediator encountered prospective participants at the community hall because it served as a neutral place for members. The researcher outlined the study's goal and the significance of voluntary participation. The mediator explained the consent form in full.
- The consent form was only given to people who are interested in the study to avoid the form being published to entire community members.
- The participants were given 48 hours to decide whether to participate in the study. The participants communicated with the independent person to show their interest in the study.
- The independent person obtained the consent forms from the participants to ensure their free will accord and willingness to be part of the study. The independent person of the study explained to the participants what the study was about and clarified the informed consent to them so that they understood what was expected of them during the interview and for how long it would take

place. The researcher used one Independent person throughout the research for convenience and to avoid introducing too many professionals to the study, which may confuse the participants.

- Informed consent :participants were fully informed of what will be asked of the and how the data will be used .The participants provided explicit, active, signed consent to taking part with the research, including understanding their rights to access to their information and the right to withdraw at any point.

1.9 Definitions of terms

The terms' definitions are vital in the study because they give the readers a clear picture of and depict the meanings. The following terms were defined as follows:

1.9.1 **Social Media**

The term “Social media” is defined as an application that allows users to converse and interact with each other; to create, edit and share new forms of textual, visual, and audio content; and to categorise, label, and recommend existing forms of content (Selwyn, 2012).

1.9.2 **WhatsApp**

WhatsApp is the most prominent and usable texting application, with over 1500 million users (Statista, 2017). WhatsApp is an instant messaging application that offers users surfing an Internet connection and access to share videos, audio, images, and written messages (Sulemana, 2018).

1.9.3 **Family Relations**

A family relation entails reciprocal action between family members. It typically includes living together, communicating, caring for each other, dealing with challenges, and carrying forward family values. Family relation means discovering commonalities, mutual understanding, cooperation, and respect are crucial to having a strong family bond.

1.9.4 **Young Adults**

A young adult is generally a person in her developmental stages between the ages of 18-25. It is a person in the adolescent stage or late teenage years (Definitions.net. 2021).

1.10 Theoretical Framework

According to Osanloo & Grant (2016), the theoretical framework is the "blueprint" for the dissertation inquiry. It provides the structure for defining how you will approach the dissertation from a philosophical, epistemological, methodological, and analytic standpoint (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). Osanloo & Grant (2016) state that a theoretical framework is derived from an extant theory (or theories) in the literature that has been tested and validated by others and is generally accepted in the scholarly literature. (Osanloo & Grant, 2016) The selection of a theoretical framework requires a thorough and reflective understanding of the research problem, purpose, significance, and research questions. It is crucial that all four constructs—the problem, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions—are tightly aligned and intricately interwoven so that the theoretical framework can serve as the basis for the researcher's work and guide his/her choice of research design and data analysis (Osanloo and Grant, 2016).

The researcher incorporated the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) into this investigation. UGT examines how individuals select media that satisfies their requirements, allowing them to achieve gratifications such as knowledge enhancement, entertainment and relaxation, social interaction, and reward or compensation (Ko et al., 2005). UGT was one of the first approaches to consider the audience's active role in media selection, proposing that individuals actively seek out, identify with, and use media to satisfy particular gratification requirements (Ku et al., 2013). This viewpoint acknowledges that media consumers are active rather than passive recipients.

Uses and gratification are frequently viewed as a counterpoint to more deterministic media theories, which hold that media has certain effects (Matei, 2010). In other words, it qualifies or even overcomes the difficulties associated with claims that media exposure alone leads to specific behaviours, sometimes without the user's conscious control (Matei, 2010). According to the Uses and Gratifications theory, users/media consumers actively choose specific content based on their requirements (Matei, 2010). If there are any effects, they are either deliberate or at least actionable. Nevertheless, the theory of uses and gratification can be seen to operate on two levels of abstraction and complexity (Matei, 2010). On one level, U&G theory can be viewed as a giant mosaic composed of pieces that the researcher can assemble based on his

or her requirements and imagination (Matei, 2010). On the other hand, it can be viewed as a puzzle in which the bewildering complexity of the media use tableau's pieces can only fit together in a specific manner. The first interpretation is more prevalent, whereas the second is more grounded in theory (Matei, 2010). The underlying assumption of UGT is that users are actively engaged in media utilisation, and the theory has become increasingly relevant in studies of media channels that permit consumer choice and interaction, such as social media (Ruggiero,2000).

This theory was necessary because it endeavours to explain the gratifications consumers seek in a particular medium and their perceptions and affinity for that medium's content (Ruggiero, 2000). It also recognises that various individuals can use the same medium for different purposes (Roy, 2009). Applying the UGT to social networking sites is crucial to contemporary mass communication research because this form of mass media is relatively new compared to newspapers, radio, and television (Ruggiero, 2000).

According to this theory, individuals are not passive recipients of media messages but active influencers of the message effect. That is, consumers of media messages are free to choose how they will use and be affected by the media (Rubin, 2002). Audiences selectively choose, attend to, perceive, and retain media messages to influence the effect process actively. Thus, the emphasis is on media consumption rather than production and transmission functions. Instead of asking, "What types of effects occur and under what conditions?" the question becomes "who utilises which content, from which media, under what circumstances, and for what purposes?" (Rubin, 2002). UGT indicates a positive correlation between social media usage and the satisfaction derived from such activity. Similar intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivate social media consumers (Amarasinghe, 2010). In addition, he listed five reasons for utilising social media: meeting new people, entertainment, social events, relationship maintenance, and media creation.

According to Ruggiero (2002), the deregulation of the media and the convergence of mass media and digital technology have altered how individuals are exposed to the media. New media gives users more options and opportunities to appreciate and utilise media. Using the new media, people actively combine multiple motivations to satisfy their desires and aspirations, appropriately termed gratifications. This also occurs when they utilise SNS.

Therefore, the purposes and gratifications approach is an effective method for analysing the motivations and influence of WhatsApp on family relationships. From a uses and gratifications perspective, SNS offers a wide variety of entertainment and informational content; therefore, those who utilise their services and resources should be able to fulfil a broad variety of needs (Lederman and Lederman, 2015). The competition between participation in social media networks affects young adults' social interactions and family relationships. This suggests that the amount of time young adults devote to social media could affect their time with their significant others and, consequently, their family relationships. Theoretical frameworks are essential to all our work, whether quantitative, qualitative, or blended methods are employed. All research articles must have a valid theoretical framework to justify the significance and relevance of their work (Lederman , 2015).

1.11 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provided an overview of the research topic and the rationale for the study. It begun by introducing the significance of WhatsApp as a widely-used messaging platform and its potential impact on family relationships. The research objectives were presented, followed by an explanation of the study's relevance to the academic community, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Lastly, the chapter outlined the scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will critically review existing literature on the impact of digital communication platforms, particularly WhatsApp, on interpersonal relationships and family dynamics. It will begin with a discussion of the general effects of technology-mediated communication on relationships and then narrow the focus to studies specifically examining the influence of WhatsApp. The chapter will also highlight gaps in the literature, particularly about the study of rural communities like Mamotintane Village, and how the current research aims to address those gaps.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter will describe the research design and methodology employed in the study, focusing on the qualitative approach. It will detail the data collection techniques, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observations. This chapter

will also discuss the sampling techniques, data analysis procedures (e.g., thematic analysis, content analysis), and ethical considerations. Additionally, the chapter will present the research questions that guide the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

This chapter will present and analyse the findings from the qualitative data collection. The data will be organised into themes and sub-themes based on the research questions and the emerging patterns observed during the analysis process. The chapter will provide a detailed account of the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships in Mamontintane Village. The findings would be interpreted in light of the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter will summarise the study's main findings and discuss their implications for understanding the influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in rural communities. It will highlight the study's contributions to the existing literature and suggest areas for future research. The chapter will also provide recommendations for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders, based on the insights gained from the research, to help mitigate potential negative effects and maximise the benefits of WhatsApp use for family relationships in similar communities.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Booth (2021), a literature review studies what has already been written on a particular topic. It presents the results of other studies closely related to the study. Comparative and contrasting studies are appropriate to this study (Booth, 2021). A literature review must be done to measure new-found research against current literature concerning the same topic (Cooper & Both, 2018:02). DePoy & Gitlin (2005) state that reviewing the literature is a significant thinking and auction process worldwide. This chapter considers the constructs of the study and examines previous research on similar studies conducted. It is based on WhatsApp, the influence of WhatsApp on family relationships, the experiences of young adults using WhatsApp, and to determine the challenges of young adults using WhatsApp within their family setting.

2.2 The experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts.

According to Amaral, Flores,Antunes & Brites (2022:335) WhatsApp enables the simultaneous communication among young adults with their family members. The availability of multiple modalities enables individuals to select the most appropriate method of communication based on their own and shared preferences of the sender and recipient(s). Furthermore, the report asserts that extended families have specifically utilized WhatsApp as a means of engaging in daily phatic communion . In other words, rather than exchanging significant and crucial information, short WhatsApp messages serve to maintain social connections among family members who have conflicting daily schedules.

Ivan (2021) states that WhatsApp is widely recognized by young adults within their family contexts for its ability to enhance intergenerational family communication. The success of young adults utilizing WhatsApp in their family environment has attributed to two primary factors: firstly, the ability to communicate with the entire family simultaneously, and secondly, the capacity to foster "phatic communion" through concise messages. Family members consider the preferences and communication abilities of others while using different communication methods on WhatsApp, such as text and voice messages, images, and videos (Taipale, 2019).

Due to the diminished presence of social cues in WhatsApp interactions, young adults have experienced a decreased level of care for others' perceptions of them (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Hence, individuals are more inclined to share personal and private details with their close friends over WhatsApp rather than in face-to-face interactions. This, in turn, enhances the intimacy and closeness of these friendships (Trepte et al., 2018; Valkenburg & Peter, 2009a; Yau & Reich, 2018).

Young Adults have numerous opportunities to engage and maintain contact with their close friends through WhatsApp, irrespective of their location, be it at home, cooking or cleaning . WhatsApp has expressly encourage young adults to disclose their present thoughts, emotions, and encounters to their friends, so inviting prompt support or positive response from these friends (Bayer et al., 2016; Waterloo et al., 2017). Young Adults have never had such a chance before to instantly share several experiences with their close mates. Furthermore, individuals have never got such a chance to obtain a substantial amount of prompt affirmative input and emotional backing from these acquaintances when divulging their encounters (Bayer et al., 2016; Kahlow et al., 2020; Yau & Reich, 2018).

The excessive use of WhatsApp at home raised concerns about the issues of safety, privacy, and abuse. According to Blabst & Diefenbach (2017), the blue tick and last seen features of WhatsApp let users know about the last seen and activity of the respondent. This can cause or lead to arguments between the sender and recipient when respondents do not reply to WhatsApp messages after reading them (Blabst & Diefenbach, 2017). This leads to the disclosure of privacy and safety concerns. Despite the usefulness of WhatsApp, social media these days has become a Cyberbullying site where bullies get an opportunity to victimise people anywhere and anytime (Riccio, 2020). Morris (2012) states that 15-year-old Amanda Todd committed suicide after an online predator disseminated a screenshot of the young woman flashing her breasts to a webcam. This is also seen in South Africa at Mbilu High School, located in Limpopo, where a student committed suicide after a video of her being beaten by a schoolmate went viral.

Young people enjoy leisure experiences that cross normal boundaries of space and time, as a good part of their home activity has transferred into the digital setting. It is, therefore, understood that “the internet has substantially modified the free time and leisure of young people and shifted the norm of spending time with their significant

other" (Viñals & Cuenca, 2016). The use of WhatsApp among young adults has resulted in low-quality leisure within their family settings and situations where disadvantage is evident. The risks of this can include losing the sense of reality and dependence (Echeburúa and Corral, 2010; Sosa et al., 2019). In this way, young people face the freedom of digital networks to stay constantly connected with friends and quickly relate with strangers by sending instant messages rather than connecting with their significant other (Tejada, Castaño & Romero, 2019).

According to Chan, Yong, & Hamizi (2020), families have endured isolation and deprived attention of young people because they have shifted their focus more to WhatsApp. They use this tool as a communication method rather than physically engaging with one another. Since the affordances of WhatsApp fit into the overall ecosystem of human communication, the application has invaded family time and interactions.

The use of WhatsApp in family setting has resulted in fading away of social interactions among young adults with their significant others and irregular usage of WhatsApp (Brian, Primack & Miller,2017:01). The connection between children and their family members is no longer strong and effective because children's have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interacting with their parent's and parents no longer give attention to their kids, but rather spend quality time with their gadgets (Chan, Yong &Harmizi,2020:16-20). According to Wahab, Pasha, & Khan (2022), parents do not have any extra time for rest due to their busy schedules at work and travelling due to business, which is sometimes exacerbated by using mobile phones and other forms of technology. Parents are extremely pressured to maintain a work-family balance. Even though they do so to give their children a good life, they forget that it costs them time with their children (Yun, Thing & Hsoon, 2019:441-446). They expend much of their time on heavy workloads and job pressures. Conversely, children do not share their experiences, challenges academic performance, and daily lives with their parents (Bahmani, Naseri & Fariborzi, 2022:1-15). Mak et al. (2020) point out that parents make tremendous sacrifices to make a living, while at the same time, the children are ignored, creating communication barriers in the family and leading to disconnected family relations. Parent and child relations are perpetually fading away. Young adults suffer from psychological tension and withdrawal that leads

them to commit suicide and become victims of cyberbullying and find it hard to get help because they lack interaction with their significant others (Salgur,2016: 25).

Kibona & Mgaya (2015) examined the effects of WhatsApp on family relations. According to their results, 48% of the participants agreed that they use smartphones for about 5-7 hours per day on social communication sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp without considering that that time spent on the social network could have been used on interacting with family members to build quality time, help families to resolve conflict and creating a sense of belonging and hence yield negative results in family relationships because it creates zero interaction between siblings and parent-child. It starves the family of learning and modelling with each other social cues, interpersonal relationship skills, communication, and bonding (Faye, 2020:48). Lwin (2020) conducted another research about the effect of WhatsApp on family relationships. It was concluded that young adults spend more hours on social media than with family members, and most respondents use social media for social academic-related purposes. They spend 1-2 hours for study and 2-5 hours for spending on WhatsApp to socialise with people outside their environment. When young adults are home, they start chatting with their friends and talk less with their family. This has led to people spending their waking hours with their eyes glued to their phones, constantly catching up with someone else. This is leading to a rot in relationships.

Faye et al. (2020) examined the pattern of WhatsApp usage in a family setting. When the pattern of WhatsApp use was analysed, 37% of the participants reported a decline in time spent with young adults and family since they started using WhatsApp. About 24% reported impairment in fulfilling their responsibilities (household, family, other) compared to before, and 35% noticed that time spent on WhatsApp was increasing significantly daily. About 62% responded positively to the use of WhatsApp while doing personal or household chores, 26% of the participants agreed that they were having disturbances in work and social activities, 20% said that they have difficulty in bearing the absence of WhatsApp, and few (13%) noticed irritability and restlessness when they are unable to use it.

A study of the southern part of India (Chennai region) was conducted on the age group of 18 to 23 years to investigate the importance of WhatsApp among youth. This study found that students spent 8 hours daily on WhatsApp and remained online almost 16 hours a day. All the respondents agreed that they use WhatsApp to communicate with their friends rather than spend quality time with their family. The interaction between them and their significant others has deteriorated and faded away because of the fervent use of WhatsApp. They also use WhatsApp to exchange images, audio and video files with their friends. It was also proved that the only application the youth uses when spending time on their smartphone is WhatsApp (Mahesh, 2019:01).

Additionally, Nedelcu & Wyss (2016) found that social media can exacerbate feelings of pain, separation, and abandonment. By monitoring their parents' online activity, WhatsApp provides some children with evidence of parental neglect, resulting in negative or hurt emotions. Additionally, WhatsApp facilitates young people's expression of wounded emotions. Silence, brevity, and sometimes timing were strategic means of expressing feelings of pain, abandonment, or discontent with the treatment received. This demonstrates that while new communication technologies can empower youth, they may also complicate relationships, which can have negative consequences. The disadvantages of new media communication have received comparatively little attention, even though they have the potential to redefine transnational relationships and are thus worthy of further study.

According to Kiran & Srivastava (2018), teens are known to develop an addiction to WhatsApp as they continue to monitor their phones for new messages. As a result, individuals need help concentrating on essential tasks at home. Continued exposure to jokes and trolls can drive individuals insane. When someone on the other end of the line does not respond to the phone's messages, the mind becomes cluttered with numerous irrelevant inquiries.

Disengagement from the actual world: WhatsApp users lose touch with the outside world and are isolated from their family members; hence, they pay more attention to the app at home rather than spend quality time interacting with one another. Consequently, they become socially inaccessible and distant. Non-engagement with society harms the WhatsApp devotee (Kiran & Srivastava,2018:57).

As WhatsApp enables the simple and rapid transmission of links to news articles and videos of recent events in a young adult's environment, it is ideally suited to their needs. A 23-year-old woman from the village of Mamotintane used to send her partner nude and pornographic videos via WhatsApp while at home (StatsSA, 2019). Due to her excessive use of the app and her preference for spending time alone in her boudoir with her family, she became addicted to shooting pornographic videos and sharing them with her boyfriend. The boyfriend revealed the video, which went viral on WhatsApp and Facebook. This has caused the woman to experience psychological tension, resulting in a suicide attempt. This hurt her family because community members forwarded and shared it with family members and significant others. (StatsSA 2019).

2.3 WhatsApp usage's influence on young adults and their family relations

Young adults spend most of their time on WhatsApp for different purposes. It is believed that young adults who spend most of their time on WhatsApp for other reasons besides educational purposes are more likely to perform poorly in their social interaction and interpersonal skills. Englander et al. (2010) researched the cross-disciplinary perspective on explaining young adults' performance in introductory statistics. They discovered that young adults spend most of their time using WhatsApp for other purposes besides educational use, which affects their academic performance and social interpersonal skills. Nalwa & Anand (2003) agree with the above authors. They also state that young adults spend most of their time using the internet for their responsibilities, affecting their communication skills and social life. Mim et al. (2018) state that young adults' educational performance and social life increase by giving them more time to study and interact with their significant others and decrease by spending more time on social networking websites.

Kuma & Sharma (2016) conducted a study on the survey analysis of the usage and Impact of WhatsApp Messenger. They investigated the usage and effect of WhatsApp in the regions of Northern India. To obtain responses, they performed an internet-based survey using open-source Lime survey software and obtained responses (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). A total of 460 responses had been received, of which only 136 were considered for analysis. Those who have completed all questions and are more than 18 years of age (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). The users in India made a slow shift from all social networking sites to WhatsApp in a quick period. This survey results

show a significant impact of WhatsApp on its users (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). Around 66% of WhatsApp users believe that WhatsApp has improved their relationships with friends. More than 63% of its users think it is not harmful to them (Kuma and Sharma, 2016). WhatsApp was only utilised for communication and information; later, it was added for entertainment and family or friend connections (Gasaymeh, 2017).

Sulemana (2018) conducted a study about the importance of WhatsApp among youth between the ages of 18 to 23 years. The findings revealed that young adults spent 8 hours per day using WhatsApp and remained online almost 16 hours daily. All the participants agreed that they use WhatsApp to communicate with their friends. They also use WhatsApp to exchange images, audio, and video files with friends. It was also proved that the only application that youth use when spending time on their smartphone is WhatsApp (Sulemana, 2018).

Uys et al. (2012) examined smartphone application usage among young adults at a South African University. The study aimed to evaluate the usage of social media applications in South African universities. Their findings revealed that young adults spend an average of five hours daily on their smartphones, communicating with others through social media applications. According to Business Standards in its news on March 3, 2014, the combined usage of WhatsApp and Facebook contributes to over half an hour per day to the overall time spent on smartphones. Abdul and Al-Daboubi (2014) wanted to view the impact of social networking sites on applied science university students. Their research revealed that young adults spend around two to three hours per day on social networking sites, which has resulted in them neglecting their interaction with their significant other and family relations are no longer tangible and solid (Grolar & Schenck 2009:120). Grobler (2009) state that the interaction of a person and family members is vital to the development of the self, together with the values attached to their principle.

Young adults use social networking sites such as WhatsApp mainly for friendly and academic communication; almost half the respondents spend less than two hours a week on social networking sites (Mohamed & Sumitha, 2011). This was found in the study about the perception and use of social networking sites among Indian students (Mohamed & Sumitha, 2011). The research conducted by Ahad and Lim (2014) revealed that young adults use WhatsApp for more than 3 hours a day. Similarly, Sharma and Shukla (2016) investigated smartphone application usage among

students at a South African University. The purpose of the study was to assess the usage of smartphone applications, specifically social networking applications, amongst young adults in South African universities. It was proved that young adults remain online for 16 hours a day and spend an average of 5 hours on their smartphones interacting with others through social networking applications; this has stolen their face–to–face interaction and has failed tangible relationships with their significant other. They further state that youths spend more time on social networking sites than with their family members (Sharma & Shukla, 2016).

Cepeda et al. (2022) state that in another family impact of social media studies, it was found that when a parent arrived home from work, and their children were immersed in technology, the parent was greeted 30% of the time and was ignored 50% of the time. When children who spent a significant amount of time on social network sites stated, they felt less supported by their parents. Parents are more involved on their phones, with work and personal responsibilities blurred. Too often, parents work at home and spend more time on technology than with children or partners. 70% of women report that cell phones, computers, and TV interfere with family relationships. They also reported that 40% of the time, partners and their children get distracted by WhatsApp during conversation and that 33% of parents stated their significant other checks their phone frequently.. Studies also find that young adults who spend more time using technology and are in front of a screen have more difficulty than peers understanding emotions and developing relationships and may be more dependent on others.

Social media allows young adults to create online identities, communicate with others and build social networks. These networks provide young adults with valuable support from family members, relatives, and friends at their home, especially helping those who experience exclusion or have disabilities or chronic illnesses. (Paul &Criado, 2020). Teens also use social media for entertainment and self-expression towards their significant other. The platforms can expose teens to current events, allow them to interact across geographic barriers, teach them about various subjects, and help them build rapport and strengthen family relationships. Social media that's humorous or distracting or provides a meaningful connection to peers, immediate family members, or extended family helps teens avoid depression. It has created a sense of

belongingness, closeness and effectiveness with friends and relatives (Sosa et al., 2019).

Sulemana (2018) states that social media is the main way of keeping young adults in contact with their peers. Not only can youngsters communicate with friends living nearby, but social media also allows them to communicate with those friends living great distances away, friends made at different gatherings (Sulemana, 2018). These sites permit the user to communicate instantly and without delay, allowing students to develop stronger social skills (Sulemana, 2018). One of the effects of social media is encouraging people to form and cherish artificial bonds over actual friendships. WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Imo, Instagram, and others also allow young adults to express themselves on their own “homepage”, allowing them to discuss ideas that interest them and be introduced to other interests from friends (Sulemana, 2018).

Sulemana (2018) states that WhatsApp has many benefits for young adults; it also enhances their learning performance by promoting active learning involvement in WhatsApp conversations or discussions at home. Through this application, a conducive environment for learning is created in their family setting, and the learning process becomes student-centred (Sulemana, 2018). There are educational benefits, as well, for those students using social network sites. Facebook and other sites allow students to discuss schoolwork together after school hours. Students also develop stronger digital skills and competence as they learn to post pictures and comments on the site and navigate the internet. As schools become increasingly digitally reliant, these skills are necessary for a student’s classroom’s success (Sulemana, 2018).

Steinfield (2007) discovered that students mostly use SNS for social purposes. They stay in touch with their peers and relatives who stay far away and form connections with people they have met offline. Similarly, Ellison et al. (2007) found that college young adults used WhatsApp to maintain friendships and relationships rather than form new ones. Social networking sites promote social connectedness, confidence, and friendliness, especially for those too shy to do it face-to-face. According to Hershkovitz et al. (2019), WhatsApp promotes a healthy relationship between parents and children. Social media reduces loneliness and allows young people to form friends online if they find it difficult to do so in person (Hershkovitz et al., 2019).

Kuma & Sharma (2016) conducted a study on the survey analysis of the usage and Impact of WhatsApp Messenger. They investigated the usage and effect of WhatsApp in the regions of Northern India. To obtain responses, they performed an internet-based survey using open-source Lime survey software and obtained responses (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). A total of 460 responses had been received, of which only 136 were considered for analysis. Those who have completed all questions and are more than 18 years of age (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). The users in India made a slow shift from all social networking sites to WhatsApp in a quick period. This survey results show a significant impact of WhatsApp on its users (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). Around 66% of WhatsApp users believe that WhatsApp has improved their relationships with friends. More than 63% of its users think it is not harmful to them (Kuma and Sharma, 2016). WhatsApp was only utilised for communication and information; later, it was added for entertainment and family or friend connections (Gasaymeh, 2017).

Ngonidzashe (2016) conducted a study in Zimbabwe; this study aimed to determine how Zimbabweans perceive the use of electronic communication in their family setting. Eighty per cent answered that their use of electronic communication was dictated by proximity and time. All the respondents were quick to point out that there is a time when they spend time together as a family that is not involved or centred on these social networks. Eighty per cent of the respondents strongly agree that social networks play an important role in a functioning family and household relationship. When asked to what extent these social networks assisted in communicating with family members daily, the responses included knowing about death issues and illness among family members, discussing social issues affecting the family and interacting. What it shows is that electronic communication is helping to build up relationships within the family setups. This is supported by Heirtein and Anchet (2014), who claimed that communication technologies have developed relationships and assisted in relationship management and enhancement. Similarly, Pettigrew (2009) observed that the specific use of text messaging allowed couples to stay connected throughout the day based on interviews of dyads that were dating, engaged, married, or cohabiting. Hertlein (2012) believes that online gaming may contribute to a couple's ability to fantasise about their relationship, acquire and improve socialisation skills, and better

understand their partner's context. For Parker et al. (2013), technology provides unique opportunities for couples to connect to satisfy function and emotional needs. In a similar study, Coyne et al. (2011) explored that married individuals reported using texting, instant messaging, social networking, blogs, and webcams more frequently than dating couples. Electronic communication is thus quite effective in managing family affairs within the Zimbabwean community.

Alsanie (2015) conducted a study at the University Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic about the influence of WhatsApp on young adults in their family setting. Social media is an integral aspect of the lives of modern people, particularly young people, in modern societies. The present research investigates the relationship between university students' continued use of WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook and their families. The sample consisted of students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, of the four departments in which students study Bachelor through eighth level, with a total sample of 658 students from the following departments: psychology, sociology, geography, and history. And the used tool of The research is comprised of three axes: the first axis of public data; the second axis is means of communication, which includes the use of social media and the time spent daily with them; and the third axis of relationships and social media to communicate with the family, which includes ten phrases addressing the impact of social media on the continuing student's relationship with his family. As a means of extracting stability, arbitrators and internal consistency sanctioned extraction and received favourable rates. 1) The most significant finding was a negative relationship between the use of statistically significant means of social communication and the relationship between students and their families. 2) the absence of an impact on the type of scientific department that uses social media. 3) Time spent on means of communication: WhatsApp (37.6%), Twitter (54.4%), and Facebook (76.5%) ranked in the top three with less than an hour. 4) In the distribution of means, WhatsApp was ranked first (93.4%), followed by Twitter (46.4%) and Facebook (36%). The researcher discussed recommendations from the search results in his or her conclusion.

According to Alsanie (2015:62), the ecological influences related to social media features (e.g., accessibility, acceptability, and accommodation), the changes social

media use brings to family structure (e.g., redefinition of rules, roles, and boundaries), and those related to family processes (redefinition of intimacy, new ways of communicating, and new rituals) are interconnected and interdependent. Thus, due to the proliferation of new forms of communication and the effects they can have on the functionality and routines of the family (e.g., redefinition of roles and boundaries, new forms of intimacy, communications, and rituals, parents may have ambivalent views regarding their impact on their relationships and communications with their adolescents. Consistently, studies on families, which include adolescents, have yielded contradictory findings, spanning from higher social support to lower family cohesion and progressive isolation of family members within the same house.

According to a BBC News report (2021), Globally, young adults spend an average of 44 minutes per day using WhatsApp, and Spanish children are no exception. In Spain, 10 to 18-year-olds will spend nearly 268 hours per year sending and receiving communications via the application in 2021, a 41.94 per cent increase from 2020. The amount of time Spanish children of different ages spend on WhatsApp provides additional insight into how younger children and adolescents communicate online: 16-18-year-olds are the group spending the most time on WhatsApp (56 minutes per day), followed by 13-15-year-olds at 43 minutes per day and 10-12-year-olds at 37 minutes per day.

Children in the United States spend an average of 39 minutes per day on WhatsApp, followed by children in the United Kingdom with an average of 31 minutes, and finally, France, where 10-18-year-olds spend only 24 minutes daily on WhatsApp.

The study's findings suggest that using mobile communication devices and WhatsApp provides young people in the care system with a degree of independence, control, and liberation from scrutiny that is not traditionally associated with life in the care system. On multiple occasions, they had ceased or resumed contact with members of their familial network at will. In other words, the interaction was part of an ongoing pattern of informal communication, as opposed to the formulaic nature of contact with children in foster care, which can appear static and out of sync with their natural cadence and daily routine. There is also a need to consider what Licoppe (2004:139) refers to as the shared history of expectations, routines, and worldviews that develop through continuous conversation in interpersonal relationships. For foster care youth, this

means they are free to continue having dialogues with specific family members of their choosing, reinforcing their existing relationships. Therefore, even after a young person has been removed from his or her family home, he or she retains a psychological connection to familial and friendship networks that is not readily lost or eradicated by entering the care system.

WhatsApp appears to connect more people and keep them up-to-date, contributing to social isolation. It decreases the number of face-to-face interactions among adolescents because they spend most of their time on online social platforms. The results of several scientific studies indicate that social isolation can result in a variety of physical, emotional, mental, and psychological problems in these adolescents. This can subsequently contribute to depression, anxiety, and numerous other issues. Using brief forms and abbreviations also leads to misspelt words and improper use of words and tenses. This negatively affects students, directly affecting their language skills and resulting in low grades.

According to Limakrishna, Suryanti, & Wijoyo (2021), WhatsApp has become a central point of communication for many users, with numerous activities, such as online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, conducted on the platform. Since its introduction to the South African market, WhatsApp has been a major factor in bridging the digital divide between urban and rural regions (Shambare, 2014). WhatsApp usage in South Africa increased by 40 per cent during the lockdown, with more users relying on the application to remain in touch with family, friends, and co-workers (Perez, 2020). WhatsApp is no longer merely a social instant messenger; for many South Africans, education, work, and business-related topics are increasingly discussed over the application (Perez, 2020). Before the pandemic, WhatsApp was South Africa's principal communication platform. As more aspects of people's lives have migrated online, the current circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have only increased WhatsApp's significance in South African society and due to their reliance on WhatsApp services, South African users met WhatsApp's proposed privacy policy with resistance (Fiesler & Hallinan, 2018).

WhatsApp usage has rapidly spread. Despite variations between individuals and locations, interview data reveals recurring patterns. First, video calls were used in one-on-one conversations to convey love and affection to the closest and dearest relatives

and friends. Customised information sharing enhanced interpersonal relationships and demonstrated concern in one-on-one conversations and small groups. Thirdly, photos or videos depicting daily life were primarily used to make a person's presence tangible to small groups, such as family and close acquaintances. According to the study, people primarily used amusing memes and videos to engage in large group socialites. As demonstrated by the "heart" emoji, various groups widely used emojis to express various sentiments and emotions, primarily affection, love, and support. WhatsApp made group socialites more important than ever, providing individuals with various communication channels to convey their emotions, experience proximity, and negotiate their presence within diverse groups.

According to Cruz & Harindranath (2020), WhatsApp is prominent among family members in countries such as Mexico, where violence is prevalent; establishing and maintaining safety networks is crucial, especially in large urban areas such as Mexico City. WhatsApp is employed as a security technology in a variety of methods. For instance, it is common for people to monitor the travels of relatives and acquaintances through the city to ensure that they arrive at their destinations safely. Women, in particular, establish groups to share information about potential dangers, provide mutual support, and trade advice on places to visit or avoid, how to behave in specific situations, and what to do in an emergency. Families are always connected, with members regularly posting updates on their well-being and protection. Personal safety depends on WhatsApp's constant connectivity and the availability of a larger network of trusted individuals. These "networks of trust" may include family members, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, neighbours, and "authority" figures such as the police, attorneys, or physicians. These groups are constantly on standby, waiting to be activated if necessary. However, the exchange of information is occasionally abused (for example, incorrectly accusing someone based on "suspicious" behaviour, appearance, or activity). Possibilities exist for positive and negative outcomes in a perceivably hazardous environment and membership in multiple trustworthy networks with constant connectivity. It is conceivable that the combination of pervasive violence and the relative ease with which such groups can be activated contributes to the recently reported vigilante mob violence. WhatsApp is proposed that focuses on the relationship between family dynamics and mediated practices, personal relationships and trust, mediated communication and constant interaction as facilitating feelings of

personal security, and encrypted messaging apps as semi-public arenas (Chen et al., 2018)

Taipale & Farinose (2018) conducted a study examining the use of WhatsApp in extended families in Finland and Italy, which represent different family and communication cultures. Qualitative research material was collected in 2014/2015 from families with three or more generations living in the same or different households.

This study examined WhatsApp as a "middle-reach" technology that has the potential to contribute to the social cohesion of extended families and intergenerational family relationships. The research material provided numerous answers to the query, "What is the significance of WhatsApp's short messages to the social cohesion of extended families?" First, WhatsApp provides a functional platform for facilitating intergenerational communication, particularly between young people and their late-middle-aged parents, as it enables simultaneous communication with the entire family. As parents have begun sending photos, videos, and audio messages, it can be argued that WhatsApp represents a shift away from the traditional dichotomy between "texting teenagers" and their "speaking parents." Particularly, the mothers of the key informants have actively engaged in instant messaging with their adult offspring in Finland and Italy, extending their role as family caregivers to electronically mediated communication and the online world. The father's role in WhatsApp communication is much more limited but still present. Second, the significance of short messages is tied to WhatsApp's ability to facilitate "phatic communion." In family WhatsApp communication, social bonding via multiple modalities, such as brief text messages, photos, and video clips, frequently appears to be a superior mode of communication to the interchange of messages with a high information value. In dyadic family relationships, WhatsApp's multiple modes of communication enable each family member to select the most preferred and appropriate mode of communication for them. In addition, WhatsApp provides a reasonably secure environment for one-to-group communication. According to the informants, WhatsApp group conversations facilitate intra-family communication and strengthen the social cohesion of geographically separated families. Occasionally, even brief WhatsApp messages can be functional. They are used to share information and coordinate daily agendas and

appointments among family members residing in the same residence (Montag, Błaszkiewicz& Sariyska, 2015:6).

According to Thimm (2023), WhatsApp transformed the relationship between those who are physically co-located and the 'absent presence', which refers to the relationships we have with partners, children, and family members who are not physically present in the same space. Multiple studies have demonstrated that certain applications support families' increasing mobility and multimodality in daily life and strengthen the family structure. All generations can benefit from shared digital spaces, particularly regarding family organisation and expressions of belonging. Scholar concludes that discursive, presentational, and audio-visual communication practices facilitate participation in the everyday lives of other family members. Examples of such practices include sending requests to go to bed via WhatsApp and posting family photographs on social networking sites (SNS).

Others argue that the media has become an integral component of conventional family life, positively and negatively affecting family functioning. *Procentese, Gatti, and Di Napoli* argue that, despite effects, media do not always have to compete with family members for time or attention in the lives of adolescents. *Rodrguez-de-Dios/van Oosten/Igartua* (2021) also emphasises that parents and adolescents frequently use media platforms to stay connected and structure family routines.

According to Costa Valle (2022), WhatsApp usage has rapidly spread among young adults and their families. Despite variations between individuals and locations, recurring patterns were revealed. First, video calls were used in one-on-one conversations to convey love and affection to the closest and dearest relatives and friends. Customised information sharing enhanced interpersonal relationships and demonstrated concern in one-on-one conversations and small groups. Thirdly, photos or videos depicting daily life were primarily used to make a person's presence tangible to small groups, such as family and close acquaintances. According to the study, people primarily used amusing memes and videos to engage in large group socialites. As demonstrated by the "heart" emoji, various groups widely used emojis to express various sentiments and emotions, primarily affection, love, and support. WhatsApp made group socialites more important than ever, providing individuals with various

communication channels to convey their emotions, experience proximity, and negotiate their presence within diverse groups.

Mayer (2022) states that it is apparent that media affects how a family unit socialises and, as a result, their relationships. It also can negatively impact in-person family contact, hindering face-to-face interactions and social involvement.

Fauzan and Nadia (2020) assert that there has been a deterioration in traditional nuclear family households as people have become more individualistic. Families are spending less time together, resulting in a change in family structure in society; as such, traditional family values and the family itself have been eroded (Turtiainen et al., 2020).

WhatsApp is specially developed for sharing information that is linked to job advertisements. Sarin, Kar, Kewat, & Ilavarasan (2020: 1880) state that WhatsApp has exponential advancement and the field is thriving as it helps in the preferment of brands, sharing of information, staying connected with a circle of a network that consists of family and friends. Social networking has something to offer people of all age groups, and utilisation of them has almost become a part of our day-to-day activities (Dahiya, Saluja, & Johari, 2022: 229-249). It has emerged that young adults are fervent users of WhatsApp; they use it to exchange information conveniently.

Gibson (2022) found that Social networking sites such as WhatsApp allow young adults an opportunity to share their thoughts and raise their voices against social acts such as human rights violations, corruption, abuse, and bullying. Furthermore, this medium also provides rich, multi-media discernments into the sphere of young people, not readily accessed through other methods. It endows them with greater freedom to talk about sensitive issues, the capability to express themselves via text and the possibility of exercising greater control over shared information.

Osei, Mazzucato, & Haagsman (2023: 97-111) state that WhatsApp provides a functional platform for facilitating intergenerational communication between young people and their late-middle-aged parents, as it enables simultaneous communication with the entire family. WhatsApp transformed the relationship between those who are physically co-located and the 'absent presence', which refers to the relationships we

have with partners, children, and family members who are not physically present in the same space (Thimm, 2023).

Đorđević & Matejević (2021:227) found that continuous family get-togethers help build rapport and strengthen family values and norms that will help with the development of an individual. Family meetings foster a sense of autonomy while maintaining family connections and good communication skills.

2.4 Challenges young adults encounter when using WhatsApp daily within their family setting.

According to Moeller (2010), the rapidly growing new forms of communication, SNS, impact the dying of interpersonal and communication skills. She added that WhatsApp takes an individual away from reality by immersing him/her in virtual communication (Moeller, 2010). These findings are disturbing because they indicate that the arrival of SNS threatens the conventional communication style, which is vital for everyone to communicate in the real world, not just in the virtual world. Thompson (2009) states that the frequent use of SNS changes people's conventional manner of interaction due to the need for face-to-face communication. This results in the need for more communication skills such as reading body language and other communication facilities.

Sharma & Shukla (2016) conducted a study intending to measure the impact of WhatsApp on students in the youth of Gwalior, India. A questionnaire survey among the youth/students was conducted to understand the impact of WhatsApp on them. A total of 100 students were selected as participants. The study's findings revealed that WhatsApp harms the lifestyle and culture of youth, especially in their studies and communication skills at home (Sharma & Shukla, 2016). It affects their academic language and spoils their spelling skills and the grammatical construction of sentences (Sharma & Shukla, 2016).

According to Raisa & Tina (2022:160), while WhatsApp offered technology for strengthening social relationships, it also enforced a family culture of parental control, often resembling a mediated surveillance culture. Reaching out to dispersed family members over a distance caused anger and frustration and created a practice of mixed messages. Though parenting was done politely and with the best intentions, digital

technology could easily undermine individual family members' autonomy, shaping a culture of distrust that might even be an obstacle to personal growth and developing a sense of personal responsibility.

Turosong & Faisal (2014) examined a related study in a public university in Ghana. Based on their study, social media moderately affects students, and the frequency of use was an average of one per day. The study also revealed that social media negatively affects student performance because they use it for non-academic-related purposes, which do not have any positive trickling-down effects besides entertainment.

Ifeanyi & Chukwuere (2018) conducted a study that revealed that 62.4% of young adults use smartphones at home and during lectures, disturbing other students in class and disturbing them to execute duties at home, while 17.1% of responses differ. Furthermore, many (52.3%) young adults take pictures with their smartphones while in lectures and even at home when doing chores. Moreover, it has been proved that 56.3% of the participants engage in fewer household chores and schoolwork because of smartphones (Ifeanyi & Chukwuere, 2018). Additionally, their smartphone use causes them not to get enough sleep, and 58.4% of the participants are distracted (Ifeanyi & Chukwuere, 2018). Smartphone usage consumes participants' time, with 29.6% of the students in support (Ifeanyi & Chukwuere, 2018). Overall, 72% agree that the use of smartphones decreases academic performance. This implies that many of the participants are negatively affected by smartphone usage because they are mostly distracted in one way or the other while using smartphones (Ifeanyi & Chukwuere, 2018). Baron (2010) states that the growth in the use of mobile phones causes WhatsApp applications to be overused.

However, fervent usage of WhatsApp is a barrier or major challenge for young adult development. The geographical isolation significantly detracts from the need for social interactions that are usually afforded by face-to-face situations (Simui et al., 2018). Consequently, the void leads to isolation, confusion, and stress and ultimately contributes to a high failure rate and drop-outs from academic programs (Simui et al., 2018).

According to Ntibi & Ibok (2020), WhatsApp usage conversely contributes to the decline in the quality of communication and socialisation since young adults use the application to engage with families, friends and relatives or activities that do not enhance effective family relations outcomes. Social media is seen as a major cause of distraction and disruption and may be used for things undesirable, such as examination malpractice, playing games, watching pornographic films, and other forms of internet crime at the expense of their relations and academics rather than absorbing important information (Ntibi & Ibok, 2020). There are many activities that young adults engage in when using social networking sites, and this tends to harm the social, emotional and psychological well-being of a person (Ntibi & Ibok, 2020).

Ukpong (2015) In his study discovered that young adults engage in midnight browsing for lower tariffs, and some engage in viewing status video games or any other activity which robs them of the opportunity to have sound sleep. This inadequate sleep makes young adults restless and has a low attention span (Ukpong, 2015). Thus, it affects their school academic performance (Ukpong, 2015). Madge Meek and Wellens (2009) stated that misuse of the internet and lack of control often become detrimental to student's studies. This may lead young adults to need help completing their homework, interacting with family members, executing their daily duties at home, or getting enough sleep to be alert and active for the next day (Madge Meek & Wellens, 2009). This study confirms that social networking harms young adults and their relationships. They further state that among the smartphone-addicted group, female is more addicted than male because 57% of the respondents were female. Among those females most of them 75% were below 25 years old, indicating that teenagers are more addicted to smartphone usage and are not self-controlled (Kibona & Mgaya, 2015).

Young adults are engrossed with WhatsApp and are obsessed with sharing selfies, videos, and audio files among friends and colleagues. Such youngsters usually want to avoid mingling with the outside world; they are always at home clued to their gadgets (Malecela, 2016). As a result, they become socially unreachable and aloof. No interaction with family, friends and society makes these teens snobbish, harming their growth (Malecela, 2016). WhatsApp-addicted youngsters become lazy due to constant

use of the application (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014). They waste their productive time due to their obsession with sharing jokes, selfies, memes, and videos on the platform and hardly spend time with their significant other, whereby family values, norms, and traditions are fading away (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014).

In their study, Kuss et al. (2011) discovered that WhatsApp is mostly used for social purposes by introverts and extroverts. They further state that extroverts use SNS for social enhancement, whereas introverts use it for social compensation. This may lead to low conscientiousness and high narcissism. Negative correlates of SNS usage involve the decree in real-life social community participation and relationship problems (Kuss et al., 2011). Echeburua & de Corral (2010) indicate that excessive usage of SNS may result in addiction problems, especially in youth. The symptoms of addiction to SNS are like those of substance abuse. This has a significant impact on clinical practice because the goal of SNS addiction treatment cannot be avoided by avoiding using the internet per se, as the latter is an integral element of today's professional and leisure culture. It is believed that young, vulnerable people with narcissistic tendencies are particularly prone to engaging with SNS in an addictive way (La Barbera et al., 2009)

Rouis (2012), in the same line of thought, maintains that many young adults tend to spend their free time surfing WhatsApp, and this has made them able to express themselves, experience greater integration with their peers, find new friends, and maintain a continuous exchange of knowledge and information with their online friends (Rouis, 2012). Obi Jude (2019) asserts that many WhatsApp and other social network users use SNS for entertainment. Many users use it to share fun activities. Many people get socialised using WhatsApp. This allows them to share pictures, academic videos, group/class interaction, and other vital academic materials online (Obi Jude, 2019). Some students also abuse the use of WhatsApp through the sharing of illicit and socially unaccepted pictures like pornographies, videos, and others rather than academic motives (Obi Jude, 2019). Kuma & Sharma (2016) conducted a study on the survey analysis of the usage and Impact of WhatsApp Messenger. They investigated the usage and effect of WhatsApp in the regions of Northern India. To obtain responses, they performed an internet-based survey using open-source Lime survey software and obtained responses (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). A total of 460

responses had been received, of which only 136 were considered for analysis for those who have completed all questions and are more than 18 years of age (Kuma and Sharma, 2016). The users in India made a slow shift from all social networking sites to WhatsApp in a quick period. This survey results show a significant impact of WhatsApp on its users (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). Around 66% of WhatsApp users believe that WhatsApp has improved their relationships with friends. More than 63% of its users think it is not harmful to them (Kuma & Sharma, 2016). WhatsApp was only utilised for communication and information; later, it was added for entertainment and family or friend connections (Gasaymeh, 2017).

In their study, Baro et al. (2014) found that most young adults, especially university students, mainly use WhatsApp among various social networking sites to exchange ideas, social interaction, and connections. Bhatt & Kumar's (2014) research on young adults' opinions on social networking sites shows that many students use social networking sites for daily communication with their classmates, peers and relatives. Sharma & Shukla (2016) Confirm that young adults may get misleading information or fake news, concentrate more on gossip, and even become dependent on this to get information about the world (Sharma and Shukla, 2016). Many youths are addicted to it and cannot abstain from constantly chatting, replying, and sharing ideas or information, so it has become difficult to control it and needs psychotic help (Sharma & Shukla, 2016). Young people in Gwalior use WhatsApp mainly to communicate and update their status regularly (Sharma & Shukla, 2016).

The immediate and ubiquitous use for social coordination and updating makes more and more youth download and use the app (Sharma & Shukla, 2016). Many studies in India have proved that youth make use of WhatsApp to communicate with their friends and family, and this has disadvantages. According to Sharma & Shukla (2016), The disadvantages of WhatsApp are as follows**:** Images can be downloaded from the profile pics and can be used for any purpose; It consumes much space in smartphone as we download all the pictures and videos from the application and saved them to our smartphone storage device; Through WhatsApp, people get access to phone numbers and images of anonymous people, just because they are a part of group texting; WhatsApp has encouraged youth to send hectic messages and thereby enhancing the culture of visibly hectic text messages. There is no restriction on the

size of text messages that can be sent through WhatsApp. Young people seldom turn off their WhatsApp, even at home; They will receive messages occasionally. Due to this, they lack concentration and hence won't listen or engage with others that much. The 24/7 online nature of WhatsApp results in a lack of communication with the family in the physical world. Today's youngsters are so obsessed with WhatsApp that they rarely communicate with their families (Sharma & Shukla, 2016). Even though WhatsApp has some negative sides, youth still prefer to use it to connect with their close ones (Sharma & Shukla, 2016).

The Times of India Online published an article titled "Indian Youth Prefers WhatsApp, Facebook Over SMS" on 16 June 2013. In 2012-2013, Tata Consultancy Services conducted a study involving high school pupils in 14 Indian cities, totalling 1,7500 participants. The study concluded that more than 70 per cent of today's youth use their smartphones to their utmost potential. Gross (2001) discovered that excessive use of smartphones can result in psychological and physical issues such as insomnia, fatigue, lowered body immunity, lack of appropriate exercise, eye strain, etc. Moreover, it impacts the individual's social life, such as relationship issues and family conflicts, as well as the academic performance and concentration of the younger generation, as well as other issues such as cybercrime, exposure to pornographic materials, etc. The study also revealed that excessive Internet use can lead to technological addiction. In his investigation, Kim (2008) found that an individual's personality also affects internet usage. It was stated that extraversion is associated with the tendency to experience positive emotions and social involvement, whereas extraverts do not view internet and cyber relationships as social support.

Additionally, Nedelcu & Wyss (2016) found that social media can exacerbate feelings of pain, separation, and abandonment. By monitoring their parents' online activity, WhatsApp provides some children with evidence of parental neglect, resulting in negative or hurt emotions. Additionally, WhatsApp facilitates young people's expression of wounded emotions. Silence, brevity, and sometimes timing were strategic means of expressing feelings of pain, abandonment, or discontent with the treatment received. This demonstrates that while new communication technologies can empower youth, they may also complicate relationships, which can have negative consequences. The disadvantages of new media communication have received

comparatively little attention, even though they have the potential to redefine transnational relationships and are thus worthy of further study.

A 2012 study titled "Smartphone Application Usage amongst Students at a South African University" evaluates the usage of smartphone applications, primarily social networking applications, among users at a South African university. The study demonstrated that students are online for 16 hours daily and spend an average of 5 hours interacting with siblings, parents and peers via social networking applications on their smartphones. Young adults exert control over communication with their parents in five primary ways. First, the youth demonstrated initiative in how they utilised their WhatsApp skills. They utilised WhatsApp's monitoring and surveillance features to remain in contact with their expatriate parents in the background or foreground. Second, adolescents strategically timed their communications with their parents to maintain connection or convey discontent. Some children attentively observed their parents' interactions to determine the optimal times to call and ensure their parents' full attention. Others responded tardily or never to messages from parents expressing displeasure. Thirdly, some adolescents demonstrated autonomy by bringing up specific topics in their communications with their parents. Some called their parents to make requests and receive advice or words of encouragement.

According to a recent study conducted by Pew Research (2015), adolescents prefer to spend time with their classmates, as this reduces their risk of being left alone and experiencing feelings of sadness, anxiety, and jealousy. During their formative years, adolescents prefer to seek advice from parents and siblings. As children mature and become more self-reliant, they develop a closer relationship with their friend circle and a weaker bond with their family. This is also considered a psychologically healthy aspect of growing up, as children can learn to achieve stability between family and peers. Even in today's technologically advanced society, the need for interaction remains the same; however, technological instruments provide support during difficult times.

Aizenkot & Kashy-Rosenbaum (2021) examined how WhatsApp influences the lives of young adults. They found that parents and adolescents have social lives in both the actual and virtual worlds in recent years. As prominent social communication platforms, social networking sites such as WhatsApp play an important role in the lives

of young people and their significant other. More than 97 per cent of Israeli adolescents use WhatsApp and belong to WhatsApp groups that comprise relatives, siblings and friends, whereby the app is used to interact and maintain family relations. Increasing WhatsApp usage in a family setting is accompanied by an increase in the frequency of cyberbullying, which is the intentional and repeated use of online aggressive behaviour with the intent to cause injury. Due to its association with serious psychosocial, affective, behavioural, and academic issues, cyberbullying victimisation has garnered a considerable quantity of attention. Although much has been written about cyberbullying on Facebook, there is little written about cyberbullying on WhatsApp. Based on a large-scale survey that analysed the prevalence and manifestations of cyberbullying, the current cross-sectional study provides a comprehensive description of cyberbullying victimisation in WhatsApp groups by different age cohorts and gender among Israeli school-age children and adolescents.

The study included 4,477 Israeli elementary, middle, and high school students who filled out questionnaires about cyberbullying victimisation in their WhatsApp cohort groups. According to the findings of the study, approximately 30% of all survey respondents report being a victim of cyberbullying in their WhatsApp family groups, and nearly twice as many report having been a victim of aggression in the recent past. It appears that demographic factors, including grade level and gender, moderate cyberbullying. In elementary school, cyberbullying was more prevalent than in middle and high school and WhatsApp cohort groups; more female than male students were cyberbullied. The article outlines several areas of concern in cyberbullying research and discusses issues that could be the subject of future research. In addition, education policy guidelines and intervention implications are discussed.

Young adults use WhatsApp to get updated about what is happening nationally and internationally. This social app provides details of current affairs across the globe. The study of Shaikh Mahesh (2019) revealed that WhatsApp has become a popular tool for marketing in businesses and publicity in politics. Young adults stay updated about what is happening and can spread the information without checking its authenticity. This causes detrimental effects because of the fake news they receive.

Young people with low conscientiousness have resorted to WhatsApp as a tool to spend time, talk to others and entertain themselves, leaving aside or adjourning their

daily activities, which could lead to long-term problems in their daily functioning, academic performance, family and social relationships (Ruiz & Alcázar, 2022:6).

According to a study by Matassi, Boczko, & Mitchelstein (2019:2183-2200), Communication between parents and children using WhatsApp is limited due to the age gap and technology illiteracy. Young adults (18–34 years) adopt WhatsApp as a taken-for-granted platform where sociability is mainly produced in groups with friends and enacted through an "always on" availability. A constellation of work and care responsibilities partly shapes middle adults (35–59 years) appropriate to this platform.

Osei, Mazzucato, & Haagsman (2023:97) found that age influences people's views and experiences of social interaction through WhatsApp. It is important to look at how young people experience digital interactions differently from their parents. The study findings indicated that young adults find it difficult to communicate with some family members who are older through WhatsApp because they are not technologically advanced, and this has caused a drift in their communication skills. WhatsApp text confidentiality is a concern among young adults. Young people encourage privacy so that people may be denied access to their chats. They are promoting safety and security for the information shared. The encrypted data cannot be accessible. All texts, photos, videos, voice messages, documents, status updates, and calls are encrypted on WhatsApp, and only the people you send them to can access them. This stops the leakage of data from hackers (Sur & Goswami,2021)

2.4.1 Psychological effects

The majority of young people use WhatsApp to fight rejection, depression, FOMO (fear of missing out) and the psychological effects of the fourth industrial revolution (Pramod, 2016:61-66).

For young adults, using WhatsApp allows them to discuss a particular subject without restrictions and serves as a socialisation platform (Elkaseh et al. 2016). It has allowed young adults to communicate where they conveniently chat online, where individuals can avoid being nervous and shy when communicating face-to-face (Shahkat & Kootbodien, 2017). Excessive use of WhatsApp can result in addictions, which may be tied to negative mental health outcomes, including loneliness, social anxiety, and decreased empathy (Berry, Ferguson & Negy, 2018:307-314). According to Veena Lokesha (2016), addiction means unconsciously using something repeatedly without

noticing its harmful effects. Having a feeling of not coping without a particular thing can be food, drink, and devices.

Excessive usage means using something continuously, spending more than two hours focusing on a phone or computer or checking on something minute to minute without taking a break (Merriam-Webster, 2021). When young adults communicate using this kind of social app, the feeling of enjoyment gradually increases their tendency to repeat the action. This action occurs without a conscious decision to act and is performed like a habit, and they encounter psychological tension (Hsiao et al.,2016). Parent must emphasise discipline and monitor their children's cell phones to ensure good App usage. Excessive usage of WhatsApp may adversely impact children's functioning and development (Stutzman & Gershy ,2023:139).

2.4.2 Emotional Effects

According to Bruno & Lawyer (2020) WhatsApp negatively affects the young adults in terms of their education, behavior, and daily routine. This application is incredibly addictive and creates a trace that is hard to control. The application has such a captivating effect that users abandon their real-world activities, becoming emotionally invested solely in the app (Lu, Vijaykumar,Jin & Rogerson, 2022:67) . Their emotional state is contingent upon the response they receive from other users. They are unable to restrain themselves from engaging in continuous chatting, responding, and exchanging ideas(Dhahir,2020).

Young adults lose interest in the real world and become emotionally confined to the app due to its impact. Symptoms of WhatsApp dependence include lack of control, significant disturbance in daily life (at school or home), and persistent reliance on the app. WhatsApp can disseminate misinformation that has the potential to hurt individuals, incite panic, or lead to the dismissal of accurate information shared across many social media channels (Ashiru, Oluwajana, & Biabor, 2022).

Incorrect or misleading information can trigger negative feelings like bewilderment and worry, leading individuals to spread false information on WhatsApp.

Young Adults emotions, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors are influenced by the content they encountered on WhatsApp (Lu et al.,2022). WhatsApp elicits seven adverse emotions in users: worry, guilt, pressure, distraction, humiliation, suspicion, and perplexity (Si, 2012). Signs of these feelings involve anxiety and reduced self-worth when confronted with lengthy responses, urgency to reply to messages

promptly, suspicion about who the other person is communicating with, uncertainty about the message's intended meaning, and other related issues.

2.4.3 Social Effects

The rapid escalation of WhatsApp usage by young people which gives intensification to numerous predicaments. One of the difficulties young people encounter is social withdrawal, which progresses to a high rate of social isolation (Hamzah, 2018:646). WhatsApp, commonly used by young adults, may offer an opportunity to ameliorate social isolation (Brian, Primack &Miller, 2017:01).

This is a predicament that needs serious attention to elude the fading away of social interactions among young adults with their significant others and irregular usage of WhatsApp (Brian, Primack & Miller,2017:01). The connection between children and their family members is no longer strong and effective because children's have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interacting with their parent's and parents no longer give attention to their kids, but rather spend quality time with their gadgets (Chan, Yong & Harmizi, 2020:16-20).

According to Wahab, Pasha, & Khan (2022), parents do not have any extra time for rest due to their busy schedules at work and travelling due to business, which is sometimes exacerbated by using mobile phones and other forms of technology. Parents are extremely pressured to maintain a work-family balance. Even though they do so to give their children a good life, they forget that it costs them time with their children (Yun, Thing & Hsoon, 2019:441-446). They expend much of their time on heavy workloads and job pressures. Conversely, children do not share their experiences, challenges academic performance, and daily lives with their parents (Balmain, Naseri & Fariborzi, 2022:1-15). Mak et al. (2020) point out that parents make tremendous sacrifices to make a living, while at the same time, the children are ignored, creating communication barriers in the family and leading to disconnected family relations. Parent and child relations are perpetually fading away. Young adults suffer from psychological tension and withdrawal that leads them to commit suicide and become victims of cyberbullying and find it hard to get help because they lack interaction with their significant others (Salgur, 2016: 25).

According to Marchetti et al. (2023), decreased conscientiousness was the personality trait most strongly related to the increased negative consequences experienced by using WhatsApp. Thus, people with low conscientiousness may find

WhatsApp an application to spend time, talk to others and entertain themselves, leaving aside or postponing their daily activities, which could lead to long-term problems in their daily functioning, academic performance, family and social relationships.

WhatsApp connects young adults with their family members and keeps them up-to-date, contributing to social isolation. It decreases the number of face-to-face interactions among adolescents because they spend most of their time on online social platforms. The results of several scientific studies indicate that social isolation can result in a variety of physical, emotional, mental, and psychological problems in these adolescents. This can subsequently contribute to depression, anxiety, and numerous other issues. Using brief forms and abbreviations also leads to misspelt words and improper use of words and tenses. This negatively affects students, directly affecting their language skills and results in low language grades (Simpson, 2020: 06).

2.4.4 Health Effects

According to Waring & Schoffman (2018:2), constant typing and texting through WhatsApp result in inflammation and swelling of wrist tendons. This condition is called Tenosynovitis. Adolescents may develop personality disorders, excessive aggression, attention deficits, and even abnormal anxiety.

WhatsApp is also causing harm to the body posture of many teens. By continually keeping heads angled down to type, view, and text on their smartphones, backs and necks start to hurt and can cause sleep deprivation, resulting in a lack of emotional connection. It causes obesity because it deprives young adults of the opportunity to engage in physical activities such as walking, exercising, etc. (Khajeheian et al.,2018).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

According to Osanloo & Grant (2016), the theoretical framework is the "blueprint" for the dissertation inquiry. It provides the structure for defining how you will approach the dissertation from a philosophical, epistemological, methodological, and analytic standpoint (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). (Osanloo & Grant, 2016) state that a theoretical framework is derived from an extant theory (or theories) in the literature that has been tested and validated by others and is generally accepted in the scholarly literature. (Osanloo & Grant, 2016) The selection of a theoretical framework requires a thorough and reflective understanding of the research problem, purpose, significance, and research questions. It is crucial that all four constructs—the problem, the purpose, the

significance, and the research questions—are tightly aligned and intricately interwoven so that the theoretical framework can serve as the basis for the researcher's work and guide his/her choice of research design and data analysis (Osanloo & Grant, 2016).

The researcher incorporated the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) into this investigation. UGT examines how individuals select media that satisfies their requirements, allowing them to achieve gratifications such as knowledge enhancement, entertainment and relaxation, social interaction, and reward or compensation (Ko et al., 2005). UGT was one of the first approaches to consider the audience's active role in media selection, proposing that individuals actively seek out, identify with, and use media to satisfy particular gratification requirements (Ku et al., 2013). This viewpoint acknowledges that media consumers are active rather than passive recipients.

Uses and gratification are frequently viewed as a counterpoint to more deterministic media theories, which hold that media as media has certain effects (Matei, 2010). In other words, it qualifies or even overcomes the difficulties associated with claims that media exposure alone leads to specific behaviours, sometimes without the user's conscious control (Matei, 2010). According to the Uses and Gratifications theory, users/media consumers actively choose specific content based on their requirements (Matei, 2010). If there are any effects, they are either deliberate or at least actionable. Nevertheless, the theory of uses and gratification can be seen to operate on two levels of abstraction and complexity (Matei, 2010). On one level, U&G theory can be viewed as a giant mosaic composed of pieces that the researcher can assemble based on his or her requirements and imagination (Matei, 2010). On the other hand, it can be viewed as a puzzle in which the bewildering complexity of the media use tableau's pieces can only fit together in a specific manner. The first interpretation is more prevalent, whereas the second is more grounded in theory (Matei, 2010). The underlying assumption of UGT is that users are actively engaged in media utilisation, and the theory has become increasingly relevant in studies of media channels that permit consumer choice and interaction, such as social media (Ruggiero,2000).

This theory was necessary because it endeavours to explain the gratifications consumers seek in a particular medium and their perceptions and affinity for that medium's content (Ruggiero, 2000). It also recognises that various individuals can use the same medium for different purposes (Roy, 2009). Applying the UGT to social

networking sites is crucial to contemporary mass communication research because this form of mass media is relatively new compared to newspapers, radio, and television (Ruggiero, 2000).

According to this theory, individuals are not passive recipients of media messages but active influencers of the message effect. That is, consumers of media messages are free to choose how they will use and be affected by the media (Rubin, 2002). Audiences selectively choose, attend to, perceive, and retain media messages to influence the effect process actively. Thus, the emphasis is on media consumption rather than production and transmission functions. Instead of asking, "What types of effects occur and under what conditions?" the question becomes "Who utilises which content, from which media, under what circumstances, and for what purposes?" (Rubin, 2002). UGT indicates a positive correlation between social media usage and the satisfaction derived from such activity. Similar intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivate social media consumers (Amarasinghe, 2010). In addition, he listed five reasons for utilising social media: meeting new people, entertainment, social events, relationship maintenance, and media creation.

According to Ruggiero (2002), the deregulation of the media and the convergence of mass media and digital technology have altered how individuals are exposed to the media. New media gives users more options and opportunities to appreciate and utilise media. Using the new media, people actively combine multiple motivations to satisfy their desires and aspirations, appropriately termed gratifications. This also occurs when they utilise SNS.

Therefore, the purposes and gratifications approach is an effective method for analysing the motivations and influence of WhatsApp on family relationships. From a uses and gratifications perspective, SNS offers a wide variety of entertainment and informational content; therefore, those who utilise their services and resources should be able to fulfil a broad variety of needs (Lederman, 2015). The competition between participation in social media networks affects young adults' social interactions and family relationships. This suggests that the amount of time young adults devote to social media could affect their time with their significant others and, consequently, their family relationships. Theoretical frameworks are essential to all our work, whether quantitative, qualitative, or blended methods are employed. All research articles must have a valid theoretical framework to justify the significance and relevance of their work (Lederman, 2015).

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented various studies that supported the constructs of this study. The researcher looked at the various social networking sites young adults use and what are the reasons behind these usages. The impact of WhatsApp was discussed, and how this affects their family relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presented the methodology of the study in detail. According to Payton & Gould (2023:7), research methodology is the approach by which problems are solved. It is also a science of studying how research is conducted systematically. In this field, the researcher explains the steps generally taken to study a research problem. In this chapter, there is a discussion about the type of research used in this study. This study used basic research, which is only concerned with generating new knowledge (Faggion, 2023:73). The study relied on constructivism philosophical assumption, and a Qualitative Descriptive design was adopted and discussed in this section. There is also a full discussion on population and sampling, data collection, analysis, and presentation. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the research ethics.

According to Alharahsheh & Pius (2020), Methodology is concerned with the general research strategy followed in conducting research; as a result, it would identify the methods to be used and match the outlined research strategy. Methods are included and described in the methodology to clarify the modes of data collection (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The methodology does not provide a specific method to be followed; it would rather focus on the nature of the process to achieve the research objective in a procedure.

3.2. Type of Research

The type of research adopted for the study was basic research. Basic research is primarily concerned with creating new knowledge and, in most cases, is only indirectly involved with how that knowledge would be applied to specific, practical, or real problems (Madden, 2022:1633-1647). This study aimed to provide information about WhatsApp's influence on family relationships among young adults and provide knowledge and recommendations to social workers.

3.3. Research Philosophy/Paradigm

According to Park et al. (2020), the research paradigms are the philosophies of science that guide how science is conducted simply by shaping the following core elements: Ontology (how reality is viewed), epistemology (how the nature of knowledge is conceived), axiology (the role and values of the research process), methodology (how the paradigm defines processes associated with conducting

science), and rigour (the criteria used to justify the quality of research in the paradigm). It is vital to have a deeper understanding of paradigm-specific assumptions as they provide a deeper understanding of how science is operationalised and the components that promote legitimate problems, solutions, and criteria for evidence.

According to Matta (2022: 02), a paradigm is a way of viewing the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct the thinking and action of the study.

Mason & Seakhoa (2022:684) emphasise that a research philosophy would only sometimes answer important questions. Still, its guidance can point in the direction of answers, arrange observations, and make sense of them.

The philosophical worldview proposed in the study was constructivism. According to Schwandt (cited by Mertens 2014:16), the basic assumptions guiding the constructivist paradigm are that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process and that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it. Constructivist paradigm is used to underpin the study through interviewing the participants to generate data and understanding the phenomen from the participant's perspectives and lived experiences . The researcher interviewed the participants individually , to gain insight into their individual experiences about the study and also help participants to explore their own personal experiences ,values and beliefs using interview questions.

3.4. Research Approach

Research approach "is the plan and procedure for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation" (Aithal, 2022:04). The overall decision must be made regarding which approaches should be used to study the topic. In this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted. This approach is useful as it helps to explore and understand complex issues. It addresses 'why and how' questions that describe the process of behaviour or a phenomenon (Maarouf, 2019). This study used a qualitative research approach to outline and investigate the effects of WhatsApp use on family relations among young adults between the ages of 18 to 24 years and to identify the challenges encountered when using the application and ways that can be implemented to ascertain the befitting utilisation of WhatsApp among young adults.

3.5. Research Design

According to Laukshear and Kuobel (as cited by Seabi, 2012:81), a design can be defined as a procedure or a guideline for doing something under certain conditions. Furthermore, a design is a plan of how the researcher intends to accomplish a particular task. In research, this plan gives a structure that guides the researcher in terms of which theories, methods, and instruments the study would be based on (Seabi. 2012: 81). The design selected for this study was Qualitative Descriptive (QD) design which aims to provide a complete summary, in understandable terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of people (Sandelowski, 2021:336).

Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway (2017:24) listed 6 QD design features and techniques extracted from descriptions of the approach in the literature. The features are discussed as follows:

- First, according to Sandelowski, 2000 (cited by Kim, Sefcik, and Bradway, 2017:24), researchers in this design generally take a naturalistic perspective as their starting point and examine a phenomenon in its natural setting (Sandelowski, 2000). In the study, participants were interviewed on their experiences as they encountered them in their family context.
- Second, according to Siedlecki (2020:8), QD has been described as less theory-focused than other qualitative approaches. For example, researchers may or may not decide to begin with a theory of the targeted phenomenon and need not stay committed to a theory or framework if their investigations take them down another path. In this study, the two theories adopted were Ontology, The nature of reality and Epistemology, The nature of knowledge. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) define ontology as the nature of reality. Therefore, ontology is mainly concerned with the phenomenon's nature of existence. It seeks an answer or reality to a research question by indicating that existing knowledge can be found. Park et al. (2020) state that ontologies assume that there are some realities, “e.g. the influence of WhatsApp usage”, which exist in the world and may affect the family relations of young adults and view it as a causal reality”.
- Therefore, epistemology concerns how a researcher aims to uncover knowledge to reach reality. Moreover, Epistemology is considered an internal

factor within the researcher as it is also concerned with how a researcher can distinguish between right and wrong, and it is about how a researcher views the world around them (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). This is relevant to this study as the researcher did not influence or be influenced by the participant and is looking for the influence of WhatsApp usage (as realities exist in the world) on young adults in their family relations (Ahmed, 2008). These theories (the two theories adopted were Ontology, The nature of reality and Epistemology, The nature of knowledge) explain the experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts.

- Third, data collection strategies typically involve individual and focus group interviews with minimally structured or semi-structured interview guides (Neergaard et al.; Sandelowski, 2000).
- Fourth, researchers commonly employ purposive sampling techniques, such as maximum variation sampling, to obtain broad insights and rich information (Neergaard et al.; Sandelowski, 2000).
- Fifth, qualitative content analysis is a common strategy for data analysis (Neergaard et al., 2009; Sandelowski, 2000). In some instances, thematic analysis is used, which should be distinct from content analysis. These data analysis approaches allow researchers to stay close to the data with minimal transformation during analysis. Such interpretation is low inference (Neergaard et al.), which should enable readers familiar with the topic to recognise their own experience of the phenomenon in the findings. Finally, representation of study findings in published reports is expected to be straightforward, including comprehensive descriptive summaries and accurate details presented in a way that makes sense to the reader (Neergaard et al.; Sandelowski, 2021).

Furthermore, QD design is unique as it contains lower levels of interpretation than high inference qualitative research designs such as phenomenology or grounded theory, and it requires a less conceptual rendering of data (Sandelowski, 2021:335). Lambert and Lambert (2012:255) believe that virtually any purposive sampling technique may be used regarding the use of sampling in a qualitative descriptive design. Like any other qualitative research design, the goal is to obtain cases deemed rich in information to saturate the data (Lambert & Lambert, 2012:255).

The presentation of data from a qualitative descriptive study involves a straightforward descriptive summary of the informational contents of the data that is organised logically (Lambert & Lambert, 2012:256). How the data are organised depends upon the researcher and how the data were rendered (Lambert & Lambert, 2012:255). Lastly, QD researchers do not move away from their data; rather, they adopt the words and events of their participants as they happen compared to other qualitative research designs (Sandelowski, 2021:336). The descriptive study involves a direct investigation of the research background problem to get the required information needed to carry out the study (Copper,2021:01). Descriptive studies record the aspect of activity that is happening (Cope and Murray, 2021:01).

The QD design enabled the researcher to describe and ascertain the experiences of young adults regarding their usage of WhatsApp in their family contexts and determine the challenges they encounter daily. The researcher selected twelve participants for this study, and she believed that data saturation could occur. Lastly, content analysis was used to analyse the data.

3.6. Population and Sampling

A population consist of people with the same qualities and traits (Asiamah et al.,2017). Pritha (2020) refers population as a complete set of people with specialised characteristics**.** According to Andrade (2021:87), a population does not only refer to inhabitants; it depicts a group of elements of anything you want to study. It can also be described as a group of people who can form a study, for instance, all young people who are fervent users of WhatsApp in the world or a certain continent (Salkind,2021:.15). On the other hand, the population target for this study are individuals that meet certain study criteria such as age, gender, live in a family setting and are fervent users of WhatsApp (Salkind, 2021:15).

In this study, participants from the ages of 18 -24 years were selected. There was no specific gender for participation; all genders participated in the study. Participants were fervent users of WhatsApp. The researcher selected participants who were from Mamotintane village.

The study focused on 12 participants due to their essential knowledge and relevancy to the study and the sampling size depended on the saturation of information

collected from the participants - 8 of them are enrolled at the University of Limpopo and met the study's inclusion criteria.

The sampling strategy used for the study was purposive sampling in the form of a homogenous sampling type as proposed by Bernard (as cited by Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016:2). The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the intentional choice of study participants due to the qualities the participants possess. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by knowledge or experience. On the other hand, Andrade (2021:88) maintains that this type of sampling method is based on the researcher's judgement that the participants contain the most characteristics or are the most representative population for the study.

Briefly, this sampling technique was selected because young adults of Mamotintane village are fervent users of WhatsApp. Also, the selection of this sampling method was based on Parahoo's (2014) (cited by Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody, 2017:3) suggestion, which states that the sampling techniques selected within a research study must be reflective of the research design and research question. The sampling process best able to achieve this within qualitative studies, particularly qualitative description designs, is a nonprobability technique of convenience or purposive sampling (Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody, 2017:3).

3.6.1. Sample Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- Participants were young adults between 18 and 24 years old. The participants had to be proficient in English or Sepedi, as the interviews would be conducted in English and Sepedi. If the participant could not speak English, the interview was conducted in Sepedi and translated into English.
- Prospective participants were community members of Mamotintane village and lived with families. Participation in the study would not have been possible if:
- Participants had no access to mobile phones and were not fervent users of WhatsApp daily.

3.6.2. Sample Size and Motivation

According to Yun (2019:2), the ideal standard for qualitative sample size to interview to redundancy (Schesul & Le Compte, as cited by Trotter, 2012: 399) (redundancy is the process of sequentially conducting interviews until all concepts are repeated multiple times without new concepts or themes emerging) or to interview to saturation (a point at which all questions have been thoroughly explored in detail, no new concepts or themes emerge in subsequent interviews). The number of participants suggested by the proponents of the nominated sampling is 12 (Trotter, 2021:399). In the study, the sample size was determined by both redundancy and saturation and by enumerated stance, i.e., the minimum number of participants was set, and it depended on the redundancy and saturation of information. The sampling size depended on the saturation of information collected from the participants. The general principle that guides sample size is saturation of data or redundancy of data. The targeted number of participants in this research was 12, all of whom were interviewed.

3.7. Data Collection

Schoonenboom (2023:5) defines qualitative data collection as an assortment and formation of philological (or visual) material for examining and understanding problems or challenges, social fields, subjective and collective experiences, and related meaning-making processes. Qualitative data collection is also pragmatic to ascertain and designate issues in the ground or structures and progressions in procedures and practices (Schoonenboom,2023:7). Collection entails naturally occurring phenomena or elicited data. It can be based on talking, listening, observing, and analysing materials such as sounds, images, or digital phenomena. Furthermore, the major aim of collecting qualitative data is to provide materials for an empirical analysis of phenomena that a study is about (Houston, 2022).

3.7.1. Data Collection Procedure

Firstly, the researcher approached the two sentinels of Mamotintane village, namely the Induna of the village and the community councillor. The researcher met face-to-face with them to request legal permission to conduct the study. The researcher introduced herself, and the following was explained: The purpose of the visit and the study, the benefits of the study to the community and young adults, the number of interviewees needed for the study, the estimated time it would take for each interview, and refreshments.

Secondly, after getting the approval to conduct the study, the following process took place: The researcher had a discussion with the fieldworker from Mamahlo Home-based Care; with the field worker's approval, she was made aware that she would be the negotiator between the researcher, participants and community. The field worker was selected as an independent person because she is neutral. The mediator was a Social Worker from an NGO (Centre for Positive Care) in Polokwane; the Social Worker was selected because she had no influence on participants and had extensive knowledge of presentations and research processes.

The researcher briefed the mediator about the study and informed consent so that it would be easy to understand when she explained it to the gatekeepers and community members. The mediator encountered prospective participants at the community hall because it served as a neutral place for members. The researcher outlined the study's goal and the significance of voluntary participation. The mediator explained the consent form in full. The consent form was only given to people who were interested in the study to avoid the form being published to entire community members. The participants were given 48 hours to decide whether to participate in the study. The participants communicated with the independent person to show their interest in the study. The independent person obtained the consent forms from the participants to ensure their free will and willingness to participate in the study. The independent person of the study explained to the participants what the study was about and clarified the informed consent to them so that they understood what was expected of them during the interview and for how long it would take place. The researcher used one Independent person throughout the research for convenience and to avoid introducing too many professionals to the study, which may need to be clarified for the participants.

The participants informed the mediator about their participation, and all the questions they had that the mediator could not answer were directed to the researcher.

After the meeting between the mediator and prospective participants, the participants were given 48 hours to decide whether they wanted to participate in the study.

Thirdly, after the participants' responses regarding participation were yes, the mediator and the participants met to sign the consent form at the community hall. The consent form was signed during the day. Informed consent is the clear agreement read and signed by each participant to participate in the study. Informed consent was issued

through a consent form or letter and used as a tool to ensure ethical behaviour (Xu, Antonia &Mellisa 2020:04). The research procedure and consent forms were explained in the language they understood, English and Sepedi. It was also explained to participants that they could withdraw from the interview anytime they felt the need to do so.

Lastly, the researcher used the interview as a method to collect data. In qualitative description research, data collection involves using data to understand and explain the phenomenon (Aithal, 2022:05). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain data about the phenomenon. According to Doody and Noonan (as cited by Bradshaw et al., 2017:4), using interviews enables the researcher to explore issues with the participants through encouraging depth and rigour, facilitating the emergence of new concepts/issues. The interviews held at Mamotintane village , community hall and were conducted in the Sepedi language. All the interviews were recorded using a cell phone recorder with the participants' permission and took 30 minutes to 1 hour . After the interviews, the records were transferred to a researcher's secured computer for storage and deleted from the cell phone. The researcher then translated the interview recordings to create transcripts in English, which were then sent to the co-coder for co-analysis. Consent of recording the interviews was included in the informed consent. Recording participants was critical as it helped the researcher prepare all the information for transcribing without missing any important information. The researcher was fluent in both English and Sepedi. The interview questions were divided into two categories, which are socio-demographic information and experiences and questions.

After the interviews , refreshments were given to the participants to quench their thirst.

3.8. Data Analysis

According to Jorgen (as cited by Boejie, 2010), analysis means organising and interrogating data to allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories. In this study, several steps were followed to analyse data. The researcher used qualitative content analysis to analyse data. According to Nag &Malik (2023:94), qualitative content analysis is the analysis strategy of choice in qualitative descriptive studies (Roller,2019:02). The co-coder used the Atlas Ti software to analyse data. Also, six steps of content analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, Huberman, and Huberman (1994) were adopted.

1. Coding of data from notes, observations, or interviews.

   According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (cited by Colorati & Evans, 2016:20), Codes can be developed from the literature of the study and analysis of preliminary data from notes, observations, and interviews. Codes are action-oriented words or labels assigned to designated portions (Chunks or meaning of words) of text reflecting themes or topics that occur with regularity.

2. Recording insights and reflections on the data.

   Each transcribed document was formatted with wide right margins, allowing the researcher to apply codes and write marginal remarks by hand (Lester 2020:99). The marginal remarks enable the researcher to organise all the important insights and record them in a computer.

3. Sort the data to identify similar phrases, patterns, themes, sequences, and important features.

   According to Lester (2020:99), transcribing the interviews and listening to the participants' voices repeatedly enables the transcriptions to come alive during the analysis in the search for themes and subthemes. All the similar phrases, patterns and themes were sorted according to their categories. Off themes were identified initially, but after further analysis and focusing on the purpose of the study, a smaller number of themes stood out to capture the experience. The researcher then familiarised himself with the data to understand it, and it became easy to break it down into themes, subthemes, patterns, and all-important features.

4. Looking for commonalities and differences among the data and extracting them for further consideration and analysis.

   Conceptually similar codes were organised into categories. During data analysis, patterns were generated, and the researcher spent significant amounts of time with different categorisations, asking questions, checking relationships, and generally resisting the urge to be ‘‘locked too quickly into naming a pattern” (Mezmir, 2020:18).

5. Gradually deciding on a small group or generalisations that hold for the data.

   During this phase of analysis, pattern codes were revised and redefined in the coding manual, and exemplars were used to clarify the understanding of each code (Colorati

& Evans, 2016:21). Those small themes the researcher observed were questioned and analysed to understand them and to generalise them finally.

6. Examining these generalisations in the light of existing knowledge.

Analytic memos are defined by Mezmir (2020:19-20) as a ‘‘brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher’s reflections and thinking processes about the data.’’ Memos aided in data reduction by tying together different pieces of data into conceptual clusters. Memoing was conducted throughout the analysis, from data collection to the dissertation findings to chapter write-up.

3.9. Trustworthiness of Data

According to Sandelowski & Patton (as cited by Daniel, 2019:102), trustworthiness or rigour of the study refers to the degree of confidence in data interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of the study. To ensure the trustworthiness of the proposed study, the researcher adhered to the several concepts of trustworthiness by Lincoln and Guba, as described in the article by Connelly (2016:435-436).

1. Credibility

Credibility is defined as a strategy in qualitative studies that is applied to determine the extent to which the research findings and the process of data analysis are trustworthy (Stahl & King,2020:26). Lemon and Hayes (2020) postulate that member checking refers to when you prove your understanding of what you have detected with those observed.

The most important principle is the study's credibility, or the confidence in the truth of the study and, therefore, the findings. This concept is like internal validity in quantitative research. A reader might ask whether the study was conducted using standard procedures typically used in the indicated qualitative approach or was sufficient justification was provided for variations. Collected data and evidence about the challenges and experiences of young adults using WhatsApp were examined several times by the researcher and co-coder to ensure its credibility.

The co-coder was Professor Maake, with the following academic qualifications: a BA. Degree in Social Work, an MSc in Industrial Psychology at the University of Limpopo, an MA in Social Work at the University of Johannesburg and South Africa, and a PhD

in Social Work at the University of Limpopo. He has fundamental expertise in Atlas Ti, SPSS, and research methodology. Lastly, he specialises in qualitative data analysis as he often presents qualitative methodology workshops at the University of Mpumalanga library for postgraduate students, and he is currently running a Research Consultancy called Maake Research Academy. The data collected was stored on the researcher's computer, which was only accessed by the researcher and is protected by a password. After storage, the data was transcribed and translated from Sepedi to English.

2. Dependability

Korstjens and Moser (2018:121) state that dependability refers to the data's stability over time and the study's conditions. It is like reliability in quantitative research, but with the understanding that the stability of conditions depends on the nature of the study. The researcher provided a solid and concrete explanation of the research methodology and the process followed in the study.

3. Confirmability

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018:121), confirmability is the neutrality or the degree of consistent findings that could be repeated. This is like objectivity in quantitative research. Methods to be used in the study would include maintenance of an audit trail of analysis and methodological memos of log. The researcher kept detailed notes of all the decisions and analyses of the study progression. In this study, the notes/memos were reviewed by a colleague/third party person to prevent biases from the researcher.

4. Transferability

This aspect of trustworthiness is concerned with the extent to which findings are helpful to other people in a variety of settings. Transferability differs from other trustworthiness aspects of research in that readers determine how applicable the findings are to their situations Korstjens and Moser (2018:121). Amankwaa, 2016 (Cited by Conelly, 2016:436) stated that qualitative researchers focus on the participants and their perspectives without saying that this is everyone’s story. In this study, the researcher considered each participant's context and individuality. The participants’ responses might help other families and people with challenges

encountered due to the utilisation of WhatsApp and researchers in other settings to understand the influence of WhatsApp on young adults and their family relationships.

5. Aunthenticity

According to Dammann and Friederichs (2021:01), the degree of authenticity is determined by how accurately researchers portray participants' experiences and how they represent a variety of distinct realities. To ensure and confirm that the study is thorough, original, and legitimate, the researcher chose the right individuals as the study sample.

3.10. Research ethics

The application to conduct research must include a vital section on ethical behaviour for the research to achieve its goals of discovering new information and resolving certain problems (Drolet & Rose, 2022:07). The role of ethics in research is to assure honesty and to defend the rights of all people and groups affected by the research (Drolet &Rose,2022:07).

According to Dammann and Friederichs (cited by Blakley, 2022:322-331), researchers should protect their participants from harm by following high ethical standards and procedures, developing a relationship of trust and creating a welcoming environment for research, and promoting the integrity of research by making sure that they refrain from any research misconduct that could jeopardise their efforts, it would the study's subjects and the researcher's organisation. The researcher stressed upstanding conduct in the following ways:

3.10.1. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality means the information shared is private and should not be conveyed to the other person without the other person's consent (Bryan & Burstow, 2018). Confidentiality limits how information about an individual may be used by others (Jamal et al., 2019).

The researcher assured confidentiality from the onset, and it assisted in acquiring informed consent and building rapport. The following are the manners in which the researcher ensured confidentiality:

1. The researcher would not and never talk about the interview responses from the participants in public places. He also avoided being tempted to share the details of the interviews with a friend, family member or any other person who was not involved in the research to ensure the information. From participants were safe. The researcher interviewed participants individually and never shared the responses and information of participants with participants.
2. The researcher should have discussed this with the participants on the phone or in letters, as it could have jeopardised the confidentiality of the participants.
3. The participant's data is stored in a lockable cabinet where only access is restricted to the researcher.
4. All the data stored on the computer was password protected and will be kept for five years.

Anonymity: According to Saunders et al. (2019), "to be fully anonymous means that a person cannot be identified by any of the four dimensions of identity knowledge". The four dimensions of identity knowledge are as follows:

1. Legal name: the researcher did not mention participants by their real names or surnames. The researcher referred to them as Participant 1, participant 2, etc.
2. Traceability: the researcher needed to give information such as house numbers, street names, coordinates, and Google locations that could be used to track the participants.
3. Pseudonyms linked to name or location: the researcher did not use pseudonyms related to the participants' names or locations.
4. Social categorisation: the researcher did not classify participants in a social status or creed that would jeopardise their anonymity.

3.10.2. Privacy

Privacy is anything from the state of being alone or undisturbed and the freedom from interference from public attention (Harper, 2020:6). The researcher used the following four categories proposed by Harper (2020:06) to ensure that participants had ideal privacy: information privacy, bodily privacy, privacy of communication and territorial privacy.

1. Information privacy or data protection covers the collection and handling of personal information. Information was collected through interviews in the Mamotintane community hall. The researcher had arranged with both community

gatekeepers to provide a community hall and available space on the day of data collection. The researcher emphasised that the mediator should inform members and gatekeepers of the community to minimise movement in and out of the hall during the research interviews. Permission in the consent form was asked, and the mediator informed the participants about recording the interviews using a professional tape recorder. Lastly, the researcher made field notes throughout the data collection process and at the end of the interview sessions, refreshments were served to participants.

2. Bodily privacy covers the protection against invasive procedures such as genetic tests and drug administration. In this study, no physical tests were used as it was not in the scope of this study. The mediator and the researcher also respected the participants' personal space (proximity) by not getting too close or staying too distant to make participants uncomfortable.

3. Privacy of communication covers the security of emails and other forms of communication. When using telephones for appointments, the researcher would ask the participants if they could talk privately. The interviews and data-related information were not communicated through media such as emails, text messages, and letters.

4. Territorial privacy concerns the setting of limits on intrusion into participants' environments, such as the workplace, public, and domestic spaces. The study interviews were conducted in the participants' natural environment, their community hall.

3.10.3. Deception of Participants

Huang & Cong (2022:1589) state that "deception involves withholding information, or offering incorrect information to participants." Also, according to Skavlid (2015), deception in research means that participants are not fully informed about the purpose of the study. In the study, there was no misinformation among participants regarding the study. The research was presented and conducted honestly during the whole research process. Every study process was discussed, including the purpose and rationale, ethics, and publication of results. Lastly, the researcher clarified and answered all participants' questions and concerns.

3.10.4. Beneficence

Halsband &Heinrichs (2023:103) indicates that “bene” comes from the Latin term meaning doing “well” or “good”. Morris (2009:43) also explains that beneficence involves more than avoiding harm. It advocates a level of selflessness and kindness absent from doing damage. Prasecki and Dranseika (2019:621) emphasise that a researcher must also observe the principle of beneficence and justice by maximising the benefits to the participants, minimising harm, and avoiding bias in recruiting participants. In considering risk versus benefit, types of potential harm include physical, psychological, social, and economic harm (Maxworthy, 2019:2).

The participants were exposed to two possible risks: physical and psychological risks. Physical risks included tiredness and exhaustion due to the length of the interview. Participants needed to be more disorientated and disengaged during the interviews. This was minimised and avoided by taking frequent breaks and providing refreshments.

Psychological risks could have occurred as the topic could have reminded the participants of their experiences and challenges they came across using WhatsApp. The participants could have experienced psychological distress. In case of psychological distress, the researcher premeditated to give the participant short breaks. She also prearranged with a Social Worker who would attend to any distressed participants. In the study, no physical or social harm was experienced by the participants.

3.10.5. Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation refers to human research participant’s exercise of free will in deciding whether to participate in a research activity (Mumford, Higgs & Gujar, 2021) People must comprehend what is being requested (Vivek, 2022:299). Participants in this study were not forced in any way to participate in the research project. They also knew they could withdraw from the study for any reason. The research ethics were explained in understandable language, and the participants understood their right to refuse participation in the study.

3.11. Conclusion

Chapter 3 displays that this research adopted a basic research type of study which intends only to provide new knowledge. The research paradigm mentioned is constructivism, which holds that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process. The research approach discussed is qualitative, followed by a Qualitative Descriptive design. QD is naturalistic in its point of departure, less theory-focused, and the data collection tool used is interviews. The population sample was young adults 18-24 years of age and above, in 12 participants from Mamotintane village were selected using a purposive sampling strategy.

The trustworthiness of the data discussed included credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity. Lastly, research ethics formed an integral part of the discussion. Amongst others, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy, deception of participants, and beneficence were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.

4.1 Introduction

The study is aimed to describe and ascertain the experiences of young adults regarding their usage of WhatsApp within their family contexts and determine the challenges they encounter daily in Mamotintane Village, using a qualitative descriptive research design to achieve its objectives. The chapter presents the qualitative findings of the study using Atlas Ti version 8.4.23 for analysis. This qualitative software facilitated the virtual findings of the study as qualitative data was networked and projected for a better understanding of participants' expressions on challenges and experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts. The presentation of the results followed a systematic scientific method of interpretation. Findings were discussed according to research questions. The chapter discusses the process for data analysis, the demographic profile of study participants, the challenges, and experiences of using WhatsApp, and findings relating to research questions, and the chapter ends with a summary.

4.2. Process for Data Analysis

The method of data collection of the study was through a face-to-face interview with participants in Mamotintane village in Mankweng . Data was analysed based on the data collected from a total of 12 participants who are young adults and fervervent users of WhatsApp in Mankweng, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Below the procedures used in analysing the data collected for this study are explained.

Table 4.1. Analytical process for data analysis

Step	Method	Explanation
1	Organizing data	Interviews were transcribed, sorted, and prepared for data analysis.

2	Review of transcripts	Data was reviewed by the researcher. This was to ensure that the researcher familiarize with data collected and to make sure that the collected data reflected the direction of the study.
3	Stage one coding	Initial emerging contents were labelled and then categorized.
4	Stage two final coding	The coding process was used to sort related data in a way that related headings with similar content were grouped together. These formed the categories under the themes.
5	Representation of data	A content analysis was then used to present the findings. The findings in the contents were represented through Atlas Ti version 8.4.23 in figures and network linkages, followed by content presentations of participant's verbatim words. Likewise, the presentations of findings were aligned to research questions.

The Atlas-Ti version 8.4.23 was used for performing analysis (coding process) of the interview transcripts in this study, Atlas-Ti is a software that specializes in analysing qualitative data. Auto-coding was performed on the transcript, to visualize participants understanding and expressions relating to the challenges and experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts. According to Soratto, Pires, & Friese (2020:2), ATLAS.ti is a valuable tool for data analysis in qualitative research. It can be used with various theoretical frameworks and data analysis methods, including thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is the method of data analysis for the qualitative phase of the present study. The thematic analysis describes a research technique for the arbitrary interpretation of the data through a methodological coding and theme- or pattern-identification process (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The coding process was effectively managed in Atlas Ti. Software.

The transcript was auto-coded through a text search tool to depict young adults' understanding and opinions of their experiences of using WhatsApp within their family contexts.

Using the text search tool allowed the researcher to become more familiar with participants' voices and views. This exercise allowed the researcher to begin the coding process.

According to Saldaña (2015:4), a code is a word or a brief phrase to which the researcher assigns a particular piece of data. Whether the researcher uses lump or split coding affects how much code is produced. Split coding refers to breaking the part into separate portions. In contrast, lump coding refers to assigning a single code that encapsulates the substance of a section (Saldaña, 2015:23). The researcher used a lump coding approach for this exploration. Saldaña (2015:3) describes 32 different coding techniques used in the guidebook. The descriptive coding method was mostly used in this study, which Saldaña (2015:88) notes is appropriate for practically all qualitative explorations and especially helpful for a researcher still learning to code. Words or short phrases were used in descriptive codes to describe the data.

Following the coding process, the codes were categorised into six (6) main themes, twenty -two (22) sub-themes, and fifteen (15) categories. Generally, these three organisational levels were used to present findings. These codes and sub-categories are presented in Tables 4.1, 4.2,4.3 and Figure 4.1 as the themes and sub-themes for this study. The next section details the empirical findings of the study.

4.3 Demographic details of participants

This segment presents information about the number of participants, age, number of dependants, area of residence, marital status, highest qualification, employment status, years of visual impairment, and gender of participants used to attain saturation for the qualitative study.

4.3.1 Demographic Information

A total of 12 participants were interviewed in Mamotintane village in Mankweng and participated in the study. Table 4.2.presents a holistic view of the participant's age, gender, number of parents living with, area of residence, marital status, highest qualification and number of siblings.

Table 4.2 : Demographic information of participants

S/no	Gender	Age	Number of parent living with	Area of residence	Relationship status	Level of education	Number of siblings
1	Female	22	2	Mamotintane	Single	Degree	2
2	Male	22	2	Mamotintane	Single	Diploma	2
3	Female	19	2	Mamotintane	Single	Matric	4
4	Male	24	1	Mamotintane	Single	N1 Civil Engineering	2
5	Female	24	1	Mamotintane	Single	Degree	2
6	Male	20	2	Mamotintane	In a relationship	Degree	2
7	Male	24	1	Mamotintane	Single	N3 Electrical Engineering	2
8	Female	24	2	Mamotintane	Single	Degree	2
9	Female	21	1	Mamotintane	Single	Diploma	3

10	Female	23	1	Mamotintane	Single	Degree	1
11	Female	24	1	Mamotintane	Single	Degree	1
12	Male	22	1	Mamotintane	Single	Degree	2

According to the findings, 74% of the study participants were females and 26% were males. This observation agrees with Koçak &Vergiveren (2019) that in terms of gender, The is a high prevalence of woman using WhatsApp .It is understood that females tend to share personal issues and gossip more than males and males share political issues more than females. Finding of study confirms that WhatsApp groups are heavily used among Turkish users both for professional and personal life and it is accepted an essential communication way one cannot resist (Koçak &Vergiveren, 2019).

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The study themes and sub-themes are presented in Figure 4.1.

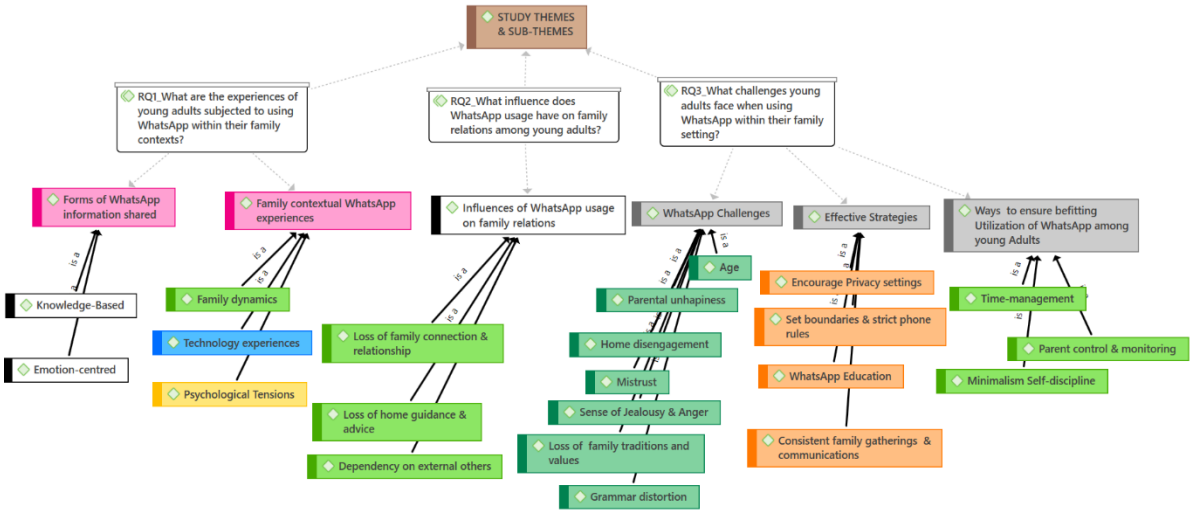


Figure 4.1: Study themes and sub-themes

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

4.4 FINDINGS ON EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG ADULTS SUBJECTED TO USING WHATSAPP WITHIN THEIR FAMILY CONTEXT

The experiences of young adults subjected to using WhatsApp within their family contexts consist of two themes – Forms of WhatsApp information shared and family-contextual WhatsApp experiences. The sub-themes and categories associated with these themes are presented in Table 4.3

TABLE 4.3: Experiences of Young Adults Using WhatsApp in Family Context

Forms of WhatsApp information shared • Knowledge-Based • Emotion-centred
1.1 Knowledge-based • Job Opportunities • Politics • Youth development & education • Digital communication
1.2 Emotion-centred • Emotional expressio & healing • Self-expression
2. Family contextual WhatsApp experiences • Family dynamics • Technology experiences • Psychological Tensions
2.1 Family dynamics • Home social-isolation • Family online monitoring, misinterpretation, and judgment • Loss of family culture • Laziness & procrastination
2.2 Technology experiences • Phone distractions & dependence • App-usage generational gap differences • Communication convenience & efficiency

THEME 4.5 : FINDINGS ON FORMS OF WHATSAPP INFORMATION SHARED

When young adults were asked to share the information they shared on WhatsApp, their responses were categorised into three sub-themes: knowledge-based, emotion-centred, and technology**.**

THEME 4.5.1 : KNOWLEDGE-BASED

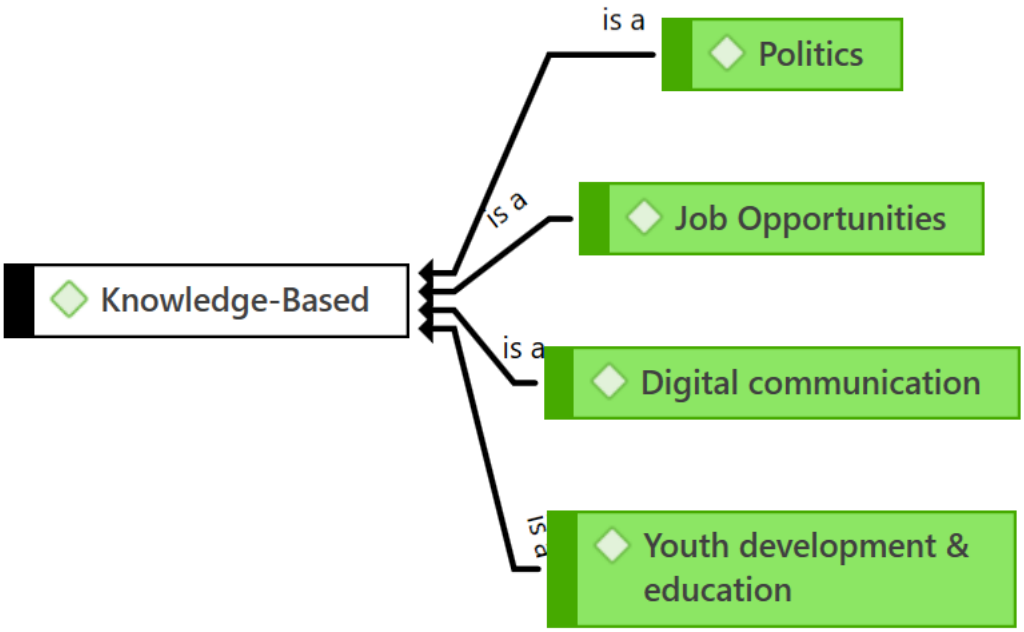


Figure: Knowledge-Based

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

Note P stands for participants

P1= Stands for participant 1

P10= Stands for participant 10

SA1-SA4 = Section A, part1 to section A part 4

SB1 =Section B, part1

SC1-SC3 = Section C, part 1 to section C part 3

When it comes to the type of information young adults share on WhatsApp, Figure 4.1 shows that most of young adults strongly agreed to be using WhatsApp for the following reasons :

- To socialize,
- To stay in touch with friends they can't see regularly,
- To share/discuss academic information with their peers on group cha
- To view and share entertainment information.

Based on the findings , a significant majority of participants expressed a strong inclination towards utilizing WhatsApp as a means of maintaining communication with their peers and engaging in discussions pertaining to academic and entertainment pursuits. This aligns with the findings discussed in the literature review. In their study, Bouhnik & Deshen (2014) discovered that students frequently utilized social networking sites (SNS) for a variety of purposes, encompassing both academic and social aspects. These purposes included maintaining communication with friends who were not readily accessible, sharing links to educational resources, engaging in discussions pertaining to classroom activities, and providing mutual support to one another.

SUBTHEME 4.5.1.1 : JOB OPPORTUNITIES

All participants revealed that they use WhatsApp to share information linked to job advertisements and PDF documents . Majority of young adults utilize this app to update each other about job opportunities that arises from diffferents companies, departments and NGO.This finding about job opportunities is similar to Sarin, Kar, Kewat, and Ilavarasan (2020: 1880). WhatsApp has exponential advancement, and the field is thriving as it helps to prefer brands, share information, and stay connected with a network of family and friends. Social networking has something to offer people of all age groups, and utilisation of them has almost become a part of our day-to-day activities (Dahiya, Saluja, & Johari, 2022: 229-249). It has emerged that young adults are fervent users of WhatsApp; they use it to exchange information conveniently.

Below are examples of participants words:

Mmmm , usually young people like to share and exchange knowledge about job opportunities (SA1, P1).

WhatsApp group is created to share knowledge, ideas and perceptions about a particular topic and links about job opportunities (SA1, P2).

They share information about careers, jobs, academic and personal lives. Usually, a person can use videos or pictures as status to tell her friends, family, classmates and relatives about what is happening in her/his life (SA1, P7).

We usually share job opportunities usually we create a group chat whereby anyone who has seen a post will update it on the group. This helps us know which company hires and what kind of requirements or criteria they seek (SA1, P8).

SUBTHEME 4.5.1.2 : POLITICS

The study revealed that participants use WhatsApp to get updated about what is happening nationally and internationally. This social app provides details of current affairs across the globe. The study of Shaikh Mahesh (2019) agrees that WhatsApp has become a popular tool for marketing in businesses and publicity in politics. Young adults stay updated about what is happening and can spread the information without checking its authenticity.

Below are the participants words:

Widens each other's knowledge about certain information or current affairs (SA1, P1).

They share videos of fake news and what is happening nationally and internationally; it can be about celebrities, politics, ...etc. That news with juicy stories is the one that young people like to share (SA1, P12).

Based on the data , participants agreed that they use WhatsApp to consume , produce content and share information regarding posts in

the form of statuses or videos that can be accessed, appreciated, and commented on by a wide audience.

SUBTHEME 4.5.1.3: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

The study's findings discovered that WhatsApp plays a pivotal role in the lives of participants , especially in their academic field. Participants mentioned that they spend most of their time on WhatsApp for different purposes. They have express that WhatsApp has made life easy for them in terms of their educational purposes, and this aids them to interact with their classmates at large. The finding agrees with Sulemana (2018) that WhatsApp has many benefits to young adults; it also enhances young adults' learning performance by promoting an active learning involvement in WhatsApp conversation or discussion at home. WhatsApp has become a central point of communication for many users, with numerous activities, such as online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Limakrishna, Suryanti, & Wijoyo,2021).

Below are extracts of participants verbatim words:

> *Young adults primarily use WhatsApp to send text messages, trending videos about what has transpired in their community and global school assignments (SA1, P2).*
>
> *They share information about their academics, such as question papers, tasks, research work and notes. They update each other about what has transpired at school, work, and home. They use the app to create communication groups to discuss assignments and vacation plans. This helps young people to stay alert about what is happening around them (SA1, P6).*
> *WhatsApp benefits youth, especially those still studying, in terms of discussing and sharing information related to study matters, apart from their everyday communications with families, friends and relatives. This helps with the spread of information that is vital for their academics (SA1, P9).*

The results of this study are pertinent to the topics discussed in the literature review. In a study conducted by Abdulla (2017), it was found

that social media platforms have a beneficial influence on academic performance. Specifically, 57% of students expressed a preference for utilizing the mobile application WhatsApp as a means of engaging with social media for academic purposes. As per the scholarly work conducted by Bouhnik et al., (2014), it has been expounded that WhatsApp groups fulfil a range of fundamental roles. These encompass the facilitation of communication with students, the cultivation of a social milieu, the encouragement of dialogue and information exchange among students, and the provision of a platform conducive to the process of learning

SUBTHEME:4.5.1.4 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

The study's findings revealed that WhatsApp is used as a podium for freedom of expression and speech among young adults. They use the app to express their feelings and share thoughts without hindrances. It has created a convenient flow of information. This observation agrees with Bouhnik and Deshen (2014), who reported that WhatsApp allows young adults an easy and speedy transference of links to news videos digitally of what has transpired in their setting. The latter findings are the same as Ghalawat et al. (2017). They found that Social networking sites, such as WhatsApp, allow young adults an opportunity to share their thoughts and raise their voices against social acts such as human rights violations, corruption, abuse, and bullying. Furthermore, this medium also provides rich, multi-media discernments into the sphere of young people, not readily accessed through other methods and endows them with greater freedom to talk about sensitive issues, the capability to express themselves via text and the possibility of exercising greater control over information shared (Gibson,2022).

Below are responses in this regard:

> *Usually, young people share different kinds of information such as entertainment, files in different formats containing academic notes and content (word, Excel, PDF), stickers, emoticons, audio and video notes and geolocation. This information enhances effective and convenient communication among young people about their studies and personal lives (SA1, P3).*

The app is used for freedom of expression and speech. You control what you want to share or say, and who can see it and when. Suppose you want to delete the information; you can also do that at your discretion. The app has given us much power to take charge and control our digital life without hindrances. We can send information and reach our target without any hassles; just one status, the information shared will reach many people (SA1, P7).

They share videos of fake news and also what is happening nationally and internationally; it can be about celebrities, politics, GBV, rape etc. That news with juicy stories is the one that young people like to share. Youngsters develop and create their digital identity and spread information about what is currently happening in their lives, and this is done to wipe away the fear of missing out (FOMO) (SA1, P12).

According to the partcipants, the platform is user-friendly and facilitates effective communication. It offers features such as written and stored communication, enabling students to share notes, PDFs, and eBooks. This functionality proves beneficial for students who are unable to physically attend class or prefer to engage in discussions via WhatsApp. Additionally, the platform allows students to address any uncertainties they may have.

THEME 4.6 : EMOTION-CENTERED

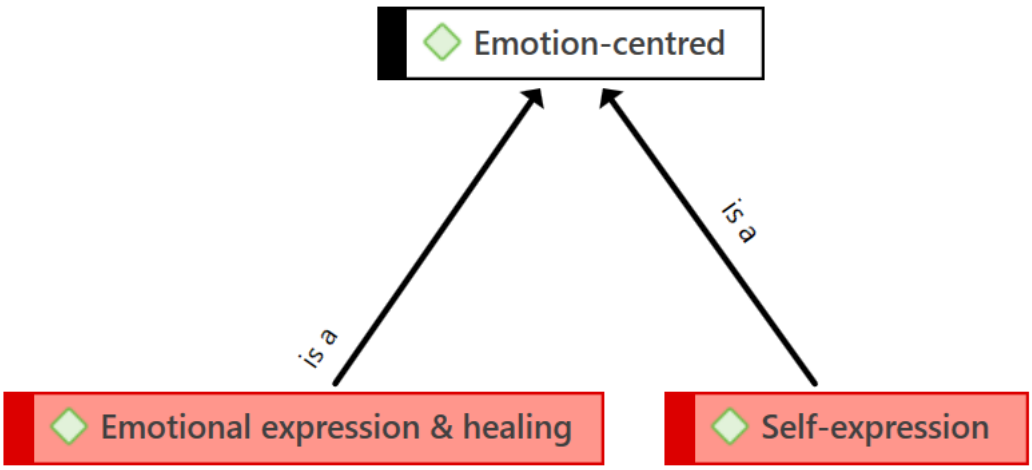


Figure: Emotional-centred

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.6.1. : EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION & HEALING

Young adults are using WhatsApp to ignite a spark in their intimate relationships. They utilise the app to share romantic pictures, text and express their love for each other without being shy. Also, they use it as a therapeutic session platform whereby they can express their emotions and get comforted by family and friends. This finding is like Paul and Criado (2020). These networks provide young adults with valuable support from family members, relatives, and friends at home, especially helping those who experience exclusion or have disabilities or chronic illnesses. Ntibi and Ibok (2020) argue that WhatsApp has detrimental effects on the emotional state of young people. There are many activities that young adults engage in when using social networking sites, and this tends to harm their social, emotional, and psychological well-being.

> *Usually, young people like to … update pictures of their significant other as profile pictures or statuses to express their love, respect, and appreciation towards them (SA1, P1).*

> *We also use WhatsApp to talk about our love life and to ignite the spark in our relationships by using love emojis and sending seducing pictures to attract our partners. WhatsApp has „smiley faces", which we use to depict our emotions when there is no*

tone or expression displayed during texting (except a voice note) (SA1, P1).

They use text messages or voice notes to express their feelings for one another through sending sexual content or nude pictures; this is dominant amongst males because they are too shy to express their feelings physically. Instead, using WhatsApp (giggles) contributes to a couple's ability to fantasise about their relationship (SA1, P5).

The information that is shared on WhatsApp are videos that contain jokes, music, pornography and nudes. Sharing of porn and nudes is dominant among youth as they are sexually active, and sex is their language. WhatsApp has made it easy for young people to share this kind of information because it allows a person to have privacy (SA1, P10).

People will send comforting texts, and some will engage in private conversations to help the victim heal (SA1, P4).

Most young adults highlighted that WhatsApp provides young people in the care system with a degree of independence, control, and liberation from scrutiny not traditionally associated with life in the care system. Young adults can share their challenges and receive empathy from significant others. This app has created a climate within which an individual feels completely safe to share his grievances.

SUBTHEME 4.6.2 :SELF-EXPRESSION

Participants expressed freedom of expression. Each of their perceptions is real and relevant. The individuals react to the environment as it is experienced and perceived. WhatsApp allows young adults to express themselves freely and fluently; at the same time, such communication is often more private than verbal communication, offering a comfortable space to interact without adult involvement or supervision. The finding is congruent with Jude (2019) that many young adults tend to spend their free time surfing WhatsApp, and this has made them able to express themselves, experience greater integration with their peers, find new friends, and maintain a continuous exchange of knowledge and information with their online friends. Young people's

extensive use of WhatsApp has given them the courage to engage in greater freedom to talk about sensitive issues, the ability to express themselves via text and the possibility of exercising greater control over the information shared (Gibson,2022).

> *Others use it to share information about their daily routines, such as the food they eat, what they do during the day and how they keep themselves busy by updating statuses and profile pictures. and share recorded videos of their social lives to keep others intrigued or gain followers, in that way you become popular. They create content about the positive and nice things they do or have and update negative content (SA1, P2)*
>
> *They share photos and videos about what has transpired and memories created with their significant others. They eventually update those pictures on their WhatsApp statuses. Young adults have turned WhatsApp into a tool of self-expression. They express their feelings on WhatsApp status using stickers and emojis and write about their negative or positive emotions. This way, they try to send the message and tell people how they feel (SA1, P4).*
>
> *I share friendly information whereby we talk about ourselves and gossip, "Yeah, that's the kind of information I share on WhatsApp" (SA1, P8).*
>
> *Nowadays, teenagers use WhatsApp to spread information they have created as content about what they have experienced or witnessed. This tool is used to share perceptions and ideas and express your emotions using pictures, stickers, emojis, etc. This content may contain business ideas, vacations, motivations, and love life (SA1, P11).*

All the young adults mentioned that WhatsApp gives them freedom of expression and control over what is shared. Moreover, WhatsApp offer introverted individuals an opportunity to promote their talents, skills, and businesses, a task that may have posed challenges in face-to-face interactions.

4.7 : FAMILY CONTEXTUAL WHATSAPP EXPERIENCES

When asked to reveal experiences of young adults using WhatsApp within their family contexts, their responses yielded four sub-themes- family dynamics, technology experiences, and psychological tension.

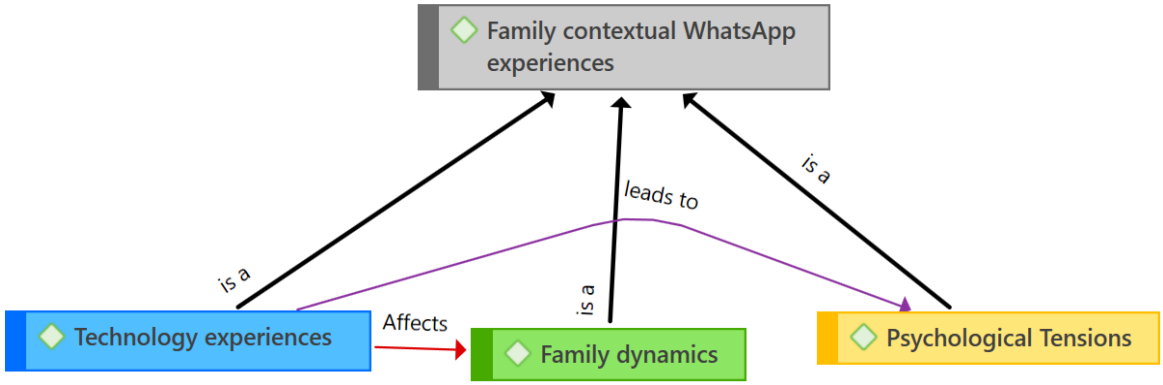


Figure: Family contextual WhatsApp experiences

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.7.1 : FAMILY DYNAMICS

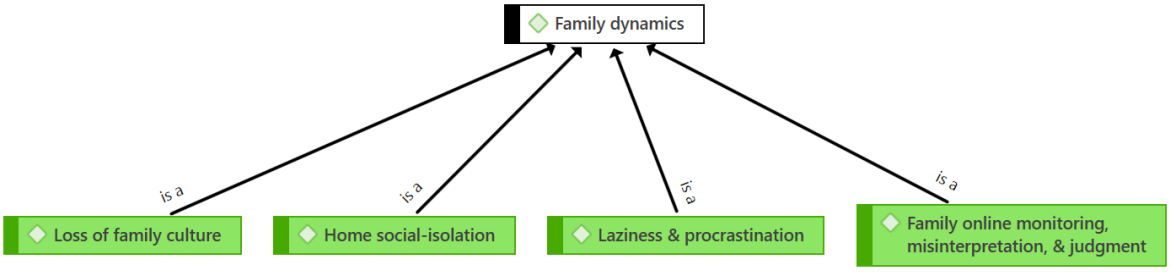


Figure: family dynamics

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.7.1.1 : HOME SOCIAL-ISOLATION

WhatsApp can contribute to social isolation among young people, as they prefer to be on their phones rather than speaking to people in person. All the young adults mentioned that WhatsApp created home social isolation as the constant use of WhatsApp weakened face-to-face family interactions. The findings agree with Fauzan

Nadia (2020) assertion that there has been a deterioration in traditional nuclear family households as people have become more individualistic. Families are spending less time together, resulting in a change in family structure in society; as such, traditional family values and the family itself have been eroded (Turtiainen et al., 2020). Furthermore, the above statement contradicts Costa &Valle (2022), whereby it is ascertained that WhatsApp has a positive impact on building tangible family relationships and creates connections depicting daily life were primarily used to make a person's presence tangible to small groups, such as family and close acquaintances irrespective of their location.

Below are the participants words:

> *It also prohibits physical and social interaction among family members because everything is communicated through the app, and everyone has individualised themselves (SA4, P1)*

> *The focus is more on outside people than the immediate ones. Online leisure has become an extra setting in the lives of young adults and has dangerously invaded our family time and socialisation. Even during our dinner time, everyone is eating whilst using their phones; we hardly share ideas, our values and how to build tangible family relations (SA4, P1).*

> *WhatsApp has affected how our family interacts and socialises and, as a result, negatively affected our family relationships. It has hindered my family and their relatives' face-to-face interactions and social involvement. The application has taken over our lives (SA4, P3).*

> *Been less critical and absent-minded in family issues. The app is beneficial as Important information can be shared; sometimes, it leads to a lack of interaction and communication in the family. families have endured isolation and deprived attention from their young people because they have shifted their focus more to WhatsApp (SA4, P4)*

It interferes with our daily routine and promotes social isolation because we hardly spend time together as a family. Everyone has created a bond with his or her phone (SA4, P10)

a family member will rather confide to a stranger than talk to us (SA4, P11)

Home isolation is particularly true as all participants mentioned that they slightly talk with their family members through WhatsApp; they said they prefer talking with strangers on WhatsApp.

Very slightly or not often, because most young adults prefer talking to strangers and friends than they do with their families. Because with strangers, you feel free to express your feelings without hesitation (SA3, P1).

The reasons for not communicating with their parents include fear of being judged-**"***To avoid fear of being judged* (SA3, P1)". Also, their parents are seldom online, and they may chat with them whenever they see them online; otherwise, chatting with their parents on WhatsApp, according to the young adults, is a no-no! "*I use the app to communicate with my parents only if I cannot find them on direct call; I just send one or two texts to tell them what I am looking for! (rolling eyes and frowning) besides, I don't communicate with them (SA3, P1)".*

Old age, illiteracy and lack of technology knowledge were other reasons for lack of communication with their parents.

Most of our parents don't use WhatsApp because they are old. They have downloaded the app on their phones but hardly use it. So communication with our parents via WhatsApp is ineffective and is limited" (SA3, P3).

The age cohort of our parents determines communication with parents through WhatsApp. If your parents are young and technologically wise, the communication becomes fervent, but if your parents are old, the communication is less fervent. Young adults use WhatsApp to communicate with their folks only if they want something urgent or done something they feel they cannot physically engage with them" (SA3, P4).

Participants expressed that using phones promotes a culture of individualism.

SUBTHEME 4.7.1.2 : FAMILY ONLINE MONITORING, MISINTERPRETATION, & JUDGMENT

Though parenting was done politely and with the best intentions, digital technology could easily undermine individual family members' autonomy, shaping a culture of distrust that might even be an obstacle to personal growth and developing a sense of personal responsibility. Findings about miscommunication and monitoring are similar to Raisa (2022:160). While WhatsApp offered technology for strengthening social relationships, it also enforced a family culture of parental control, often resembling a mediated surveillance culture. Reaching out to dispersed family members over a distance caused anger and frustration and created a practice of mixed messages.

Below is some extract from participants responses:

> *I wouldn't try to expose my relationship status on WhatsApp because I have family in my contacts. Whatever I post, I must ensure that it is not offensive and sarcastic because some family members might feel that you are indirectly talking about them. I often hide my status from my close family members to avoid being judged on what I post on my status (SA4, P5)*
>
> *The app is creating social isolation in our home and fading away the golden bond we had as siblings. I have experienced a high volume of miscommunications during WhatsApp interactions with my family (SA4, P8)*
>
> *We have opted to use WhatsApp to track each other's movements for our safety purposes; for instance, we check our last seen and update each other about our whereabouts. If you are off online! We use a direct call to check up on you (SA4, P11)*
>
> *WhatsApp will jeopardise or encourage people to invade your privacy, especially siblings. They stay intrigued and eager to know whom you are chatting to and endorse secrets (SA4, P12).*

Young adults have outlined that family members have invaded their privacy and are no longer free to express themselves because they fear this may cause conflicts and misconceptions.

SUBTHEME: 4.7.1.3 LOSS OF FAMILY CULTURE

The connection between young adults and their family members is no longer strong and effective because children have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interact with their parents. Also, parents no longer give attention to their kids but rather spend quality time with their gadgets. This finding corresponds with Yeboah and Ewur (2014). Young adults' fervent usage of WhatsApp resulted in not spending quality time with their significant other, and family values, norms and traditions are fading. Mak et al. (2020) point out that parents make tremendous sacrifices to make a living, while at the same time, the children are ignored, creating communication barriers in the family and leading to disconnected family relations.

In contrast, Chan, Yong & Harmizi (2020) conducted a study examining the relationship between the usage of WhatsApp and interpersonal communication skills among students in Malaysia; the study revealed that communication through WhatsApp facilitates the expansion of relationships between family members, relatives, and friends. Through WhatsApp, individuals can avoid the anxiety and timidity associated with face-to-face interactions. They can solve problems, discuss issues, and confront someone who may have misunderstood them without having to communicate in person.

Below are responses in this regard:

> *We have lost* the *traditional way of doing things because we no longer visit friends, families, and significant others and physically interact with one another like we used to do in the past. For instance, during supper or lunch, we used to sit together, and our parents would share the golden oldies stories and tales and narrate their upbringing to us so that we could learn from that and pass it on to our coming generation. But now, we hardly*

spend an hour together as siblings; everyone is glued to his or her phone and prefers her own space (SA4, P3).

The bond between children and their parents is no longer strong and effective because children have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interacting with their parents, and parents no longer give attention to their kids but rather spend quality time with their gadgets. Parents are often ignored by their children, creating communication barriers and leading to disconnected family relations. Our relationship with our parents is perpetually fading (SA4, P4).

Young adults emphasised that face-to-face interactions strengthen family relationships, passing values to generations and building solidarity and rapport.

SUBTHEM 4.7.1.4 : LAZINESS AND PROCRASTINATION

WhatsApp has affected young adults negatively in such a way that it promotes stagnation and setbacks in their everyday activities**.** Procrastination and laziness were faced by young adults in their daily lives. The observation agrees with Faye et al. (2020) that impairment in fulfilling their responsibilities (household chores, schoolwork work, and others) is dominant among youngsters who use WhatsApp. Thus, young people with low conscientiousness have resorted to WhatsApp as a tool to spend time, talk to others and entertain themselves, leaving aside or adjourning their daily activities, which could lead to long-term problems in their daily functioning, academic performance, family and social relationships (Ruiz & Alcázar, 2022:6).

Below are examples of participants words:

It takes away family time, helpful in sharing information, but it delays you in completing chores or tasks given to you at home. WhatsApp is very addictive, and it is hard to ignore it. This app instils the spirit of procrastination and laziness. You can't even

spend a minute without checking it. It creates interferences in our daily routine (SA4, P10)

It encourages procrastination because we spend most of our time hooked up to this app. (SA4, P11)

Spending much time on WhatsApp can lead to procrastination, laziness, and difficulty concentrating on other activities. It can also interfere with family time and relationships (P10, P11).

THEME 4.8 : TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCES

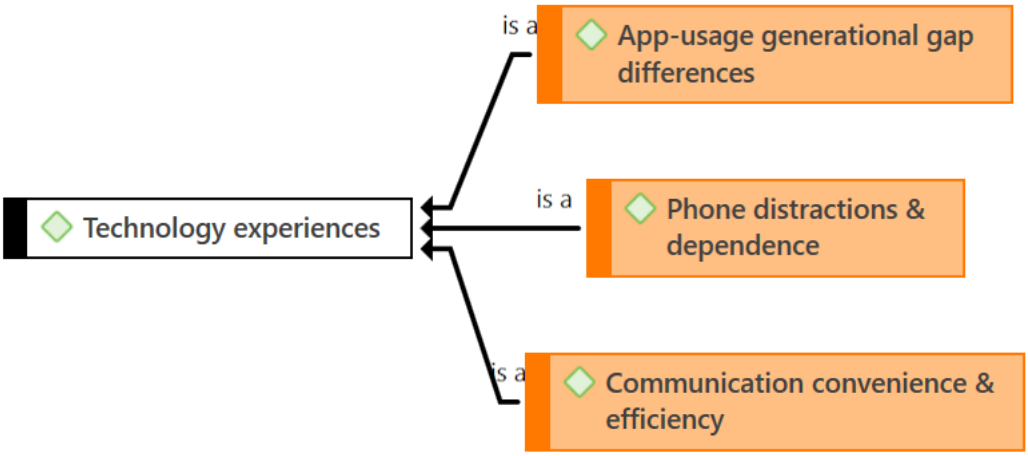


Figure: Technology experiences

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.8.1 :PHONE DISTRACTIONS AND DEPENDENCE

The study's findings indicate that young adults depend more on this application. They hardly do tasks adequately because they often check the status of their contacts and wait impatiently for a reaction after sharing shared content. It is difficult for them to have a conversation that will last without a beep on WhatsApp disturbing them. The finding is the same as Sosa et al. (2019). The use of WhatsApp among young adults has resulted in low-quality leisure within their family settings and

situations where disadvantage is evident. The risks of this can include losing the sense of reality and dependence.

Below are the participants comments:

> *The other thing is when we are having family meetings or trying to spend time together; our phones steal our focus; we fervently check our app per beep instead of paying attention. Usually, this is done by me and my siblings. We stick with our cell phones, destroying our relationships and reducing communication between us as family members. It steals our time as a family; everyone is connected and has a bond with his or her phone than with their family members. It creates a void in our relationships (SA4, P5)*

> *As children, we rely a lot on the functionalities of WhatsApp to monitor and surveil our parents' interactions with us. When our parents are not responsive to digital conversations, we monitor them online. This negatively affects us; we feel less loved and valued (SA4, P6).*
> *WhatsApp encourages gossip, which leads to hatred and bitterness. Siblings will gossip about you in your presence, and you won't notice a thing. Even though a person has unfinished business or issues with you, she or he will rather write a status about your disagreements rather than solve it in person (SA4, P7).*

SUBTHEME 4.8.2 : APP-USAGE GENERATIONAL GAP DIFFERENCES

Communication between parents and children using WhatsApp is limited due to the age gap and technology illiteracy. This finding is evident in Matassi, Boczko & Mitchelstein (2019:2183-2200). Young adults (18–34 years) adopt WhatsApp as a taken-for-granted platform where sociability is mainly produced in groups with friends and enacted through an "always on" availability. A constellation of work and care responsibilities partly shapes middle adults (35–59 years) appropriate to this platform.

I hardly use WhatsApp to communicate with my parents. Yes, they do have the app, but I find it weird and boring to use it for communication. The communication does not flow or intrigue me like when I communicate with my friends. My parents take a long to respond to the text or voice notes. Sometimes, they use incorrect emojis to express their emotions and use wrong spelling and grammar. I find it hard to understand what they are trying to say; it's awful (SA3, P9).

My mother prefers to communicate via something other than WhatsApp; she could be more knowledgeable. She needs to be educated. So, it is easier for her to use the Android phone given to her if she gets someone to assist her in making the calls or sending texts. I am the one who is supposed to call her. It doesn't usually happen because I use my money to buy data for WhatsApp calls and voice notes, yet she prefers direct calls, so we don't get to talk often. Maybe in a week or two, we will talk once (SA3, P11).

Some young people wait to see their parents online on WhatsApp before connecting with them. For those whose parents prefer receiving text messages, young people sometimes expect an immediate response to their texts. Yet, when this does not happen, it can lead to hurt feelings because they feel ignored and not valued. So, the communication depends mostly on parents if they are online, so it only happens occasionally (SA3, P12).

Most of our parents don't use WhatsApp because they are older adults. They have downloaded the app on their phones but hardly use it. So, communication with our parents via WhatsApp is not effective and is limited (SA3, P3).

The age cohort of our parents determines communication with parents through WhatsApp. If your parents are young and technologically wise, the communication becomes fervent, but if your parents are old, the communication could be more fervent.

Young adults use WhatsApp to communicate with their folks only if they want something urgently or do something they feel they cannot physically engage with (SA3, P1).

"*Besides that, I don't communicate with them at all. Some parents are not likely to use social media and are not technologically advanced. Again, young adults don't feel comfortable talking to their parents using social media; it shows a lack of respect and bad morals. Only young adults whose parents can use technology and smartphones can communicate, but not so often; most time, communication is with peers. Some young adults even avoid their parents on social media, so they cannot see or monitor what they post (SA3, P1)".*

Most of our parents must be technologically literate because they were born before technology. So I don't prefer using WhatsApp for communication with my parents because the conversation is boring (SA3, P2)".

Findings have revealed that parents are not fervent users of WhatsApp because they need to be technologically advanced and find the app too complicated. The conversation between them and their children does not flow and becomes tedious.

SUBTHEME 4.8.3 :COMMUNICATION CONVENIENCE & EFFICIENCY

WhatsApp-Mediated Interactions between family members. There are many ways that young adults execute through their use of WhatsApp to influence communication with their parents. Communication through WhatsApp facilitates expanding relationships between family members, relatives, and friends. These networks provide young adults with valuable support from family members, relatives and friends at their home, especially helping those who experience exclusion or have disabilities or chronic illnesses. (Paul and Criado, 2020). This finding is supported by Osei, Mazzucato, and Haagsman (2023: 97-111). WhatsApp provides a functional platform for facilitating intergenerational communication, particularly between young people and their late-middle-aged parents, as it enables simultaneous communication with the entire family. WhatsApp transformed the relationship between those who are

physically co-located and the 'absent presence', which refers to the relationships we have with partners, children, and family members who are not physically present in the same space (Thimm, 2023).

Below are words in this regard:

> *WhatsApp allows us to reach family at once and also promotes phatic communication between our family members (SA4, P1)*
>
> *through WhatsApp, family group chat communication was enhanced.*
>
> *WhatsApp groups offer a particular channel to maintain and nurture these strong family ties, whether near or afar, providing both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication. This was evident during COVID-19 when curfews were initiated, and families were hindered from visiting or spending time together. My family and relatives in other provinces could use WhatsApp to check on us (SA4, P2).*
>
> *Families communicate often on WhatsApp because it is faster, cheaper and user-friendly. Most families have created their group chat whereby they talk about their family issues and events and share ideas about certain things. WhatsApp is a communication and learning tool for many and is used regularly in our everyday lives (SA3, P5).*
>
> *Me and my core family's main channel of communication nowadays is a WhatsApp chat group. We created this group about half a year ago, which has become very active. Someone sends photos and messages daily to the group, and everyone follows it actively. The biggest difference from the past is that my parents have learnt to use WhatsApp's instant messaging service, making our communication easier and faster. This has brought positive vibes to my family and strengthened our relationship. We discuss family issues in the group and resolve them. (SA3, P6).*

Communication between young adults and their parents has rapidly spread and flows due to WhatsApp chat groups. The platform has created a conducive environment for communication among families, especially for young parents who are technologically advanced. Hence, we live in the fourth industrial revolution. For instance, recently, at home, we created a WhatsApp chat group for the family, through which we can easily reach the entire family when we need to contact everyone at once. My mother loves to use the app to communicate with us regularly; she will text about what needs to be done or remind us about the appointments we have to attend. Our family communication frequently happens and is based on the app (SA3, P7).

> *Almost all the time, because nowadays calls are not as important, parents delegate through WhatsApp. Some families have even WhatsApp groups to communicate whatever they want. There is no more physical communication due to our busy schedules and daily routines that differ from one another. WhatsApp is currently used to facilitate communication between parents and children; we even text each other even if we are in the same proximity. The app is very helpful because we can address issues that are not easy to address when having face-to-face communication and express our emotions without being shy. After all, non-verbal communication or body language is used, which can be threatening. WhatsApp makes communication easier and faster, enhancing the effective flow of information, idea sharing and connecting parents and their children. e.g. if one has visited another province, the app is fervently used to check on each other through video calls (SA3, P8)*

WhatsApp has created a platform where young adults easily communicate with family members and friends. Face–to–face communication is no longer dominant among

families. The findings show that parents' positive perceptions of WhatsApp on social interactions and relationships within their family system can foster good family functioning and open communication among family members.

4..8.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL TENSIONS

The findings of this study state that the excessive use of WhatsApp by young adults has exposed them to offensive news and information that is not authentic and have negative effects on their mind. Being a victims of cyberbullying in their WhatsApp family groups by receiving fake news and videos that have caused them Post Traumatic Disorder. The findings are consistent with Sharma & Shukla (2016), who Confirm that young adults may get misleading information or fake news, concentrate more on gossip and even become dependent on this to get information about the world (Sharma & Shukla, 2016). Many youths are addicted to it and cannot abstain from constantly chatting, replying, and sharing ideas or information, so it has become difficult to control it and needs psychotic help. There are many activities that young adults engage in when using social networking sites, and this tends to harm the social, emotional and psychological well-being of a person (Ntibi & Ibok, 2020).

Below are responses from the participants:

> *The spread of fake news and false information through WhatsApp once created anxiety and psychological tension in my family. We received a video of an accident scene forwarded by my neighbour insinuating that my father was involved; my mom fainted after seeing the video, only to find out later that the video was not authentic and was taken in another province last year. If I had not used WhatsApp in my family context, we would not have received this fake news that brought us pain (SA4, P9).*

> *I think I have insomnia! Because I sleep around 1 am every day, chatting with my friends (SA4, P10).*

> *Young adults suffer from psychological tension and withdrawal that leads them to commit suicide and become victims of cyberbullying and find it hard to get help*

because they lack interaction with their significant others (SA4, P4).

It kept me and my mother close; it made it convenient to reach each other and maintain our relationships with my mom and sibling because we use family group chat to discuss family issues and video call each other. Our WhatsApp conversations have strengthened our extant interpersonal relationships. Constant interaction between my mom and siblings on WhatsApp has improved my ability to learn, discuss issues they are hesitant to ask questions in our physical interaction and utilise this system to ask questions directly (SA4, P11).

Excessive use of WhatsApp among young adults resulted in addictions, which may be tied to negative mental health outcomes, including loneliness, social anxiety, and decreased empathy.

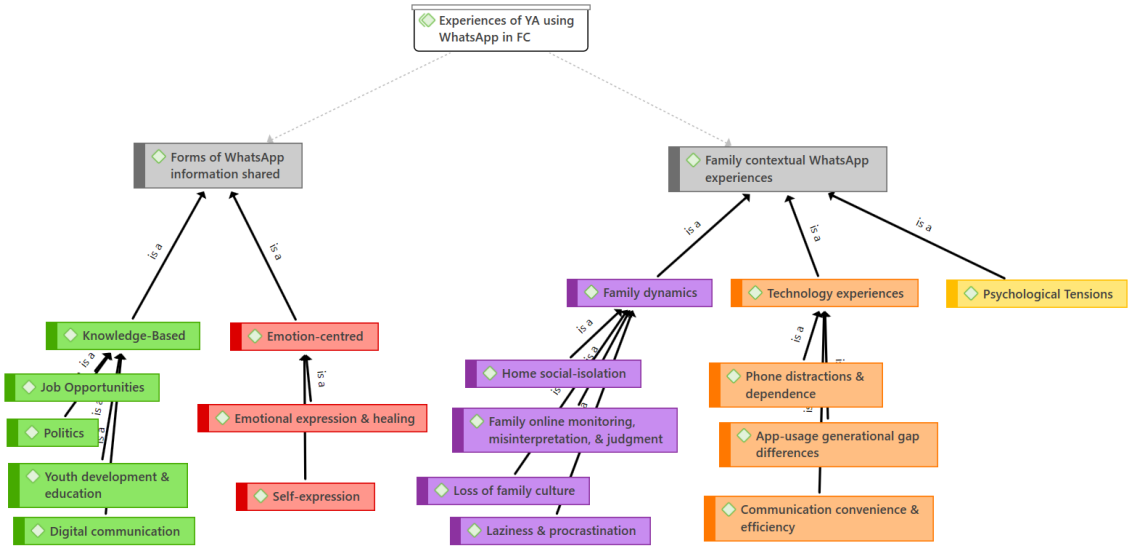


Figure: Overview of RQ1 themes and categories

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

4.9 : FINDINGS INFLUENCE OF WHATSAPP USAGE ON FAMILY RELATIONS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

TABLE 4.4: Influences of WhatsApp usage on family relations

Influences of WhatsApp usage on family relations

- Loss of family connection & relationship
- Loss of home guidance advice
- Dependency on external others

WhatsApp influences on family relations consist of loss of family connection and relationship, loss of home guidance and advice and dependency on external others.

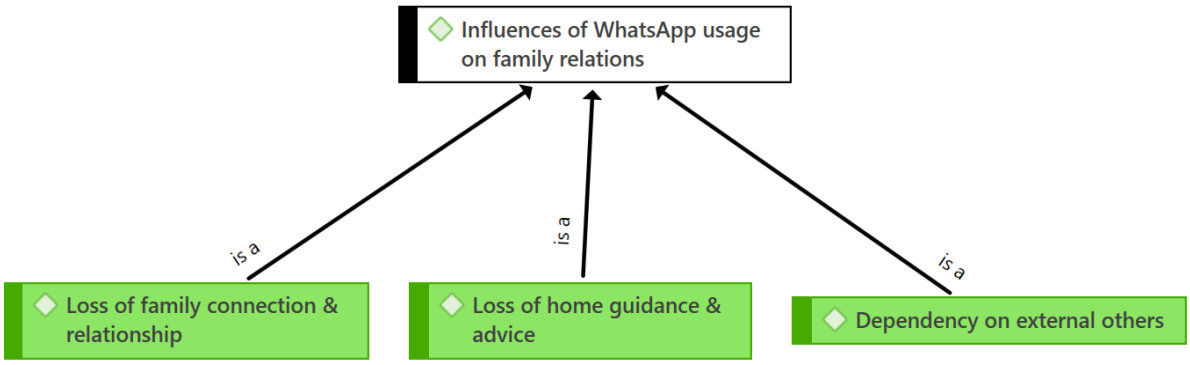


Figure: Influences of WhatsApp usage on family relations
Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.9.1: LOSS OF FAMILY CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIP

The use of WhatsApp among young adults has resulted in lower family cohesion and progressive isolation of family members within the same house—the rapid escalation of WhatsApp usage by young people intensifying numerous predicaments. One of the difficulties young people encounter is social withdrawal, which progresses to a high rate of social isolation. The findings are similar to Brian, Primack, and Miller (2017:01). Young adults commonly use WhatsApp, which may offer an opportunity to ameliorate social isolation—fading away from social interactions among young adults with their

significant others due to irregular WhatsApp usage. The connection between children and their family members is no longer strong and effective because children have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interact with their parents. Also, parents no longer give attention to their kids but rather spend quality time with their gadgets (Chan, Yong &Harmizi,2020:16-20).

Below are examples of participants words:

> *Even if your family is around and it happens that you don't need their company because sometimes a person needs her privacy. You get to express yourself and have open communications without hindrances. But with family, we cannot speak freely or share our views in-depth; I always get restricted from saying things in front of my parents and siblings….so yeah! (SB1, P3).*

> *We connect ourselves to the society and the whole world. It is an effective medium for the flow of information and ideas. It helps me to explore new opportunities and experiences. I get to learn from others and express myself openly. Still, with family, every conversation ends with a fight or heated argument, so I focus on the app to avoid heartache and disappointment (SB1, P4).*

> *I have a toxic family; we don't just get along! If you spend just a mere minute with them, they twist every word you just said. They are bitter people and don't even show remorse if they hurt you. I think they do that deliberately; my siblings disrespect me, and my mom doesn't even see a problem with that or care to reprimand them. I prefer interacting with people not close to me, so I spend most of my time on the app than with my family (SB1, P5).*

> *In my family, everyone is occupied; it's either studies or work. My parents leave early in the morning and return late; we hardly have time to spend as a family. This influences me to bond with*

my gadget to get rid of boredom. I stay online frequently and try to connect with my cousins, friends and classmates (SB1, P7).

These are some of the issues that I cannot share or disclose to my family members. I stay on WhatsApp to seek advice from my friends who are far away from me and strangers. This has helped me to have a clear perspective about life in general. And again, I don't have a close relationship with my siblings because I didn't grow up with them; we don't have a bond. So it's hard for us to stay in one room for more than 2hours; we end up having nothing to say and resort to our cell phones (SB1, P8).

WhatsApp is entertaining and lets you know what is happening in people's lives around you. The face-to-face communication between us as a family does not flow like that on WhatsApp. We don't have as much freedom of speech as we do on WhatsApp; through the app, we express ourselves freely; hence, I'm shy (SB1, P10).

SUBTHEME 4.9.2 : LOSS OF HOME GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

The findings of this study indicate that youngsters today are so obsessed with WhatsApp that they rarely communicate with their family; they get advice and guidance from outside sources, which are inconsistent with their family values. Young adults a misled by social media due to FOMO (Fear of missing out). The findings are the same as Baro et al. (2014) in their study found that young adults, especially university students, mainly use WhatsApp among the various social networking sites to exchange ideas and social interaction and connections.

Participants verbatim words are:

I spend more time on WhatsApp to engage and interact with my friends to strengthen our friendship. My family is always near me. They are issues that I cannot discuss with my siblings or parents because I don't feel comfortable. So, I use the app to ask my

friends or people in my contacts about the things I need clarity on! They get to share their views (SB1, P2).

I always give my time and energy to my family, but I don't get the vibe back; I feel less appreciated and valued. I try to nurture meaningful relationship, but my family don't reciprocate. So when I spend time on WhatsApp, I create more meaningful friendships, and my friends reciprocate. The app helps me avoid arguments; if someone is trying to talk nasty or make sarcastic comments, I immediately block that person. WhatsApp gives me peace of mind (SB1, P6).

SUBTHEME 4.9.3 : DEPENDENCY ON EXTERNAL OTHERS

Young adults mainly rely on WhatsApp as a source of information, guidance, Psycho psycho-social support. Due to conflicts that may arise between family members, individuals prefer to spend their time alone and end up glued to the app. The finding is similar to Obi Jude (2019) in the same line of thought maintains that many young adults tend to spend their free time surfing WhatsApp, and this has made them able to express themselves, experience greater integration with their peers, find new friends, and maintain a continuous exchange of knowledge and information with their online friends.

Below are the participants responses:

I prefer spending more time on WhatsApp than with my family because we fight or make sarcastic comments about something, hurting my feelings. I prefer being alone! (SB1, P1).

So, I use the app to ask my friends or people in my contacts about the things I need clarity on! They get to share their views. I feel relieved and free to share my perceptions and experiences without being intimidated, but with family! (sighs) you always get undermined or discredited. You end up losing self-esteem, and they will always remind you of what you shared with them (SB1, P2).

I connect to society and the world simultaneously; I learn and understand different people with peculiar identities. I get more knowledge and ideas on how to live my life. With family, you get to talk about the same issues and gossip, which becomes tedious. I love heated conversations that will broaden my mind (SB1, P11).

My life revolves around this app. For instance, most things are being communicated on WhatsApp, especially my academics, exploring the outside world and socialising with friends and extended family. Unlike my immediate family, I can share my thoughts without hesitation and engage with many people simultaneously (SB1, P12).

4.10 FINDINGS ON WHATSAPP CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG ADULTS WHEN USING WHATSAPP WITHIN THEIR FAMILY SETTING

This finding consists of three themes, which are WhatsApp Challenges, Effective Strategies and Ways to ensure the befitting Utilization of WhatsApp among young Adults (Table 4.3)

4.10.1 CHALLENGES

When asked to share challenges encountered with using WhatsApp within their family setting, Young adult's responses were categorised into six sub-themes, -parental unhappiness, age, home disengagement, mistrust, sense of Jealousy and Anger, Loss of family traditions and values and grammar distortion (Table 5.3).

TABLE 4.5: Challenges

WhatsApp Challenges
• Parental unhappiness • Age • Home disengagement • Mistrust

- Parental unhappiness
- Age
- Home disengagement
- Mistrust
- Sense of Jealousy & Anger
- Loss of family traditions and values.
- Grammar distortion

Effective Strategies

- Set boundaries & strict phone rules
- Encourage Privacy settings
- WhatsApp Education
- Consistent family gatherings & communications

Ways to Ensure Befitting Utilization of WhatsApp among Young Adults

- Time-management
- Parent control & monitoring
- Minimalism Self-discipline

Minimalism Self-discipline

- Engage in selective communication boundaries
- Content moderation system

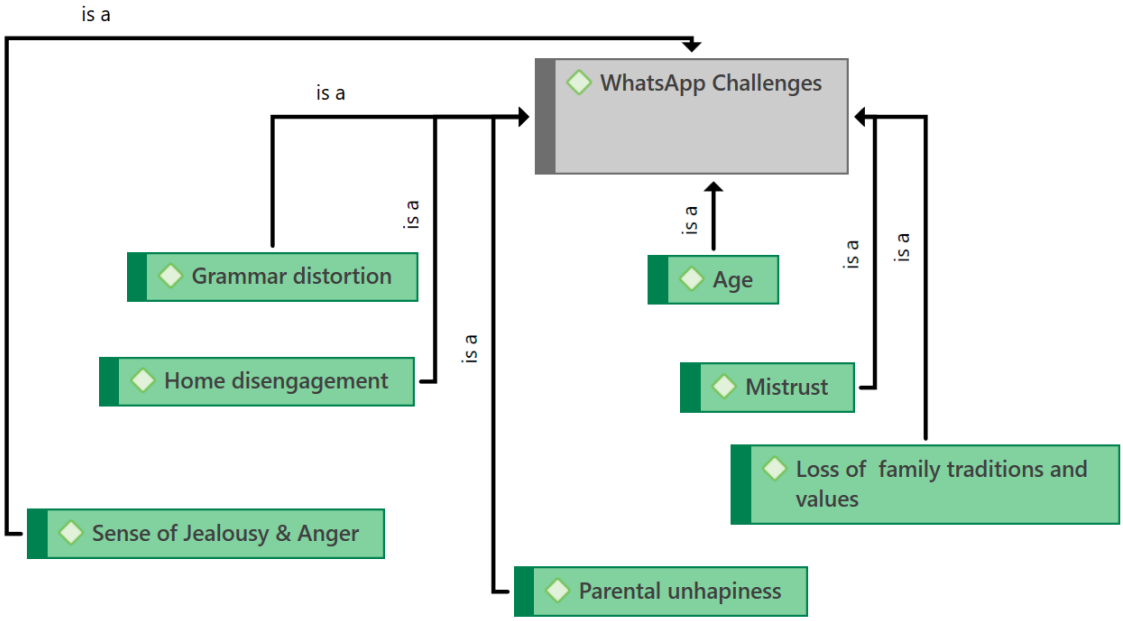


Figure: WhatsApp challenges

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME4.10.1.1 : PARENTAL UNHAPPINESS

The study findings revealed that parents are unhappy because they no longer get attention from their children. Instead, the attention is deviated to WhatsApp. Parent-child relationships are gradually fading because of a lack of socialisation between them. This finding is evident with Fauzan (2020) assertion that there has been a deterioration in traditional nuclear family households as people have become more individualistic. Families are spending less time together, resulting in a change in family structure in society; as such, traditional family values and the family itself have been eroded (Turtiainen et al., 2020). Mayer (2022) states that it is apparent that media affects how a family unit socialises and, as a result, their relationships. It also can negatively impact in-person family contact, hindering face-to-face interactions and social involvement.

Below are the participants exact words:

> *WhatsApp overtakes our real family relationships. Hence, it is a strong reason for social isolation. Instead of connecting and talking, the focus is on the phone and the outside world. Parents are not happy about it as they find it hard to get attention from*

their children; attention is eventually lost during conversations (SC1, P7)

It disturbs us to execute duties at home, and we must complete chores on time. We end up fervently chatting and stop what we are doing. This has caused my parents to shout at us and regard us as not being obedient. It has created distance and a void between my folks and me. I can see that I'm not their favourite because they always complain about how I fail to do a mere chore and insist that WhatsApp has taken a toll on me, which is not the case(Frowns). Do you think I am addicted to the app? (SC1, P8)

SUBTHEME 4.10.1.2 : AGE

The study findings indicated that young adults find it difficult to communicate with some family members who are older through WhatsApp because they are not technologically advanced, and this has caused a drift in their communication skills. The finding is the same as Osei, Mazzucato & Haagsman (2023:97): Age influences people's views and experiences of social interaction through WhatsApp. Important to look at how young people experience digital interactions differently from their parents.

Below are the participant's words:

Some of the challenges are that older people within my family need help to type or are unfamiliar with WhatsApp, unlike us. They are not technologically advanced, and it becomes a challenge because they don't understand our language when texting (SC1, P12).

We must communicate more frequently because they always require face-to-face interactions, even though unnecessary. You won't get help immediately during an emergency or a catastrophic situation because they fail to understand what you are trying to say (SC1, P12).

SUBTHEME 4.10.1. 3 : HOME DISENGAGEMENT

The dominance of WhatsApp shows that families experience irregular communication with one another**.** The finding is similar to Obern's (2022:1649), who suggests that the use of mobile communication devices and WhatsApp provides young people in the care system with a degree of independence, control, and liberation from scrutiny that is not traditionally associated with life in the care system. On multiple occasions, they had ceased or resumed contact with members of their familial network at will. In other words, the interaction was part of an ongoing pattern of informal communication, as opposed to the formulaic nature of contact with children in foster care, which can appear static and out of sync with their natural cadence and daily routine.

Below are the participants statements:

> *We hardly spend much time together as a family because the app has created a division. The active users of WhatsApp check their app on per beep instead of spending time with family. They stick with their cell phones, which destroys their real relationship and reduces communication between family members (SC1, P2)***.**

> *I spend most of my time online engaging with numerous people because that's where I feel loved and appreciated (SC1, P3).*

> *Family members need to work on their work due to WhatsApp. It seriously interferes with their work, studies, relationships and normal social functioning (SC1, P4).*

> *The parent–child relationship is fading because too much focus is on socialisation and interacting with friends, relatives etc., online (SC1, P4).*

SUBTHEME 4.10.1.4 : MISTRUST

The findings outlined that WhatsApp has created tension and conflict among families; it has inflicted trust issues among partners, which led

to detrimental family relationships. The observation is congruent with Chen et al. (2018) due to excessive WhatsApp texts, and distrust has been evident among couples.

Below are the participant's responses:

> *Parents fight because of the unpleasant text they get from each other's phones and accuse each other of cheating. The app destroyed the couple's relationship and trust. My parents have trust issues because my mom once found seductive text and porn pictures from my father's girlfriend. They always fight a lot (SC1, P5).*
>
> *Family members are emotionally broken and have anger issues, which accelerate the high rate of GBV and domestic violence (SC1, P6).*
> *It sometimes spreads false information, harming our family relations; I normally set rules about location sharing and how one can interpret my texts. I'm tired of quarrels and disengagements caused by the app in my family. Instead of connecting and talking, the focus is on the phone and the outside world. (SC1, P9).*

SUBTHEME 4.10.1.5 : SENSE OF JEALOUSY AND ANGER

Young adults expressed that since WhatsApp has dominated as a communication tool between families, conflict, anger, and jealousy have arisen due to shared data on the app and explicit hate speech by family members creating negative or hurt feelings. WhatsApp also makes it easy for young people to express their hurt feelings. The findings are similar to Osei, Mazzucato & Haagsman (2023:98). Silence, brevity and sometimes timing are strategic ways of expressing feelings of hurt, abandonment or dissatisfaction with the care they receive. This shows that while new communication technologies can empower youth, they may make relationships more complex, which can cause adverse effects.

Below are the participant's words:

> *My mom always put my sister's picture as her profile, and she keeps appearing in her status, but she never updates mine. This has negatively affected me, and I feel like my mom doesn't love and value me as much. I tend to grow jealous of my sister and resent her. This has caused much strain on our relationship as a family, and I always prefer spending time alone in my bedroom with my phone to get rid of boredom (SC1, P3).*
>
> *Due to the social isolation experienced, young adults tend to speak to strangers due to a sense of loss of the self.*
>
> *P11: The social isolation of young people at home has been exacerbated by WhatsApp. Rather than speaking to people in person, they would rather be on their phones. Self-esteem is impacted, self-doubt develops as a result, and their health is also affected (SC1, P11).*
>
> *P10: The WhatsApp chat has become a battle for close and extended families. They use voice notes and memes to swear at each other. WhatsApp has also disseminated hate speech directed at specific people. Most families have been affected by irregular hate speech uttered by significant others (SC1, P10).*

SUBTHEME 4.10.1.6 : LOSS OF FAMILY TRADITIONS AND VALUES.

Young adults revealed that WhatsApp had shifted how they did things with their families. It has stolen their social interaction with their significant other, and all family norms and values, such as communication and interpersonal skills, are gradually fading away. The findings are similar to those (Hamzah, 2018: 646). This application has affected the traditional way of doing things because young people no longer visit friends, families, and significant others and physically interact with one another like they used to do.

Below are the participant's words:

WhatsApp has affected our traditional way of doing things; sitting and catching up as a family takes time. We no longer embrace our family values and norms. All vital habits our parents instilled in us as children are gradually fading away. WhatsApp has promoted isolation among family members. Our culture of eating together has deteriorated because everyone is eating in their room and with their gadgets in their hands (SC1, P1).
WhatsApp harms the lifestyle and culture of our families and communication skills at home. Everyone at home tends to have a poor attention span because they always attend to every app beep and lose focus (SC1, P5).

It changes the family's conventional manner of interaction due to the lack of face-to-face communication, resulting in missing communication skills such as reading body language and non–verbal cues (SC1, P6).

We hardly spent time together as a family and shared our views, values and bond. Because every time, everyone is glued to their cell phone, they are not concentrating when you talk to them and always have pending, incomplete or delayed chores because of WhatsApp. It sometimes spreads false information, which can be detrimental to our family relations (SC1, P9)

SUBTHEME 4.10.1.7 : Grammar distortion

The study's findings indicate that the extensive use of WhatsApp has negatively affected young adults' vocabulary and grammar due to shortening words and omitting some alphabets when communicating through the app**.** The finding is the same as Sharma & Shukla's (2016) study revealed that WhatsApp harms youth's lifestyle and culture, especially in their studies and communication skills at home. It affects their academic language and spoils their spelling skills and the grammatical construction of sentences.

Below are the participant's words:

It has affected how we speak and write; it becomes difficult when doing our school work because we struggle with grammar. You know! (raising her voice), even when attending my classes, I always check the app; I can't concentrate, which strains my studies (SA4, P10).

THEME 4.11 : EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Effective strategies are presented in Figure 5.4

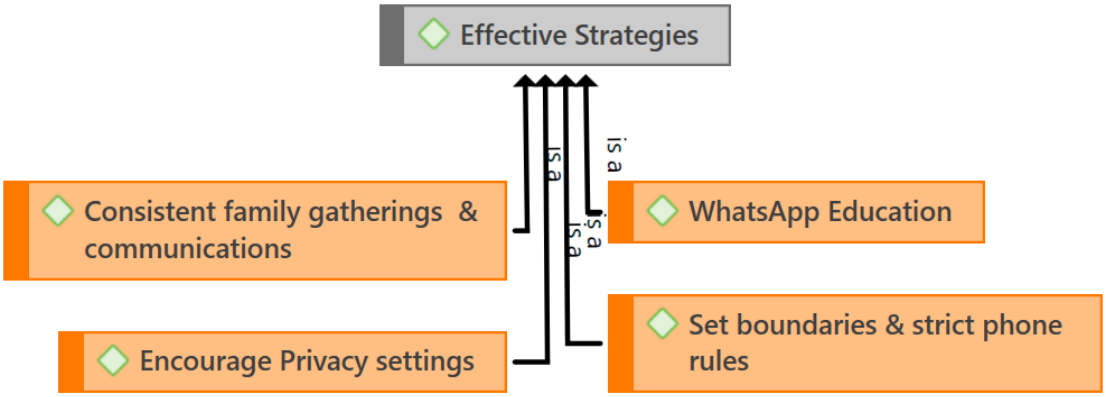


Figure 5.4: Effective strategies

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.11.1 : SET BOUNDARIES AND STRICT PHONE RULES

This study's findings reflected that strict phone rules and boundaries must be set to restore traditional home values. All participants agreed that there is a need to return to the traditional ways and customs within the family setting. They mentioned that parents should be firm on certain rules, including restriction of phone usage during meal times. They argued that once that is established, family relationships will be restored; according to these young adults, spending too much time on WhatsApp can lead to social isolation.

We should go back to our traditional way of doing things, e.g. having breakfast, lunch and dinner together. Parents should set rules that no cell phone is allowed when we spend time or eat together, and they must be strict. This will help us

maintain our relationship and stick to our family culture (SC2, P1)" **"***Restriction of the app should be emphasised during family times; phones must be on silent mode and will attend to it in free time. This will bring positive impact to the lives of young people, and their attention span will be effective (SC2, P11*)

Even young adult's opinion was that "Rules must be set within the family, that you can only be on WhatsApp if you are alone in the setting. Ensure that usage is limited during family time; phone use is not allowed. Everyone must adhere to the rules; this will increase socialisation among families and also increase physical interaction *(SC2, P4)".*

Young adults said that parents need to be firm on meal times, set ground rules, and time frame for logging into WhatsApp whenever the young adults are in the home. Wi-Fi access also needs to be regulated. They explained that such rules will assist in restoring the traditional ways within the family context; meal times will be a period of family bonding, not phone addiction.

Families should revive their traditional way of doing things, such as eating breakfast and dinner together, going to church and having limited time on social media. Ground rules must be developed to maintain discipline at home (SC2, P9), and *"Families should learn more about the pros and cons of the app. The should be a timeframe set by an individual on when should they log in and off the app to avoid addiction (SC2, P3),* ***"****Parents should limit accessibility of Wi-Fi at home, they should set time frame for its usage. This will allow young people to focus more on school work and increase physical interaction with family members. They will have plenty of time to execute home chores (SC2, P8).*

Findings have revealed the need for parents to set firm rules for WhatsApp usage in the home. This will help to foster family interaction and bonding. The lost traditional customs will be restored, such as eating together and sharing smiles, jokes and stories.

SUBTHEME 4.11.2 : ENCOURAGE PRIVACY SETTINGS

WhatsApp text confidentiality is a concern among young adults. Young people encourage privacy so that people may be denied access to their chats**.** They are promoting safety and security for the information shared. The findings are the same

as Sur and Goswami (2021). The encrypted data cannot be accessible. All texts, photos, videos, voice messages, documents, status updates, and calls are encrypted on WhatsApp, and only the people you send them to can access them. This stops the leakage of data from hackers.

Below are some extracts from participants:

> *Privacy should always be maintained, and the app must have tight security so one cannot log into my app without permission to avoid fights and mistrust because trust is broken! It can never be replaced. To go to settings, then hide those you do not want them to see your statuses to avoid disputes (SC2, P3)*

Privacy and security on WhatsApp are important, and families should discuss the pros and cons of the app. Setting timeframes for usage and maintaining privacy can help avoid addiction and conflicts (P3).

SUBTHEME 4.11.3 : WHATSAPP EDUCATION

Young adults suggest that a sensitisation workshop about WhatsApp should be implemented in their families so that no one should be left out of this effective and cost-friendly communication app. The finding is similar to Malekhosseini, Hosseinzadeh and Navi (2018:1143). WhatsApp provides numerous feature that allows posting desired content without restrictions in terms of type with the capability of being managed by users. Status can be a place to express users' feelings, opinions, and thoughts. However, special attention should be paid to the privacy of users and the information published in this manner because access to a user's status by unauthorised friends and interpretations of the user's status content may violate his/her privacy.

Below are the Participants' words:

> *By allowing even our elders access to gadgets that allow for the usage of WhatsApp and familiarising them with buying data. This will help them engage more in virtual communications and learn to know what is going on in their children's lives. This will bring positive vibes to our*

family relations. No one will feel neglected, and parents will play a significant role in the upbringing of their children. The high rate of depression, mental breakdown and suicide will drop among teenagers (SC2, P12).

4.11.4 : CONSISTENT FAMILY GATHERINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Continuous family get-togethers will help build rapport and strengthen family values and norms that will help an individual's development. This finding is similar to Đorđević and Matejević (2021:227). Family meetings foster a sense of autonomy while maintaining family connections and good communication skills.

Below are the participant's responses:

We can address this issue by being free and open about certain issues with our parents and them being open-minded and also learning to listen and embrace us. We should consistently have family meetings and picnics to build tangible values and norms so that we can pass them to our future generation (SC2, P2)

Having face-to-face conversations within ourselves as a family creates family time daily to avoid detachment. We should encourage open communication, and no one should feel inferior or superior towards someone (SC2, P2).

Parents should not take social media seriously as we post and share our interests for fun (SC2, P3)

They are examining how we communicate as a family and rectifying our mistakes. Also, establish family gatherings and vacations. This will help the family restore their relationships and create a new bond to strengthen their family customs and values (SC2, P6).

Parents should create an atmosphere of open communication among themselves and their children. They allow everyone to express themselves freely and learn to listen to their kids (SC2, P7).

We communicate openly by being free and open about certain issues with our parents and them being open-minded about certain issues with us. By doing so, physical interaction and effective communication will rise between families, creating solid family ties (SC2, P10).

4.12 FINDINGS ON WAYS TO ENSURE BEFITTING UTILIZATION OF WHATSAPP AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

The suggestions from young adults interviewed on ways that can be adopted to ensure the befitting utilisation of WhatsApp consist of time management, Parent control and monitoring and Minimalism Self-discipline

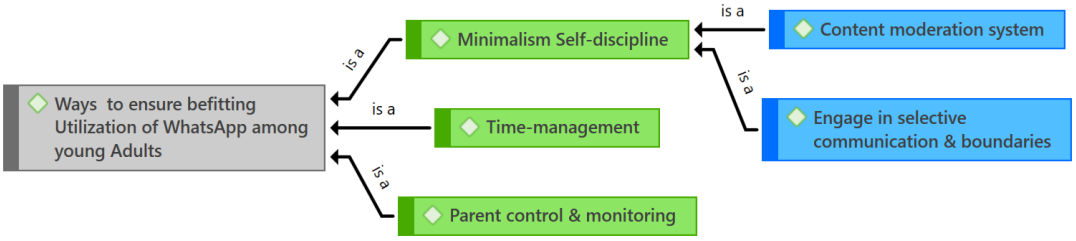


Figure: Ways to ensure befitting utilisation of WhatsApp among Young Adults
Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. ti

SUBTHEME 4.12.1 : TIME-MANAGEMENT

Young adults encouraged to use WhatsApp in family settings be limited, and rules and regulations should be implemented to ensure good family relationships. The finding is consistent with Raisa (2022:160). While WhatsApp offered technology for strengthening social relationships, it also enforced a family culture of parental control, often resembling a mediated surveillance culture.

Below are the participants verbatim:

> *By restricting the amount of time spent on WhatsApp so that people can have more family time**,** the more family time we have, the better the relationship. We will clearly understand our personality and behaviour and learn to respect and accommodate one another (SC3, P2).*
>
> *Every family member should limit time spent on WhatsApp and interact only with their significant other to avoid fervent use of the app that derails time for chores and physical interaction (SC3, P3).*
>
> *Limit time spent on WhatsApp and interact only with your significant other to avoid fervent app use and derail time for chores and physical interaction (SC3, P8)*
>
> *.*

Participants suggest that WhatsApp must have a time limit; it can only be used for certain hours of the day to avoid procrastination and withdrwal from society. This will help individuals to develop interpersonal and communicatrion skills with their significant other.

SUBTHEME 4.12. 2. : PARENT CONTROL & MONITORING

Young adults said parents should check their children's phones and observe how often they log into WhatsApp. This will help to minimise the fervent use of the app.

Parent must emphasise discipline and monitor their children's cell phones to ensure good App usage. Excessive usage of WhatsApp may result in adverse impacts on children's functioning and development. The findings of Shutzman and Gershy (2023:139) suggest that greater parental supervision may protect against the development of internet addiction among children.

Though parenting was done politely and with the best of intentions, digital technology could easily result in undermining the autonomy of individual family members, shaping a culture of distrust that might even be an obstacle to personal growth and the development of a sense of personal responsibility (Sharma and Shukla, 2016).

Participants responses are as follows:

Parents should monitor their children's gadgets and see what they have been up to. This will minimise the excessive usage of WhatsApp among young adults (SC3, P6).

Monitoring and controlling WhatsApp use within the family context was identified as one of the ways to ensure the befitting utilisation of WhatsApp among young Adults and to curb its excesses.

SUBTHEME 4.12.3 : MINIMALISM SELF-DISCIPLINE

Some forms of internet use increase the chances of harmful outcomes, while others are more likely to lead to beneficial outcomes. Young adults should refrain from using WhatsApp excessively. The finding is like Gudka, Gardiner, and Lomas (2023:86), stating that social media's rapid proliferation has brought considerable discussion around the negative impacts and risks for society and individuals. Constant typing and texting through WhatsApp result in inflammation and swelling of wrist tendons, and adolescents may develop personality disorders, excessive aggression, attention deficits, and even abnormal anxiety (Waring & Schoffman 2018:2).

Minimalism self-discipline consists of Engaging in selective communication and boundaries and content moderation.

4.12.4 : ENGAGE IN SELECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND BOUNDARIES

Participants outlined that communication on WhatsApp should be selective and limited to significant others such as close family, relatives and classmates. Unknown contacts should not be prioritised, and usage should be at most hours. After responding to texts, individuals should log off to avoid the temptations. This finding is the same as Hsiao, Chang, and Tang (2016: 342-355). When young adults communicate using this kind of social app, the feeling of enjoyment gradually increases their tendency to repeat the action. This action occurs without a conscious decision to act and is performed like a habit, and they encounter psychological tension.

Below are the participant's words:

A person should communicate with known contacts and only send messages to those who have contacted you first or have

requested. Avoid unnecessary utilisation that can harm our health and emotional and psychological well-being (SC3, P9).
Limit the interest and knowledge to avoid parental involvement in our social well-being (SC3, P4).

I have few WhatsApp contacts, only save family, classmates and close friends. The fewer contacts, the more time you acquire. Only send messages to those who have contacted you first or have requested you contact them on WhatsApp.
I have few WhatsApp contacts, only save family, classmates and close friends. The fewer contacts, the more time you acquire. Only send messages to those who have contacted you first or have requested you contact them on WhatsApp (SC3, P11).

4.12.5 : CONTENT MODERATION SYSTEM

Young adults must be vigilant about the content they create and share with others. It should not be harmful or explicit to any human being. Individuals should share information that will empower, provide adequate, authentic information, and refrain from sharing fake news.

I think a person should discipline her/himself when it comes to using the app. We should have a login and log-off plan; it will have details on when to be online or offline. This will help us to pay attention to the things that will shape, empower and brighten our future. We can complete our tasks and pay attention to details in every aspect of our lives (SC3, P1).
We can complete our tasks and pay attention to details in every aspect of our lives. Everything starts with you! By monitoring the amount of negative content that is being shared and limiting the usage of those content (SC3, P1).
Young adults should not share personal information with strangers. This will prevent cyberbullying, which affects our emotional being and causes suicide. We have lost many young

people because of bullying, and still, our parents don't know what happened to their loved ones. Depression is real (SC3, P5).

Disable every one of your notifications to keep you from being disturbed. Just reserve some in case there's an emergency. This will help stop the spirit of procrastination and be able to complete tasks on time (SC3, P7).

Ensuring it does not affect family time, use it to an advantage in business promoting learning(education) (SC3, P10).

4.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented the demographics of study participants, the experiences and challenges of WhatsApp usage and the three findings of research questions through Atlas Ti version 8.4.23. The virtual presentations of Atlas. Ti helped present participants' understanding of challenges encountered and experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family context. The findings revealed what influences people to use the app and that WhatsApp has stolen the family's traditional ways of doing things and negatively impacted their time and communication. WhatsApp has also promoted isolation, which leads to psychological tension in young adults. Thus, the results from this descriptive analysis provide new acumen about young adults as WhatsApp users, and these results can be of interest to other groups such as social media influencers, applied behaviour analysis, demographers, etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings . The findings also relate to the influence of WhatsApp on family relationships, the experiences of young adults using WhatsApp, and challenges of young adults using WhatsApp within their family setting. The findings are organised based on the research objectives. Following the discussion, this chapter also presents the conclusion from the study, and lastly, the recommendations related to future studies are listed.

5.2 Summary of findings

The primary objective of this study was to assess the influence of WhatsApp use among young adults on family relations.

The background of this study was established through a comprehensive review of existing literature pertaining to the international, national, and regional context, specifically focusing on the Limpopo province. The research problem encompasses the examination of the influence of WhatsApp on family relations . The study's background reveals that the proliferation of WhatsApp usage among young adults has been identified as a concern. Chapter two of the study focused on a comprehensive review of existing literature pertaining the impact of digital communication platforms, particularly WhatsApp, on interpersonal relationships and family dynamics.. The discussion revolved around the historical utilization of strategies aimed at promoting effective utilization of WhatsApp, as well as the corresponding theoretical frameworks.

The study focused on young adults from Mamotintane village as the target population. Data was collected from a sample of 12 young adults who resides at Mamotintane village and are between the ages of 18-24 years . The study employed qualitative data analysis to investigate the influence of WhatsApp use among young adults on family relations.

The research study employed a descriptive research design in order to gather data that would address inquiries pertaining to the status of the study's participants. The study employed a purposive sampling method, as it was deemed that this approach would yield the most pertinent information to address the research inquiries.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain data about the phenomenon. The interview questions were divided into two categories, which are socio-demographic information , experiences and questions.

The data analysis was performed utilizing Atlas Ti version 8.4.23 for analysis. This qualitative software facilitated the virtual findings of the study as qualitative data was networked and projected for a better understanding of participants' expressions on challenges and experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts . Chapter 4 of the study encompassed the presentation and subsequent discussion of the obtained results. This was achieved through the utilization of various analytical tools, coding and theme- or pattern-identification process.

5.3 Findings as per the Objectives of the Study

Below is the presentation of the findings per the study's objectives.

5.3.1 To learn about young adults' experiences using WhatsApp in their family contexts.

The qualitative data revealed several experiences of young adults using WhatsApp in their family contexts in Mamotintane village; data revealed that all 12 participants encountered different experiences within their family contexts; some were similar, and some showed contrast. This study showed that WhatsApp is dominant among young adults and is used as a communication tool in their everyday lives, negatively impacting their family relationships and gradually fading interaction. Participants prefer to be on their phones rather than speaking to family members in person. WhatsApp created home social isolation as the constant use of WhatsApp weakened face-to-face family interactions among participants. The findings agree with Fauzan Nadia's (2020) assertion that there has been a deterioration in traditional nuclear family households as people have become more individualistic. Families are spending less time together, resulting in a change in family structure in society; as such, traditional family values and the family itself have been eroded (Turtiainen et al., 2020).

This study found that WhatsApp has affected how participants interact and socialise with their families and, as a result, negatively affected their family relationships. It has hindered face-to-face interactions and social involvement among family members and relatives. The application has catastrophically taken over participants' lives, making them less critical and absent-minded in family issues.

Participants experienced the loss of family culture, whereby WhatsApp usage promoted a culture of individualism. The connection between participants and their family members is no longer strong and effective because children have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interacting with their parents, and parents no longer pay attention to their kids but rather spend quality time with their gadgets. This finding is corresponding with Yeboah & Ewur (2014). Participants further stated that fervent usage of WhatsApp resulted in not spending quality time with their significant other, and family values, norms and traditions are fading. Mak et al. (2020) point out that parents make tremendous sacrifices to make a living, while at the same time, the children are ignored, creating communication barriers in the family and leading to disconnected family relations.

Laziness and procrastination were experienced by young adults in their family contexts; they needed to be more active to complete tasks or postpone their duties because they focused more on WhatsApp than their daily activities. Procrastination and laziness were faced by young adults in their daily lives. The observation agrees with Faye et al. (2020) that impairment in fulfilling their responsibilities (household chores, school work, others) is dominant among youngsters who use WhatsApp. Thus, young people with low conscientiousness have resorted to WhatsApp as a tool to spend time, talk to others and entertain themselves, leaving aside or adjourning their daily activities, which could lead to long-term problems in their daily functioning, academic performance, family and social relationships (Ruiz & Alcázar, 2022:6).

The study found that communication among young adults has shifted from traditional interpersonal communication, including face-to-face conversations, to various websites and applications limited to online, such as WhatsApp. WhatsApp has created a flow of communication because of its efficiency and convenience—WhatsApp-Mediated Interactions between participants and their family members. Communication through WhatsApp facilitates expanding relationships between family members, relatives, and friends. These networks provide young adults with valuable support from family members, relatives and friends at their home, especially helping those who experience exclusion or have disabilities or chronic illnesses. This finding is supported by Osei, Mazzucato, and Haagsman (2023: 97-111). WhatsApp provides a functional platform for facilitating intergenerational communication, particularly between young people and their late-middle-aged parents, as it enables simultaneous communication

with the entire family. WhatsApp transformed the relationship between those who are physically co-located and the 'absent presence', which refers to the relationships we have with partners, children, and family members who are not physically present in the same space (Thimm, 2023). From these findings, one can conclude that study participants had different experiences relative to the individual's perception. Each experience is real and relevant, and they are all entitled to their perceptions.

5.3.2 To find how WhatsApp usage influences young adults and their family relations.

The qualitative data revealed numerous influences of WhatsApp use among young adults and their family relations. WhatsApp influences on family relations consist of loss of family connection and relationship, loss of home guidance and advice and dependency on external others. Participants mentioned that WhatsApp has resulted in lower family cohesion and progressive isolation of family members within the same house, leading them to lose family connections and relationships.

One of the difficulties young people encounter is social withdrawal, which leads to a high rate of social isolation; the findings are similar to Brian, Primack, and Miller (2017:01).

One of the participants mentioned that they prefer to be alone rather than have the company of their family members because they need privacy. Through WhatsApp, they express themselves and communicate openly without hindrances. But with family, they cannot speak freely or share their views in-depth; they always get restricted to say some things in front of parents and siblings.

Loss of home guidance and advice was also the tricking part that affected family relations. Participants resorted to social media because they rarely communicate with their families because they don't feel comfortable; they get advice and guidance from outside sources inconsistent with their family values. Young adults a misled by social media due to FOMO (Fear of missing out). The findings are the same as Baro et al. (2014).

Furthermore, they needed attention and time from family members and didn't reciprocate. Participants added that interaction with others was also very important because it makes them feel valued and appreciated, and WhatsApp gives them peace of mind.

Dependency on external others emerged as a critical factor influencing WhatsApp usage among young adults and their family relations. Four participants said they rely on WhatsApp as a source of information, guidance, Psycho psycho-social support. Due to conflicts that may arise between family members, individuals prefer to spend their time alone and end up glued to the app.

This study found that social networks such as WhatsApp are pivotal in helping young adults with their academics, freedom of expression, information and socialisation. Engaging with friends, strangers, and classmates was an intriguing factor, as advice and ideas shared during such interactions helped to increase self-esteem, give them a sense of belonging emotional expression and decrease loneliness.

5.3.3 To discover the challenges young adults encounter when using WhatsApp daily within their family setting.

Findings revealed several challenges young adults encounter when using WhatsApp daily within their family setting. Data revealed that all 12 participants encountered different challenges such as emotional , psychological and health effects . This study showed that WhatsApp harms participants and their significant others. Parents are unhappy about their children's fervent use of the app; parents no longer get attention from their children; instead, the attention is deviated to WhatsApp. Findings about parental unhappiness were evident in Fauzan (2020). One participant said WhatsApp overtakes their family relationship. Hence, it is a strong reason for social isolation. Instead of participants connecting and talking to family members, their focus is shifted to the phone and the outside world. As a result, family relationships were damaged, and others faded away. Participants perceived WhatsApp as a burden; hence, it disturbs them to execute duties at home and fervently chat, and parents tend to be not pleased at all, and this caused a drift in their family setting.

Lack of knowledge about technology and the age gap was another challenge. Participants believed their family relationship could have been better if all family members were technologically advanced because this would have strengthened their interpersonal and communication skills. The finding is the same as Osei, Mazzucato, and Haagsman (2023:97). Age influences people’s views and experiences of social interaction through WhatsApp.

This study found that the loss of family traditions and values was one challenge faced by young adults in their family setting. WhatsApp has shifted how young adults are doing things with their families. It has stolen their social interaction with their significant other, and all family norms and values, such as communication and interpersonal skills, have gradually faded. This observation agrees with (Hamzah, 2018: 646), who reported that WhatsApp has affected the traditional way of doing things because young people no longer visit friends, families, and significant others and physically interact with one another like they used to.

Sense of jealousy and anger was another challenge faced by young adults. Some of the participants expressed that they experienced jealousy and anger due to shared data on the app and explicit hate speech by family members, creating negative or hurt feelings. Lack of appreciation, love and favouritism of siblings by parents has aroused jealousy and anger towards siblings. The jealousy has caused much strain in their family relations whereby an individual prefers to spend time alone in the bedroom with their phones instead of interacting with their families. Due to the social isolation experienced, young adults tend to speak to strangers due to a sense of loss of the self. The finding of jealousy and anger was similar to the study of Osei, Mazzucato & Haagsman (2023:98) stated that silence, brevity and sometimes timing are strategic ways of expressing hurt, abandonment or dissatisfaction with the care they receive. The study found that while new communication technologies can empower youth, they may make relationships more complex, which can cause adverse effects.

5.4. Recommendations of the study

The purpose of this study was to fulfill the stated goals, but it also provided several new possibilities for investigation. Due to the dynamic and evolving nature of this field of study, it is evident that further investigation into any of the categories addressed in the literature review could yield valuable insights in the future. In conjunction with the categories expounded upon in Chapter 4, it is advisable to propose the following suggestions for supplementary investigation in order to attain a comprehensive comprehension of the influence of WhatsApp use in family relations.

The study made use of the following recommendations:

- It was found that WhatsApp has negative impacts on social life of individuals and affects their communication and interpersonal skills . Benefits of using WhatsApp: this should be implemented to equip young adults for using social networking for its benefits and inform them of the dangers of using WhatsApp excessively, including both positive and negative social outcomes for young adults, parents and family members.
- This study was restricted to the Mamotintane community, but similar research might be conducted in other rural South African communities.
- WhatsApp facilitates the enhancement of communication proficiency, utilization of information and communication technologies, and cultivation of problem-solving abilities predicated on the aforementioned proficiencies. Therefore, it is recommended that research be conducted to explore the methods and skills to enhance and strengthen family relationships through the utilization of WhatsApp.
- Findings revealed several challenges young adults encounter when using WhatsApp daily within their family setting. Participants encountered different challenges such as emotional , psychological and health effects . This study showed that WhatsApp harms participants and their significant others .Social workers, Psychologists and other professionals must implement programmes and sensitisation workshops at schools and communities to teach young adults and parents about the adequate utilisation of social networks such as WhatsApp, etc. and how to avoid addiction.
- Parental awareness: parents should be technologically advanced about access to social networks to be aware of the dangers and activities their children are exposed to and involved in.

5.5. Recommendations for future research

Based on the findings of this study, it was apparent that several issues could be investigated further**:**

- The researchers should examine the ability of family relationship programs to expand social and interpersonal skills.
- There is a need to create an effective strategy manual to help young people in the utilisation of social media to help prevent addiction, psychological tension, social isolation and procrastination.

- This study was limited to Mamotintane village, and further research could be carried out looking at the same topic in other South African rural areas

5.6. Conclusions

The study aimed to describe and ascertain the experiences of young adults regarding their usage of WhatsApp within their family contexts and determine the challenges they encounter daily in Mamotintane Village. Consequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Twelve participants from Mamotintane were selected. All participants were 18-24 years old and fervent WhatsApp users. The study was a basic research study which followed a qualitative approach and was informed by a qualitative descriptive design. The study made several conclusions and findings.

WhatsApp plays a pivotal part among young adults; they use it to share information concerning their issues of interest compared to other ages; hence, it might have positive and negative impacts on their family relationships. WhatsApp has altered a convenient and effective way for young adults to communicate with friends, relatives, and classmates. However, it has started to affect the daily activities of normal human beings.

It was found that young adults encountered the following challenges when using WhatsApp: harm to their social, emotional and psychological well-being, lack of concentration and social isolation. It is, therefore, understood that the internet has substantially modified young people's free time and leisure and shifted the norm of spending time with their significant other. The rapid advancement of technology and science influences how people engage with one another.

The study also revealed effective strategies to eliminate irregular WhatsApp usage and cope with their challenges: Set boundaries and strict phone rules, WhatsApp education, consistent family gatherings and communications and encourage privacy settings. On the contrary, family meetings foster a sense of autonomy while maintaining family connections and good communication skills.

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ANNEXURE A - SEPEDI INFORMED CONSENT

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HREC Stamp

MONGWALO WA TUMELELANO YA BOITLAMO KA SEKATHULAGANYO SA DIPOTŠIŠO THERIŠANO.

HLOGO YA THUTO YA NYAKIŠIŠO: **HLOHLELETŠO YA TSHOMIŠO YA WHATSAPP MAGERENG GA DIKAMANO TŠA MALAPA GARE GA BASWA BA MOTSESELEGAE WA MAMOTINTANE.**

NOMORO KAELO YA BOITSHWARO:

MOTLHOTLHOMIŠIMOGOLO: Prof N. H. Ntombela

MOITHUTI: E MABITSELA

ATERESE: 253 MAMOTINTANE VILLAGE 0727

NOMORO KGOKAGANYO: 0725945042

O laletšwa go tšeya karolo mo thutong ye, ya nyakišišo e lego karolo ya nyakišišo ya kwaliteitifi. Ka kgopelo tšeya nako go lebelela tšibišo ye e tšweleditšwego mo, e e tlaa tlhalosang ka botlalo se thuto e eleng ka ga sona. Ka kgopela nnetefatša goba nyaka motho omongwe yo a ka go tlhalosetšang ka potšišo ye ngwe le ngwe ye o sa e kwišišing mabapi le nyakišišo ye. Go botlhokwa gore o kgotsofalele go kwišiša gabotse seo nyakišišo e leng ka ga sona gape le gore o ya go amega bjang. Gape, go tšea karalo gago ke boithaopo e bile o lokologile go ka gana go tšeya karolo. Fa o gana, se ka se go ame ka gope. O letlelelwa go ka ikgogela morago nako ye ngwe le ye ngwe le ge o be o dumetše go tšeya karolo.

Thuto e e dumeletšwe semmušo ke Komiti ya Tebelelo ya Maitshwaro a nyakišišo ya Boitekanelo ya Legoro la tša Saense ya Boitekanelo ya Yunibesiti ya Bokone Bophirima **(NWU -00079-22-S1)** mme e tlaa dirwa go ya ka ditaelo le tsamaiso ya thebolelo ya maitshwaro mo nyakišišong ya Kgokaganyo ya tša leago : Tsamaišo, Mekgwa le Dibopego le ditaelo tše dingwe tša boditšhabatšhaba tše di dirišiwang mo thutong ye. Go tlaa tlhokega gore komiti ya tekolo ya maitshwaro goba o mongwe wa maleba a hlahlobo ya direkhotho tša nyakišišo.

Thuto e, e ka ga eng?

- Maikemišetšo a thuto ye ke go tseba hlohleletšo ya tshomišo ya whatsapp magereng ga dikamano tša malapa gare ga baswa ba motseng se gae wa Mamotintane.
- Thuto e ka fana ka tsebo ye e lego gona ye e nyalaneng le ya Tshomišo ya WhatsApp . Thuto e ka fana ka thušo ya banyakišiši basemorafe le batlhami ba dipholisi go ba le tsebo ka thuto.

  Mo thutong ye, batšeyakarolo etlaba badudi ba Mamotintane, go tloga ka mengwaga ya 18 go ya 24 batla tlhokolwa. O tla butšišwa dipotšišo tše di ka tšeyago metsotso ye masomenne hlano (45) go ya go iri ye tee (1). Bakgatha tema ka gare ga thuto-potšišo e tlaba ba lesomepedi (12) ka palo.

- Thuto yee, etla tswarelwa holong ya badudi kamoka ba Mamotintane, thuto-potšišo etla ba mohuta wa otee ka otee, ebile di tla rekhotiwa gape di tla etelela ke monyakišiši pele.
- Lebaka la go botšiša di potšišo ke go nyaka go kgonthišiša hlohletšo ya tshomišo ya WhatsApp magereng ga dikamano tša malapa gare ga baswa ba motseng se gae wa Mamotintane.
- Nyakišišo yee, eleka go bontsha mekgwa yeo e ka šomišago, go nnetefatša dikamano tša go tiya tša malapa ge ba šomiša WhatsApp.

Ke ka lebaka lefe, o laleditšwe go tšeya karolo?

- Laleditšwe go tšeya karolo ka gobane go ya ka tebelelo o motho yo a lokafetše go ba kagare ga thuto yee, go ya ka dikwokwane tša thuto.
- Batšeyakaralo ba tshwanetše goba baswa ba megwaga ya magareng ga lesomeseswai (18) go ya go masomepedi-nne (24).
- Batšeyakarolo ba tshwanetše goba badudi ma Motse-selegae wa Mamotintane ebile ba dula le malapa a bo bona.
- Batšeyakarolo ba tshwanetše kgona go bolela Seisimane le Sepedi, bjalo ka gee, dipotšišotherišano di tlile go dirwa ka Seisimane le Sepedi. Fa e le gore motšeyakarolo ga a kgone go bolela Seisimane, potšišotherišano e tlaba ka Sepedi ya fetolelwa mo Seisimaneng.
- Batšeya karolo ba tshwanetše go ba le sellathekeeng, ebile ba sešomiše ka mehla.

Ge motho aka sebe le dintlha tšeo, a ka se kgone go tšeya karolo, ebile ba ka sehlokolwe.

Dintlha tša go se tšeye karolo di ka mokgwa woo:

- Batšeyakarolo bago sekgone go bala le go ngwala.
- Batšeyakarolo ba goba le kgatelelo ya monagano ye eka gogelang morago polelo ya bona.
- Batšeyakarolo ba go sebone le go kwa.
    - Laleditšwe go ba karolo ya nyakišišo yee, ka gobane ona le dintlha tše dinepagetšego goba karolo ya sehlopha sa thuto-ya nyakišišo ye e nyakago go tseba ka ga hlohletšo ya tshomišo ya WhatsApp magereng

ga dikamano tša malapa gare ga baswa ba motseselegae wa Mamotintane. O kaba le tshedimošo ye hlwahlwa le maitemogelo ka seka- thuto, le sehlopha se selokafetšego ebile se sekaone sa gonyakega go kgetha tema ka gobane ke sona se dirišang tšaleago la phatlalatšo ka mehla.

- Go kgatha temaka gare ga

Ke eng se se kgolofelwago go wena?

O Kgolofelwa go araba dipotšišo tša tikologo ya leago di le 5 tšeo di fanago ka tshedimošetšo ya leago la gago le tše 8, tše di amanang le thuto, Dipotšišotherišano di tla tseya metsotso ye 45, ebile ditla rekhothiwa. Dipotšišo di latela bjalo*:*

KAROLO 1: TSHEDIMOŠETŠO KA TIKOLOGO YA LEAGO

- Mengwaga……..
- Nomoro ya batswadi bao o dulago le bona……
- Seemo sa kgwerano ……
- Seemo sa thuto……
- Nomoro ya bana ba genoka gae……..

KAROLO 2: DITHULAGANYO TŠA DIKGWETLHO LE KGOTLELELO

1. Ke tshedimošo efe yeo baswa ba abelanago yona mo go WhatsApp?

2. Ke dinako dife tšeo baswa ba dirišago WhatsApp?

3. Ke ga kae mo elego gore baswa ba diriša WhatsApp go boledišana le batswadi ba bona?

4. Ke mang goba ke eng seo se go hloleletšago gore o phele go WhatsApp go feta go phela la balapa la geno?

5. Ke eng seo o itemogetšego sona ka go diriša WhatsApp?

6. Ke di thulaganyo dife tšeo o bilego wa kopana le tšona ka go šomiša WhatsApp ka legoro la lapa lageno?

7. Thulaganyo tšeo di ka fedišwa bjang?

8.Ke mekgwa efe yeo e ka šomišago, go netefatša tšomišo ye botse ya WhatsApp gare ga baswa?

Afa o tla amogela se sengwe ge o tšeya karolo mo nyakišišong ye?

- Sengwe se se ka amogelwang mo thutong e, ke go thušana go lwa le hlokofatšo y age motho a diriša sellathekeng le go aga malapa a go tiya le go lwantsha leago la phatlalatšo. Le gotla ka mekgwana goba ditsela tša go thuša baswa ka gohlahlobiwa ka poledišano, gofola matswalo le go tshentsha mekgwa ya bophelo.
- Oka se lefelwe selo go tšeya karolo mo go thuto-nyakišišo ye. Ebile o ka se fiwe tshelete ya senamelwa ka gobane dipotšišotherišano tšo tšea karolo mo o dulago gona.

A go na le dirisiki go tšeya karolo ga gago mo dinyakišišong, gape go ka dirwa eng go dithibela?

Go ya ka seemo sa potšišotherisano sa sekapopego, potšišotherišano e tlaa tšeya metsotso e le 30 – 45 mo mesong. Sethalo se se latelang ke ye ngwe ya dirisiki tšeo o ka itemogelang tšona le dikgato tše di ka tšewang fgo tlhokomelwa dirisiki.

Dirisiki	Dikgato tše di ka tšewang
Risiki ya maemo a go lahlegelwa ke kgahlego Batšeyakarolo baka lahlegelwa ke kgahlego ebile batšwa go potšišotherišano	Seo se tliša tshošetšo ye kgolo go thuto-nyakišiši go feta batšeyakarolo. Seo fedišwa ka go khutša gafetša le gafetša ebile go nwewa dino.
Kgatelelo ya monagano le maikutlo Dirisiki tša kgatelelo ya monago dika tswelela ge monyakišiši ge a elela go ya kamo go swanelwago ka bophelo bja sephiri bja batšeyakarolo kudu kudu, seo se ka tliša kgatelelo ya monagano le maikutlo.	Ge go ka bale kgonagalo ya kgatelello ya monagano, monyakišiši otlafa batšeyakarolo sebaka sa go khutša le gobeakanya with modirelaleago o hlwahlwa, pele ga go gobakantsha ditaba tša nyakišišo, ge motšeyakarolo ge a ka itemogela gatelelo ya monagano, otla išiwa go modirelaleago. Dinomoro tša motato tša modirelaleago, ditla bontšhwa go fomo ya boitlamo le mokgothatsi o tlaba gona mo sebakeng.
Bamalapa ba kakwa kgatelelo ya go nyaka go tšeya karolo gare ga thuto. **Sephiri**	Fomo ya boitlamo etla gatelela hlago ya goikgetha go tšeya karolo. Motlišakhutšo etlaba modirelaleago, yoo alego le tsebo ka tša dikgohlakgohlano tša dihlopha le ditirelo tša leago.
Di tshwaetšo tša kokwanahloko ya COVID-19	Dikgato tšeo ditlaelwa šeedi: Go bula matshikangoepe gore moya wa go hlweka o tsene ka gare ga holo. Batšeyakarolo batla fiwa sepipa molomo le

	dinko ebile bahlohleletšwa go seapara dinako ka moka. Monyakišiši le Motlišakhutšo batla hlwekiša mabato ka moka kgafetšakgafetša kudu mom abating leditulong. Segoba sa dimetara tša 1.5 setla fiwa. Monyakišiši le batšeaya karolo b aka se dule ka sekgobakano ka nako ya potšišotherišano. Meetse, Sesepe le Sanitisa ditlaba gona gore hlwekafatša. Magato ao atla tšiwa go thibela phetetšo ya kokwanahloko ya Covid-19.

Re ka šireletsa sephiri sa gago bjang le gore ke mang yo o tlaa lebelelang diphitlhelelo tša gago?

- Botlhokaina mo diphitlhelelong tša gago bo tlaa šireletswa ka go diriša maina a tlaleletšo a go setsebjwe.
- Ke monyakišiši fela yo atlago go lebelela dipoelo. Dikarabo tša gago di tla išwa ka go setlabakelo sa ditaba ebile dika sebontshe gore ditšwa go wena.
- Se dirišwa sa go gatiša lentšu se tla dirišwa ge batšeyakarolo ba dumelelana le seo.
- Ditaba tša ka sephiring tša batšeyakarolo dika sekgopelwe.
- Sephiri setla kgonthišišwa ka go šireletšwa ga ditaba ka kamoreng ya go notlelwa.
- Nyakišišo etla dirwa ka botshepegi le botswirere.

Go tlaa diragala eng ka diphitlhelelo le dišupo?

Diphitlhelelo tša thuto yee, di tla dirišwa fela go thuto mme ditla thuša gothoma diporekeromo tšeo ditla dirišiwang go aga malapa a go tia le go fenyenya kgatelelo ya sošele mediya.

Diphitlhelelo ditla beiwa ka gare ga kamora wa go notlelwa le ka gare ga komputara mengwaga ye hlano (5) tša fetša tša senywa.

O tla tseba bjang ka dipoelo tša nyakišišo ye?

Re tla go neela dipoelo tša nyakišišo fao e feditswe mme monyakišiši o tla tla ka bo yena go le neela dikarabo.

A o tla patelwa go tšeya karolo mo nyakišišong e le gore a gona le dihlohlo tše dingwe?

Thuto ye, elefsa ke ba univesiti ya Bokone Bophirima go tšwa go ba thušo ya mašeleng ya dithutotšagodimo. Oka selefse go tšeya karolo mo go thuto ye ya nyakišišo.

Oka se lefišwe selo, ge o tšeya karolo ka go thuto ye.

Dino ditla fiwa ge dipotšišotherišano e feditšwe.

Batšeyakarolo batla fiwa tebogo ya R20.00 ya metsotso ya sellathekeng, a gona tshelete yeo e tla fiwago batšeyakarolo.

A go na se sengwe seo o nyakang go se tseba goba go se dira?

O ka ikgokaganya le Elizabeth Mabitsela go 0725945042, ge ona le dipotšišo goba mathata.

O ka ikgolaganya le Komiti ya Patlisiso ya Thebolo ya Maitshwaro/Maitseo (HREC) ya Yunibesithi ya Bokone Bophirima mo 018 299 1206 , imeile: carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za ge o na le dipotšišo goba mathata amangwe ka ga nyakišišo.

O tla amogela setlankana sa tshedimošetšo le fomo ya boitlamo go ya ka maikemišetšo a gago.

Tlhomamišo ka motšeyakarolo

Mosaeno ka fase, Nna……Ke dumela go tšeya karolo mo hlogo taba ya nyakišišo: Hlohleletšo ya tshomišo ya whatsapp magereng ga dikamano tša malapa gare ga baswa ba motseselegae wa mamotintane.
Ke bolela gore:
Ke tlhaloseditswe ka ga mohola le mokgwa wa thuto ya nyakišišo.
Ke ithaopile go tšeya karolo.
Ke neela E. Mabitsela toka ya go ka rekota potšišotherišano yaka.
Ke kwišiša gore nka ikgogela morago go tšwa mo thuto ye nako yengwe le yengwe, pele e thoma goba geke tšwetšepele go tšeya karolo.
Ke kwišiša gore botlhokaina bjaka bo tla netefatšwa mo go tshwanetšeng ka go fihla boitshupo bjaka.
Ke kwišiša gore ditsopolo tša go se tlhagiše leina laka mo potšišotherišanong di tla dirišiwa mo dissertation le mo diphatlalatšong tše dingwe ge ke neela toka ka mo fase:
Ka kgopelo tshwaya mo lepokising la maleba:
Ke dumela gore tsopolo goba phatlalatšo e ka ntshiwa go tšwa mo potšišotherišanong yaka.
Ga ke dumele gore tsopolo goba phatlalatšo e ka ntshiwa go tšwa mo potšišotherišanong yaka.

Saennwe kua (lefelo) .....Ka (letšatšikgwedi)…….. 20....

Tlhomamišo ka omongwe yo a amogetšeng boitlamo

Nna (Leina) …… ke bolela gore:

- Ke tlhalositše ka botlalo tshedimošo ye e be go mo pampiring yee.

  …….

- Ke dirisitše/ga ka diriša motšhomolodi.
- Ke mo eleditše go botšiša dipotšišo le go tšeya nako ya gagwe mo go di arabeng.
- Ke kgotsofetše gore o kwišišitše dintlha ka moka tša nyakišišo gabotse bjalo ka ge ditlhalošitšwe ka mo godimo.
- Ke mo neetše nako ya go boledišana le ba bangwe ge ba nyaka go dira bjalo.

Saennwe kua (lefelo).....ka(letšatšikgwedi)……20

....

Tshaeno ya moamogedi wa maitlamo **Tshaeno ya Hlatse**

Tlhomamišo ka monyakišiši

Nna (leina) …… ke bolela gore:

- Ke tlhalositše tshedimošetšo mo lengwalong le ……..
- Ke dirisitše/ga ka diriša motšhomolodi
- Ke mo eleditše go botšiša dipotšišo le go tšeya nako ya gagwe mo go di arabeng.
- Ke kgotsofetše gore o kwišišitše dintlha ka moka tša nyakišišo gabotse bjale ka ge di tlhagišitšwe ka mo godimo.
- Ke kgotsofetše gore o kwišiše, ofilwe nako ya go boledišana le ba bangwe ge a nyaka go dira bjalo.

Saennwe kua (lefelo) .....ka (letšatšikgwedi)…….. 20....

....

Tshaeno ya Monyakišiši **Tshaeno ya hlatse**

ANNEXURE B - ENGLISH INFORMED CONSENT

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom

South Africa 2520

Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222

Fax: +2718 299-4910

Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za



HREC Stamp

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR MAMOTINTANE VILLAGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: An exploration of the influence that WhatsApp usage has on family relations among young adults: A case of Mamotitlhane village
ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00079-22-A1

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof N.H Ntombela

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Mabitsela EM

ADDRESS: 253 Mankweng, Polokwane

CONTACT NUMBER:0725945042

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of the requirements for my Master's degree at the North West University (Mafikeng Campus), South Africa. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

What is this research study all about?

- This study will be conducted in Mamontintane village in Mankweng, Limpopo Province. The research describes the lived experiences of young adults who are using WhatsApp within their family context. Your participation in this project will provide useful information on this topic. You qualify for participation if you reside in Mamotintane village are between the age of 18-24 years. You will be asked questions that will take you about 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews will consist of 12 participants.
- This study will be held at Mamotintane community hall, were semi-structured interviews will be conducted and audio recorded, and will be independently facilitated by the researcher.
- The purpose of questioning is to ascertain the influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in Mamotintane village.
- The ultimate goal of this research is to describe ways that can be utilized to maintain tangible family relationships, values, and interactions whilst using the WhatsApp application. Therefore, this study strives to ascertain appropriate ways that can be implemented and utilized to guarantee the befitting usage of WhatsApp for better relations and well-being of families.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- You met the inclusion criteria of the data.
  To take part in this study:
  - Participants should be young adults, between the age of 18 and 24.
  - Prospective partakers should be individuals who are community members of Mamotintane village and live with families.
  - Participants should have access to mobile phones and be fervent users of WhatsApp, on a daily basis.
  - Participants should be proficient in Sepedi and English.

  By definition, if a person does not adhere to an inclusion criterion, they will be excluded.
  Exclusion Criteria are set out as follows:

- Participants cannot read and write Sepedi.
- The participant has psychological/physical difficulties that delay comprehension of speech.
- Participants who are visually impaired and deaf.

- You have been invited to be part of this research because you qualify to be part of the population of the research study which seeks to describe the influence of WhatsApp use in family relationships among young adults. You will have adequate information and experiences about the subject matter as you are the most target group that use social media on a daily basis.
- You will also fit the research because your participation in this project will provide useful information on the development of the programs that can be implemented to reduce the impropriate use of the application and help those who are addicted.

What will be expected of you?

- You will be expected to answer semi-structured interview questions for 45 minutes they will be audio tapped. The researcher will ask a series of questions, evaluate the answers and then draw conclusions. You will be expected to answer 5 demographic questions which gives an insight into your background and 8 questions related to the study. The questions are as follows:
-

CATEGORY 1: SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Age…….
- Number of parents living with …….
- Relationship status……
- Level of education……...
- Number of siblings ……

CATEGORY 2: CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES

1.What kind of information do young adults share on WhatsApp?
2. What are the exact time spent on WhatsApp?
3. How often do young adults communicate with parents using the WhatsApp application?
4. What influences you to spend more time on WhatsApp than spending time with family?
5. Tell me about the experiences you've had using WhatsApp in your family contexts?
6. What are challenges you encounter regard to using WhatsApp within your family setting?
7. How can this challenges be addressed?
8.Which ways can be adopted to ensure the befitting utilization of WhatsApp among young adults?

Will they be direct benefits for you from taking part in this research?

- The gains for you if you take part in this study will be to come together to fight against cyberbullying, social media addiction and build a tangible family structure and self-identity. Through developing the programs and strategies will help young adults by getting help through counselling, debriefing sessions and social behavioural change workshops.
- You will receive no remuneration for participating in this research study. No travel fees will be necessary because the semi-structured interviews will be held at your home place.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- *Due to the nature of the interview being semi-structured, the interview will take approximately 30 – 45 minutes and be conducted in the morning. The following table is a possible risk that you may experience and the measures that will be taken to take care of the risk.*

Possible Risk	**Precautions**
Participants might lose interest and disengage from the interviews.	This poses more of a threat to the research than the participants. This will be avoided by taking frequent breaks and providing refreshments
Psychological tension and emotional turmoil. Psychological risks can occur if the researcher go beyond the expected into the private life of the participants this will results into psychological tension and emotional turmoil	In case of psychological distress, the researcher will give the participant a short break and pre-arrange with the professional social workers prior to the research data collection so that, if the participant experiences the distress, he/she can be referred to the social worker. Providing the contact details of a social worker that participants can contact telephonically, the contact details will appear on the consent forms and having a registered counsellor on standby.
Family members can feel the pressure to participate in the study.	Informed consent will emphasize the voluntary nature of participation.
Confidentiality	The mediator will be a professional social worker, who is experienced in the area of group dynamics and social service experience. The researcher will ensure confidentiality to participants at the beginning of semi-

	structured interviews. Partial confidentiality will be communicated and negotiated with all the participants before the interviews takes place.
COVID -19 infections	*These precautions will be taken into account:* Opening of the windows to increase the amount of natural ventilation in the hall. The participants will be given mask and encouraged to wear it all the time by covering their nose and mouth. The researcher and mediator will clean and disinfect surfaces frequently, especially those who are regularly touched, such as door handles and chairs. Social distancing of 1.5 metre will be maintained and the researcher and participants will not sit in a close proximity during the interviews and chairs and tables will be sanitized frequently after interviewing each participant. Water, sanitizer and soap will be available to keep good hygiene. All this will be implemented to minimise the transmission of Covid-19 infections.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- Your privacy will be respected by not requiring names with any recognizable information. No identities of participants will be revealed.
- Only the researcher will be able to look at your findings. Your feedback will go into a tool of data and will not be traced back to you.
- The use of the audio recording will only be used with the consent of the participants
- No private details from the participants will be requested
- Confidentiality will further be assured by protecting the data in a secured locked room
- The research will be conducted in an honest, open and transparent manner as far as it is possible.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- The findings of this study will only be used for this study to develop programs that can be used to build tangible family relationships and how to overcome addiction of social media.
- The data will be kept in a locked room and on password protected computer for 5 years and will then be destroyed.

How will you know about the results of this research?

- The researcher will make a copy for you.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

This study is funded by North West University Postgraduate Bursary.
You will not be paid to take part in the research study.
There will thus be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.
Refreshments will be served when in-depth interviews will be complete.
Participants will receive incentives of R20.00 data for telecommunication for participating in the study and no money will be given to participants.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Elizabeth Mabitsela at 0725945042 if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the NWU-Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a hard copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes and also via email.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ……..……. agree to take part in the research study titled: The influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in Mamontintane Village.

I declare that:
The purpose and nature of the research study has been explained to me.
I am participating voluntarily.
I give permission for my interview with E. Mabitsela to be recorded
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, before it starts or while participating.
I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the right-up by hiding my identity.
I understand that anonymous quotation from my interview may be used in the dissertation and any subsequent publication if I give permission below:

Please tick the suitable box:
I agree to quotation or publication of extract from my interview

I do not agree to quotation or publication of extract from my interview 

Signed at (*place*) .....…..……. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....

Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I *(name)* ……..…… declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to …….
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..……. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....

Signature of person obtaining consent **Signature of witness**

Declaration by researcher

I *(name)* ……..…… declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ……..
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) .....….....…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....

Signature of researcher **Signature of witness**

ANNEXURE C- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

TRANSCRIPT

Topic: An exploration of the influence that WhatsApp usage has on family relations among young adults: A case of Mamotitlhane village

Name and Surname: **Mabitsela EM**

Student number: **37897365**

Analysis: **Atlas Ti Version 23.**

Number of Participants: **12**
Location of interview: **Mamotintane Village**
Interviewer: **Jane Mametja**
Degree: **MSc in Social Work**
P: **Participants**
SA1-SA4: **Section A, part1 to section A part 4**
SB1 **Section B, part1**
SC1-SC3 **Section C, part 1 to section C part 3**

CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES

SECTION A-1 (SA1)

Research Question 1:

1. What are the experiences of young adults subjected to using WhatsApp within their family contexts?

<u>Question 1:</u> What kind of information do young adults share on WhatsApp?

Participants responses:

P1: *"Mmmm"* usually young people like to share and exchange knowledge about job opportunities, also widen each other's knowledge about certain information or current affairs and also updates pictures of their significant other's as profile pictures or statuses to express their love, respect and appreciation towards them.

We also use WhatsApp to talk about our love life and to ignite the spark in our relationships by using love emoji's and sending seducing pictures to attract our partners. WhatsApp has „smiley faces" which we use to depict our emotions when there is no tone or expression displayed during texting (with the exception of a voice note)

P2: WhatsApp is primarily used by young adults to send text messages, trending videos about what has transpired in their community and globally, school assignments which WhatsApp group is created to share knowledge, ideas and perceptions about a particular topic and links about job opportunities. Others use it to share information about their daily routines such the food they eat, what they do during the day and how they keep themselves busy by updating statuses and profiles pictures and also share recorded videos of their social lives to keep others intrigued or again followers, in that way you become popular. They create content about the positive and nice things they do or have but rarely update negative content.

P3: Usually young people share different kind of information such as entertainment, files in different formats that contains academic notes and content (word, Excel, PDF), stickers, emoticons, audio and video note and also geolocation**.** This information enhances effective and convenient communication among young people about their studies and personal lives.

P4: They share photos and videos about what has transpired and memories that have created with their significant other's**.** They eventually update those pictures on their WhatsApp statuses. Young adults have turned WhatsApp into a tool of self-expression. They express their feelings on WhatsApp status using stickers, emoji's and write about their emotions whether negative or positive. In this way they try to send the message and tell people how they feel. People will start sending comforting text and some will engage into private conversation that will help the victim to heal.

P5: They use text messages or voice note to express their feelings for one another through sending sexual content or nude pictures, this is dominant amongst males because they are shy to express their feelings physically instead the opted to use WhatsApp (*giggles) it* contributes to a couple's ability to fantasize in their relationship.

P6: The share information about their academics such as question paper, tasks, research work and notes. They update each other about what has transpired at school work and at home. They use the app to create communication groups to discuss about assignments and vacation plans. This helps young people to stay alert about what is happening around them.

P7: They share information about careers, jobs, academic and personal lives. Usually a person can use videos or pictures as status to tell her friends, family, classmates and relatives about what is happening in her/his life. The app is used as freedom of expression and speech. You control what you want to share or say, and who can see it and when. If you want to delete the information you can also do that at your own discretion**.** The app has given us much power to take charge and control of our digital life without hindrance's. We are able to send information and reach our target without any hassles, just one status the information shared will reach a lot of people.

P8: We usually share job opportunities, usually we create group chat whereby anyone who has seen a post will update it on the group. This helps us to get information about which company hires and what kind or requirement or criteria they are looking for. Personally, I share friendly information whereby we talk about ourselves and gossips, "yeah that the kind of information that I share on WhatsApp"

P9: WhatsApp is beneficial to youth especially who are still studying in terms of discussing and sharing information related to study matters, apart from their everyday communications with families, friends and relatives. This really helps with the spread of information that is vital for their academics.

P10: The information that is shared on WhatsApp is videos that contains jokes, music, pornography and nudes. Sharing of porn and nudes is dominant among youth as they are sexuality active and sex is their language**.** WhatsApp has made it easy for young people to share this kind of information because it allows a person to have privacy.

P11: Nowadays, teenagers use WhatsApp to spread information that they have created as content about what they have experienced or witnessed. This is a tool used

to share perceptions, ideas and express your emotions using pictures, stickers, emoji's etc. This content may contain business ideas, vacations, motivations and love life.

P12: They share videos of fake news and also what is happening nationally and internationally, it can be about celebrities, politics, GBV, rape etc. That news with juicy stories are the ones that young people like to share. Youngsters develop and create their digital identity and spread information about what is currently happening in their lives and this is done to wipe away fear of missing out (FOMO).

SECTION A-2 (SA2)

Question 2: What are the exact time spent on WhatsApp?

P1: Depending on the content of the information being exchanged amongst us as young people. I would say about ten plus hours a day. The time is spend through writing and reading messages on WhatsApp and checking updated statuses and profile, it is what consumes our time and shift our focus.

P2: Young people spend at least two hours on WhatsApp during their free time. They use this time to communicate with their friends and catching up about the trending news and gossips.

P3: Teenagers use WhatsApp anytime! morning, during the day and moreover at night. This happens when they have enough data, they are always online because they believe that WhatsApp is convenient and user friendly for communication. A person can chat with family, friends beyond the limit regardless of their proximity. It also helps to keep contact to everybody at one time. No doubt, (*smiles)* this amazing app is useful for us in many ways.

P4: WhatsApp users spent about 30 minutes on the app per day**.** Usually because young people are always occupied with their studies and do not have enough time for the app.

P5: This depends on how many friends and families they communicate with and it approximately be more hours spend. This is determined by the people who are online, the more people online the more the hour's increases. Young people are more dependent on this app, it serves as a fast transport system of information, is an effective way of communication not only for the youth but for everyone.

P6: I think they spend 8-12 hours per day, this fervent usage of WhatsApp helps us as teenagers to stay connected with the outside world and creates the ability to strengthen bonds with family and friends. The more time spend on the app chatting to someone whether it's a friend, classmates or family members, the more a tangible love, care and respect is establishing especially for those ones that does not stay in same proximity as ours. But if you spend less time chatting on the app, the bond and relationships gradually fades away. Nowadays WhatsApp is used as a medium of communication among young people, whether you want or not, you are obliged to stay connected! besides its cheap, effective, convenient to transport information.

P7: I don't exactly have exact time that I spend on the app, the time spend is determined by whether I get messages or not. If a hear a beep of the text, I immediately response and the log off time will depend on the length of our communication. Usually, I log on WhatsApp if I have to talk to someone urgently. The app doesn't control me much; I prefer direct calls. I am impatient by nature, I cannot stand the extended texting and voice notes, it irritates me (*sighs*).

P8: In the afternoon or at night because at that time most people are home and free so they catch up. The usually spend 3 hours to update each other about their love life, goals and some flirt with their crush during that time, hence no one will disturb or invade their privacy.

P9: I spent 3 – 4 hours on WhatsApp per day, especially when I don't have anything to do. I use WhatsApp to get rid of boredom by checking people statuses and uploading my pictures. WhatsApp has become my buddy because it keeps me busy and I avoid physical interaction to prevent conflicts and gossips.

P10: WhatsApp runs throughout the day therefore communication is done daily at any time. This is a 24hour app without any restrictions, as long as you have data, utilization of the app is guaranteed. It is used as a mode of communication by teenagers all over the world. They check frequently their cell-phone on every beep of WhatsApp inspite of engaging in studying, eating or doing some-thing important.

P11: I use it for more than 3 hours per day, which indorsed to its ease-of-use, ease of communication, real-time messaging, and it is inexpensive as well as due to the quick information retrieval and transfer about personal and academic life. I spend most of my time on WhatsApp for quick information retrievals and transfers, particularly in

sharing information with friends and classmates related to study-matters such as work discussions and assignment.

P12: I spend almost every minute on my app, and that's what I enjoy the most and it takes my mind away from lot of things. I monitor my boyfriend's movement on WhatsApp, I check when he is online and what time did he log out. The reason I spend my time frequently on this app is that I am able to connect and interact with my friends, siblings, classmates and relatives as the same time. This helps me to build rapport among people who play a vital role in my life.

SECTION A-3 (SA3)

Question 3: How often do young adults communicate with parents using the WhatsApp applications?

P1: Very slightly or not often, because most young adults prefer talking to strangers and friends than they do with their families**.** Because with strangers you feel free to express your feelings without hesitation, and to avoid fear of being judged**.** For me, I use the app to communicate with my parents only if I cannot find them on direct call, I just sent one or two text to tell what I am looking for! (rolling eyes and frowning) besides that, I don't communicate with them at all. Some parents are not likely to use social media and are not technologically advanced. Again, young adults don't feel comfortable to talk to their parents using social media, its shows lack of respect and having bad morals. Only young adults whose parents are able to use technology and smart phones can communicate but not so often, most time communication is on peers. Some young adults even went to extend of blocking their parents in social media, so that they cannot see or monitor what they are posting.

P2: Most of our parents are not technologically literate because they were born before technology. So I don't prefer using WhatsApp for communication with my parents because the conversation is boring. Usually, I ask closed ended questions or shoot straight to the point. I would say as young adults we communicate with our parents using the app once in a while, and only if we don't have airtime for direct calls.

P3: Most our parents don't use WhatsApp because they are old people. They have downloaded the app in their phones but hardly use it. So communication with our parents via WhatsApp is not effective and its limited.

P4: Communication with parents through WhatsApp is determined by the age cohort of our parents. If your parents are young and technologically wise, the communication becomes fervent but if your parents are old the communication is less fervent. Young adults use WhatsApp to communicate with their folks only if they want something urgently or done something that they feel, they cannot physical engage with them.

P5: Families do communicate a lot on WhatsApp because its faster, cheap and user friendly. Most families have created their own group chat whereby they talk about their family issues, events and share ideas about certain things. Presently, I believe that WhatsApp is a communication and learning tool for many and it is used regularly in our everyday lives.

P6: Me and my core family's main channel of communication nowadays is a WhatsApp chat group. We created this group about half year ago, and it has become very active. Someone sends photos and messages every day for the group and everyone follows it actively. The biggest difference to the past is that my parents have learnt to use the instant messaging service in WhatsApp and it made our communication easier and faster. This has brought positive vibes in my family and strengthens our relationship. We discuss family issues on the group and resolve them.

P7: Communication between young adults and their parents has rapidly spread and flows as a results of WhatsApp chat groups. The platform has made or created a conducive environment for communication among families especially for young parents who are technologically advanced, hence we live in the fourth industrial revolution. For instance, recently at home, we created a WhatsApp chat group for the family, through which we can easily reach the entire family when we need to contact everyone at once. My mother loves to use the app to communicate with us regularly, she will send a text about the thing needed to be done or remind us about the appointment we have to attend. Our family communication is frequently happening and based on the app.

P8: Almost all the time, because nowadays calls are not as important, parents just delegate through WhatsApp. Some families have even WhatsApp group to communicate whatever they want. There is no more physical communication due to our busy schedules and daily routines that differ from one another. WhatsApp is currently used to facilitate communication between parents and children, we even text

each other even if we are in the same proximity. The app is very helpful because we are able to address issues that are not easy to address when having face-face communication and also express our emotions without being shy because there's non-verbal communication or body language that is used, which can be threatening. WhatsApp is making communication easier and faster thereby enhancing effective flow of information, idea sharing and connecting parents and their children e.g. if one has visited another province, the app is fervently used to check on each other through video calls.

P9: I hardly use WhatsApp to communicate with parents, yes they do have the app but I find it weird and boring to use it for communication. The communication does not flow or intrigues like when I communicate with my friends. My parents take long to respond to the text or voice notes. Sometimes they use incorrect emoji to express their emotions, use wrong spelling and grammar. I just find it hard to understand what they are trying to say, it's awful**.**

P10: Lately, especially in relation to high usage of smartphones, I have noticed an increase in the use of WhatsApp by my parents (both 52), although they still employ it only for communications of minor importance or the exchange of photos and funny videos. We don't use the app regularly but we do use it for greetings and checking on each other maybe once or twice a week.

P11: My mother does not like to communicate via WhatsApp, is like, she is not that knowledgeable. She is not that educated. So, it is difficult for her to use the Android phone that was given to her unless she gets someone to assist her in making the calls or sending text. I am the one who is supposed to call her. It doesn't usually happen because I use my money to buy data for WhatsApp calls and voice notes, yet she prefers direct calls, so we don't get to talk often. Maybe in a week or two, we will talk once**.**

P12: Some young people wait to see that their parents are online on WhatsApp before connecting with them. For those whose parents prefer receiving text messages, young people sometimes expect an immediate response to their texts. Yet, when this does not happen, it can lead to hurt feelings because they feel ignored and not valued. So the communication depends mostly on parents if they are online or not, so it does not happen frequently.

SECTION A-4 (SA4)

Question 4: Tell me about the experiences you've had using WhatsApp in your family contexts?

P1: WhatsApp allows us to reach family at once and also promotes phatic communication between our family members. It also prohibits physical and social interaction among family members because everything is simply communicated through the app and everyone has individualised themselves, the focus is more on outside people than the immediate one. Online leisure has now become an extra setting in the life of young adults and has dangerously invaded our family time and socialization. Even on our dinner time, everyone is eating whilst using their phones, we hardly share ideas, our values and how to build tangible family relations.

P2: WhatsApp groups offer a particular channel to maintain and nurture these strong family ties whether near or afar, providing both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication this was evident during Covid-19 whereby curfews were initiated and families were hindered to visits or spend time together. My family and relatives who were in other provinces were able to use WhatsApp to check on us.

P3: Apparently, WhatsApp has affected the way our family interact and socialize and, as a result, it has negatively affected our family relationships. It has hindered face-to-face interactions and social involvement among my family and their relatives. The application has taken over our lives, the traditional way of doing things because we no longer visit friends, families, and significant others and physically interact with one another like we used to do in the past. For instance, during supper or lunch time, we used to sit together and our parents will share the golden oldies stories and tales and narrative their upbringing to us so that we can learn from that and past it to our coming generation. But now, we hardly spend a mere hour together as siblings, everyone is glued up to his or her phone and prefer her own space.

P4: Been less critical and absent minded in family issues. The app is beneficial as Important information can be shared across, sometimes it leads to lack of interaction and communication in the family. families have endured isolation and deprived attention from their young people, because they have shifted their focus more on

WhatsApp. The bond between children and their parents is no longer strong and effective because children's have opted to engage in social media platforms rather than interacting with their parent's and also parents no longer give attention to their kids, but rather spend quality time with their gadgets. Parents are ignored by their children on most cases, creating communication barriers in the family and leading to disconnected family relations. Our relationship with our parents are perpetually fading away. Young adults suffer from psychological tension and withdrawal that leads them to commit suicide and be victims of cyberbullying and find it hard to get help because they lack interaction with their significant others.

P5: I wouldn't try to expose my relationship status on WhatsApp because I have family in my contact. Whatever I post I must make sure that is not offensive and sarcastic cause some family members might feel that you are indirectly talking about them. I often hide my status from my close family members, to avoid being judged on what I post on my statuses. The other thing is when we are having family meetings or trying to spend time together our phones steals our focus, we fervently check our app on per beep instead of paying attention, usually this is done by me and my siblings. We seem to stick with our cell-phones which destroys our real relationship and reduce communication between us as family members. Steals our time as a family, everyone is connected and has a bond with his or her phone than with their family members. It creates a void in our relationships.

P6: As children we rely a lot on the functionalities of WhatsApp to monitor and surveil our parents' interactions with us. When our parents are not responsive to digital conversations, we resort to monitor them online this has affects us in a negative way, we feel less loved and valued.

P7: WhatsApp encourage gossips which leads to hatress and bitterness. Siblings will gossip about you in your presence, and you won't notice a thing. Even though a person has unfinished business or issues with you, she or he will rather write a status about your disagreements rather than solving it in person.

P8: As teenagers at home, we are more dependence on this application. We hardly to our task adequately because we often check the status of our contacts to wait impatiently for a reaction when we share content. It is difficult for us to have a conversation that will last without a beep on WhatsApp disturbing us. The app is creating social isolation in our home and fading away the golden bond that we had as

siblings. I have experienced high volume of miscommunications during WhatsApp interactions with my family

P9: The spread of fake news and false information through WhatsApp, once created anxiety and psychological tension to my family**.** We received a video of accident scene forwarded by my neighbor insinuating that my father was involved, my mom fainted after seen the video, only to find out later that the video was not authentic and was taken in other province last year. If I was not using WhatsApp in my family context we would have not received this fake news that brought us pain.

P10: It takes away family time, helpful in sharing information but delays you in completing chores or task given to you at home. WhatsApp is very addictive and it hard to ignore it. This app instils the spirit of procrastination and laziness. You can't even spend a minute without checking it. It creates interferences in our daily routine and promote social isolation, because we hardly spend time together as a family. Everyone has created a bond with his or her phone. It has affected the way we speak and write, it becomes difficult when doing our school work because we struggle with grammar. You know! (raising her voice), even when I am attending my classes, I always check the app, I can't even concentrate in class, this is putting a strain in my studies. I think I have insomnia! because I sleep around 1am every day, chatting with my friends.

P11: It kept me and my mother close, it made it convenient to reach each other and maintain our relationships with my mom and sibling because we use family group chat to talk about family issues and video call each other. Our WhatsApp conversations has strengthened our extant interpersonal relationships. Constant interaction between me, my mom and siblings on WhatsApp has improved an ability to learn, discuss issues that they are hesitant to ask questions in our physical interaction and utilize this system to ask questions directly. We have opted to use WhatsApp to track each other's movements for our safety purposes, for instance we check our last seen and also update each other about our whereabouts. If you are off online! we use a direct call to check up on you.

P12: WhatsApp will jeopardize or encourage people to invade your privacy especially siblings. They stay intrigue and eager to know who are you chatting to and indorses secrets. For example, a family member will rather confide to a stranger than talking to

us. It encourages procrastination because we spend most of our time hooked up to this app.

SECTION B -1 (SB1)

Research Question 2:

2. What influence does WhatsApp usage have on family relations among young adults?

Question 5: What influences you to spend more time on WhatsApp than spending with family?

P1: I get to interact with a lot of people at the same time**.** WhatsApp is addictive towards young people & none can deny it. Now, everyone in this world wants to keep their social status by showing what they have, how they fun…so they upload pictures, videos & all, through that I get to explore and learn about people's lifestyle, culture and values. I always get to express myself fully without hesitation. I feel free and alive and I just be me when using the app. I prefer spending more time on WhatsApp than with my family because we end up fighting or some making sarcastic comments about something and it hurts my feelings. I prefer being alone!

P2: I spend more time on WhatsApp because of I want to engage and interact with my friends to strengthen our friendship. My family is always in close proximity with me. They are issues that I cannot discuss with my siblings or parents because I don't feel comfortable. So I use the app to ask my friends or people in my contacts particularly about the things I need clarity on! and they get to share their views. Through that I feel relieved and free to share my perceptions and experiences without being intimidated, but with family! (sighs) you always get undermined or discredited. You end up losing self -esteem and they will always remind you of the things you shared with them.

P3: The reason I spent more time on WhatsApp to engage with my friends and know what is happening in their lives because they are very far and use it to communicate with my boyfriend and create a spark and ignite our union. Sometimes get bored and

lonely that makes one to resort to the app. Even if your family is around and it happens that you don't need their company because sometimes a person needs her privacy. You get to express yourself and have open communications without hindrances. But with family we are unable to speak freely or share our views in-depth, I always get restricted to say some of the things in front of my parents and siblings….so yeah!

P4: We connect ourselves to the society and the whole world. It is an effective medium for the flow of information and ideas. It helps me to explore new opportunities and experiences. I get to learn from others and express myself openly but with family every conversation ends up with a fight or heated arguments, so to avoid to heartache and disappointment I just focus on the app.

P5: I have a toxic family; we don't just get along! If you spend just a mere minute with them, they just twist every word you just said. They are bitter people and doesn't even show any remorse if they hurt you. I think they do that deliberately, my siblings are disrespectful towards me and my mom doesn't even see a problem about that or care to reprimand them. I prefer interacting with people who are not close to me, that's why I spend most my time on the app than with my family.

P6: I always give out my time and energy towards my family but I don't get the vibe back, I feel less appreciated and valued. I try to nurture meaningful relationship but my family don't reciprocate. So when I spend my time on WhatsApp I create more meaningful friendships and my friends reciprocate. The app helps me to stay out of arguments and if someone is trying to talk nasty or make sarcastic comments, I immediately block that person. WhatsApp gives me peace of mind.

P7: In my family, everyone is occupied, its either studies or work. My parents leave early in the morning and came back late, we hardly have time to spend as family. This influences me to have a bond with my gadget to get rid of bored. I stay online frequently and try to connect with my cousins, friends and classmates**.**

P8: The are some of my personal issues that I cannot share or disclose to my family members. I stay on WhatsApp to seek advices to my friends that are a far away from me and also to strangers. This has help me to have clear perspective about life in general. And again, I don't have a close relationship with my siblings because I didn't grow with them, we literally don't have a bond. So it's hard for us to stay in one room for more than 2hours, we end up having nothing to say and resort to our cell phones.

P9: I always give out my time and energy towards my family but I don't get the vibe back, I feel less appreciated and valued. I try to nurture meaningful relationship but my family don't reciprocate. So when I spend my time on WhatsApp I create more meaningful friendships and my friends reciprocate. The app helps me to stay out of arguments and if someone is trying to talk nasty or make sarcastic comments, I immediately block that person. WhatsApp gives me peace of mind**.**

P10: WhatsApp is entertaining, social and lets you know what is happening in people's life around you. The face to face communication between us as family does not flow like those on WhatsApp. We don't have much of freedom of speech like we do have on WhatsApp, through the app we express ourselves freely hence I'm a shy person.

P11: I get to connect to the society and the world simultaneously, I get to learn and understand different people with peculiar identities. I get more knowledge and ideas on how to live my life. With family, you get to talk about the same issues and gossips and it becomes boring and tedious. I love heated conversation that will broaden my mind.

P12: My life revolves around this app, for instance Most of the things are being communicated on WhatsApp, especially my academics and explore the outside world and socialization with friends and extended family. I am free to share my thoughts without hesitation and engage with lot of people simultaneously unlike when I am with my immediate family. I prefer spending my time on the app because of my shyness and cannot easily engage in social interaction. I stay connected most with peers, this allow me to lower the risk of being left alone, feeling of sadness, worry and jealousy.

SECTION C-1 (SC1)

Research Question 3:

What challenges young adults face when using WhatsApp within their family setting?

<u>Question 6:</u> What are challenges you encounter with regard to using WhatsApp within your family setting?

P1: WhatsApp has affected our traditional way of doing things, it takes us time to sit and catch up as family. We no longer embrace our family values and norms. All vital habits instilled in us by our parents as children is gradually fading away. WhatsApp

has promoted isolation among family members. Our culture of eating together has deteriorated because everyone is eating in his or her room and eat with their gadgets in` hands.

P2: We hardly spend much time together as a family because the app has created a division. The active users of WhatsApp check their app on per beep instead of spending time with family. They stick with their cell-phone which destroys their real relationship and reduce communication between family members**.**

P3: My mom always put my sister picture as her profile and she keep appearing in her status but she never updates mine. This has negatively affected me and I feel like my mom doesn't love and value me as much. I tend to grow jealousy against my sister and resent her. This has caused a lot of strain on our relationship as a family and I always prefer spending time alone in my bedroom with my phone, to get rid of boredom. I spend most of my time online to engage with numerous people because that's where I feel loved and appreciated.

P4: Family members procrastinate their work due to WhatsApp. It creates serious interferences with their work, studies, relationship and normal social functioning. The parent –child relationship is fading away because too much focus is on socialization and interacting with friends, relatives etc. online.

P5: Family members may feel uncomfortable sharing personal information on WhatsApp due to lack of privacy. Whenever you have posted a status, they screenshot and use it against you. WhatsApp harms the lifestyle and culture of our families in and communication skills at home. Everyone at home tend to have poor attention span because they always attend to every beep of the app and lose focus. Parents fight because of the unpleasant text they get from each other's phones and accuse each other of cheating. The app destroyed couple's relationship and trust. My parents have trust issues because my mom once found seductive text and porn pictures from my father's girlfriend. They always fight a lot.

P6: It changes family conventional manner of interaction due to the lack of face-to-face communication which results in the missing of communication skills such as reading body language and non –verbal cues. Lack of family disengagement has resulted into young adults experiencing depression or being victims of cyberbullying and this has resulted into high rate of suicide among adolescents. Families members

are emotionally broken and have anger issues, this accelerate the high rate of GBV and domestic violence.

P7: WhatsApp overtakes our real family relationship. Hence it is strong reason for social isolation. Instead of connecting and talking the focus is on the phone and outside world. Parents, are not happy about it as they find it hard to get attention from their children, attention is eventually lost during conversations.

P8: It disturbs us to execute duties at home and we do not complete chores on time. We end up fervently chatting and stop what we are doing. This has caused my parents to shout at us and regard us not being obedient. It has created distance and void between me and my folks. I can see that currently I'm not their favourite because they always complain how I fail to do a mere chore and insist that WhatsApp has taken a toll on me, and that not the case(Frowns). Do you think I am addicted to the app?

P9: We hardly spent time together as family and share our views, values and bond. Because every time everyone is glued up to their cell phone, not concentrating when you talk to them and always they have pending, incomplete or delayed chores because of WhatsApp. It sometimes spreads false information which can be detrimental to our family relation, I normally set rules about location sharing and how one can interpret my texts. I'm tired of quarrels and disengagements cause by the app in my family. Instead of connecting and talking the focus is on the phone and outside world.

P10: The WhatsApp chat has turned into a battle field for close and extended families. The us voice notes and memes to swear at each other. WhatsApp has also disseminated hate speech directed at specific people. Most families have been affected by irregular hate speech uttered by significant others.

P11: The social isolation of young people at home has been exacerbated by WhatsApp. Rather than speaking to people in person, they would rather be on their phone. Self-esteem is impacted, and self-doubt develops as a result, and their health is also affected.

P12: Some of the challenges are that older people within my family cannot type or are not familiar with the usage of WhatsApp unlike with us. They are not technologically advanced and it becomes a challenge because they don't understand the language we use when texting. We fail to communicate frequently because always the require face-face interactions even though it's not necessary. During emergency or

catastrophic situation, you won't get help immediately because they fail to understand what you are trying to say.

SECTION C-2 (SC2)

Question 7: How can this challenges be addressed?

P1: We should go back to our traditional way of doing things, e.g. having breakfast, lunch and dinner together. Parents should set rules for us that when we are spending time or eating together no cell phone is allowed and they must be strict on that. This will help us maintain our relationship and stick to our family culture.

P2: We can address this issue by being free and open about certain issues with our parents and them being open minded and also learn to listen and embrace us. We should consistency have family meetings and picnics to build tangible values and norms, so that we can pass them to our future generation. Having face-face conversations within ourselves as family and creates family time on a daily basis to avoid detachments. We should encourage open communications, and no one should feel inferior or superior towards someone. We have to accommodate each other.

P3: Families should learn more about the pros and cons of the app. The should be a timeframe set by an individual on when should they log in and off the app to avoid addiction. Parents should not take social media serious as we post and share our interests for fun. Privacy should be maintained all the time and the app must have tight security so that one must not be able to log into my app with permission, to avoid fights and mistrust, because once trust is broken! it can never be replaced. To go to settings then hide those you do not want them to see your statuses to avoid disputes.

P4: Rules must be set within the family, that you can only be on WhatsApp if you are alone in the setting. By making sure that the usage is limited, during family time using a phone is not allowed. Everyone must adhere to the rules, this will increase socialization among families and also increase physical interaction.

P5: Each family must stick and adhere to their family culture, customs and values that they had before WhatsApp. This will strengthen their family relations**.**

P6: Examining the way in which we communicate as a family and rectifying our mistakes. Also establish family gathering and vacation. this will help family to restore

their relationships and creates new bond that will strengthen their family customs and values.

P7: Parents should create an atmosphere of open communication among themselves and their children. They show allow everyone to express themselves freely and also learn to listen to their kids.

P8: Parents should limit accessibility of Wi-Fi at home, they should set time frame for its usage. This will allow young people to focus more on their school work and increase physical interaction with family members. They will have plenty of time execute home chores.

P9: Families should revive their traditional way of doing things such as eating breakfast and dinner together, going to church and having limited time on social media. Ground rules must be developed to maintain discipline at home.

P10: We try to have an open communication by being free and open about certain issues with our parents and them being open minded about certain issues with us. By doing so, physical interaction and effective communication will rise between families, this will create solid family ties.

P11: Restriction of the app should be emphasis during family times, phones must be on silent mode and will attend to it on a free time. This will bring positive impact to the lives of young people and their attention span will be effective.

P12: By allowing even our elders to have access to gadget that allows for the usage of WhatsApp and familiarizing them with buying of data. This will help them engage more in virtual communications and learn to know what is going on in their children's lives**.** This will bring positive vibes in our family relations**.** No one will feel neglected and parents will play a significant role in the upbringing of their children. The high rate of depression, mental breakdown and suicide will drop among teenagers.

SECTION C-3 (SC3)

Question 8: Which ways can be adopted to ensure the befitting utilization of WhatsApp among young adults?

P1: Personally I think; a person should discipline her/himself when it comes to the utilization of the app. We should have a log in and log off plan, it will have details on what time to be online or offline. This will help us as individual to pay attention to the

things that will shape, empower and brighten our future. We will be able to complete our task and pay attention to details in every aspect of our lives. Everything starts with you! By monitoring the amount of negative content that is being shared and limiting the usage of those content.

P2: By restricting the amount of the time being spent on WhatsApp so that people can have more family time**,** the more family time we have, the better the relationship. We will get a clear picture of what our personality and behaviour entails and learn to respect and accommodate one another.

P3: Every family member should limit time spend on WhatsApp and interact only with your significant other to avoid fervent use of the app that derail time for chores and physical interaction with one another.

P4: Limit the interest and knowledge to avoid parental involvement to our social wellbeing**.**

P5: Young adults should not share personal information with strangers. This will prevent cyberbullying which affect our emotional being and causes suicide. We have lost many young people because of bullying and still our parents don't know what happened to their loved one. Depression is real.

P6: WhatsApp must highly be used for job advertisation and job applications, again it must not allow over age content and sensitive things on the platform**.** Parents should monitor their children's gadgets and see what they have been up to. This will minimise the excessive usage of WhatsApp among young adults.

P7: Disable each and every one of your notifications to keep you from being disturbed. Obviously, just reserve some in case there's an emergency. This will help stop the spirit of procrastination and be able to complete task on time.

P8: Limit time spend on WhatsApp and interact only with your significant other to avoid fervent use of the app and derail time for chores and physical interaction with one another.

P9: A person should communicate with known contacts, only send messages to those who have contacted you first or have requested. To avoid unnecessary utilization that can be detrimental to our health, emotional and psychological wellbeing.

P10: Ensuring that it does not affect family time, use it to an advantage in business promoting, learning(education).

P11: Have few WhatsApp contact, only save family, classmates and close friend. The less contacts the more time you acquire**.** Only send messages to those who have contacted you first or have requested you contact them on WhatsApp.

P12: WhatsApp must have a time limit; it can only be used for certain hours in a day

- There has to be something that monitors sharing of statuses, as some people just post each and every time on App.

ANNEXURE D – PROOF OF ETHICS TRAINING



Zertifikat

Certificado

Certificat

Certificate

TRREE

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Clinical Trials Centre
The University of Hong Kong

Elizabeth Motsatsi Mabitsela

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Introduction to Research Ethics

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2022/03/31

CID : LYNRqDmr3

Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

APPROVED BY
SIWF FMH ISFM
Programmes de formation continue (2 crédits)
Continuing Education Programs (2 credits)

Foederatio Pharmaceutica Helvetiae
FPH
Programmes de formation postgraduée et continue
Programmes de formation continue
Continuing Education Programs

Ce programme est soutenu par - This program is supported by :
European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (www.edctp.org) - Swiss National Science Foundation (www.snf.ch) - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/2891.html) - Swiss Academy of Medical Science (SAMS/ASSM/SAMW) (www.samw.ch) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (www.kfpe.ch)

[REV : 20220217]


TRREE
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Certificate
Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants
Certificat de formation - Training Certificate
Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that
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The University of Hong Kong
Elizabeth Motsatsi Mabitsela
a complété avec succès - has successfully completed
Research Ethics Evaluation
du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation
Release Date: 2022/04/06
CID : OHSUfieL2A
Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator
APPROVED BY
SIWF FMH
ISFM
Programmes de formation continue (2 crédits)
Continuing Education Programs (2 credits)
Foederatio Pharmaceutica Helvetiae
FPH
Programmes de formation continue
Continuing Education Programms
Programmes de formation postgraduée et continue
Ce programme est soutenu par - This program is supported by :
European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (www.edctp.org) - Swiss National Science Foundation (www.snf.ch) - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/2891.html) -
Swiss Academy of Medical Science (SAMS/ASSM/SAMW) (www.samw.ch) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (www.kfpe.ch)
[REV : 20220217]



Zertifikat

Certificado

Certificat

Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Clinical Trials Centre
The University of Hong Kong

Elizabeth Motsatsi Mabitsela

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Informed Consent

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2022/04/06

CID : s4WOXWNs2L

Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

APPROVED BY SIWF FMH ISFM
Programmes de formation continue (2 crédits)
Continuing Education Programs (2 credits)

Foederatio Pharmaceutica Helvetiae
FPH
Programmes de formation postgraduée et continue
Programmes de formation continue
Continuing Education Programms

Ce programme est soutenu par - This program is supported by :
European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (www.edctp.org) - Swiss National Science Foundation (www.snf.ch) - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/2891.html) - Swiss Academy of Medical Science (SAMS/ASSM/SAMW) (www.samw.ch) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (www.kfpe.ch)

[REV : 20220217]


TRREE
Zertifikat
Certificat
Certificado
Certificate
Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants
Certificat de formation - Training Certificate
Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that
Clinical Trials Centre
The University of Hong Kong
Elizabeth Motsatsi Mabitsela
a complété avec succès - has successfully completed
South Africa
du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation
Release Date: 2022/10/18
CID : kyACqsCHza
Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

ANNEXURE E – PERMISSION LETTERS TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

KGORO YA MAMOTINTANE
BJATLADI TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

Eng: Mathosa KS.
Email: bjatlatc @gmail.com
Tell: (015)2677144
Cell: 0714885442

P. O SEKGOPJE
0744

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY

DEAR MS EM MABITSELA

This letter serves to inform you and your institution that Mamotintane Village Community Leaders accepted your request to conduct a study. The purpose of this letter is to notify you that you have a permission to conduct the research titled "The influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in Mamontintane village" at Mamotintane.

Hope that this is in order.

KGORO YA MAMOTINTANE
GA-MAMABOLO
2022 -04- 24
SOVENGA 0727

Yours truly
Mathosa KS

MATHOSA K.S

HEADMAN

Scanned with CamSc

ANNEXURE F-CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS

This code of conduct IS applicable to all NWU researchers.

As a researcher of the North-West University (NWU), I subscribe to the rules of the NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC), all applicable policies of the NWU as well as all national and International laws and regulations applicable to my field of study Furthermore, I commit myself to abide by the ethical principles and responsibilities as set out in the Singapore statement on Research Integrity (22 September 2010), in any and all research endeavours that I undertake as a researcher of the NWU.

The four major principles of research integrity to which I will adhere and that will guide my research are:

- Honesty in all aspects of research
- Accountability in the conduct of research
- Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others
- Good stewardship of research on behalf of others

Consequently, I will also adhere to the following ethical responsibilities:

1. I will take responsibility for the originality and trustworthiness of my research.

2 1 will stay abreast of and adhere to all institutional, national, and international laws, regulations, and policies applicable and related to my research.

3 1 will at all times employ appropriate research methods, base my conclusions on critical analysis of the evidence and report my findings and interpretations fully and objectively.

4. I will keep clear and accurate records of all research that I have conducted in a manner that will allow verification and replication of my work by others, if applicable.

5. I will, where applicable, share my data and findings openly and promptly, in line with external funding rules. This will be done as soon as possible after I have had an opportunity to establish priority and ownership claims.

6. I will take responsibility for my own contributions to publications, funding applications, reports and other representations of my research. I will also and only include authors who meet valid authorship criteria.

7. I will acknowledge the names and roles of those who made significant contributions to my research in publications, including writers, funders, sponsors, and others, but do not meet authorship criteria.

8. In my peer reviews, I will provide fair, prompt and rigorous evaluations and I will respect confidentiality when I review others' work.

9 1 will disclose all conflicts of interest (financial and other) that could compromise the trustworthiness of my work in research proposals, publications, public communications, and in review activities.

10. When I publically address a community in the spirit of academic freedom, I will in all stages base my professional comments on research findings (if applicable) and my expertise. I will distinguish between professional comments and opinions based on personal views.

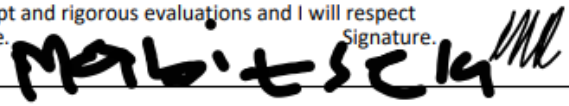
11. Should any irresponsible research practices and/or research misconduct become known to me or brought under my attention, I will report such irresponsible research activities to the appropriate authorities.

12. I will respond to irresponsible research practices or conduct, by taking prompt actions as set out in the procedures of the university. I will also protect those who report misconduct in good faith, to the best of my abilities.

13. I will endeavor to create and sustain an environment that encourage research integrity through education of students, research teams and peers, as well as abide by policies, and reasonable standards for advancement.

14. I will at all times weigh societal benefits against the risks inherent in my work.

Name. Signature.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS

This code of conduct is applicable to all NWU researchers.

As a researcher of the North-West University (NWU), I subscribe to the rules of the NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC), all applicable policies of the NWU as well as all national and international laws and regulations applicable to my field of study. Furthermore, I commit myself to abide by the ethical principles and responsibilities as set out in the Singapore statement on Research Integrity (22 September 2010), in any and all research endeavours that I undertake as a researcher of the NWU.

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9. I will disclose all conflicts of interest (financial and other) that could compromise the trustworthiness of my work in research proposals, publications, public communications, and in review activities.

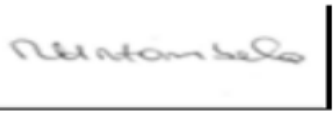
10. When I publically address a community in the spirit of academic freedom, I will in all stages base my professional comments on research findings (if applicable) and my expertise. I will distinguish between professional comments and opinions based on personal views.

11. Should any irresponsible research practices and/or research misconduct become known to me or brought under my attention, I will report such irresponsible research activities to the appropriate authorities.

12. I will respond to irresponsible research practices or conduct, by taking prompt actions as set out in the procedures of the university. I will also protect those who report misconduct in good faith, to the best of my abilities.

13. I will endeavour to create and sustain an environment that encourage research integrity through education of students, research teams and peers, as well as abide by policies, and reasonable standards for advancement.

14. I will at all times weigh societal benefits against the risks inherent in my work.

Name: Ngeni Ntombela Signature:  Date: 09/10/2021

ANNEXURE G-CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

entered into between:

I, the undersigned

Prof/ Dr / Mr / Ms Elizabeth Motsatsi Mabitsela

Identity Number 8909231117080

Address House No: 253 Mankweng 0727

hereby undertake in favor of the **NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**, a public higher education institution established in terms of the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997

Address: Office of the Institutional Registrar, Building C1, 53 Borcherd Street, Potchefstroom, 2520

(hereinafter the "NWU")

1. Interpretation and definitions

1.1. In this undertaking, unless inconsistent with, or otherwise indicated by the context:

1.1.1. "Confidential Information" shall include all information that is confidential in its nature or marked as confidential and shall include any existing and new information obtained by me after the Commencement Date, including but not be limited in its interpretation to, research data, information concerning research participants, all secret knowledge, technical information and specifications, manufacturing techniques, designs, diagrams, instruction manuals, blueprints, electronic artwork, samples, devices, demonstrations, formulae, know-how, intellectual property, information concerning materials, marketing and business information generally, financial information that may include remuneration detail, pay slips, information relating to human capital and employment contract, employment conditions, ledgers, income and expenditures and other materials of whatever description in which the NWU has an interest in being kept confidential; and

1.1.2. Commencement Date" means the date of signature of this undertaking by myself.

1.2. The headings of clauses are intended for convenience only and shall not affect the interpretation of this undertaking.

2. Preamble

2.1. In performing certain duties requested by the NWU, I will have access to certain Confidential Information provided by the NWU in order to perform the said duties and I agree that it must be kept confidential.

2.2. The NWU has agreed to disclose certain of this Confidential Information and other information to me subject to me agreeing to the terms of confidentiality set out herein.

3. Title to the Confidential Information

I hereby acknowledge that all right, title and interest in and to the Confidential Information vests in the NWU and that I will have no claim of any nature in and to the Confidential Information.

4. Period of confidentiality

The provisions of this undertaking shall begin on the Commencement Date and remain in force indefinitely.

5. Non-disclosure and undertakings

I undertake:

5.1. to maintain the confidentiality of any Confidential Information to which I shall be allowed access by the NWU, whether before or after the Commencement Date of this undertaking. I will not divulge or permit to be divulged to any person any aspect of such Confidential Information otherwise than may be allowed in terms of this undertaking;

5.2. to take all such steps as may be necessary to prevent the Confidential Information falling into the hands of an unauthorised third party;

5.3. not to make use of any of the Confidential Information in the development, manufacture, marketing and/or sale of any goods;

5.4. not to use any research data for publication purposes;

5.5. not to use or disclose or attempt to use or disclose the Confidential Information for any purpose other than performing research purposes only and includes questionnaires, interviews with participants, data gathering, data analysis and personal information of participants/research subjects;

5.6. not to use or attempt to use the Confidential Information in any manner which will cause or be likely to cause injury or loss to a research participant or the NWU; and

5.7. that all documentation furnished to me by the NWU pursuant to this undertaking will remain the property of the NWU and upon the request of the NWU will be returned to the NWU. I shall not make copies of any such documentation without the prior written consent of the NWU.

6. Exception

The above undertakings by myself shall not apply to Confidential Information which I am compelled to disclose in terms of a court order.

7. Jurisdiction

This undertaking shall be governed by South African law be subject to the jurisdiction of South African courts in respect of any dispute flowing from this undertaking.

8. Whole agreement

8.1. This document constitutes the whole of this undertaking to the exclusion of all else.

8.2. No amendment, alteration, addition, variation or consensual cancellation of this undertaking will be valid unless in writing and signed by me and the NWU.

Dated at Mahikeng this _____ _____ 28

April 2022

Witnesses:

1

Molepo Maggie

(Signatures of witnesses) *(Signature)*

ANNEXURE H- ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

NWU®
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 086 016 9698
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za/

North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC)

Tel: 018 299-1206
Email: Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za (for human studies)

2 November 2022

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC) on 02/11/2022, the NWU-HREC hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-HREC grants its permission that, provided the general conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: The influence of WhatsApp use on family relationships among young adults in Mamontitane Village
Principal Investigator/Study Supervisor/Researcher: Prof NH Ntombela
Student: EM Mabitsela - 37897365

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	0	0	7	9	-	2	2	-	A	1
Institution				Study Number						Year			Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single study
Commencement date: 02/11/2022
Expiry date: 30/11/2023

Risk: **Minimal**

Approval of the study is provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of an annual monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation. A monitoring report is due at the end of November annually until completion of the study.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The principal investigator/study supervisor/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-HREC:*
  - *Annually on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided annually, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the principal investigator/study supervisor/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the NWU-HREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for active monitoring.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-HREC reserves the right to:*

- *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
- *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
- *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
  - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
  - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-HREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
  - *submission of the annual monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and/or*
  - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

- *NWU-HREC can be contacted for further information via Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1206*

Special conditions of the research approval due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

Please note: Due to the nature of the study i.e. (face-to-face collection of qualitative data via in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with young adults and their parents), this study will be able to proceed during the current alert level, following receipt of the approval letter. No additional COVID-19 restrictions have been placed on the study other than that indicated under the COVID-19 risk mitigation strategy as indicated in the application. The researcher must, however, ensure that before proceeding with the study that all research team members have reviewed the North-West University COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Standard Operating Procedure.

The NWU-HREC would like to remain at your service and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU-HREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Chairperson NWU-HREC

Current details:(23239522) G:\My Drive\9. Research and Postgraduate Education\9.1.5.4 Templates\9.1.5.4.2_NWU-HREC_EAL.docm
20 August 2019
File Reference: 9.1.5.4.2

38683296:MABITSELA_EM_DISSERTATION.docx

by VINCENT MABVURIRA

Submission date: 09-Nov-2023 06:07AM (UTC-0800)
Submission ID: 2222789377
File name: 8dcd4-a2f2-4538-bed9-6ad60f8c6a25_MABITSELA_EM_DISSERTATION.docx (3.74M)
Word count: 58017
Character count: 316024

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	8%	2%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

ANNEXURE I- CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
MAFIKENG CAMPUS

ALDE UNIT, A13 ADC BUILDING B125 (Department of Academic Literacy)
RS NGUBANE (28383095) ext 892109, Cell 0828178046

18 November 2023

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING A DISSERTATION

To whom it may concern

May this confirm that I have proofread and edited the dissertation by **MABITSELA ELIZABETH MOTSATSI, Student number 37897365**

orcid.org/0000-0002-8077-3825

titled **An exploration of the influence that WhatsApp usage has on family relations among young adults: A case of Mamotitlhane village**

The candidate corrected the language errors identified. The document is now of an acceptable linguistic standard.

I thank you.

RS Ngubane

.....
RS NGUBANE (Ms)