



**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**EXPLORING THE USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY ON FACEBOOK AND  
STUDENTS: THE MOTIVATION FOR USE AND ITS EFFECTS ON  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL,  
SOUTH AFRICA.**

**By**

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DECLARATION

I, Ifedayo Ajimakin, declare that:

1. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents, Engineer and Mrs FGN Ajimakin, for their love, motivation and continuous support.

You made this dream possible!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am entirely grateful to God almighty, for ensuring that this project that started as a dream, is finalised. Thankful for the grace and strength to overcome all the challenges faced during this study.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the tenets of the uses and gratification theory and how it relates to Facebook being a social media platform. The advent of technology, in particular the advent of social media sites becomes a daily part of human life. The prevalent use of this social media platform has increased and has now overtaken the traditional media (Gallion 2010).

This study explored the uses and gratification theory's orientation of Facebook use among undergraduate students of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The purpose was to seek opinions from students on what motivated them to use Facebook, and analyse these motivations in relationship to the four major constructs of the UGT: sociability, information, self-seeking behaviour and entertainment factors. The study adopted a qualitative research method as it is the empirical approach of inquiry. It sampled the opinion of 24 undergraduate students within the ages of 18-24 with the aid of focus group discussion.

Findings from the study argued that the factors of peer-pressure, , keeping in touch with friends, meeting new people, low cost of access and social surveillance were the key motivations for UKZN undergraduate students to adopt the use Facebook as a social media platform. The findings also indicated that personality difference among individuals is vital in the acceptance of Facebook as many students did not agree to using Facebook for building social relationship, accessing information and getting entertained. The study concluded that Facebook has significant meaning in the everyday life of a student, as it helps them maintain a balanced life, in education, providing a better social interaction space, identity expression and seeking valuable information.

**Keywords: Uses and Gratification Theory, Facebook, Social Media, Students**

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The introduction of online technologies has set new trends for the field of social media (Tanta, Mihovilovic, Sablic, 2014:86). This new trend of social media has shifted the focus of media users from traditional media to social media, this has been encouraged due to the dynamic nature of social media and, it focuses on large numbers of media users that create and consume media content (Gallion, 2010:3).

This study focuses on social media users' motivation for adopting a media - particularly exploring the adoption of Facebook among students. This study explores media literacy - why and how users interact on Facebook, the benefits of Facebook use, the gratification obtained from the use of Facebook. The theoretical background employed in this study is the Uses and Gratification theory (UGT), which is an audience centred approach in mass communication history and active audience. The UGT forms the bedrock of this study, as the study frantically explores the major constructs of the UGT among undergraduate students of the University of KwaZulu -Natal (UKZN).

The University of KwaZulu-Natal is an institution of learning in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The institution comprises of five campuses, namely; Howard college campus, Pietermaritzburg campus, Westville Campus, Nelson Mandela medical school and Edgewood campus. This study area is the Howard college campus because of its accessibility, location and enormous number of students.

This chapter provides a general overview of the study, the background of the study, followed by research rationale, research problem. Further discussed the research aims, objectives and research questions, the research methods and design. The chapter also offers the overall structure of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The revolution of technology has brought in many convenient devices and social media platforms which are enabling new ways of interpersonal communication among friends and business networks (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). This advancement of technology has not only brought forth internet and computer mediated communication; it has also rejuvenated the much critiqued Uses and Gratification Theory (Ruggeriro, 2001:3).

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) was propounded by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in (1974), the theory was initially developed to observe traditional media, such as print media and

radio, the theory is relevant for understanding the uses and motivation of any form of media (Katz, Gurevitch and Hass, 1973; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974).

Studies have employed the UGT to provide answers to fundamental questions about the gratification for traditional media use (Blumler and McQuail, 1969; McLeod, Becker and Byrnes, 1974). However, due to the emergence and widespread use of social media, scholars have employed the UGT for studying the motives and gratifications for using social media; Bumgarner, (2007); Foregger, (2008); Raacke and Bond-Raacke, (2008); Papacharissi and Mendelson, (2011), these studies have applied the UGT in various disciplines of social communication, learning theory and human development. The UGT is relevant in social media studies because it originates from communication literatures (Whiting, 2013). Considering this, the gratification for use of Facebook is related to the gratification of television, as discovered in a study carried out by Alan Rubin (1983) to identify the motivation and viewing pattern of television. It was discovered that television audiences were motivated to watch television because of four basic elements; which include (1) to pass time, (2) information, (3) entertainment and (4) companionship, (Rubin, 1983). These findings are similar to the findings from the study of Quan-Haase and Young (2010); Park and Lee, (2014); Junco, (2011) which revealed that Facebook use among students were recorded for the purpose of passing time, seeking information, entertainment and identity formation.

The basic idea of UGT is that individuals will seek out a particular media that suits their needs and leads to gratification. UGT has been used extensively to study media subjects such as audience behaviour, political media, political messages, and these studies revealed that UGT stays relevant in understanding the motives for adopting any form of media, particularly by students (Lineberry, 2012; Whiting, 2013; Tanta *et al.*, 2014; Al-Barashdi *et al.*, 2015). Hence, it is of importance that further studies be conducted to understand the motives for adopting Facebook and to know the relevance of the constructs of UGT and how it applies to students. UGT stays relevant in explaining both traditional and new media uses. It is however important to explore the constructs of the UGT in relevance to the study of social media, particularly, Facebook. McQuail (2010:35) has argued that one of the benefits of the UGT is that it enables us to understand the media audience and their motivations for media use. This study utilises the constructs of the UGT namely; social relations, information surveillance, self-seeking behaviour, entertainment (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch 1974) as a theoretical framework action.

Social networking sites (SNS) are websites that allow individuals to develop a public or semi-public profile of themselves and to connect to others. SNS enable users to find and connect with other users (commonly referred to as friends or followers) with whom they share the same connection or views, sharing their pictures, favourite books, hobbies (Boyd and Ellison 2007:210). The nature of SNS varies from site to site, with new sites frequently being developed it has encouraged the increase in two-way participant communication (Fox and Warber, 2013).

Social media refers to the platform that allows users to engage in the construction and sharing of information for social purposes, which takes place in a world wide web (Abbate, 2017). It gives room for many users and improves social interaction which takes place in website services for online content creation (Abbate, 2017). Social media platforms are made available in the form of websites and these websites are referred to as social networking sites. The use of social media platforms, specifically Facebook, cannot be over emphasized, as social media helps people to satisfy their social connections (Kross *et al.*, 2013). It is unarguably an important facet of the day to day lives of students, as they use this social networking site for various reasons that include, but are not limited to posting of pictures, sharing of updates, status changes, likes, share comment and “lurking” (Fox and Warber, 2013:5).<sup>1</sup>

Facebook is a social media platform which was launched in February 2004 in the United States and now has approximately 2 billion active monthly Facebook users (Statista, 2018). Facebook was originally created for students of Harvard University, Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and co-founders, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes, who were then students of the Harvard University. In 2006, it gained widespread popularity beyond educational institutes and everyone with a registered email address could sign up for Facebook, (Oyetunde, 2017). In South Africa, there are 56.52 million South Africans regular Facebook users of which 16 million are active Facebook users (South Africa social media landscape, 2018). The statistics of social media users in South Africa show that there was an increase of Facebook uses from 13 million in 2015 to 14 million in 2016 to 16 million users in 2018 with 14 million users having access to Facebook on mobile devices (South Africa social media landscape, 2018). This means that, 25% of the South African population are active on Facebook. A report by Toby Sharpshak (2016) shows that about 8 million South Africans use Facebook daily, spending an average of 5 hours, 13 minutes via their mobile phones.

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<sup>1</sup> Lurking is a social media activity, where an individual is online, but pretends to be offline to observe other users posts and comments.

Social networking sites like Facebook have created a communal environment that is fully online and involves the relationship of the 'offline' friends (Rudd, 2013:11). This social network (Facebook) can influence university students social experience, there is an increase in the level of societal dependence on the online and social network environment (Rudd, 2013:13), students, business owners, educators are all interested in the use of this technology for development. However, it is important to understand the motivation for engaging in Facebook use and particularly look through the lens of UGT constructs to understand this phenomenon on the students' populace.

The use of Facebook has become an almost indispensable platform for communication and interaction (Fox and Warber, 2013), and this has led to Facebook becoming a significant object of academic research from a variety of disciplines - psychology, sociology, applied media communication and political activism (Bumgarner, 2007; Foregger, 2008; Joinson, 2008; Bosch, 2009). Studies in particular have focused on how students have used Facebook for various purposes; academics, identity formation, teaching and learning, social capital and consumer behavior (Pascarella, 2006; Jung, Youn and McClung, 2007; Livingstone, 2008; Sheldon, 2008; Quan-Haase and Young, 2010; Graham, 2012; Junco, 2014). While other scholars have examined the use of Facebook in relation to its intensity and civic activities of its users (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007; Park, Kee and Valenzuela, 2009).

It is however significant to discuss why Facebook was selected out of all other social media platforms. Tanja Bosch (2009) claimed that Facebook is the most frequently used social media platform in South Africa for political participation among students. In a recent study, conducted by Kevin Johnston, Mei-Miao Chen and Magnus Hauman (2013) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, it was discovered that the percentage of Facebook users among students increased to 95%. Similarly, Courage Gwena, Willie Chinyamurindi and Chioneso Maragne (2018) revealed in their study that the major motives for the use of Facebook amongst international students at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, - is to connect with friends from their home country as it particularly, relieves them of anxiety and stress. This indicates that South African students are keen users of Facebook. This study is examining the undergraduate students of UKZN because there is a dearth of study on Facebook use among UKZN as previous studies focused on Twitter and Facebook among "Generation Y" of KZN province, area of South Africa. Hence, the undergraduate students of UKZN between the ages of 18-24 years who are Facebook users are targeted for this study.

## **1.2 Research Rationale**

The rationale for choosing this topic is to contribute to the body of knowledge that links motivation for Facebook use with information, education, entertainment, self-seeking behaviour and social interaction as interplay with the social media platform, Facebook, which offers new perspective to the existing literature on UGT.

While several studies (Chigona, Kamkwenda and Manjoo, 2008; Tanta *et al.*, 2014; Al-barashdi *et al.*, 2015; Oyetunde 2017) have examined one or two of the UGT constructs in their studies, this study alternatively explores all constructs of the UGT to fill the gaps in literature that can be found in relation to studying how UGT can be related to social media, in particular within the student populace.

In addition, this study was born out of a quest to understand the focus on social media because of my aspiration to become a social media expert. This study will accordingly, provide an in-depth knowledge about the social media industry.

The expected output of this study will provide answers to the research questions raised, it will contribute to the existing academic literature on the use of Facebook among students, existing scholar write ups on Facebook, social media and students at university.

## **1.3 Research Problem**

This study seeks to see how relevant the UGT stays, by understanding the motivation and gratification for Facebook use among students and predominantly explore the constructs of the Uses and Gratification theory and how it applies to Facebook.

“Face booking” has generally become a habit that students engage within their everyday life (Bosch, 2009; Junco, 2011). According to Nancy Baym (2015), Facebook is a part of human communication and individuals are gradually becoming dependent on the use of this platform, which in essence creates a sense of sociability and interaction among its users as against the traditional media, where there was no room for interactivity. The traditional media is referred to as the push strategy – which only provided communication with no means of feedback from the audience, the introduction of the new media has improved interactivity among audience and created room for socially responsible behaviour by audiences. With this adoption of the new media and audience transitioning into the use of new media, it informs the theorisation of the UGT, as it was originally developed during the reign of the traditional media. The crux of this is to investigate if the UGT stays relevant in gratifying the audience choice of a media platform.

Masin (2011) pointed out that students have reported feeling depressed and lonely when deprived access to Facebook. Bosch (2009) argued that there is a limited number of studies carried out on the use of social media, specifically Facebook, in South Africa. Similarly, Junco (2011) identified that a substantial number of students agree that Facebooking is more beneficial to them than any of the traditional media because of the interactive performance recorded on Facebook by students.

This study will significantly identify and examine how and what students are using Facebook for, towards media literacy through the lens of UGT. Exploring the uses and gratification theory can help draw inferences towards understanding the reasons for adopting new media among users by investigating the impact of each construct of the theory. Throwing further light, this study will probe to understand the risk associated with the use of Facebook among undergraduate students of UKZN alongside the importance of each construct of the theory.

While some studies (Joinson, 2008; Raacke and Bond Raacke, 2008; Junco, 2011, Oyetunde, 2017) explained that the amount of time spent on Facebook is not staggering or posing danger to its users, several scholars (Sheldon, 2008; Masin, 2011; Rudd, 2011; Fox and Warber, 2013) gave reported situations, that not only are students spending time on Facebook, but they are also integrating Facebook into their routines of everyday life that has enabled them to develop social capital and encourage interaction among students. Facebook has gradually replaced the space and time spent on television-watching (Hicks, 2010). In light of this, it is imperative to understand the shift from traditional media to new media, particularly investigation if the social media provides the same gratification obtained by use of Television, as reported from studies of Blumler and McQuail, (1969); McLeod and Becker, (1974) and McQuail, (1984).

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to understand the motivations for the use of Facebook among undergraduate students at Howard College campus, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The primary focus of this study is on motivation for Facebook use among undergraduate students, the gratification obtained from using Facebook and exploring the four constructs of the UGT (mentioned earlier) on undergraduate students. Hence, the objectives and research questions were informed by the constructs of the UGT.

The research objectives of this study include:

1. To explore the motivating factors on the adoption of Facebook by undergraduate students of UKZN;

2. To understand how UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for social relations;
3. To determine how undergraduate students of UKZN use Facebook for information surveillance;
4. To understand how undergraduate students, use Facebook for self-seeking behaviour;
5. To examine how undergraduate students, use Facebook for entertainment activity;

#### **1.4.1 Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the motivating factors for undergraduate students joining Facebook?
2. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for social relations?
3. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for information surveillance?
4. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for self-seeking behaviour?
5. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for entertainment activities?

#### **1.5 Research Methods**

This study adopts qualitative research method. To investigate the research objectives, a qualitative study is required as the study sought to understand the perceptions, motivation and explore the constructs of the UGT. Such variables cannot be numerically analysed.

#### **1.6 Research Design**

This research employs exploratory research design, to understand the benefits and effects – on social interactions and relations of students across various variables such as: academics, mental health, teaching and learning of Facebook use among undergraduate students. Exploratory research is used to develop or create a better understanding about a phenomenon (Hair *et al.*, 2003). This study may not be sufficient to provide a general knowledge of Facebook and its effect on students' (general body of students) but it can provide an insight to the motives of Facebook use and its effect on undergraduate students at UKZN.

The exploratory research design will help this study identify innovations or alternatively study the motivation and possible gratification obtained using Facebook among undergraduate students of UKZN. This study underpinned the exploratory design to seek clarity in understanding a social problem (Hair *et al.*, 2003).

## **1.7 Data Collection Method**

Data collection allows researchers to obtain information that is needed from the study population, (Abawi, 2013). There are several methods of collecting data to include: documents review, observation, questioning, measuring or a combination of different methods.

This study uses three focus group discussions, with a minimum of six participants and a maximum of eight participants for each focus group discussion. With this calculation, this study accommodated twenty-four participants as the total number of those who made up the study sample.

Freitas *et al* (1998:2) defined focus group discussion as a type of detailed interview accomplished by a particular group that represents same characteristics with defined population size, composition and interview procedures. The purpose focus group discussion is the analysis and interaction within the group. A face-to-face structured focus group discussion was conducted to elicit qualitative response from participants. The focus group discussion was tailored towards understanding the view of participants on the motives for using Facebook and its effects on their social relations, among other constructs of the UGT (as provided in the research questions), looking at the pros and con of Facebook use among students. Responses were audio recorded after seeking the consent of participants for this purpose.

## **1.8 Thematic Analysis**

Thematic approach is targeted at analysing the qualitative data, which aims at identifying patterns and making associations between research findings to attain conclusions on the research problem (Snape and Spencer 2003). This research uses thematic analysis as it allows the scholar to ascertain the exact relationship between the research concepts and compare them with existing data, which will further help the research to ascertain the effect of Facebook use among students through the constructs of UGT. This study adopted the use of Clarke and Braun (2013) six steps of thematic analysis, which includes; familiarisation with data, coding, searching for themes, revisiting themes, defining themes and writing up.

The findings from this study were analysed in six themes stated as; (a) Understanding the influence of motivation of Facebook usage (b) Using Facebook for social relations (c) Facebook and Information seeking behaviour (d) The influence of Facebook for self-seeking behaviour (e) Using Facebook for entertainment activity (f) Understanding the effect of Facebook. These themes were developed from the level of recurrence of the answers from the participants. These themes were further discussed in the analysis chapter of this dissertation.

## 1.9 Structure of Dissertation

This study will be structured in the following chapters:

**Chapter Two: Literature Review**– A literature review is a way of explaining and analysing research topics that have been conducted and published. As the second chapter of this research, it serves a presentation of the current state of knowledge on a topic, which is designed to highlight past research findings and to pave the way for a specific study. This study’s literature review chapter encompasses the review of available literature on the use of social media platforms, specifically the use of Facebook. This serves as the crux of this study, which explores how UGT can be used within the context of Facebook.

**Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework** -The aim of a theoretical framework is to stimulate research and give over all meaning and reasons for the research findings to be meaningful and acceptable (White 2011: 290). This study employs the Uses and Gratification theory (Katz *et al.*, 1974) to conceptualize and understand the motivation for use of Facebook among UKZN students and how it affects students in different aspects of life. The third chapter begins with the introduction and evolution of the Uses and Gratification theory. The chapter further details the way this theory is applied as the theoretical framework for the study.

**Chapter Four: Research Methodology:** An inductive qualitative research methodology, employing the data collection methods of focus group discussions was outlined in this chapter. This chapter discusses the exploratory research design that was employed in this study, further discussed the qualitative research methods and thematic data analysis in details of codes and markings.

**Chapter Five: Findings and Analysis:** Research findings are discussed thematically (stated under thematic analysis heading) in line with the study’s methodological approach, theoretical framework and research questions where appropriate diagrams, graphs and illustrations will be employed to present findings. Data sifting, analysis and discussion will be undertaken in line with qualitative research methodology.

**Chapter Six: Conclusion:** This chapter will review the findings in themes, summarize salient points and discuss inferences reached in light of the research findings. It shall further draw from the literature review (Chapter Two) and theoretical framework in outlining the motivation and benefits derived by undergraduate students from their use of Facebook and its effects on their social relations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The use of social media platforms, especially Facebook, cannot be overemphasised as it forms a greater part of students' social integration (Reggie, 2015). Tara Heffner (2016:4) argued that "most young adults live, at least a part of their lives on social media, as it shapes their real-world understanding of life". This increased involvement on Facebook among students for active social participation is connected to the strength of social media. When examining the functionality of Facebook among students, studies of Junco, (2011); Masin (2011); Rudd (2013) and Heffner (2016) sparingly highlighted the primary use of Facebook as sending messages, keeping in touch, commenting on posts, building relationship, relieving stress through entertainment provided on Facebook by other users.

In order to explore the use of Facebook among UKZN students, this study chapter will review literature on studies that have examined the use of Facebook among students, studies that have proposed the motivations for Facebook use as well as review existing literature on similar context of how students engage in Facebook for social relation-online engagement, social capital, information seeking behaviour, self-status seeking behaviour, academic, and entertainment.

#### 2.1 Facebook Use among Students

The use of Facebook among audiences has broadened the scope of understanding the disposition of Facebook among the student population, as the use of Facebook is gradually integrating into the university and learning environment which has resulted in the incorporation of university students engaging in the use of Facebook for academics, maintaining of social relationships, gaining friends and other social use (Masin, 2011:2). According to Bruns (2011:133), social media audiences are largely found among what he termed 'Generation C'. 'Generation C' are described as the boisterous active audience, of common goals and practices, who create their own forms of information and knowledge, which are not necessarily found in books (Bruns, 2011:135). Further, stating that the 'Generation C' is an active audience, as they function as both the producer and consumer of social media content. In the same line of thought, Fox and Warber (2013:5) added that college students are early adopters of the social media,

which makes up the major audience of social media. Therefore, this section will explore how other studies have examined Facebook use through student populace.

Julie Trescott (2009) addressed the use of Facebook by college students for cognitive, socio-cultural and physiological development. Trescott's study (2009) discovered that students have used Facebook for self-development in some areas of their lives, such as academics, keeping friends and maintaining a cordial relationship with others. Students further recorded the use of Facebook to monitor their acquaintances and form social groups. These findings do not only support the idea of Facebook use among students, but also points at the importance of this phenomenon to individuals who have adopted the use of this platform into their day to day lives.

Students have been the populace of interest in studying Facebook and other social media platforms in various contexts such as political participation on Twitter among students of the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa (Bosch, 2009), the study of Karimi *et al.*, (2014) which applied UGT in comparing higher education students' motivation for using social networking sites by comparing students from Malaysia, Iran, United Kingdom and South Africa. Findings from Karimi *et al.*, (2014) revealed that students' motivation to join Facebook in each country varied based on the cultural differences associated with users from each country. The study of Park *et al.*, (2009) have particularly examined the uses and gratification theory in relation to students' adoption of social media in the United States and discovered that North-American students adopted the use of social media for various reasons including maintaining relationships, entertainment, seeking information among others. A Malaysian study conducted by Hamid *et al.*, (2011) also proved that college students mostly adopted the use of Facebook for several reasons, such as; getting to know people, finding people with mutual interests, building friends on Facebook to suit their desires. Similarly, Brocke *et al.*, (2009) examined Facebook use and motivation among German students and their findings revealed that most German students adopted Facebook because their friends had Facebook. The adoption of Facebook is significant to know that students are studied for a variety of reasons which include their susceptibility to adopt social media platforms. Particularly, because Facebook was initially created for college students, they are also the most active users of Facebook (Lampe, Ellison and Steinfield, 2006). Similarly, Clark Lee and Boyer (2007) found that Facebook was used to engage in discussion with classmates, to pass time and be entertained and importantly keep in touch with friends.

Findings from the study of Bosch (2009) on students of the UCT in South Africa on their use of Facebook discovered that many students have limited knowledge about their level of privacy and the information that they allow other users to have access to, such as their cell phone numbers and other information on Facebook. This study also inferred that within the South African context of social media use, especially Facebook, students have been recorded to use this platform for political activism, teaching, learning, and active journalism. Which is quite different from the findings of the study of Karimi *et al.*, (2014); Hamid *et al.*, (2011); Brocke *et al.*, (2009) that have examined the use of Facebook among students in various countries. Their findings explained that cultural differences are a leading factor that explains why students use Facebook for different reasons. Bosch (2009) also highlighted that there is a dearth of studies on student use of social media, specifically in South Africa, affirming that what is more disturbing is the insensitivity of the users, who now feel more disconnected and lonelier, if they cannot establish a stable sense of themselves, without the use of Facebook. Similarly, another study from UCT South Africa, conducted by Johnston *et al.*, (2013) on the use of Facebook among students proved that UCT students identify that “friends and strangers” are the main audience of Facebook. This shows that the perception of UCT students towards Facebook remains constructive because it is a more popular form of social communication and information sharing among students. Findings from Johnston *et al.*, (2013) explains that students are encouraged to use Facebook because most of their peers are on Facebook, particularly because the more friends you have on Facebook, the better your chances of being socially inclined. These are clear indications that there are changes in the usage, attitude, and perception of students on the use of Facebook over time. Joinson (2008) asserts that Facebook is one of the best ways to reconnect with old friends and acquire new ones.

In the same line of thought, Joinson (2008) added that students use Facebook to meet like-minded people and engage in community development tasks. Some studies, (Lampe *et al.* 2006; Sheldon, 2008; Joinson, 2008; Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2008; Pempek *et al.*, 2009; Haridakis and Hanson, 2009), reported that using Facebook to maintain relationships has a higher level of prevalence of gratification obtained and “finding new friends” was also one of the main reasons students engage in the use of Facebook.

Greg Siegle (2011:15) observed that young adults are the foremost generation to be nurtured completely in this era of digital technology use which defines them as true “digital natives” Siegle (2011) defined digital natives as individuals who grew up in the generation of digital technology. Similarly, Sonia Livingstone (2008:395) agreed that teenagers view the online

world as “their space”, when they are off their parents’ watch and rigid cultural standards. Teens and adolescents use “friending” on Facebook for various reasons, which include complementing real-life relationships and friendship, developing knowledge about the online world, sharing academic information to balance learning process (Livingstone, 2008).

An intense look at the use of Facebook and students is the feature of friends on Facebook is part of what this study discusses. Since Facebook offers the ability of increased social contact, users engage in the feature of adding and accepting friend requests on Facebook. ‘Friending’ on Facebook is the act of requesting another Facebook user to be a friend, which does not essentially involve the idea of friendship, as in most cases such friends are often visual friends (not seen in person), (Cronin, 2009:4). Users of Facebook can become friends with people in the same network or add friends in order to build a network. Once friendship is activated on Facebook, they can now begin to post messages on each other’s wall, tags and share videos and pictures, friends on Facebook can also show interest in building their relationship beyond Facebook (Livingstone, 2008).

One of the uses of Facebook among students is the need for self-presentation, which will be discussed in detail in the self-status seeking behaviour section of the review, given that Facebook offers a comfortable way to access feedback and communicate with their peers, students’ attitudes about themselves can be affected through engaging in the use of social media. With the feature of two-way participant communication on Facebook, friends can now give considerable information (user generated contents) about themselves and their family, putting up a personal profile of an individual on Facebook is the way the users present themselves, which improves interactivity by being an active consumer of Facebook, (Sheldon 2008:41).

When specifically examining the role of Facebook in the uses and gratification perspective, John Raacke and Jennifer Bond-Raacke (2009) discovered that most of the students use their Facebook account to keep in touch with old friends, current friends, and to also build a network of online friends. In their study (Raacke and Bond-Raacke, 2009), it was reported that there is less gratification of Facebook use in learning about events or sharing information about themselves for academic purposes and for dating or romantic relationships. Another study conducted among Singaporean student by Santos *et al.*, (2009) discovered that students predominantly use Facebook to socialise; their findings discovered that 42% of students used Facebook for fun and to keep in touch with friends.

The essence of sociability is to develop a level of involvement within the society, an important use of Facebook is to gain social acceptance from other social media users (Baym, 2015:103). However, the use of Facebook has also been discovered to also cause harm, in situations where students feel depressed and lonely when deprived of the use of Facebook (Masin, 2011:5). From a similar perspective, Charles Omekwu, Helen Eke and Jennifer Odoh (2014:4) further asserted that the use of Facebook has influenced its user's level of interaction, thereby seeing one another as "objects" to be accessed via Facebook or other social media platforms.

Reviews from Zeynep Tufekci (2008:25) publicised that some students who engage in Facebook use reported social abuse, such as cyberbullying, while some students also reported that they go through emotional stress when they do not get enough "likes" or "comments" on their post, giving them a feeling of dejection or not doing enough to be accepted within the social space. In comparison, a later study by Langat (2015) centred on the influence of Facebook use among undergraduate students at Kenyan University, established that Facebook had negative effects on students' study habits and was found to be a major cause of poor academic performance. Likewise, Pascarella's study (2006) discovered that excessive use of social media platform results in low self-esteem of its users and a feeling of disconnectedness when they are denied access to the internet. While Pascarella (2006) study gives an understanding of the effect on social media platforms, it is important to know the effect of Facebook as it relates to social factors, especially among students, towards gaining an in-depth knowledge of how these relate to students' experiences and outcomes, the findings from this study will give room for better understanding of the motivation for use and the importance of this phenomenon on students' social interaction, education, information seeking behaviour, political and entertainment activities. Consequently, as the use of social media is becoming a habit (Fox and Warber, 2013:5) it becomes a necessity to know the motivation for the use of Facebook among students. Hence, there is a need to explain how students engage in the use of Facebook in everyday life. Elisheva Gross (2004: 635) also noted that students use Facebook, not only for pleasure and leisure but also engage in its use for the purpose of sharing information links, health awareness programs, online learning and job searches, which necessitates the importance of Facebook use among students.

## **2.2 Motivation and gratification for Facebook use among students**

As Facebook has become an almost indispensable tool for communication among students (Oyetunde, 2017), it is vital to understand the motivation behind the use of Facebook amongst

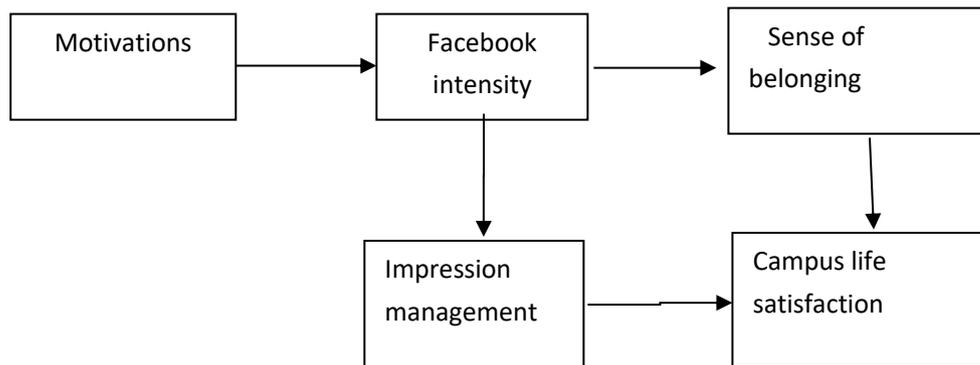
this user population of university students. Quan-Haase and Young (2010:355) revealed that the motivation for Facebook use among students; 85% of their respondents revealed that the principal motivation for joining Facebook was because it was recommended by their friends, which means that friendship is an important character in the adoption of Facebook use, bearing in mind that the prime purpose of Facebook use remains for social connectivity (Donath and Boyd, 2004; Boyd, 2008). According to Boyd (2008:123), another reason student adopt Facebook is because they claimed that “Everybody I know is on Facebook”. The use of Facebook is known for its level of popularity and it is considered fashionable (Whiting and William, 2014:367). It was further discovered that students are motivated to use Facebook for different purposes such as to pass time, to gain friends, to improve fashion and lifestyle, sharing problems and share social information (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010)

Pavica Sheldon (2008:40) pointed out that there are motivating reasons why students join social media platforms as they try to communicate within their social relations system. In his findings, the major motive for the use of social media by young adults was to maintain the existing relationship with their acquaintances. Boyd and Ellison (2007:210) also support these findings, as they agreed that Facebook and instant messages were not used by students to meet new people but rather to maintain existing social ties. Studies such as Papacharissi and Rubin (2000); Flanagin and Metzger (2001), Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004) have all made reference to the fact that one of the best motivations towards social media use is its unique way of providing social gratification.

Analysing the gender perspectives, regarding the motives of using Facebook, Sheldon (2008) discovered that women were most likely to use Facebook to nurture and maintain existing relationships and get entertained, whereas men were reported to engage in the use of Facebook to seek new relationships. In another study, Acquisti and Gross (2006) affirmed that one of the major motivations for Facebook use among students is to learn about events and keep in touch with friends. In addition, Tiffany Pempek, Yevdokiya Yermolayewa and Sandra Calvert (2009) studied the motivation for Facebook use among students and discovered that students use Facebook for improving their social relationships and gaining social support among their friends as opposed to parents or strangers.

The approach and motivation for Facebook use among students was illustrated in a study by Park and Lee (2014) in which they examined the patterns and the correlation between the motivations for engaging in the use of Facebook, the extent to which users rely on Facebook

for communication, and its consequences on psychological and relationship maintenance through the perspective of social capital, the discussion from Park and Lee (2014) stays relevant because it explored motivation for Facebook use among students. The study revealed that there are two psychological outcomes on motivation for Facebook use among students (1) sense of belonging and (2) campus life satisfaction, in the context of social relation and community building. Hence, their study suggested a model (Figure 2.2) for understanding the motivation of Facebook use among students.



**Figure 2. 1 Motivation for Facebook use among college students**

Source: Park and Lee, 2014:603.

This model (Figure 2.2) shows that the major factors that influence students’ level of motivation are the building of social relationships. This model is influenced by the building of social capital - Social capital in this context involves an individual who belongs to a social group to secure benefits and provide solutions to problems by social participation which improves social trust among social media users and promotes effective participation towards achieving a shared objective (Bayat, 2005).

However, the constructs of the models are simplified to suit the context of this study as, (sense of belonging to mean socializing, satisfaction to mean entertainment; impression management to explain self-status seeking, (Park and Lee 2014). Each construct of the model explains that there are different motivations for Facebook use and how it affects the users’ level of intensity which in turn influences the users psychologically. Park and Lee (2014) also suggested that users of Facebook are motivated to use Facebook for impression management because it plays a huge role in influencing their online self (self-presentation), which is an essential factor for relationship building and maintenance of existing relationships. The model also reflects on the constructs of “Facebook Intensity, Impression management and sense of belonging” (Park and

Lee, 2014:21) to be a great influence on the level of a student's satisfaction with life in the University.

Christy Cheung, Pui-Yee Chui and Matthew Lee (2011) explored the influence of the adoption of social media platforms, specifically Facebook, among students. The study conceptualized the intentional use of Facebook and how it impacts on social influence, social presence and its gratification for use. The study of Cheung *et al.*, (2011) highlighted the use of "We-Intention" as one of the motivating constructs of using Facebook, which is strongly determined by an individual's drive for social presence (online interaction), friendship mediated by Facebook and offline social interaction. Cheung *et al.*, (2011:1338) argued that the "We-Intention" is the most suitable approach to study online social activities. As it is defined as the "commitment of an individual to engage in a joint action that involves an explicit or implicit agreement between users to engage in such joint action" (Cheung *et al.*, 2011:1335). "We-Intention" is regarded as a performance act carried out by an individual to perform a social responsibility. Exploring this phenomenon, Cheung *et al.* (2011:1339) explained that the "We-Intention" is carried out when an individual begins to view themselves as part of a whole in social representation, where an individual believes he or she has a right of performance in an online social network.

The rationale for underpinning the "We-intention" as stated by the study of Cheung *et al.*, (2011) is to understand the "motivation for Facebook use". Cheung *et al.*, (2011:1339) affirmed that the "We-intention" is a driving force to motivate users to engage in Facebook use because the "We-Intention" is characterized by the factors of social influence that includes social identity and group identity formation (norms and subjective norms). Similarly, Icek Azjen (1991) explained that intentions are assumptions that motivate and influence active audience and participation of Facebook use. Cheung *et al.*, (2011) further revealed that the "We-Intention" involves a level of participation (social interaction) of the social media users; it is an intention (joint intention) of users of a social media platform to continue the use, in order to perform a joint action. With this, the role of participation comes into play. Participation in this context means liking pictures, sharing information or links, comments and sharing tags which are an act of social responsibility (Papacharissi, 2009).

The exploratory study of Park and Lee (2014) on the motivation of Facebook use and psychological outcomes on college students revealed that there are five motivational factors that stimulate students to use Facebook, these include; 1) entertainment, (2) communication, (3) relationship maintenance, (4) self-expression and professional use. These findings are

supported by previous studies on motivation for Facebook use among students (Jung *et al.*, 2007; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Quan-Haase and Young, 2010) which explained that there are different motivations for using Facebook among students. However, it was noted that entertainment had the highest prevalence for motivation for Facebook use among students, this was because students recorded that they enjoyed using Facebook for watching videos and playing games, rather than communicating or sharing information (Park and Lee, 2014: 614), which was in contrast to the findings of the study of Jung *et al.*, (2008) which presented Maintaining relationship as the leading motivating factor for adopting Facebook use by students. Hence, there is a need to understand what benefit its users derive from its use, especially students, how it affects their social interactions with others, and if the use of Facebook poses any form of threat or risk to its users.

In discussing the gratification for Facebook use among students, Quan-Haase and Young (2010:352) explained that for any form of media used by a particular audience, there is a form of gratification being sought and the specific medium must be able to provide a level of gratification for its users. Mark Urista, Qingwen Dong and Kenneth Day (2009) agreed that when a medium does not fulfil its desired gratification, then its audience member will predictably select another medium. Quan-Haase and Young (2010:352) further stated that in order to understand the gratification for media use, there are methods that must be taken. First, one must understand the expectation of its audience and the media habits, which is often time derived from the gratifications they obtained in using diverse media consumption. A number of studies (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979; Joinson, 2008; Dimicco, *et al.*, 2008) have focused on the gratification obtained, but neglected the motivation for using a particular media-Television (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979 and the new media (Joinson, 2008; Dimicco *et al.*, 2008). There are several gratifications for Facebook use among students, for example, Joinson (2008) reported that students in the United Kingdom showed a certain level of satisfaction by viewing other profiles, their pictures and status, and playing games. Similarly, Sheldon (2008) revealed that Facebook users were satisfied with the use because it fulfils their basic entertainment needs, which in any case was originally satisfied by the use of traditional media (TV and Radio), this validates the use of traditional media and social media in fulfilling the need for entertainment.

On a similar note, studies from LaRose and Eastin (2004); Ancu and Cozma (2009); Park *et al.*, (2009) explored the gratification of social media use among audiences, it was revealed that (socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking and information seeking) were discovered to be

the main gratification of social media use. Park *et al.*, (2009) supported the findings of (LaRose and Eastin 2004:360) which also identified factors such as seeking information, getting social support and being entertained as the most prevalent gratification for using Facebook, additional gratification for Facebook use aside, obtaining social information and social interaction includes; learning about fashion, engaging in community development and also to pass time (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). In exploring the terms of gratification obtained, Eighmey and McCord (1998), studied some selected websites by introducing personal involvement and continued relationship as possible gratification obtained on internet use, their study categorically pointed out two major gratifications derived from social media use, their findings stated the factor of media as a means of getting entertainment as this is also valued for information, which is similar to the gratification obtained from using traditional media.

Discussing that the gratification obtained is the benefits received from using a particular media, whilst the gratification sought is the benefits expected by audiences from the use of a particular media (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). Therefore, the users of Facebook seek the need to gratify their cognitive and affective needs of any form of media.

### **2.3 Facebook Use and Social Relations**

Social interaction and friendship are the foremost constructs that form social integration among individuals which if users positively engage in its use, will lead to social actualization - Social actualization means a defined successful career that is often achieved through societal collaboration by involving oneself in the collective work of the society towards development (Bean 2005:228). Valenzuela *et al.*, (2009) claimed that the use of Facebook among college students' level of social interaction cuts across different (multidimensional) constructs that include political participation, communal participation, social trust, maintaining a relationship, education, and life satisfaction (social actualization).

Nugent Pam (2013) defined social relation as the interaction between two or more people over time, which revolves into a good quality of association or relationship among people within a society. However, Valenzuela *et al.*, (2009:877) claimed that there is an interwoven connection between social interaction and social capital. The idea of social capital is straightforward, social capital is regarded as the resource (product), which means that it is the benefit derived by people who engage in the use of social media through social interaction (Lin, 2001; Putnam and Goss, 2004:5). People who engage in building a large network of friends are believed to achieve more social capital than people who do not have a large network of friends or contacts.

Ball *et al.*, (2001) found that people with established connections within a community do so by interaction with friends and even strangers alike, which helps them possess a stronger voice within such a community, as opposed to other individuals with less interactivity within the community. Ball *et al.*, (2001) clarified that there are factors that influence social relationships among individuals (online or offline), which include, individuals trying to generate sentiment among their peers through admiration, socializing with people that equate their standard of living, all this mentioned in turn gratify social needs. Jensen Schau and Gilly, (2003); Lampel and Bhalla, (2007) further added that once an individual achieves a desired status within a community, it becomes an asset, that is held with prestige and most individuals strive to maintain their achieved status.

Although, Valenzuela *et al.*, (2009:877) opined that people develop social capital by means of their social engagement and interaction with friends, acquaintances, co-workers. Pam (2013) also claimed that individuals engage in making conscious decisions of engaging in social interaction, which is one of the major reasons people engage in the use of Facebook for social networking. Additionally, Bean (2005:230) claimed that students derive satisfaction from the use of Facebook as it has become a social attachment, with increased feelings of social support and social interaction which boosts self-confidence among students. Furthermore, interactions on Facebook can be academic or non-academic, as it relates positively to the efficient habits that boost the real-life performance of students (Rudd, 2013:17).

This field of social relation is a characteristic of adapting online activity that concentrates on the social relations which produce conformity through communicative recognition with others as friends, networks, acquaintances, strangers, persons known only online, co-workers, students, and family, all which are categorized under the label of friends. Cover (2012) posit that there are two ways of developing online relations on Facebook:

1. The development and maintaining friends through continuous acceptance of friend requests on Facebook;
2. Constant communication with friends varies at different times, through the interactive nature of Facebook, by updating status, commenting on pictures/posts, liking and response to tags and comments.

Cover (2012:183) explained that both are performative acts of social relation expressed through the structure of interaction involved on Facebook use. Engaging in the use of social media improves an individual's ability to develop social trust, which is effective for social engagement and facilitate people's knowledge of working with each other as a common group,

in reference to the student populace, it is imperative that students engage in social media use to improve their social and academic engagement skills. Valenzuela *et al*, (2009) inferred that the end products of socializing are improving interpersonal relationships, growing a good quality of life, and engaging in social development activities through developed social networks.

Giannokos *et al.*, (2013) explained that social relation is essential to students, who use it for reasons that include fun, finding friends and adapting/engaging in social development activities through social networks. Rudd (2013:17) added that students who engage in social interaction within the university are most likely to have a big network of friends and build a positive image, which is part of the factors that encourage other students to adopt good social interaction skills. Suggestions from the study of Sheldon, (2008) and Papacharissi and Mendelson, (2011) identified interpersonal communication as one of the gratifications allied with the use of Facebook. It was discovered that Facebook was used to convey personal messages that often deals with emotions and value for friendship (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010:355). The adoption of social media platforms into everyday life has negatively influenced the level of interpersonal (Face-to-Face) interaction between individuals, given the fact that individuals now prefer to discuss with virtual friends than actual physical discussion, (Johnston *et al.*, 2013).

Flowing from the above, the assertion is supported by the ideology of the uses and gratification theory which states that “the purpose of a channel of communication is determined by the interactive level of its users” (Bargh and McKenna, 2004:578). Johnston *et al*, (2013) discovered that the use of social media is important, and it is discovered to be helpful for individuals who find it difficult to maintain or develop an ideal social relationship in an offline environment, increased online interaction was discovered to encourage and improve such individuals’ social engagement either offline or online<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the following subsections will discuss the benefits that encourage the use of social media platforms, with particular reference to Facebook and social integration among its users.

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<sup>2</sup> Offline is a state where there is no connectivity to the internet. Usually when such individual has the ability to be connected to the internet.

<sup>2</sup> Online expresses the state of connectivity to the internet

### **2.3.1 Online engagement**

This is described as a means to improve and strengthen social relationship through the use of a social media platform (Wellman *et al.*, 2001; Dmitri Williams, 2006; Steinfield *et al.*, 2012; Johnston *et al.*, 2013). Chad Petersen and Kevin Johnston (2015:4) claimed that the number of friends or followers an individual has on social media platform defines their level of intensity of social media use, while the amount of time spent on a social media platform determines the quantity of usage. Similarly, Ellison *et al.*, (2007) assert that when an individual has a large or certain number of friends or users on Facebook that means that such individual has gained a certain level of social trust and benefits from continuous engagement in social interactions. The effects of social interaction among students have been distinguished into three main categories: intrapersonal domain which refers to *individuals' life satisfaction*; an interpersonal domain which is represented by a *social trust*; and the behavioural domain characterized by an individual's participation in *communal and political participation* (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009). These three categories are explained in more detail below.

### **2.3.2 Life satisfaction**

Amongst the users of social media platforms, life satisfaction is an evaluation of an individuals' surrounding that puts into consideration the influence of these platforms in their life, (Scheufele and Shah, 2000). In discussing the virtual world, Life satisfaction is determined by the level of social interaction between individuals which cuts across building social ties to achieve social actualization (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009; Petersen and Johnston, 2015). Fukuyama (2000) explains that if an individual engages in interpersonal communication it goes further to assist them in developing life satisfaction, which has a positive effect on their well-being.

Taking this rationale into Facebook use, Potti Valkenburg, Jochen Peter and Alexander Schouten (2006) revealed that individuals who are active users of Facebook, participate in social development activities, and connect to their friends and acquaintances, tend to feel happier, this explains why once a Facebook user engages in using Facebook for personal connections or whatever purpose an individual decides to use it for, that there is a feeling of contentment, then the level of satisfaction derived from using Facebook increases, which improves the general well-being of the user.

The use of Facebook for life satisfaction is important to a students' level of social interaction, Park and Lee (2014:667) identified satisfaction with campus life as one of the major constructs in the conceptual model of their study; they argued that students use Facebook for different

purposes, but particularly to settle within campus activities (which gives them a satisfaction about life on campus). Their study (Park and Lee, 2014) also identified that, motivation for students' use of Facebook is to develop a level of satisfaction about their environment and for relationship building among their peers. Benchmarking on Putnam (2002), Park and Lee (2014) added that to get life satisfaction, there are development levels which are associated with basic means of mutual benefits and trust. Helliwell and Putnam, (2004) further explained that some individuals believe that life satisfaction is related to building social trust, while some individuals believe that strangers can be trusted (these individuals were reported to be subjective), while other individuals believe that life satisfaction is based on general trust.

### **2.3.3 Social Trust**

Social trust is a process of socialisation that is achieved through maintaining a stable personality (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009; Uslaner, 2002). Social trust is subject to change, due to the flexible nature of trust (trust is a belief, built on imperfect knowledge) (Uslaner, 2002). Social trust in an online environment is aimed at reducing the level of uncertainty about other users, their intention and actions, which involves detailed reason for building trust and mutuality (Putnam, 2002). If individuals do not know each other either offline or online, the level at which they trust each other is reduced and the possibility of building a relationship is reduced as well. Although, if the level of uncertainty is reduced by social interaction, it does not mean that uncertainty level is reduced through social trust (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009; Park and Lee, 2009).

Facebook users learn the act of social trust by seeking information about others (Ellison *et al.*, 2007), therefore the more an individual gets to know another the more they learn to trust or distrust them. This, therefore, means that if an active Facebook user discovers that one of his or her friends or followers in their personal list acts or posts information in a distasteful manner, it is most likely that such an individual will be 'distrusted.' Hence, the use of Facebook can positively correlate to having a network of friends that can be trusted (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009:877). For instance, if an individual who believes in building social trust belongs to a group with a large network of friends, such an individual might be able to receive social support in times of private crisis and this kind of support promotes social trust towards achieving life satisfaction (social actualization of an individual) (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009; Park and Lee, 2009; Petersen and Johnston, 2015). This means that the use of Facebook for social interaction must

put into consideration the factor of social trust, which is a determining factor that fosters good social relations.

### **2.3.4 Political and Communal Participation**

Political participation is a major part of social interaction that involves the traditional activity of political participation such as voting and political campaigning (Kim and Chen, 2016:321). While communal participation involves the individual or collective action of people towards the development of a community (Zukin *et al.*, 2006). Kim and Chen, (2016) claimed that political participation has gone digital, by means of social-political participation (writing emails to a politician, visiting campaign website, reposting campaigns adverts and raising funds for political organizations), which is different from the traditional activity of voting and campaigns. While this is true, political participation goes beyond the mentioned, political participation now incorporates social interaction as participating in mentioned activities improves community development (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009; Bosch, 2009).

Using Facebook for engaging in communal and political activity is dedicated to making political activism popular among the student populace (Bosch, 2009). Students use social media as an instrument to project their action and show interest in the politics of their environment. Bosch (2009) found that students at the University of Cape Town used Twitter and Facebook for political activism, especially during protests within the university under the tag #feesmustfall. Additionally, Boyd (2008) opined that political activism, when taken into an online community, renders a louder voice to the cause of protest, which in turn serves as a means to mobilise other individuals who agree or support the cause for protest to join in lending a voice for their cause. These assertions represent unique contributions of people's engagement towards achieving a goal through social interaction among individuals.

### **2.3.5 Social Capital**

This is regarded as the benefits of engaging in the use of social networks, which helps in bonding with people of diverse opinion and bridging gaps among people in a society, which in turn enables the society to function effectively (Uslaner, 2001). The social capital is a paradigm that bridges the two disciplines of sociology and economics, this approach has emerged to be relevant as a key concept in the study of Facebook as it focuses on social structure – of studying motivation as an underlying factor of social relationship in a civil society (Anheier and Kendall, 2002; Bayat, 2005).

Social capital is relevant to this study as part of the gratifications gained by Facebook users through social interaction. Petersen and Johnston (2015) revealed that there are diverse categories of social capital, particularly, looking at university students. The types of social capital for social interaction includes linking social ties, building social ties and maintaining social ties, that students use on social media platform to best show their social interest. Petersen and Johnston (2015:7) discussed these types of social capital - to bridge the gap between user (online and offline), as the bonds that maintain social ties among users offline.

Petersen and Johnston (2015) further examined the benefits of social capital by interaction, the study discovered that the use of social media helps users to widen their social integration through developing social ties. Similarly, Donath and Boyd (2004) supported that the use of Facebook among students can improve the development and maintenance of social interaction, due to the reduced cost of accessing social media, particularly Facebook, which makes it affordable for students. Ellison *et al.*, (2007) explained that people use social media platforms to bond with people who have different cultures, diversity and importantly, provide emotional support for such individuals both online and offline. Similarly, Johnston *et al.*, (2013) revealed that the more an individual uses Facebook, the more it serves as a bond for continuous social interaction with other individuals. For instance, an individual can use Facebook to form alliances within a group of people who are social influencers, power holders, by showing their loyalty - this will create a reliable relationship among individuals who will assist them in building social reputation. Xun Lui and Robert LaRose (2008:312) detailed in their findings that individuals receive social support from other users which help them boost their profile, improve their quality of life, especially among students, by boosting their self-esteem and providing them with a feeling of satisfaction.

Towards maintaining social ties by interaction, Ellison *et al.* (2007); Johnston *et al.*, (2013); Petersen and Johnston, (2015) discoursed that social relationship is subjective to change, as people change environment and meet new individuals especially in the context of university students, because often times they change academic levels and move from different environment and backgrounds. Therefore, the use of Facebook serves to maintain previous or old relationship with others, particularly with people who are not geographically connected. Katja Rost (2011) claimed that the use of social media and instant messaging has helped students to maintain social ties, especially in long distance relationships.

To conclude this, social relation among students on Facebook is described as a means to improve students' social relationship, through engaging in online interaction, developing social trust, improving life satisfaction and social capital with consistent use (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Petersen and Johnston, 2015; Ellison *et al.*, 2007; Rost, 2011; Johnston *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, individuals who engage in social interactions are successful in their relationships as they are able to build personal relationships, form groups, participate in group discussions, and increase their emotional well-being such as improved self-esteem and social presentation towards deriving life satisfaction (Petersen and Johnston, 2015). Bargh and McKenna (2004) affirmed that self-esteem and fulfilment with life are pivotal to measure an individual's well-being. From these assertions, it could be inferred that appropriate social interaction among students can improve a student's general well-being. With no doubt, engaging in the use of Facebook for online engagement, life satisfaction, political participation and social capital, improves students' sense of belonging to virtual community through social integration.

#### **2.4 Facebook Use for Entertainment Activity**

Facebook use among individuals now supports an extensive array of entertainment activities, which include watching of short minute's videos, memes, inviting friends to play visual games and watching comedy skits (Moss, 2010:150). According to Jenkins (2007) there are newer developments on Facebook features that encourages user participatory functions on Facebook entertainment such features include, video sharing, podcast and file sharing, he further added that Facebook is a constantly updated platform that is dynamic in nature. Hence, there will be continuous updates that will encourage active user participation.

Saleem Alhabash and Mengyan Ma (2017:5) regard Facebook as a social media platform for entertainment and leisure use, particularly by students. Findings of the study of Belal Hossain (2017) on how students of Comilla University use Facebook, it was revealed that 64% of the students engage in Facebook use for entertainment activity (sending birthday wishes, enjoy comedy videos, posting videos and sharing funny captions). The study added that Facebook is an integral part of students' daily activities, while many of the respondents engage in Facebook use for purposes that also include seeking information, maintaining relationships, sending greetings as well as entertainment (Hossain, 2017). Likewise, Quan-Haase and Young (2010) discovered that Facebook is used as a means of getting entertainment and gaining social support, which is supported by the findings from Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) that

people are motivated to use Facebook because of the gratification they obtain that was to habitually pass time and get entertained.

Alhabash and Ma (2017:7) affirmed that entertainment is one of the gratifications obtained from students using Facebook, as it is regarded as a mode of relaxation and a means of escape from stress, adding that most users of Facebook engage in its use to satisfy their media need. Ryan *et al.*, (2014) asserted that people gain social interaction by using Facebook for entertainment purposes, thereby promoting social events and shows. Similarly, Hossain (2017) revealed that students engage in Facebook use for entertainment and as a means of leisure, through playing and inviting their friends to play online games, and winning social contents in an online environment etc. In addition, Odell *et al.*, (2000:860) revealed that male users of Facebook are more likely to engage in using Facebook for gaming than the females.

## **2.5 Facebook Use among Students for Academic Purposes**

Regarding the use of Facebook for academic purposes, educators within the institution of learning explain that it is imperative to understand how students use social media for learning, interaction and academic growth (Rudd, 2013:14). This section relates how effective it is to understand the use of Facebook among students on their academic development.

In a bid to understand the effect of Facebook on the information seeking behaviour of students, Ellison *et al.*, (2007) viewed Facebook as a means of learning and they conducted a study on the use of Facebook among students in relation to its educational purposes. Their study focused on the uses of Facebook as a platform for sharing information, getting advice, and getting different tasks completed (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). Their study also investigated the implications of the use of Facebook on education and information seeking behaviour of students especially in relation to school activities (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). Their study revealed that forty-nine percent of their respondents agreed to use Facebook for Face-to-Face study, and that forty-nine percent of the respondents reported to use Facebook to seek information about school activities, engage in private or group chats for classroom activities and complete their assignments (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). The findings from this study are a clear indication that students use the features of Facebook for seeking information, specifically for educational and learning purposes. The study further revealed that one third of their respondents desired that Facebook possessed more facilitating tools that could improve learning process (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). One of the ways to improve the learners' site is the introduction of the Moodle site into the learning environment, which promotes interaction among educators and students (Gemmill and Peterson, 2006). The

introduction of the Moodle site into learning improves interactivity of learners and as such implements the suggestions of the convergence culture of Jenkins, (2006) which describes an era of participatory culture-participation with the new media (Interaction between learners and educators via internet). Additionally, the study of Ellison *et al.*, (2007) suggested that the use of Facebook should be incorporated into the academic system (counsellors, teachers, learners) for the sole aim of improved academic and social interaction of students. However, Hossain (2017) similarly suggested that there should be a higher policy of engaging Facebook into academic learning.

Studies on the use of Facebook among students continue to grow, as more articles are being published (see Bosch, 2009; Rodrigues, Sabino and Zhou, 2011; Masin, 2011; Ya-Rong Huang, 2012; Rudd, 2013; Bin *et al.*, 2014; Kim and Chen, 2016; Oyetunde, 2017). Bosch (2009) conducted a study on the use of Facebook as a social media platform for teaching and learning at the University of Cape Town and discovered that students expressed constructive opportunities available from using Facebook, and students used Facebook for academic and technology literacy towards building <sup>3</sup>micro-communities. Similarly, Bin *et al.*, (2014:210) discovered that the use of Facebook among students increased their potential educational values, which improved the communication ties shared among their classmates. Huang (2012) established the importance of using Facebook for learning and academic purposes as it provides a learning environment for users to engage in the learning process.

Stefan Hrastinski (2009) argued that Facebook enables students to adapt to the evolving learning environment at University, which might initially be overwhelming for students to handle. Although Rodrigues *et al.*, (2011) mentioned that social media was not fashioned for academic purposes. However, Huang (2012) argued that peer or collaborative academic learning among students via social media platforms is usually fostered when there is a group assignment that needs the contribution of all group members. Additionally, Facebook use among students for academic purpose encourages collective sharing of knowledge, as students engage in group discussions, this allows an individual (maybe a group leader) to discuss topics while other individuals can contribute to the topic of discussion and by so doing the creation of collective knowledge is encouraged among students (Moskaliuk, Kimmerle and Cress, 2009).

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<sup>3</sup> Micro community is a smaller group of individuals that share common goals or specialty to build a brand or provide support system for others (Jordan, 2017)

In contrast to the findings presented above, the use of Facebook can also negatively impact on the academic performance of students (Junco, 2012; Ogedebe *et al.*, 2012). Ogedebe *et al.*, (2012) in their study on private and public higher institution learners discovered that Facebook use among students decreased their level of productivity. They revealed that the additional time students spent on Facebook, the less time they devote to academic study. The studies further revealed that male students recorded more poor grades, due to excessive use of Facebook, as opposed to female students. Similarly, Junco's (2012:168) study revealed that students recorded poor grades because of bad time management, as many of the students revealed that they did not plan their time well in balancing study time with Facebook time Junco (2012:169) referred to this as an 'unhealthy relationship' between students and their studies, as this affected students' grades.

## **2.6 Facebook Use for Information Seeking Purpose**

This section discusses the relevance on how Facebook can be used as a means of sourcing for information among students and its general users.

Information seeking in the context of this study is conceptualized as a subject of information behaviour, on how students gain access to information, how they discover and use the information they find on Facebook. The information seeking behaviour among students is described as a two-way communication between the information seeker (consumer) and the information creator (producer) although, this relation is symbolic to the idea that the role of information seeker is often times the same as the information creator (Hyldegard, 2014). This section seeks to understand the role of Facebook on information seekers (consumers). Given that Facebook has become part of young individual's information and learning behaviour, there is a need to seek knowledge of how Facebook has been used to gather information and what type of information Facebook users' access, specifically students. This section seeks to explain the effective use of Facebook on students' attitude towards information and information surveillance to understand if the information that students access has an impact on their academic or learning and social behaviour.

To properly address the information seeking behaviour of students through social networking sites, June Ahn (2011) reviewed theories and her controversies centred on the use of social media by students and how it affected their academic development, if student's participation on social media exposes them to harm or develop their relationship, if social media helps their personal development (self-esteem and psychological well-being). Findings from Ahn (2011)

detailed that the features of social media and its technicality affects the social behaviour (well-being and learning) of its users. She further suggested that other studies must consider an integrated approach to explore the effect of social media on students. Similarly, Hyldegard (2014) sought to understand the information seeking behaviour of students and found that Facebook was used by undergraduates to gather information specifically for academic purposes. Kim (2014:11) highlighted information as one of the gratifications for Facebook use among students. Facebook is connected as a major search tool for information regarding academics or searching for people they share either same interest or diverse opinions in the online environment (Urista *et al.*, 2009). There is a level of satisfaction achieved through surfing the internet and looking through other profiles on Facebook. Joinson (2008:1029) asserted that seeking social information has its own, psychological benefits to users such as, developing a feeling of being part of a larger social group, a sense of belonging and involvement in what's happening in their society. In addition, Carol Kuhlthau, (2004) and Diane Nahl and Dania Bilal (2007) revealed that personal factors such as emotions and situational factors influenced why students sought information. In relation to the use of Facebook for information seeking, it is imperative to properly understand the informative activities that are carried out on Facebook by students and the information technique available on Facebook.

### **2.6.1 Activities of Student on Information Seeking Behaviour**

The role of social media in information seeking behaviour of an individual is vital, due to the complex nature of the term Information. Therefore, information in the context of this study are current news especially on social media platforms, because of its convenience and flexible nature of giving reviews and information to its seekers (Osatuyi, 2013:5). Hamid *et al.*, (2015) explained that the easy access to social media by students makes it a primary source of information to students. Hence, the primary reason for using Facebook as an information tool includes:(1) social interaction, (2) seeking information, (3) expressing opinion, (4) information sharing and surveillance or lurking to seek information about others (Whitting and Williams, 2013; Osatuyi, 2013).

Several studies have sought to understand how students use Facebook for gathering information (Hrastinski and Aghaee, 2012; Hyldegard 2014; Kim, Sin and Yoo-Lee, 2014). Kim *et al.*, (2014) revealed that students prefer to use Wikipedia to seek information and preferred Facebook to keep in touch and share opinions with other users of the site. In support

of the assertions from Kim *et al.*, (2014), Hyldegard (2014) also stated that if students use Facebook to gather information about trends, styles and celebrities, it could be proven that the sole purpose of using Facebook for information seeking purpose is not lost, explaining further that the use of Facebook for information seeking behaviour cannot only be for academic purposes, as students also need to be involved in other social activities so as to ensure a balanced life. Brett Bumgarner (2007) claimed that information seeking and exchange on Facebook can be vague, giving that most information exchange is gossip about others or events in their online profiles. He further added that this factor does not reduce the satisfaction of users on the information seeking process. However, Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) suggested that Facebook is used as a means of developing practically useful information. Urista, *et al.* (2009) also discovered that people engage in using Facebook to get information on events

Hrastinski and Aghae (2012) revealed that students used social media as a means of seeking information, by quickly getting their needed support from friends, quick answers to questions, and the retrieval of information already posted by other friends. Kim *et al.*, (2014) also discovered in their study that information seeking behaviour is based on gender and discipline of students, they discovered that there are gender preferences of using Facebook, as females engaged more in using Facebook to follow how to do instructions than the male students. 70% of the male students agreed that they get information from Wikipedia first before using Facebook.

Kim *et al.*,(2014) also found that students of Humanities college used Facebook for video sharing and sending information links, while students from the field of Natural Science were active on Facebook for sporty activities that include (online games) and sharing links for competition to win star prizes, furthermore, students use Facebook for sharing information link with their friends and family to engage in online competition, most importantly, their study revealed that one of the most shared information on Facebook among students was creating health awareness to their friends, to this end, Facebook serves as an information source.

The information seeking behaviour by students is a way of relieving students of their level of uncertainty, Hamid *et al.*, (2015) piloted a study on the use of Facebook by international students, the findings discovered that international students often use Facebook as their information source, especially to get first-hand information about the social life of their “host country” and to get information about the university they are going to, they use Facebook to learn a bit of the environment, which might include the language, level of sociability, campus

activities and importantly, their residence of living. Hamid *et al.*, (2015); Gwena *et al.*, (2018) argued that international students use Facebook differently as it is a major source of information to them, (regarding their home country when they depart and a crucial source of information about their host country before arrival). The first-hand information they get from searching Facebook assists them in reducing their level of uncertainty before going to their new destination.

In the perspective of its effect on its audience, the application of uses and gratification approach in line with Facebook use towards information seeking behaviour is the conceptualized idea, that runs through two concepts; the instrumental and ritualised use of Facebook as online sources for information. Rubin (1994) explained that the ritualised use of a specific media is to pass time and serve as a means of distraction, while the instrumental use of a media is to gather specific information. Wise *et al.*, (2010:555) further revealed that there is a clear distinction between the ritualised (passing time) and instrumental (seeking information) use of Facebook, which leads to cognitive use of Facebook. The instrumental and ritualised use of Facebook is further explained and simplified into two distinct categories, which are; (1) Information seeking strategies (ritualised use of Facebook) and (2) Information Surveillance (cognitive use of Facebook), particularly among students. These two distinct categories of Facebook use for information seeking behaviour are explained below;

**1. Information seeking strategy:** Ramirez *et al.*, (2002) identified the various online social networks used and discovered that people use Facebook to reduce the level of uncertainty about their environment and social group. The study proposed a conceptual framework of social information seeking behaviour which includes; interactive strategy, active strategy, passive strategy.

1. The interactive strategy depicts that there is an existing level of familiarity among information seekers and that there is an existence of direct interaction between both parties. For example, this direct interaction could include sending instant messages (Wise *et al.*, 2010:556). This interactive strategy assumes familiarity between information seekers and implies that there may be shared experiences that users have with both online and offline communities. Through this, they can share relevant pieces of information among themselves including those that are mainly relevant within educative contexts like the university, while sustaining their social bonds with these people.

2. The active strategy: this information seeking strategy explains that, a user of social media platform, seeks information about “something” from another individual, but they do so without direct interaction. For instance, a Facebook user will seek information about an individual from another person to avoid direct interface with the ‘target’, this information seeking strategy involves a third party, (Wise *et al.*, 2010:556).
3. The passive strategy: this information seeking pattern is classified as the surface survey - when an individual seeks information through wall posts on Facebook, looking at general news feeds on Facebook, lurking around profiles of their target (information sought), without sending any active message to gather information (Wise *et al.*, 2010:556).

The assertion of Wise *et al.*, (2010) on information seeking strategy is supported by Evans *et al.*, (2010) whose study argued that there are three information gathering tactics among students which are explained as; Target asking: which usually involves friends asking or seeking information through the use of instant messaging or email (interactive strategy), second is the network asking, which involves using social media platforms like; Facebook or Twitter for information gathering purposes. Third, is by searching: this is done using internet search engines such as, Google, Wikipedia, or Bing. Evans *et al.*, (2010) suggested that if these three tactics were combined as one and used by students, it will lead to better search for information sources. Evans *et al.*, (2010) further revealed that when a social media site tends to satisfy the information seeking behaviour, students will use that site more often than using others, then such social media platform proves to be more cognitive and assists in the learning and fulfilling information task.

From the reviews of Ramirez *et al.* (2002) and Wise *et al.*, (2010) it can be inferred that information seeking behaviour on Facebook is exemplified in the extractive and passive information strategies, as most students from the findings of the Ramirez *et al.*, (2002); Wise *et al.*, (2010) and Evans *et al.*, (2010) have reported to use Facebook for extractive purposes and also passive purposes respectively. However, this is not to say that there are no students who use Facebook for interactive and active information seeking strategies (Hamid *et al.*, 2010).

## 2. Information Surveillance

Information surveillance is the monitoring of another individual's social network that carries information of different social content, which promotes social media convergence (Trottier and Lyon, 2012:102). The use of Facebook for information surveillance, involves two purposes as identified by Lampe *et al.*, (2006), which includes; social searching and social browsing. Social Searching is the act of seeking precise information about an individual who someone has encountered with or met in an offline space but goes in search for such individual online (search via social media platforms, for example Facebook). This act is carried out to seek out specific information about an individual (Lampe *et al.*, 2006).

Social browsing is categorized as seeking general information about people but with no particular person in mind. This is a basic act of surfing the online space for information about friends or acquaintances and strangers (Lampe *et al.*, 2006).

While these functions describe the use of Facebook, Joinson (2008) also identified the use of Facebook for information seeking behaviour and identified some functions and motives for Facebook use among students, which ranged from social connection (for example, keeping in touch) and the expression of identity. Joinson (2008) identified social investigation among students as an important factor for Facebook use. Social investigation is described as using Facebook or other social media platform as a source to search for information about individuals or events. The function of Facebook for social investigation is very similar to social searching; in that they basically want to seek information about individuals they meet offline to gain knowledge about them.

In the same line of thought, the findings of Lampe *et al.*, (2006) illustrated that the use of Facebook for information surveillance is based on social browsing which is in line with social investigation, the findings further revealed that students use Facebook to survey events and activities within campus, it was reported to be a search tool for social events both on and off-campus events, while in some instances students recorded its use as a means of surveillance (to monitor the track of events around their environment).

From the conceptualised idea of the study of Ramirez *et al.*, (2002); Lampe *et al.*, (2006) and Wise *et al.*, (2010), it could be inferred that information seeking strategy aligns with the use of Facebook, the studies suggested social browsing on Facebook as a passive information seeking strategy, (checking general pages without looking for any particular information about an

individual or a phenomenon. Ramirez *et al.*, (2002); Lampe *et al.*, (2006) and Wise *et al.*, (2010) further examined the social searching function of Facebook as an interactive information seeking strategy, which is a goal-oriented information seeking behaviour (where an individual is concerned about investigation, moving from general information to more specific information, checking another persons' page to gather information about them).

## **2.7 Facebook use for Self-Status Seeking Behaviour**

To better understand this study, part of the objectives that this study undertakes is to explore the use of Facebook for self-status behaviour. This section discusses, how students engage in using Facebook to express their identity, self-presentation, and how they use Facebook to negotiate around their identity.

Self – seeking behaviour is explained as the motive of an individual to content and serve self above others, this is a behaviour of satisfying ego in order to achieve material gain (Kuss and Griffiths, 2011: 3530). In the context of this study, self-seeking behaviour is examined as the intent of a Facebook user to serve self above others in order to attain self-actualization. Lin (2001:78) discussed self-status seeking behaviour as the way different individuals go about improving their 'selves' within their community (either offline or online).

The use of Facebook for self-status seeking behaviour is relevant to this study to ascertain if this study's respondents wish to maintain social status through 'friending' especially within a learning environment (Jensen Schau and Gilly, 2003; Lampel and Bhalla, 2007). Lampel and Bhalla (2007:435) viewed self - status seeking behaviour as a passion driven by social formation for individuals to invest their time in activities that will benefit other users of social media. This social 'desire' serves as a reliable source for individuals to continuously participate in the growth of the online community. Similarly, Jensen Schau and Gilly (2003) augment that the self-status seeking behaviour of users is not restricted to the online community, but in the offline environment as well. People participate in self-status seeking behaviour by "gift giving or giving advice" (Kuss and Griffiths, 2011: 3530) to gain attention within the online and offline space. Thus, self-status seeking behaviour operates in both online and offline environments.

People invest time in promoting themselves to improve their social presence, by participating in social activities, which in turn improves their social status. Lampel and Bhalla (2007:436) argued that self-status seeking behaviour that operates in the online communities is

operationalised using posts, pictures, videos and written words. By extension, self-status seeking behaviour is a component of actions carried out by an individual to improve their status, honour, or defence within their community (Perretti and Negro, 2006). The major goal of self-status seeking behaviour is to gain social advantage or acceptance among their friends on Facebook, these 'friends' may also be involved in self-status seeking behaviour to improve their emotions or psychological well-being (Lampel and Bhalla, 2007:437).

Integrating the concept of self-status seeking behaviour among students, there must be an detailed explanation of self-presentation online as it has been identified by scholars to be a purposeful engagement of social media to achieve social advantage (Ball *et al.*, 2001; Lampel and Bhalla, 2007; Hodkinson, 2007; Lewis and West, 2009; Gonzales and Hancock, 2010; Cover, 2012; Edwards, 2017). This is relevant to this study because it further explains the intricacies of self-status seeking behaviour among students.

**Self-presentation** is the practice and showcasing one's perception towards life and other people which serves as a major pointer to the inception and development of relationships (Leary 1995:2). Self-presentation is a desired image portrayed on social media platforms for increased acceptance by other network users to gain social interactions or acceptance. Self-presentations shaped on social media platforms are developed to reveal their activities offline and online (Chambers, 2013:62). For instance, in a study on Twitter use, carried out by Alison Hearn (2008), it was discovered that twitter was used by people to construct a detailed and comprehensive image of self, which users are expected to maintain such status-quo for their online identity. Similarly, Tufekci (2008) agreed that Facebook can be used as an active form for impression management by its users that are categorically involved in construction of social self with the use of Facebook, individuals are provided with the privilege to display content information which includes post, family background, education, and images of themselves to obtain feedback.

Facebook is the most popular platform used by individuals, especially university students for online self-presentation (Baym, 2015:108). Different social media platforms allow self-presentation and impression management (Junco, 2014:114). For example, Facebook allows its users the opportunity of uploading short minute videos, with the voice tones (content) included. This gives its users opportunity to showcase their desired possessions or qualities, as social affordance that attracts comments and opinions of others, which in turn gives room for social interactions, and the poster deriving the feeling of social acceptance. The impression

originally created by such user is already accepted to be their way of life, therefore in cases where these showcased attributes are false, the user must continue to live up to that standard already created. However, Junco (2014) argues that while the process of self-presentation corresponds to online happenstances, individuals do not present habits that they find distasteful, rude or embarrassing on Facebook.

Self-presentation on Facebook by students was used to review profiles and explore the personality and sense of self that was already formed online. Samuel Gosling, Sam Gaddis and Simine Vazire (2007) discovered that students tend to express a certain type of presentation that was understood as being emotionally stable and open to new experiences. Similarly, Baym (2015:109) stated that students were aware of the efforts made to self-present themselves online and they had to put in a conscious effort to create good impressions to others. Hence, there is a synergy between self-presentation and image presented to other persons. This is a further agreement between the behaviours expressed online and in real life. Furthermore, in an exploration of self and Facebook presentation, Nicole Ellison, Rebecca Heino and Jennifer Gibbs (2006:416) reported that Facebook users maintain their already self-presented images by adjusting and uploading pictures, while capturing with notes and tagging friends, joining groups. In addition, people could edit the posts they put on Facebook to avoid negative comments (Tufekci 2008).

Facebook provides a means of making these contributions of self-presentation and motivation among students, it is an avenue for students to establish a different kind of relationship or network to make their opinion known and to develop a sense of independence. Facebook use has given students sense of belonging to a greater society (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). Masin (2011) added that students integrating into the use of Facebook help them to gain better understanding of how they fit into a larger whole, being independent of their parents and making informed decisions on their own, without consulting their parents and respected authority. Junco (2014) posited that since students become independent and surround themselves with their peers, many of these students use social media platforms to form and join peer groups. However, some peers or groups joined are most likely to be more significant than others. Students who join these groups tend to be friends or join to be associated with a larger whole. The peer group joined goes a long way in achieving their goals or help them identify themselves as part of a larger whole, thereby shaping their minds towards how they perceive themselves and how others see them.

The idea of self-status seeking behaviour among students is based on the psychological effects on their selected self-presentation (Edwards 2017:32). Amy Gonzales and Jeffery Hancock (2010:3) asserted that the use of Facebook among students is premeditated to empower users to present themselves as socially acceptable to their friends. Users of Facebook purposefully engage in self-presentation to achieve a desired status within their social network of friends. Edwards (2017:32) posits that students who engage in self-presentation have tendencies to embrace their already 'self-presented self' and they continue to live within the already created space. However, Edwards (2017) noted that students who might have presented a fake 'self' will continue to promote the false living, to maintain the standard already displayed on Facebook. This is supported by the discussion of Robb (2014) who described active Facebook users as narcissistic individuals who try to "construct and maintain a carefully desired self-image".

Similarly, Dainius Runkevicius (2014) affirmed that Facebook users only engage in Facebook use for presentation of desired self and display of expensive purchased goods to show affluence and personal achievements. However, Runkevicius (2014) regarded such persons as "socially-disruptive individuals". This is denoted as identity formation and expression and has a strong relation to the users' perception of engaging in Facebook for self-status seeking behaviour (Gonzales and Hancock, 2010:5).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This review of existing literature revealed that Facebook is a major social media platform that has cut through various aspects of life of every individual, especially to maintain existing relationships. This chapter discussed motivation for Facebook use, gratifications obtained for using Facebook, in particular reference in discussing how students engage in using Facebook for social relations, exploring the information seeking behaviour of students, the entertainment purpose of Facebook, not leaving out how Facebook is used in the self-status seeking behaviour among students and academic performance among other important effects of Facebook use, particularly among students. The reviewed literature of this study shall be used in conjunction with theory to discuss the themes for the discussion of research findings. The forthcoming chapter presents the theoretical framework for this study, the chapter discusses the theory which is the foundation of this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the existing literature on Facebook use among students, its motivation for use and subsequent explanation on how Facebook relates to the constructs of the Uses and Gratification theory (UGT). The reviewed literature revealed that Facebook, like television has many uses such as social interaction, providing information, encourages self-status seeking behaviour and entertainment. This chapter is outlined into sections that discuss the theoretical framework of the dissertation, which is the UGT (Kutz, Blumberg and Gurevitch, 1974). This will be discussed in detail, beginning with a brief history of the theory, how other studies have applied the uses and gratification theory, followed by a comprehensive explanation of the theory and an overview of some of the main criticisms made against the theory.

The UGT will be used as the theoretical explanation of this study based on the contributions it makes in understanding the motives and gratifications of a media selection. The UGT is expected to balance this study by providing insights necessary to attain the aim of the study. The relevance and appropriateness of this theory will then be outlined in the context of both UGT and new media and more specifically for this project, how students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal use Facebook.

#### **3.1 Brief History of Uses and Gratification Theory**

This section traces in detail the development of the uses and gratification theory. The uses and gratification theory has its foundation in communication research which is best explained in stages, stage one – Herzog (1941) first posited the idea of individuals who are regular listeners of radio programmes, it was discovered that radio audience are not inactive listeners of the messages, rather they engage in using radio to fulfil gratification by selecting radio programs which fulfil their needs. Herzog (1941) classified three different listening patterns and the satisfaction derived, listed as; listening to gather information, listening as a form engaging their thoughts and listening as a means for to satisfy emotions. With these findings of Herzogs gratification in place, Katz (1960) expanded on the Herzogs findings and noted that studies

should move from 'what media does to people, to what media does for people' (Katz, 1960:686).

Stage two - The UGT was best explained in a study of McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972), which explained that media audience have a choice to adopt any media, further studies by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) introduced the four significant factors of any media to include; (1) Diversion (emotional satisfaction, stress reliever), (2) Personal relationship (building companionship), (3) Personal identity (exploration of self and self-understanding), (4) Surveillance (getting information about environment). Identifying these four factors indicates that users actively select a media to obtain gratification.

The UGT arose from the functionalist perspective of the mass media to rightfully present the audience of a media as active rather than being a passive audience (Klapper, 1963). This theory dates back to studies from 1940s which were conducted on the effect of radio programmes among other traditional media on audience (Eighmey and McCord, 1998). The research of the 1940s started out trying to understand various motives and media selection among audiences of mass media. For example, Cantril and Allport (1935) examined the effect of media on the radio audience. Waples, Berelson and Bradshaw (1940) examined the effect of the newspaper on reading audiences, while Herzog (1944) study built on the gratifications obtained from the audience of radio and quiz programs. Lazarfield and Stanton (1949) engaged in studying the role of different media genre on its active audience. These studies were conducted to understand better ways to communicate and the consequences of such messages on the audience.

The UGT is a notional foundation for the study of multiple media platforms, this theory explores the importance of audience in a media component, in order to gratify their social and psychological needs (Lueng and Wei, 2000). The overall perspective of the UGT research is centred on understanding the motives and gratification for media consumption. However, Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) discussed the fundamental development that further explains the UGT in another light, Katz et al (1973) outlined another component of UGT as; gratification sought and gratification obtained. Explaining gratification sought as 'understanding the principle that distinguish the expectations about a media content and gratification obtained as the satisfaction derived from consuming the media content' (Katz et al., 1973:25). Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) explained that active audience are goal oriented, therefore they specifically seek out a media to satisfy their needs. Kim (2014) asserts that the difference between these components lies in the relationship between audience needs and choice of media.

However, an individual's choice of media determines the kind of gratification they seek, while the satisfaction derived from the consumption of that media refers to the gratification obtained.

### **3.2 Forms of Gratification**

The original use of UGT is based on the interest of a precise form of media, which met the mental and societal needs of its audience (Cantril, 1942). Satisfaction derived from the use of any media is categorised as fulfilling the request for information, leisure, entertainment, understanding socio-cultural norms and getting familiar with a common topic (Kim, 2014:9). Hence, Ruggiero (2000) presented the content gratification that exist with media use: Content Gratification which is obtained through the substance of the media being consumed (television content, News, game shows etc.). To achieve content gratification, there must be a continuous consumption of that particular media site, the regular use of a media (content of media) amounts to content gratification (Ruggiero, 2000).

The characteristics of theory are majorly the audience and a distinct cord of motivation for media use (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). Nicholas Cummings (2008) explained that the theoretical explanation of the UGT, which explores the motives behind the adoption of any media channel, makes it suitable for analysing and understanding the adoption of social media trends, which is based on internet usage. Furthermore, the use of social media is largely due to and aligns with the gratification obtained by users of the media. Although, Cummings (2008) added that there cannot be an automatic gratification, there must be some type of gratification sought by the user, which means a user actively selects a particular medium to consume in order to be gratified. Ruggiero (2000:4) explained that one of the constructs of UGT involves the primary description and the ability to understand the responses of the users of the media. Similarly, McQuail (2000) agreed that studies on UGT relies primarily on the behaviour and responses of the audience.

### **3.3 The Uses and Gratification Theory of Social Media**

The UGT explains how people use media for their own needs and gratifications. Uses and gratification theory is a viewer's-aligned theory that concentrates on what people do with media, as disparate to what media does to people (Katz *et al.*, 1974: 21). Given the fact that UGT was applied and validated through the context of the traditional media (Gallion, 2014). The abundance of the UGT features proves that it is convenient to study any form of media, in

this case social media, (Hunold, 2014; Gallion, 2014). Earlier propositions from Ruggiero (2000) expressed that the;

The emergence of computer-mediated communication has revived the significance of uses and gratification. In fact, UGT has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communication medium; newspapers, radio, television and now the internet (Ruggiero, 2000:3).

Flowing from the claims of Ruggiero (2000) that the UGT is suitable for studying new media, as the public are growing their media choices, motivation and satisfaction based on audience analyses, other studies Leung and Wei, (2000); Monti *et al.*, (2007); Sheldon, (2008); Quan-Haase and Young, (2010); Valentine, (2011); Gallion, (2014); Oyetunde, (2017) have examined UGT in various dimensions with social media, this proves that UGT stays relevant in exploring social media. The phenomenal use of social media and its popularity in modern time has led researchers to examine the ongoing adoption of social media, which employed the UGT to understand the level of motivation (Lineberry, 2012; Karimi *et al.*, 2014; Basilisco and Cha, 2015; Al-Barashdi, Bouazza and Jabur, 2015).

One of the successful ways to examine the “How and Why” people adopt any type of media is to engage in the UGT, because UGT focuses on understanding the motive for a media selection and how such media gratifies the need of the audience (Quan-Haase and Young, 2011:35). In spite of the revolving nature of the UGT, it has proven to be the best approach to apply for this study. Firstly, UGT has been engaged by researchers to study motivation, gratification derived from media use, which is the aim of this study, Secondly, the use of UGT has been revitalised and revisited in the digital age and the development of social media (Cummings, 2008; Valentine, 2011; Hunold, 2014; Al-Barashdi, *et al.*, 2015). Lastly, studies that undertake a UGT approach are typically exploratory in nature, which is so for this study (Pederson and Ling, 2003).

Previously, UGT has been functional to a diversified nature of mass media content, with audiences been given the choice of media type selection to match the dominant content desire. While, the UGT constructs has been functional in the context of Television and social media, the progression of the Internet and social media has shaped a medium of higher level of interactivity for its users (Ruggiero, 2000).

According to Song *et al.*, (2004) the UGT has no specific difference between the audience of traditional mass media and social media. Countering this assertion, Slot and Frissen (2008) argued that the interactive nature that emerged from web 2.0 where users of social media not only function as the consumer, but simultaneously, function as the creator of media content, sharing and facilitating online communication, all of this makes social media more interactive than the traditional mass media. One of the characteristics of the web 2.0 is its interactive nature, while the core component of UGT is characterised by its level of interactivity and active audience.

The theory is characterized by the active audience, Ruggiero (2000) defined active audience as a goal-directed audience, that specifically engage with the information and media content to suit their personal and social context, thus, they select particular media to fulfil their need. This implies that an active audience or individual chooses a media platform that is suitable to their need of media content (news). The audience needs are determined by information seeking, entertainment, distraction in which the audience expects that it gratifies their social needs (Katz *et al.*, 1974). This forms the theoretical basis for a social media study that utilises the UGT (Basilisco and Cha, 2015).

### **3.4 Application of the Uses and Gratification Theory**

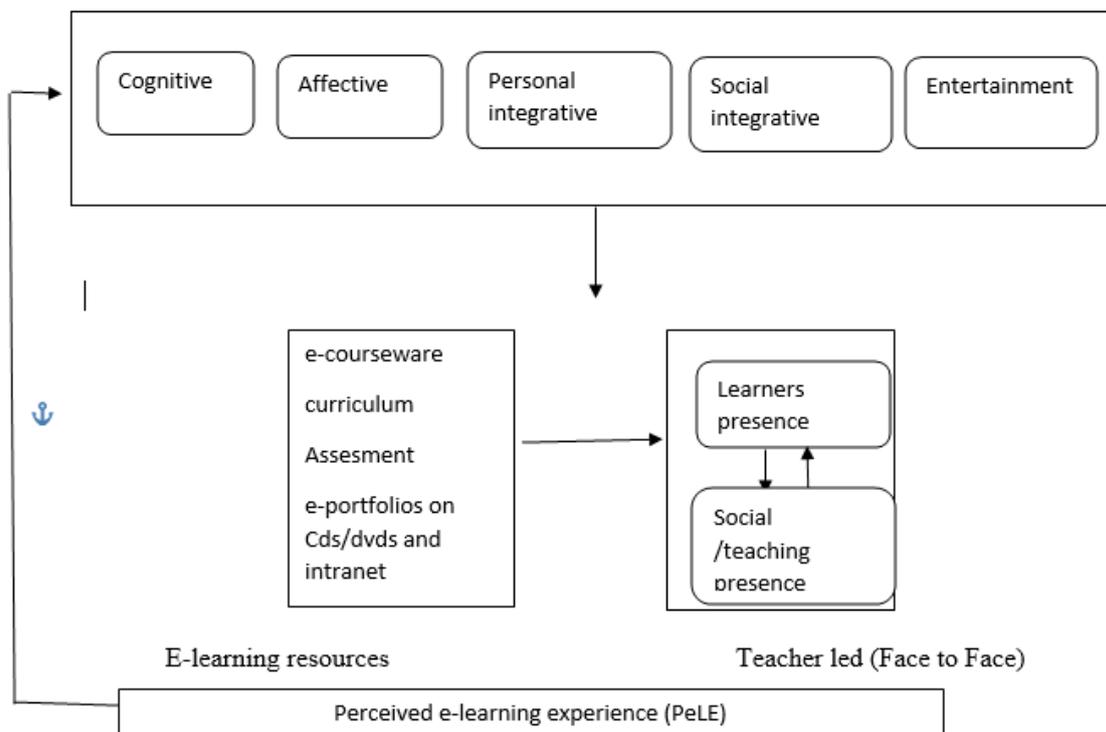
Flowing from the developmental stages of the UGT (section, 3.1), stage three of the UGT is its modern-day application to the social media, given the explanatory and exploring studies to connect media usage and gratifications obtained. Generally, the UGT has been crucial to understand the focus of shifting from traditional media to social media (Hunold, 2014:9). This section discusses how other studies have applied the UGT in relevance to social media.

The application of the UGT has increased the importance of the theoretical and practical understanding of the motives and gratification for media use among audience. The theory lays great emphasis on the motivation for media use. Specifically, since the adoption of internet and social media, it is imperative to examine how students accept the use of social media, particularly Facebook.

To better understand how UGT has been used in relation to Facebook, various studies have applied this theory to social media. Robert LaRose and Mathew Eastin (2004) and Park *et al.* (2009) applied the UGT to their study and they still maintained with no further development that the major gratifications for social media use is evident in the four constructs of the theory,

which includes *socializing, getting information, improving their self-status seeking (identity performance) and entertainment*. Therefore, their study proves that the four constructs of UGT is still valid in the era of social media. In recent years, UGT has been applied to the new context of social media (see Park *et al.*, 2009). In addition, many studies proposed the UGT as a theoretical framework for new media studies (see Flanagin, 2005; LaRose, Mastro and Eastin, 2001; Leung, 2001).

A study that conceptualized the UGT is the study of Mondy, Woods and Rafi (2007), the study integrated that UGT can be utilised for e-learning purposes. Mondy *et al.*, (2007) proposed the Uses and Gratification Expectancy model (UGEM) which explains that e-learning resources are likely to gratify students learning needs, styles, values, motivation and interest. Mondy *et al.*, (2007) conceptual framework of UGEM should be extended into academic learning, this suggested incorporation of the e-learning into school activities will succeed in building a better learning strategy to satisfy students. The conceptual model is explained in figure 3.4



**Figure 3.4 1 UGEM conceptual model**

Adapted from Mondy *et al.*, (2007:439)

Further explaining the UGEM, Mondy *et al.*, (2007) proposed five dimensions of their conceptual framework that was derived from the UGT, which is discussed; Cognitive UGEM-

which connotes that students acquire information, get knowledge and understand critical thinking skills through cognitive engagement of the e-learning resources. Affective UGEM - which entails the emotional contentment and beautiful experiences among students. Personal UGEM - refers to a student's ability to seek credibility. Integrative UGEM - promotes student seeking relationships and engaging in learning within a community. Entertainment UGEM - refers to the students' ability to use e-learning resources to have fun and relax. The main concept of the Mondy *et al.*, (2007) present that students can use any media to gratify their cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and entertainment need, however, these dimensions of the UGEM may improve the e-learning experience of students.

The study of Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) applied the UGT to study the combination of interpersonal communication, within media, the measures, the satisfaction derived from internet usage, the study maintained that the strongest motivation and gratification for using the internet is to get entertained and to seek information. Similarly, the study of Lineberry (2012) applied the UGT to understand social networking sites and how it applies to the three types of social capital among students, the study established gratification for social media use was to get information, entertainment and improve social interaction. In addition, Stafford *et al.*, (2004) and Stafford and Goiner (2004) applied the UGT in the study of internet users and confirmed that there are specific motivations for intense users, which gives an established gratification, which includes socialization, information seeking and entertainment.

Haridakis and Hanson (2009) applied the UGT in understanding the level of entertainment on the use of YouTube and discovered that YouTube fulfils entertainment needs and information seeking behaviour particularly among young males. However, Haridakis and Hanson (2009) added that the new characteristics of the theory is that it allows information seeking, entertainment, social interaction on a single platform. For example, a user can derive gratification from using Facebook in terms of socializing, information seeking, entertainment and equal gratification can be obtained using YouTube.

Some studies Papacharissi and Rubin (2000); Charney and Greenberg (2001); Stafford and Goiner (2004); Joinson (2008); Quan-Haase and Young, (2010); Hunold (2014), have also applied the theory in understanding the gratification for using social media as against the traditional media of T.V, radio and newspaper, there are similarities in the result of these studies, the factors that predominantly occurred on the gratification of social media use includes; entertainment, interpersonal communication that promotes social interaction, getting enough information, passing time and learning about diversified cultural values and norms.

Flanagin and Metzger (2001) applied UGT in a study that compared the unique gratification of Face-to-Face interaction, an internet based media (social media) and traditional media, the study established that social media ranked the highest in gratifying its audience because of its nature of relationship maintenance, social interaction, social bonding and also being able to solve problems of the audience (unlimited access to getting information).

Studies discussed above have applied this theory and the general conclusion is that “Gratification sought by audience is the actual motivation for the adoption of any communication medium” (Al-Barashdi *et al.*, 2015:215). Further discussion on the UGT theory and its application by different studies; these studies maintained that the use of social media is proof that there are unique gratifications associated with different social media platforms as against the traditional mass media (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010).

### **3.5 Gratification of Facebook Use for Students**

This study examines the four constructs of the UGT among the undergraduate students of UKZN. This theory will be illustrated in a diagram below (Figure 3.5), which gives a better understanding of the theory, the graphed diagram has been provided for better understanding of the theory and the constructs are explained below;

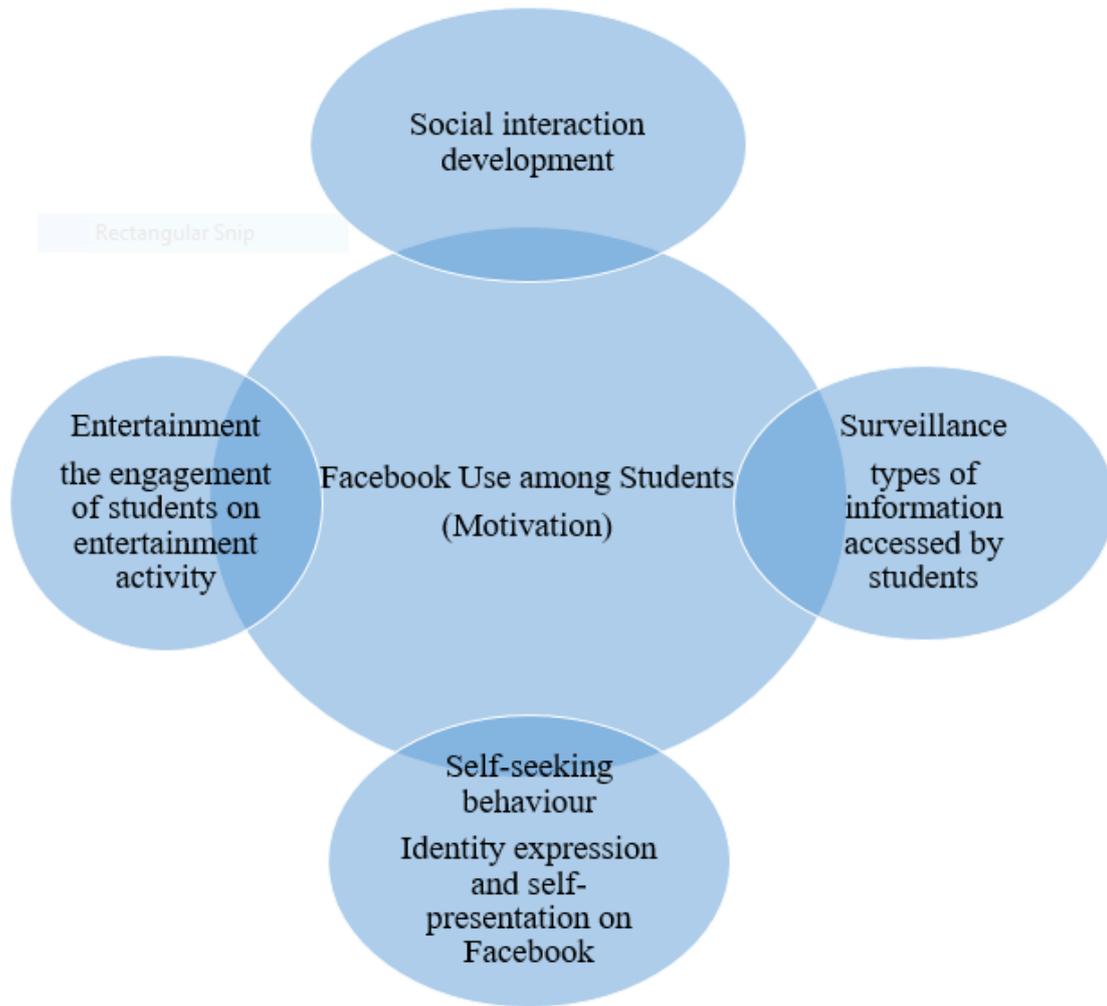


Figure 3.5 Analysed tenants of the uses and gratification theory and how it applies to Facebook use

Source: Own.

From the above diagram, this study seeks to examine the major constructs of the theory, namely; *socializing, information surveillance, self-status seeking (identity performance) and entertainment* among undergraduate students.

**3.5.1 Social Interaction development:** this is one of the major constructs of the UGT. It is considered as the most important element of the theory towards social media use, (Gallion, 2010:3), Likewise the traditional media use (Katz *et al.*, 1974). Users of the various social media platforms use such platforms to gratify their social needs. Gallion (2010) claimed that users who engage in social media used do so to satisfy necessities such as meeting new people, sustaining their offline relationship and developing a sense of involvement to a larger group of people in the online environment.

Having examined the social interaction factor from the perspective of the UGT, this study explains the relationship building and how undergraduate students use Facebook to build social relationships. It will be interesting to prove how this theory stays relevant in understanding media function and gratification obtained as in this case, socializing. The major factor that relates to the theory is that Facebook provides a means of socializing among students and there is a level of gratification obtained by maintaining social relationships with online friends and offline friends (Ellison *et al.*, 2007:22).

**3.5.2 Surveillance:** one of the gratifications of using Facebook is the ability to access information (Gallion, 2010:5). Facebook users seek information about political and civic issues, as well as campus activities among students (Park *et al.*, 2009). Gallion (2010) identified blogging as one of the new ways to access information, which has proven to be more accessible to users than traditional media of T.V or radio. Thus, this study hopes to explore the types of information undergraduate student's access via Facebook. Particularly, to ascertain if using Facebook for information surveillance is instrumental or ritualised as conversed earlier in the literature review of this study. Information seeking on Facebook was more of entertainment information, however, the information aspect of using Facebook, might be one of its reasons for adopting the use of Facebook by students (Ancu and Cozma, 2009:570).

**3.5.3 Self-Status Seeking:** People engage in media use to soothe their status, to increase credibility and stabilize their identity standards through their use of Facebook, which are keenly hunted by other users of this sites (Park *et al.*, 2009). Park *et al.* (2009:731) discovered that people use Facebook in order to present themselves as “cool” (impression management) or to improve social status. It is imperative to understand the motive behind the use of Facebook for self-presentation as the traditional Media (Radio, T.V) did not provide room for self-presentation.

It can be expected that a “public self” is being presented principally for an individual's special social group, the prominent use of Facebook encourages users to communicate the features of their offline selves (Green, 2008:7). However, Facebook is regarded as a social media platform that is centred on the users' profile and how they present themselves to others, Facebook users are also regularly followed by an array of friends, Tufekci (2008:586). In these ways, social media platforms are considered a social space created to display real life identities which does not mean that it is impossible to invent an online identity which may not be true (Donath and Boyd, 2004).

Having examined the self-seeking behaviour from the perspective of studies mentioned above, this study will explore the how undergraduate students use Facebook to self-present themselves. Particularly, their perception towards using Facebook for impression management.

**3.5.4 Entertainment:** often people use Facebook as a means to escape from stress, relax, relieve from pressure (Joinson, 2008). For instance, some people tend to relax watching television, listening to the radio, watching films, or surfing the internet which might satisfy their need for entertainment. However, this is subject to what an individual, finds entertaining.

Gallion (2010) considered entertainment as an element that improves media consumption. Park *et al.*, (2009:731) identified entertainment as a major gratification of social media platforms as it pertains to satisfying their leisure and amusement needs. Having examined the entertainment factor from the perspective of Katz *et al.*, (1974), this study hopes to explore the aspect of entertainment in Facebook from how users tend to get themselves entertained through their interactions with other users. Particularly, comedy skits and memes have become popular over time, it will be interesting to prove how this theory can be used to analyse such and other forms of entertainment on Facebook.

### **3.6 Limitations and Critiques of the UGT**

The UGT gained advantage by providing the approach to study the motives for a particular media consumption, which complements the data findings presented in the analysis chapter of this study.

But at the same time, there are several critiques associated with this theory, which curtails the theory in a specific manner. The limitation of the study is based on the idea that audience are always conscious of their needs and seek out a media to satisfy such needs. However, Tanta *et al.*, (2014) claimed that it is rather uncertain that every individual is consciously aware of their social need and can accurately articulate such need at a time. Rosenstein and Grant (1997:30) argued that one of the major weaknesses of the theory is associated with self-reporting and researchers not critically examining the behaviour of audience and their experiences. Similarly, the theory reports to be a self-centred approach to study communication as it strongly relies on the self-report of media users (Ruggeiro, 2000). The study of O'Donohoe (1994) presented a critique on the validity of self-report on UGT, she argued that audience answering research questionnaires or open-ended questionnaires are unassuming, particularly in the light of discussing motivation. O'Donohoe (1994) suggested that to ensure validity on the self-report of audience on motivation studies, researchers should underpin interviews. Which this study

identified, discussing the motives for adopting Facebook among students was done through Focus group discussions as it encourages extensive discussion among participant and researcher.

Ruggeiro (2000:5) discoursed that early studies of the theory focused on individualistic gratification, which makes it difficult to see beyond the audience studied, which does not consider societal implications. Robert White (1994) pointed out that the frameworks of the UGT allowed people to select the media component they desire, and the means of clarification is only focused on such individualistic opinions. White (1994:7) further discussed that as opposed to the traditional media, where there is freedom of selection, it was more dependent on the availability of the media content (credibility of the media) that an individual's point of view about media platform subsequently following the introduction of the internet.

Ruggeiro (2000:7) pointed out five critiques of the theory and how it applies to previous entities. Firstly, the theory focused mainly on the audience use of a media, which renders a "one man" philosophy about a particular media. The theory failed to embrace a communal reason for media consumption. Secondly, studies from the UGT perspectives are secluded and motives are categorically generalised because of findings from research. Thirdly, entities such as motives, needs, behaviour are still in need of perfect explanation. Fourth, there proves to be an inadequate scholarly explanation on the central element of the theory; "motives, gratification", there is a lack of shared definition. Lastly, the theory's perspective assumes, findings conveyed from the research are usually from an active audience that has been existing in the pre-assumptions of the researcher.

Rosenstein and Grant (1997) argued that UGT has failed in trying to generate relationship between the program content of a media to its audience satisfaction and reasons for program selection; this is to say that, there must be a level of relationship between program content and reasons for program selection by the audience, which the theory has failed to examine. They further stated that self-report is greatly influenced by audience understanding and the theory failed to put into consideration observed behaviour of its audience.

Building on the imperfections of the UGT, Ruggeiro (2000:12) argued that a re-approach should be taken under the UGT studies, which will provide a refined theoretical explanation and furnish a benchmark for other studies in the context of motives for media use, particularly, when dealing with human personality. Discussing further, Ruggeiro (2000) affirmed that individuals' understanding of media is being misjudged for the actual behaviour of audience

towards a media platform. However, Ruggiero (2000:26) opined that through the critical research of the theory, there is an observation that the audience perception of media content is totally different from users intended meanings of media content.

### **3.7 Relevance of the Uses and Gratification Theory for this Study**

The UGT has been a theory of communication that examines why and how people engage media. Although, UGT was originally used to explore the traditional media, (Katz *et al.*, 1973). It has begun to gain prevalence in the era of social media.

According to Ruggiero (2000), the rise of the internet has come with changing the roles of the traditional media, this transition to the new media comes with new changes in audiences personal and social habits, this change promotes the re-introduction of the UGT into the social media studies. Stafford *et al.*, (2004) buttressed the assertions of Ruggiero (2000) that new media have re-launched studies to engage in the use of UGT and also suggested that students are primary adopters of the social media. Li (2005) expressed that there is a difference between people, the people who use the traditional media (Radio, newspaper and T.V) to people who have adopted the use of social media, to consume basic media content. Arguing further, Li (2005) buttressed that social media gives opportunity to audience to actively seek information and messages that befits their interest. Kim (2014) states that UGT proves to still stay relevant in exploring the new media by applying it to the two-way communication enabled by the use of social media. Further exploring the study of Ruggiero (2000:7), he pointed out three factors that distinguish the social media from the traditional media, which include;

- 1) Social media creates interactivity among its users,
- 2) There is demassification of social media use; the use of social media cannot be controlled,
- 3) Social media is recent in time.

The UGT is considered fit for this study because it permits investigative studies in the media and communication channels that meets with the psychological needs, motives and gratification of a media channel through its content (Lin, 1996). Therefore, UGT is an ideal to identify and discuss the motive for Facebook use among students, (Whitting and William, 2013; Kim, 2014). The well-established framework of UGT provides insights into the new media and found a way to reform the theory into providing explanation for its social benefits of entertainment, information and what motivates individuals to join social media and the gratification obtained from its ongoing use. The continuous engagement of the UGT suggests

that it has remained relevant in media and communication studies (Ruggiero, 2000). The development of the theoretical foundation of this study is due to its exploratory nature. It will help this study identify innovations or alternatively study the motivation and possible gratification obtained using Facebook among undergraduate students of UKZN.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the Uses and Gratification theory, brief history, its relevance to social media studies and how other studies have applied the theory to their research. This chapter discussed in extensive view how UGT is now being integrated into social media studies particularly how it relates to Facebook use. The chapter was able to discuss theory in application and relevance to Facebook, the limitation and critiques associated with the UGT. The next chapter discusses the research methodology this study employed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter of this study outlined the theoretical framework of UGT for this study, the theory relates to the motivation of Facebook use among students. This chapter presents the underpinning research approach for this study, starting with the exploratory research design. The chapter discusses in detail the research methods which is the qualitative research method, a brief explanation of the study area, a description of the target population, the non-random sampling procedures and recruitment strategy for participants. The underpinning of this study was focus group discussion as the data collecting strategy. This chapter also presents a brief discussion of thematic analysis and the themes that emerged in data collection for the study.

#### **4.1 Research Design**

Research design is described as the general plan behind a study that provides an overall framework of the study, which can include study location, selecting research subjects, data collection and providing answers to research questions (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001:166). Sarah Lewis (2015:474) explained that research design is the outline of carrying out a study, which describes in detail, how, when and where a research is conducted and analysed; it is the strategy taken to execute a research.

This study employed an exploratory research design. Exploratory research design is used to explore studies that are considered new areas to be investigated, which has little knowledge about an area of research interest (Polit 2001:19). It investigates and unravels the nature of a new phenomenon and situations related to it. In this study, the exploratory research design is considered appropriate because the research objective is to gain insights and create new knowledge on what motivates students to adopt Facebook, the gratification obtained from using Facebook and in particular to explore the constructs of the UGT of Facebook use among undergraduate students of the UKZN.

#### **4.2 Research Method**

Research methodology is explained as the study of methods through which data is gained and aims to give a study a work plan. Research methodology influences the choice of study design and data collection strategy adopted in a research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:14). The research

methodology is the method a researcher undertakes in carrying out a research project. Kreuger and Neuman (2006:150) state that methodology is a methodical way to provide solutions to research problems; it is the science of studying how a research project is to be carried out. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:14) further state that research methodology is the processes researchers go about their study of unfolding, clarifying and envisaging a phenomenon.

Kreuger and Neuman (2006:150) explain that there are three different approaches that can be adopted in conducting research: the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach. The qualitative approach is used to qualify written, transcribed data, the quantitative approach is used to quantify numerical data, and mixed methods is used to combine both numerical and textual data analysis. The qualitative research method is suitable for this study because it proves appropriate to study unquantifiable data expressions such as motivation, perceptions, behaviour of a research phenomenon (Stebbins, 2001). With the aim of this study, it is best to undertake a qualitative method as it allows extensive discussion with research participants on the research questions and objectives, which is best expressed under qualitative research method.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research Method**

Qualitative research is characterised as understanding some aspects of social life, and its methods, which (in general) generate words rather than numbers as data (Patton and Cochran, 2002:45). Qualitative research studies that deal with real world situations to generate narrative descriptions and entails descriptive and analytical explanation of a concept (Alzahrani and Bach, 2014). Qualitative research uses a realistic method to understand a phenomenon in its natural state (real life settings), where the researcher assumes a subjective position towards the findings from the study (Patton and Cochran, 2002: 39). Qualitative research is used when human variables such as beliefs, motivations, emotions, perceptions are extensively discussed, which cannot be analysed quantitatively.

To meet the objectives of this study, a qualitative research method was used. This study applies the qualitative method because it is appropriate for small sample studies that cannot be quantified or analysed numerically (Alzahrani and Bach, 2014). Another reason for adopting the qualitative method is that it provides the researcher the opportunity to produce a complete and accurate description of a research topic or interest, which does not cut the contribution or limit the responses of its participants. In addition, this study employed the qualitative method because it gives an in-depth meaning to the study.

Therefore, qualitative research method gives room for exploration and understanding a fundamental social problem (Cresswell, 2014). For this study, the qualitative method allowed me to explore and understand the participants' motives and gratifications for using Facebook. Similarly, for clear research findings, the issues related to motivation, gratification and perception cannot be quantified, rather seeking opinions, conducting research, asking questions through interviews, and in this case, focus group discussions, review of societal perception and acceptance of a phenomenon is vital in gaining knowledge. Therefore, qualitative research method was appropriate to understand the motivations for use of Facebook among undergraduate students of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The benefits of qualitative research method is that they allow the researcher to study the broad and selected issues of the research (Quinn and Keough, 2002), as it assists in identifying the relationship and the kind of information that emerges from the data gathering. Qualitative research answers the questions of 'What, Why or How' of a social phenomenon rather than numerical statistics, which are questions answered by quantitative methods, (Stebbins, 2001:19).

This selected methodology will benefit this study, in the following ways;

It will provide a better understanding in which people look at the concept of the Uses and Gratification of using Facebook, particularly, examining the concepts of motivations and gratifications. This is mainly because individuals are exposed to different activities on Facebook, which often give them the experiences to explain the motivation for use of Facebook and its effect on their personal lives, especially towards the four constructs of the UGT, which are socialising, information, entertainment, and self-status seeking behaviour.

This study gives a natural setting of student environment, with the focus group discussion being held in the University settings, (Howard Campus) among undergraduate students identified as the research focus of this study. Furthermore, Creswell, (2014) described the flexibility of qualitative research as an added advantage, because data gathered is at the most convenient time for study participants, especially as the study engaged in focus group discussions.

#### **4.4 Location of the Study**

The location of the study is the Howard college campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The campus is situated in the coastal city of Durban, in KwaZulu-Natal, close to the city centre

of Durban. The Howard college campus accommodates students within the colleges of Social science, Engineering, Law and Applied Human sciences.

The institution is relevant to the objectives of the study, most importantly, the choice of the study location cannot be disconnected from the fact that it provided easy access to participants. Part of the reason this study adopted purposive sampling was due to limited time and funds. Since the study is particularly interested in undergraduate students, there is a likely possibility that students, especially undergraduates from UKZN (Howard Campus) might share a common opinion as students from surrounding institutions and various campuses, as the phenomenon of Facebook usage among students is common, irrespective of their location.

#### **4.5 Target Population**

Target population is the totality of members or objects that specifically meet a particular criterion for research procedures (Alvi, 2016:10). It means the totality of participants from which actual samples were drawn to participate in a study, since it is not feasible to include the whole population in a research investigation. Target population is the precise group that the researcher choose to study. Ritchie *et al.*, (2013) identified target populations as the accessible population.

Hence, the target population for this study are Facebook users, who are undergraduate students at the Howard college campus, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). The available population for this study are students of Howard College Campus at University of KwaZulu-Natal. From experimental evidences, the number of active users of Facebook seems substantial, as most of the students in universities are social media users (Bosch, 2009). Specifically, they use different social media platforms for various purposes.

#### **4.6 Sampling Strategies**

It is usually dreadful to include the entire population in a study because there may be a major restriction with time and cost. Research, usually deals with large populations of instruments; hence, there must be a selection of a sample from the large population. Kobus Maree (2007:172) explains that there are two types of sampling: the probability and non-probability sampling methods. Probability methods are grounded on the belief of randomness and probability theory, while non-probability methods are based on the judgement of the researcher. This study adopts the non-probability random sampling technique because not all

the population can be included in the study, there must be a selection of participants and this was carried out by non-random sampling techniques.

Maree (2007:175) defined non-random sampling as a method where the objects of a particular population have little opportunity of being selected, to be part of the sampled population or when the chances of being selected cannot be accurately determined. This study adopts the technique of non-probability sampling, this technique is often referred to as judgmental sampling because the selection of participants is by the choice of the researcher. Non-probability technique proves to be the most suitable technique because of its characteristics of saving time and money, and its rules are easier to implement to a study (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted the purposive sampling technique, which is a type of non-probability sampling.

#### **4.7 Purposive Sampling**

This is a sampling technique that is used in gathering data for a qualitative research, it is characterised by easy identification and opportunity to select the rich cases of information in a data set for research purpose (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling involves selecting or identifying a subgroup of individuals or objects that are knowledgeable about a phenomenon (research) to participate in the study (Creswell and Clark, 2007). In addition to knowledge and experience, purposive sampling offers an objective of providing a sample that can be considered as a representation of the population, particularly on the important characteristics of the population being studied. Purposive sampling is appropriate for this study because of the nature of the study and target population. It would not be feasible for this study to involve the entire undergraduate student body of UKZN, therefore, this study purposefully selected 24 active users of Facebook.

##### **4.7.1 Recruitment Strategy**

These participants were selected through a post advertised on the student central notice board in the undergraduate student residence for willingness to participate in a focus group discussion. However, only participants who met the criteria of the research focus were selected i.e. students who were undergraduates, active Facebook users and within the ages of 18-24, this age bracket was selected by the researcher because undergraduate students found on campus are usually within the age of 17 years and above. However, the focus of the study was on undergraduate student and as such age was not a primary issue in the preliminary phase of

the research. Notwithstanding, for ethical reasons the age 18-24 was considered appropriate for the study sample.

#### **4.8 Sample Size**

Sample size is a sub-group of an entire population, sample size must be representative of the entire population, in the sense that each sample unit must characterise the known number of the population (Maree, 2007:172). Having stated this, it is not feasible to include the entire population for this study, due to the constraint of time and funds. Therefore, a number of 24 participants were selected from the undergraduates. This study selected 24 participants due to the fact that qualitative research such as this is usually focused on the selection of a small number of people who are crucial to the usefulness of data collection (Gogtay, 2010:518). These 24 participants chosen to participate in this study were undergraduates who reflect heavy usage of Facebook and are between the ages of 18-24 years of age.

#### **4.9 Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection is the systematic way of obtaining information from a selected population for a scientific research, (Abawi, 2013). Data collection allows us to obtain information we require from the study objects (population). There are several approaches of collecting data which include: reviews of documents, observing, in-depth interviews/questioning, (Abawi, 2013) and focus group discussions.

##### **4.9.1 Focus Group Discussion**

This study adopted focus group discussions. Alvi (2016:20) defined focus group discussion as a category of in-depth interview accomplished by a particular set of groups that represent same characteristics with defined proposal size, composition and interview procedures. The subject of analysis is the interaction within the group. This group discussion influences the participants' thoughts through their answers to the ideas and contribution during the discussion. Stebbins (2001:57) similarly added that the fundamental data gathered from these discussions are produced by translations and used as a reflection for the study.

A structured focus group discussion was conducted to elicit qualitative response from participants by the researcher. The focus group discussion was tailored towards understanding the view of participants on the motivation of Facebook use; their use of Facebook for social interaction, information surveillance, self-status seeking behaviour and entertainment activity,

while looking at the pros and cons of Facebook use among students. This study engaged in three focus groups that consisted of undergraduate students within the ages of 18-24 years who were used in gathering data for this study. This study used three sections of focus group discussions in order to engage in proper dialogue. The focus groups needed to be in segments, to allow enough time and space for discussions. There were eight participants in each discussion group, because the researcher intended to elicit proper responses from participants, and to achieve this it was imperative that focus group discussions were not crowded to avoid participants talking over each other (Stebbins 2001:59). Eight participants in three focus group discussion section totals 24 participants for this study, these eight participants were from diverse levels in their academic year. A list of uniformed questions (see appendix B) were used to gain responses from the participants, the focus group discussions were structured to encapsulate the research questions and elicit responses from participants on; what motivated you to join Facebook? How do students use Facebook for social relations? How do you use Facebook for information surveillance? How do you use Facebook for self-status seeking behaviour? How have you used Facebook for entertainment activity? The focus group discussion was conducted in the media room at the Centre for Culture Media and Society (CCMS), University of KwaZulu Natal. This room was spacious enough to accommodate participants and the researcher.

This did not, however, limit the extent of questions asked as there were needs to gain more insight in specific instances during the discussions. The collection strategy was audio taped after seeking the consent of participants for this purpose (see appendix C). The duration of the discussions was between 30 mins-45 mins for each group, this was because the discussions became more active and each participant had to contribute extensively to the discussions. A major justification for the adoption of the focus group was to understand in depth, the motivation and gratification of Facebook usage among students through the perspective of the UGT. Notes and text during the focus group discussions were also proofread and transcribed. This was to ensure that there was no piece of information lost.

Once the focus group discussions were complete, transcription of data ensued, followed by marking and coding the responses; the data was transcribed into written documents, which also made the researcher familiar with responses from the data. Whilst, this is an interpretative act which is a major feature of the thematic analysis, (Ibrahim, 2012:39) it created meaning for the data collected. Transcriptions were verbatim accounts of the focus group discussions to

minimize any alteration of meaning. This effected an initial list of ideas contained in the data and what was interesting about it.

#### **4.10 Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that is used to analyse, classify and present patterns that relate to the data (Ibrahim, 2012). It is an illustrative method that gives great detail to diverse subjects via interpretations (Boyatzis 1998). Patton and Cochran (2002) describe thematic analysis as a method in which the researcher expresses all data gathered in the study in order to identify common issues that re-occur in the responses from the participants of the study and then summarised according to themes.

Thematic analysis provides an in-depth understanding to prospective research idea to understand the potentials of research problem (Marks and Yardley, 2004). The use of thematic analysis provided the research with a possible link to compare various ideas and opinions of the research and to compare these ideas with previous data that had been gathered by different studies and situations in the literature and theoretical chapter of this study.

Qualitative research draws interpretation from the data collected; thematic analysis has the quality of being able to achieve distinct data set and its ability to identify variables that influence issues discussed by the research participants, therefore, the participation and interpretations are important in order to provide meaningful explanations for the behaviour, perception, and actions of the participants (Ibrahim 2012). Thematic analysis proves to be able to understand complex data, because of its level of efficacy in producing rich and detailed data interpretation which gives the entire research a thematic description of the data collected and would give the reader a sense of important themes from the data. Thematic analysis process, analyses data without engaging existing themes, this proves that for every data set, themes and codes are created for clarification. Thus, every statement or idea of the participants contribute towards understanding the issues, that gives meaning to the whole research.

Victoria Clarke and Virginia Braun (2013) present six stages of the thematic analysis, which this study adopted;

1. **Familiarisation with data:** This is the initial stage where the researcher absorbs the data gathered, this absorbing of data is achieved through listening to the audio-recording, reading and re-reading the data gathered, this is to help them develop a sense of familiarity with the data (Clarke and Braun, 2013: 120).

2. **Coding:** This is the stage where the researcher illustrates data by the use of labels, which is essential from the data set. It is significant to note that at this stage, the researcher is looking for particular characteristics (from the data set) that will answer the research question, and also take into consideration both semantic and conceptual reading of data (Clarke and Braun, 2013:120)
3. **Search for themes:** A theme gives a summary of something that deals with critical importance through a patterned response approach, and through the themes, there must be reactions to the research questions (Clarke and Braun, 2013:121). The researcher at this point actively searches for codes that can be identified with the similarity of the collected data and constructed themes. At this stage, the researcher must understand the themes and be conversant with the themes, this is done in order to avoid mix up of themes.
4. **Revisiting themes:** this stage the researcher begins to revisit the themes originally searched for, thereby selecting a theme that will work for a full data set. During this phase, some themes are likely to be expanded while some will be reduced to suit the data set. (Clarke and Braun, 2013:121).
5. **Defining and naming themes:** at this point the researcher already developed themes that is preferred and understood by the researcher. These theme(s) are named according to the preference of the researcher. In addition, this stage gives room for a detailed analysis of each theme that has been identified, which therefore, proceeds to be written, and provides the researcher's ability to understand the story that each theme tells and makes a relationship among the overall data collected (Clarke and Braun, 2013:121).
6. **Writing Up:** This is the final stage of data analysis, as stated by Clarke and Braun (2013:121). This is the important part of the whole research, which means that this is the point where the data gathered is being expressed in textual form, and it means that the researcher puts data set into a standpoint and determines which part of the data set answers the research questions. Therefore, this stage is where the researcher is able to give a detailed and analysed and consistent report of the data findings.

In conclusion this study takes into consideration the above phases of thematic analysis and the data set for this study was analysed using the thematic analysis, which will be discussed below;

This study adopted the use of a thematic approach for analysing the qualitative data, which was aimed at identifying patterns in, and making associations between, findings to reach conclusions on the research problem (Snape and Spencer, 2003:4). This study follows the

thematic steps of Clarke and Braun's. As the researcher, familiarity with the data, was the first point to clearly understand the depth of the content, this was achieved by continuous listening to the audio taped responses from the participants, as well as repeated reading of the transcripts.

Initial codes and marking were generated for the responses. In this study, the coding was done manually by marking each transcribed script with black pen (one research question at a time) and data driven codes were organised into meaningful groups. Dates and time of focus group discussions were labelled and coloured, highlighted patterns were used to set data apart for easy access, as this was to ensure there was no reusing a set of data that had been previously used. This was ideal in creating a pattern for the data collected.

The themes for this study were created from the data collected. This theme (s) were created by sorting the codes into different themes. These themes identified for the findings of this study include; understanding the influence of motivation of Facebook usage, using Facebook for social relations, Facebook and Information seeking behaviour, the influence of Facebook for self-seeking behaviour, using Facebook for entertainment activity and understanding the effect of Facebook. These themes emerged from the relation of the research questions and incorporated the constructs of the UGT, as each theme was developed from the findings of the study, which were initially based from the outline of the research objectives, this was done to ensure that the flow of findings were aligned with the research questions and objectives. The themes were generated by breaking down each research question into smaller meaningful codes, this proved to be easy, as each theme represents a data set collected. For instance, the first research question was what are the motivating factors of adopting Facebook use? This developed into a theme of understanding the influence of motivation on Facebook usage and this was marked in red pen and subsequent questions were marked in various colours of pens and acronyms. These themes and presentation of data, will be extrapolated in the data findings chapter.

Another factor of thematic analysis is to keep revisiting the themes or ideas created by the researcher, by continuous review of data. (Ibrahim, 2012:41). This was achieved through constant reading of the audio taped responses from the participants. However, it should be noted that the analysis was generalised as each theme created was used to address each research questions of this study. Finally, the analysis was written out to provide a summarized, rational and non-repetitive account of the story told by the data.

#### **4.11 Credibility and Trustworthiness**

The researcher is aware that it is unethical to involve personal opinions and objectives to the study. Therefore, the researcher ensured that perspectives and observations in the field of study were distanced and maintained objectivity throughout the research process. Every effort was made to ensure diligence and consistency in the research process, including documentation, this ensured that data that emerged from this study is reliable (Helen Simmons, 2009).

#### **4.12 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher obtained a gate keeper's approval letter (see appendix D) from the office of the Registrar at the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the beginning of data gathering. This letter gives approval to the researcher for data gathering before using the students of the University of KwaZulu-Natal for data gathering purposes.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee (see appendix A). The researcher ensured that consent from (see appendix C) was made available for the participants to sign after explaining to them in detail what the study entailed. Besides this, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the participants were upheld to ensure that participants' rights and freedom were not compromised in any way possible.

The written informed consent of participants was obtained prior to the start of the focus group discussions. All written information was made available in English as the focus group discussion was conducted in the English language. The participants were informed of the fact that they were not forced to participate; they could choose to withdraw from the discussion at any time. Utmost confidentiality and anonymity was assured during participation and transcription of data. The researcher took the necessary steps to ensure the information (data gathered) was stored in a secured place. Data acquired is being stored in the department and will be destroyed after five years upon completion of this study.

#### **4.13 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the exploratory research design that was used for the study, the qualitative research method, the site of the study, target population, non-probability sampling techniques, purposeful sampling, and sample size were outlined in this chapter. Furthermore, the chapter presented sequentially the focus group discussions, thematic analysis and lastly the chapter ended by outlining ethical considerations that the researcher adhered to.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

In examining the constructs of the UGT and how it relates to Facebook use among students via qualitative research data, gaining knowledge about the responses relayed by participants is often considered a rigorous process that involves a thematic development of recurrent patterns and concepts. This chapter presents the findings of the study in relation to the review of examined relevant literature and the theoretical chapter. Due to the synergy of the literature and findings chapters, inferences will be drawn on the implication that Facebook has on the major constructs of the UGT. This chapter will provide a critical and engaging analysis of data collected through this study.

The responses accumulated in this study were analysed using thematic content analysis. Data sets are presented in themes discussed below;

#### **5.1 Themes for data analysis**

The findings of this study are discussed under the following conceptual headings;

- a) Understanding the influence of motivation for Facebook usage
- b) Using Facebook for social relations
- c) Facebook and Information seeking behaviour
- d) The influence of Facebook for self-seeking behaviour
- e) Using Facebook for entertainment activity
- f) Understanding the effect of Facebook.

#### **5.2 Understanding the influence of Motivation for Facebook usage among UKZN undergraduate students**

Answering the first research question on what factors motivate students to adopt the use of Facebook. The findings gathered during the focus group discussion indicates that Facebook use is motivated by several factors, which include, peer pressure, keeping in touch with friends, low cost of usage and stalking among undergraduate students of UKZN. Responses from this research question will be analysed in themes of recurrent patterns. First factor of this theme is peer pressure.

**Peer Pressure:** Peer pressure is best explained as a situation where people are influenced by other people, mostly friends or age group associates, to act in a certain way. This links back to debates in the literature by Livingstone (2008) that explained that students usually spend most of their time with friends which influence their adoption of any social media. This assertion was supported from the discussion with my respondents, when asked what motivates students some of the participants had this to say:

Sam explained that,

*“For me, I had Facebook since I was 11, it was peer pressure, because everyone had Facebook and everyone was talking about Facebook and I wanted to have Facebook as well, so I joined when I was 11”.*

According to Bimms,

*“I would not lie to you, it was just peer pressure. Everyone had Facebook, I felt left out so I decided to join Facebook. I spend about 2 hours every day”.*

Busi shared a similar idea,

*“It was because many of my peers are using Facebook and it was easy to access Facebook because it is free. Many people are using it and I decided to join so I do not feel left out, and it has been good since I started using it. I have good conversation with people and I gain knowledge about things happening around the world”.*

In the words of Russels,

*“I joined Facebook because of my friends as I did not want to be left out”.*

From the discussion presented above, it is evident that some of my respondents were pressured into using Facebook, because they did not want to experience dejection among their peers. The ubiquitous nature of Facebook was also considered as part of what pressured students to join Facebook. This assertion explains the reason why slovo concurred that,

*“In my first year, all my friends had Facebook and I was the only one left out. So whenever we were together they always talked about the jokes on Facebook. I finally created my own profile, so I can get the gist of what is happening on campus”.*

In this situation peer pressure was one of the predominant factors that contributed to the adoption of using Facebook among undergraduate students of UKZN. This finding is supported from the findings from the study of Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar, (2000), which explained that peer pressure was one of the reasons why students adopt the use of Facebook as students fear that they will be labelled old school, if they do not subscribe to latest trends.

**Keeping in touch with friends:** This was another recurring response for the motivation of joining Facebook. Many of the participants agreed that they joined Facebook to maintain their relationships with high school friends. This links back to the debates presented in the literature on Lampe *et al.*, (2006), Ellison *et al.*, (2007) that discussed that from their study, students engaged in using Facebook to maintain their old relationships and sustain new ones which helped in building social relationships through Facebook. This theme, keeping in touch with friends, emerged during discussions with participants on what motivated them to join Facebook. Some of the responses are presented below:

As the use of Facebook has become almost an indispensable tool for communication among students, as stated by Big J, *‘As I am in the university now, doing my first year and I am far away from home, I use Facebook to communicate with my friends back home, my old school mates and to start new relationships. I remember this one time I got a girlfriend from Facebook, Facebook has been like my main source of communication with people I do not know’*

The factor of keeping in touch with friends and family is considered one of the major reasons for adopting the use of Facebook. This assertion was confirmed when, *Don P shared that,*

*‘For me, Facebook is a means of getting to be in contact with people who are not geographically close to me. I joined because it was fun and my friends were always talking about Facebook, so I joined because I did not want to feel left out. I joined Facebook also for the information’.*

The term keeping in touch with friends is discovered as a motive for joining Facebook among undergraduates students of UKZN and is in support of the findings from the study by Sheldon (2008), Boyd (2008), Park *et al.*, (2009) and Park and Lee (2014), that presented the assertion that students mostly joined Facebook for the purpose of keeping in touch with their friends. These findings establish Facebook as a way of maintaining old while building new relationships and as an added benefit of attaining social capital by engaging in social interactions. This finding is also considered to be one of the gratifications associated with using Facebook through the lens of the UGT. While this theme of keeping in touch with friends is considered a motive for adopting Facebook, it simultaneously gratifies the need of communicating with old ties. The ability to maintain communication with friends and sustain new relationships for this study, is considered as a gratification obtained among UKZN undergraduates for using Facebook.

**Low cost of usage:** Students presented the fact that Facebook does not consume a lot of mobile data to access with minimal mobile data consumptions, it is pocket friendly to access

and saves them the expense of reloading their mobile phones with airtime to make calls. Here are some responses below:

Abike expressed her idea as,

*“I joined Facebook because it was much cheaper than buying airtime to call everyone. I can use my bundle to chat with everyone because it is cheap, but I cannot call all my friends with my airtime, so I use Facebook to chat with them. That is the reason I joined Facebook and because of entertainment”.*

Similarly, Thomas states that,

*“Most of the time, I run out of data and there is free Wi-Fi on campus, so it is easy communication with my friends”.*

Desmond explained that,

*“I joined Facebook because it is free to communicate with my friends, I cannot be buying airtime all the time, so I use my free mode to chat with my friends”.*

Topsy confirmed that,

*“I joined Facebook because my friend and my girlfriend had Facebook, so I realized it will be easier to connect with them whenever I am far away from them. I joined because it was easier to connect with my girlfriend without calling her”.*

Responses of my participants inferred that the low cost of using Facebook against other social media platforms has increased its level of adoption by students. These findings support similar conclusions in the study by Quan-Haase and Young (2010) that students admit to using Facebook because of its low cost and free access from computer labs.

**Meeting new friends** is another reason why some of the participants joined Facebook. Below are some responses of the participants on making new friends on Facebook, which was a factor for joining Facebook:

Blackie explained,

*“I joined Facebook just to communicate with people, get to know other people. Just for communication”.*

Toms asserted,

*“I joined Facebook because I wanted to communicate with people from different places and people I actually do not know, but I eventually get to know on Facebook. So I joined Facebook because I use it to keep in contact with my friends”.*

Ken also reported that,

*“I joined Facebook in 2012, because I wanted to keep in constant communication with my friends, because it has helped me stay close to my friends who are in the same university with me”.*

**Stalking** is a wilful repeated watching and constant following or harassing another person, which usually occurs over a period of time (Breiding, 2014:1). In the context of this research, stalking is considered as the wilful monitoring of another person in the online environment. This was one of the recurring answers as to why some students joined Facebook. Below are some of the responses:

According to Banks,

*“I joined Facebook because I wanted to stalk people and my boyfriend’s ex especially. I also stalk some celebrity and my crush”.*

Pink Berry shared the same opinion,

*“I joined Facebook just to monitor what my ex schoolmates are doing with their life, and to communicate”.*

In the same line of thought, Gold Rush explained that,

*“I joined Facebook in 2015 and I joined it because I wanted to monitor my high school friends, to see how far they have gone in life. I just wanted to see people’s picture and their posts, that’s all”*

From the above, it can be inferred that stalking is one of the reasons students decided to join Facebook and how they use it. Despite the abundance of literature present on social media, one aspect that has perhaps witnessed a slight paucity is the perceived negative aspect. The factor of stalking is made possible by the availability of Facebook. However, from the reviewed literatures, Park and Lee, (2014); Quan-Haase and Young, (2010); Ogedebe *et al.*, (2012) there is a dearth of contributions on the topic of stalking. Stalking is considered as one of the motivations for adopting the use of Facebook among students. Thus, affording this study an opportunity to relatively make new contribution.

The data collected on the research question one - What are the motivating factors for adopting Facebook among UKZN undergraduate students? The findings revealed that peer pressure, keeping in touch with friends, low cost of accessing Facebook, stalking, meeting new friends are the major recurring motivations for using Facebook among undergraduate students of UKZN. The findings of this study that, peer pressure and keeping in touch were prevalent factors towards motivation for Facebook use among students, support the output of Johnston *et al.*, (2013) that peer pressure is one of the leading factors that engage students in Facebook

use. Similarly, the findings from the study of Ellison *et al.*, (2007) are also supported and confirmed in this study that “keeping in touch” was one of the major reasons students adopted the use of Facebook. In addition, the findings of this study are in contrast with the findings of the study by Park and Lee, (2014) that presented the entertainment factor as the leading motivation for the use of Facebook among students, while this study presents peer pressure factor as the leading motivation for adopting Facebook among UKZN undergraduate students. These themes function as gratification obtained from engaging in Facebook use. Further discussing the themes that were developed in this finding - keeping in touch with friends, meeting new friends, low cost of usage can be classified as gratification obtained from using Facebook, as it satisfies their need for social engagement, which was the argument of Katz *et al.*, (1974) that any form of media should be able to gratify the need of its audience. Hence, it can be asserted that Facebook functions as a medium for the gratification of students needs to maintain their relationships, seek new relationships and save their cost of mobile data consumption. In addition, it can be concluded that peer pressure, keeping in touch, low cost, meeting new friends and stalking to be considered as the major influence towards the adoption of Facebook use among undergraduate students at UKZN.

### **5.3 Using Facebook for Social Relations**

Answering the research question two on how students use Facebook for social relations, this section explains the perception of students on the use of Facebook towards their social relations. This section will present the responses of how undergraduate students at UKZN use Facebook for the purpose of interaction and building social capital. Many of the respondents agreed that they use Facebook for building social relationships, however some participants have contrasting opinions, where they believed that because of their personal individual differences, they do not agree that Facebook has helped them develop or maintain social relationship. This section will be analysed under themes termed - sociability, better social image and individual differences.

**Sociability:** This was the first theme that recurred when discussing the findings of Facebook and social relationships among UKZN undergraduates. It was discovered that students engaged in using Facebook for sociable reasons because it helps them with their social development, in this view, Desmond presented his idea of using Facebook for social relationship by saying,

*“I normally use Facebook to check up on my friends by liking their pictures, commenting on their pictures or tagging them in different posts on Facebook. I think I can consider this as*

*an act of social relationship, because I cannot see them physically. So the only way I still relate with some of my friends is by commenting and liking their pictures on Facebook. I think that's enough social relationship”.*

Sam also explained,

*“It has helped me a lot because I find things on Facebook, like I found my long time high school friends on Facebook and we created a re-union group, so everyone can still keep in touch with their friends from high school. I also get information. I socially connect with my cousins and relatives”.*

Topsy shared her view,

*“I use Facebook to connect with my loved ones, and to share my pictures and to comment on my friend's picture. By doing this we are all socially connected”.*

This claim is supported by the findings from the study of Valenzuela *et al.*, (2009) that argued that students majorly engage in using Facebook just for the purpose of socializing, which was also supported by the findings of Park and Lee (2014) that presented the fact that students use Facebook to socialize within the campus and to integrate into campus environment.

**Improved Social Image:** This was one of the themes that emerged when analysing the findings of my participants on the question of how they use Facebook for social relations. Discussing the views of my participants on how they use of Facebook for building social relations, some expressed that Facebook has given them a better image, which has helped in achieving social actualization. Analysing the discussions on building a better social image through social interactions, Busi presents that,

*“I do use Facebook to communicate with my friends, but not all the time. I do use Facebook to maintain relationships with my high school friends, and I also use Facebook to add people I do not know as friends. This has helped me build my relationship with strangers, because I have about 2,000 friends on Facebook, I think I have a large network of friends now. I always feel like maybe I am a mini celebrity”.*

This finding on the theme improved social image is supported by the findings of Rudd (2013) that explained that students who engage in social interaction within the university build a better positive image.

From the responses on the question of using Facebook for social relations, the findings of this study presents that the end product of socialising are to develop social engagement skills, building a better social image to achieve self-actualisation. These factors are gains of social capital which is essential to a student's social development. These findings support some earlier scholarly opinions (Fox and Warber, 2013; Boyd and Ellison, 2007) explain that Facebook is

majorly for keeping social relationships. While some of the participants in this study agreed to use Facebook for building social relations, others had contradicting opinions, which is presented under the theme termed individual difference:

**Individual Differences:** This was another theme that emerged from the findings of this study, when discussing the opinion of participants who did not agree that Facebook was for them to develop relationships, based their discussion on the issue of individual differences, some participants responded that because they are reserved or introverts they rarely want to talk to people who they are unfamiliar with, whether offline or online. When discussing about personality of my participants and how it affected their social relationship, in this case of personality, Gold Rush presented that

*“For me, it has not helped me build social connections because I am not a social person, so I only use Facebook to find people and seek information. I do not chat with people, I do not even use it to contact my friends”.*

From the same line of thought, PinkBerry expressed that she does not like using Facebook for building relationships, because it is disturbing for her to chat with strangers

*“I am like a ghost walker on Facebook, I hardly reply people’s chats because I always feel disturbed. Mainly because of my personality, I am an introvert. So I do not contact or maintain relationship with anybody on Facebook”.*

The findings of this particular phenomenon that discusses individual personality among students who do not agree to using Facebook for building social relations is supported by the findings from the study by Bargh and McKenna, (2004), which explained that not all students seemed to maintain social relationship on Facebook particularly when the subject of personality was raised.

While some participants presented individual differences as the reason for not engaging in using Facebook for social relationship some other students were of the opinion that Facebook was not for them to maintain social relationships. Part of this was Thomas and Bimms who were of the opinion that Facebook to them was not really to build social relationship.

*“I do not really have social relationships to maintain on Facebook per se, because most of my friends on Facebook are people that I know personally and I can contact them on my phone, so I do not normally use Facebook to maintain any social relationship (Thomas)”.*

Similarly, Bimms shared same thought,

*“I do not chat with people on Facebook, because they always want to poke their nose into my business, so I avoid chatting with people, particularly strangers. So I do not normally use Facebook to keep in constant communication with my friends. I just look at their post, like and comment on their picture whenever I feel like it, sometimes I find it disturbing (Bimms)”*.

From the discussion above, some of my respondents do not agree that they have any social relationship to maintain on Facebook, as they prefer physical interactions to virtual interactions on Facebook, these findings presented above do not totally support the findings of the study by Giannokos *et al.*, (2013) that claimed that all students engage in using Facebook for social interaction because it helps in developing self-actualization.

#### **5.4 Facebook and Information Seeking Behaviour**

One of the research questions of this study sought to explore how students engage in using Facebook for seeking information. Of importance was the need to find out what type of information students access and post on Facebook. Students discussed their views on Facebook as an information seeking platform. Participants agreed that they use Facebook for information searching. This section will be presented in sub themes, which are detailed as social browsing, instrumental information, ritualised information, and motivational information. The first theme to be identified is:

**Social browsing:** which is coined from the reviewed literature of the concept of Lampe *et al.*, (2006) study, which explains that Facebook serves as a means of seeking general information. In this study, social browsing is defined as an act of searching for information about people in general with no one in particular. This act of social browsing is one of the leading factors on how students use Facebook for information surveillance. This is done through Facebook. Some participants presented their opinions about social browsing as presented below:

Busi explained that,

*“In getting information on Facebook, I hardly search for information about celebrities. I search for people I know, especially people that are in my class that I don’t usually talk to, and also to learn how well they are doing in life. Their Facebook page gives me information about how they are doing in life, have they changed? I use Facebook to stalk my boyfriend’s exes to see if they are beautiful, if they are better than me, those are the kinds of information I seek on Facebook”*.

Topsy shared the same opinion,

*“I found out about the different life styles of people, the way people live and their culture, and how they look, so I access Information about people in general. I just click on random profiles and check them out, sometimes I add them as friends, and sometimes I do not add them. It depends on what I find in their profile”.*

Gold Rush described that

*“The type of information I get on Facebook is just the general stuff, I would not say school wise, and it is just general information about what is happening around the world. I do not specifically search for information, they come directly to my news feed, so I click on the ones that catch my attention. I have not used Facebook to search for school work”.*

From the discussion presented by my participants, it can be inferred that students use Facebook for social browsing. This findings is also supported in a study by Wise *et al.* (2010) that found that social browsing can help students initiate conversations and learn about others through continuous search of their profiles, particularly in cases of affection between users.

**Instrumental Information:** Integrating on the discourse of using Facebook for seeking instrumental information, participants explained that Facebook has assisted them in improving their academics and social learning. The instrumental use of Facebook among my participants centred on them using Facebook to seek out specific information, which satisfies the cognitive need of my participants. This is termed under the function of using Facebook for instrumental purposes, which runs through fulfilling the gratification of “Getting Information” as one of the constructs of the UGT (Katz *et al.*, 1974). Some of them revealed that they use Facebook to learn about their academics. Going further, Thomas explained how Facebook has been instrumental to his academic development:

*“Facebook is playing a major role especially in my studies, because I know the quality of information I get. I log on to Facebook to communicate with my friends who might have attended a lecture that I missed. I also watch videos on crimes and investigations, which helps me learn more about crime and its terminologies as a criminology student, because some of these terminologies, I miss it when attending lectures, because my mind may be far away. It helps me gather more knowledge about my course of study, so I am thankful for crime videos on Facebook. I usually do not post anything, but always get information on Facebook”.*

Pink Berry explained that,

*“I have also used Facebook to source for information about school work, because I have used Facebook for my psychology class work. I viewed a page on a psychology forum on Facebook to review people’s comments, which gave me an insight about writing my assignment. I also use Facebook to access information about school bursaries”.*

Ken shared that,

*“I joined the news page on Facebook, pages like news 24, SABC news to get information about what is happening around the world and I post normally about things that are happening, things that I have heard of that is happening on campus and I also post about my life on Facebook. I also get information about what is happening on campus, for instance, maybe there is a strike going on, I get the information from the UKZN Facebook page (Ken)”.*

The use of Facebook for instrumental purpose has often times been contested. As scholars have argued that Facebook may not necessarily be used for learning or academic purposes (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2011; Ogedegbe *et al.*, 2012; Junco, 2012). For instance, the study of Rodrigues *et al.* (2011) affirmed that social networks were not created for academic purposes. However, the findings of this study calls this an act of social constructivism because my respondents expressed their views on how they have used Facebook as students to learn by watching videos that explains class terminologies, joining forums and engaging in groups on Facebook that provides insights to their assignments and coursework, rather than just getting entertained. These findings are supported by the findings from the study of Hrastinski (2009), which explained that information seeking is not solely about academics. If students engage in using Facebook to seek information about celebrities, fashion and style, then the sole purpose of the term information seeking is not lost, seeking information about lifestyles and trends will help students maintain a balanced life. This is buttressed when Hobbs explained that he uses Facebook to learn about campus activity and fashion.

*“Yesterday we did not receive information on our emails about the bursaries we applied for, so we logged on to Facebook to get the information, because people were already talking about the funds and bursaries on the UKZN Facebook page. I get information about what is happening on campus. I also search for Fashion pages because I like to be on point with my dressing”.*

This finding suggests that the argument on collective sharing of knowledge that was posed by Rodrigues *et al.*, (2011) that students do not learn using Facebook can be improved, as findings

proved that students now engage in the instrumental use of Facebook for academic development. This study shows that students feel that using Facebook helps them to improve their learning skills and academic performance.

**Ritualised Information:** The use of Facebook for information seeking cannot be over emphasized as students engage in its use for gaining knowledge either academically or culturally. The ritualised use of Facebook for information seeking, simply implies that students use Facebook just to pass time, a means of distraction. This theme discusses the responses of participants on the discussion of how they have ritualised Facebook. Many of the respondent considered Facebook a means of passing time. Their views are hereby presented below:

Sam shared that,

*“As I am distant from home, I get information about what is happening in my local community, who is getting married, who bought a new car, what is happening about my community development and I get information about school. What test are we writing? Tutorial activities that we have to do and what lecture we are going to have. Facebook helps me a lot with scholarly information and information about my local community. I only post memes on Facebook, I do not post anything about school work or academics”.*

Don P shares the same thought,

*“It is easy to get information on Facebook because nowadays people talk about things on social media. If you want to access information about what is happening you will always find it on Facebook, because in South Africa people tend to use serious issues as jokes. So if you want to know what is happening either politically or academically, just log on to Facebook and you will see “memes” of a social happening. So yes, I use Facebook to get information about school work, my society and country”.*

Discussing further on the ritualised use of Facebook among students, respondents pointed out that information seeking of Facebook should not be considered serious, given the fact that creation on content is given by the another Facebook user, this similarly buttressed the argument of Hylegard (2014) that explained that users of social media are the producers and consumers of the content. Following this assertion, Big J, Slovo and Blackie were of the opinion that Information on Facebook is not credible, Banks suggested that Facebook should be left for jokes and entertainment. Their views are expressed below:

*“I do not really trust information on Facebook, because anybody can just post anything it could be a lie or a myth. So whatever information I find on Facebook, I do not always regard it. I just use for posting jokes, memes and funny videos”.*

Slovo also explained,

*“I do not find information useful on Facebook, I am just there for posting pictures and updating my status, that’s all. I do not seek information on Facebook because too many people joke around on Facebook, so information seeking on Facebook can be false”.*

Blackie emphasized that,

*“I can never take any information I find on Facebook serious, because someone might just come up with this things in their head and people will start reposting. It may be false. I only share “memes” that’s the kind of information I share on Facebook, just for jokes. I post about my family too, but I do not believe all information on Facebook”.*

Banks described,

*“I do not post any information on Facebook. All this information about helping somebody that has cancer and all that sickness might be a lie, some of them may be genuine, but I cannot trust Facebook information. I think we should just leave Facebook for jokes and entertainment”.*

The above seems to suggest that students are using Facebook to access ritualised information, as they perceive that information presented on Facebook may not be credible. The discussion that emerged on the type of information respondents accessed, the ritualised use of Facebook for information indicates that users enjoy using Facebook to pass time, which explains the attitude to information sought on Facebook by students.

**Motivational Information:** The findings from this study identified that motivational quotes as part of the information students seek on Facebook. When asked about the type of information students seek on Facebook, discussions about motivational/inspirational talks, posts, videos emerged. Participants discussed how they access motivational talks on Facebook to help them improve their life actualization. Some views are hereby presented:

Bimms expressed that,

*“I am someone with a low self-esteem, I do not like to mingle with my friends, because I am afraid most of the time, so whenever I feel down I listen to inspirational talks on TedEx. Sometimes I watch videos of powerful talks about life that people post on Facebook and I just*

*think about my life. I realize I am not the only one going through difficult times. I use Facebook to seek information about new motivational speeches, which gear me up. It has really helped me, even though I am not there yet, I think I will get there”.*

Buks also shared the same opinion,

*“The information I usually post are motivational quotes to inspire my fellow students about life, because sometimes we do not know what our friends are going through, everyone is fighting their own battle, you know! I also seek motivational quotes to inspire me with my business and education”.*

Abike claimed that,

*“I post information on Facebook about my life, I share a lot of motivational quotes, because I love positivity”.*

Russels buttressed that,

*“I post educative information that I think it is productive to people because I see their comments on my post and it feels like I made a good impact in their lives. So I mostly post positive information”.*

The responses presented above explains that students use Facebook to inspire themselves, share motivational quotes and inspire their friends is a phenomenon not many studies have identified, despite the abundance of literature present on the use of Facebook, one aspect that has experienced paucity is the use of Facebook to seek inspiration. Thus, affording this study to claim that students engage in using Facebook to seek inspirational quotes, which gratifies their need for seeking information. The gratification obtained by students who engage in using Facebook for seeking inspirational quotes proves that they experience improved psychological development. This was made expedient when Bimms concluded her statement by saying:

*“I realize I am not the only one going through difficult times. I use Facebook to seek information about new motivational speeches, which gear me up. It has really helped me, even though I am not there yet, I think I will get there”*

This indicates that inspirational quotes student access on Facebook is an indication that it improves their lifestyle. Students get motivated by the inspirational quotes they share and go as far as reposting and sharing such information with others.

From the discussion of the themes - social browsing, instrumental information, ritualised information and motivational information presented above, it can be concluded that students engage in using Facebook for seeking different information that suit their interests at a specific time. The findings of this study are supported by similar ones in a study by Osatuyi (2013) that

presented the major reasons for using Facebook as an information source, which included getting enlightened about situations, information sharing, stalking and relaxation. However, the finding of this study negates the results of Kim *et al.*, (2014) that information seeking among students is generally done on Wikipedia search engines, as Facebook was only used to maintain social relations. The results presented above indicate that students have used Facebook for various information purposes, ranging from getting informed, motivated, to improved academic knowledge on course of study. What these findings present is centred on the basis that students have started engaging the use of Facebook for both academics, social learning, social browsing and seeking motivational quotes when they feel tired and need to be inspired. Aside from the ritualised use of Facebook among students, Facebook has proved to be vital in the cognitive development of students.

### **5.5 The Influence of Facebook for Self-Seeking Behaviour**

According to Lin (2001), the idea of self-seeking behaviour is crucial in everyone's life because it is understood as a way of improving their self-presentation skills within their community. Community in this debate is regarded as virtual friends on Facebook and Facebook itself being regarded as the online community. Lampel and Bhalla (2007) described self-seeking behaviour as a means of social formation that individuals invest their time into, specifically in the online community. The findings from this question on how students engage in using Facebook for self-seeking behaviour is explained in the following themes; Ego reward and Self-status avoidance behaviour.

**Ego Reward** proves to be evident in the discussion of the participants. Discussion from the analysis on how undergraduate students' use Facebook for self-seeking behaviour, the findings reveal that students accurately used Facebook to promote themselves, participants pointed out that they engage in the use of pictures for visual representation of themselves, stating that when pictures are posted on Facebook, the likes and comments received on the pictures reportedly improves their self-esteem. For these findings the gratification obtained from using Facebook as a means of identity expression validates the self-status seeking construct from the UGT, which explains that people seek out a particular media for affective and emotional needs, which in this case is the Ego reward achieved by users of Facebook who engage in its use for self-seeking behaviour. Participants explained that they use pictures to display their beauty, fashion and life styles and enjoy the feedback their friends relay to them and it is reported that this helps them build self-esteem. Some of the responses are presented below;

According to Topsy,

*“I do post pictures, because of self-seeking behaviour. I usually post pictures that are very beautiful, so that my stalkers can see, and the motive behind posting beautiful pictures is so that the guys can see how hot I am, my potentials, my curves and they say that girl is so hot. My friends they can see I am flourishing and slaying. I want people to view my profile and they should be like that girl is so beautiful. I want to maintain that standard of being beautiful. So when I am posting a picture, I choose the most beautiful pictures and I sometimes edit the pictures. When people pop in likes and comments on my pictures, it really boosts my ego and confidence and I always feel like next time I have to do more”.*

Ken said,

*“I post my pictures, especially the dignified pictures because I am a Christian. So whenever I am travelling, I take nice pictures and post on Facebook and write very nice captions to share my moments with my friends and when they comment they will see I am living the life. I am someone who likes nice haircut. So when I have a new haircut, I post it and my friends always say nice haircut, which boosts my self-esteem”.*

Don P stated that,

*“I post my very nice picture to impress my friends on Facebook, especially if I have a new outfit. I will post a picture, so they can see my new outfit and whenever I travel, I post my location on Facebook so that they can know I am having fun and also for memories, because Facebook saves the pictures”*

The discussion on ego reward is explained as the satisfaction derived from posting pictures on Facebook, the level of interactivity of Facebook (as it encourages two-way communication) through likes and comments has improved the self-esteem of some of the participants. Similar to this are the findings presented in the literature of Ellison *et al.*, (2007), LaRose and Lui (2008) which affirmed that students maintained their already presented images on Facebook through constant uploading of pictures, tagging friends and comments. From the findings stated above, it proves that photography and visual communication are relevant factors that contribute to students seeking validation of how and what they should post on Facebook, from other users. Bimms confirmed this assertion when she explained that

*“I have like 500 pictures on my Facebook, because I love pictures. The comments on my Facebook makes me feel myself, it encourages me to do more. When I get like 300 likes I feel like Yho! That is me, I am slaying! So it does make me feel very good”.*

Further integrating the theme of Ego reward in this analysis, participants have attributed the use of Facebook for self-presentation and the intention to do more than just posting pictures, the reactions and intention of my participants before posting pictures says a lot about their

expected output from posting pictures on Facebook. This was made evident when Gold Rush explained that,

*“I do not like taking pictures a lot, my friends know me, but then when I have that picture love and I have to post this, so my enemies can see that now I have grown. My enemies are the haters, those high school friends, who do not like you and you do not know why and they are jealous because I made it to university and they did not. I have to post pictures so they can see that I am growing and I am better than them. They do not have my number, but I know they are stalking me, so I have to post nice pictures on Facebook, so they can see my level of achievements”.*

The findings of the theme ego reward supports findings by Edwards (2017) that claimed that the self-status seeking behaviour among students is based on the satisfaction derived from their posts on Facebook, which was a result they achieved through self-presentation online.

The participants further revealed that they engaged in the use of Facebook for self-seeking behaviour, which helped them build a larger network of friends through social interaction on Facebook even though they presumed that other users are stalking them, which thereby puts pressure on them to further self-present themselves, confirming this, Slovo said that:

*“Posting my pictures on Facebook sometimes, makes me anxious and excited because I know some people might be stalking me, like my ex-boyfriend, I know he will be stalking me. So I post very nice pictures, when my makeup and outfit is on point. When I post my pictures on Facebook, I feel very good because I get comments that I am looking good and it encourages me to do more, I know my ex-boyfriend will be jealous of the comments on my Facebook wall”.*

Many participants affirmed that they were encouraged to post more pictures due to the positive feedback (likes and comments) they receive when they post pictures. Similarly, the findings from the study of Gosling *et al.*, (2007), Gonzales and Jeffery (2010) affirmed that students used Facebook to present their desired self to their friends and they do so for social acceptability.

**Self-status avoidance behaviour:** Considering this, some of my participants have contrasting opinion on how they use Facebook for self-status seeking behaviour. Some of them opined that Facebook has judgemental people who judge personalities by what is posted. Responses from my participants indicate that not all self-seeking behaviour produces positive feedback as some of my participants explained that it has unintended negative outcomes, this makes them avoid posting pictures on Facebook. Some of the responses are presented below:

Big J explained that,

*“I do not post much pictures on Facebook. Sometimes I do not like the way people comment on my post, their comments make me sad. They always want to complain about something not nice about the pictures I post. So I rarely post pictures on Facebook, I majorly use Facebook to chat”.*

Abike added that,

*“It has not helped me with my identity because judging by that, I rarely get about 10 likes, so it does not encourage me to want to post more pictures”.*

Hobbs opined that,

*“I do not post pictures on Facebook because people tend to judge me by my appearance. They will rate me according to what I wear. I do not like it and I always avoid judgmental people”.*

Russels explained that,

*“I use Facebook for checking other people’s life. I do not like to stress because people will rate you on each day, maybe today they feel like liking your picture today and tomorrow they do not feel like it. So they will rate me and I will be stressed out when I do not get up to 100 likes”.*

From the responses highlighted above, it can be inferred that not all students are comfortable with using Facebook for self-seeking behaviour, for fear of being judged by their post. This is in contrast to earlier studies discussed in the literature review that seemed to indicate that students engaged in the use of Facebook for self-seeking behaviour (Lewis and West, 2009; Hodgkinson, 2007; Cover, 2012). What these response points out is that students who engage in the use of Facebook are now more reflexive, becoming aware of the dangers that is associated with using Facebook, particularly for self-seeking behaviour. However, Tufekci (2008) pointed out that students critically analyse their pictures before posting to avoid negative comments.

One major argument of interest is the fact that there is a feeling of low self-esteem observed from the students when they feel that their pictures have not attracted enough comments and likes. This makes them feel bad about themselves and may consequently affect their general psychological wellbeing as argued by Edwards (2017). This assertion was made clear in the response from ‘Russels’ who expressed anxiety in relation to posting pictures on Facebook. This respondent made it clear that she often checks if posted pictures are getting the desired likes. In her words, *“I will be stressed out when I do not get up to 100 likes”*. This implies that some students judge their ability to be satisfied with themselves by the number of likes they receive from friends and followers on Facebook.

## **5.6 Focusing on using Facebook for Entertainment**

The fifth research question investigates how UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for entertainment. Many of the participants credited Facebook as a major means of being entertained. This finding is related in themes identified as - stress reliever and Non-sufficient entertainment.

**Stress Reliever:** this theme was identified, as many respondents agreed that Facebook has relieved them of stress and it fulfils their need for entertainment. Discussing the respondent opinion about Facebook being used for entertainment, Bimms shared that for her,

*“Facebook usually entertains me. I follow funny pages on Facebook, which helps me relax and enjoy my day. When I want to start my day I watch funny videos and if I am having a bad day I just log on to Facebook to watch videos”.*

In the same vein, Banks opined that,

*“I use Facebook for entertainment activities. I cannot imagine life without memes, I get entertained too by watching food channels, music videos and uploads of new songs. Sometimes, when I log on to Facebook I also stalk because it’s entertaining for me”.*

Ken also mentioned that,

*“I really get entertained on Facebook by looking at other’s pictures and reading gossip about my friends and high school mates. I do not post any entertainment videos”.*

Buks was of the opinion that,

*“As we all know, our marks are coming out next week. I am already stressed, but when I log on to Facebook, I see that people are already making jokes out of it, posting funny videos about students and their marks. It makes me relax in some ways, so I do not stress that much. I do not use my Facebook to post any entertainment activity, but I follow the entertainment page of UKZN on Facebook, so it keeps me updated about what’s happening on campus during the weekend”.*

The above statements on how Facebook has been a source of entertainment for students corroborates with Alhabash and Mo (2017:5) who explained that “Facebook is a facilitator for entertainment and promotes leisure among students.” This fact encourages daily use of Facebook to promote stress relief and entertainment. From the responses presented above, it can be deduced that most students consider Facebook as a means of getting entertained, through the short videos posted, memes, and celebrity gossip. They have proved that Facebook has been able to relieve them of stress on bad days, thereby providing means of getting entertainment. The responses from the discussion is evident that Facebook fulfils the need for entertainment. Sustaining the fact that Facebook serves as a stress reliever is a gratification obtained from using Facebook as a means of getting entertained. Hence, this finding validates the construct

of UGT that explains that every media should be able to gratify its audience need for entertainment (Katz *et al.*, 1974). This is regarded as the major gratification derived from using Facebook, and this is similar to findings, of Moss, (2010), Albash and Mo (2017), and Hossain (2017), study which affirmed that students engage in the use of Facebook for entertainment, their findings further assert that students enjoy the ritualised use of Facebook to just pass time.

**Non-sufficient entertainment:** This was another theme that developed in the course of discussing how students engage in using Facebook for entertainment. The responses under this theme presents that not everyone is sufficiently entertained by Facebook. The responses presented below show the opinion of students who expressed that Facebook is not sufficiently entertaining:

According to PinkBerry,

*“Facebook does not really entertain me, because I am not a fan of entertainment, so I do not use my Facebook for entertainment”*.

Slovo also shared the same opinion,

*“Well, my Facebook is boring, maybe because of the people who are my friends on my Facebook, they do not entertain me, I do not know why. I do not find Facebook entertaining”*.

Busi emphasized that,

*“I do not use Facebook for entertainment activity, I just check my updates, accept friend requests and chat with important people”*

These participants believed Facebook has not adequately satisfied their quest for entertainment, this explains that getting entertained on Facebook is largely based on the people you accept as friends or the groups/pages you follow on Facebook. While exploring how my participants feel about using Facebook for entertainment, the issue of personalities was raised, as a respondent explained that she does not find entertainment on Facebook because she is not a social person. Don P explained that,

*“I am not so much of the social type, so when it comes to entertainment, I am very boring. If I see post about music or a Disc Jockey (DJ) is coming to Durban for a show I always do not get excited because I am not a very social person, I always like to stay in my room”*.

This is supported by literature of Odell *et al.*, (2000) which explained that users of Facebook are more likely to engage in what they consider as entertaining to them as it suits their different personalities. Substantiating the assertions of Odell *et al.*, (2000) on personality difference and what they found entertaining, some of the respondents presented stalking other users as their own form of entertainment, to buttress this claim, Russels and Hobbs confirmed that:

*“I stalk people and I search for memes, stalking and posting memes is my own definition of entertainment and I get that a lot on Facebook” (Russels).*

Hobbs expressed that,

*“My entertainment on Facebook is just basically stalking people, seeing how my friends’ life is going, that’s what I enjoy most and I find it entertaining. For me, stalking is entertainment” (Hobbs).*

From the discussion presented above, there is an indication that individual differences is paramount to what people consider as entertainment. Hence, these findings assert that entertainment is explained as what an individual deems fit to suit their personality.

### **5.7 Understanding the General Effect of Facebook on Students**

It is significant to understand that Facebook use among students has numerous effects on them. Participants have expressed their opinion on how they have applied Facebook in the previous sections of this chapter. However, opinions were divided when participants were asked how engaging in Facebook use has affected their general wellbeing: answering this question, participants expressed their opinions in mixed feelings. This section will provide a general discussion of how my participants viewed Facebook in two themes - The pessimist and the optimist,

**The Pessimist:** Firstly, this section presents the opinions of respondents who expressed pessimistic views about how Facebook has affected them, the discussion went from respondents who viewed Facebook as being a negative companion in terms of academics; Explaining that they spend too much time on Facebook while such time could have been channelled into their study. According to Sam,

*“Facebook has had a bad effect on my life because I use more Facebook instead of studying. I find myself spending more time on Facebook than doing other productive things. It has also impacted my life positively because I find useful information on Facebook and like I said earlier, I found my lost cousin on Facebook”.*

Toms shared the same thought,

*Facebook affects me in a bad way, because my grades are low. I spend a lot of time on Facebook than studying. Facebook is more entertaining than my books”.*

According to Desmond, Facebook has a negative impact on his life and particularly his academic studies,

*“The negative effect of Facebook is that it distracts me. Whenever I am about to study, I always find myself logging on to Facebook and going through the posts which also helps me to relax. I tend to take too many breaks when I am studying to log on to Facebook and I think it is affecting my grades, but it is not that bad, because if I was not using Facebook I would concentrate more on my studies. The positive effect of Facebook is that it entertains me, there are more negative things on Facebook than the positive ones. Facebook has a negative impact on my cognitive mind because of the posts. Some people post pictures of physically challenged people and they say ‘Type Amen, if you do not type Amen, you will go to hell.’ This does not sit well with me because it is not right to post such pictures, because I am not responsible for such problems. Facebook also has its financial implications, because when I am off campus, I have to use my money to buy data, since I only have access to free Wi-Fi for Facebook at school”.*

Incorporating the effect of Facebook on students, participants expressed that when they are logged onto Facebook, there is a feeling of disconnectedness from their physical friends. Further explaining this, Ken considered that speaking to his friends on Facebook more than his physical friends was considered as negative use of Facebook,

*“The negative part is that the time I use on Facebook can be channelled into my studies, it would have increased my grades. I also discovered that I spend too much time with my friends online than I do with my offline friends, because I am always logged on to Facebook. It has affected me associating with my friend’s offline” (Ken).*

The use of Facebook among students has also been negative, as expressed by some of the participants in relationship to their grades, time management and disconnected feeling when spending time with their offline friends. Speaking on the pessimist effect of Facebook on students, bad time management was evident in the discussion, when Pink Berry explained that:

*“It has the bad and good effect. The good one is that I get entertained, but at the same time when it comes to studying I remember the jokes I saw on Facebook and start laughing. Facebook really interrupts my study. It affects my grades, but now I am trying to manage my time, so I do not spend too much time watching Facebook videos”.*

This finding on bad time management among students is in support of the findings of Junco (2012) who pointed out bad time management among students as one of the reasons reported for poor grades, as they failed to properly plan what time should be devoted to studies,

Although, many of the participants agreed that Facebook helps them to relax and relieve stress, which is part of the gratification obtained from the entertainment construct of the UGT, investigating the effect of Facebook on students proves that time spent on Facebook affects the academic performance of the respondents. From the assertions presented by the responses of my participants, it is evident that using Facebook among students has affected their grades, participants also mentioned that they do not allocate adequate time to their study, this is as a result of bad time management. These assertions are similar to Ogedebe *et al.*, (2012) and Junco (2012) study, which explained that students who reported high frequency of Facebook use expressed low levels of academic productivity because of the little time devoted to their studies. This concern was also a recurring response among the participants of this study.

**The Optimist:** This theme was developed from the positive aspect of Facebook on the respondent. They presented that Facebook does not affect them negatively as earlier presented. Therefore, it is evident that while some participants have experienced the positive side of using Facebook, even for their academics, others have not. Some participants expressed their opinion: Blackie shared that,

*“It affect me positively. I joined Brainy learners group on Facebook, so when I have difficulty in understanding my school work, I quickly post on the group and I get answers and encouragement on the group. It has helped me a lot”.*

Speedy was of the thought that,

*The effect of Facebook on me is positive, because I keep in touch with my friends, Facebook does not have any negative effect on me”.*

Hobbs described that,

*“It has affected me positively because it has boosted my self-esteem and I am now socially active. Facebook does not affect my academics”.*

Gold Rush added that,

*“Facebook has affected my outlook on society, my trust issues are now better, because I am beginning to understand the concept of social trust”.*

The above indicates that many students have experienced the use of Facebook for different purposes such as developing and maintaining identity, meeting new people, maintaining

existing relationships, seeking information, and being entertained. According to the findings of this study, students at UKZN felt that Facebook has both constructive and undesirable effects. The constructive effects were thought to be, easy access to information, getting entertained, and improving the general outlook of life, these factors are supported by the findings of Rudd (2013), Bosch (2009), Haung (2012), which also added that students improved their teaching and learning skills through the use of Facebook. These findings under the theme of the optimist, is in total support of the construct of the UGT, which explains that a media channel should be able to gratify the need of its audience. These findings indicate that Facebook has been able to adequately gratify the needs of its users.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the data of the study, which started from understanding the motive behind the adoption of Facebook use among undergraduate students, its general effects and particularly examined how relevant the four major construct (socialising, information seeking behaviour, self-status seeking behaviour and entertainment) of the UGT can be applied to Facebook use among undergraduate students of UKZN.

Responses from the 24 active Facebook users, who participated in the focus group discussions, were presented for data analysis. The findings of this study significantly proved that Facebook has both constructive and undesirable aspects that relate to students. This study presented that Facebook proves to be imperative for the development of students cognitive abilities, their academic performance, personal belief, social interactions with strangers and friends, as most of the respondents agreed that Facebook had impacted their lives through the features of sociability, information, entertainment, identity development and academic performance. However, the use of Facebook among students has also presented some negative aspects on students, the findings recorded that some of the participants experienced having low grades and bad time management when using Facebook, it was also recorded that Facebook causes feelings of disconnectedness among offline friends, as Facebook users prefer to stay in constant communication with their virtual friends.

The next chapter presents the discussion on, the connection of the study with the theoretical framework (UGT) which will be discussed along with recommendations for further studies on Facebook.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the discussion regarding the information undertaken in the preceding chapters. It aims to summarise the major findings and the justification for the study as it relates to its theoretical foundation. It concludes with the recommendation for further studies.

This study has used the UGT as a way of analysing and explaining how and why students engage with Facebook. The study used 24 respondents in three focus group discussions, to elicit answers from the participants. This was followed by subsequent questions to explore the constructs of the UGT on Facebook and students, these included;

1. What are the motivating factors for undergraduate students joining Facebook?
2. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for social relations?
3. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for information surveillance?
4. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for self-seeking behaviour?
5. How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for entertainment activities?
6. What are the effects of Facebook use on UKZN undergraduate students?

#### **6.1 Summary of Major Findings**

The aim of the study was to understand the motivation for Facebook use among students, exploring how and why students use Facebook and to analyse the motivations in relation to the four major constructs of the UGT: sociability, information, self-seeking behaviour and entertainment factors.

Question 1, focused on understanding the motivation for joining Facebook. From the responses it was clear that different factors motivated students to join Facebook, these included peer-pressure, maintaining relationships, communication, stalking and obtaining information. Peer pressure was highly prevalent in the motivation towards the adoption of Facebook use. Therefore, for this study peer-pressure is regarded as the leading factor that motivates the undergraduate students of UKZN to join Facebook, followed by the need to maintain relationships with others, keeping in touch, stalking (social surveillance), low cost of usage.

Question 2, examined how students engaged in the use of Facebook for effective social relationships. This question explored diverse opinions among students, some students agreed to use Facebook for developing social relations, engaging in Facebook to improve their social networks and particularly build social capital which improved student's self-actualisation. This study discovered that students who engaged in using Facebook affirmed that Facebook gratified their need for social interaction, improved their social trust and developed good interactive skills. However, some students did not agree that Facebook sustained their existing relationships, especially as far as personality was concerned. Some participants claimed to be introverted or shy whenever they received messages from people who were not their mutual friends on Facebook and did not know how to respond.

Question 3, explored the question about information surveillance, it was discovered that students particularly engaged in the use of Facebook for seeking information about academic work and campus activities, while most of them acknowledged that they posted motivational quotes. The findings presented in this study revealed that students consistently used Facebook to gather information which gratified their needs on several issues, including, social lifestyle, campus activities and engagement, academics and culture.

Question 4, on how students use Facebook for self-status seeking behaviour, diverse opinions were shared. Some students revealed that they mainly use Facebook to maintain their existing online profile because of social formation and the kind of feedback they receive when sharing pictures, locations and posts. These findings assert that Facebook gratifies the need for identity expression and impression management among students. The psychological effects of the feedback on their posts on Facebook is an indicator that students often seek validation and look forward to feedback with regards to their posts on Facebook. From the findings of this study, students claimed that when they did not accumulate the desired number of Facebook likes after posting photos, it affected their self-esteem. It made them feel that they did not fit into the ratings or standard of what their friends on Facebook considered beautiful, desirable or successful.

Question 5 investigated the focus of Facebook on the entertainment factor, participants agreed that Facebook had consistently been a source of entertainment for them. They follow a lot of comedy pages, posting memes and videos, this explains the claim of Jenkins (2007) that discusses the convergence of social media, in this case, students find Facebook entertaining because everything fun is accessible on one platform - friends, gossip, academic learning,

information, pictures and family. They also shared that entertainment on Facebook has greatly relieved them of stress from school. This finding supports the study of Park and Lee (2014) that claimed that entertainment is an integral part of student's daily activities, which helps them maintain a balanced social life.

Question 6 explored the context of Facebook among the student populace resulting in discussion on how students have engaged the use of Facebook for cognitive development and likewise, its ritualised use. Discussing the responses provided by my participants, undergraduate students expressed that Facebook provides diverse satisfaction, although findings from this study proved that excessive use of Facebook negatively impacted their academic study, this was a result of bad time management which consequently affected their school grades. Further expressions by the findings explicitly provides that Facebook is the platform that has equally satisfied their social relation need (social capital-self-actualization), developed their cognitive abilities, improved self-esteem and Facebook served as a major source of information among undergraduate students of UKZN.

## **6.2 Theoretical Explanation**

The theoretical perspective examined how students engaged in the use of Facebook while exploring the performance of the constructs of the UGT. The theory particularly emphasises the way an audience chooses a medium. This raised the question on "What motivated students to adopt the use of Facebook". The media that meets their need and the gratification obtained led to the exploration of the four major constructs of the UGT on Facebook - investigate how Facebook met the needs for social interaction, information, self-status seeking and entertainment on students.

Facebook was identified as the social media platform presented among other media choices from diverse options, as indicated by the UGT, which claims that audience seek out a media to satisfy their cognitive and affective needs (Katz *et al.*, 1974). In this case, Facebook, was the selected media, the UGT has been used in understanding why students made the choice of Facebook as their predominant social media platform. This study discovered that the main motives for students joining Facebook include, peer-pressure, keeping in touch with friends, meeting new people, low cost of accessing Facebook, and stalking were the major reasons undergraduate students of UKZN adopted Facebook. Importantly, the study has added new perspectives and data to already existing literature on the uses of social media platform. Drawing solely from UKZN, it is evident that students adopt Facebook for the aforementioned

social reasons. From the findings of this study, students prioritize the use of Facebook for: maintaining relationships, seeking information, impression management, encouragement (motivational talks) and entertainment. These are regarded as the priorities of Facebook use by students at UKZN. Following the constructs of the UGT, there must be gratification obtained from the use of any media. Listed as the gratification obtained by students while using Facebook are the following activities, in order of recurrence;

- a) Keeping in touch with existing friends
- b) Creating new relationships
- c) Submitting to peer pressure (doing what everyone is doing)
- d) Acquiring information
- e) Promoting self-seeking behaviour
- f) Getting motivated about life through posts on Facebook by friends
- g) Escaping stress through entertainment posts on Facebook

Looking at this study from the perspective of gratification obtained through social interaction on Facebook: This study inferred that Facebook as a social media platform has diverse effects on students and helps them relate to different aspects of life - social relations, getting informed, self-presentation, improved self-esteem and getting entertained. It is important for students to integrate this social media platform into their daily routine. This might go a long way in helping students manage their social life effectively.

### **6.3 Recommendations and suggestions for further study**

The purpose of this study was to understand the motivation for Facebook use among students, to analyse these motivations in relation to the four major constructs of the UGT and to identify the gratification obtained from the use of Facebook.

I felt the need to provide some recommendation and suggestion for further studies that emerged from the findings of the study, to improve further studies on Facebook or other social media platforms in relation to UGT, the following recommendation is suggested:

This study suggests that individual and personality differences should be considered as an area of interest while studying any social media platform. Individual differences are relative to how audiences engage in any media use. From the findings of the study, I recommend that future researchers should consider investigating individual differences and perceptions on the use of Facebook. This could reveal interesting data on the different perceptions of people on Facebook

regardless of whether they use the social platform or not. As such, new data in the area of social media will be exposed particularly in comparison to other social platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and so on.

#### **6.4 Limitation of the Study**

This study and its results were limited to only one university in South Africa. Given that the university is in the province of KZN, and is the most popular and populous in the province, one can assume that the findings may be generalised in the province, while it might be tempting to rely on the representation of its sample size to generalize the results, doing so would not be appropriate, as other universities within KZN and other provinces in South Africa may not produce the same findings. Another limitation that this study faced was the sample size; the study used a small sample of 24 participants and was limited to only one campus (Howard College), among four other campuses of UKZN, this study was also limited to only one social media platform, Facebook, the responses to the research questions can therefore only be applied to the use of Facebook. Hence, other studies should consider exploring the constructs of UGT on other social media platforms such as Instagram and twitter.

There is a need for more research to be conducted, to similarly explore the use of Facebook or other social media platforms on students in South Africa and beyond.

#### **6.5 Conclusion**

This study had no difficulty in procuring respondents. It is encouraging to find that a large number of students are Facebook users and they do so for social, instrumental and self-development purposes and may increasingly need it for promoting academic excellence.

With regards to the UGT, the findings of this study inferred the students found gratification in the use of Facebook for various reasons, which proved to be instrumental in their personal and academic development. As stated earlier the constructs of the theory postulated that people make personal choices and adopt a particular medium because of their need for gratification. Therefore, this study concludes that through the application and exploration of the UGT among undergraduate students of UKZN, Facebook has successfully met the needs for gratification, this was accomplished by fulfilling several needs of its users: Facebook as a social media platform gratifies the need for social interaction among students by promoting the benefits of social capital, Facebook gratifies the need of information surveillance among the undergraduate students of UKZN. Facebook fulfils the need for self-presentation and improves

self-seeking behaviour among undergraduates at UKZN. Facebook gratifies the need for entertainment among students. Findings from the study suggest that Facebook serves different purposes among undergraduate students. It is an entertaining platform for some, a site that encourages self-presentation, a platform to learn about society, friends and culture, while for others the platform does not gratify with regards to entertainment nor satisfies the need for self-presentation and information. This study concludes that the use of Facebook among students centres on individual differences. Gratification is relative and dependent on individual traits.

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## APPENDIX A

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE



08 May 2018

Ms Ifedayo Ajimakin (217078879)

School of Applied Human

Sciences — CCMS

Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Ajimakin,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0253/018M

Project Title: Facebook and students: The motivation for use and its effects on undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Approval Notification

— Expedited Application in response to your application received 26 March 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

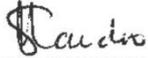
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

Cc Supervisor: Dr Given Mutinta

Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Jean Steyn

Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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## APPENDIX B:

### FOCUS GROUP GUIDE



#### **TOOL 1: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Total focus group time:** 1 hour + 15 minutes

**Project title:** Facebook and students: the motivation for use and its effects on undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

This research seeks to explore how Facebook has been used among students, the motivation for use and its effects on student's calls for an examination of the dominant and popularized attitudes within the South African society especially among students about this social phenomenon.

#### **Introduction (15 minutes)**

- Welcome participants and introduce myself, the research assistants/interpreters and our respective roles.
- Explain the purpose of the discussion broadly, outlining why participants were selected.
- Discuss the purpose and process of focus groups, and explain that the discussion will last approximately one hour.
- Explain the presence and purpose of audio recording equipment and cameras.
- Go over ground rules and discussion guidelines, such as the importance of everyone speaking up, talking one at a time, and being prepared for the moderator to interrupt to ensure that there is time to cover all questions.
- Address the issue of confidentiality, inform the group that information discussed is going to be reviewed as a whole, and that names will not be used in any analysis of the discussion or in the thesis.
- Go through the informed consent form and ask participants to complete and sign the form indicating their informed consent to participate in the study, for discussions to be audio recorded and for photographs to be taken.

- Ask participants to introduce themselves using their first names and ages, and communities where they live, and begin the focus group discussion.

### **Overview**

The study hopes to elicit responses that will help answer the following questions;

- 1) How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for social relations?
- 2) How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for information surveillance?
- 3) How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for self-seeking behaviour?
- 4) How do UKZN undergraduate students use Facebook for entertainment activities?
- 5) What are the effects of Facebook use on UKZN undergraduate students?

**THE END.**

**THANK YOU!**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **INFORMED CONSENT LETTER**

#### **UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

#### **APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

##### **For research with human participants**

#### **INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE**

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

#### **Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research**

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is, IFEDAYO AJIMAKIN. I am collecting data as part of a research project titled; *Facebook and students: the motivation for use and its effects on undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*. The project is conducted under the supervision of University of KwaZulu-Natal. Centre for Communication and Media in Society (CCMS). My supervisor's name is Dr Given Mutinta. I am writing to request your participation.

The aim of the study is to understand the motivation for use of Facebook and its effect among Undergraduate student of Howard College Campus.

Participation in this study is voluntary. As a participant, you may withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequences. Participating in this study does not require any form of payment or incentives. The discussion will not be paid for in money, but a small token gift or appreciation may be given. In general, responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Confidential information will not be used without your permission. If you agree to be interviewed, we will request that you choose a pseudonym for the purposes of this research, so

your real identity will not be revealed in the final reports. As a participant, you will be treated with respect and dignity.

We request the use of an audio-recorder in the interview. The data will be kept securely for five years for purposes of verification by my supervisor, Dr Given Mutinta at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Should you request, an electronic copy of the final projects, it will be sent to you on completion.

Thank You for your time.

Your willingness to participate in this study will greatly be appreciated.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at

Name- IFEDAYO AJIMAKIN.

CELL-O736307141

Email address- [dayo.ajimakin@gmail.com](mailto:dayo.ajimakin@gmail.com)

### **CONSENT (Edit as required)**

I (\_\_\_\_\_) have been informed about the study entitled (provide details) by (provide name of researcher/fieldworker).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

Additional consent, Please tick where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Willing

Not Willing

Audio Tape Recording

---

**Signature of Participant**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature of Witness**

---

**Date**

**(Where applicable)**

## APPENDIX D

### GATE KEEPERS APPROVAL



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU•NATAL  
INYUVESI

YAKWAZULU-NATALI

29 September 2017

Ms Ajimakin Ifedayo (SN 217078879)

School of Applied Human Sciences

College of Humanities

Howard College Campus

UKZN

Email: [Dayo.ajimaki@gmail.com](mailto:Dayo.ajimaki@gmail.com) [Mutinta@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Mutinta@ukzn.ac.za)

Dear Ms Ifedayo

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate degree, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Facebook and students: the motivation for use and its effects on social relations among undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews, and/or focus groups with undergraduate students on the Howard College campus.

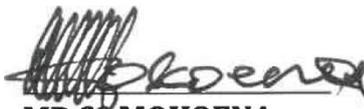
Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire: • Ethical clearance number;

- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



**MRS S MOKOENA** MRS  
MOKOENA REGISTRAR

---

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag , Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email:  
[registrar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:registrar@ukzn.ac.za) Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

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**APPENDIX E**  
**EDITING CERTIFICATE**

1 Leincester Road

Scottville

Pietermaritzburg

2 March 2019

**Ajimakin Ifedayo, A.- 217078879**

Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS)

School of Applied Human Science

College of Humanities

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Durban

**CERTIFICATE OF EDITING**

This is to certify that this Master's dissertation has been thoroughly edited for correct English usage. Spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax have been corrected where necessary.

On occasion where meaning was not clear, notation was made in margin for the candidate's perusal and clarification.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you need further clarification.

Yours faithfully,

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