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DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY

STUDIES

**TOPIC: MOBILE PHONE CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN A FARMING
COMPOUND THE CASE OF TRIANGLE, TONGAAT HULETT ESTATES**

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ABSTRACT

The study set out to investigate mobile consumption patterns in Triangle, Tongaat Hulett Estates. It sought to unravel the trends in mobile phone use amongst this community and the gratifications they derive from it. The study was informed by the uses and gratifications theory and the digital divide concept. Data was obtained through qualitative interviews and participant observation. Thematic analysis was deployed to analyse the data obtained from findings. The study found that people use mobile phones as gadgets for basic communication, mobile wallets, prestigious purposes, social networking and for downloading and storing information. The research concluded that mobile usage patterns in a farming compound differ per individual depending on age, attitude, income and literacy levels among other factors which determine the extent to which one uses the device.

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ACRONYMYS

ICT- Information Communication Technology

SMS- Short Message Services

THE- Tongaat Hulett Estates

U&G- Uses and Gratifications Theory

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is often argued that marginalised areas in Zimbabwe are the most disadvantaged in terms of technology adoption due to the remoteness of the areas and the lack of technical know-how among individuals. However, with the growing literacy rate among youths in the country and widespread diffusion of Information Communication Technology (ICTs), previously excluded communities have adopted the use of mobile phones to bridge the digital gap and ease the way of communication. This research explores mobile phone consumption patterns in Triangle specifically on the Tongaat Hulett Estates (THE). Numerous researches have been done on the subject by scholars who focused on impacts of mobile phones on rural consumers, usage of mobile phones among students and mobile phone adoption in Africa (Scott et al 2004; Aoki and Downes 2004). This study seeks to explore how people of different ages, occupations and locations within Triangle use mobile phones.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The history of mobile phones dates back to the mid-90s (Sager 2012) and its arrival to the Sub-Saharan continent dates later in the century. On their most primitive arrival, mobile phones were mostly used for communicating messages and voices. However, they have advanced over the years to include multiple functions and applications such as entertainment and data storage. A mobile phone also known as a cellular phone is a generally defined and described according to its features and functions. The Webopedia define the mobile phone as, “an electronic telecommunications device that connect a wireless communications network through radio wave and or satellite transmissions.” They are advanced media gadgets with several fashionable features and functions that eases social networking and communication. This research is concerned with mobile phone adoption, access and usage in the farming compound understanding how mobile phone usage is influenced by different factors.

The mobile phone has caught up well with Zimbabwean populace and is rapidly being integrated into people’s lifestyles due to its appealing functionalities like sending and storage of media files ranging from documents, music, videos and text messages. Mobile phones’ adoption by people of different ages, occupations and demographics across the country has also been attributed to their portability and multi-function. Mobile phones have penetrated into communities and

reshaped people's daily practises and culture through making communication easier and reducing distance among other things.

Previously, people relied on the postal and telephone services to transmit and receive messages across regions. With increasing developments and progression in Zimbabwe's economy the use of mobile phones has arisen over the years. According to a 2016 survey report by POTRAZ the country's mobile phone penetration rose to 95.4% from 92.8% in the previous years. This research makes a thrive to find out the current trends in mobile use in the sugar farming compound of Triangle and the influences to ownership patterns and access to mobile phones in the estate.

Triangle being a sugar farming estate, is a peri-urban area which is a rationally modern community due to the flourishing sugar business profits from the milling services which are used to maintain and upgrade the estate. It is sheltered under the roof of Chiredzi District. Being an estate, Triangle is among what Roggers (1995) terms the 'late majority adopters to technology' due to the fact that it is more often characterised under the rural communities. Employees are categorised according to importance of their work and the salaried accordingly, thus one of the main aims of the research is to uncover the extent to which class influence mobile phone ownership among individuals per household. The research brings to light some of the reasons and explain why consumption patterns generally tend to be decentralised despite the grading.

Triangle is also divided into segment of settlements which include Section 19, Rufaro A to C, Mufakose and Nzimbe location to mention a few. Most parts of the community however lack facilities such as electricity and are less spacious especially for lower grades who include cane cutters and other general workers. The research also takes into account these and other factors in order to come about a conclusion to explain the reasons behind different mobile phone usages in the area.

The concept of mobile phone consumption in farming compounds has been previously researched in foreign nations like India and Bangladesh by scholars who focused more and gave emphasis to effects of mobile phone consumption rather than inspiration to ownership and usage. Scholars like Goggin (2006) who in their research found out that mobile phones are at the centre of the vast information transfer in communication and the media also managed to come up with

its importance in relation to other media and the idea of modernity. Thus, the researcher seeks to find if people from Triangle adopt the mobile phone as a device for entertainment as well as a sign of modernity. The research seeks to identify the different segments in the community and study how they identify with the mobile phone.

On the other hand, numerous studies have been conducted on different aspects of the mobile phone ranging from advantages of usage to effects on health among different demographics in the African and Western continents. This research therefore, make every effort to explain on the influence to ownership, access and usage of mobile phones in the case study which has not thoroughly been looked into by these scholars. The study looks more into this subject providing a more detailed research to deepen understanding on the case study and add literature on Zimbabwean communities.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research aims to build an understanding of mobile phone usage patterns in a farming community and motivations to ownership of the gadgets. It also seeks to investigate access and utilisation patterns of mobile phones in the area of study, Triangle, to broaden the knowledge on what has been done and what is yet to be done by technology. The study is significant to both the company and the business world as well as the community at large and other researchers in the area to enhance business and social communications. Being a reputable company, the research aids to improve the current communication trends between the organisation and its stakeholders and the community at large to permit better flow of information.

There is relatively little literature in the context of mobile phone usage in farming compounds and peri-urban areas however, a number of research papers have been written on mobile phone adoption in Africa, mobile banking patterns in Zimbabwe and others on advantages of mobile communication for farmers in nations like India, Finland and Japan. Scholars like Aker and Mbiti (2010:208) asserts that, “mobile phones have greatly reduced communication costs, thereby allowing individuals and firms to send and to obtain information quickly and cheaply on a variety of economic, social, and political topics.” The purpose of study is to explain the different reasons and main influences to ownership and usage of mobile phones within the case study as well as hindrances to ownership and others setbacks to usage of the devices.

The research also seeks to explain the political economy of the new media in a farming compound and bring out the reasons for the digital divide in the area. It traces the most preferred functions on the mobile phones and their role in enhancing communication in the community. Oksman (2010) explains that mobile phones are a medium in themselves and should not be undermined when studying media. I chose to examine the mobile phone as a form of media because it is an all-inclusive medium with various qualities that unite old and new forms of media features and thus would make my research more remarkable and practical. The mobile phone is also one of the most advanced media which is more convenient for all ages, thus I selected to study this as it seemed more significant in the digital era. The area of study, Triangle, has a sizeable number of people who contribute to the majority population of the country, therefore the community caught my attention to study since it is one of the major sugar producing companies in the Lowveld with little studies conducted in the area in relation to mobile phone ownership and consumption.

This research is therefore of great importance as it aims to patch gaps in the study of mobile phones and provide in depth information on the case study and help in the socio-economic development of the area. It also seeks to improve communications patterns in the community.

1.4 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The main aim of this research is to trace the usage patterns of mobile phones in a farming compound, which is Triangle as the case study. The area houses dynamic cultures and religions resulting from intermarriages of employees from different walks of life and therefore, my research intends to find out how these and other factors like age, gender and class affect and contribute to the consumption of mobile phones within the area. Very little (if any) studies have been carried out in the area concerning media usage although the area houses a great number of workers across diverse departments. Therefore, my study also aims to find out consumption patterns among people of different levels in terms of income, class and demographics.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the mobile phones consumption patterns in a farming compound in the case of Triangle Tongaat Hulett Estates.
2. Explain the different trends in mobile phone consumption patterns in the case of Triangle Tongaat Hulett Estates.

3. Examine the possible influences to mobile phone consumption patterns in the area under study.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the major consumption patterns of mobile phones in Triangle, Tongaat Hulett Estates?

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2. To what extent do different usages reflect diversity in audiences among user demographics?
3. Which are the main socio-economic factors prompting mobile phone consumption?

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses more on Triangle THE especially the sub-divisions housing its employees and others from complimentary organisation within the area's boundaries. It studies in detail Rufaro A, Rufaro C and the senior staff yards. It focuses within the time frame between February 2018 and April 2018. The study is limited to this time frame in order to obtain more realistic results through selection of audiences for study since the area is broad.

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS

- Mobile phone usage in Triangle is high among students, youths and the working class especially the high income earners.
- Consumption patterns for mobile phones in Triangle is mainly influenced by income, electricity, network services and gender issues.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In Zimbabwe we have numerous districts, towns and cities, study findings are based on research entirely limited to Triangle and may therefore not be convenient or usable in other areas. The findings obtained may also be affected by individuals unwilling to cooperate or those who provide false information which may spoil end results. This kind of research also needs to be undertaken often to obtain realistic and up-to-date information as patterns continually change with the times. A lot of time and commitment is required in order to conduct the research and

come up with rich and relevant data for the study, thus the results found may not be as exhaustive.

1.10 SUMMARY

This research strives to explore the existing consumption patterns of mobile phones in the area under study. It also aims to cover the gap on how different genders, ages and occupations within Triangle appreciate and use mobile phones as well as to uncover the problems that hinder consumption among different people.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone consumption patterns, in modest terms, are practices by which individuals classify, purchase and consume mobile devices and their related services to suit their perceived needs. This research takes into consideration findings from previous related studies to get an insight of the possible factors influencing usage behaviors. The notion of mobile phone usage in social contexts has not received much attention by researchers as compared to research on engineering and policy aspects of mobile technologies (Aoki and Downes, 2004). Although numerous scholars have released research papers on mobile phone usage patterns, most studies focused more on specific demographics and not entire societies. According to a survey by Donner (2008), very little research has been conducted by economists on the subject of mobile phone coverage and adoption and the few available researches focused more on diffusion rather than individual adoption (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2003). The lack of literature on mobile phone consumption patterns is attributed some by scholars as related to limitedness or inaccuracy of data on individual handset ownership among other factors. This research strives to fill in the existing gap of literature on mobile phone consumption in small communities.

2.2 Mobile phones as a symbol for modernity

Mobile phone preference is related to its more personal use and privacy compared to the telephone. A number of scholars are of the view that mobile consumption in any given area is high among students as they regard the devices with some sense of freedom and liberty (Tirfe & Nittala 2015). Students and the youth are said to adopt the mobile phone fast due to the need for freedom of communication without parental control. In view of that, the researcher seeks to find out the determinants of mobile phones consumption in a farming compound to verify the extent to which findings from previous researches apply to the area under study.

The increase in use of mobile phones has also been associated with modern ICT trends, which make them more accessible compared to traditional media in terms of cost, geographical coverage and ease of use (Obono 2016). Goggin (2006) associates mobile phones with the idea of modernity and says that they are the centre of vast information in communication. Influence to mobile phone consumption is therefore associated with the fact that mobile phones are interactive platforms that allows interactivity between old and new media (McQuail 2010;

Chartterjee 2014). People can now send replies to television and radio programs via social platforms and feel engaged in decision making in competitions. Mobile phones have developed functionalities typical of other media such as built in cameras and are therefore more sophisticated. This research seeks to uncover the trends in consumption patterns and clarify the extent to which they are influenced by these factors explaining whether or not people in Triangle are driven to use mobile phones by the motive to a sense of modernity.

Mobile phones consumption in the light of modernity can also be attributed to the fact that it bridges the gap between the poor and the elite. Mobile phones are noted to be making opportunities available for Zimbabwe to leapfrog development stages as many Zimbabweans' first experience of the internet is through the mobile phone (Ndlovu and Ndlovu 2013). Numerous scholars note that mobile phones, in developing countries, have taken over at a more rapid speed replacing the fixed telephone even in areas where it had never been established, thus facilitating a technological leapfrog and competitiveness for underdeveloped regions. However, some scholars argue that the idea of consumption in relation to modernity was prominent during the early years of mobile phones as people associated it was seen as providing people with a higher degree of individuality in terms of communication and social assembling (Townsend 2000; Mäenpää 2001; Holfich 2005). The research pursues to find out the extent to which the adoption of mobile phones as a sign of modernity is applicable in Triangle.

Usage patterns of mobile phones are associated to its features and advanced technologies that connect old and new media allowing the user to choose from a wide range of functions. Wei (2008) notes that smartphone technology allows the user to talk, text, surf the Internet, initiate and end relationships, and take and make photographs available to others, all in one social communication device. The youth relate more to the mobile phone as a reflection of their lifestyle and personality as well as representation of body and expression of self-identity. Ling (2001) notes that the definition of the mobile phones "tacky, vulgar, cool or impressive" contribute to its usage patterns. The usage of mobile devices is therefore influenced by age and other factors such as phone colour, shape, weight, price, functional capabilities, and brand name among others. The research aims to find out if the youth in Triangle use mobile phones as a device for self-identification, and if so to establish the extent to which they do so.

2.3 The mobile phone as a tool for banking and business transactions

“The terms m-banking, m-payments, m-transfers, m-payments, and m-finance refer collectively to a set of applications that enable people to use their mobile telephones to manipulate their bank accounts, store value in an account linked to their handsets, transfer funds, or even access credit or insurance products” (Donner & Tellez 2008:2). The use of mobile phones in Zimbabwe’s rural areas has been noted by Musungwini et al (2014) to be growing as a result of the introduction of mobile money in the midst of cash crisis and economic breakdown. Mobile banking is described as a transformational innovation, Musungwini et al (2014), which has caused interesting changes in some societal and business institutions (Oksman 2010). Mobile banking has also promoted the use of mobile phones in marginalised areas due to its complimentary features to existing institutions and its ushering in of new ways of doing business.

Mobile phone use for banking is rapidly expanding due its efficiency and effectiveness in serving people. Koskinen (2008) explained that the embracing of mobile transactions in countries like Ghana and Nigeria is attributed to the loss of trust in local currency and banks due to inflation and other economic hardships. Koskinen (2008) also states that mobile banking becomes the real currency in such cases and this example can also be applicable to Zimbabwe as a nation which has over the years faced similar challenges. However there remains an unresolved question about the extent to which mobile phones consumption is influenced by mobile banking in rural and peri-urban communities. It also remains unanswered whether the Triangle community also uses mobile phones for banking purposes. The study seeks to find out if it does and if yes, how the mobile phone is deployed in these mobile phone banking transactions, by who and for what purposes.

Usage of mobile phones for business transactions has also been said to be high among women as it promotes and accommodates both formal and informal livelihoods. In a study conducted by Musungwini et al (2014) on mobile banking and rural women, they established that women who engage in clubs (round tables) are most familiar with mobile banking as they store generated money in these accounts. The study reviewed that this promotes usage of mobile phones as it acts as a window of opportunity promoting socio-economic development of women. The study seeks to establish whether this is true of Triangle Estates women. If not, the study seeks to

establish whether this could be because of their geographical location. In other words, it seeks to also establish whether gender, class, and geographical location have a bearing on mobile phone use patterns. This is significant considering that Musungwini et al (2014) study seems to suggest that gender, location (rural), class and/or economic activities determine mobile phone use patterns amongst the rural women.

Mobile banking has also been discovered to encourage increase in mobile phone usage as it offers an opportunity to serve what Lufumpa et al (2010) terms the “unbanked” referring to those without bank accounts. Lufumpa et al (2010) also notes that the unbanked people are a heterogeneous group which includes the poor, rural dwellers and people with sufficient incomes from informal sources. The rapid usage of mobile phones among marginalised people is also associated with the convenience of the mobile banking system which is accessible in remote areas allowing people to sell, buy and make payments without time restrictions as noted by Ndlovu and Ndlovu (2013). It also allows people to make money transfers, deposits and storage independent of bank accounts over secured networks. Fengler (2012) notes that mobile money attracted high demand in previous financially excluded communities because it is regarded as safe, fast, cheap, and has slight infrastructure requirements Henceforth, my study seeks to discover the extent to which the mobile phone has appealed to the Triangle populace provided its banking capacity which accommodates the informal sector and the non-working class.

2.4 Mobile phones as a tool bridging the digital divide

The digital gap in Zimbabwe is slowly and steadily narrowing due to the blur of divisions in the ownership and access of ICTs promoted by the introduction of mobile phones. Rice and Katz (2003:599) point that, “previous studies which pointed out that the adoption rates are first higher in cities but differences between urban and rural regions tend to shrink as telecommunications become more affordable.” Mobile phones are playing a pivotal role in covering the ICT gap in previously left out communities due to cheapened access. Contrast to previous decades, nowadays it is much easier to secure a mobile phone and SIM-card as the prices have drastically dropped over the years. Mobile phones which used to be a luxury are no longer a preserve for the rich elite as low-income earning Zimbabweans in rural and peri-urban areas now have access. The researcher seeks to discover the extent to which consumption patterns of mobile phones in

Triangle THE is stimulated by the advent of cheap products and other non-original devices which sell for half the price of original and leading brands.

Mobile phone usage in rural communities has also been attributed to the fact that it accommodates the illiterate through the implementation of user friendly applications. It has blurred the gap through provision of applications that allows the use of local languages giving tutorials in text, voice and video form to assist users. Davis (1989) reveals the idea of perceived efficacy and ease of use as the most cited factors that influence the attitude and behavioral intentions of a person towards consumption of mobile phones. On the contrary, Anjum (2015) mentions other factors contributing to mobile phone usage challenges as the lack of proper computer education, gender differences, trust, infrastructure, electricity, security issues, government interest, low income, high cost and user friendly mobile application designing. The researcher strives to discover the extent to which illiteracy, low income, electricity and mobile designs affect the mobile usage patterns in Triangle given that Anjum (2010) asserts these factors as major challenges to mobile usage.

Mobile phone consumption among the rural populace has been greatly attributed to the fact that it is more affordable than other ICT and require less groundwork. Pimenidis et al. (2009) argue that mobile devices and networks can offer accessibility to internet services to large masses of people who are currently deprived of these due to lack of infrastructure. In contrast, McQuail (2010: 57) argues that "...the cost of technology continues to favour the same already privileged beneficiaries as does the development in infrastructure and management systems..." Van Dijk (2005) contends that the digital divide within the developing countries is most likely to continue rising, due to the unequal ranking of areas when undergoing development. These scholars affirm that usage in remote remains areas remains low due to unfair prioritisation in development. The researcher thus seeks to find out if mobile consumption in Triangle is limited by the slowness of development in the area and determine the extent to which development affects usage.

2.5 Mobile phone championing social inclusion

The rising need for everyday social interaction has seen the mobile phone being classified as a need rather than a want. Due to the availability of multiple social platform which appeal to all age groups, nowadays people tend to spent most of their time on the mobile phone. According a study by Sife et al. (2010:1) "Mobile phones contribute to reduce poverty and improve rural

livelihood by expanding and strengthening social networks, increase people's ability to deal with emergencies and cut down travel costs, maximise the outcomes of necessary journeys, increase temporal accessibility and amplify efficiency activities". The availability of such convenient tasks on mobile phones has been discovered in previous studies to promote the device's usage.

The widespread use of cell phones for information, entertainment, business and personal communications made the gadgets central and popular technology in the 21st century (Lundquist et al 2014). These scholars describe mobile phones as pervasive and all-inclusive media for conducting both private and public affairs thus people from developing parts of the country are pushed to own mobile phones to gain a sense of involvement and inclusion in the digital era. Lehr (2007) notes that mobile phones usage is shifting the lives of many users in developing countries and as they are extensively recognized as an important existing and forthcoming technology platform for developing nations. The research also aims to determine the extent to which integrated nature of the mobile devices has promoted the use of mobile phones for online socialising in the peri-urban area under study.

Mobile phones have also been noted to have become popular due to their ability to shorten time and space. Oksman (2010) posits that mobile phone has been considered as a means of individual communication, social inclusion, empowerment and liberation from fixed locations and timelines. He brings to light the idea that some people use phones to blur the line between their underdeveloped areas and other developed areas through communication. McQuail (2010: 156) claims that, "you do not need to be rich and powerful to have a presence on the World Wide Web." He dismisses the idea that internet usage is influenced by wealth. McQuail (2010: 157) also reveal that "the possession of the right technology does open doors to new possibilities for information and intercommunication irrespective of the level of development of one's own home place". Therefore, the researcher seeks to explore if the idea of social inclusion has been strong enough to drive motivation for mobile phone consumption in the peri-urban society under study. It also seeks to ascertain whether or not class does affect internet usage.

The advent of social platforms that provide entertainment and interaction has promoted the use of mobile devices. Sife et al. (2010) notes that mobile phones permit the flow of interactions as they bridge the gap of distance, time and space. Tacchi et al. (2003) also notes that mobile

phones influence existing community ecologies, and thus promote usage among the rural populace as they feel socially included in the digital age through interacting with others from different walks of life and across borders through social networks like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. The social platform permit the creation of profiles that allows people to escape reality, to create and maintain new identities they want (Ling 2006). The researcher seeks to verify the extent to which the mobile phone is deployed as a device for social interaction and show how this contributes to different trends of usage among different people within Triangle community.

Summary

Different levels of mobile phones usage patterns in marginalised areas has been noted to be dependent on a number of factors which include attitude, class, and motivation, age and affordance as highlighted by previous studies. Consumption patterns were also noted to vary with age with the youth being most active participators. The researcher strives to verify the discussed themes in this chapter and link their relevance to the study. The researcher seeks to find out whether the themes are applicable in Triangle, THE residents and explore the extent to which they influence mobile phone usage in the area paying particular attention to age, class and gender.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.6 Introduction

My study utilises the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) as well as the digital divide concept to investigate the use of mobile phones in the farming compound of Triangle, the case of THE. The approach has been previously used by media researchers to study the satisfactions related with the use of different forms of media such as newspapers, television, social platforms and the internet. Thus, the utilisation of the U&G Theory on mobile phone use is associated with the idea that individuals use the device to appreciate their needs for interpersonal communication. It gives the people autonomy of decision making on what to do with the media and focuses on how and why individuals use the media that is the behaviour and motivation of media users. The research uses this theory to explain how people from peri-urban area decode and interpret the mobile phone to satisfy their perceived needs. The digital divide concept on the other hand, is a complimentary concept that is useful in explaining the differences in consumption among people in less favoured parts of the country and those at the heart of the nation. The technological gap in

marginalised areas is subject to different social, cultural, technological, and political constraints. Hence, the digital gap is of importance to this research as it concerned with explaining the forces behind lack of access and hindrance to participation as well as the reasons associated with exclusion of the marginalised in the digital information society era.

2.7 Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory was propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974 after revising the two step theory Katz had worked on with Lazarsfeld in 1955. McQuail (2010), however claims that the theory can be traced back to the early 1940's when researchers started investigating why people listen to popular radio programmes and why they read newspapers daily. The theory materialised in response to the needs of explaining why people use certain media and the benefit they obtained from the selected device. The basic assumption of the theory is that people use mass media for different reasons and seek to derive various gratifications (Asemah, 2011). It is interested in why audiences engage in various forms of media behaviour, focusing on the consumer rather than the message by asking "what people do with media" rather than "what media does to people" (Katz et al 1974:12). The theory admits that the audience are considerably active in seeking media that best satisfy their needs. At the core of the theory is the user's ability to be in control of media usage. The relevance of the theory to this study rests in explaining how people use mobile phones to discover underlying motives and determine whether or not it is users actively select content.

The theory seeks to understand the patterns in audiences' active selection and utilisation of content for individual purpose. Katz realised that audiences are not passive but rather active participants who use the media to satisfy personal needs and goals. He claims that it is the person who makes sense of the media in his or her hand. The uses approach assume that people's values, interests, associations, and their social roles are pre-potent and thus people selectively fashion what they see and hear to these interests (Katz,1995). Katz explains the theory highlighting that mass media content emerges to fulfil individual needs and goals enabling a society to function more effectively. The theory is important in order to explain how users actively select mobile phone content to suit their desired needs.

The theory is also a contradiction to previous theories such as the Magic Bullet Theory which overstated influence of the media and underestimated the power of the audience in decision

making and selection. The key tenets of the theory according to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) are that the audience is active and its media use is goal oriented. These scholars posit that people have various uses (needs) they seek to satisfy through media therefore audience members take initiative to link need gratification to a specific media. They also point that the media compete with other sources for need satisfaction thus people have enough self-awareness of their own media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that use. Therefore, the study utilises the U&G theory in order to find out how mobile phones are used consciously despite competition with other media devices.

Apart from that, Katz et al (1974) in their research came up with five uses according to which needs for media use can be grouped. McQuail (2010) notes that the audience seek the media because they want to be informed or educated, identify with characters of the situation in the media environment, simple entertainment, enhance social interaction and escape from the stresses of daily life. Blumler (1979) summarises the active audience as characterised by utility, intentionality, selectivity and imperviousness to influence. The theory is therefore important for this study in order to understand the different dimensions of needs and the possible motives for consumption of mobile devices among people with diverse tastes.

In the context of mobile phone consumption, the U&G theory is useful in order to explain the different patterns of usage and understand why people adopt the mobile phone as a device of choice. Pertierra (2007) notes that mobile phone users are able to invent functions and services then dedicate developments of this service. Mobile phone consumption patterns are therefore influenced by individual decisions on what one wishes to do with the device individually. The U&G theory is hence crucial in understanding mobile phone usages in the area under study, as a device with distinct and attractive characteristics. It also helps to explain the different levels in gratifications based on functions and applications of mobile phones and explain why people prefer choices such as mobile banking and games or the internet. The theory helps to give a clear analysis of how individuals actively select desired functions on mobile devices for their benefit disregarding alternatives.

As Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) noted in their theory, people have their own needs before they use the media and therefore their use is consciously driven by the motive to satisfy a

personal need. Ling (2004:23-24) notes that, “although a mobile phone is designed primarily as a communication device, it can conceivably function as a type of hammer, a shoehorn, a bottle opener or even a type of flashlight depending on the inventiveness of the user.” Hence, the theory is significant in explaining why users adopt mobile phones as well as the individual differences that drive them to seek different uses for the device. McOmber (1999) argues that the relationship between technology and culture is an outcome of human choices from the usage of internet as an education or entertainment medium. Therefore, the study also seeks to find out how individuals in Triangle select technology according to their needs and relevance to their culture.

2.8 Digital Divide Concept

Digital divide is explained by Fuchs and Horack (2008) as a situation where people have unequal access to the information and communication technology. Pertierra (2007b) maintains that the digital divide does not refer only to the ownership of a mobile phone or physical access. He identifies that critical factors, such as literacy and cognitive as well as socio-cultural capital greatly determine the actual access to mobile information technology. The term was coined in the early 1990s to explain the difference in information and communication, especially internet, usage between the developed and the developing countries. Pimenidis et al (2009) reveals that, despite the evolution of the World Wide Web, the digital divide continues to be an acute problem for most of the governments. The nature and characteristics of the digital divide determined by a number of factors, which includes the availability of technology, connectivity, literacy and ability to use information systems. The digital divide the gap can also be defined across different sections of societies within the same country as well as across rural and urban areas (Pimenidis et al, 2009).

The concept explains the differences between the included and the excluded in the digital era. Warschauer (2011) explains the digital divide as a social stratification that exists due to unequal ability to access, adapt, and create knowledge via use of ICT. According to Yu (2002), the digital divide exists along lines including, education, income, ethnicity, geography, infrastructure and disability but it is not limited to these conditions alone. The research utilises this concept in order to find out the role being played by the mobile phone in bridging existing digital gap among people in the area under study.

The digital divide is also defined in terms of unequal access to use information and communication technologies. Fuchs and Horak (2008) claim that the digital divide can be divided into different categories which result in different types of social divide. The first category, material access, is related to the availability of hardware, software, applications, networks, and the usability of ICT devices and applications (Van Dijk and Hacker, 2003). Fuchs and Horak mentions usage and skills as the second category which is associated with the capabilities needed for operating ICT hardware and applications for producing online content and for engaging in online connections and applications. The scholars explain the third category as benefit access which deals with ICT usage that benefits the individual and advances a good society for all. As noted by Fuchs and Horak (2008), institutional access as the fourth and final category involves participation of citizens in institutions that govern the internet. Therefore, the digital divide concept is important explaining usage patterns in Triangle as it is measured not along one but various categories that help determine the setbacks for digital inclusion in the community under study.

The introduction of the mobile phone presented new ways to get the previously excluded communities into inclusion as mobile phones allow easier access to the internet as compared to computers. Bush (1991) views technology as a form of human activity that applies the principle of science and mechanics to the solution of problems. Tomaselli and Dunn (2001) notes that, what may be regarded as low technology in another area may be high technology in another society. As pointed by these scholars, the division between the included and the excluded in the information age is being bridged by the mobile phone which the people regard as high technology. The digital divide concept is important to get a clear understanding of how and why the people in the area under study make use of mobile phones for internet connection as well as the extent to which they use it.

The rapid increase in the use of mobile phone is argued to be raising hopes to bridge the digital gap faster through provision of services to people living in rural and remote areas. Jackson (2004) notes that ICTs have the capacity to decrease marginalization and empower people by giving access to information. Pimenidis et al (2009) also points that, mobile devices and networks can offer accessibility to e-services to large masses of people who are currently deprived of these due to lack of infrastructure, and are exposed to the ill effects of the digital

divide. Fuchs and Horak (2008) point that structural inequality in society is the main cause for different types of the digital divide such as the global, gender, ethnical, age, income, educational, and abilities divide. Thus, the digital concept is significant for my research in order to explain how the structural inequality noted by Fuchs and Horak (2008) affects usage patterns of mobile phones for internet purposes in the area under study.

The digital divide concept is crucial in explaining why the usage patterns in remote areas differ despite mobile phones' affordability, accessibility, self-sustenance and empowerment. As much as mobile phones provide a wide range of services at reasonably low cost, digital divide comes in to explain the various challenges that differentiates the consumption levels for people in marginalised areas compared to those in the cities. Sarker and Wells (2003) notes that there is clear need to understand why users adopt mobile devices as the possession and use of a mobile phone by consumers does not guarantee its use for beneficial commercial purposes. Hence, this concept is also central in explaining constraints to digital participation among people in a farming compound.

2.9 SUMMARY

This section highlighted, discussed and justified the usefulness and relevance of the Uses and Gratifications theory as well as the Digital dive concept to the study of mobile phones. The U&G theory is key in explaining how people in Triangle attend to different information needs through mobile usage. The digital divide concept is key in enlightening whether or not the penetration of mobile phones has substantively contributed to reducing the digital divide in Triangle community. Mobile phones regarded as more appealing and viable tools because they are global. The research pursues to explain mobile phone as an alternative way for people to access the internet through an experience which is easier than desktop computers to determine the extent of digital participation among the people under study and verify whether or not there is digital inactivity despite ownership of the devices.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses in detail, the research design, the population sample or unit of analysis, and the sampling procedure. It also shows and justifies the validity and reliability of the methods of data collection, analysis and presentation. The chapter takes into account the ethical considerations and the relevant methods of data gathering that the research utilises.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study utilises qualitative research methods. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research involves an interpretation in a naturalistic approach to the world. It attempts to make sense of and to interpret situations in natural settings. Qualitative research methods are advantageous since they provide in-depth information through studying people in their natural settings to obtain first-hand information that includes detailed notes obtained through keeping good records and recognising the uniqueness of the people, the setting and material under study (Priest 2010). It also allows the flow of unexpected ideas and thus gives the researcher room to construct community meanings on mobile phone usage. It is an inside approach to research. My study utilises qualitative research approach with an intent to obtain first-hand and rich information on the usage patterns of mobile phones among different demographics in a farming compound and the prompts for usage. However qualitative research is said to be more difficult and requires good analytical skills and a high systematic approach although there are high chances of selecting relevant informants.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research utilises a case study. Bell (1999) explains a case study as an appropriate approach for individual researchers as it gives opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in-depth within a limited time scale. It is used to narrow down a broad field of research into a few easily researchable examples. The case study research design is also useful for testing specific theories and models and their applicability to the real world.

A case study research method is explained “as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin 1984:23). Case studies allows the researcher to explore complex issues as well as to

closely examine the data within a specific context. The researcher studies Triangle, THE as the case study. The study investigates contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of how people make use of mobile phones in their everyday life using a limited number people, events and their relationships within the community. Thus, a case study is important for the research as a method that helps to answer and explain research questions as well as to define the statement of problem through encounter and interaction with the people selected for research.

The research specifically employs the descriptive research design of case study. Descriptive case studies describe the natural situation which occur within the data in question. The challenge associated with descriptive case study is that the researcher must begin with a theory to support the phenomenon, in this case the U&G theory is utilised. Descriptive research design is also crucial in the study as it covers the characteristics of people, socio-economic characteristics as well as other characteristics like age, education and income and note how these influence usage patterns. The nature of the data includes the peoples' knowledge of mobile phones, attitudes towards the technology and their opinions on the usage in their respective locations. This is useful in analysing patterns data collected from people of diverse backgrounds. A case study is advantageous because as it allows researcher to describe data in real-life and also help to explain complex situations which may not be captured through other methods. It also helps to get a variety of responses which allows for data to be categorised. However, this research design also has disadvantages as it is difficult to conduct, lacks rigor and gives results that are difficult to generalise.

3.4 RESEARCH POPULATION

The research analyses the residence Triangle, THE specifically from Rufaro A, Rufaro C areas and the senior staff yards between February 2018 and April 2018 following how these people of different backgrounds make use of mobile phones. The researcher interviewed individuals from selected households with different ranks and lifestyles using the company's ordering of residence according to grade at work. The studied population was characterized by diversity. It included school going children (secondary), young adults (youths) and adults (working and non-working). The research studied people with varied occupations from the groups in the communities. The study also considered people with different technological skills as well as those without to obtain

the varied reasons for consumption among population under study. A total of forty-eight people were interviewed.

3.5 SAMPLING APPROACH

The research also employ purposive sampling to collect data from different households. Purposive sampling will be adopted in this regard to avoid excluding key people and reliable informants in the area. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique which performs selection of informants from population based on their characteristics and the purpose of the study. It involves the judgement of the researcher on selection of who to study or interview and also focuses on characters of interest who will best answer the research questions.

The researcher also intends to specifically use maximum variation sampling, a method in which participants are deliberately sought according to information required by the analysis as the study progresses. This method is appropriate as it allows the researcher to save time through going straight to relevant informants for the study. It is also a useful method for this research as it ensures the capturing of wide range of perspectives relating to the topic under study. However, purposive sampling has shortfalls since it does not give enough representation data on the majority of people. It gives a general qualitative understanding on how the population appreciates and makes use of mobile phones.

3.6 METHODS OF DATA GATHERING

This section presents the methods of data collection specifically interviews and participant observations. It explains the methods and justifies them.

3.6.1 INTERVIEWS

This study utilises interviews to gather data. Berger (2014) asserts the simple definition of an interview as a conversation between a researcher and an informant. The research made use of unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In an unstructured interview the researcher clearly has aims for the research and a topic of study (Edwards and Holland 2013). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of key themes, issues, and questions to be covered. This type of interview allows change in the order of the questions depending on the direction of the interview. These methods are of importance as they allow the interviewee to talk from their own perspective using their own reference, ideas and meanings which are familiar to them. Edwards and Holland (2013:30), note that flexibility allows the researcher “to develop unexpected themes

and adjust the content of interviews and possibly the emphasis of the research as a result of issues that emerge in any interview.” Thus, interviews are an advantageous method that ensures discovery of other important themes the researcher might have overlooked.

The researcher conducted face to face interviews with residents of Triangle, THE who included staff members and employees from other local companies and schools in the area. Other interviewees included school children, non-working graduates, sales people (vendors), carpenters and maidens from selected households. The researcher approached individuals from households in order to obtain varied information from a wide range of people as usage differs per person. Although there are other areas which houses low income areas, the researcher chose Rufaro C which is inhabited mainly by workers with grade ‘A’. These have the lowest income in the company and include non-qualified and general workers such as messengers and cleaners. The researcher also chose Rufaro A to interview medium income earners. This area houses a great number of grade B workers. This rank is related to people with decision making muscle and those who worker under relative supervision reporting to delegated officials. The third selected area for study were the grade C senior staff yards which houses relatively high income earners including the senior management. However, the directors and executives, that is grade D and E, who are the highest income earners were excluded in study. This selection was done by the researcher so as to obtain information from different income levels and relate the extent to which the factor of income affects consumption patterns among these social groups given that education and experience play a crucial role in job and housing classification.

In terms of gender, the response rate was high among men as compared to women. Some of them were not willing to answer the questions thus, due to ethical reasons the researcher had to leave as convincing had failed. English and Shona were the main languages used by the researcher for the study in all areas as the local languages. A total number of forty eight interviews were conducted who included twenty nine men and nineteen women. Of these, five were teenagers (aged between 13 & 19), thirteen were youth (aged between 20 & 39) and the rest were considered mature and elderly people. Corporation and response rate was high in Rufaro A as people there were familiar with the researcher compared to the other areas.

3.6.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The study also utilises participant observation for data collection. It involves participation and observation of places, practises and people by the researcher who was born and bred in Triangle. Participant observation is suitable for the study as it allows the researcher to obtain meanings people attach to define and interact with mobile phones in their ordinary environments. Participant observation helps to learn more about people's daily activities through engagement and paying attention. Schensul et al (1999:91) defines participant observation as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting." Participation observation involves being a careful observer and a good listener, and being open to the unexpected in what is learned (DeWalt & DeWalt 1998). It also allows the researcher to observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share through interviews. The method is advantageous as it increases the validity of the study. The study uses participant observation in order to assist the researcher to have a better understanding of the different levels of appreciation to mobile technology at community level.

Participant observation also gives the researcher a better understanding of the trends of usage in mobile phones and lends credence to one's interpretations of the observations. Participant observation is crucial in my study as it helps in establishing why mobile phones are important for different income earners' as well as to understand the specific uses elders, women and youths associate with the device. It is also important for the study as it helps to uncover the everyday aspects that are taken for granted and hold them up for scrutiny. On the other hand, the weaknesses of participant observation includes the fact that it is not designed for generalising beyond the event, group or practice under study meaning to say the findings are specific and cannot be used to challenge the assumptions the researcher began with.

3.7 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This section discusses the methods of data analysis that the study deploys. It presents a description and justification of the thematic analysis.

3.7.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This study utilises thematic analysis to analyse the data collected. Thematic analysis is a process that consists of reading through textual data, identifying themes in the data, coding those themes, and then interpreting the structure and content of the themes (Guest et al, 2012). The researcher

uses this method to analyse the interviews and obtained data classifying content for consistency and redundancy. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify developing topics. It also allows for the researcher to organise key issues in data collection to be grouped under themes reflecting main relations in the research questions.

The research specifically applies on theoretical thematic analysis method. It is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and it is thus more analyst-driven. This form of thematic analysis provides less rich description of the overall data, and focus more on the detailed analysis of some aspects of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Having previously discussed themes such as mobile phone as a tool for mobile banking and business, the research uses the obtained results to draw conclusions and analyse data relating to the themes.

Thematic analysis is strategic because it is characterised by flexibility. It is a comparatively easy and quick method to learn and apply. It is also characterised by accessibility to researchers with little or no experience in the field of qualitative research. The method is also useful for summarising key features of a large body of data and can assist to highlight similarities and differences on the data collected. Thematic analysis can also generate unanticipated insights and allows for social as well as psychological interpretation of data. It illustrates the data in great detail and deals with diverse subjects via interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are a set of concepts and principles that guide us in determining what behaviour helps or harms sentient creatures (Paul and Elder 2006). One of the most important ethics to consider when collecting data for research from participants is honesty. The researcher must tell the people under observation that they are being studied as well as clarifying the purpose behind the motive. The researcher has to be ethical in order to ensure that the informants provide reliable and valid information. Ethical considerations are also important when gathering data to ensure that participants know and understand why the study is being conducted.

When collecting data, the researcher ought to be guided by this principle of informed consent. In the case of interviews, verbal consent is required. The interviewer informed the community, groups and individuals of the researcher's identity, purpose, topic of research and method to

ensure they were comfortable to engage in the study. Not everyone was willing to help in the study, therefore the researcher did not force or push the people into doing so for it is unethical.

The researcher also ought to protect the names of the participants who choose to remain anonymous and thus treat collected data with confidentiality where necessary. During the course of participant observation, the researcher must be sensitive to differences of age, gender, class, and culture issues. Agreement with parents is also important when interviewing teenagers, for it is unethical to interview young children without their parents' consent. The researcher must not force individuals to answer questions which they are not comfortable with.

The researcher must assess the risks they are likely to expose the respondent for example stress, before they pose sensitive questions (Gray, 2004). The researcher should obtain the right from authoritative bodies before undergoing the study to ensure no disturbances. The researcher should also be aware of data collection boundaries and avoid pushing limits to respect the legal expectations of the area.

3.10 SUMMARY

The chapter presents the research methodology for the study. Covered in the chapter is the research design, definition of the population sample and sampling methods. It also made justification on why different methods of data gathering were included. The two research instruments used are interviews and participant observation. Ethical considerations that were discussed include honesty, consent and knowledge of research boundaries which the researcher employed in the data collection process.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation. Presentation of information is done thematically. The researcher draws meaning from findings to highlight new discoveries obtained from the study. The main focus of this research is to find out the consumption patterns of mobile phones in a farming compound paying particular attention to how issues like income levels, age and gender affect people's usage of mobile devices. The researcher analyze how people from different walks of life make use of mobile technology to gratify their needs and also explain how the adoption of mobile phones in the area plays a crucial role in bridging the digital divide.

4.2 Mobile phones as a device for basic¹ communication

The research found that people from Triangle use the mobile phones mainly for basic communication. Information obtained from all interviews shows that most mobile phone users prioritise communication although the rate of communication differs from person to person. People from different walks of life make use of mobile phones to communicate with their distant relatives, children, friends and business partners as well as to call the hospital in times of emergencies. The study also revealed that people engage in different forms of communication switching between calling and messaging depending on the nature of the message to be communicated as well as the urgency. Literacy was also discovered as a factor that contributes to use of different modes of communication among the elderly who mostly engage in calling and receiving as messaging.

In the course of the study, the researcher found out different answers from respondents by asking the question: *What is the main use that you attach to your mobile phone?* A local shop salesman in his mid-fifties, had this to say when I approached him;

"...my phone is useful as I can send short and precise messages. Most of the time I communicate with my wife from work and my daughter who is studying in Harare. I prefer calling to text messaging..."

A sugar packing employee in her early thirties, said;

¹ In this study, basic communication refers to the use of calls and messages without internet connection

“My phone is my friend. I like my Samsung model because it allows me to communicate with friends through calls and messaging anytime and anywhere as long as I am within my network range.”

An apprentice in boiler-making in his mid-twenties, said;

“This mobile phone enables me to frequently communicate with my relatives, during times of hardships and emergencies like funerals and when I want to check on my parents. I also use my phone to call my bosses at work when I need to take time off or when I am not able to come to work.”

4.2.1 DISCUSSION

As noted from the quoted and recorded responses by the researcher, it can be noted that people in the farming compound of Triangle make use of mobile phones mainly for communication purposes. Mobile phones have recently been noted to be playing a much greater role in changing the landscape of communication in Africa more than in Europe (Hahn & Kibora 2008). The significance of mobile phones in Triangle as gadgets for communication can be related to its opportunity to include the once excluded people into the communication system. It is due to this idea that scholars like Cronin (2004) notes that the mobile phone is gaining popularity in cities and marginalized areas. This because the mobile phone promotes participation of people who had failed to buy telephone landlines. Triangle houses a great number of people from different walks of life who come in search of employment for the milling company, Tongaat Hulett. Therefore, the researcher found out that people in the area value mobile phones for communication to keep in touch with their families and relatives who stay in their original home-grown places.

The study also discovered that different individuals value mobile phone because of its ability to reduce distance and save time through communication. This supported by scholars like Sife et al. (2010) who points that mobile phones bridge the gap of distance, time and space. As a matter of fact, the people from Triangle make use of the mobile phones to gratify their needs to communicate with distant and immediate families and friends. Thus, the researcher observed that most employees work throughout the seasons and get one long holiday a year, therefore the mobile phone plays a crucial to keep in touch with their families when they cannot visit them

physically. Scott et al. (2004) admits that mobile phone is a cheap means of communication especially through SMS and beeping. Therefore, mobile phones have received warm acceptance by people in Triangle as they provide cheap ways of communication.

The research discovered that people within communities do not limit themselves to the general functions of the mobile phone as they engage in various kinds of communication to keep in touch with business partners and to connect with other people besides family. Other informants also indicated that they use the mobile phone to keep in touch with their doctors for checkups and to book appointments. From the discoveries made by the researcher, it can also be noted that different types of engagement in communication differ from person to person. Oudshoorn and Pinch (2003) point that technology does not explain its importance in everyday life but the use and context that people put mobile phones to is most important. Therefore, the idea of communication drove a number of mobile users in the studied area to appreciate the mobile technology as important although the context in which users associate with the gadgets differs.

4.3 Mobile phone as portable wallet

The researcher found out that people from Triangle use mobile phones as wallets to keep their money. They appreciate mobile phones for their convenience and mobility which allows them to receive, send and store money whenever and wherever they want. The research established that Econet Wireless is the most dominant network provider in the area which is associated with the use of mobile money. The use of mobile phones as wallets was discovered to have been prompted by economic hardships and the shortage of money in banks. Therefore, people appreciate mobile phones as mobile wallets which they can take money from to buy groceries, pay credits or school fees without hassles. The research found that the use of mobile wallets was prompted by the failure of the few banks in the area to house the large number of people who receive the salaries through them and therefore a great percentage of the population shifted adapted the mobile banking.

Below are quotations from various respondents who highlighted the connection with the mobile phone as a portable wallet for everyday transactions. Different answers were obtained in response to the question: *Besides communication, what is the other frequent use do you put your phone to?* A general worker in the parks and gardens department, in her late thirties answered;

“I’m in the business of selling chickens, so my phone is convenient for me as I can receive payments for my sales anywhere and anytime. I can also use the money from my wallet to buy new batch of chicks, vaccines and feeds. So my phone is my wallet.”

A mechanic in his early sixties, said;

“I shifted to mobile wallet at the peak of the economic crisis and officially registered my Ecocash account at work so that is where I receive my salaries now. I also use my phone as wallet because it is secure. I can receive money from clients for my part time car repair and welding business and use the money for the family upkeep.”

A form six student at a local school, said;

“My parents encouraged me to open an Ecocash account so that I can save my pocket money and earnings from my hairdressing business. The mobile phone is convenient for keeping money as I can buy data bundles for research or buy airtime without problems.”

A local house maid said;

“My phone is my bank account. With it I can store my salary or send money to my mother and buy groceries when I cannot go to the village in person.”

4.3.1 DISCUSSION

The researcher found that the quick adoption of mobile phones by people in Triangle can be attributed to the device’s capability of storing money through various network providers. People at different levels, social stratifications and hierarchies were noted by the researcher to be using the mobile phone as a wallet to store their salaries and receive money from personal business. The respondents pointed portability and security as some of the advantages for using mobile phones as wallets. The findings show that people gratify their needs for financial security and convenience through the use of mobile phones as portable wallets. This is also supported by Fengler (2012) who points that the high attraction of mobile phones to the previously financially excluded can be attributed to idea of safety and fastness. Responses also showed that the mobile wallet is used across all age groups. The non-working youth class reflected the mobile phone as a safe wallet where they can use money to buy airtime and other basics whenever they want to. Therefore, one can note that gratification occurs at different levels for different people.

Apart from that, the researcher also discovered that individuals make use of the mobile phone to satisfy different needs such as shopping, paying insurance and other bills as well as receiving debts. Women in projects were also discovered to be frequent users of mobile wallets. The research revealed that women make use of mobile phones to keep money from their mini-projects, informal businesses like chicken selling, round tables and salaries for the employed. This supported by scholars like Musungwini et al (2014) who in their study on how rural women, discovered that the provision of savings accounts by network providers has attracted the use of mobile phones by many as a portable wallet. Likewise man also use the mobile phone as a wallet to keep their proceeds from part time jobs like carpentry, shoe mending, car repair and welding among others. Therefore the mobile phone appealed to the majority in Triangle as it accommodates the previously unbanked (Lufumpa et al 2010) and those in informal jobs.

To add to that, the researcher also found that class and economic activities differentiates the extent to which people use the mobile phone as a wallet and the activities to which they undertake using the gadget. People with higher statuses engage in serious business transactions, payment of property tax and firm accounts as compared to those with lower ranks who engage in lending, borrowing and payment of small bills. Therefore, this distinguishes the extent to which different people make use of mobile wallets. The research also revealed that the majority of respondents identify with the mobile phone as a convenient wallet and this applied to all people regardless of class, gender or age. However, the researcher also found out that a smaller percentage of the people use their phones for mobile banking. This includes well established businessmen and people who use bank credit cards for transactions. These people use the mobile phones to check their balances as well as to make transfers.

4.4 Mobile phone as a source of prestige

The research established that a sizable percentage of people use mobile phone for prestigious purposes through interviews conducted with people on low salaries and the youth. The study revealed that despite low incomes, low salaried employees own expensive mobile phones which are purchased through monthly installments as facilitated by G-Tel in partnership with THE, Triangle at zero percent discount together with Telecel mobile network (currently). The drop in price is noted by Vortec (2004) to stimulate the high appreciation of mobile phones by low income earners. The study also revealed that despite the availability of higher priorities within

the households interviewed, most working men in the area owned a classy mobile phone as a 'status symbol'. Katz (2006:145) notes that the high prestige of mobile phones is based on their "unique capability to spatially delimit communication." The researcher managed to come up with different views on why people in the area value the mobile phone to forge their identities observing and listening to various statements.

When asked on the importance of mobile phones in his life, another respondent said;

"Everyone now has a mobile phone, hazvidi kusara vamwe vachingotsvaira so (I don't want to be left out when others are using touch screens)."

A plumber in his early forties said;

"...mazuvano phone svinu ine swag so, chero usiri pamhepo nevamwe as long as unayo chete (these days an expensive phone has status even when you are not connected the idea of just owning it is enough)."

Another male respondent observed by the researcher said;

"Phone yakanaka inechiremera, unobudisikawo pane vamwe muri kubhawa kana kubhora zvasiyana nechidhuura chinonyadzisa (a fancy phone has high status, you won't shy from showing it in public unlike the old models)."

4.4.1 DISCUSSION

Through understanding of the area and the set-up, the researcher came to understand the meaning of these seemingly innocent statements mentioned above and others. The researcher discovered that most low income earning men being feel intimidated by others when they meet at work and social places like the beer hall and the football club, therefore they are driven to own the fancy mobile phones to look classy. This is upheld by Nyamnjob (2004) who points that Africans make use of mobile phones in particular modes to counter their marginal status. Thus, the use of mobile phones as gadgets for self-representation and high class imitation was noted by the researcher to be high among low income earners who use the device to satisfy the need to move up the social ladder. The research found that the digital gap is still huge as people from lower classes possess the right devices and not the right mind to put the mobile phones to use.

Apart from that, the researcher also discovered that the tendency to own a device for prestige is also high among the youth who own big phones that they flash to show stylishness. They are interested in the loud and trendy applications. Consumption goes deeper than the idea of purchasing a product or services and deals more with the degree of self-expression and individual identity as noted by Featherstone (1991). Thus Katz and Sugiyama (2006:66) note that, “mobile phone as a consumer good assumes different forms of usage...” The people in Triangle therefore adopted the mobile phone for different personal needs such as upgrading social status. However, given the evidence that some people cannot and do not use the phone properly despite having internet connection and many other applications, the researcher was enlightened that the concept of digital divide has not fully fade in the area as people are not putting their phones to the uses that they should.

The research revealed that despite unavailability of electricity in Rufaro C, the mobile phone owners find other alternatives of recharging their mobile phone batteries like solar and car batteries. These people were also observed to use the phone in crucial times in order to save battery. Castells (2007:246) notes that, “...a very high proportion of the population of the planet has access to mobile communication, sometimes in areas where there is no electricity...” Therefore, the fact that mobile phones are used in crucial time and mostly saved is a reflection that the low income earners acquire mobile phones to blur their difference from the high class people. However, Hahn and Kibora (2008) in their case study of Burkina Faso point that economic conditions are not always satisfactory to explain why societies and people down the social ladder are able to adopt mobile phones at higher degrees. Due to these findings, the researcher concluded that factors such as electricity are not crucial in influencing mobile usage as people find alternative ways of charging their mobile devices.

4.5 Mobile phone as a hub for social networking

The researcher established that the level of interactions with the mobile phone as a tool for socialization is largely affected by income, attitude and literacy. People from the middle and high income earning households were noted by the researcher to have high interests in internet use and a positive attitude for digital involvement. The youth and the middle aged groups were also observed to be the most active internet users through admission to use of social networks like WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Skype and LinkedIn among others. For these groups,

the mobile phone function as a hybrid device inclusive of other technologies which makes it convenient to gratify the interests of the user to socialize and to keep in touch with friends. Young people make use of the device to establish and maintain social relations with their virtual friends. Mhiripiri and Mutsvairo (2013:427) note that, “social media networking is usually a leisure that sustains interpersonal communication among friends, relatives, colleagues, or people pursuing for a common interest.” Courtesy of this scholarly view, the research also established that the people in Triangle make use of mobile phones to connect to social sites especially Facebook where they freely express their political, social and economic views in chatrooms, discussion platforms and public debate pages. Therefore, the community appreciates the device to satisfy their needs for social engagement in a globalized world.

Below are numerous responses from interviews which the researcher conducted with people across different spheres of life. The researcher obtained responses after asking the question: *Since your mobile has internet access, how often do you surf the internet and for what purposes?* A university graduate in his early-twenties replied;

“My phone keeps me in touch with my friends through WhatsApp. I also use social platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn where I can also make new friends, link with former schoolmates and search for employment through building connections with people in the business world.”

A working class youth in his late twenties said;

“I occasionally use my phone to make video calls on Skype using Wi-Fi to connect with my brother and his family who are abroad...I frequently connect to Facebook where I chat and comment on the current political and economic debates which I follow on a number of pages.”

A stores-man in his mid-forties said;

“I joined social platforms to connect with old friends and other family members. I prefer WhatsApp to Facebook. The cost of data bundles does not allow me to connect to all platforms frequently I normally use free Wi-Fi at work or buy bundles once a month to just check on the latest happenings.”

A college student in her late teens said;

“I cannot imagine a day without my mobile phone because I am almost always connected on social media uploading pictures, checking messages from friends and downloading the trending stuff. When I am bored it is never a disappointment as I find jokes, entertainment and new friends to chat with.”

4.5.1 DISCUSSION

The research established that the idea of social networking in Triangle is mostly affected by age as the youth are the most vibrant group to engage in socializing and social networking. However, the researcher also noted that attitude and literacy contributes to consumption given that there is a high number of mobile phone owners who are ignorant and therefore do not make use of the device to connect. Internet usage for socialising was also noted to be low among the old aged people as well as others with affordability issues especially among the low income earners. The lack of interest and reluctance among others groups was another factor discovered by the researcher to be deepening the digital divide in the area as other individuals were noted to be ignorant and resistant to technology. Contrary to Horkheimer and Adorno’s (1990:74) suggestion that the “man with leisure have to accept what the cultural manufacturers offer him,” the people in Triangle make use of the mobile phone to fulfill their perceived needs to be socially connected through their own creative ways. However this is not applicable to everyone as some people do not know how to use the mobiles for personal needs.

To add, people across all ages were discovered to link in social groups on different platforms with WhatsApp actually having the most dominantly used groups for football, church and work related purposes. Miller et al (2016) notes that ‘the world shapes social media’ and therefore supports the fact that people are not passively subjective to mobile functions as the researcher discovered in the study. The low usage of platforms like Instagram by the mid-aged populace was also discovered by the researcher to be due to data bundles affordance issues more than education levels. Castells (2007:246) notes that, “the diffusion of Internet, mobile communication, digital media, and a variety of tools of social software have prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time.” Likewise, people in Triangle, especially the youth, were discovered to be actively and globally connected through involvement with foreign and anonymous people. This is supported by Pinch and Bijker (1987) who point that mobile phone in its material and cultural

aspects is a ‘socially constructed technological system’. People use social platforms to strengthen their relationships with long distant relatives and virtual friends, therefore people gratify their needs in specified contexts which goes beyond the characteristics and capabilities of the devices.

The research also observed that people’s interactions with social media on current political and economic happenings in the country has promoted the use of mobile phones an alternative public sphere. Habermas (1989:102) defines the public sphere as a “realm of our social life in something approaching public opinion can be formed (where) access is guaranteed to all citizens.” The freedom to participate in different public debates on social networks, was noted by the researcher to have played a pivotal role in promoting mobile usage as an alternative public sphere for the youth and the middle-aged populace, especially men, as they are free to air their views and debate on issues of interest.

4.6 Mobile phone as a tool for downloading and storing entertainment and recreational services

The researcher discovered that usage of mobile phones for downloading is high among the youth and affluent people in the area. People make use of the internet to download and store information and applications for leisure and entertainment such as news updates, music and videos, football games and health test applications among others. The usage levels of the mobile phone for internet connections to download and store information online and offline was discovered by the researcher to differ with class, age, individual preference and attitude. As Kelleci & Inal (2010) noted, the internet has become a necessity for work and academics, entertainment, communication and social interaction. The research also discovered that people use the mobile phone to download educational and work related content and applications like Word and Adobe on the internet to store their documents. People thus attach the mobile phone as a requirement to their daily existence as they engage in activities simplified through the use of the device. The research also found that specific uses of mobile phones show people are not passive as they make use of phones to fulfill perceived needs. Below are selected responses from different interviewees that made the researcher ascertain the usage of mobile phones for downloading and storage of information. Another youth in his mid-twenties said;

“I find it hard to imagine life without a mobile phone. It allows me to surf the internet and to download games and the latest music audios for entertainment...the mobile phone also has a large built in memory which allows me to store audios videos that I download on WhatsApp.”

A private school teacher in his mid-forties, noted that;

“...with just a few touches the mobile phone is life in the palm of the hand. The internet has made my life easy as I can download useful applications like the DSTV remote control, Opera News updates and health facilities such as the BP test which I can enjoy in the comfort of my home.”

A football player in his late twenties said;

“As a soccer fan, I find the internet very useful as I can now access football results and highlights on YouTube. I can also download applications that keeps me updated on football tournaments worldwide.”

A SHE officer in her early thirties said;

“The mobile phone comes in handy for me as it allows for quick and convenient internet connections. I can download applications like the mobile bible and hymn book as well as back up my pictures and safeguard my important documents online on my google account.”

4.6.1 DISCUSSION

The usage patterns of mobile phones for downloading and storage of information on internet was discovered to be high among the youthful ages and mature people and extremely low among the elderly. The internet as an umbrella medium, Castells (2007), feeds users' needs for different forms of behaviour ranging from cultural, entertainment and religious wants. Females in the area prefer downloading applications like photo editing, beauty tutorials and mobile bibles while males favour football, machine-use tutorials as well as news applications. Uses were also discovered to differ with gender and attitude as people use the devices to satisfy different needs from the vast activities available online. This is supported by Castells (2007) who notes that the internet is a broad forum where users partake in different activities.

To add, the research discovered that low income earners engage in partial usage as the rate of consumption decreases when they have no airtime for data bundles or the public Wi-Fi has been

limited. However, Anjum (2015) argues that illiteracy plays a crucial role that hinders mobile phone usage as some people are scared and do not trust some mobile phones features. The research also established that education levels also plays a crucial role in the usage of mobile phone for downloading of applications in the area. Prior to this discovery, the research concluded that this is one of the main reasons why the digital divide still exists between classes in the area. As noted by Tolbert and Mossberger (2006), although connectivity is available everywhere individual connection levels remain uneven along different lines. In this case, the research established differences along lines of location within community, income, education level, gender and age.

The research showed that few people engage in downloading of applications like WhatsApp as they are shared via offline connections. Van Dijk (2006) argues that education and income play a part to influence usage. He notes that highly educated people use mobile phones for more complicated applications while the less educated are concerned with simpler applications like games and entertainment that may not require internet use and therefore remain excluded and segmented in the digital era. The research discovered that this claim is true to a larger extent given that despite availability of tutorials in local languages for assistance, people down the social ladder still lag behind in internet usage.

Apart from that, the research also established that people formulate other uses for the mobile phone such as storage of large files, videos, music and documents both online and offline. School going ages and affluent people were discovered to be familiar with goggle account applications for storage of school and work documents. As obtained by the interviews conducted with a number of graduates and other school going youths, the mobile phone is crucial for storing curriculum vitae and backing up useful information for later use. Therefore, the research established that the mobile phone can assume any shape or form depending on the user's needs. This affirms the assertion by Ling (2004) that despite the primary use of the mobile device, it can function in any shape or form depending on the inventiveness of the user.

4.7 SUMMARY

The research discovered that a large part of the population in Triangle THE, are familiar with mobile phone usage. Visible patterns of usage were noted to exist as a matter age, gender, class, education and attitude towards the mobile gadgets. Despite the differences, the usage of mobile phones among different people is rather not passive as they associate the device with divergent social, cultural and religious needs which they actively satisfy through consumption of the phone as a tool for social networking, mobile wallet and storage safe among other things.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summaries the research and recommends areas for further study.

5.2 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES.

The study focuses on mobile phone consumption patterns in a farming compound the case of Triangle, THE. It looks at mobile phone consumption patterns paying particular attention people of different age groups, incomes, classes and gender. It analyses data from February 2018 to April 2018 within Rufaro A, Rufaro C and the senior staff yards to obtain a clear understanding of how different social hierarchies appreciate mobile phones in the community. It deploys the Uses and Gratifications theory as well as the Digital Divide concept to explore the major trends in mobile phone usage and explains how people from selected locations actively make use of the device to satisfy economic, political, religious, social, and cultural needs in the digital era.

Data was obtained through qualitative interviews and participant observation. The population unit was selected using purposive sampling to obtain the most relevant information. Thematic analysis was deployed to analyse the data. The study found that mobile phones are largely and primarily used as tools for basic communication, mobile wallets, prestigious purposes, social networking and for downloading and storing information. Of importance, the research notes the varied reasons people associate with the mobile device to blur the digital gap as a community. The study also discovered that the youth are the most active participants on digital platforms and the usage level decreases age. The findings showed that low income earners are low level users of the internet and other mobile applications despite possession of the device due to data cost, attitude and illiteracy among other factors. Literacy was discovered to be an influential factor in consumption patterns among different ages, classes and genders as it differentiates the types of usage and the extent to which people uses the gadget. Factors such as unavailability of electricity were however discovered to minor setbacks as people find alternative solar and batteries for charging especially in Rufaro C.

On the basis of these findings, the study concluded that mobile phone usage in a farming compound is crucial building on the understanding that it is an all-inclusive device for communication. The research concluded that age, attitude, income and literacy are the major determinants of mobile phone usage in Triangle, THE. It also concluded that mobile phone use is

gendered among the low income earners and fades up the social ladder with the youth being the most active users across all classes. The study having examined the consumption of mobile phones in a farming compound, recommends other researchers to further studies and dig deep into the causes of communal digital divide in a farming compound as well as to look at social media usage in the area paying particular attention to Facebook and WhatsApp. Further studies can also look more into gender and participation of women on social platforms particularly among the high-income earners.

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