

**SELFIES AS SELF-REPRESENTATION TOOLS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION
OF NARRATIVE IDENTITIES**

By

Precious Mkwala

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE**

MAGISTER ARTIUM (CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY)

in the

**FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Supervisor: Prof. L. Naudé

2020

Plagiarism Declaration

I, PRECIOUS MOKWALA, declare that the dissertation/thesis hereby submitted by me for the Magister Artium (Clinical Psychology) degree at the University of the Free State is my own, independent work, and has not previously been submitted for a qualification at another institution of higher education. Furthermore, I cede the copyright of the dissertation/thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

Signature:

Date: 15 October 2020

Declaration by Supervisor

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIBESITHI YA
FREISTATA



UFS·UV
THE HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSAPPE

Reference: Prof L. Naudé
Psychology Building, Room 111
University of the Free State
BLOEMFONTEIN
9301

Telephone: 051 401 2189

Email: naudel@ufs.ac.za

November 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

Student: Precious Mkwala

Student number: 2013072224

Degree: Magister Artium (Clinical Psychology)

Department: Psychology

Title: Selfies as self-representation tools during the construction of narrative identities

I hereby provide permission that this dissertation be submitted for assessment - in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Humanities, at the University of the Free State.

I approve the submission for assessment and that the submitted work has not previously, either in part or in its entirety, been submitted for assessment.

Kind regards

Prof L Naudé Supervisor



Declaration by Language Editor

I, **Glenda Holcroft, (ID 5103060026082)**, a professional language practitioner, declare that I conducted the language editing of this dissertation: *Selfies as self-representation tools during the construction of narrative identities*, submitted by Precious Mokwala.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Holcroft', written in a cursive style.

Signature

G Holcroft

11/11/2020

Acknowledgements

- To **God and my Ancestors**, thank you so much for carrying me throughout this process. I managed to reach the end through the guidance and strength that you gave me.
- To my supervisor, **Professor Luzelle Naudé**, thank you so much for being invested in this process. I wholeheartedly appreciate the time and effort that you spent working on the manuscript with me.
- To my language editor, Glenda Holcroft, thank you for helping me refine the final product of my manuscript.
- To the **National Research Foundation**, thank you for financially investing in my academic journey. The resources provided by the Foundation enabled me to focus on performing at my best without having to worry about my fees.
- To my parents, **Frans and Patricia Mkwala**, thank you very much for constantly being there and for your prayers. Thank you for the unconditional love that you show me and thank you for being my two most ardent supporters.
- To my sister, **Ledile Mkwala**, thank you for being an incredible younger sister. You have shown me so much support and have encouraged me to continue working towards my dreams.
- To my dear friends, **Karabo Kekana, Kalyca Horne, Cindelee Olivier, and Elzine McPherson**, thank you for being ready to listen and cheer me up during tough times.
- To my precious, **Fred Bopape**, thank you for constantly being by my side, showing me endless support and motivating me to give this process my best.
- To the **Department of Psychology** at the **University of the Free State**, thank you for granting me the opportunity to further my studies.
- To the **participants**, you all make up a significant part of my research journey, because none of this would have been possible without your willingness to share your experiences. I want to thank each and every one of you.
- *A big thank you to my late brother: You were a significant part of my journey even though you were not physically with me I know you were with me in spirit.*

Abstract

In this study, the topic of selfies as tools for self-representation during the construction of narrative identity is explored. Emerging adulthood, narrative identity and selfies were the focus of the study. Emerging adulthood is a dynamic developmental stage in which the main developmental task is the exploration of identity, particularly in western societies. It was, therefore, important to examine this life stage as it is experienced by emerging adults in the South African context, but with a story-telling aspect. The social constructivist perspective as a theoretical framework was adopted for this study, as it indicates that several elements – including but not limited to family, peers, friends, media, religion and culture – ultimately affect narrative identity development. A qualitative framework was employed to explore the participants' narratives. Narrative identity is socially constructed and develops through interaction with others, and meaning-making is also part of the process. Data collection took the form of four focus groups, with a group total of twenty-five, consisting of diverse participants who had been sampled by means of purposive and snowball sampling. Data were analysed using thematic analysis in which extensive coding was done, and themes were constructed by analysing the participants' responses. Emerging adults narrate their life stories in accordance with their personal preferences but also in accordance with external standards that have been stipulated by the societies in which they exist. Life stories were expressed through selfies, in which communication has evolved from the textual to the visual. Some similarities were identified between the experiences of emerging adults in western societies and those in African societies. The limitations of this research study were identified, and these will hopefully be valuable for future studies in this area.

Keywords: emerging adulthood, narrative identity, identity exploration, social media, selfies, sociocultural, South Africa.

Table of Contents

Plagiarism Declaration.....	ii
Declaration by Supervisor	iii
Declaration by Language Editor	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
List of Tables	x
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Study	1
1.1 Context and Rationale of the Study	1
1.2 Theoretical Grounding of the Study	3
1.2.1 Developmental life span perspective with a focus on emerging adulthood.....	3
1.2.2 Social constructivist perspective on identity development.....	7
1.2.3 Social media and identity expressions through selfies	8
1.3 Overview of the Research Methodology.....	9
1.4 Outline of Chapters	11
1.5 Chapter Summary.....	12
Chapter 2: Conceptualising Narrative Identity and Its Expression through Selfies	13
2.1 The Development of Identity	13
2.1.1 Erikson's psychosocial stages of development.....	13
2.1.2 Marcia's theory of the development of identity.....	14
2.1.3 Conceptualising narrative identity	17
2.2 The Emergence and Use of Social Media and Selfies	21
2.2.1 Social media and selfies.....	22
2.3 The Formation of Narrative Identity through Social Media and Selfies.....	26
2.4 Chapter Summary.....	29
2 Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	31
3.1 Research Purpose, Aim and Questions	31
3.2 Research Paradigm and Design.....	31
3.3 Research Context, Sampling Procedures and Participants.....	32
3.4 Data Collection Procedure	35
3.5 Data Analysis	36

3.6	Trustworthiness	39
3.7	Ethical Considerations.....	41
3.8	Chapter Summary.....	43
4	Chapter 4: Research Results	45
4.1	Significant Achievements	46
4.2	Connecting with Others.....	47
4.2.1	Role of family	47
4.2.2	Role of friends.....	48
4.3	The Construction of My Narrative	50
4.3.1	Effective self-expression.....	50
4.3.2	Authentic self, empowerment and increased self-appreciation	52
4.3.3	Storytelling skills	54
4.3.4	Feedback from online conversations	56
4.4	Chapter Summary.....	57
5	Chapter 5: Discussion of Results	59
5.1	Freedom of Self-Expression and Exploration through Selfies and Social Media.....	59
5.2	Personal Relationships and Their Role During the Process of Meaning-Making and Self-Expression	63
5.3	The Online Environment and its Relation to the Construction of Narrative Identity.....	66
5.4	Chapter Summary.....	69
6	Chapter 6: Summary of Noteworthy Findings, Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion	71
6.1	Summary of Noteworthy Findings	71
6.2	Limitations of the Research Study	73
6.3	Recommendations for Future Studies	75
6.4	Conclusion.....	76
	References.....	78
	Appendices.....	97
	Appendix A: Ethical clearance	97
	Appendix B: Informed Consent Form	98
	Appendix C: Biographic Information Form	99
	Appendix D: Transcriptions of Focus Groups	100

Appendix E: Reflexive Notes	207
Appendix F: TurnItIn Report.....	209

List of Tables

Table 1: <i>Summary of the Eight Psychosocial Stages</i>	14
Table 2: <i>Criteria for Identity Statuses</i>	15
Table 3: <i>Biographic Characteristics of the Qualitative Sample</i>	34
Table 4: <i>Main Themes and Sub-themes Identified using Thematic Analysis</i>	45

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Study

The context of and rationale for the study are expanded in this section, and its theoretical underpinnings are discussed. These are, firstly, the theory of emerging adulthood as a developmental stage together with the five dimensions associated with this life stage and how it appears in African countries. Secondly, social constructivism as an epistemological theory and its applicability to narrative identity and social media and selfies are examined. The evolution of social media is examined, and an in-depth discussion is provided in the next chapter. A brief discussion of the methodological processes used in the study is provided, followed by an outline of the subsequent chapters in the study. The ethical principles that were considered for the study are briefly discussed, and finally a chapter summary is provided.

1.1 Context and Rationale of the Study

In the last 15 years, social media has become the most popular way of communicating among young people, with forums such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp being some of the most popular ones (Vranešević et al., 2019). Initially, mass media was a unilateral channel of communication created to provide information and entertainment for the public that had access to it. With the arrival of social media, however, access to information and the means of communication became possible. There was a boom in social media use from 2008, but a more significant surge was seen between 2013 and 2017, with the greatest number of users being the youth (Galvez, 2019). Social media is now used to create and maintain existing relationships (Mazur & Richards, 2011). This form of media is an important platform for self-expression, the expression of values, and exploration (Mazur & Li, 2016).

Data show that those between the ages of 18 and 29 – in other words, emerging adults – have the highest levels of social media consumption (Arnett, 2007). However, there remains insufficient information on social media and emerging adults, specifically in the developmental aspect of psychology. The main focus in this regard has been on adolescents rather than emerging adults (Coyne et al., 2013). Thus, for the current study, it became important to highlight the importance of selfies in the lives of emerging adults. This because selfies have become an important tool in life story narration, exploration, self-expression and the preservation of personal stories. There are many South African studies with this particular angle on selfies and identity thus, it is a gap that prompted the researcher to take on this current study. Statistics and research have indicated that emerging adults are the biggest consumers of

social media thus, they became the ideal research group for the researcher because of that reason. Further information on emerging adults' consumption of media nationally and internationally will be elaborated on in the second chapter. The use of profiles to represent the self has been extensively studied, with a focus on entire web content, wall posts and status updates together with profile pictures on Facebook (Strano, 2008).

The development of identity is driven by social exchanges that young people have with others (Newman & Newman, 1976). Emerging adults experience what is known as the age of instability. During this time, the exploration of identity is important, and many emerging adults experience several changes of residence, career changes and romantic connections. With all of these life-altering occurrences, there is often a sustained sense of uncertainty and instability (Arnett, 2004). These changes often take place because young people possess a future perspective; in other words, they think about these changes deeply, because they realise that they will have an impact on their futures. Thus, a look at one's past and the prospect of newer possibilities may be important in the process of narrating a life story (McLean, 2008). A contextualised explanation of identity and narrative identity, together with newer developments, will be provided in the chapter that follows.

There is insufficient information focusing on the expression of self via selfies, and this study intends to bridge this gap. There is also a dearth of literature on emerging adulthood in Africa, and in South Africa specifically. In South Africa, young people in the specified age range seem to go through the events mentioned in the literature, such as delaying childbearing (Ansell, 2004). Other similar events include the need for higher educational qualifications (Anderson et al., 2001), the need for employment, and lastly a delay in marriage (Goldberg, 2013). When these similarities had been noted, it seemed crucial to conduct this particular study and provide a perspective on emerging adults in a South African context. The social constructivist perspective was chosen as a theoretical framework because the process of meaning-making is impacted by sociocultural factors, as are social media use and narrative identity. As emerging adults are the most sizeable consumers of social media, with a growing need for stability and meaning, social constructivism was seen to be the most appropriate for this current study. The study therefore aims to contribute to the developing knowledge on social media use and narrative identity expression through selfies among emerging adults in a developmental context.

1.2 Theoretical Grounding of the Study

In this section, the complexity of development, social constructivism and social media are discussed. The section is sub-divided into three parts: the developmental life span perspective, with emerging adulthood being a pivotal point for this particular study. Secondly, social constructivism as a perspective on the development of identity is highlighted. Thirdly, as social media has also come to be an important tool for self-representation, this, together with social constructivism, is an important element that needs to be considered during the process of constructing narrative identity.

1.2.1 Developmental life span perspective with a focus on emerging adulthood

To live is to change. Many people would say that they are not the same person they were a decade or two ago. In spite of this, however, individuals somehow retain key elements of their personhood. Change or development is a process rather than a destination or an achievement that needs to be attained; a process rather than a state of being (Sugarman, 2004). It is therefore important to question the direction in which an individual has been moving rather than asking if some ideal end has been reached.

Another important element in the developmental process is age (Rider, 2017). Age is a prominent feature in this study, because it helped with the selection of the current study's participatory cohort and with identifying a theory that would adequately describe this group. Age is used as a form of universal categorisation to anchor changes recorded over time (Kang et al., 2019). It also serves to group individuals and processes and to mediate the process of linking knowledge and society (Sugarman, 2004). The concept of emerging adulthood has been proposed as a way of identifying a developmental period. The theory on emerging adults focuses on the years from late adolescence right into the twenties (van Dulmen, 2013). The initial focus was specifically on those between 18 and 25 years of age (Arnett, 2000). However, with the progress of time and knowledge, the latter definition is no longer regarded as accurate, and emerging adulthood is now regarded as stretching from the age of 18 until 29 (Arnett et al., 2014; Arnett, 2004). Early contributions to theories of development were made by Erikson (1950). However, he did not include a stage that would come to be known as emerging adulthood, as proposed currently in the literature (Arnett, 2000).

The theory of emerging adulthood was proposed as a framework for acknowledging that the shift into adulthood was now lasting longer than had previously been suggested. This period is now seen as a life stage rather than a transition (Arnett, 2007). It has been found that

this developmental period is difficult for emerging adults, because many, if not all, seek financial freedom and self-sufficiency during this time but are fearful of taking on adult roles and responsibilities (Arnett, 2004). This life stage shows individuals who no longer feel as though they are adolescents but feel as though they are only partially adults; they are emerging into adulthood but have not yet arrived at that destination (Arnett, 2007). Those at university are further protected by the educational system, which usually prolongs individual exploration and self-focus. These places of learning offer clear but limited responsibilities to students and they nurture extended analyses of any future developments which the emerging adults may have (Negru et al., 2010).

In 1960, those aged 21 would either have been married or would be about to get married; they would have been bringing up a child or preparing to have one; they would have completed their education or would have been about to do so. In other words, a 21-year-old in the 1960s would have already settled into a lifelong role as an employee, partner, or parent (Arnett, 2004). Today the life of a 21-year-old is vastly different from the life of a 21-year-old in the 1960s. In these times, the typical 21st century 21-year-old has delayed marriage, work, and parenthood by at least six years. Education now lasts several years, with extended undergraduate programs now being four, five or even six years long (Arnett, 2000). For many emerging adults, the pursuit of higher education is to ensure better earnings, a wider range of employment opportunities, and improved quality of living (Arnett, 2007). Now more than ever women's newfound freedom allows them to pursue tertiary education or training, and they now have increased opportunities to invest their time and energy into suitable careers (Schwartz et al., 2013). In most western societies there is an emphasis on market-oriented policies (Inglehart, 2008) and lifestyles based on consumption, which are rapidly replacing community-oriented policies and lifestyles that were previously based on production (Lanctot & Poulin, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2005). Education has come to be more and more important in society. The period of emerging adulthood is also about the intensification of friendships that already exist; it is also about family oriented-socialisation and political awareness.

According to Tagliabue et al. (2015), the markers of adulthood that were previously recognised are being delayed more and more in the 21st century. These authors do, however, still share the common belief that adulthood is largely shaped by the social and cultural contexts that individuals find themselves in (Tagliabue et al., 2015).

Arnett (2004) described five factors characteristic of emerging adulthood that are known as its dimensions or five pillars; these terms will be used interchangeably. In terms of these features, this is the age of instability, the self-focused age, the age of feeling in between, the age of possibilities and the age of identity exploration. Arnett (2004) states that the five features described above are not meant to be universal but are indeed common in both developed and developing societies.

The first dimension is the age of instability. This age is defined by a range of relationships between the ages of 18 and 29 years, with episodes of non-committed relationships. There are also numerous job changes (Arnett et al., 2014) and changes of residence, coupled with the need to steer away from the role-related transitions stipulated by society and families (Syed & Mitchell, 2013; Tagliabue et al., 2015). Because emerging adulthood is one of the most unstable periods in one's life, several changes may be expected. The next dimension is the self-focused age. The self-focused age entails a time in one's life where there is little to no obligation to those around you. In addition, this is the age where emerging adults' reliance on their parents is reduced, the focus shifts to gaining more knowledge, and the need for more skills and self-understanding emerges (Arnett & Mitra, 2018). This is the age when there is a strong focus on the self to make independent decisions outside the circle of family and friends (Arnett & Mitra, 2018). The third dimension is the age of feeling in-between; this entails emerging adults often feeling stuck between two periods. This feeling occurs frequently, because they are no longer adolescents; however, they do not yet identify as adults (Arnett et al., 2014). The fourth dimension is known as the age of possibilities. This was seen in a study conducted with emerging adults between 18 and 29 years, who believed that their futures were bright (Arnett et al., 2014). During this time emerging adults continue to believe that they have a number of possible futures still ahead of them. This form of observed optimism has been found among emerging adults partly because they are just entering adult life, and many of their questions have not yet been resolved (Arnett & Mitra, 2018). The last stage is the age of identity exploration; this involves experiencing as many opportunities as possible in the areas of love, career, friendships and ideology (Arnett et al., 2014). The exploration of one's identity has been deemed significant and occurs mainly during this period of emerging adulthood, although it may first arise during the adolescent years.

Lo-oh (2016) reported that in many African countries, specifically Cameroon, society-based indicators of adulthood continue to be regarded as very important. In Cameroon, young people have been left languishing in poverty, unemployment, inadequate education, and a

challenging labour market. School to work transitions are hence nearly impossible. This is the case in a country like South Africa as well (Ansell, 2004). It was found that Cameroonian youth had subjective markers indicative of adulthood that were similar to those in western societies. However, there are great challenges for young Cameroonians in gaining financial independence, becoming autonomous, and dealing with a poor economy, resource poverty and the general instability in the country (Lo-oh, 2016).

Obidoo et al. (2019) reported that, in Ghana, there continues to be an emphasis on traditional markers of adulthood similar to those specified by Arnett. Historically, as indicated by Obidoo et al. (2019), a significant traditional marker in Ghanaian culture was marriage, which typically took place right after puberty. This marker was specifically aimed at young girls, while for boys the marker was attaining economic independence. The latter is comparable to the markers for emerging adults in western society. In Igbo society in Nigeria, the attainment of puberty was celebrated with ceremonies that focused on preparing young people for adult roles through social expectations. Work-life in countries like Lesotho and Zimbabwe marked adult identity, which young people aspired to. As in the western world, entry into formal waged work is the new form of initiation into adulthood. This need for formal employment places boys and girls in a predicament that sees them requiring further education (Ansell, 2004). In Southern African countries, adulthood is now marked by delaying marriage and childbearing in the pursuit of a better life (Ansell, 2004). In South Africa specifically, the markers for transitioning into adulthood are similar to those in western society. The first is the need for higher educational attainment (Anderson et al., 2001); secondly, emerging adults are expected to be employed; and thirdly, a delay in marriage can be observed, with the median age of marriage among emerging South Africans being 27 (Goldberg, 2013).

The delaying of pregnancy is impacted by factors such as social and economic patterns of inequality. Research has found a strong relationship between delayed pregnancy and economic power and educational background, with individuals from poorer areas being more likely to have children earlier than their counterparts (Moultrie & McGrath, 2007). In a town like Khayelitsha situated in the Western Cape, one of the first areas of racial segregation prior to 1994, there remain high levels of poverty and inequality, and it is here that we see a high incidence of females giving birth in their adolescent years (Swartz et al., 2018).

1.2.2 Social constructivist perspective on identity development

Lev Vygotsky's work has had an impact on the development of social constructivism because his theory placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the role of others and the social context (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). Adler shows that constructivism is the belief that the material world is shaped by human activity. He also stated that relation relies on the dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world (Adler, 1997). Guzzini (2000) has claimed that knowledge is socially constructed, social reality is also constructed and both knowledge and reality have an impact on one another. Much emphasis is placed on the interaction of society and the self because these elements are mutually constituted (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Jung, 2019). Social constructivism is a paradigm that recognises the weight of culture and has a holistic understanding of one's context. It also looks into what might be happening in society and how knowledge is derived and understood (Kim, 2001). The creation of knowledge remains a dual-agentic process where knowledge is co-constructed and exists in a socio-cultural realm. Learning and the conception of knowledge encompass the need to have understanding, which is negotiated through dialogue or discourse among two or more members of the community (Mishra, 2014). The creation of knowledge is thus an active process which is contextual and social (Kundi & Nawaz, 2010). Knowledge is not transferred from the external world into people's memories; rather, people construct interpretations of the world that lie in past events and interactions in the world (McMahan, 2007). Many meanings and perspectives exist in different experiences and concepts, and all of these form subjective realities (McMahan, 2007).

Identity, narrative identity and social constructivism are related concepts. Identity is unique to each individual and remains constant over time. However, it is also an indication of individuals' relationships with wider collectives or social groups with whom they share social, cultural and biological traits (Buckingham, 2008). This implies that, when individuals speak about identity, it is partly a matter of what is shared with others and how these individuals identify with others and the impact others have in shaping identity. Identities that are formed will continue to be presented depending on whether or not what is presented is confirmed or verified by others. If this is perceived to be the case then no change is required (Burke, 2004). The world is made up of social structures and particular roles are assigned to people in these structures.

Narrative identity in particular is socially constructed through interactions with others and can co-exist with the other integrated experiences that the self has undergone (Baumeister,

1998). It is through these interactions that individuals develop skills to evaluate and integrate the processes of interaction and meaning-making. Social constructivism is hence a theory about how the world shapes the individual and the individual shapes the world. It can be postulated that social media could constitute the world that shapes a person's narrative identity. In addition, selves and societies are mutually constituted through a multilayered interaction of meaningful systems that have been created (Hammack & Toolis, 2015). Telling narratives depends on the storytelling skills that one develops: the more entertaining the narrative, the more listeners an individual will have. In this way, individuals will be more aware of what content "the world" finds interesting and, as a consequence, may emphasise those particular points in their narratives (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

Narrative identity includes the process of integration and brings together elements of oneself including different roles, values, attitudes and the here and now (McAdams, 2018). People look to their constructed society for an indication of how to be good members of society. Hence, narratives may be impacted by what is deemed socially acceptable and by the expectations constructed by the societies that individuals are from (Hammack & Toolis, 2015). Social interactions are a significant part of narrative identity development, and the more visible people's interactions are, the more they will be motivated to create impressive narratives. This process requires purpose and planning to create a space for the public consumption of narratives (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). The self is constructed and reconstructed in relation to what surrounds it. As a result, narrative identity is relational, because it is not fixed and makes temporal and spatial shifts and shares relational epistemologies (Somers, 1994) Through the work of McAdams, who successfully built an extensive body of literature on narrative identity, the term narrative identity has come to represent a life story that has been shaped by cultural influences such as religion, group values, parental values and many other factors constructed by society.

1.2.3 Social media and identity expressions through selfies

Social media has evolved immensely since its beginnings in the 1970s. These forums now provide a quicker way to disseminate data (Gunduz, 2017) and a quicker way to get in touch with friends and loved ones. There have been different forms of media over the years (Edosowam et al., 2011). More and more emerging adults are now using selfies as forms of expression and are, in fact, at the centre of this trend. Emerging adults have social media at their disposal, and reports have shown that members of this population group spend more than four hours a day on social media (Bjorsen, 2018). Literature has shown that there are currently

over 274 million selfies on social media platforms (Robsham, 2016), and these are undoubtedly a useful tool for self-representation. Great emphasis is placed on the quality of the selfie and also on the background, the other people in the selfie, and how impressive it is. Feedback from others remains important for emerging adults, and much emphasis is placed on the likes and comments that individuals receive (Barger et al., 2016, Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001).

Now, more than ever, selfies are a process of documenting oneself and are at the forefront of a socio-cultural revolution in the development of identity. Selfies are widespread, contextually specific, and nuanced (Cruz & Thornham, 2015). To provide a refined perspective, it is necessary to look at selfies from a South African context, with South African participants. It is also important to contribute to the existing literature on the long tradition of visual culture in which images are read as representations to be interpreted (Cruz & Thornham, 2015). Social media offers different ways of developing knowledge and constructing meaning (Schrader, 2015). Social media offers opportunities for interactions that lead to the recreation of knowledge, because knowledge develops from shared activity, community engagement and dialogue. Individuals develop the ability to reflect from within and outside their perspectives, because social media has created newer and larger communities for a more diverse collaboration during the process of meaning-making (Schrader, 2015).

Human activity creates what constitutes reality, because members of a society are the ones who develop the principles that govern society (Noh & Jing, 2017). Hence, online interaction by social media users constitutes an online community that contains online behaviours and principles. Meaning is thus created through interactions between online community members and between them and the social media environment that has been created (von Ernst, 1998). This is a self-reflective process, because individuals are now able to relate to their past as a form of understanding the self, which enables them to create a life narrative. These processes occur in African contexts as well as in western society, but there is very little literature covering aspects of identity, narrative identity development and social media in African contexts (Georgokoulou, 2016; Yang et al., 2017).

1.3 Overview of the Research Methodology

Social constructivism is the paradigm in which the study is rooted. Social constructivism can be described as a process of meaning-making through personal understanding of experiences (Amineh & Asl, 2015). This paradigm recognizes that experience is embedded in a particular socio-cultural domain, and this is what determines its distinctive

features. In terms of this paradigm, the generation of knowledge largely depends on social context, and there is collaboration between members of social groups and other factors such as politics, social values and the economy (Tarziu, 2016). Thus, many meanings and perspectives exist in different experiences and concepts (McMcahan, 2007). Reality is not objective but is, rather, created subjectively by people, which makes it unpredictable and reliant on human interaction in different contexts (Kundi & Nawaz, 2010).

The objective of this study was to investigate how selfies are used as self-representation tools during the construction of narrative identities based on participants' subjective experiences. The study adopted a qualitative research approach (Neuman, 2014) and focused on aspects of narrative identity and personal narratives that participants shared. Both exploratory and descriptive research designs were considered for this research study. The exploratory and descriptive research designs (Stangor, 2015) allowed the participants to provide thorough and in-depth responses, which was important in obtaining their narratives.

Purposive and snowball sampling were used for the study (Etikan et al., 2016; Stangor, 2015; Noy, 2008). These forms of sampling were most appropriate, because there was an interest in a particular group of individuals and an intentional approach was necessary in choosing the participants. Hence, the cohort that was assembled for the study consisted of emerging adults who are between the ages of 18 and 29 (Arnett, 2004) who had social media platforms and posted selfies on them. Purposive sampling was followed by snowball sampling where the initially identified participants were asked to bring a friend along as a potential participant given that they satisfied the criteria. These forms of sampling methods are ideal, because they are non-random methods and do not have underlying theories or require a particular number of participants. Appropriate questions for the study were developed and four focus groups were conducted with a total number of 25 participants.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcriptions of the focus group discussions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Because this was a group project, the researcher personally conducted all four focus groups. Transcriptions were later obtained from a member of the group project and meticulously scrutinised several times to correct errors that might have been made during transcription. It was imperative to go over the transcriptions, because there were language barriers during the transcribing period that gave rise to the need for corrections, and some of the words were translated into English. In this process, identifiers for the spoken contributions of each participant were created, to ensure that different participants' quotes could be identified

for the results chapter. It was also important to go over the transcriptions to fill in quotes that had been reported as inaudible, and in so doing more of what the participants were saying was adequately captured. These processes facilitated the process of becoming familiar with the data. The data was then organised into the most prominent themes and sub-themes, while ensuring that the participants' views were still prominent in the data.

Ethical procedures were followed during the conducting of the study. The Department of Psychology and the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State granted permission for the study to be conducted. The ethical clearance can be found in Appendix A. Before the focus groups met, the research participants received informed consent forms (see appendix B) that they needed to read and sign before participating (Corey, 2014). They were also given adequate background information on which to base their informed consent. Other important ethical principles that were adhered to were beneficence, confidentiality, non-maleficence, autonomy, and respect for human dignity; these are discussed in the study (Neuman, 2014).

Trustworthiness was also highlighted, and the aspects of transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability are discussed fully in the study (Elo et al., 2014; Shenton, 2004). To present a true indication of the participants' perceptions and experiences, these aspects were strictly adhered to.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 provides a general overview and introduction to the study and a discussion of its theoretical perspectives, including emerging adulthood, its features and how it looks in African countries. A detailed discussion of social constructivism and its applicability to identity, narrative identity and social media, including selfies, is provided.

Chapter 2 discusses an extensive body of literature on identity and its genesis, together with the narrative identity and social media and how these concepts are connected. Erikson's perspective on identity and James Marcia's work are discussed, the latter accompanied by the latest developments on the identity statuses theory. Narrative identity is discussed further, with the work of prominent authors McAdams and McLean being highlighted. Selfies are discussed as an example of social media in relation to the construction of narrative identity

The focus in chapter 3 is on the methodology implemented in the study. The following areas are explored: (1) research rationale and the aim of the research study; (2) the research approach as well as the research design; (3) research participants and sampling procedures; (4),

data collection methods; (5) data analysis; (6) ethical considerations; and (7) trustworthiness, which focuses mainly on the rigour applied throughout the study.

Chapter 4 provides an elaboration on and further discussion of the results that were obtained. The focus in this discussion is on comparing the research results with the already existing theory on social media and narrative identity. The results were analysed thematically, and the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the focus groups are described. The most consequential themes and sub-themes that came up are highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 5 discusses the results that were obtained in the study. The dominant findings are highlighted, together with the analyses that have been made in terms of the theory of narrative identity and social media.

Lastly, in chapter 6, a conclusion based on the results is provided. This conclusion presents the noteworthy findings of the study, describes its limitations and makes recommendations for future studies.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a contextualised overview of the research study, its aim and rationale, and the significance of providing a perspective from a South African context. The theoretical underpinnings were also discussed to provide the structure of the study; these included the theory of emerging adulthood as observed in the work of Arnett. In this chapter social constructivism was discussed and the ways in which identity is socially constructed were described. This discussion was followed by the brief discussion of narrative identity, as well as social media and its most prominent feature: the selfie. The research processes for each chapter were also briefly outlined. In the chapter that follows, the aspects of identity and narrative identity are discussed in detail, together with selfies and social media and how these elements are related.

Chapter 2: Conceptualising Narrative Identity and Its Expression through

Selfies

This chapter deals with identity and ego development from the perspective of Erikson; the initial work of Marcia on identity statuses; and more recent work by Crocetti, Meeus, and Luyckx and colleagues. Narrative identity, which is the focus of the current study, is then discussed, with particular emphasis on the work of McLean and McAdams, which has had a significant impact on the conception of narrative identity. Contributions by Ricoeur, Conway and Singer are briefly outlined. Early developments in social media, and the current situation with the addition of the selfies feature, also are discussed.

2.1 The Development of Identity

In this segment, the concept of identity is discussed in terms of the work developed by Erikson and Marcia, together with newer developments by Crocetti, Meeus, and Luyckx and colleagues. Following this, the work of McAdams and McLean on narrative identity is explained.

2.1.1 Erikson's psychosocial stages of development

Erikson's theory of ego identity formation is regarded as a multidimensional process (Hammack, 2008). He suggested that identity elements come from several sources and that these characteristics, considered together, present what is known as ego identity (Crocetti et al., 2012). His work was inspired by the works of Freud on ego development (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). He believed that the ego should be viewed as a model that prevented the re-experience of previously uncomfortable encounters. He saw the ego as intrapsychically oriented and as an independent structure that existed outside other elements of the psyche. According to Erikson, the growth of the ego happens in a process involving eight stages, each of which is marked by an associated phase-specific psychosocial crisis (Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

In Erikson's view, the development and maintenance of one's ego identity depend on how well they are acknowledged and the support that the ego receives from the individual's social environment (Cote & Levine, 1987). In other words, what happens to an individual is impacted by both personal and societal elements: what is happening in society during that period together with the reaction to the event(s) (Dambudzo, 2015). The ego identity is regarded as one's personality makeup and is formed and continually transformed throughout one's life cycle (Cote & Levine, 1987). Erikson used the term 'psychological moratorium' to

describe periods during which society allows young people to resolve the crises associated with the eight stages. The table below provides a summary of the eight stages.

Table 1

Summary of the Eight Psychosocial Stages (Chung, 2018)

Age	0-1.5	1.5-3	3-5	5-12	12-18	18-40	40-65	65+
Stage	Infancy	Toddlerhood	Preschool age	School age	Adolescence	Young Adulthood	Middle Adulthood	Late Adulthood
Ego crisis	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Shame	Initiative vs Guilt	Industry vs Inferiority	Identity vs role confusion	Intimacy vs Isolation	Generativity vs Stagnation	Ego integrity vs Despair
Basic virtue	Hope	Will	Purpose	Competency	Fidelity	Love	Care	Wisdom

2.1.2 Marcia's theory of the development of identity

According to the developments by Marcia on identity, it is a self-structure that is developed internally and within one's discretion, with the elements of instincts, capabilities, values, and individual past. These organised structures change over time. It was previously believed that identity development happened during one stage only, that of adolescence (Erikson, 1950). However, Marcia (1980) indicated that identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence but, rather, begins when the self differentiates from the object at infancy and goes on right into full integration during old age. Marcia went on to develop what has come to be known as identity statuses, which were developed as a methodological way to allow Erikson's work on identity to be subjected to empirical study (Marcia, 1980). These statuses included identity achievement, identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, and moratorium. *Table 2* is a tabulated explanation of Marcia's work on identity statuses; these will be discussed further.

Table 2

Criteria for Identity Statuses (Marcia, 1980)

Identity status					
Position on occupation or ideology	Achievement	Foreclosure	Diffusion	Moratorium	
Crisis	Present	Absent	Present or absent	Present	
Commitment	Present	Present	Absent	Present	

The placing of an individual into one of the four statuses is based on the existence or non-existence of a crisis, and the degree to which the individual has made a personal investment, also known as commitment. This occurs in two areas, namely occupation and ideology (Marcia, 1980).

Identity achievement refers to individuals whose personalities have shown high levels of achievement as well as high levels of motivation and confidence. These individuals function optimally both cognitively and interpersonally (Kroger, 2003). This group is one of two with a high level of commitment. Individuals in the identity achieved status are not easily influenced by outside forces and their solid character and flexible characters are most impressive (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Those who fall within the moratorium status have one key element to their personality, which is anxiety. They are often confused and include others in their identity formation process (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Those who display foreclosure are consistently seen to have high levels of conformity, a desire for change and low levels of anxiety together with a strict nature. This is the second status that has a high level of commitment; however, unlike the achieved status, those in this status are not flexible and fear exploration. (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Those who are identified as being in the diffusion status are different from those in the foreclosure status: they can be described as shy and easily swayed by peer pressure (Kroger, 2003).

There have been more recent developments on Marcia's theory. There is the three-dimensional model by Meeus and Crocetti that is now also considered when the construction of identity statuses is discussed (Meeus et al., 2012). This model states that there are three dimensions to the process of identity formation. The first is commitment, which entails the significant

decisions that individuals have to come to, ensuring that this conclusion relates to their developmental domains, and the self-confidence that results from this decision making (Meeus et al., 2012). The second element is intentional and extensive exploration, which refers to the extent to which individuals generally remain aware of their above-mentioned commitments (Crocetti et al., 2017). The third feature in the model is the reconsideration of commitments; this entails looking at current commitments and comparing them to existing possible alternatives, especially when the current commitment no longer makes the individual feel fulfilled (Crocetti et al., 2009).

Five original identity statuses have subsequently been conceptualised (Crocetti et al., 2011). These statuses are as follows, in no specific order: early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, diffusion and achievement (Crocetti et al., 2011). Each one of the statuses allows for theory-rich, specific profiles to be developed, highlighting personality, problem behaviour, and parent-adolescent relationship dimensions. Luyckx and colleagues are other contributors to the extended theory (Crocetti et al., 2012). Luyckx et al. (2008) identified two forms of diffusion: diffused diffusion and carefree diffusion. They also proposed an integrative model that is used to evaluate identity and general future plans (Crocetti et al., 2012). They focused on the five processes that are taken into consideration when looking at unique identity domains, and on future exploration and goals that individuals might want to commit themselves to in the future (Crocetti et al., 2012; Crocetti et al., 2008). Another model was proposed by Luyckx and colleagues (2008). This was a structure with four dimensions, which were: exploration in depth, exploration in breadth, identification with commitment and lastly commitment-making (Crocetti et al., 2011). Further elaboration would go beyond the scope of this particular study.

Identity remains complex in the South African context. According to Albert et al. (2003), the development of identity is impacted by several factors, including but not limited to socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts. Thus, it is imperative that researchers remain conscious of the fact that identity theories were developed outside the South African context, and the theories should therefore be applied with caution to African cultures, especially in marginalised areas (Makhubela, 2012). Many African adolescents are profoundly influenced by the economic, racial, class and gender disparities that characterise their families, and the collective identity they adopt is significant to the adolescent exploration of identity.

The traditional identity theories in South Africa have focused mainly on occupation, politics, relationships and religion (Alberts, 2000). Because of the changes taking place in cultural

contexts, socioeconomic conditions and roles, the development of identity continues into early adulthood. In a study conducted by Alberts, focusing on occupation, religion and socio-cultural aspects, 63,6% of participants were in the achieved identity status. In the break-down of the findings, it was reported that there were large numbers in the foreclosed status when it came to occupation, with the same for religion, possibly because of the standards set by communities and families (Low et al., 2005); this remains highly impactful on personal narratives or life stories, which will be discussed next.

2.1.3 *Conceptualising narrative identity*

Building on the work of Erikson's psychosocial theory of development during the 1980s, McAdams contested that narrative identity develops in the latter part of adolescence as well as during early adulthood, as a societal function to meet society's expectations about identity and maturation (McAdams & McLean, 2013). The process of internalisation provides individuals with an answer to the perennial question of "Who am I?" (McAdams and McLean 2013). Habermas and Bluck (2000) also stated that it is not until adolescence that individuals develop an understanding and manifest coherence when it comes to life events. In the life story model conceptualised by McAdams, he emphasised that identity is, in fact, a story. He stated that there are scenes, a setting, character, plot, and theme (McAdams, 2001). Furthermore, Georgakopoulou (2016) has pointed out that social media now allows narrative stance-taking elements, such as being able to check into different locations, tag friends, and receive notifications about the events in the narrator's environment.

Narrative identity is believed to be a story that is constructed in accordance with peoples' lives, in other words, an individual's sense of self revolves around a narrative structure that puts them in the position of being an active agent in constructing their narrative or life journey (Singer, 2004). Peoples' life stories are constantly morphing, and their lives continue to be internalised in this evolution. This ongoing process of development and establishment involves integrating and reconstructing a past and an imagined future life, with a sense of unity and purpose (McAdams & McLean, 2013). In other words, it is an internalised and morphing life story that explains how individuals become who they are (McAdams, 2019). By developing a narrative identity there is a higher chance of developing its coherence, social continuity, culture (Puoane et al., 2010) and historical time. Knowing someone means allowing ourselves to understand their life narrative (Hammack, 2008). In the 21st century, people in late adolescence, and more especially those in early adulthood, start reconstructing their past,

understanding their present and looking forward to their future through the process of internalising and evolving life stories (McAdams, 2004).

The development of identity can take different forms; however, the narrative approach understands it as the process in which an individual synthesizes their psychosocial elements with their culture, across the span of their life (Hammack, 2008). In this approach, human development is based on the formulation of a personal narrative across a life span while ensuring that this is meaningful and effectively integrated into a person's life. Another element of narrative identity which differs from previous theories is that narrative identity is not restricted to a particular life stage. This life journey encompasses challenges of intimacy and independence. Storytelling has evolved over time, and it is now used as a mechanism for developing and defining life narratives. It is a skill that no other species possesses. Humans have been sharing stories for years, from listening to them around the fire to watching them on our mobile devices or in movie complexes, and we reflect on them consciously (McAdams 2019). This process continues across entire life spans (Singer, 2004), but this study delves most deeply into the way it is conducted in emerging adulthood.

The study of identity has focused mainly on the developing self and the uniqueness of individuals and has very seldom focused on the micro-processes through which identity is formed. These include narrative approaches where both individuality and aspects of identity continuity are included (Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009). The narrative approach insists that all individuals have the same right to express their ways of comprehending what identity means to them. The development of identity has been investigated in environments that would be regarded as social and where relationships and interactions take place.

The concept of narrative identity is seen as flexible and dynamic (Barkhuizen, 2016). This means that it can be changeable, situation-dependent and arranged in various ways. The concept of identity is looked at through the lens of different social spaces and interactions with others. The development of identity is impacted by a person's attitudes, belief system, expectations, assumptions and dispositional traits, which means that its construction is based in particular culturally-rooted meanings. In short, individuals create a sense of meaning through what they are going through or have previously gone through in their lives.

The narrative approach to identity is regarded as being closely aligned with the work of Erikson with its emphasis on temporal integration as part of the development of personality. Narrative identity is an integrative story that explains how individuals come to view

themselves; the individual's story thus provides unity and purpose (McLean & Lilgendahl, 2019). Narrative approaches to identity development look at existing meanings and people's past experiences; they relate these to how the self and identity will develop further and will integrate these past events into a sense of self. According to the literature on narrative identity, past and present narratives are significant in the way people develop their life stories, and this has an effect on how the self and identity will develop (Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009).

Narrative identity comes from storytelling, which reflects the human desire to be an acceptable social being. According to McAdams (2019), stories are there so that they can be told and are almost always about social life. He assumes that there is almost always an audience for a story, and the audience's participation is essential. In order to develop a narrative identity it is important for individuals to develop ways to tell their stories according to cultural standards and within groups including friends, family, peers and so on (McAdams & McLean, 2013). The process followed in constructing one's narrative identity is multilayered and complex. From a young age, children observe the ways in which stories are told (McLean & Lilgendahl, 2019), and these ways are passed on to them as part of their culture.

Research shows that the style parents use to converse helps to develop story-telling skills in children; this provides a foundation for teaching them how to create significance from what they go through in their lives (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Parents usually encourage children to talk about personal experiences from a very young age. Initially, this is a guided process where parents would help the child recollect what they had to eat in the morning or a visit to a medical practitioner, for example (McAdams, 2001). Children learn to recognise which stories are valued the most, and how these stories are shared. As they mature they continue to construct their life stories and share them with others, and they are later exposed to the wider society and the extended culture (McLean & Lilgendahl, 2019).

According to McAdams and McLean (2013), stories need to be captivating to draw an engaged audience. Certain factors need to be considered in the telling of the story, as they play an important role in the process of meaning-making. Firstly, there must be a reason why a particular story is shared, to ensure that the listeners understand its relevance. Secondly, the listeners' response also matters greatly, as it allows for a more meaningful and personal narration. Lastly, relationships matter, because if the important figures in an individual's life see the significance in a personal story, this will encourage the narrator to keep the story (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Once the adolescent years are reached and adulthood looms,

emerging adults begin to battle with developing narratives, as they navigate and negotiate self-understanding in a context shared by many others. This will inevitably encourage yet impinge on the developing identity (McLean & Lilgendahl, 2019). Life stories comprise more than reiterations of occurrences that have passed; they are what defines us, because narrative identities are tales that individuals act upon, and emerging adults are only just beginning to put together their self-defining stories (Bamberg, 2010).

At the beginning of life, an individual becomes a social actor who responds to those around them and conveys emotions in their special way. The self continues to evolve over the course of a lifetime and becomes a motivated and autobiographical author (McAdams, 2019). It is not until the years of emerging adulthood that individuals begin to construct their life stories which create unity and purpose. This assertion rests on the belief that constructing a life narrative requires cognitive skills that people only develop during late adolescence and young adulthood (McAdams, 2001).

Conway and Singer are two other authors who have had an impact on the study of narrative identity. They proposed what is now known as the dual memory system, which galvanises the development of the autobiographical memories that are most efficient in constructing narrative identity; these are known as self-defining memories (Singer et al., 2013). Telling autobiographical stories strengthens social relationships, and for this reason, people take pleasure in sharing their stories with others. They also serve as advisory sources, because people search and use these memories, or similar ones, when dealing with distressing life situations (McAdams, 2018). These self-defining memories result in the formation of narrative scripts, which in turn help the individual develop a repetitive response to stimuli. Singer and Conway reported that the autobiographical memories consist of the autobiographical knowledge base (which stores past experiences) and the conceptual self (Singer et al., 2013).

Another author who had a significant impact on the study of narrative identity was Ricoeur (Romele, 2013). His view on narrative identity was that people carry out what is known as “emplotment” which is how individuals pull together differing events from their past into a meaningful and comprehensive unit, by creating uninhibited yet significant connections between all these past occurrences (Rhodes, 2016). He possessed a more hermeneutical phenomenological perspective on human subjects, thus he believed that the hermeneutical came from the narrative. Ricoeur believed that it is through the text and its linguistic and structural analysis that the understanding of oneself and others can begin. He believed that

cultural expression can be observed in symbols, metaphors and ultimately narratives (Romele, 2013). For Ricoeur, the figuration of events into a significant whole occurs from the conclusion of the story, amid the action of looking back at one's past and drawing sense from past occurrences. In this way, earlier events and their significance form a pattern that is recognised mainly from the later perspective (Rhodes, 2016). This, however, is monolinear, whereas the inclusion of social networking sites in a narrative creates a multilinear view of narrative identity.

According to Androutsopoulou and Stefanou (2017), life stories are often generated from what is known as a critical juncture or turning point, because people develop meaning from these experiences. Turning points can be changes for better or worse, but even tragic events may later be interpreted as positive. In a study conducted by McLean and Pratt (2006) they highlight turning points in the lives of emerging adults and point out that the process of meaning-making often takes place at such turning points, and that people rarely construct meaning without them. Turning points are critical instances or significant periods of change and are often seen as a chance for people to reorientate and reinterpret their lives (Androutsopoulou & Stefanou, 2017). McLean and Pratt (2006) suggest that turning points and the meaningfulness of experiences provide the most significant way to understand oneself, because this is where one faces the need for new decisions, self-reflection and possibly a new route in life altogether. Turning points capture the greatest attention in our lives, because more often than not these critical junctures are life-altering. Turning points may be highs or lows, good or bad, but they have an impact on the process of identity development (Morrison et al., 2014).

2.2 The Emergence and Use of Social Media and Selfies

In this section, the history of social media and selfies is discussed, highlighting the developments from the first emergence of social media until the current situation. The term selfies is newer than social media; however, selfies have existed for over a century but were originally known as self-portraits. The aim of this section is to explain how selfies are used by emerging adults during the construction of narrative identities.

Religion and spirituality are significant components in the lives of emerging adults. According to Meeus et al. (1999), many emerging adults show a strong sense of religious commitment. In another study by Arnett and Jensen (2002), emerging adults indicated that they had strong religious affiliation, especially after entering college. A large number of emerging

adults reported that religion was an important part of the process of meaning-making (Cook et al., 2014). In a separate study conducted by Koenig et al. (2008) with individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, it was found that there was a decline in religious affiliation once emerging adults enter university, particularly when it came to attending church services (Lee et al., 2017). Religious affiliation often has an impact on an emerging adult's choice of friends, and also has a significant potential to influence their choice of romantic partner. Friends and partners, in turn, also have the potential to influence an individual's religiosity. Media influences daily religious practices. Identity exploration impacts an individual's choice of media, and the media chosen, in turn, impacts the individual. Thus, social media impacts identity development, including development in the religious domain (Barry et al., 2010). Media has the potential to influence emerging adults' religiosity and spirituality, and time spent immersed in the media may promote the exploration of their beliefs and their engagement in religious practices (Barry et al., 2010).

2.2.1 *Social media and selfies*

Media has undergone a transformation, with newly developed systems offering more benefits than earlier ones. This can be regarded as a social revolution that links people via virtual worlds (Gunduz, 2017). Communication has been the one task that humankind has attempted to simplify over time. One of the first examples of mass communication was developed in 1792 in the form of a telegraph system that was used to receive and transmit messages over long distances (Edosowam et al., 2011). This was further developed in the 1800s. The 1970s saw the development of the Multi-User Domain, which was a real-time virtual world that allowed gamers to role-play, engage in interactive fiction, and have online chats. The Open Diary was another form of social media conceived by Bruce and Susan Abelson. It was regarded as a site for social networking because it allowed creators the opportunity to post their content and become connected (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In 1979, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis developed what was known as Usenet, which allowed the internet to post correspondence which was available to the public to view (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social networks have evolved over the course of time, with many emerging around the 1990s. Some examples were known then as Six Degrees, Blackplanet, Asian Avenue and MoveOn (Edosowam et al., 2011). In the year 2000 sites emerged that made interaction a little less difficult. These were social networking sites. People were now able to share their common interests in music, education, movies and much more (Edosowam et al., 2011). Access to Web

2.0 has facilitated communication and the creation of content, allowing the rapid dissemination of information and access to more people (Gunduz, 2017).

These social sites allowed people to engage with each other on aspects of public policy and other specific niche interests. Social networking skyrocketed at this time, because this is the period when we began seeing the emergence of Facebook, Youtube, LunarStorm, Six degrees, Cyworld and other sites and blogs.

In January 2009 there were over 175 million users and over 3 billion pictures on Flickr (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Emerging adults in particular are greatly impacted by, and the chief consumers of, the various forms of media including television and magazines but more specifically social media. They now gravitate toward platforms that have more images, such as Instagram and Snapchat, and are moving away from media that is focused on text (Hancock & Toma, 2009), such as Twitter (Bjornsen, 2018). It has been shown that emerging adults, specifically those between the ages of 18 and 29, are the first group to have been exposed to cell phones, social messaging services, and social networking sites from childhood until late adolescence, and even a little beyond late adolescence (Coyne et al., 2013). This group has been found to spend a minimum of four hours daily on their cellphones or on social networks. Research by the Pew Research Center (2017) has shown that 88% of emerging adults are active on Facebook, while 59% use Instagram, 36% use Pinterest and 34% and 36% use LinkedIn and Twitter respectively. Many prefer Instagram because it focuses on picture sharing.

South Africa's social media sphere has continued to grow rapidly especially in terms of number of users and intensity of use (World Wide Worx, 2013). Currently, South Africa is one of the leading countries on the continent in this regard, with the highest number of social media users (UNICEF New York et al., 2012). According to research conducted by Twitter, usage has risen by 129%, with Instagram showing an increased number of users – over 500 000 new users in the past year. In 2014 alone, there were over 100 000 new Facebook users each month (World Wide Worx, 2013). The most popular social media networks are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest. Approximately 5.3 million currently use Facebook, with most of the users being between the ages of 20 and 29. There is a great deal of interest in social media use because, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, this medium helps users communicate and stay in touch with loved ones (Budree et al., 2019).

The use of social media networking sites has become a significant way for emerging adults to socialise, assert their new-found autonomy (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015), explore

their identity and initiate and maintain relationships (Coyne et al., 2013). These sites also provide a platform on which a person's narrative almost continues to exist beyond their lifetime, because when someone dies their account is not deactivated. These accounts serve as a remembrance, while other accounts are created for those who cannot express themselves yet, such as babies (Baldauf et al., 2017).

There are currently more than 274 million pictures on the popular social networking site Instagram, and these are just those that can be located under the hashtag #selfie (Robsham, 2016). They have earned a valuable place in being known as one of the more multilayered and varied ways that individuals use to represent themselves on social media (Georgakopoulou, 2016). A selfie can be easily defined as a self-portrait (Robsham, 2016). Self-portraits date back to ancient Greece, Egypt and the Middle East, when self-portraiture was not a specific genre but was seen, rather, as a matter of convenience (Gorichanaz, 2019). In the 20th century self-portraits gained popularity, with prominent figures creating portraits of themselves, and now in the 21st century they are said to be the defining element of our age.

Technology has given rise to the 21st-century self-portrait, which is the selfie (Gorichanaz, 2019). The Oxford Dictionary selected "selfie" as their word of the year in 2013. Since that announcement, it is now clear that selfies have come to be the latest instrument for self-representation (Lobo & Gowda, 2016). In terms of the definition given by Macmillian Dictionary (2017), a selfie is a photo that is snapped by oneself using a modern-day cellphone or a camera on a laptop or desktop, to share on social media. It is important to note that there has been a dystopian view of selfies for many years, especially relating to female figures (Georgakopoulou, 2016). Selfies have often been linked to pathology, including but not limited to narcissism and body image issues; however, this perspective will not be the focus of the current study.

Selfies are more than a reflection of how people view or perceive themselves; they are also public reflections of how individuals are perceived by others (Kozinets et al., 2017). They are significant instruments that people use to construct a sequential series of narratives about themselves (Kozinets et al., 2017). How people represent themselves involves constructing what they believe to be their identities and conveying this to others. Frequently, individuals curate the material that they issue to the world, because they would much rather have viewers know only certain aspects of themselves instead of seeing them in their entirety (Deeb-Swihart et al., 2017). During the process of identity development, people often seek verification for

how they already view themselves (Chen et al., 2006). By being validated by those around them, these individuals often feel and believe that their self-views are appropriate. On social media, this involves the commentary and reactions that one receives from other users.

At the very core of the process of constructing one's identity is the process of self-representation. This process will frequently evolve, however, depending on the context that people place themselves in and the strong desire to reinvent the self in unfamiliar environments (Yang & Brown, 2016). Selfies constitute small stories, but they are only fragmentary and open-ended, because no single post can sum up the life story of the individual who is posting them; social media users therefore curate what they want the world to know about them (Georgakopoulou, 2016). As Westley (2016) also pointed out, there are issues with posting single images, because single selfies only provide partial information which can be frustrating to the online 'readers' of that particular person's narrative. Thus, by looking at a selfie, we begin to explore the user's narrative which expands across the text.

Communication via social media has always been clear (Rettberg, 2017) and as it becomes more and more prevalent, the younger generation comes to view it as a form of self-expression. Just as friends are an important part of developing a sense of self (Brooks, 2002), selfies can be influential in shaping the sense of self that university students possess. Creating a selfie means creating the capacity to self-identify and motivates further exploration of self; this creates a narrative of students' lives through the use of photographs (Robsham, 2016). Ultimately a self-portrait is a process more than an end product; in other words, it is a construction process rather than just a representation, bringing oneself forward over a period instead of simply showcasing oneself (Gorichanaz, 2019). Depending on which social media platform one posts on, different actions follow. For instance, it has been observed that a platform like Snapchat elicits dialogue among users and facilitates interactions between friends and acquaintances, while a platform like Instagram mainly focuses on aesthetic appeal (Barker & Rodriguez, 2019). For instance, Facebook has a 'like' function which promotes positive interactions between users and encourages commentary, while a platform like LinkedIn is more for professional use. It offers users the chance to share their specific skills and describe their competencies (Baldauf et al., 2017). Every social media platform possesses a distinctive and personalised function that is used to express oneself, and users must adhere to the structure and rules that have been stipulated (Baldauf et al., 2017; Barker & Rodriguez, 2019).

It is important to recognise that content on social media is curated: a great deal of thought goes into what is posted, what is not, the lighting that is used, the pose that the users adopt in the picture and so forth (Deeb-Swihart et al., 2017). This is done to avoid judgment, or to draw attention to particular aspects of oneself. For instance, when people share pictures relating to their favourite bands, their political stance, their home town, the clothes they choose to wear, their tattoos, attributes of their bodies and many other things, these are all saying something about who they are (Deeb-Swihart et al., 2017).

2.3 The Formation of Narrative Identity through Social Media and Selfies

The process of identity development remains complex, more so because emerging adults now find themselves heavily involved in the use of social media and social worlds that are delineated by educational facilities, households, and friendship groups (Pattaro, 2015). Online self-presentation is multi-faceted and reveals the most prevalent need at a given developmental stage; for emerging adults, for example, creating online images is to help them stay connected to their loved ones (Yang et al., 2017). This process, however, involves not only the recording of daily events but also the use of new media, which has an impact on personality development. Media by itself has managed to provide users with a platform for identity exploration through socialisation and self-socialisation. In western society, self-portraits gained prominence in the 16th century, when artists used self-portraiture to show off their skills and as a way to reveal what they believed to be the deepest aspects of their characters (Kozinets et al., 2017). Contemporary ways of capturing selfies have become complex and enculturated. Selfies have become a mirror image of how we see our tendencies and in turn how the public sees us (Kozinets et al., 2017).

Social media now provides ample spaces for exploration, which is the basis of identity development. There is also a new perspective which suggests that offline and online boundaries of identity are intertwined; the assumption is that who we see offline is who we see on social media, but this is not always the case (Pattaro, 2015). Selfies are now used as visual diaries and reused by people to tell their narratives. As a result, we can say that these are autobiographies that are facilitated by new-age technology which has a way of communicating the self to others (Clara & Garner, 2017). Selfies have come to be a popular and more relevant means of expressing oneself and presenting oneself with the introduction of new technologies (Lobo & Gowda, 2016) over the years. The art of self-presentation has erupted into a phenomenon of a culture filled with selfie posts. Cooley's looking glass theory shows that a person's self is constructed through the ideas and beliefs that they gather from those around them. This theory

indicates that individuals develop an awareness of self by using others as a mirror; modern-day selfies can be used for the same function (Lobo & Gowda, 2016). It is also important to highlight the relevance of selfies as self-representation tools in the African context, because there is scant literature covering aspects of identity development and social media in this context (Georgokoulou, 2016; Yang et al., 2017).

Self-presentation is a process where an individual relays their image to those around them, and this plays a notable role in identity development (Yang et al., 2017). Looking at what a person posts and how they choose to curate their selfies gives us a glimpse into who they are and what they value (Garner, 2017). This is done intentionally by those who post selfies to reveal certain aspects of themselves, in a socially acceptable way. This is true for young people, especially emerging adults, who often feel that they are judged and have a constant desire to remain socially connected. Selfies have earned a significant place among the many ways in which people present themselves on social media and now provide a glimpse into people's small life stories, because they contain valuable data for understanding people's narratives (Georgakopoulou, 2016).

It can be said that selfies are an outlet through which others can have a glimpse into one's life. An investigation carried out by Deeb-Swihart et al. (2017) has demonstrated that some people see their narratives as indicating their active engagement in activist roles in areas such as human rights or underrepresented minority groups; some posts show people's passion, such as blogging, where they show off their love for beauty, health and so on. This also shows off their competence in these areas (Deeb-Swihart et al., 2017). In a study by Barker and Rodriguez (2019), some participants indicated that they took selfies as a form of self-expression in which they showed others who they are and how they feel about themselves; other participants indicated that posting selfies made them feel empowered and motivated and was a way of connecting with others (Barker & Rodriguez, 2019). The world can therefore no longer exclude selfies from narrative examination or question their narrativity, because storying in selfies is dynamic and contextual, a nascent process that is co-constructed by selfies and those who post them (Georgakopoulou, 2016).

Social media has indicated that small stories created with selfies are not a one-way street; instead, these stories are co-constructed by media and the influences of social media (Georgakopoulou, 2016). Just as with personal narratives told in person that have elements that make them intriguing, as mentioned previously, so there is extensive work that goes into

portraying the desired self on social media. For instance, how people engage with the content one has put out is important; positive assessments include emoticons, likes, and comments or the dialogue that the commenters create around the selfies. People create an image of themselves to claim their identity, and the verification they receive from others impacts how they see themselves (Lobo & Gowda, 2016). Selfies negotiate between lived experience and mass media and allow people to stand up and say that this indeed is who they are and others should also understand them as they are (Barker & Rodriguez, 2019).

A platform such as Instagram is not only a digital space that has no real purpose; the images that are posted there should be looked at as pieces of online narratives about a person, and all these images that are posted should be viewed in their context and entirety to develop a robust comprehension of who an individual is (Kozinets et al., 2017). Selfies remain a significant way to create, assert and develop long-lasting narratives of the self that impact identity work (Kozinets et al., 2017). Together with their captions, they make up small personal stories, and elements such as captions, hashtags and comments are pivotal in the process of posting them (Clara & Garner, 2017). The significance of the above elements during the process of posting selfies will also be discussed in detail later in the study, because they were mentioned during the data collection process. Even though they are significant, they are not always common. The investigator in this study sees the selfies posted on social media as a way of motivating more and more people to engage in the poster's life story, just as there would typically be a storyteller and a listener, or listeners, in real life. In the study it has been mentioned that people strive to become social beings who are accepted and listened to; this point is relevant to this study, because selfies have become narratives and those who post them are the storytellers who have observed what is likely to be acknowledged on social media and what is not. These are the skills that would usually develop during childhood.

In the work of Smith and Watson (2010) it was stated that narrativity can be used to describe autobiographical acts, including representation of a person's life in non-written forms which individuals have chosen to utilise as representation. Essentially for this study, it can be said that the participants are storytellers, and whatever they choose to disclose or create will be impacted by history and culture (Low et al., 2005). Even the process of meaning-making will be impacted by the person's environment, and the aspects of nurture and nature should be considered because they give value to our talking about ourselves (Westley, 2016). In the context of this study, societal traditions and general makeup are significant. This is because South Africa's context is immensely diverse, and narrativity is impacted by more factors than

just race and ethnicity; it is impacted by the economy, familial composition and so on. In visual representation, self-portraits represent and create affirmations about a person's identity; the statement that they make is open to narrative interpretation. The selfies that the participants post of themselves are their personal stories that they disclose, therefore narrative identity makes up a person's intersubjective process, which is a process of meaning-making (Westley, 2016).

The process of telling the story has become quicker and easier thanks to social media; however, this does not imply that the stories that are told are any poorer in meaning or less impactful (Clara & Garner, 2017). The process of narrating a story allows individuals to integrate their experiences. This activity pertaining to self-interpretation is motivated by the need to teach, entertain or impress those who are listening (Baumeister & Newman, 1994). Stories, as mentioned above, are used to reach goals such as self-expression, but they are also used as measures through which people can determine their acceptance into social groups by seeing whether or not their beliefs and values align with those in the context they exist in (Baumeister & Newman, 1994). Developing identity as a narrative is useful for many, because in the current context many people live in a world where a multitude of discourses are being created; identity development thus becomes a reflexive project. The immense quantity of information that exists does not stay consistent, because of globalisation (Hammack, 2008). An individual's construction of narrative identity becomes more intentional and deliberate in an attempt to obtain understanding and meaning.

2.4 Chapter Summary

Identity development was discussed in relation to the work of Erikson and Marcia and the more recent work on the identity statuses previously identified by Marcia. Narrative identity was explored in depth, looking at key developments by different authors. McAdams and McLean highlighted narrative identity as a life story and continued to develop the theory further, ultimately reiterating that narrative identity is a changing life story impacted by life events and those around one. It is also important for meaning-making among those beyond adolescent years. Conway and Singer emphasised the dual memory system otherwise known as the autobiographical memory and its function in narration (McLean & Fournier, 2008). Ricoeur emphasised symbols and language as being important tools in pulling together life stories and giving these events meaning. Furthermore, the history of social media and its current most prominent feature, selfies, was discussed. Selfies have come to be a tool for self-expression

and self-representation from when they were first encountered as self-portraits more than a century ago.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the research objective and the aim of the study. This is followed by an explanation of the chosen research approach and the research design. The research paradigm is discussed, and the data collection process and data analysis method are described. The concept of trustworthiness, its applicability to the study, and the relevant ethical considerations are then discussed.

3.1 Research Purpose, Aim and Questions

The objective of this study was to investigate selfies as self-representation tools for the construction of narrative identity. Given how rapidly social media is growing, it is essential to examine the ways in which individuals use it to tell their narratives, and the consequences thereof. In other words, it has become important to discuss the role of social media and its interaction with identity construction (Arnett, 2000). There remains a gap in the research on how social media impacts the identities of emerging adults, and this warrants further research (Coyne et al., 2013).

The questions looked at in the study were, firstly, how selfies relate to the construction of narrative identities in emerging adults and secondly, how feedback received from posted selfies facilitates narrative identity construction in emerging adults. The interest in the topic was piqued by personal observations of peers and their interaction with social media, together with personal experiences as an emerging adult. Besides these personal factors, the dearth of information about this topic in the South African emerging adulthood population was a motivating factor to conduct this research study. There has been little exploration of the role of selfies in the construction of narrative identities in South Africa.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Design

This study was grounded in the social constructivism paradigm. According to Adom et al. (2016), social constructivism is a paradigm that insists on the construction and understanding of knowledge about the world through lived experiences. Social constructivism believes that what is considered to be the truth is relative and often depends on one's perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The research adopted a qualitative research approach (Stangor, 2015). Qualitative research refers to studies in which the findings are not arrived at through the use of statistical procedures or any other method of quantification (Rahman, 2017). Several advantages were considered before employing the qualitative research approach; firstly, this sort of approach

allows for thick descriptions of participants' experiences and meanings (Rahman, 2017). Secondly, a qualitative research approach, according to Jackson et al. (2007), allows an opportunity for a better understanding of the participants from a holistic point of view because of its wider epistemological viewpoints. Thirdly, the qualitative research approach can provide an understanding of different people's voices and the meanings that they attach to things around them. As a result, the qualitative research approach was considered most appropriate for the study, as it would provide an in-depth view of information pertaining to the role of social media in the construction of narrative identity by emerging adults.

Research design can be regarded as a structured framework for the methods that are used to control the responses to the research questions that have been posed (Babbie & Mouton, 2010; Gelo et al., 2008). A descriptive and exploratory research design was employed, because such a design would allow more flexibility during the collection of data and would ensure that a rigid structure during the process would not be imposed. This type of research design created a space in which the data reflected the participant's beliefs.

3.3 Research Context, Sampling Procedures and Participants

The context is important for research purposes, in the synthesis of knowledge and for adequately understanding the events that take place. The issues covered, and the events and experiences, are best understood in their context. This study aimed to obtain a better understanding of individuals' experiences within the context of emerging adulthood.

According to Braun and Clarke (2013), the participants and the processes that are followed form a crucial part of any research study, because the participants that are selected have a role to play in relation to the results of the study and also impact the quality of the results that are produced.

Purposive and snowball sampling were considered for this study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgement sampling and is regarded as a deliberate decision that is taken when selecting specific participants, based on particular qualities that the participant may have (Etikan et al., 2016). What makes purposive sampling ideal is the fact that it is a non-random technique that does not require particular underlying theories or a set number of participants. A decision is made regarding what should be known, and thereafter individuals who are well versed in particular knowledge or experiences are sought because they are ideal participants. For this research study, emerging adults were the ideal respondents. This is because even though aspects of identity development were said to apply to those in their adolescent years by

Erikson (1950), Arnett's work has since shown that identity development carries on well into emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Purposive sampling was employed to ensure a diverse group of participants for the study. Purposive sampling was followed by snowball sampling. Snowball sampling typically involves researcher gaining access to informants through the contact information that is provided by other informants or participants. In the case of this current study, the initially identified participants were asked to bring friends along as possible participants given that they satisfied the criteria. Snowball sampling is arguably the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research (Noy, 2008).

To identify participants for this research study, specific inclusion criteria had to be considered. The participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 25. The emerging adulthood theory originally identified emerging adults as being between the ages of 18 and 25 (Arnett, 2000), and it was only later that further developments were made (Arnett et al., 2014; Arnett, 2004). For the purpose of this research study, participants between the ages of 18 and 25 were chosen. The participants could identify as any gender and could be of any religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sexual preference, or cultural background . A total of 25 individuals were eventually identified and recruited by employing purposive sampling. The already identified participants were contacted and asked to bring a friend along to the focus group. The initial participants informed their friends that they would need to satisfy the criteria mentioned previously. The initial participants were known by the researcher who then asked whether or not they would be comfortable to take part in a research study to which some responded with a yes, however some indicated that they would not be available during the time the focus group discussion took place. In addition to this, the identified participants were then asked to bring a friend along who would also be comfortable in taking part in a research study. The initial participants were informed of the time and place that the focus group discussions took place and were asked to relay this to their friends.

All 25 of the identified potential participants consented to take part in the study by being participants in focus groups that were conducted. It is important to note that before commencing with the focus group discussion all participants those identified by the researcher and those who were referred by their friends were given an informed consent form to sign upon their arrival. This was done in this manner to ensure that all participants indeed signed the form and they also had access to researcher and were able to ask for further clarification on the study and the informed consent form itself. After the participants signed the informed consent forms they were collected and it was noted at the beginning of the audio recordings that indeed

participants had signed the informed consent forms thus indicating their willingness to participate in the study. All the focus group interviews were conducted in the city of Bloemfontein, which is situated in Free State. This seemed convenient because the participants were also based in Bloemfontein at the time and were thus all able to be part of the research. The biographic information form is provided in Appendix C, and the results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Biographic Characteristics of the Qualitative Sample

Biographic information		Focus group				Total sample	
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>		
		<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	<i>18-20</i>	3	3	5	3	14	56
	<i>21-23</i>	2	3	1	5	11	44
	<i>Total</i>	5	6	6	8	25	100
Gender	<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	4	4	16
	<i>Female</i>	5	6	6	4	21	84
	<i>Total</i>	5	6	6	8	25	100
Racial group	<i>Black</i>	5	3	3	8	19	76
	<i>White</i>	0	1	3	0	4	16
	<i>Coloured</i>	0	1	0	0	1	4
	<i>Indian</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>Other</i>	0	1	0	0	1	4
	<i>Total</i>	5	3	6	8	25	100

In this study, the participants were between the ages of 18 and 23. Most of the participants – 56% – were between the ages of 18 and 20, as indicated in the table above, and 44% of them were between 21 and 23 years of age. Females made up 84% of the cohort while the male participants made up 16%. In terms of group diversity, 76% of the participants

identified as Black, 16% identified as White, 4% identified as Coloured and the remaining 4% identified as Other.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

In this section, the data collection procedures utilised during the study are discussed further. Data collection procedures consisted of focus groups. A detailed outline, description and rationale are provided below.

Focus groups constitute a type of group interview where the participants are encouraged to discuss a specific topic and its underlying issues (Parker & Tritter, 2006). Focus groups are deemed efficient, because participants are seen as valuable sources of information. In focus groups, participants can report factual data, discuss information satisfactorily and express opinions, feelings and perceptions (Chioncel et al., 2010). These are, however, just assumptions which are assumed to be correct. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), the main intention of focus groups is to gain data through participant interaction and discussion. There is a belief that people create their realities and make meaning of their experiences through the interpersonal interactions and engagements that they have. Even though focus groups are sometimes synonymous with one-on-one or group interviews (Parker & Tritter, 2006), what differentiates them from those two methods is the fact that focus groups include discussions with a facilitator/moderator (Nyumba et al., 2017).

Focus groups were first mentioned as a market research technique in the 1920s and the 1950s and have continued to be a popular method to collect data (Kitzinger, 1994). Focus groups should be seen as a forum in which ideas can be clarified, because this ultimately goes on to influence how groups are run (Kitzinger, 1994). Focus groups typically involve a small group of people, usually between six and eight, who are brought together by a trained moderator to explore attitudes, feelings and perceptions about a topic (Latif & Dilshad, 2013). According to Latif and Dilshad (2013), there are major elements to be considered before conducting focus groups.

Latif and Dilshad (2013) highlight important considerations for interviewers, and these were observed in the current study. Firstly, clear objectives were provided for the focus group, the participants were contacted in advance and were made aware of the purpose of the activity. It was also important for the interviewer to consider the time and place for the meeting and to ensure that it was convenient for the participants. Secondly, the composition of the group was considered. The groups needed to be representative of the actual demographics in the country

in which the study was conducted. Thus, it was important to have different genders, race, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Thirdly, during the process of conducting the focus group, participants were put at ease. It was important to consider the appropriateness of questions asked to ensure that participants were comfortable, and to remain aware of the language used in the process in order to minimise possible language barriers between participants. Fourthly, participants' responses were recorded with accuracy and with minimal disturbance to the participants involved in the process. A great deal of consideration was given to how the data was analysed and reported.

Another important point that Abrams et al. (2014) suggested was that a decision should be made whether focus groups should be conducted face-to-face or online. In both methods, the importance of the moderator's role, the costs associated with each method, the role of technology, location and convenience should be understood. It was also important to realise that even though the focus group is not the only method that can be used, it is a method that yields the most data. For the purpose of this current study opting for face-to-face focus groups was the most appealing because more in depth data was gathered from the discussion and participants were better able to respond authentically to each other's responses as well. Furthermore participants were able to build on each other's ideas. It was important to remain conscious of the fact that participants were likely to be inclined to give socially appropriate responses. The initial participants were informed about the study and were informed about the location at which the group would convene. They were then asked to relay this information to their referrals so that they had knowledge that this would be a face-to-face interaction. The inclusion of a descriptive design in the study was to enhance the observation of the phenomena from the participants' view.

3.5 Data Analysis

It was imperative to employ a method of analysing data that was precise, and that there was consistency in recording, systematising and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process followed was credible (Nowell et al., 2017). Several methods are used to analyse data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013), but for the purpose of this study, the thematic analysis was used.

Thematic analysis is viewed as an independent qualitative descriptive approach to the identifying, analysing and reporting of themes found in collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme can be described as something that highlights important elements in the data that has

been collected, and which can be linked to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It represents meaning in the data set. A theme might be given considerable space in some data items, and little or none in others, or it might appear in relatively little of the data set. Themes are generated either inductively or deductively. An inductive approach means that the themes that have been identified are strongly linked to the data themselves. In this approach, after the data have been collected specifically for the research study, the themes identified may bear little relationship to the specific question that was asked of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Deductive, also known as theoretical, thematic analysis is driven by the investigator's theoretical or analytic interest in the area and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven. This form of thematic analysis tends to provide a less rich description of the data overall, and a more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An immense amount of information is typically collected, to ensure that sufficient conclusions are reached and that adequate suggestions for future research projects are made (Patton, 2002). For the purpose of this study, the deductive approach was used because specific research questions had to be answered. Hereafter the analysis of the data was also conducted and after four focus groups, enough information had been collected once it became evident that the same themes kept on resurfacing.

Thematic analysis is described as a process of identifying patterns that exist within data and is considered a method rather than a methodology. This is because thematic analysis is not grounded in any particular epistemology or theoretical perspective (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). It is hence considered to be a flexible method and has a few advantages. These include high levels of flexibility and an ability to provide a rich, detailed and complex account of data. Furthermore, it provides greater access to the process of analysing data for both novices as well as seasoned researchers (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2013). The work of Braun and Clarke is arguably the most influential approach in the social sciences, because it provides a useful and easily understood framework for doing thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a six principles process to be considered when analysing data.

Familiarising oneself with the data is important. This was done through reading and re-reading the data obtained in this study. By doing this one develops themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The investigator listened to the audio recordings while reading the transcriptions (see Appendix D) after the recordings had been transcribed by a trained research assistant. This was done not only to ensure that what the participants had reported was

adequately reflected in the research study; through listening to the audio recordings the investigator was increasingly exposed to the data, and this was paired with reading the written material to identify possible information that the research assistant might have missed.

The coding process involves developing labels for salient features in the data and these should be of relevance and should answer the research question in the process. During this process, it remained crucial that the research questions be kept in mind, because this guided the coding process. In addition to this, this meant that thematic analysis would be used (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). It was also important to note that coding is not only a reductionist method; it is also an analytical process. In the end, every piece of data was coded by gathering all the extracted codes and relevant data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially, several themes were developed, and depending on their appropriateness these were then captured. A personal laptop was used during the coding process to group these identified themes. This allowed for a functional visual representation of the data which could be easily changed. Open coding was utilised for the study. This meant that there were no pre-set codes, but new codes were developed and modified during the coding process.

Another principle that is part of the process of thematic analysis is searching for and identifying themes, which are a cohesive and meaningful pattern that is useful in answering the research question that has been posed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Searching for themes is an active process, because themes are not hidden in the data and have to be constructed. This phase ends with the themes being organised and data being coded. During the initial coding process a list of general themes which were most applicable was drawn up. After this, the themes were reviewed, and more meaningful groups of themes were formulated. In this study, themes were identified after codes had been generated from each set of transcripts.

Afterwards, it is important to review the themes. This process involved ensuring that the identified themes were relevant to the extracted data which were also coded as the full data set. A convincing and compelling story about the data emerged from the themes that had been identified. Defining and naming themes involved a detailed analysis of each theme and an informative name being given to each theme. Themes and subthemes were developed, informed by the participants' responses. These themes were developed after the coding process in which codes were grouped into meaningful chunks of information.

The final step was the process of writing up the results obtained after the data had been analysed and themes had been gathered from the sub-themes that had emerged (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). The themes and subthemes which were generated will be thoroughly discussed in the chapter that follows.

3.6 Trustworthiness

There has always been a challenge in deciding which criteria to use – either qualitative or quantitative – to ensure trustworthiness in research findings (Anney, 2014). This, together with the many philosophical paradigms, has confused the nature of qualitative research and, as a result, a novice researcher would rely heavily on quantitative research, which has dominated the research field for centuries. The most widely used criteria were developed by Guba and Lincoln (Elo et al., 2014), who used the term trustworthiness.

There has been much debate about the most appropriate concepts to be used in qualitative research for validity; for example, there has been much debate surrounding rigour, validity, reliability and trustworthiness (Noble & Smith, 2015). Four alternatives have been proposed for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, namely credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Elo et al., 2014).

Credibility can be checked using several methods; however, for this study, the most applicable method was prolonged engagement (Loh, 2013). The researcher had to read several articles to gain adequate knowledge about the topic and her Honours study had also included work on identity development. Thus, there was previous engagement with the material relating to identity development was helpful for this specific study. This allowed the formulation of appropriate questions for the research study and it also created an opportunity to collect in-depth information from the participants and to ensure that the related topic would be explored extensively (Hadi, 2016). Another way in which credibility was ensured was through the use of consent. It is applicable not only when speaking about ethical consideration, but also when attempting to establish credibility. When participants are given the option to agree or refuse to participate in a study, the process of collecting data involves those who are genuinely interested in forming part of the focus groups, which helps in retrieving more honest information (Shenton, 2004).

Another way of ensuring credibility, and also to prevent bias, was to request that the already identified participants bring people who were unknown to the individual conducting the focus groups. This, according to Shenton (2004), would prevent bias in selecting participants. This procedure provides the greatest assurance that those selected are a representative sample of the larger group in society. However, there was a disadvantage to this

in that some of the participants who were brought in were chosen by the participants who had initially been contacted, thus there was a possibility that there might be silence, uncooperativeness or failure to fulfil the study criteria. Another significant point was that the participants were informed that information pertaining to the study would be available to them should they need it. This was done before the commencement of the focus groups. This was done to allow participants to reflect on whether or not their points of view were adequately captured and represented (Moon et al., 2016).

Dependability can be paralleled to reliability in the positivist approach (Noble & Smith, 2015). It is indicative of the fact that findings are consistent and could be replicated. In essence, it refers to the stability of results over time (Anney, 2013; Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Dependability comprises participants' evaluating the results, interpretations and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are all supported by the data that was gathered (Anney, 2013). Keeping an audit trail throughout the process can be beneficial in establishing dependability. The reader is provided with a detailed description of how data was collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. All of this was done to evaluate whether or not the results, interpretation and conclusions are supported by the data (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Another important aspect which has been previously highlighted was that credibility and dependability are closely linked, thus the successful execution of the latter comes from the successful execution of the former. Thus, it remains crucial that detailed descriptions of the process are provided (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability refers to how accurately the data represents the information that the participants provided, to ensure that the interpretations which are made are the participants' (Elo et al., 2014). According to Elo et al. (2014), confirmability looks at objectivity, which is the potential for congruence between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, relevance and meaning. As a social being, it is important to acknowledge preconceived ideas and notions about emerging adulthood. It was also important to reflect on one's values and predispositions that could have an impact on the study's outcomes (Jootun et al., 2009). Reflection remains an important activity, and documenting and being reflective assist in identifying bias and subjectivity that is not the participants'. For this study, the only information that was relayed was the information that was provided by the participants during the conducting of the focus groups. During the research process, the researcher wrote down the experiences and challenges which she went through in an attempt to be faithful to the participants' ideas. This form of journaling is encouraged by Palaganas et al. (2017). It is

important that the process of reflection is seen as a way to challenge perspectives and assumptions about the social worlds. This enriches the research process and its outcomes (Palaganas et al., 2017). Personal reflective notes can be found in the script (see Appendix E).

Transferability used to be understood as the generalisability of inquiry. When readers examine the research process, they are better able to judge the transferability of the research (Nowell, 2017). In other words, transferability looks at one's ability to provide details on the study and how these results will be applicable in a different context. However, this has recently been challenged. The challenge with generalisability with qualitative studies is that qualitative research findings often relate to a single environment or individual, or a small number of them. As a result, generalising data to another environment becomes complex. Instead, the purpose can be to identify, and begin to explain, phenomena where a lack of clarity prevents them from being adequately understood and related to the original theory (Moon et al., 2016). For the purpose of this study, all details were reported, to enable whoever wishes to transfer the data to compare it to other studies to do so satisfactorily. It remains imperative that context be taken into account should duplication be considered.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This section covers the ethical aspects that were considered during the conduct of this study.

A core part of qualitative research is to consider the ethical processes that are involved. Many of these processes encompass several aspects, including beneficence, confidentiality, non-maleficence, informed consent, autonomy, respect for human dignity (Corey, 2014; Neuman, 2014; Sobočan et al., 2018; Surmaik, 2018; Weerasinghe, 2018) and many others. Authorisation to conduct this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities of the University of the Free State and the Student Affairs' Research Desk.

Beneficence is a term that is often understood as doing good and doing the least harm to the participants in the study (Weerasinghe, 2018). As with any other approach, the intention in qualitative studies should be that the benefits justify the potential risks to society and the participants; these need to be stated clearly and concisely to avoid any potential confusion surrounding the study and its processes (Weerasinghe, 2018). In the case of this study, the participants were provided with information, so that they would not be participating in a study about which they had inadequate knowledge. It was also important to evaluate the sensitivity

of the research questions and to question whether or not sensitive information would be elicited by the questions. This reflection helped maintain awareness of the possibility of unknowingly engaging in a quasi-therapeutic relationship with the participant(s). Thus, to avoid harm, it was imperative that the information disclosed by the participants should remain confidential, and that their identities should be kept private.

It is imperative that the participants' information is kept confidential and that their identities are protected by not mentioning their names in the study. The participants' identities were also protected in the transcriptions. When they mentioned their names or the other participants' names, these names would be represented by their initials. Confidentiality was treated as a high priority throughout the study. There are mixed feelings regarding the previous point on confidentiality. For example, some researchers believe that revealing the identity of study participants at their request may empower them in certain circumstances, because their voices can finally be heard (Surmaik, 2018). However, this view is not shared by everyone and would have not been appropriate for this particular study and its objectives. It is important to note that only partial confidentiality can be guaranteed from the researcher's perspective. In other words, consent forms will be kept safe, participants identifying information will not be indicated on the research study and what the participants share will be used solely for the current study. However, it was important to note that focus groups consisted of other individuals and even though they had been asked to maintain confidentiality the researcher has no control over what the participants did with the information once they left the room. As part of the researcher's effort to maintain confidentiality, participants' identities or identifying information was not revealed in the study. They were assigned identifiers instead and the consent forms were kept safe to avoid.

Non-maleficence is another principle that was considered in the conduct of the study. This aspect refers to one of the abiding principles of ethics, which compels researchers to avoid accidentally or intentionally inflicting harm on participants and to minimise the risk of harm or discomfort for research participants (Neuman 2014; Sobočan et al., 2018). Possible harm to participants was minimised during the focus group discussions in this study. This was done by remaining aware of the language that was used and clarifying instances where one of the participants swore during the focus group, only to find that this was a form of expression. There was a level of awareness of group diversity, and those present in the focus groups needed to remain respectful of all the participants. This was to avoid the possibility of making any participant feel uncomfortable or feel that their input would not be valued. If it had been

necessary, the participants who might have experienced any distress during the process had the option of being referred to counselling services at Kopsie Health.

Informed consent provides valuable information to the participants in any research study, so that they can take the right or the best decision for themselves at that time (Petrova et al., 2014). In many western European countries, written consent needs to be obtained from the participants (Surmaik, 2018). Thus, written consent was obtained from all the participants in this study. Participants were all informed about the study and its value, and how valuable their participation was. This can be ascertained at the beginning of each focus group, where participants were briefed about the study and the consent forms had been signed. Information protection involves not disclosing information unless participants in the research consent to its disclosure.

Autonomy was another principle that was highlighted. In any type of research, the participant has the right to exercise their autonomy by consenting or refusing to participate, and being informed of the purpose and process of the study and their expected involvement (Weerasinghe, 2018). The principle of autonomy was respected in this case by acknowledging that the participants are individuals who can think and participate autonomously (Corey, 2014). As a result, the participants were not coerced into participating and they were allowed to withdraw from the study whenever they felt the need.

Respect for human dignity refers to respecting individuals and their human rights. This meant that participation could not be deemed mandatory should any participant have wanted to withdraw. A non-prejudicial attitude was prevalent during the conduct of the study, and there was also a low tolerance for any sort of discrimination against any of the participants and their input.

3.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the chosen research methodology was discussed. This included the research aim. The social constructivist paradigm was used in the research study to understand the construction of narrative identities and the involvement of others in the process. The qualitative approach was considered most appropriate to give an in-depth understanding of narrative identities. The data were collected by means of four focus groups with a total of 25 participants. The process of thematic analysis was then discussed; this included methods of analysis that are often linked to thematic analysis, the two ways to generate themes, and the process, according to the seminal work of Braun and Clarke (2006). This segment was followed

by a discussion of the aspects that ensure rigour, which was better understood as trustworthiness in qualitative work. These are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Finally, the ethical considerations observed in this study were also discussed.

Chapter 4: Research Results

The results of the current study are presented in this chapter. Selfies were analysed as self-representation tools during the construction of narrative identity in emerging adults. More specifically the discussions on the selfies that the participants brought along were what was analysed. The themes and subthemes that were identified are shown in *Table 4* and discussed in a narrative structure, illustrated by the participants' responses during the focus group discussions. The themes and sub-themes were analysed with thematic analysis, using the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke.

The participants' responses are presented verbatim to ensure that their experiences are shared faithfully. However, a few of the quotations have been altered to eliminate repetition of words such as fillers, including "Uhm," long pauses, and sounds such coughing or other chatter which may have taken place during the focus group. This bracketed ellipsis (...) will be used to indicate that the participant was speaking prior to or after the quotation that is given. It is important to note that the data contain no information that may be linked to or identify a participant. Each participant's quotes are identified by means of an identifier. This identifier is in brackets (1.22) which can be linked to the response of one of the focus groups. The gender of the respondents will be indicated with '*F*' for females and '*M*' for males. Thus, an identifier looks as follows: (1.22*M*).

Table 4

Main themes and sub-themes identified using thematic analysis

Main themes	Sub-themes
Significant achievements	
Connecting with others around me	Role of Family
	Role of Friends
The construction of my narrative	Effective self-expression
	Authentic self, empowerment and increased self-appreciation
	Storytelling skills
	Feedback from online conversations

4.1 Significant Achievements

There was a pattern that emerged where the participants emphasised the desire to share their achievements and could do so through the selfies that they took. For instance, a participant stated the following: (...) *the interesting one, the one that I love the most, is the one that we took at my graduation day and we had serious faces (...)* (3.222F). In this quote, the participant highlighted that her favourite selfie was one that she took with her friends on her graduation day, even though she has many others that she has taken with her friends. There is a significance in graduating; thus, having this as part of one's narrative was paramount. One participant reported that: *The last one I uploaded was my graduation picture and that would tell you that I am determined, the fact that I got on to that stage and graduated* (2.154F). Another quote read: (...) *and the one that stands out was my graduation selfie. It was so nice seeing people reposting it, that was really nice and how much there are.* (3.329F). There is a great deal of aspirations for the participants to highlight their successes and achievements in the selfies that they share with others. A life of prosperity and thriving is one that many of the participants

desire, and if it is achieved, even briefly, they are quick to share these moments as selfies. For instance, one participant said: *When I feel like it like hey you haven't seen me in a while or I wanna flex I look good in this then I'll put it out* (4.343M) meaning that whenever he believes that his appearance is worth sharing with other social media users then he will take that opportunity to show off. Another participant from the same group mentioned that: *Me myself I was just showing people I am fresh you know I am in Joburg that's what I am communicating in that selfie. I am not gonna lie I am just you know literally your boy fresh [looks good]* (4.302M). Selfies are a memento of proud moments included in personal narratives. They serve as a reminder of the goals that were set out and achieved as well as proud moments:

Okay, it's a pic of me and my mom. It just represents the happiness like I've waited literally almost over 10 years to just stand there and say finally I am making her proud. It's about seizing the moment, every time I look at it I know that I've achieved something because that was my ultimate goal (1.254F).

The participants' quotes in this current theme emphasised how important it is for them to share special moments with others. There were no restrictions on what is deemed significant, because while some participants shared their academic accolades, others shared the pride they take in their physical appearance.

4.2 Connecting with Others

As this theme developed, it encapsulated the participants' accounts of significant people, including family and friends.

4.2.1 Role of family

Family forms an important part of the participants' narratives. By participating in the construction of a life story it is apparent that family forms a significant sub-theme in the lives of many of the participants in the current cohort. For instance, a participant stated that: *(...) so this picture, I took it in Joburg with my family: it was me, my brother and my mom and stepdad*" (1.263F). Another participant indicated that family, immediate or distant, are contributing constituents during the construction of narrative identity and self-expression: *(...) my aunts are always like: why are you not dressing up? what's wrong? and stuff, but you know, I wish people can actually see me as like...what I want people to know about is that I love women empowerment, (...)* (1.439F). The previous quote makes it apparent that family members need the participants to act in a way that would be deemed socially appropriate. This demand impacts

on the participants' expressiveness and aspects that are significant to their beliefs. It is also an indication of the key role that family members have in constructing personal narratives.

The subsequent quotes by participants are an indication that many use their family as an attribute to describe who they are: *Okay ja I think it just says that like I am a family girl and ja I like to like have fun and be silly like... I don't know, like... be comfortable enough to share that with other people as well* (3.228F). The subsequent quote by a participant is a demonstration that even when life is not pleasant there is still a desire to capture and savour the moment with the people who hold the most significant value in our lives. The quote reads: *So it was like...it was after we had been through some really deep things and this was like literally the first family trip we took in forever, so being there I just wanted to capture every moment* (1.264F).

Social media and selfies are used to keep in touch with family members and continue to engage them in their narration. One participant said: *(...) I like WhatsApp because I can speak to my mother and she's quite far (...)* (3.13F). Real-life and online presentations are becoming more intertwined, and participants can be found sharing pictures that are representative of who they are. However, some of the participants' parents disapprove of their children's narratives and become persistent in having them act in accordance with how they as parents raised them; one participant said:

(...) I've always wanted to portray this...kinda look right, and then for my mom, it's always like, but you need to be more ladylike, you need to be all of this, so then now right like at this stage with the current stage of my life where I posted the selfies that I posted and all the people, it's not rather, not necessarily selfies that kinda look cool but also beautiful, so basically taking like being a tomboy and being ladylike and joining them together (...) (2.310F).

As expressed by the quote above, that particular participant feels and believes that social media is a platform where she can experiment with her looks, because experimentation and exploration form a significant part of identity development. There is pressure to become individuals as stipulated by families and the community; however, it is essential to evaluate this experience and how it impacts the construction of the participants' narratives.

4.2.2 Role of friends

Friends are also extremely important to the participants. In many instances, the participants in the current study elaborated on the presence of their friends when taking selfies,

whether their friends were in the selfies or not. A participant stated that: *On social media, I am always with friends, I am always happy (...) (2.222F)*. Another quote from a participant read: *I have a lot of supportive friends, so I know when I post a picture I am gonna get like seven emojis from each of them, so ja (2.290F)*. In the following quote the participant showed that at life's turning points friendships continue to play a role in the participants' lives:

Alright, but it was almost as though when we took that selfie it was the start of like this friendship that you know we would still try to develop, it's cool but it's also very honest, so I guess this selfie is just, you know, a new beginning I guess (4.285M).

The subsequent quote is another indication of how significant friends are during the construction of narratives identities, a participant stating the following: *(...) we were at church so it was the first time we were all there like at the same time (4.348F)*. This is an indication that the participants want moments with their friends to be captured and have them last longer. The participant and her friends being at church at the same time, and the need to capture the moment, mean a great deal to her. Selfies also serve as reminders of changes that the participant has experienced over the years; she stated the following:

The last picture I posted on social media of myself was myself and somebody who I was friends with, who I am not friends with anymore, and for me 'cause I used to like always take photos and that photo was the whole point where I was like okay, now I need to slow down 'cause things are constantly changing (2.164F).

Friends and social circles remain prominent in the lives of many of the participants. Thus, a lot of time is invested in being with friends or maintaining a connection with distant ones. Therefore, when friends react or comment on an individual's selfies it is a way to maintain a relationship or to show support. For the participants, the friendships they have often become sources of support as they assert their individuality in relation to their families; one participant stated: *(...) I was going through a break up so I was in a shambles most of the time and then I uploaded a picture and one of my friends said single looks really good on you (...) (2.290F)*. She highlighted how, during the most difficult time in her romantic life, her friends offered words of encouragement and were supportive. Another quote read: *I feel like social media is a good thing because you can interact with your friends (...) (2.343F)*, which once again emphasises how much the participants value their friendships.

Selfies are also an opportunity to narrate a shared experience with friends that may be significant or consequential. For instance, many of the young people in this study found friends

with the same values and interests as them; one participant stated: *“I remember but it’s with friends so it says that I like going out with friends and like doing things with them; the thing is, I tend to go...the last one I posted was with us going to an escape room (...) (3.214F).* Another participant shared religious beliefs with her friends: *I always take pictures at the church and I like to take pictures with friends (...) (2.241F).* The third participant stated (...) *that time we were all at church and I think most of us like dressed up really well so one guy decided that yo let’s take a picture (4.350M).*

Friendships have a profound effect on the participants’ narratives. Many of those who formed part of the cohort expressed their feeling that the selfies and narratives they put out to the world showcased the meaningful interactions they had with their friends.

4.3 The Construction of My Narrative

This section highlights four sub-themes: effective self-expression; authentic self, empowerment and increased self-appreciation story-telling skill; and feedback from online conversations.

4.3.1 Effective self-expression

The novelty of self-expression in the present day is that the newer social media technologies provide the opportunity to share personal stories through selfies. This has proved to be most helpful for the study’s participants, because selfies create an opportunity to clarify narratives that might have been misunderstood. For instance, a participant stated that:

Happiness, joy, appreciation all assert that you are comfortable being your own self basically. Because I feel like there has been a lot of misinterpretations of other people’s personalities and with the selfie, they are comfortable and can actually give out my version of my own definition of who I am (3.163F).

The previous statement highlights how important it is that the participants do not appreciate their narratives being misunderstood and have taken it upon themselves to ensure that they are correctly represented. One participant stated that selfies help provide a clearer picture to others; she stated that:

It makes people understand who you are. It has to say something about like...if you feel you are posting it you want people to know about you, so then why not actually show them something about you in the picture if you know what I mean? Like this is my favourite book, this is my favourite shirt (...) (3.168F).

The previous quote is an indication that selfies are an outlet used on social media to give outsiders insight into the participants' interests, values, beliefs and so many other aspects of themselves that would often be misunderstood. It is evident that social media does provide an environment where members of this cohort feel secure enough to share parts of themselves. The participants are abandoning sites that require verbal and textual representations and are moving towards more visual representations, and this is supported by the nature of the sites that the participants reported using most frequently. For instance, when asked which social media sites were most preferred, the participant's responses read as follows: *Twitter, WhatsApp, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram...yeah YouTube (1.13F)*; another reported that they preferred using: *WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Snapchat (2.10F)*. Most of the responses were an indication that the preferred sites have a preponderance of images.

The following statement by a participant suggests that the participants are enjoying greater freedom of expression on social media: (...) *Nowadays people are [now] becoming like themselves, we are sticking true to our characters like if you wanna use for an example this O's hair situation, girls are now becoming free with theirs (4.435F)*. By speaking about hair, which is also a form of expression, she is saying that now more than ever she feels comfortable with presenting herself as she is without the fear of being rejected or scrutinised. Another participant in the current study stated the following in conjunction with experiencing freedom in expressing themselves:

(...) I think it was on that point where I feel like...sometimes I feel like okay maybe sometimes there are people like ja they that don't appreciate you so what the hell? If you appreciate yourself then like it doesn't matter what people think of you, so just put it out there that like I am myself and like I am just gonna do it (1.293F).

Social media provides an extensive field for exploration, with exposure to different perspectives; one participant stated that: (...) *It's a good place to express yourself, it's a good place to learn other people's opinions as well and you get like, like your perspective might be like narrow but once you post the same thing there, maybe it broadens it (...) (2.186F)*. Selfies are a window into parts of the participants' lives that would otherwise not be known because of misunderstandings that generally arise about the participants within their own communities. Therefore, these forms of autobiographies are effective in letting society understand the participants' political views, values, religious beliefs and other aspects of themselves. A participant stated: (...) *But maybe I want to just be known as a girl who thinks, who is a critical*

thinker, who has a stance, who has her own like a firm identity (1.427F). Selfies also provide others with the opportunity to engage in conversation with the narrator and allow the participants an opportunity to offer further clarification. Thus, selfies can be considered catalysts of engagement. One participant stated that:

I think they actually get to know who I really am because I like to post what means the most to me like whether it is, they probably know I like to eat chocolate because I am always eating chocolate in pictures then I always take pictures at the church, I like to take pictures with friends and family (...) (2.241F).

Social media and selfies are a vehicle for self-expression, offering the community a deeper gaze into the participants' lives. From these two elements, outsiders will have a clearer understanding of the participant's interests, values, and religious beliefs, and their favourite chocolate as one participant phrased it. Selfies speak to authenticity and congruent selves; these tie in with the next subtheme.

4.3.2 Authentic self, empowerment and increased self-appreciation

There was also a salient theme of the need to present the self as authentically as possible to the social media community; one of the participants said the following:

So ja, that's the communication, I would say a picture is worth a thousand words, ja. For me, I feel like authenticity 'cause selfies usually like we've been saying there is a lot of fakeness to it, there's a lot of thought-out joy or happiness or something that someone wants people to think I have that I don't have (...) (4.296F).

The previous quote emphasises the participant's wish to tell truthful stories and refrain from creating false narratives. It is clear that self-expression should be genuine; another quote from a participant read:

Ja it's more what she just said I feel like it portrays that I am so happy in my guy like presentational look. In this one I look myself, like this is the true me with my locs, with my crusty look, that people categorise crusty but I do fine so I think it's a presentation of the true me (...) (3.128F).

The previous quote emphasised the importance of not constructing false selves and encouraged the narrator to choose her authentic self regardless of whatever perception others may hold. The process of identity development remains challenging and unstable; for instance, one participant stated that:

(...) I mean you're a coloured but not coloured, coloured because you don't take on certain characteristics that the rest of the coloured society does so then for the longest time I was like am I the wrong one, do I have an identity crisis? and then as you go on social media and you realise hey! but other people speak with certain accents even though they from another ethnic background (2.202F).

For the participant who shared the previous quote, her identity is being questioned by those whom she believed she was already a part of, and this has disturbed her sense of self. Her process of developing a personal narrative is filled with questions about ethnicity and a sense of belonging. Selfies are also being used as media to express self-appreciation and empowering narratives relating to the self, according to a participant who stated: *(...) I was like I am going to graduate and I don't care if I am going to UFS just for one year I am going to graduate (...)* (1.294F). In the previous quote, the participant highlighted the reality that selfies can indeed be used as media to motivate and empower others; not only this, selfies may also be vehicles to mark turning points in individuals' lives. The use of selfies is empowering, because these participants are confident enough to share their narratives and themselves despite existing differences on social media. A participant stated that: *(...) I actually feel comfortable in that, even though someone is wearing makeup and I am not wearing makeup, I am able to be like you know what? it's who I am, and I am happy (...)* (3.165F). Another participant in the study stated: *It's just like appreciating your beauty it's yourself you know when you take a selfie and you're like wow look at me!* (1.282F).

Sharing first-time experiences through the use of selfies is also regarded as an empowering experience and a catalyst that gets narrators feeling confident; for instance, a participant stated: *For me so it was taken on my first-year Valentine's ball. So that was the first time I ever put on eye shadow for myself, so then obviously I wanted to see how I look* (2.88F). Putting make-up on for the first time was experienced as a significant moment for the participant, because, as she said, she put it on by herself, on herself. There is a sense of empowerment and excitement that emanates from that moment and the participant decided to capture the moment with a selfie. Another participant stated the opposite: *I just, for the first time I went without wearing makeup* (1.242F); for her the powerful moment came from her stepping out without any makeup, and evidently, this was a moment that she wanted to share with other social media users. Another participant's quote read: *"You are way more confident than I thought you were. I have taken a picture with like blemishes. I am pretty, so I don't care* (2.277F). The previous quote describes a young lady who is confident in her own skin and, as

she said, she knows that she is attractive and comments from others have very little impact on her. The three previous statements shared by participants emphasised the notion of being comfortable in your own skin: all three participants indicated a sense of feeling empowered by their actions, from applying makeup to going out without it.

Turning points are major events in the lives of many of the participants and these moments often form part of their developing narratives. This feeling seems to transcend gender: females are not the only ones who feel empowered when posting their selfies, males, too, express the same kind of confidence when sharing their photos; for instance one of the participants stated: (...) *I am communicating in that I am not gonna lie, I am just, you know, literally your boy fresh* (4.302M) after getting a haircut. The use of social media is also an opportunity for the participants to see themselves through other people's eyes; it is also an opportunity to gain a better understanding of oneself. As one participant said:

(...) it also empowered me to see that if they can do it, I can do it too and I can even do it better, so it has actually gained me a positive sense of understanding of my capabilities more than it has ever damaged (...) (3.271F).

Selfies and social media are media that many of the participants use to show their self-confidence and a space where participants have voiced feelings of empowerment and increased confidence in their capabilities.

4.3.3 Storytelling skills

These skills are necessary in creating a noteworthy narrative. Thus, users have control and power over what aspects they wish to share with others, and how this information should be curated. In the process of creating narratives, it seems important for the participants to put their best foot forward. The subsequent quotes highlight the value that the participants attach to ensuring that their posts are appealing. When asked which of their selfies actually get posted, the first participant stated: *Whichever one you look the best!* (2.102F), and another participant stated: *When I post a selfie you look at things like lighting, like if you look like you're vibrant and not pale and...look like a ghost basically (...)* (3.145F). The third participant said: *The one that looks the best* (2.106F). The three previous quotes show how important it is for users to generate validation and approval from those around. Thus, how individuals' narratives are shared and their appeal to others has an impact on the types of narratives that individuals decide to continue sharing and which ones may need to be discarded.

Those who believe that a single frame does not suffice in successfully telling their story go so far as to create collages with different selfies in them. This expresses the many facets that the participants have, which cannot always be captured by a single frame. One participant said:

I got this, well it's a selfie with lots of selfies in it. It's got four frames and in the one, I am pulling a goofy face and the other one it's a pout which looks like I am kissing and the other one I got a really straight face and with the other one I look bored (...) (2.84F).

Great significance is placed on the backgrounds that appear in the participants' selfies, together with their lighting and the angles that they choose to use. For instance, one participant said: *Ja, and like lighting is important as well and stuff ja (3.140F)*, while another said: *"Ja no of course ja okay I don't think I've ever posted a photo from like a bad angle (3.138F)*. A good angle and good lighting are some of the techniques used in pictures found in mainstream media. In adopting these techniques, selfie creators can increase their knowledge of how official stories are constructed.

Selfies remain dynamic, subjective and contextual, thus by adding a background to their selfies the participants allow for different forms of engagement to take place. One participant stated that: *(...) it would be more about the background behind me than the...like in England that's the type of vibe and like she said I try and create this perfect image of: you know, guys, I finally made it to this place! (...) (4.269M)*. For some of the participants a clear background was important, to ensure that there were no other elements that would take away from their chief narrative. A participant explained: *(...) make sure that I look pretty there and that the background also matters, like it really matters, the background matters and nothing is really distracting from the main focus, the main focus would be me (...) (4.341F)*. Communicative artistry is left to the participants because they are the ones who are posting the selfies. The content that they choose to share with other users will be scrutinised and evaluated, thus it has to be appealing.

Validation is what the participants seek; as one explained: *It puts a lot of pressure on you 'cause there is a lot of poses you have to have, filters you have to use, makeup, hairstyles, dress codes, everything, it's, it's just this whole world of things (...) (4.386F)*. This implies that she puts significant effort into constructing an appealing narrative. In many instances, a sense of self lies in the collective and how individuals relate to the collective.

It is thus imperative for the participants to manage the impression they make and how they come across to the group to be validated and accepted. As a result, these participants may experience what they describe as pressure to uphold a particular narrative.

4.3.4 Feedback from online conversations

This subtheme is a salient theme in the study. According to participants, social media and sharing their selfies has had a positive impact on their personal narratives. For many of the participants, social media helped them make sense of their world; for instance, one participant stated that: (...) *it's never like negative comments. It is always positive and without them...besides the people [are] already know [to] themselves okay this is who I am* (1.421F). The next response highlights how existing narratives also have an impact on social media interactions and social media posts: (...) *from a very young age I had an association with certain companies, so you know, when you are a part of a certain MGO of a certain company they give you social media talk but then it's a way of saying hello you can't do this* (...) (3.271F).

Receiving positive reactions from other social media users is what the participants often seek; one participant stated that: *I also get like positive comments on my photos, mainly because it's my family and friends* (...) (3.321F), and another participant said: (...) *It is nice when you post a video or picture and someone or many people comment like positive things, it does like give you that reassurance* (...) (3.343F). This pointed to the reality that positive feedback from others gives participants a sense of consolation.

Social media has also become a platform to expand one's narrative identity and a place that allows for constructive interactions. The participants have reported positive experiences when it comes to expressing themselves because offline expressions can be too harshly critiqued. One participant stated:

I think for me it is a good platform to express yourself 'cause sometimes in life there are just a few things that you can't say out there 'cause people would be like ah but then when you go online you can say what you want to say and you will get people that would say hey we feel you, we also feel like that and then add on to your knowledge. You know whatever you are expressing it becomes bigger than what it was (2.184F).

The construction of identity comprises these positive experiences and statements such as: *I don't have a lot of people but those that I do are like close friends so most of the time it's positive things like pretty picture, you look so cute, like your hair, stuff like that* (...) (3.320F).

While many may have had positive experiences, the other side of the coin is that not all experiences have been positive for participants; some have experienced restrictive standards on the platform. This is probably true more for those who are still developing their careers and professional relationships. For instance, one participant felt that her religious beliefs would leave her open to scrutiny if she posted them on social media; she said:

Our employers look at our Facebooks and our Instagram and they choose the candidates based on that. Now I am now if I go and I post a lot of Sabbath Adventist things, they assume I am a radical and then I go and I apply for a job like ooh uh uh [dissatisfied] (...) it restricts me to post, from putting everything that I want because now I have to also be careful how would an employer look at this (1.404F).

There is a pattern of feeling too harshly criticised for being authentic and liberal about one's personhood, for instance, one participant stated the following: (...) *pressurised to meet certain standards enough, though you don't have to, 'cause sometimes you really can't, but no, you don't have to, but that, that for me is just in terms of appearance"* (4.385F). Another participant stated: *Like they get here and then they get judged and if she's skinny and then they like but that's not an African woman* (1.340F). This not only has these participants questioning their appearance, it also has them questioning their identity. Identity exploration continues to take place during this time and feedback from social media can interfere negatively with this process.

Participants have reported feelings of uncertainty and confusion because of their negative experiences on social media. One participant said: (...) *Minnie Dlamini, two years ago she was [an] 'it' girl but now they say she's fat. Now you ask yourself, but this is what they said the definition of a true African woman is (...)* (1.347F). Another participant stated the following about the selfies that she posts: *No because first of all when you put them there, you're allowing people to stab at them and judge them and try to scrutinize them into ways that they want them to be (...)* (1.404F).

These participants see themselves through the eyes of the community, which constitutes their race, ethnicity and bodies, and the feedback from social media has an impact on the life stories that they are constructing.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the significance of social media and selfies during the construction of narrative identity among emerging adults. Selfies that were shared by the

participants in this study highlighted how selfies provide opportunities to share personal achievements with others and the significance of these achievements. Narrative identity involves two critically important groups of people for these participants, namely family members and friends. Social media is a way to connect with friends and family, but it is also a way for narrators to indicate how important and special these people are to their narrative. Selfies are an avenue for self-expression, and in this study the participants' engagement indicated that social media interactions are a conversation. The participants also indicated that they have control over how they share their narratives and as well as the content of their narratives.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Results

This chapter provides an integrated discussion of the results and the relevant theoretical framework. The discussion is broken down into the following sections: (a) Freedom of self-expression and exploration through selfies and social media; (b) Personal relationships and their role during the process of meaning-making and self-expression; and (c) Social construction of narrative identity, along with online conversations and context.

5.1 Freedom of Self-Expression and Exploration through Selfies and Social Media

In this study, the participants expressed the view that social media and selfies in particular were a widely accepted form of self-expression. Social media and posting selfies provided the participants with the opportunity to share their religious views, interests, and values. As stated by this study's participants, there are fewer restrictions on self-expression on social media platforms than in face-to-face interactions, and there is substantial freedom of self-representation as well. The novelty of self-expression in the present day is that new social media technologies provide the participants with the opportunity to share personal stories through selfies. In social media, the social and communicative aspects of self-representation have always been clear (Rettberg, 2017).

Participants reported that they log onto their social media accounts and post whatever they want to without fear of scrutiny, and they often realise, through the interactions with others, that they have common feelings or experiences shared with other users. They reported that other users often venture to state that they too are going through or have gone through similar events and offer advice to the participants. Self-representation has always been about communication, and the generated message is intended for others (Romele, 2013). Social networking sites as Facebook have provided a chance for visual self-presentation, because in recent times there is an emphasis on consciously constructing visual online self-presentation (Westley, 2016). Self-expression has an increased value in society because participants are relying more on social media platforms to express themselves positively and accurately (Mazur & Li, 2016). The concept of self-representation being text-based is slowly being done away with, meaning that selfies are the new form of expression, with participants using images as ways to tell personal stories (Hancock & Toma, 2009).

Of the five pillars of emerging adulthood, identity exploration (Arnett, 2000) was the most prevalent pillar pervasive throughout all the focus groups. There is now an endorsement of exploration and experimentation that previously was not so prevalent. The participants are

currently able to experiment with their identities and preferences to find what they identify with most, and this provides an opportunity for increased self-knowledge. For instance, the participants reported there were now opportunities provided by selfies, such as the exploration of personal style, preferences, and personal interests. Through social media, they get an increased level of exposure to different types of content pertaining to their interests, as well as content they may know little about, which then provides them with learning opportunities. Many of the participants expressed the fact that they face challenges during this exploratory phase. Some of them indicated that their parents are adamant that they should grow up to be as their parents had imagined they would be; this entails them being more feminine and a representation of what their parents believe being a woman is. However, the use of selfies has come to offer a space to challenge these oppositional notions expressed by their parents and to explore their identity on their terms. As pointed out by Tagliabue et al. (2015), there is an increased need to steer away from role-related transitions expected by society and families.

Another one of the five pillars mentioned by Arnett is that emerging adulthood is the age of possibilities. It is here that emerging adults experience high levels of independence and optimism. For instance, these participants decided to attend university and with this they are now making decisions about their daily activities on and off-campus. The study's participants are also permitted to attend university or pursue other forms of tertiary education, which was historically not supported. During the past two decades, there has been growth in participation at post-school institutions (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Data found in Statistics South Africa (2017) indicated that there was a 38% increase between 2000 and 2016 in post-high school education enrolment. This number is twice the number from before 2000. Earlier in history, women were not allowed to enrol in tertiary institutions; recently, however, there has been an increase in the number of females enrolling in institutions of higher learning. The study's demographics also indicate that there are more possibilities available to females in South Africa. This deduction is based on the large number of females who attended the focus group discussions. There is an increased level of optimism and, in a country like South Africa with high levels of socio-economic disparities (Lo-oh, 2016), the country's emerging adults now more than ever before feel that they will be better off than their parents (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). There is also a great desire shown by the participants to travel more and travel abroad. One participant reported that he wishes to travel to England and share the moment with those on his social media feed. This level of optimism indicates that the participants have a greater

sense of the many opportunities and possibilities currently available to them and many of them are inclined to believe that they will achieve whatever they set their mind on.

University is a place where these participants have become self-focused and less dependent on their caregivers. All of the study's participants attend university and many have moved away from their respective homes in an attempt to pursue what they perceive as better lives for themselves. This level of autonomy may cause conflict between them and their family members. Their attitude may be viewed as self-centredness and parents and other family members may become hostile; this is because such autonomy is alien to interdependent or collectivist cultures (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). This is, however, the time that the cohort has taken to attend university, not only to work out who they are outside of their families but also to develop the skills that will be needed for the apparently endless prospects of their adult lives (Arnett et al., 2014). According to the participants, there is an increased need for them to portray themselves as authentically as they can. There is also an increase in behaviours that promote genuine representation of values, beliefs, and overall true self. Many of the young women in the study expressed how important it was for them to remain authentic to who they are, especially when it came to their hair, ethnicity, body type and how they dress. The participants spoke about the harsh standards of social media and this harshness was also expressed in the work of Padoa et al. (2018). Several participants in this current study, both male and female, expressed the importance of remaining truthful to their narratives regardless of whether or not they met the typical standards set on social media.

South Africa's emerging adults find themselves pursuing tertiary education in greater numbers than ever before in an attempt to create better lives. This study's participants indicated that some of their selfies were of their graduation day, which was described as a momentous experience. This also reflects the findings in the literature on the need for emerging adults to seek education in places of higher learning (Anderson et al., 2001; Arnett, 2000). University demographics have changed over the years in South Africa. As reported in the earlier chapters, there is an emphasis today on market-oriented policies and lifestyles-based on consumption, which are replacing community-oriented policies and lifestyles that were previously based on production (Lanctot & Poulin, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2005). In South Africa, the increased number of those attending institutions of higher learning (Statistics South Africa, 2017) is largely attributed to the need for a skilled and capable workforce to support the present-day market profile.

The participants in the study showed confidence and enthusiasm in their identities. Participants insisted that it is important that society accepts them as they are; one participant stated that she is comfortable with her tomboyish appearance even though others may disapprove. Some were confident in their physical appearance, with one participant reporting the need to show off once he had received a haircut, while others were confident about their church-going behaviour and were happy to share their religious experiences with those on their social media platforms through selfies taken with friends. These participants have also made evident religious commitments. Even though some expressed being wary of the scrutiny they may experience, for instance being a Sabbath Adventist religious practitioner, several participants have made a clear commitment to their religion and faith. Even with fears of scrutiny, many continue to share their beliefs and experiences on social media platforms because they are confident in their commitment and experiences. The data vary in respect of religion. In some of the data, it is evident that there is a decline in religious practice among some groups of emerging adults (Lee et al., 2017), while others continue to follow religious practices in their meaning-making process (Barry et al., 2010; Cook et al., 2014). This study's cohort expressed the significance of religion in their lives and they also expressed the relevance of friendships whenever they attend church services, which also speaks to the interests that the participants share with their companions. In addition to the previous statements, it is important to consider the possibility that the participants have made a commitment because of inherent societal expectations. In other words, there may be high levels of commitment and low exploration on the basis that the participants may be following expectations set by families and the culture (Low et al., 2005).

In the present study, there were indications of identity achievement as well, with most of the participants showing confidence in who they are and who they are becoming. There were many instances where this was clear and could be observed in their adamant attitude when it came to society accepting the participants as they are in an attempt to avoid incongruence, and also how religion has come to be pivotal to many of their lives. Considering the fact that this cohort applied for and entered university, which typically requires a commitment of three years for a degree within a specific field, this is also evidence of the participants making a commitment even though it may be subject to change. In a study conducted with South African and American students, Low et al. (2005) showed that half of the South African students were classified in the achievement identity status, and similar results can be found in a study by Alberts et al. (2003). In this current study, the participants reported events that indicated

experimentation and exploration as well, which are important characteristics demonstrated by individuals who are confident in themselves.

In this section, the five pillars suggested by Arnett were examined and it is evident that some of the pillars were more prominent than others. For instance, in this study, the cohort did not mention feeling in between, which is associated with feelings of not being an adolescent anymore yet not believing that one is an adult. This can almost be compared to feeling stuck between two stages. This may be a result of the changing structures of South African society and how the emerging adults in the country are left to make major life decisions on their own (Low et al., 2005). As a result, many emerging adults are expected to shoulder responsibilities that would otherwise be designated for adults, especially in collectivist societies. Another reason why this dimension was not prevalent in this study could be that the members of the cohort were not directly asked whether or not they felt as if they were in between and, as a result, this fact was not explored as much as it could have been. The sense that this was an age of instability was another dimension that was not as prevalent as the literature proposes. This is said to be a time of instability in respect of employment, relationships, and place of residence (Syed & Mitchell, 2013), but in this study the participants mentioned social media as being unstable. In South Africa, social, political, epidemiological, and economic forces have caused emerging adults to experience instability (Goldberg, 2013); however, there were no reports of instability from the cohort. Again, this could be the result of not homing in enough on aspects of change. It could also be because many of the participants have already made significant commitments to aspects of identity and preferences. Another reason is that this particular cohort is still attending university and thus many of them have not yet started working and reside mostly in university residences and accommodation. Therefore, there were no reports of the constant changes in employment and residence that have come to be associated with instability.

5.2 Personal Relationships and Their Role During the Process of Meaning-Making and Self-Expression

In this study, it was found that friends serve as support structures because they are the ones who show support by reaching out on social media if they cannot do so in person. One participant reported that after an unpleasant end to her romantic relationship, her friends were the ones who posted positive comments under her selfies on social media and the participant found this to be comforting. She added that her friends would post large numbers of emoticons in an attempt to show their concern about her and as a way to cheer her up. Participants also

emphasised how social media is important to them because this is how they keep in touch with their parents who live far away from them. Because many emerging adults move away from their homes after completing their high school education, many leave behind support systems that they would already have formed with family members. Social media thus provides a platform where the participants can establish and maintain supportive relationships as well as a platform to share special moments with friends and family (Hochberg & Konner, 2020) who are not close by.

The participants stated that there is a constant battle between them and their families about their preferences. This battle may exist because of socially constructed beliefs that exist in different communities. Knowledge is socially constructed and the consensus of the group is what is considered to be the reality of group members. Thus, participants may not always view the set rules and standards as appealing. But apart from the bigger community what the participants find interest in may not always be approved by their own nuclear and extended family members. As a result, it is challenging to integrate the narratives that have been carved out by family members and the narratives that the participants are constructing. The theory of narrative identity indicates that friends and family members are the chief audiences for personal storytelling in emerging adulthood (McAdams & McLean, 2013), which suggests that they play similar roles as listeners for early adults (McLean, 2005). Family members often conduct elaborate interactions with those they consider ‘young’, and these elaborate conversations help in the process of meaning-making (Pasuphati & Hoyt, 2009). This is done because as stated previously the world shapes the individual and the individual shapes the world according to social constructivism. Those around the participants together their context are important during the processing of meaning-making because the social constructivism has emphasised that the self is constructed and reconstructed in relation to what surrounds it (Somers, 1994). As a result, narrative identity and the process of meaning-making is dependant on the relationships that the participants have with those around them. Individuals construct their self-identities through identity talk about personal interests shared with friends.

In this study, it was evident that the participants shared many interests with their friends. There were shared religious interests where participants reported going to church with their friends who reinforced their religious beliefs. The church in question is one where many took selfies and shared them on social media to further validate their religiosity, encouraging them to be open about their practices. The participants also shared their enjoyment of adventure and social gatherings and reported that the selfies they had recently shared were with their friends

visiting new and exciting venues or being together at social events. Social media has come to form an integral part of the lives of many emerging adults (Gunduz, 2017) including this study cohort. Friends, in particular, constitute an important category of those who help narrators reflect and create a comprehensive sense of self (Brooks, 2002).

Peer feedback was specifically associated with identity exploration of extremely important possible selves, suggesting that close relationships may be implicated in the co-construction of salient identity domains. Thus the friendships that the participants kept on referring to are likely to provide dynamic social contexts for identity development in the interpersonal domain, through their interactions which convey social expectations and feedback (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001). The external impact that affects the participants' narratives consists of narrators sharing content that they believe to be their true selves, such as going to church or embracing personal preferences; these stories are then acknowledged and accepted by their companions (Chen et al., 2006).

The results of this study indicate that forming and maintaining long-lasting relationships is important in the lives of these participants. The participants emphasised the fact that they have supportive friends and ones with whom they can explore new experiences such as enjoyable outdoor activities and new friendships. There were reports of a positive outlook on new, developing friendships, and the participants were happy about this experience. Friendships are important, as highlighted by the psychosocial theory (Erikson, 1950) which states that it is during this time in the lives of emerging adults that they work on forging strong relationships, especially friendships. These participants emphasised how important it is for them to forge and maintain their friendships, and how social media platforms help sustain these relationships. Having these close relationships with friends is crucial during the process of meaning-making, because a friend is an impactful party who helps an individual reflect and create a sense of self (Brooks, 2002). In addition to this, there were reports of rejection, where participants reported going through a rift in their intimate/romantic relationships. This reflects the fear that many emerging adults have, expressed in the fear of isolation theory (Erikson, 1950). Along with this, the participants in the study also mentioned how they, too, have ended friendships. This poses a stumbling block during the process of meaning-making because friends are so important during this time. It is worthwhile to note the cultural and traditional South African families and communities that exist and how diverse and complex South Africa is.

5.3 The Online Environment and its Relation to the Construction of Narrative Identity

In the study, the participants reported the importance in selfies of the lighting, the background, and the angles that suit their bodies and facial structures the most. One participant reported that she had never posted a selfie that she considered to be unappealing. When asked which selfie gets posted onto their social media platforms, the cohort collectively responded that the best selfie is the one that makes the cut. As previously mentioned, the background is an important element to be considered when taking and posting selfies. Participants in the study were adamant that there should not be distractions in their selfies, meaning their backgrounds should not take away attention from them. This affirms the self-focused dimension of emerging adulthood, where significant effort is exerted on developing themselves and developing themselves in relation to their environment. Thus, editing techniques, filters, and other applications represent important parts of the storytelling process that ultimately determine the appeal of a narrative (Barger et al., 2016). The most appealing narratives will be the narratives that will attract a substantial audience, and this is determined by the comments and likes received on social media platforms (Bij de Vaate et al., 2018; McAdams & McLean, 2013).

Participants reported that they had experienced a misrepresentation or misunderstanding of their personality and declared that selfies provided them with the opportunity to give their audience a true version of who they are. Online conversations are no longer restricted by physical constraints, and as a result the participants continue to use feedback during the construction of their narratives. This implies that the participants can continue co-constructing their subjective realities and have these be impacted by those around them, in other words, those they interact with on their social media platforms constituted (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Jung, 2019). This allows the participants to engage in a reflective process and to have a better understanding of their identities. Marwick and Boyd (2011) indicated that more and more Facebook users are becoming increasingly skilled in the techniques that elicit a positive appraisal from the audience. The storytellers put considerable effort into their narratives and how these narratives are told. By doing this they'll be able to determine which narratives are acceptable and which ones aren't. By having narratives that are more appealing the narrator is guaranteed to have a bigger audience that will be interested in their life story and as a result participants are more likely to accentuate the parts that are more desirable (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). This is an indication that realities are co-constructed because what the community thinks about the participant's narratives in turns shapes how the participants narrate their stories and what elements are brought into their narratives.

The participants used the feedback from the online community specifically to determine how to create content that would be acceptable. Participants expressed the need to ensure that their selfies were appropriate and in line with the standards set by companies that were funding their education, for example, as well as those of prospective employers, and it was also imperative to ensure that their online presence was acceptable to their family members. Thus, prospects and possibilities (Arnett, 2004) are influenced by individuals' online conversations. Since emerging adulthood is characterised by future possibilities, the participants' narratives are required to be acceptable so as not to negatively impact their futures. The narrative is impacted by networking opportunities that have since recognised social media not only as a means to an end but as an environment. Members of a community often look at forms of knowledge that already exist within that society, because this guides individuals into being what would typically be considered a "good member" (Hammack & Toolis, 2011).

In this study, participants reported that they used different aspects of themselves as forms of expression, for instance fashion, hair, and selfies. However, in a country like South Africa, there is a salient culture of collectivism upheld in different communities (Puoane et al., 2010) and as a result, the community around the participants may regard some of their preferred methods of expression as shameful. Participants may find it uncomfortable when they receive feedback that does not align with their beliefs. This study's participants engage the community members through their identity, while the same community simultaneously exerts influence upon them during ongoing identity formation (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002) which is an emphasis of social constructivism and mutual construction of realities. The creation of knowledge is indeed a dual-agentic process and the socio-cultural context remains important with the South African population. Thus, to claim an identity and personal narrative there often needs to be a consensus from the larger collective. This is a significant issue, because group membership is a crucial element in South Africa: individuals describe themselves specifically through the relationships that they have with others (Eaton & Louw, 2000). Culture plays a pivotal role during the construction of identity, and this is also the case in South Africa. However, this is where conflict arises, because some of the traditional ideas that communities hold are not in line with what the participants believe in (Brunsdon, 2017).

For instance, participants may enjoy being social and dressing however they please, but this sort of behaviour may be shameful to families and, as a result, the participants will be asked to cover up or dress more appropriately. With their increased levels of autonomy, the participants may challenge these cultural demands, which in turn may offend members of the

community. Another area where conflict arises is in the hierarchical structure of society, where the more mature elders are expected to guide the young; however, in modern times, young people, specifically emerging adults, have a greater sense of autonomy and independence (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015). Like many things culture is socially constructed. The shared reality of a particular group of people then becomes the standard to which group members must adhere to.

The participants reported that it is challenging to receive validation from the online community because their narratives may deviate from the standards that have already been put in place. Participants reported being negated because of their image and the way in which it is not representative of what the collective has defined as African. One participant in particular reported that she had been told that she was too thin, but stated that figures that had previously been admired by South Africans were now considered too curvy which has become confusing to many. The participants reported that they experience body shaming and that this shaming also applies to well-known celebrities. As a result, the participants have reported that there is a perpetual conflict between what they believe to be their narratives and the narratives that the collective community has expounded. Bodyweight and image in South Africa are mostly connected to cultural beliefs upheld in different communities in the country (Puoane et al., 2010). This creates space for further identity exploration and the re-construction of personal narratives, which are highlights of the period of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004).

In the current study, the participants indicated that their family members disapprove of how they have come to construct their looks and ways of being. Many of the participants reported that they receive criticism regarding their narratives. However, criticism does not only come from family members; these participants receive criticism from other social media users as well. These social media users may disapprove of certain hairstyles such as dreadlocks. The participants also reported that other social media users typically judge them based on traditional standards associated with Africans. Generally, there is a prevalent concern that emerging adults may be straying from cultural and traditional practices as a result of social media use. South Africa is diverse, and its cultural richness remains admirable. However, with the emergence of social media, western and South African cultural customs, beliefs and social institutions that were once respected are now being challenged (Ephraim, 2013). Typically, those regarded as young are raised to listen to their elders and to live as members of the community (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015). However, on the basis of their responses, it can be observed that this group of emerging adults are more prone to explore the different options that they have rather than

take what their elders say to be the ultimate truth. Many Africans see social media as polluting African culture and influencing African youths negatively because of its major western culture content (Ephraim, 2013).

Poverty is another aspect highlighted in the first chapter. Generally, African countries and their environment and communities are plagued by poverty and limited resources, which impacts the process of identity development (Lo-oh, 2016; Norris et al., 2008). According to the participants in the study, popular figures are praised for how they present themselves on social media, how they look and the places they have been, and are revered for their physical appearance. However, many emerging adults, including the members of this cohort, are unable to gain access to the material resources that these popular figures have. The participants reported that they ultimately find themselves questioning themselves and the narratives that society has constructed, for example, by asking what exactly makes a woman African, because the societal standards are constantly changing. As an example illustrating this process of change, young women in the cohort pointed out that they, unfortunately, do not look like these popular figures and do not have what they have, and wondered if then they are African enough. Furthermore, discrimination based on socio-economic status is also an obstacle in the process of identity development. Poverty is therefore seen as a major challenge experienced during the time in which a sense of identity is being constructed (Alberts et al., 2003). Thus, in an attempt to have an improved quality of life, many emerging adults opt to go to university.

There is an undisputed relationship between the narrator and the users who consume the content that the storyteller discloses on social media. This connection is central to storytelling and remains an important tool, because the existence of an audience has a unilateral impact on the narrator and their narrative. The process of sense-making is central to the construction of narrative identity; however, this requires the participation of both narrator and audience member. Focusing solely on the participants' narratives without the participation of the audience would be to focus on a single part only.

5.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the themes that had been identified were discussed in detail. The participants' experiences were captured and related to theoretical frameworks, including identity, narrative identity, social constructivism, social media, selfies, and the life span perspective. Social media is a platform that allows this cohort to express themselves freely and without much fear of prejudice. It is also an essential tool for fostering and nurturing the

relationships that the participants have, and for sharing and receiving important feedback during the process of personal narration. The information in the chapter was not presented from an international perspective only: it was contextualised by considering African and South African contexts as well. In the next chapter, a conclusion of this study is provided in the form of a summary of the noteworthy findings, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 6: Summary of Noteworthy Findings, Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

In this final chapter, a summary of the noteworthy findings of the study is presented, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the research study, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

6.1 Summary of Noteworthy Findings

This section outlines the significant findings of the study in relation to selfies as tools for the construction of narrative identities. Within this study three major themes emerged: (a) Significant Achievements; (b) Connecting with Others, which had two sub-themes: the role of friends and the role of the family; and (c) Construction of My Narrative, which has four sub-themes: effective self-expression; authentic self, empowerment and increased self-appreciation; story-telling skills; and feedback from online conversations. The results from the participants' responses are in line with existing literature; however, some aspects were not as prevalent as in the results described in the literature review chapter.

Identity (Erikson, 1950) and narrative identity (McAdams & McLean, 2013) provide significant underpinnings in the field of psychology and the theories considered will therefore be closely linked with psychology. The aspect of identity is most relevant to emerging adults, because this is a period in which identity exploration continues to take place even though previous theories stated that this process ceased in the adolescent years. The theories that were considered for this study were most relevant because they helped answer the research question. It is also important to note that there is still a dearth of literature about emerging adulthood and identity among the South African population, thus this study has made an important contribution to the existing literature.

The participants' responses indicated that the idea of selfies as media used during the construction of narrative identity is a loaded one. This is because of the context in which they find themselves, the cultural and traditional aspects as well as their age group. The participants indicated that selfies are important for them because they can share significant achievements with others, mainly related to their academic work.

Family and friends are important figures during the construction of narrative identity, and this was borne out by the participants in the study. Their responses indicated that family members were important because, as many of the participants indicated, they are involved in how the participants express themselves but can also be used as an attribute to describe oneself.

Friends also played a key role during the construction of narrative identity. The participants emphasised that their friends formed strong supportive structures while they were away from their families, who had previously been the ones to offer support. Friends and families remain an important part in the process of constructing and integrating parts of their identity into narratives that have meaning. Social constructivism clearly indicates this by emphasising community members that participants engage with and the contexts that they find themselves in. There was also a prominent aspect of selfie sharing that emphasised high levels of acceptance and shared experience among the participants and their friends. Because religion plays such an important part in emerging adults' lives, there were several instances where the participants reported sharing selfies of them and their friends while at church or going to a church service. As previously reported, friends are viewed as strong support structures by the cohort, and it seems that during the process of exploration, whether of romantic relationships or other interests and adventures, friends show immense and unwavering support.

Social media and selfies have become a respected form of self-expression, and the latter is also very important to emerging adults in the 21st century (Mazur & Li, 2016). Through the construction of personal narratives, accurate and authentic self-expression remains pivotal to emerging adults, including this study cohort. Social media and selfies provide high levels of freedom, which promotes authenticity which in turn encourages honest narratives. The participants indicated that they often find face-to-face interactions to be restrictive: they are judged, scrutinised and penalised for being their true selves. Social media, on the other hand, is a place where they feel heard and often find users with whom they share common interests.

This process of narrating a story is impacted not only by people but also by context. This point is also emphasised by social constructivism which also emphasises that knowledge is co-constructed between community members and that their context also has an impact on the construction process. The South African context is culture-rich and possesses an immense amount of traditional belief and cultural practice. Thus, the cohort reported that their context, which includes this tradition and culture, impedes their process of narrative construction. The participants realise that the way in which they choose to appear to the outside world is not always as elevated as they might wish, and this can sometimes conflict with beliefs around gendered stereotypes, appearance in terms of clothing, and physicality, for example. With this being said it is important to note that the world impacts the participants' narratives; however, the participants also have an impact on their context and community members as part of the dual-agentic nature mentioned under social constructivism.

In terms of the pillars of emerging adulthood, there was evidence that some of these pillars are also applicable even within the South African context. When it came to the dimension of identity exploration, the cohort's responses demonstrated that this is indeed a prominent aspect.

6.2 Limitations of the Research Study

Even though the participants contributed meaningfully to the study, there were still limitations, discussed in this section. Identity theories used in this study were not developed in South Africa but were used to inform the study. Even though using these theories in the South African context is important, it is equally important to emphasise that the identity theories of Erikson and Marcia were developed in a western context with European and American populations. These theories were used to understand the fundamental aspects of ego and identity developments in adolescents in terms of exploration and commitment (Erikson, 1950; Marcia, 1980; Marcia 2011). Many elements can impact the development of identity and these, as highlighted in the study, are politics, economic environment and cultural context. Thus, because these theories were developed in a context that was vastly different from that of the cohort, they should be applied with caution and with sufficient consideration of the racial and economic profile of the South African population.

Concerning the research process, it is important to note that subjective dispositions, experiences, belief systems and cultural background make it necessary to remain conscious of personal bias in the research process. To ensure that the participants' voices were accurately captured, the data and the quotations were transcribed verbatim. It should be borne in mind that the environment and interactions that took place during the focus group could possibly have been a co-construction by the participants and the researcher. This possibility is inherent in the constructivist perspective. The supervisor's role is an important one because, throughout the process, she provided adequate feedback to consider during the research process. Reflexive journaling (Palaganas et al., 2017) was another important part of the process that helped reduce any researcher bias. Credibility remained a priority to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research (Elo et al., 2014; Loh, 2013). What credibility aims to ensure is that the representations of the topic being studied, and the data gathered, are accurate.

Language is a prominent factor in the research. The focus groups were conducted in English, which is not the home language of many of the participants. This was a limitation because the level of proficiency affected how well the participants could express their

experiences as well as their confidence during the conduct of the focus groups. Throughout the transcribing process, some expressions and phrases are stated in the Nguni languages (Sesotho and IsiZulu). This may have affected the participants' expression of their identity and the construction of their narratives. Because at some points the participants addressed each other's responses, they may sometimes have had an incorrect interpretation of what was said and as a result responded in an undesirable manner, which negatively impacted group cohesion.

Participants need to be in an environment that is conducive to discussion and free from distractions; however, there were instances during the conduct of the focus groups when passers-by had to be asked to quieten down when passing the room that was used for the focus groups. This may have possibly interrupted the flow of the focus group and thrown some participants off, because questions had to be repeated several times. During this time, the researcher had to ask some of the questions while standing up to relieve her back pain because of a back injury. This may have been slightly distracting to some of the participants as well.

The male-to-female ratio was not equal. Most of the participants were female. Thus, in this instance, there is a possibility that the male experiences were not equally well represented. Thus, even though there were male participants in the study, having greater numbers of them could have provided an in-depth discussion on male experiences of selfies as representative tools of narrative identity. In addition to this the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 years; this was a limitation, because the experiences of older emerging adults would have brought value to the study.

With more experiences, there would have been a greater ability to explore responses more fully than they were in this study. Furthermore, clarification of responses was important to develop a rich set of data. However, training and her prior work as a research assistant provided the investigator with the knowledge and skills that she utilised to explore aspects of identity and emerging adulthood.

Despite the limitations described above, the themes that were identified highlight the significance of this study because of their applicability to the existing literature. The data that were gathered contribute significantly to the knowledge of identity work, more specifically narrative identity in the context of South Africa and its emerging adults. The data collected provide a greater understanding of selfies as representation tools during the construction of narrative identity during emerging adulthood.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

Several recommendations for future research can be considered. Some of the recommendations relate to the limitations of the study; however, some focus on the newer possibilities that can be considered for future studies.

Because identity forms part of any individual's developmental process, with narrative identity emerging later in life, future research should have a longitudinal trajectory to adequately explore the developmental phenomenon. This is to ensure that experiences and the process of constructing narrative identity are captured as they develop over time in the South African context. Some theorists (Polyhart & Vadenberg, 2010) believe that using a longitudinal approach for research studies with a developmental focus adds value to the theories and knowledge that already exist. This allows critical reflections to take place and for the development of theories that are based within another context, for example the South African context.

Culture and tradition play a significant role in South Africa and have an even bigger impact on the narrative identities of emerging adults in the existing context. Thus, it would be beneficial for research to explore the relationship between culture and narrative identity, especially in collectivist clans. There are intergenerational values and beliefs passed down from previous generations, together with the history of the country, and it would be most beneficial to explore the role of all these during the construction of narrative identity. Thus, future research should consider a multicultural approach and should assess the adoption of westernised ways of constructing narrative identity and the implication of this for collectivistic communities.

A study such as this needs to be repeated. However, a more diverse sample should be used. It would serve researchers well to interview emerging adults who had transitioned directly into the work environment after high school. It would be most interesting to consider the dimensions of emerging adulthood while exploring narrative identity development in this population, who possibly went directly from adolescence to adulthood because of the responsibilities that they would have taken on.

Because the male to female ratio was not equal, future researchers should work towards having more male participants to have a louder male voice to share their personal experiences. By incorporating more males in the focus groups, a more dynamic social interaction between the participants would add value to understanding the topic in a more representative context.

In addition to this, future research needs to look at emerging adults who are older than 25. This research study's participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 thus, future research would benefit from exploring the narrative identities of older emerging adults.

It would be an advantage if future research could accommodate expression in the participants' mother tongue. An interpreter should be considered should there be any difficulties in understanding responses or questions. However, it is important to note that interpreters may have an impact on the rapport.

Novice researchers need to acquire adequate knowledge of research and what it entails. Ample training should be offered to them so that they develop the necessary skills needed to get the most out of the focus groups that they will conduct. This will allow them to notice increased opportunities to clarify experiences or pursue responses in ways that would have otherwise not been possible.

6.4 Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate selfies as self-representation tools during the construction of narrative identity. The study was grounded in the social constructivism paradigm and a qualitative research approach was used because it was the most applicable to the study's objective. Focus groups were used to collect data and were most appropriate because they allowed the participants to share their experiences. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. It was through these processes that valuable themes were derived. It is evident that emerging adults in South Africa value social media and selfies because they not only offer them freedom to express themselves but also help to maintain supportive relationships. The number of social media users in the country has increased over the past couple of years and it is evident that these platforms have created a space for users to share personal narratives and create conversations around these narratives. Creations do not exist without scrutiny, and the same goes for social media. There was some harsh criticism on these sites which created difficulty during the process of meaning-making and narration. However, this has not prevented emerging adults from engaging more and more on these platforms. Important aspects of history, context, culture and tradition were identified and shown to have a powerful impact on how emerging adults in South Africa construct their narrative identities, because these factors are involved in the use of social media and selfies.

In this chapter, the aim was to conclude the study by referring to the noteworthy findings of the study, its limitations, and the recommendations for future research. The aim of the study was achieved.

References

- Abrams, K. A., Wang, Z., Song, Y., & Galindo-Gonzalez, S. (2014). Data richness trade-offs between face-to-face, online audiovisual, and online text-only focus groups. *Social Science Review*, 33(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439313519733>
- Adams, P. (2006). Exploring social constructivism: Theories and practicalities. *Education*, 34(4), 243-257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004270600898893>
- Adler, E. (1997). Seizing the middle ground: Constructivism in world politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3), 319-363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066197003003003>
- Adom, D., Yeboah, A., & K., A. A. (2018). Constructivism philosophical paradigm: Implication for research, teaching and learning. *Global Journal Arts Humanities and Social Science*, 1(9), 4-10. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309413398_constructivism_philosophical_paradigm_implication_for_research_teaching_and_learningce and achieving personal goals
- Alberts, C. (2000). Identity formation among African late-adolescents in a contemporary South African context. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 22(1), 23-42. https://www.academia.edu/22306157/Identity_formation_among_African_late_adolescents_in_a_contemporary_South_African_context
- Alberts, C., Mbalo, N. F., & Ackerman, C. J. (2003). Adolescents' perceptions of the relevance of domains of identity formation: A South African cross-cultural study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32(2), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022591302909>
- Amineh, R. J., & Asl, H. D. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Language*, 1(1), 9-16. https://www.academia.edu/31113252/Review_of_Constructivism_and_Social_Constructivism
- Anderson, K., Case, A., & Lam, D. (2001). Causes and consequences of schooling outcomes in South Africa: Evidence from survey data. *Social Dynamics*, 27(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533950108458703>

- Androutsopoulou, A., & Stefanou, M. M. (2017). Seeking “home”: Personal narratives and turning points in the Lives of. *European Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 7(1), 126-147. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejcop.v7i1.150>
- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(10), 272-281.
<http://repository.udsm.ac.tz:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/256/Ensuring%20the%20Quality%20of%20the%20Findings%20of%20Qualitative%20Research%20N%20EW.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Ansell, N. (2004). Secondary schooling and rural youth transitions in Lesotho and Zimbabwe. *Youth and Society*, 36(2), 183-202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X04268376>
- Arnett, A. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from late teens through the twenties* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Arnett, J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from late teens through twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469-480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469>
- Arnett, J. (2007). Emerging adulthood: What is it and what is it good for? *Child Development Perspectives*, 1(2), 63-73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2007.00016.x>
- Arnett, J. J., & Jensen, L. A. (2002). A congregation of one: Individualised religious beliefs among emerging adults. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 17(5), 451-467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558402175002>
- Arnett, J., & Mitra, D. (2018). Are the features of emerging adulthood developmentally distinctive? A comparison of ages 18-60 in the United States. *Emerging Adulthood*, 8(5), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818810073>
- Arnett, J., Zuauskiene, R., & Sugimura, K. (2014). The new life stage of emerging adulthood at ages 18-29 years: Implications of mental health. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 1(7), 569-676. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(14\)00080-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(14)00080-7)
- Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2010). *The practice of social research*. Oxford University Press.

- Baldauf, H., Develotte, C., & Ollagnier-Beldam, M. (2017). *The effects of social media on the dynamics of identity: discourse, interaction and digital traces*.
<https://journals.openedition.org/alsic/3004>
- Bamberg, M. (2010). Who am I? Narration and its contribution to self and identity. *Theory & Psychology*, 21(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/095935409355852>
- Barger, V. A., Peltier, J. W., & Schultz, D. E. (2016). Social media. *Journal of Research in Integrative Marketing*, 10(4), 268-287. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-06-2016-0065>
- Barker, V., & Rodriguez, S. (2019). This is who I am: The selfies as a personal and social identity marker. *International Journal of Communication*, 13(24), 143-166.
<https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/9723>
- Barkhuizen, G. (2016). A short story approach to analyzing teacher (imagined) identities over time. *Tesol Quarterly*, 50(3), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1002/TESQ.311>
- Barry, C. M., Nelson, L., Davarya, S., & Urry, S. (2010). Religiosity and spirituality during the transition of adulthood. *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 34(4), 311-324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025409350964>
- Baumeister, R. F. (1998). The self. In G. I. Gardner, *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., pp. 680-726). McGraw-Hill.
- Baumeister, R., & Newman, L. S. (1994). How stories make sense of personal experiences: Motives that shape autobiographical narratives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(6), 676-690. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167294206006>
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (n.d.). Qualitative case study methodology. Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.
<http://su.works.nova.edu/hgr/vol13/iss4p/>
- Bij de Vaate, A. J., Velhuis, J., Allewa, J. M., Konijn, E. A., & van Hugten, C. H. (2018). Show your best selfie: An exploratory study on selfie-related motivations and behaviour in emerging adulthood. *Telematics and Informatics*, 1392-1407.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2018.03.010>
- Bjorsen, C. A. (2018). *Social media use and emerging adulthood*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324542908_Social_Media_Use_and_Emerging_Adulthood

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(1), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brooks, R. (2002). Transitional friends? Young people's strategies to manage and maintain their friendships during a period of repositioning. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 5(4), 449-467. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1367626022000030985>
- Brunsdon, A. R. (2017). Misconstrued identities must fall collective: Identity formation in the current South African context: A practical theological perspective. *Theological Studies*, 73(2), 9-40. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i2.3822>
- Buckingham, D. (2008). Introducing identity. In D. Buckingham, D. John, & T. MacArthur, *Youth, identity and digital media* (2nd ed., pp. 1-24). The MIT Press.
- Budree, A., Fietkiewicz, K. J., & Lins, E. (2019). Investigating usage of social media platforms in South Africa. *The African Journal of Information Systems*, 11(4), 314-336.
<https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1612&context=ajis>
- Burke, P. (2004). Identities and social structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead award address. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 67(1), 5-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250406700103>
- Chen, S., English, T., & Peng, K. (2006). Self-verification and contextualised self-views. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, 32(7), 930-942.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206287539>
- Chioncel, N. E., Van Der Veen, R. G., & Wildemeersch, D. J. (2003). The validity and reliability of focus groups as a research method in adult education. *International Journal of Life Long Education*, 22(5), 495-517.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0260137032000102850>
- Chung, D. (2018). The eight stages of psychosocial protective. *Journal of Behavioral and Brain Science*, 8(6), 369-398. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jbbs.2018.86024>
- Clara, A., & Garner, A. C. (2017). *Stories we tell our selfies*. Hong Kong: The Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities 2017 Official Conference Proceedings .
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323601369_Stories_We_Tell_Our_Selfies

- Cook, K. V., Kimball, C. N., Leonard, K. C., & Boyatzis, C. J. (2014). The complexity of quest in emerging adults' religiosity, well-being and identity. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 53(1), 73-89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12086>
- Corey, G. (2014). *Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy: South African edition*. Cengage Learning.
- Cote, J. E., & Levine, C. (1987). A formulation of Erikson's theory of ego identity formation. *Developmental Review*, 7(4), 273-325. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0273-2297\(87\)90015-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0273-2297(87)90015-3)
- Coyne, S. M., Padilla-Walker, L. M., & Howard, E. (2013). Emerging adults in a digital world: A decade review of media use, effects, and gratification in emerging adulthood. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1(2), 125-137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/216769813479782>
- Crocetti, E., Branje, S., Rubini, M., Koot, H. M., & Meeus, W. (2017). Identity processes and parent-child and sibling relationships in adolescence: A five-wave multi-informant longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 88(1), 210-228. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12547>
- Crocetti, E., Fermani, A., Pojaghi, B., & Meeus, W. (2011). Identity formation in adolescents from Italian mixed and migrant families. *Child Development*, 40, 7-23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-010-9112-8>
- Crocetti, E., Luyckx, K., Scrignaro, M., & Sica, L. S. (2011). Identity formation in Italian emerging adults: A cluster-analytic approach and associations with psychosocial functioning. *European Journal of Development Psychology*, 8(5), 558-572. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2011.576858>
- Crocetti, E., Rubini, M., Berzonsky, M. D., & Meeus, W. (2009). Brief report: The Identity Style Inventory - Validation in Italian adolescents and college students. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32(2), 425-433. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.04.002>
- Crocetti, E., Rubini, M., Luyckx, K., & Meeus, W. (2008). Statuses, identity formation in early and middle adolescents from various ethnic groups: From three dimensions to five. *Journal of Youth Development*, 37(8), 983-996. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-007-9222-2>

- Crocetti, E., Scignaro, M., Sica, L. S., & Magrin, M. E. (2012). Correlates of identity configurations: Three studies with adolescent and emerging adult cohorts. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41(6), 732-748. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-011-9702-2>
- Cruz, E. G., & Thornham, H. (2015). Selfies beyond self representation: The theoretical frictions of a practice. *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 7(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3402/jac.v7.28073>
- Dambudzo, I. (2015). Identity: The application of Erikson's psychosocial theory to explain Tony's and Jo's identity, using a thematic analysis of a semi-structured interview. *Greener Journal of Art and Humanities*, 5(1), 7-10. <https://doi.org/10.15580/GJAH.2015.1.090114345>
- Deeb-Swihart, J., Polack, C., Gilbert, E., & Essa, I. (2017). *Selfie presentation in everyday life: Large scale characterisation of selfie contexts on Instagram*. <https://www.cc.gatech.edu/~irfan/p/2017-Deeb-Swihart-SELLCSCI.pdf>
- Dilshad, R. M., & Latif, M. I. (2013). Focus group interview as a tool for qualitative research: An analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 33(1), 191-198. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Focus-Group-Interview-as-a-Tool-for-Qualitative-An-Dilshad-Latif/e13a0f7a5a455c31454d3d8d99e92097a19a947>
- Eaton, L., & Louw, J. (2000). Culture and self in South Africa: Individualism-collectivism predictions. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 140(2), 210-217. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00224540009600461>
- Edosowam, S., Prakasan, S. K., Kouame, Watson, J., & Seymour, T. (2011). The history of social media and its impact on business. *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 16(3), 1-14. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303216233_The_history_of_social_media_and_its_impact_on_business
- Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Kantse, O., Pölkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngäs, H. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness. *Sage Open*, 4(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014522633>

- Ephraim, P. E. (2013). African youths and the dangers of social networking: A culture-centered approach to using social media. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 15(1), 275-284. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-013-9333-2>
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. Norton.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas20160501.11>
- Galvez, G. (2019). Evolution of the field of social media research through science maps (2008-2017). *Communication and Society*, 32(2), 61-76. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.32.2.61-76>
- Gelo, O., Braakmann, D., & Benetka, G. (2008). Quantitative and qualitative research: Beyond the debate. *Intergrative Psychological and Behavioural Science*, 42(3), 266-270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/512124-008-9078-3>
- Georgakopoulou, A. (2016). From narrating the self to posting self(fies): A small stories approach to selfies. *Open Linguistics*, 2(1), 300-317. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2016-0014>
- Goldberg, R. E. (2013). Family instability and pathways to adulthood in urban South Africa. *Population and Development Review*, 231-259. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2013.00590.x>
- Gorichanaz, T. (2019). Self portrait, selfie, self: Notes on identity and documentation in the digital age. *Information*, 10(10), 297-313. <http://doi.org/10.3390/info10100297>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). The evaluator as instrument. In E. G. Guba, & Y. S. Lincoln, *Effective evaluation* (pp. 128-152). Jossey-Bass.
- Gunduz, U. (2017). The effect of social media on identity construction. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(5), 85-92. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mjss-2017-0026>
- Guzinni, S. (2000). A reconstruction of constructivism in international relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, 6(2), 147-182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066100006002001>

- Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(5), 748-69. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.5.748>
- Hadi, M. A., & Closs, S. J. (2016). Ensuring rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research in clinical pharmacy. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 641-645. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-015-0237-6>
- Hammack, P. L. (2008). Narrative and cultural psychology of identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 12(3), 222-247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868308316892>
- Hammack, P. L., & Toolis, E. E. (2015). Putting the social into personal identity: The master narrative as root metaphor for psychological developmental science. *Human Development*, 58(6), 350-364. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000446054>
- Hancock, J. T., & Toma, C. I. (2009). Putting your best face forward: The accuracy of online dating photographs. *Journal of Communication*, 59(2), 367-386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01420.x>
- Hochberg, Z., & Konner, M. (2020). Emerging adulthood, a pre-adult life history stage. *Frontiers in Endocrinology*, 10(918), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fendo.2019.00918>
- Ibarra, H., & Barbulescu, R. (2010). Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(1), 134-154. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2010.45577925>
- Inglehart, R. F. (2008). Changing values among Western publics from 1970 to 2006. *West European Politics*, 31(1), 130-146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380701834747>
- Jackson II, R. L., Drummond, D. K., & Camara, S. (2007). *What is qualitative research? Reports in communication*. Routledge.
- Jones, M. G., & Brader-Araje, L. (2002). The impact of constructivism on education: Language, discourse and meaning. *American Communication Journal*, 5(3), 1-10. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242074916_The_Impact_of_Constructivism_on_Education_Language_Discourse_and_Meaning
- Jootun, D., McGhee, G., & Marland, G. R. (2009). Reflexivity: Promoting rigour in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard*, 23(23), 42-46. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nx2009.02.23.23.42.c6800>

- Jung, H. (2019). The evolution of social constructivism in political science: Past to present. *SAGE Open*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019832703>
- Kang, S., Pai, C., & Kim, D. (2019). The role of chronological age, health, and basic psychological needs for older adults' travel intention. *Sustainability*, 11(23), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11236864>
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Kelley School of Business*, 53(1), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- Kay, A. (2018). Erikson online: Identity and pseudospeciation in the internet age. *An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 18(4), 264-273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1523732>
- Kerpelman, J. L., & Pittman, J. F. (2001). The instability of possible selves: Identity processes within late adolescents close peer relationships. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24(4), 491-512. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2001.0385>
- Kim, B. (2001). *Social constructivism*. <http://relectionandpractice.pbworks.com/f/Social+Constructivism.pdf>
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 103-121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11347023>
- Koenig, L. B., McGue, M., & Iacono, W. C. (2008). Stability and change in religiousness during emerging adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(2), 532-543. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.2.532>
- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 120-124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>
- Kozinets, R., Gretzel, U., & Dinhopl, A. (2017). Self in art/self as art: Museum selfies as identity work. *Frontiers Psychology*, 8(731), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00731>
- Kroger, J. (2003). Identity development during adolescence. In G. Adams, & D. Michael (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence*, (pp. 205-226). Blackwell Publishing.

- Kroger, J., & Marcia, J. E. (2011). The identity statuses: Origins, meaning and interpretations. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 31-53). Springer.
- Kundi, G. M., & Nawaz, A. (2010). From objectivism to social constructivism: The impacts of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on high education. *Journal of Science and Technology Education Research*, 1(2), 30-36.
<https://doi.org/10.5897/IJSTER.9000016>
- Lanctot, J., & Poulin, F. (2017). Emerging adulthood features and adjustment: A person centred approach. *Emerging Adulthood*, 6(2), 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696817706024>
- Lee, B. H., Pearce, L. D., & Schorpp, K. M. (2017). Religious pathways from adolescence to adulthood. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 56(3), 678-689.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12367>.
- Lobo, S. S., & Gowda, P. C. (2016). The selfie phenomenon: Self presentation and its implications. *International Journal of Computational Research and Development*, 1(1), 147-153. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.220929>
- Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(65), 1-15.
<http://www.nova.edu/ssw/QR/QR18/loh65.pdf>
- Lo-oh, J. L. (2016). Conceptions of adulthood by emerging adults in Cameroon. *European Journal of Psychological Research*, 3(2), 24-38. <https://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Full-Paper-CONCEPTIONS-OF-ADULTHOOD-BY-EMERGING-ADULTS-IN-CAMEROON.pdf>
- Low, J. M., Akande, D., & Hill, C. (2005). A cross-cultural comparison of identity development: South Africa and the United States. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 305-313. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532706xid0504_1
- Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S. J., Berzonsky, M., Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Smits, I., & Goossens, L. (2008). Capturing ruminative exploration: Extending the four dimensional model of identity formation in late adolescents. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 42(1), 58-82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2007.04.004>

- Macmillan dictionary. (2017). *Selfie*. www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/selfie
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step by step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 8(3), 2-14. <https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>
- Makhubela, M. (2012). Exposure to domestic violence and identity development among adolescent university students in South Africa. [https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/19956/Makhubela_Exposure\(2012\).pdf?sequence=1](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/19956/Makhubela_Exposure(2012).pdf?sequence=1)
- Marcia, J. E. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson, *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 109-137). Wiley & Sons.
- Marpsat, M., & Razafindratsima, N. (2010). Survey methods for hard-to-reach populations: Introduction to the special issue. *Methodological Innovations Online*, 5(2), 3-16. <https://doi.org/10.4256/mio.2010.0014>
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2006). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage.
- Marwick, A., & Boyd, D. (2011). I tweet honestly I tweet passionately: Twitter users context collapse and the imagined audience. *New Media & Society*, 13(1), 114-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810365313>
- Mazur, E., & Li, Y. (2016). Identity and self-presentation on social networking web sites: A comparison of online profiles of Chinese and American emerging adults. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 5(2), 101-118. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000054>
- Mazur, E., & Richards, I. (2011). Adolescents' and emerging adults' social networking online: Homophily or diversity? *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 32(4), 180-188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2011.03.001>
- McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(2), 100-122. <https://doi.org/10.1037//1089-2680.5.2.100>
- McAdams, D. P. (2018). Narrative identity: What is it? What does it do? How do you measure it? *Imagination, Cognition and Personality: Consciousness in Theory, Research and Clinical Practice*, 37(3), 359-372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276236618756704>

- McAdams, D. P. (2019). First, we invented stories, then they changed us: The evolution of narrative identity. *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, 1(3), 1-25.
<https://doi.org/10.26613/esic.3.1.110>
- McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(3), 233-238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214133475622>
- McAdams, D., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(3), 233-238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622>
- McLean, K. (2005). Late adolescent identity development: Narrative meaning making and memory telling. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(4), 683-691.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.41.4.683>
- McLean, K. (2008). Stories of the young and the old: Personal continuity and narrative identity. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(1), 254-264. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.254>
- McLean, K. C., & Fournier, M. A. (2008). The content and process of autobiographical reasoning in narrative identity. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 42(3), 527-545.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2007.08.003>
- McLean, K. C., & Lilgendahl, J. (2019). Narrative identity in adolescence and adulthood: Pathways of development. In D. P. McAdams, J. Tackett, & R. Shiner, *The handbook of personality development* (pp. 418-432). Guilford.
- McLean, K. C., & Pratt, M. W. (2006). Life's little (and big) lessons: Identity statuses and meaning-making in the turning point narratives of emerging adults. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(2), 714-722. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.42.4.714>
- McMahan, M. (2007). Social constructivism and the world wide web - A paradigm for learning. *Ascilite*, (pp. 7-10). Perth.
- Meeus, W., Iedema, J., Helsen, M., & Vollebergh, W. (1999). Patterns of adolescent identity development: Review of literature and longitudinal analysis. *Developmental Review*, 19(4), 419-461. <http://mifras.org/know/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Patterns-of-Adolescent-Identity-Development-Review-of-Literature-and-Longitudinal-Analysis.pdf>

- Meeus, W., van de Schoot, R., Keijsers, L., & Branje, S. (2012). Identity statuses as developmental trajectories: A five-wave longitudinal study in early-to-middle and middle-to-late adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41(8), 1008-1021. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-011-9730-y>
- Mishra, R. K. (2014). Social constructivism and teaching of social science. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 5(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.17499/jsser.22283>
- Moon, K., Brewer, T. D., Januchowski-Hartley, S. R., Adams, V. M., & Blackman, D. A. (2016). A guideline to improve qualitative social science publishing in ecology and conservation journals. *Ecology and Society*, 21(3), 17-36. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-08663-210317>
- Morrison, C., Willis, J., Crosswell, L., & Gibson, A. (2014). Turning points in narratives of research design: Research innovation stimulating unique responses to existing challenges for beginning rural teachers. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 13(1), 3-17. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288287072_Turning_points_in_narratives_of_research_design_Research_innovation_stimulating_unique_responses_to_existing_challenges_for_beginning_rural_teachers
- Moultrie, T. A., & McGrath, N. (2007). Teenage fertility rates falling in South Africa. *South African medical journal*, 97(6), 442-443. [https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/24212/Moultrie_Articla_2007.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y#:~:text=The%20data%20from%20the%20Africa,1\)](https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/24212/Moultrie_Articla_2007.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y#:~:text=The%20data%20from%20the%20Africa,1))
- Negru, O., Subtiricia, A., & Opre, A. (2010). The dynamics of aspirations in emerging adulthood. *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 12(2), 205-210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbpro.2011.02.028>
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Pearson.
- Newman, P. R., & Newman, B. M. (1976). Early adolescence and its conflict: Group identity and alientation. *Adolescence*, 11(42), 261-274. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232519061_Early_Adolescence_and_Its_Conflict_Group_Identity_Versus_Alienation

- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 18(2), 34-35. <https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-1-2054>
- Noh, M. A., & Jing, H. F. (2017). Social constructivism in social media: Facebook for teaching and learning purposes. *Malaysian Online Journal of Education*, 1(2), 59-67. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20160>
- Norris, A. S., Roeser, R. W., Richter, L. M., Lewin, N., Ginsburg, C., Fleetwood, S. A., . . . van der Wolf, K. (2008). South African-ness among adolescents: The emergence of a collective identity within the birth to twenty cohort study. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 28(1), 51-69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/027243160730867>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327-344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557070701401305>
- Nyumba, T. O., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., & Mukherjee, N. (2017). The use of focus groups discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conversation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 18(9), 20-32. <https://doi.org/10.1111.2041-210X.12860>
- Obidoa, C. A., Dodor, B. A., Tackie-Ofosu, V., Obidoa, M. A., & Kalisch, H. R. (2019). Perspectives of markers of adulthood among emerging adults in Ghana and Nigeria. *Emerging Adulthood*, 7(4), 270-278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818778906>
- Orehek, E., & Human, L. J. (2017). Self-expression on social media: Do tweets present accurate and positive portraits of impulsivity self-esteem, and attachment style? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(1), 60-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216675332>
- Padoa, T., Berle, D., & Roberts, L. (2018). Comparative social media use and the mental health of mothers with high levels of perfectionism. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 37(7), 514-535. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2018.37.7.514>

- Palaganas, . C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, M. P., & Caricativo, R. D. (2017). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A journey of learning. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(2), 426-438.
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss2/5/?utm_source=nsuworks.nova.edu%2Ftqr%2Fvol22%2Fiss2%2F5&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Palaganas, C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, M. P., & Caricativo, R. D. (2017). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A journey of learning. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(2), 426-438.
<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss2/5>
- Pandey, S. C., & Patnaik, S. (2014). Establishing reliability and validity in qualitative inquiry: A critical examination. *Journal of Development and Management Studies*, 12(1), 743-753.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266676584_ESTABLISHING_RELIABILITY_AND_VALIDITY_IN_QUALITATIVE_INQUIRY_A_CRITICAL_EXAMINATION
- Parker, A., & Tritter, J. (2006). Focus group method and methodology: Current practice and recent debate. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 29(1), 23-37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01406720500537304>
- Pasupathi, M., & Hoyt, T. (2009). The development of narrative identity in late adolescence and emerging adulthood: The continued importance of listeners. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(2), 558-574. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014431>
- Patnaik. (2013). Reflexivity: Situating the researcher in qualitative research. *Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, 2(2), 98-106.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263916084_Reflexivity_Situating_the_researcher_in_qualitative_research
- Pattaro, C. (2015). New media and youth identity. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(1), 297-327.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a33b/ae49c2a7f6a06b63e5e2e793f02239a817e1.pdf>
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research an evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Petrova, E., Dewing, J., & Camilleri, M. (2014). Confidentiality in participatory research: Challenges from one study. *Nursing Ethics*, 23(4), 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733014564909>

- Pew Research Center (2017). *Social media fact sheet*. <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/>
- Polyhart, R. E., & Vadenberg, R. J. (2010). Longitudinal research: The theory, design, and analysis of change. *Journal of Management*, 36(1), 94-114.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309352110>
- Puoane, T., Tsolekile, L., & Steyn, N. (2010). Perceptions about body image and sizes among Black African girls living in Cape Town. *Ethnicity and Disease*, 20(1), 29-34.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41547258_Perceptions_about_body_image_and_sizes_among_Black_African_girls_living_in_Cape_Town
- Rahman, M. S. (2017). The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language testing and assessment research: A literature review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1), 102-112.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n/plo2>
- Rettberg, J. W. (2017). Self-representation in social media. In J. Burgess, A. Marwick, & T. Poeli (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of social media* (pp. 2-30). Sage.
- Rhodes, P. (2016). *Paul Ricoeur and narrative identity*.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/post-clinical/201604/paul-ricoeur-and-narrative-identity>
- Rider, E. (2017). *Life-span human development* (9th ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Robsham, K. (2016). *Embracing identity exploration through the #selfie*.
<https://www.presence.io/blog/embracing-identity-exploration-through-the-selfie/>
- Romele, A. (2013). Narrative identity and social networking sites. *Ricoeur Studies*, 4(2), 108-122. <https://doi.org/10.5195/errs.2013.202>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students*. Pearson Hall.
- Schrader. (2015). Constructivism and learning in the age of social media: Chaning minds and learning communities. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 144(2), 23-35.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20160>

- Schwartz, J. S., Zamboanga, B. L., Luyckx, K., Meca, A., & Ritchie, R. (2013). Identity in emerging adulthood: Reviewing the field and looking forward. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*(2), 96-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696813479781>
- Schwartz, S. J., Cote, J. E., & Arnett, J. J. (2005). Identity and agency in emerging adulthood: Two developmental routes in the individualisation process. *Youth and Society, 37*(2), 201-229. <https://doi.org/10.117/0044118X05275965>
- Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Luyck, K., Meca, A., & Ritchie, R. A. (2013). Identity on emerging adulthood: Reviewing the field and looking forward. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*(2), 96-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21676696813479781>
- Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative. *Education for Information, 22*(2), 63-75. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201>
- Singer, J. A. (2004). Narrative identity and meaning making across the adult lifespan: An introduction. *Journal of Personality, 72*(3), 437-460. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j0022-3506.2004.00268.x>
- Singer, J. A., Blagov, P., Berry, M., & Oost, K. M. (2013). Self defining memories, scripts and life story: Narrative identity in personality and psychotherapy. *Journal of Personality, 81*(6), 659-582. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.l2005>
- Smith, S., & Watson, J. (2010). Twenty-four strategies for reading life narratives. In S. Smith, & J. Watson, *Reading autobiography: A guide to interpreting life narratives* (2nd ed.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Sobočan, A., Berotti, T., & Gottman, K. (2018). Ethical considerations in social work research. *European Journal of Social Work, 22*(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2018.1544117>
- Solo-Anaeto, M., & Jacobs, B. (2015). Exploring social media as channels for sustaining African culture. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 5*(1), 37-42. http://ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_5_No_4_1_April_2015/5.pdf
- Somers, M. R. (1994). The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and Society, 23*(5), 605-649. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992905>
- Stangor, C. (2015). *Research methods for the behavioural sciences* (5th ed.). Cengage Learning.

- Statistics, S. A. (2017). *Education series volume V: Higher education and skills in South Africa 2017*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-92-01-05/Report-92-01-052017.pdf>
- Strano, M. M. (2008). User descriptions and of self-presentation through facebook profile images. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 2(2).
<https://cyberpsychology.eu/article/view/4212/3253>
- Sugarman, L. (2004). *Life-span development, frameworks, accounts and strategies* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Surmaik, A. (2018). Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: Researchers' perspectives. *Qualitative Social Research*, 19(3), 1-12.
<https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/3099/4268>
- Swartz, A., Colvin, C., & Harrison, A. (2018). The problem or the solution? Early fertility and parenthood in the transition to adulthood in Khayelitsha South Africa. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 26(54), 145-154.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26605095>
- Syed, M., & Mitchell, L. L. (2013). Race ethnicity and emerging adulthood: Retrospect and prospects. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1(2), 83-95.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696813480503>
- Tagliabue, S., Crocetti, E., & Lanz, M. (2015). Emerging adulthood features and criteria for adulthood: Variable and person centred approaches. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(3), 374-388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2015.1074985>
- Tarziu, G. (2016). *Social constructivism and methodolgy of science*.
https://www.academia.edu/41698725/Social_Constructivism_and_Methodology_of_Science
- UNICEF New York, UNICEF Africa, Beger, G., Sinha, A., & Pawelczyk, K. (2012). *South African mobile generation*.
<https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/media/1041/file/South-African-mobile-generation-2012.pdf>

- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 15(3), 398-405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12048>
- van Dulmen, M. H. (2013). Emerging adulthood: The journal. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1(1), 3-4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968112469356>
- von Ernst, G. (1998). *Social constructivism as a philosophy of mathematics*. State University of New York Press.
- Vranešević, T., Perić, N., & Marušić, T. (2019). Perception of social media as a source of relevant information. *Zagreb International Review of Economics & Business*, 22(1), 133-144. <https://doi.org/10.2478/zireb-2019-0016>
- Weerasinghe, M. C. (2018). Ethics in qualitative research: Insights for review boards and researchers. *Journal of The College of Community Physician of Sri Lanka*, 24(1), 39-42. <https://doi.org/10.4038/jccpsl.v24i.8145>
- Westley, H. (2016). Reading self in selfies. *Comparative Critical Studies*, 13(3), 317-390. <https://doi.org/10.3366/ccs.2016.0211>
- World Wide Worx. (2013). *Social media breaking barriers in South Africa*. <http://www.worldwideworx.com/socialmedia2012/>
- Yang, C., & Brown, B. B. (2014). Online self-presentation on Facebook and self development during the college transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(2), 402-416. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0385-y>
- Yang, C., Holden, S. M., & Carter, M. D. (2017). Emerging adults social media self-presentation and identity development at college transition mindfulness as a moderator. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 52(1), 212-221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.08.006>

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical clearance



Faculty of the Humanities

04-May-2017

Dear **Prof Naude**

Ethics Clearance: **Emerging adults in a transitional society**

Principal Investigator: **Prof Luzelle Naude**

Department: **Psychology (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities. I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Research Ethics Committee of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2017/0230**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R.P.', is shown below the text 'Yours Sincerely'.

Prof. Robert Peacock

Chair: Research Ethics Committee

Faculty of the Humanities



Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

May 2018

Student: Precious Mokwala

Psychology Masters student

Dear Participant

University of the Free State

Cell: 073 8080 135

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study: **“Selfies as self-representation tools during**

Email: 22preciousmokwala@gmail.com

the construction of narrative identities” which falls under a bigger research project. Your participation will entail participating in a focus group discussion (60 minutes).

This study aims to contribute to existing knowledge regarding social media and identity development amongst emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 29 in South Africa. The study is being conducted with the hopes of gaining a better understanding of the ways in which social media impacts identity development. Hopefully you will benefit from this study as it may be insightful to reflect on your own process of identity development. Furthermore, your contribution towards this study may be of great value to the field of research and contribute towards our understanding identity in the South African context.

To protect you from harm, your participation in this study will remain confidential and anonymous. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part in this study. If you do choose to take part, and an issue arises which makes you uncomfortable, you are welcome to withdraw your participation with no further repercussions. If you experience any discomfort or unhappiness with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact us (my supervisor and myself) directly to discuss it. Note that you can be referred to a professional if needed.

Yours sincerely,

Precious Mokwala

INFORMED CONSENT

- I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the abovementioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and what the risks and benefits are.
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations he/she has indicated in the above letter.

Signature

Date



Appendix C: Biographic Information Form

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate box with an X

Gender	Male	Female	I prefer not to answer
---------------	------	--------	------------------------

Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30+
------------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----

Racial group	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Other	I prefer not to answer
---------------------	-------	-------	----------	--------	-------	------------------------

Ethnic group	Sotho	Tswana	Xhosa	Afrikaans	English	Tsonga
	Ndebele	Zulu	Pedi	Venda / Swati	Other	I prefer not to answer

Home language	Sotho	Tswana	Xhosa	Afrikaans	English	Tsonga
	Ndebele	Zulu	Pedi	Venda / Swati	Other	I prefer not to answer

Religious tion / church group	Christi an (Protestant / Catholic)	Islam/Muslim /Hindu	Traditional African Religion	None	Other	I prefer not to answer
--	--	------------------------	---------------------------------	------	-------	---------------------------

Which social media platform(s) are you on?	
---	--

Appendix D: Transcriptions of Focus Groups

Focus group 1 (Female participant)

1.1 Interviewer: Uhm participants have been briefed about the purpose of the study and informed consent forms have been signed and... biographics forms have also been signed. I will now proceed with the questioning. First question I'll, I'll go like this...

1.2 Participant: Heybo! [laughs] [indistinct chatter].

1.3 Interviewer: Ja, ja. Uhm, first, first question. Which social media platform or platforms are you on?

1.4 Participant: Uhm... [inaudible] Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat.

1.5 Interviewer: Okay.

1.6 Participant: Ja.

1.7 Interviewer: So pretty much everything [laughs]

1.8 Participant: Ja [laughs]

1.9 Participant: Uhm no I'm just on Whatsapp and Facebook.

1.10 Interviewer: Okay.

1.11 Participant: Twitter, Facebook uhm Instagram, WhatsApp...ja

1.12 Participant: Okay Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram...ja

1.13 Participant: Twitter, WhatsApp, Pintrest, YouTube, Instagram...yeah YouTube.

1.14 Interviewer: Okay...Snapchat?

1.15 Participant: Snapchat! Sometimes.

1.16 Interviewer: Is anyone else on YouTube?

1.17 Participant: Not yet.

1.18 Interviewer: Okay.

1.19 Participant: [indistinct chatter]

1.20 Interviewer: And which of these do you enjoy the most and why?

1.21 Participant: Uhm, Instagram...

1.22 Interviewer: Why?

1.23 Participant: Uhm because I get to watch what I don't afford obviously [another participant laughs] that's why. I watch nice clothes, cars, property, vacations...you know mos

that good life...ja. It gives me a bit of hope that one day [another participant giggling] I'll have that.

1.24 Participant: Uhm yeah...I also like Instagram cause well uhm... pretty much the same thing...

1.25 Interviewer: Mmm mmm

1.26 Participant: As well as looking at that lifestyle that I don't have and just...feel inspired [laughs].

1.27 Interviewer: So it's for inspiration?

1.28 Participant: For inspiration reasons ja! [laughs]

1.29 Interviewer: Okay.

1.30 Participant: And fashion I just like going to check fashion all around the world.

1.31 Interviewer: Mmm fashion in, in you...what you see do you incorporate your own fashion sense?

1.32 Participant: Ja sometimes.

1.33 Interviewer: Okay.

1.34 Participant: Ja

1.35 Interviewer: All right.

1.36 Participant: Uhm... I enjoy Twitter.

1.37 Interviewer: Twitter...

1.38 Participant: Yes, because honestly it's relatable.

1.39 Interviewer: Okay.

1.40 Participant: With Instagram every time I look at it I am reminded of how [someone says something about struggle]

1.41 Participant: How low my status is [someone is laughing - inaudible] it's relatable.

1.42 Interviewer: Mmm

1.43 Participant: Everything that is happening there I can relate...like we just...we all trash

1.44 Interviewer: Ja, ja

1.45 Participant: So Twitter.

1.46 Participant: Uhm... I am gonna have to say Twitter because I mean like, I feel like Facebook is outdated and I [participants laughing] that's, that's my point of view and Instagram I am so new in Instagram and Twitter like I'm really Twitter uhm okay uhm for quite some time so I am relating to like some things on Twitter.

1.47 Interviewer: Mmm okay...okay.

1.48 Participant: O! Okay Instagram and Twitter...

1.49 Interviewer: But why?

1.50 Participant: ...well on Instagram I actually like [long pause] actually see like I don't know how to put it but with Instagram I usually go there to...uhm...not actually to like find inspiration but actually [clears throat] it's like you know WhatsApp has statuses?

1.51 Interviewer: Mmm

1.52 Participant: But with Instagram I can actually... I can actually see like how my friends are living.

1.53 Interviewer: Mmm

1.54 Participant: I can see those guys and I will be like joh dude I have to push that side because we're pushing this side...

1.55 Interviewer: Mmm, so motivation?

1.56 Participant: Ja motivation.

1.57 Interviewer: Mmm

1.58 Participant: And then on Twitter it's mostly because I wanna see what's happening around the world and that's where I get all my memes...and [laughs] and I feel like with Twitter you can just open like that is just where you can be you...

1.59 Interviewer: Mmm

1.60 Participant: And it's, it's unlike Facebook and Instagram cause when you uhm use violent language they block you...

1.61 Participant: So then you can just be like you know...

1.62 Interviewer: Mmm

1.63 Participant: People are just free on Twitter.

1.64 Interviewer: So [clears throat] how long have you guys been on...all of the platforms that you guys have mentioned?

1.65 Participant: Joh, for so long. I had Facebook when I was in...grade uhm .

1.66 Interviewer: How long ago was this?

1.67 Participant: , how long is that?

1.68 Interviewer: Ja years, years.

[indistinct chatter and laughing]

1.69 Participant: And the other uhm platforms I had them uhm...matric...

1.70 Interviewer: Matric was....how long ago?

1.71 Participant: Uhm

1.72 Interviewer: Okay.

1.73 Participant: years ago.

[participant comments same Whatsapp group and some inaudible chatter]

1.74 Interviewer: When was that, which year?

1.75 Participant: Uhm when was it? Isn't it ... ? ?

1.76 Participant: It was .

1.77 Participant: Ja during the Fifa world cup cause it was still the [inaudible]

[participants are talking over each other - inaudible]

1.78 Interviewer: Okay, okay so you guys no one here is on mxit still?

1.79 Participant: [everyone say no]

1.80 Interviewer: Is anyone still on mxit?

1.81 Participant: No! [laughs] No!

[participants are chatting among themselves]

1.82 Participant: For me uhm WhatsApp also [inaudible]

1.83 Interviewer: Mmm

1.84 Participant: Uhm and then Facebook [inaudible] create...

1.85 Interviewer: How...how long ago was this? Grade , grade ?

1.86 Participant:

1.87 Interviewer: Uhm I don't know , years ago?

1.88 Participant: Ja

1.89 Interviewer: Okay.

1.90 Participant: Uhm and I wasn't on Twitter then, like I don't know...I didn't even [inaudible]

1.91 Interviewer: Ja

1.92 Participant: And then Instagram...grade .

1.93 Interviewer: This was how long ago?

1.94 Participant: ...[laughs] years ago.

1.95 Interviewer: years ago?

1.96 Participant: Ja.

1.97 Interviewer: Okay...okay...uhm [long pause]

1.98 Participant: It hasn't been long...WhatsApp grade , Facebook grade ...Instagram...

1.99 Interviewer: The year cause how, how [another participant says something - inaudible]
ja... Cause Instagram years?

1.100 Participant: Ja.

1.101 Interviewer: Okay.

1.102 Participant: Grade .

1.103 Interviewer: Grade ?

1.104 Participant: Which year was it? [another participant says something - inaudible]
[laughs]

1.105 Participant: Ja I think I'd say years.

1.106 Interviewer: Years?

1.107 Participant: Ja years.

1.108 Interviewer: Okay.

1.109 Participant: Since I have been into the social media game.

1.110 Interviewer: Okay

1.111 Participant: Ja.

1.112 Interviewer: And this applies to all your platforms currently?

1.113 Participant: Yes.

1.114 Interviewer: Okay.

1.115 Participant: I started being more active when I got into varsity.

1.116 Interviewer: Okay.

1.117 Participant: Which was last year.

1.118 Participant: Uhm Facebook I started in grade , it was ...

1.119 Interviewer: Okay.

1.120 Participant: Uhm...and WhatsApp...uhm ...and Twitter...it was last year [someone is opening a packet of chips] and Instagram only this year.

1.138 Interviewer: Only this year? Okay.

1.121 Participant: I started using Facebook in grade Well I was forced because of my friends.

1.122 Interviewer: Grade was?

1.123 Participant: years ago.

1.124 Interviewer: years

1.125 Participant: Cause I was the only one in the group and I was like okay and I only started becoming active in grade ...and then Instagram...I stared last year. Twitter I had an account in grade , it was like years ago, no years ago and then I only became active in matric and then WhatsApp since ag you know when it came out.

1.126 Interviewer: So this is

1.127 Participant: Ja

1.128 Interviewer: Okay.

1.129 Participant: You know with like all the WhatsApp [another participant is talking - inaudible].

1.130 Interviewer: [laughs] okay. Uhm how much time do you guys spend?

[all the participants react to this question with wow] [laughing]

1.131 Participant: Do we have to be honest?

1.132 Interviewer: Yes! Be honest.

1.133 Participant: I would levae my studies girl like I am just letting my studies go for Instagram. It's not like I am doing it intentionally. I don't even know that I am doing it, it's just like...

1.134 Interviewer: Ja

1.135 Participant: [inaudible] or hours in and when I do I switch the time off so I don't really check the time, the memes and stuff is like so good.

1.136 Interviewer: Mmm

1.137 Participant: There was a time uhm and this was I was on like it was a long weekend so [inaudible] so what we did was she was hours on my phone. There was a time at night when my room mate and I she was on her phone and I was on mine and we were onTwitter and Instagram for more than hours.

1.138 Interviewer: Wow, wow, just hold on...uhm hours on social media.

1.139 Participant: Ja.

1.140 Interviewer: Was it just that one incident or?

1.141 Participant: No not really, sometimes you don't even know you on Instagram for or hours but it's better now because [inaudible]

1.142 Interviewer: Mmm mmm.

1.143 Participant: [inaudible]

1.144 Interviewer: Mmm

1.145 Participant: Ja

1.146 Interviewer: All right.

1.147 Participant: You know I never really count [laughs] when I was on Instagram...I, I could go like a whole day...until [inaudible] until I'll, I'll go back and give some.

1.148 Interviewer: Ja, ja, ja.

1.149 Participant: So uhm I can easily I think I can also easily go hours without actually noticing.

1.150 Interviewer: ...this would be on all your social media networks?

1.151 Participant: Mainly Instagram.

1.152 Interviewer: Mainly Instagram. Does it also apply to Facebook?

1.153 Participant: Just Instagram

1.154 Interviewer: Instagram okay, okay.

1.155 Participant: With me [inaudible] hours every day. I sleep hours hours I am on social media [laughing] but [other participants are laughing] but Facebook I get in uhm...maybe once in two weeks.

1.156 Interviewer: Okay.

1.157 Participant: Instagram...maybe two hours in a day.

1.158 Interviewer: Mmm

1.159 Participant: Twitter and WhatsApp...uhm every day

1.160 Interviewer: Okay...so.

1.161 Participant: hours every day on...

1.162 Interviewer: Social media?

1.163 Participant: Ja

1.164 Participant: Joh! Uhm [participants laughing] [inaudible] Twitter is a problem [laughing].

1.165 Participant: Because like you don't even stress about data...so you can just go in there every time every day...

1.166 Interviewer: Mmm

1.167 Participant: So Twitter is like...as long as I am awake [all participants are laughing]

1.168 Interviewer: Okay!

1.169 Participant: And uhm Facebook uhm maybe once a month [all participants laughs] and then WhatsApp joh I don't even have contacts so I can go a day without WhatsApp without the group chats, so Twitter is like joh .

1.170 Participant: Are those messages from the house?

1.171 Participant: Ja those are the only messages, keeping my WhatsApp busy as well. [participants chatting among themselves]

1.172 Participant: Even if I post a status [inaudible] [participants chatting and laughing - inaudible]

1.173 Participant: On a, on a basic day on a like basic day [indistinct chatter].

1.174 Interviewer: Wow and you? How much time?

1.175 Participant: Oeg!... Facebook...every Sunday...maybe like minutes.

1.176 Interviewer: Okay.

1.177 Participant: Just to check-up who went to church.

1.178 Interviewer: Ja [participants are laughing]

1.179 Participant: Twitter I only go on Twitter if something is happening in the country. People will be like joh did you check this out.

1.180 Interviewer: Mmm

1.181 Participant: Instagram, WhatsApp, I am always on my phone like now I'll be like [someone is whispering] cause now I'll be like in class, I am in class and I'll be on my phone like that's how busy I am...with...Instagram and WhatsApp.

1.182 Interviewer: Mmm

1.183 Participant: Ja

1.184 Interviewer: Mmm

1.185 Participant: Like joh that's a struggle that happens at home cause when I am here I message everyone at home and when I am home my parents like block me from the house Wi-Fi, dad's like go buy my own data. And ten rand is like enough for two days. Then a girl has to go back so...eish I think I should switch to Telkom [indistinct chatter and laughing] but like I spend [indistinct chatter] like I am on Instagram and WhatsApp all the time even when I am like sleeping I'll be like typing there until I dose off.

1.186 Interviewer: Mmm

1.187 Participant: I'll wake up at like in the morning and I'll be on WhatsApp again. Like that's my life.

1.188 Participant: Joh! [inaudible] like you just always see the times when you just wake up.

1.189 Interviewer: Ja

1.190 Participant: Ja. Even when I go to the toilet I just want to see [another participant talks over her - ja I just want to see who, who posted] [two participants are having a conversation and laughing, they are talking over each other] at the time just so you can be like oh, and then you need to sleep cause like...

1.191 Participant: But then the only time that I am not active on social media is if I am out...[other participants says ja] that's when people know I am out.

1. 192 Interviewer: Mmm

1.193 Participant: Unless it's boring and then is like o it's boring unless if I am hung over as well and ja

1.194 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm so...I asked you guys to bring selfies...[says selfies in a different tone]...okay. I want you guys to just uhm...tell me what you think a selfie is and why you brought that particular selfie today.

1.195 Participant: [everyone says joh] what is a selfie?

1.196 Interviewer: What is a selfie?...what do you think a selfie is?

1.197 Participant: Just you taking a picture of yourself [participants are giggling]

1.198 Interviewer: Just taking a picture of yourself?

1.199 Participant: Yes.

1.200 Interviewer: Okay, is there a message that you use to take a picture of yourself?

1.201 Participant: Uhm what, well I am not a selfie person, but all I know is people just look for that angle or the best selfie and the filter matters alot [laughs]. The lighting etc

1.202 Interviewer: Ja

1.203 Participant: [participants are chatting and laughing about the lighting] and the background you know...

1.204 Participant: Ja

1.205 Participant: you have to check all these things first you know.

1.206 Interviewer: Ja. Uhm would you say a selfie is you taking it like this reaching out your hand or?

1.207 Participant: Yes

1.208 Interviewer: Or uhm looking into the mirror is that also a selfie? In, in your opinion.

1.209 Participant: Uhm you know how people who are just being creative. Selfie just means you taking a picture of yourself.

1.210 Interviewer: Mmm

1.211 Participant: But now because they wanna show off their iPhones...They, they do the mirror thing...

1.212 Interviewer: Okay

1.213 Participant: I don't know if that's a selfie but whatever you call it.

1.214 Interviewer: Okay

1.215 Participant: I think they call that a mirror selfie.

1.216 Interviewer: A mirror selfie? Okay.

[indistinct chatter]

1.217 Participant: For me a selfie is...basically you putting yourself in...ugh I don't know what I hope I am saying this properly. It's you basically putting yourself in a moment, like taking a picture of yourself in the moment. Like...you wanna...it's you, it's you being in a picture, it's you taking a picture that's already a picture. If you get what I am saying. Cause you want people to see cause especially with backgrounds you want people to see what's going on and that's already a picture and then you wanna involve yourself in it.

1.218 Interviewer: Mmm

1.219 Participant: Do you know what I am saying?

1.220 Participant: So people would be like o you were there or this is what is hopping [someone clears their throat] so for me a selfie is basically you taking a pic...you being in a picture and [laughing and talking - inaudible]

1.221 Interviewer: You being in a picture?

1.222 Participant: No.

1.223 Interviewer: Of a picture?

1.224 Participant: Yes a picture being inside another picture.

1.225 Interviewer: Ja

1.226 Participant: Ja that's basically it.

[indistinct chatter and laughter]

1.227 Interviewer: So why, why did you bring this selfie today?

1.228 Participant: Well...this one looked like me so...

1.229 Interviewer: Okay.

[participants giggle]

1.230 Participant: Okay on this day we went out for my friend's th birthday...

1.231 Interviewer: Mmm

1.232 Participant: And she was to us like we should dress fancy and stuff... So uhm...actually I went all out...basically...but in this picture...it's...it's me it's, it's R* but other people are not used to seeing this side like...

1.233 Interviewer: This side being?

1.234 Participant: In Free State like...

1.235 Interviewer: Okay.

1.236 Participant: Ja cause I will go to clubs like this and it will be chilled, I can go to class in pyjamas and a onesie...And that's it...I was living my life that I was used to living in Joburg. But ja, ja

1.237 Interviewer: So this, this picture expose the Joburg R*?

1.238 Participant: Ja

1.239 Interviewer: To people here in Bloem?

1.240 Participant: Ja.

1.241 Interviewer: Okay.

1.242 Participant: And uhm and ja...I just, for the first time I went out wearing makeup...

1.243 Interviewer: Mmm

1.244 Participant: Besides lipstick and I was all natural...So ja.

1.245 Interviewer: And why do you think...that is so significant?

1.246 Participant: Well [long pause] I don't how to put it...uhm...you know when uhm you, okay with me since I've been in a different place far from home. I told myself when I come this side this is gonna, I, I want people to see me in this way. Like I don't want people to be like ugh it's that chick that always go half naked to clubs and stuff. So I already before I started school here I already had that thing of okay this is the person I want people to see me as here. Before they can judge me for who I really am because that's, this is for us this is normal that side. And I knew that on this side people are not used to that like...some people. Just like okay I am gonna come here, I am gonna be that chick that is always coming up and all those things so...on that day I was just like...let me just be me for once!

1.247 Interviewer: Mmm

1.248 Participant: Going out you know. Let me not...cover up what I love exposing. Let me not be that R* that people don't know. So ja

1.249 Interviewer: Okay, nice.

1.250 Participant: [long pause] for me a selfie...I think is about seizing probably a selfie is about seizing the moment.

1.251 Interviewer: Mmm

1.252 Participant: You know how they always say seize the moment?

1.253 Interviewer: Ja

1.254 Participant: Ja I think it's about seizing, no I don't think I know it is about seizing the moment like seizing that just moment like this pic here I brought...sorry [long pause] one moment [awkward laugh] okay, okay it's a pic of me and my mom. It just represent the happiness like I've waited literally almost...over years to...to just spend there and say finally I am making her proud. So ja this, this picture like even if I am gone for a minute she was happy and I am going to make her proud. Ja, it's about seizing the moment [someone coughs] every time I look at it I know that I've achieved something because that's my ultimate that was my ultimate goal...

1.255 Interviewer: Mmm

1.256 Participant: For anything ja.

1.257 Participant: [long pause] Uhm for me a selfie is [long pause] it's, it's...uhm it's so you see how with normal pictures people sort of seize the moment for you...

1.258 Interviewer: Mmm

1.259 Participant: whatever, uhm a selfie is me doing that for myself...and because I like the way...I like looking at life...I prefer to take selfies rather than have people take pictures of me...

1.260 Interviewer: Mmm

1.261 Participant: Cause with a selfie you can or kinda always guarantee that you gonna look [another participant says good] good! You know which angel you [participants laugh and agree] gonna look good at, you know which, which way ja you know cause [participants talking over each other] the game like we out here no! You need that picture you know, so I prefer selfies because selfies allow me to take a moment the way I want it to be presented... Just to take the moment the way I see it, you understand?

1.262 Interviewer: Mmm ja

1.263 Participant: Ja and uhm okay I took this selfie uhm we were [long pause] [participants are whispering and laughing] uhm [laughs] well I kinda took it because I don't have any other pictures cause ja. This is just what I am using cause I broke my phone [laughs] and my mom is still mad at me till this day. Uhm so...this picture uhm I took it [inaudible] in Joburg with...my family uhm...it was me, my brother and my mom and dad [struggles over word] stepdad.

1.264 Participant: So uhm it was like... [struggling over words] it was after the like after we had been through some really deep things did things and this was like literally the first family trip we took in forever, so uhm... being there I just wanted to capture every moment like I don't know how many pictures I took on that trip...

1.265 Interviewer: Mmm

1.266 Participant: Even though I lost them now cause well [laughs awkwardly] ja uhm...I took a lot of selfies and then this one it's just...I took it cause I, I chose this uhm I don't know I can't remember [participants chatting and laughing] I was like I look cute and my makeup was like I, I, I have make-up on but it wasn't...I did like a simple look and ja it looked, it looked natural actually...

1.267 Interviewer: Mmm

1.268 Participant: I didn't see that I even had makeup on and ja.

1.269 Participant: Uhm ja selfie...[someone is playing with a bag] I think selfie...when you take a selfie it's like you are uhm, uhm...involving people in your world or something. That moment like...the moment that you are living in. Obviously...when you take a selfie like when you take a selfie is when you take a photo of yourself. I am taking a picture of this moment [laughs] ja as she said I don't like people taking pictures of me because [other participants chime into the conversation] I don't understand if like someone is still busy taking pictures of us, so with me even like even if like [inaudible] so everything is comfortable...

1.270 Interviewer: Mmm

1.271 Participant: And like when someone is busy and then you end up I don't know [laughs] [participants are all laughing and having their own conversation] you know the photo-shoot I was just like joh, joh.

1.272 Interviewer: Ja

1.273 Participant: Come on guys be serious

1.274 Participant: Just be natural like awh! [Participants are having their own conversation] like tula tula and then you keep quiet and then you like [someone else laughs] It's that moment when you guys are like having a surprise party [another participant says mmm] for somebody or you were doing something and then someone comes and you just like make sure [all participants agree] [all participants laughs] as if this was natural [everyone says ja].

1.275 Participant: Okay so the selfie [inaudible] last month when I was in my room and I just decided that it has been a long time [participants are chatting and laughing among themselves] ja my roommate was not there so [someone laughs] I just feel like oh this is the moment like I don't have times like this where I am alone...

1.276 Interviewer: Mmm

1.277 Participant: So since I am alone let me just take a picture [participants are talking over each other] ja [laughs]

1.278 Interviewer: So what do you guys want...[clears throat] I mean what do ja what do you guys want you to communicate to others through each and every one of your selfies? What do you want your selfie to tell others?

1.279 Participant: [long pause] [whispering] you must see where I am [another participant is laughing] [another participant is saying uh uh].

1.280 Participant: For me it's, it's less of about the moment, in some selfies yes it's about the moment [another participant says ja] I am at a picnic but a lot of the time I find that it is about...just look at my...look at my beauty in this moment...

1.281 Interviewer: Ja

1.281 Participant: You know, it's like wow...even I don't believe I am this pretty in this time [laughs] so I just wanna, I just wanna I, I just want to prove that. How I see me ja and my right angles and ja [someone coughs] [laughs]

1.282 Participant: It's just like uhm appreciating your, your beauty [another participant says mmm] it's yourself you know when you take a selfie and you're like wow look at me! [participants are talking over each other].

1.283 Participant: Well with me most of the time it's...it's me wanting to capture...what's happening...but I wanna be like I wanna tell people hey I was there, someone is like where are you!? [inaudible] cause I never take selfies to...see how beautiful I am cause I have, I have a roommate that just [inaudible] me out and I am just like girl! So it's just like ja, there are times that I want to capture beautiful moments but I wanna make sure I am in them [laughs] [someone else says so that they know] ja. So people so ja like cause I always print out my picture I have an album of pictures since...last year so I wanna like when you tell people like joh guys I was here I was doing this, so I want people to see that I was there...

1.284 Interviewer: Ja, ja makes sense.

1.285 Participant: What's the question again?

1.286 Interviewer: Uhm [clears throat] what do you want to communicate to others with this selfie?

1.287 Participant: Uhm...I...the moment...

1.288 Interviewer: The moment.

1.289 Participant: The moment. [laughs]

1.290 Interviewer: What about the moment?

1.291 Participant: Uhm...that like I don't know [long pause] I think like with some people you can read other people through their pictures and like understand uhm what's really going on like what, what's the story behind the picture...Because I don't think you, you just post a picture...obviously you posting it out there behind like there is a story behind so...

1.292 Interviewer: Mmm. What is your story behind that picture?

1.293 Participant: The story behind, behind the picture...uhm it was that like I think it was on that point where I feel like...uhm sometimes I feel like okay...maybe some there are people like ja that don't appreciate you so...what the hell. If you appreciate yourself then [someone

interrupts her] ja like it self love doesn't matter what people think of you so just put it out there that like I am myself and like I am just gonna do it. Ja.

[Participants are chatting among themselves - saying self love]

1.294 Participant: I'd like to slightly disagree on what she said before I answer about posting...with the meaning...honestly I just take a selfie and just post it I, I really truly don't have a meaning. I just go on and post it...this one [someone is opening a packet of chips] when I posted it uhm... I am from a public school that's...lost hope if you understand what I am saying. So nothing there is normally like even after you are done you are expected to have a baby like [everyone reacts to that statement] you see in that school it's normal unlike when you go to another school and you fall pregnant it's like ah she's pregnant...Like ah we knew. It's like ah she's not pregnant, how come? Ja so that is the case, when I finished matric they like you going to UFS so maybe after months. you will follow...so when I, I was graduating like I was posting to prove to other kids that you don't have to let society define you don't even have to let them like...set boundaries or set your...[someone says standards] standards. I was like uhm I am going to graduate and I don't care if I am going to UFS just for one year I am going to graduate. My mom is gonna stand there and be like you know what my kid...she may, she may not be the first one to go to UFS and not fall pregnant or whatever. But I am going to graduate before I fall pregnant so that is the moment of seeing my parents and kids it is possible. That your mom can be or your parents or whatever can say my kid graduated and she is not pregnant like I tried to break that mentality [someone clears their throat] that when you finish or before you finish...uhm...from that high school you are pregnant like...I am broke I can't fall pregnant now [all the participants chime in - inaudible] so ja it was just for motivation and I was glad to see the comments like o [inaudible - someone is opening a packet] ja...

1.295 Interviewer: Ja

[participants are chatting among themselves - inaudible]

1.296 Interviewer: So I want to know...what processes do you guys go through to uhm determine which selfie makes it to the social media? [laughs] which selfie gets posted and which selfie gets cut?

1.297 Participant: Uhm to be honest uhm...I don't know most of the time when I am, I'm taking a selfie I am laughing or someone is tripping me. So I am always laughing, so I will be like okay not this one, maybe the other one where I am like [laughs] look you know a bit [another participant says - like a serious person] ja like a serious person and not serious just not laughing out loud like with my mouth open [another participant is laughing] So ja I'll always choose [laughs] not the decent but...almost a decent one guys.

1.298 Interviewer: So which processes do you go through?

1.299 Participant: No I, no it's not really a process...

1.300 Interviewer: Okay.

1.301 Participant: I just look through [laughs] and then okay this one! Post this one! [another participant is laughing].

1.302 Interviewer: Okay

[laughing]

1.303 Participant: I, I kinda do the same thing hey. I go okay so is my skin clear...

1.304 Participant: Do I have makeup on or am I still gonna look, is my highlights popping properly not cause ja sometimes you will just be looking like wow. So I need to...I just feel like I need to feel like I look...proper...It must be you must deserve it you know, it must, it must deserve to be posted and uhm...also like it kinda sometimes depends on what is the caption if I don't have a proper, like a proper caption for it...sometimes I just don't post it...But another time I'll think what can I say? What am I trying to say? You know uhm...like I was under the impression, I, I have this band ja rasta colours and I have like this arm band with rasta colours uhm...so I put in Bob Marley's lyrics {singing} kay mainly because of that, it had the rasta thing going hard you can hardly see my face, you can only see a part of my face...But it had like a cool I thought it was cool, I really have a...

1.305 Interviewer: Caption

1.306 Participant: Caption for it, and I was like okay it can go through...

1.307 Interviewer: Ja

1.308 Participant: Ja uhm but sometimes I am like I feel like this one deserve a certain time so I'll take this I'll take a selfie today and post it like in two to three weeks' time when something happens because [laughs] this selfie looks so would look so much better if this thing had happened. So I'll just wait for the thing to happen and just...post it...

1.309 Interviewer: Okay...okay.

1.310 Participant: What was the question again?

1.311 Interviewer: The question is what process do you usually follow to help you determine which selfie to post uhm on the social media platforms?

1.312 Participant: Uhm it's not a process uhm when I post on Twitter I just choose a pic that won't get into the meme category

1.313 Interviewer: That's good enough.

1.314 Participant: Ja

1.315 Interviewer: Okay.

1.316 Participant: Ja uhm I am gonna say the background I check the background and like if the [inaudible] is clear uhm the...uhm even you like maybe [another participant says something] ja. You are taking a picture and ja you have something like you have to go the mirror and check [participants are laughing] you are taking a picture and it is so beautiful and then it has just this little thing here and you know you can't post it because [Ba tloe bona(they will see it)] Twitter [laughing] so I am not going to post it because if that blur thing like you

just have to be clear and then ja and double check like even after taking the picture if it is appropriate for social media

1.317 Interviewer: Okay

1.318 Participant: Evaluate [participant chatting among each other]

1.319 Interviewer: So before you post it you need to hear what...

1.320 Participant: How does it look

1.321 Interviewer: Okay

1.322 Participant: And make sure that you, you ask someone who is like honest not like someone who is gonna [another participant laughs] [participants chat and laugh among themselves] just ask someone who knows...when you go to her, she is gonna be like no girl, what's this? Don't post this or not someone who is gonna like gonna consider it be like no it's fine then it's on social media [another participant says something] just imagine ja

1.323 Interviewer: Okay [participants laugh]

1.324 Participant: Uhm with me uhm...sJoe it's a process uhm it depends where I am posting...and...why do I want to post it. If I am going out and I take a selfie for going out and stuff uhm...sJoe I will post it on Instagram or WhatsApp, but most of the time I will post on WhatsApp cause I am just like mmm it doesn't deserve Instagram but WhatsApp it qualifies. So if I am alone I will have like a nice caption but if I am with my friends, every time when I post with my friends like I take a selfie with my friends I call us baby mammas [laughs] I don't know why, so ja but I actually look at the background if everyone is okay. If I am okay I always try to see the ones I like. Like I check everything, I check who's behind us. Sometimes you know in a selfie there is someone walking there past and doing this. You know [all the participants laugh] so it's a process like I also want it to be my friends call me picture perfect because I want it to be perfect all the time. I am not good at using filters and stuff. I will just be like you know what...screw it. So I check how we standing, how who looks fat, who looks...sick, who looks you know? But ja it's a process, and I need like I, I try to see my friends you know so...I actually look at everything.

1.325 Interviewer: Ja

1.326 Participant: When you take pictures with other people as long as [participants are talking over each other - inaudible]

1.327 Participant: Madelief page they post them on Facebook for anyone to see! [don't understand the language] [laughing] posted! Now I really want those pictures to be deleted on this [other participants laugh] and ja like I really want it to be deleted and on everyone's comments there are times where I take a picture a thousand times or retake a selfie and post them and make sure that uhm it doesn't ruin our [everyone says ja] and then boom you don't get a job or they can reference like hey look there. So ja it's always about that. Cause I was that girl who loved [inaudible] like hey Jozi vibes and UFS first taught me that girl you gotta grow up. It wasn't, it wasn't a person maybe specifically. Just everyone who judge you like hey look

at that girl, even res people. You're on parade or they just look at you like hey [different language] why... So uhm...and I learnt that you can't post half naked pictures like that. Maybe one day I work in an office and then they pull up nudes you know so I was like okay ja...

1.328 Interviewer: Ja

1.329 Participant: That potentially is very important. One thing I've learnt about posting pictures is that uhm...like especially last year cause it was a time...uhm I think it was Valentine's day and I had like this dress and my boobs were like hey you know. I still remember it [everyone laughs] So people were like how can you wear this it's like your first year and I was like okay but then when I went back to my room I actually like told myself that whatever you wear the way you represent yourself and whatever you post you are really giving yourself out to the world to judge you so you got to be able to accept those [everyone says ja] judgements. But it's, it's how you respond to it and how you, you know react to it so one thing I don't do is...whenever I am like dressed half naked [laughs] I don't post it on Instagram it always ends on WhatsApp and I block certain people cause I know I have certain friends that is jags and they take screenshots and then they post it there and then it goes so I, I actually like block certain people and only certain people can see what I was wearing cause I am like...and one thing I always uhm...this one thing I never do when I go to a club or...a event I never go to VIP...because they always taking pictures and all those things if you get what I am saying. And I am trying to I try to be on Topez page on Facebook there and so like ja. I am actually careful on who I allow to see what I am wearing and those things. And uhm actually like I can go out and be comfortable the way I am but there is one thing I make sure of is like whenever people take pictures I am not in their pictures and I don't allow people to take pictures with me unless you my friend.

1.330 Interviewer: Ja makes sense. So uhm do you guys believe that social media affects how people look at themselves?

[Everyone gasps and says yes!]

1.331 Participant: Absolutely.

1.332 Participant: All right so uhm I am going to start with the body shaming...

1.334 Interviewer: Body shaming?

1.335 Participant: Body shaming yes. Okay uhm I know myself like I look sexy and all that neh I know I have a nice body but then you get comments like not really to me but I mean people have almost [inaudible] you get, they get comments like joh...I love your waist but those thighs are too big you need to lose them uhm those legs, those boobs oh why you don't have boobs I have boobs why you have that why you have this? So uhm from, from the social media [inaudible] then I try all these weird diets because I don't look uhm...what is the word...I don't look good I am not enough for the world I need to look this way I need to look like Kim Kardashian. I need to look like her I need to [another participant is giggling] look like Beyonce but that's how everybody even in this house you find a person [inaudible] even say to you joh I need to lose weight because of uhm how I look at myself people is like joh those guys are just too much. So ja uhm we get uhm we get affected by people or social media...

1.336 Participant: Ja uhm...

1.337 Interviewer: Should I pose the question again?...or?

1.338 Participant: Yes [another participant is laughing]

1.339 Interviewer: Do you believe that social media affects how people look at themselves?

1.340 Participant: Yes it does, it really does uhm because uhm social media we always say this it, it paints a picture of what beauty is or what's regarded as like the pretty lips the pretty what, what. So and then we keep on we, we also like just look at those things and we see based because it's like, it's like this so much, so many people who which consensus on this so it must be true and then we, we uhm...this, this one philosopher said the truth is just uhm lies that people have agreed upon and in a way that's social media truth the way they've like the way we decided what beauty is, the way we decided how our, how girl's weight is supposed to look. It's, it's stupid but uhm just for example is how an African women is supposed to look. Like they get here and then they get [Abo Ayanda Thabete] and she's skinny and then they like but that's not an African women an African women is supposed to look a certain way because that's the truth, ja that's the truth that. Social media has, has, has uhm declared and then...we also kinda because social media is about people but they use social media for that o this is the truth so...ja it is like truthful for life but they must be truthful as well you know and that's what we do like right now with her she looked at somebody and then also kinda took, put herself in, in that person's reality uhm...uhm [uAyanda] she has you know she has big boobs and then but she doesn't have like a big butt she's uhm ja her body is nice and she knows how to dress for it. She's, she's goals. year old goals [laughs] you know uhm...and then and then I'll be like wearing bra's and I even hate wearing bra's like my boobs just on the size...other levels. And then when I, I don't really have a big stomach and even when I do my boobs kinda make it look like they give that illusion that I don't really have a stomach but then or else it won't even matter but. So uhm...I look at her and then it's, it's ...for me I, I, I look at it and oooh letter P you know but and what not and then I just see myself like that and I, I realise it has even become like it looks worse every time and then sometimes I do come there I am like...I don't look like that. But...every time I, I am on social media and I've seen it and what not I look at myself and like [and wait'si I am a letter P] it's just the way... I don't know why our minds are...

1.341 Interviewer: Wired.

1.342 Participant: Wired like that...

1.343 Interviewer: Ja

1.344 Participant: But it's just the way we are like...we see things and we, we sommer put ourselves in other people's realities and we make it our own. So it does really affect how we see ourselves.

1.345 Participant: What is the question?

1.346 Interviewer: The question is...[clears throat] do you believe that social media affects how people look at themselves?

1.347 Participant: Definitely, because...media is uhm...is a society and it is a society that we let, we let define like she said, we let define beauty but the thing that we don't realise is that sometimes it, it impacts us negatively cause you get those people like media a few years ago light skinned women are the best later they like African women, she's dark now you just say like okay I don't deserve to be in this world cause I am not dark enough So I am, it impacts us negatively and it affects uhm how we feel also. But even [inaudible] like honestly you can't unless you wanna be fake you can't, you can't uhm you can't choose your genes. If you look like a born with a straight figure...you are not an African women you are born Africa so ja it does affect how you cause you see today... year old their hips wanting to get bigger their butts are bigger skin more lighter or whatever but they don't realise that it with media it is changing, it is evolving there will be another person coming and saying oh this one is so cute Minnie Dlamini a few cute two years ago she was the it girl but now they say she's fat. Now you ask yourself but this is what they said the definition of a true African woman is. Now they like uhm [participants are chatting to each other in a different language] they are like she's African but guys they both born in Africa so I [recording cut out] even how we see ourselves...The in this generation constructed on what everyone thinks before like we let media...define us

1.348 Participant: I think uhm it affects people to a point where some people like they end up wanting to be perfect. Which isn't possible like what some people go is too much, it's too much. Just to fit in on social media and you will find like people...so desperate to lose weight or so desperate to gain weight like it was the situation with me where people were like ja you are so thin like thin like like you not on my slate no. so I was so desperate to gain at least just, just a little bit of weight [laughs] like I don't know fit in cause I felt like uhm... I am not normal because they I don't [inaudible] it's, it's wrong like it doesn't exist so I was so desperate to gain weight to a point like uhm I don't know if you realise that uhm maybe say [recording cuts out] and then I had to like, like used to go to the clinic every month just to check on my weight am I losing or gaining weight, that's how bad I wanted to gain because of like how people were okay they were like okay ja you need to like that was always the statement, you look so, so, so but then you look so thin. Ja so I think it [inaudible] you end up wanting to change who you are and like ja.

1.349 Participant: Sjie

1.350 Interviewer: Must I repeat the question?

1.352 Participant: Ja

1.353 Interviewer: Okay...uhm do you believe that social media affects how people look at themselves?

1.354 Participant: Uhm...I strongly believe that social media really, really does affect us. Especially us women, I feel like we women are the weakest off, I feel actually like it's just us women cause men don't feel that pressure especially you know especially what's happening now with the blesser's and those things with us women...we want to...I don't know...it's, it's like she said we allow social media to define us. I'll go on Instagram and I'll go ooh [different language] but now I don't envy anyone's life anymore because I am just like ai something is missing because she doesn't have a man or anything but usually I will be like joh she has a

Gucci bag she has a that and with some, especially with, with young girls they become the, the, the biggest targets because they would be like joh I need to get a weave, I need to bleach myself I need to...and also it's...it's also affecting adults because like when I was looking at some celebrities, if I had to compare Bonang from now to she was dark. She, she had a different nose, she didn't have boobs. I compare DJ Zintle now, it's like this media tells you if you don't look this way you are not gonna make it and you are not beautiful or you are not gonna have followers. You not gonna be, you not gonna be anything. Do you know what I am saying?

1.355 Interviewer: Ja

1.356 Participant: Like with me for example...when I was in high school I, I, I, played sports, I like I love sports so I started having fit legs and I was just like okay you know. But people would say a lot oh you have man legs ooh uh uh nah joh because especially with Hockey we do like serious exercises so I was like okay let me stop eating let me stop doing this you know because they were like you have to stop eating that you know so I was like okay, I stopped eating and I and then girl became thin and ugly and then...all of a sudden girls who gym are the it thing now and then like wow okay I have to go back you know. So we allow social media to like, we like, we like dogs...you know you tell it to come, it comes, you tell it to go, it goes you know what I am saying? And it's sad how young girls are falling into the trap of a they need to do certain things to look a certain way...or to become something. Like you know when we go out you see girls who are busy with old men so that they can get money to get the latest things, to look a certain way...

1.357 Interviewer: Mmm

1.358 Participant: And it' actually sad because if, if Bonang didn't have a weave if Bonang kept going natural I feel like a lot of girls would follow and be like you know what I am also going natural. But now because Bonang has a inch weave joh somebodies child is sitting at res thinking how am I gonna get that you know and we are pushed to do things to get...you know especially for girls who come from middle class and poor backgrounds you know what I am saying so like...social media actually...sjoe it controls us you know like...you wanna you, you want to be like, like yes you as a person, like with me okay this is me this is how I am gonna live my life I want this but at the end of the day I also aim to one day have that Gucci bag...

1.359 Interviewer: Ja

1.360 Participant: I wanna have that Louis bag you know. Like I wanna have my own car I wanna have my own money but it's a choice for us girls to choose how far are we willing to take it to get what we want. Are we gonna decide to take education or are we going to decide to sleep with men and some people don't understand that some girls actually take it to the point where they...do bad things in order to be able to get that bag and I'll be like joh that girl has a Louis Vuttion bag but I don't know what she had to go through...

1.361 Interviewer: Mmm

1.362 Participant: To get that bag. And obviously she is not gonna tell me I have a blesser and you know. And you envy people's lives where you don't know how hard it is for them to get what they have...

1.363 Interviewer: Mmm

1.364 Participant: So it's...social media is joh. Ja I feel like it's the God on earth It, it tells us what to do, how to do it and, cause I'll be on social media and I'll see girls with older men and I'll be [inaudible] this is how you get this bag, this is how you...

1.365 Interviewer: Ja.

1.366 Participant: So ja. Especially with the Karabo case. Like she was busy with a man who had money...She was not even studying so I am like okay I can get a man who works...you know or he's rich or whatever but as long as he is gonna provide for me and I am gonna be able to use whatever I am getting to show people I got this. What about you? You know? So it's, it's, it's sad, it's actually very sad how girls are losing their like, losing their self-esteem over something that is gonna fall away in two years' time you know? Like five years ago skinny jeans were the it thing. Now people are going to the 's and....

1.367 Interviewer: It's come and go.

1.368 Participant: Ja it's sad [ukuthi; different language] currently doing things...just for the now. Like people [ukhuti; different language] five years from now, two years from now, two months from now [ukhuti; different language] do I still want this? Like with [different language] I had to watch an interviewer to understand why she bleached herself. I feel like she knows why she's been doing this but me if I had to go and decide to see Dr. Naidoo sommer now black joh bleach and then I am like heybo ugh! [other participants laughing] I look like a chicken breast, I can't be like o Dr. Naidoo put me back, no girl like. I feel like...we wanna be happy with other people's lives but we don't know how far they take it.

1.369 Interviewer: Ja

1.370 Participant: To be there...We don't understand, and I hate it when people are like...especially with girls, when they be like success they will be like ja this is what success is. It's not success to sleep with someone else's father to get that bag. You can't tell me on social media, I have friends who have blesseesers back home like I, I chill with them but when we go out I can't go out because my, we are not on the same level [inaudible] and I'll go there and I'll that one is crazy and I'll go back home. Thing is they be like joh this is what success is and I was to one of my friends like dude, just because you sleeping with [Mang mang's, somebody] father doesn't mean you are succeeding. You are basically...you are sleeping your way to get whatever you want and it's, it's sad how you allowing social media to influence you to do such...

1.371 Participant: So I feel like social media really influences us, especially girls...

1.372 Interviewer: Ja

1.373 Participant: We lose our values, we, we do things that were not, were taught to love ourselves and we start losing that because of materialistic things...

1.374 Interviewer: Ja

1.375 Participant: And stupid things...

1.376 Interviewer: Ja. [long pause] the next...set of questions is relating to identity. So, what would you guys define as identity?

1.377 Participant: Uhm...I would say identity is who you are, it is just what defines you as a person or as an individual. What makes you stand out.

1.378 Participant: Uhm...your identity [inaudible]

1.379 Participant: Ja I think it is how you see yourself. How you represent yourself

1.380 Participant: Uhm, uhm I am gonna say like...it's you like the, the how unique you are...ja

1.381 Participant: It's who you are.

1.382 Interviewer: It's who you are [everyone laughs] okay, okay. Uhm...besides the selfies that you currently have, think of the last one or two selfies that you shared on social media. What do those say about you?

1.383 Participant: Wow [everyone giggles and reacts to the question]. I wouldn't know what it says about me. Maybe uhm people who see my selfies would like leave comments about it...

1.384 Participant: But me nah, I wouldn't know what it says to the people or...

1.385 Interviewer: Not necessarily, let's take the people out of the equation, just what does that selfie say about you and who you are? Cause like we all said identity is who you are [long pause] we can move on in the meantime and then...

1.386 Participant: Uhm...well with me uhm the last selfie I posted was [someone coughs] what it says about me is I am open to change...[someone coughs] and I am fighting the definitions of who I should be and how I should be defined by social media. It's me saying I am okay with the way I look...and with what I am doing to myself.

1.387 Participant: Ja

1.388 Participant: Uhm I am gonna say that the last selfie I posted uhm with me it was literally about happiness. I was so happy and [everyone laughs and reacts] [someone says yes girl and coughs] mainly because like I realised that the happiness comes from within like the happiness that you get from outside it just a bonus. So I, I was like...happy with myself like...ja

1.389 Interviewer: Okay

1.390 Participant: Uhm...with mine I'd say uhm it was a, it was a pic to other people it may seem normal but to me I don't, I represented it as how beauty is a brain and maybe uhm beauty is physical and another portion is uhm...how she allows herself to feel on her own and not

think like other people like, like it is almost related to my to my profile picture on whatsapp I am not from this generation. Like I am, I don't, I don't, I don't allow my decision to depend on what others think. You might think, I am going to make this example. I might think that killing is good but for you, you may think it's not. I, I, I don't care that's my, that's how I see it, that's how. That's how I see it, because at the end of the day my role my be right for me and your wrong, maybe your right for me...ja I represent that...I stand on my own ja and it goes back to half of your beauty is your brain...

1.391 Participant: Uhm... I am not much of a selfie taker...and more so I don't post a lot...so...

1.392 Interviewer: The times that you do post.

1.393 Participant: Yes uhm so the, the, the last sort of bunch of pictures that I posted [inaudible and a lot of it is more of uhm [long pause] they portray uhm a different a me and a grown me. Uhm I've changed a lot this year, I...I, I try to portray my feminist my, my, my exploration to the like not different religions but...into spiritual things. So...that's why I had the whole rasta vibe at the time uhm...and just we moved to a new house [inaudible] uhm...it's kinda of...it's different. It's a different lifestyle. Ja uhm...so basically it was more of growth and change and I feel like it is how a lot of people see things as well. I have made very weird friendships this year [laughs] that started with commenting on those pictures...

1.394 Interviewer: Ja

1.395 Participant: Ja

1.396 Participant: Ja, self-appreciation.

1.397 Interviewer: Self appreciation? [inaudible -laughs] uhm do you think that social media platforms are a good place for you guys to express yourself? To express your life, to express your views, to express who you are?

1.398 Participant: Uhm to be honest. That's what people tend to do nowadays. Either express their feelings uhm or uhm put themselves out there but uhm honestly it's really not. Society doesn't have to know what you are up to unless you tell them unless [inaudible] but then you don't have to like...

1.399 Participant: Can you please repeat the question?

1.400 Interviewer: [clears throat] uhm do you think social media platforms are a good place to express yourself? Your life, your worldviews?

1.401 Participant: No

1.402 Interviewer: Okay. Why do you think so?

1.403 Interviewer: Guys I am just going to stand because my back is killing me.

1.404 Participant: No because uhm first of all when you put them there, you're allowing people to, to stab at them and, and judge them and, and tried to scrutinize them into ways that they want them to be and you give them an opportunity to, to, to judge and also another thing

the fact that now...uhm our employers look at our Facebooks and our Instagram and, and uhm make uhm they choose the candidates based on that. Now I am [inaudible] now if I go and I post a lot of Sabbath Adventist things, they assume I am a radical and then I go and I apply for a job like ooh uh uh. [different language; she wants to go home] but she wants to go home hey [different language] I am not, I am not so radical that I would be like let's say there's a...I can't come up with an example right now but if I need to be there then I will be there. So...they will already assume though because they see that I am gonna be like I can't do this and no you have to give me uhm you can't don't, don't serve me at a company party serve meat serve vegetarian stuff as well cause you have to cater for me. They already assume that I come with all these other things. Uhm that people with these assumptions that we have on [inaudible] and so in that way I can't uhm it restricts me to post, from putting everything that I want because now I have to also be careful how would an employer look at this [inaudible] so it's not really, it's not free

1.405 Interviewer: Ja

1.406 Participant: As it seems and also it allows more of [inaudible]

1.407 Participant: The question?

1.408 Interviewer: The question? [clears throat] do you think social media platforms are a good place to express yourself?

1.409 Participant: Yes and no.

1.410 Participant: Two years uhm...uhm [inaudible] advantage on social media and then no also cause like she said [inaudible] maybe judge you right so it is a bit of yes and no

1.411 Interviewer: Okay

1.412 Participant: Uhm... I am gonna say yes and no. I say yes because I believe that uhm as a person like uhm...half of who you are okay not really who you are but how you is...

1.413 Interviewer: How you, how you live

1.414 Participant: No not exactly. It makes people understand who you are. Uhm it's defined by other people like...you might show for them you are like this but you are not actually like that so when you post your stuff out there and then allow people to comment it's obviously [inaudible] uhm then you can see like that uhm...like through their comments you gonna see how they are uhm and in anormal situation it's that it's not good because [inaudible] [everyone laughs]

1.415 Participant: uhm, just say the question again please

1.416 Interviewer: Question? Okay that fine. Do you [clears throat] think social media platforms are a great place to express yourself?

1.417 Participant: Uhm no because I feel like with some people are too judgemental nd like they don't even understand the situation that you are in maybe they are too quick to judge you Uhm...ja

1.418 Interviewer: Okay

1.419 Participant: Uhm...for me it's a no. But I am more of a no because...uhm I once had an incident back home. Because me and my siblings would post about our lives back home and we actually became targets of crime like people would break in and steal our stuff. You know how someone would break in and you know it's this, this, that, that how it was. So it was so bad that my mom, we had to move to another estate because it was really bad. So...our friends was like guys because of this and that and that stop posting on social media because you can see we becoming targets so we had to like withdraw from social media and things were better. Like if we like it's like you selling yourself out to people, this is what happens you know my personal life. And another thing is when you, when you also post on social media. You, you actually already sell yourself because it's like you must be ready for it and you know. Social media guys it's also another thing. You can...especially when you like a brand ambassador You can help a company and you get paid for it also. And also you know it's a bad thing because...you know you might post something and then someone thinks you are trying to say something to them, and that time you are just posting it for yourself and it also puts pressure on other people to be like joh they have to go out every weekend posting saying like I am going out here. Like you putting pressure on people and it's also like ja, I don't know most of the time but ja.

1.420 Interviewer: Ja, ja. Uhm [clears throat] how do you think others perceive you on social media platforms? And how different is it from how you would like to be perceived? So...should I repeat the question? [participants says something] okay, how do you think others perceive you on social media platforms...and how is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

1.421 Participant: Sjoe! Okay, uhm I haven't uhm...come across any negative comment uhm because then wow I am posting so much multiple pictures of myself. So on Whatsapp people say oh congratulations. Wow and this and that, it's never like negative comments. It is always positive and without them besides the people are already know to themselves okay this is who I am, this is what I want and no one can change it. This is [inaudible] and I stand here. So whatever they say wont really affect me

1.422 Interviewer: Okay

1.423 Participant: Uhm...I think uhm people see...uhm as much as I say that I don't post I don't do it all the time so uhm...and uhm so I think in a way some people might see me as just another girl, just another shallow girl trying to show people that she is pretty or she is trying to be cute on social media. But...uhm if there is one thing that I wanted people to know that I strive not to be shallow.

1.424 Interviewer: You strive not to be shallow?

1.425 Participant: Yes!

1.426 Interviewer: Okay

1.427 Participant: Uhm...I, I, I, I, I don't like being seen as just a random girl...I want to make an impact uhm...positive or negative that's your opinion. But maybe I just want I, I want to...to, to, to just to be known as a girl who, who thinks. Who is a critical thinker, who, who is a who has a...stance...Who, who has her own like a firm, firm identity people know that M* is like this so you come with a political view, I have a lot of political friends so they come with their political mind-sets and try and convince me, you know how political people are. They, they it's like their way or nothing else and they are so convincing but because I like to analyse other people, most of the content rather than the not the fake news but rather how people speak I like technical stuff I listen to what you are actually saying I want that to be portrayed So, I want, I want that what people create. I, I, I, believe to a certain extent hopefully I am a feminist, I am, I am pro, I'm pro black As, as far as uhm...[laughs] appreciating blackness and wanting to know about my actually religion. I love deconalisation and things like that and I think those are the things that are not portrayed in my, my social media because they are very controversial...you know I get into a conversation about black people like face to face I don't try and show that because whatever employer one day is white and then o cause people always assume when you pro black...

1.428 Interviewer: You are racist?

1.429 Participant: You're anti-white...

1.430 Interviewer: Ja

1.431 Participant: And it's not even about that you understand? I am just appreciating blackness you understand, so uhm I think that's how I want people to see me but it's not exactly how it's being portrayed on my social media right now.

1.432 Interviewer: Ja, question?

1.433 Participant: Please, sorry I speak alot [everyone laughs]

1.434 Interviewer: it's fine, it's fine. How do you think others perceive you on social media platforms and how is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

1.435 Participant: I think, I think the first one...I wouldn't want to answer it cause you know you can never be influenced by what others think how I want, I want them to see me as [long pause] as someone who brain washed them into believing that they can do it. Outside society nroms they can do it someone who brainwashed them into thinking they can make it because of society [inaudible]

1.436 Participant: Uhm [long pause] question please?

1.437 Interviewer: Question? Okay. How do you think others perceive you on social media platforms? And how is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

1.438 Participant: Uhm... I am gonna say I...I think the way people perceive me is not...uhm that much different to how I wanna be perceived because uhm, when I do something I post it with positive thought and I am expecting positive comments from other people and that's basically what I am ja...so it's not that much different from how I wanna be perceived.

1.439 Participant: Uhm... with me...well I only used to have a few pictures. But I, I post most of the stuff on WhatsApp uhm...people don't...on WhatsApp when people comment they will be like sjoe you brave wow! And people be like I wish I had the guts like you and your friends or joh you guys...where do you guys get the confidence. But...when I sit down and talk to people especially mostly friends I've made here in Bloem, especially guys like joh the first time I saw you I thought you were a [inaudible] is a girl who is like a ho basically. They were like I thought you were a [inaudible] and they be like I thought you were like you a child you know. And it's, it's, it's actually it doesn't bother me that guys see me like that cause like I go out and guys are like if I can just get that girl, but then other nights I'll be like no I sleep alone. But the way people see me when I go out they be like okay that girl is a [inaudible] she wants a guy who has money or she wants a rich guy or she...there was once a hoho and some guy he put beer on me and I was like what are you doing and he was like [inaudible] and I was like no don't do that just because I dress like this doesn't mean he had the right to do that stuff. And then some guy was like to me if you gonna decide this...what makes you think we are not gonna wanna touch or grab and I was like just because I am exposing my body doesn't make it all right. But with my family, my aunts are always like o why are you not dressing up wena what's wrong and stuff but you know I wish people can actually see me as [long pause] like what I want people to know about is that I love women empowerment [long pause] I love like [long pause] uhm [laughs] uhm like I want guys to know that I'm, I'm very independent...and it's actually sad that guys only see that once I get in a relationship with them or we are friends and they like o I just thought you know like uhm I am very independent uhm... I am all about women and I actually enjoy sitting down empowering women like women empowering each other you know. And I want guys just because I am exposing my body doesn't mean I am a ho, or I just want a guy and all those things. So the way people see me and the way I want people to see me is way, way different. To guys I am a stripper and I want people to be able to see me as is you know. And it's actually like I'm, I'm used to it now because [inaudible] I saw you Saturday you had your [inaudible] I am gonna be a normal lawyer so ja...

1.440 Interviewer: Ja

1.441 Participant: People think the way you dress and like to have fun is you know ja

1.442 Interviewer: That's who you are.

1.443 Participant: That's who you are and like that you know. It's just me.

1.444 Interviewer: Okay. [clears throat] what had the most memorable comment been?

1.445 Participant: The most memorable?

1.446 Interviewer: The most memorable comment. What someone else's said...what, what...ja

1.447 Participant: On social media?

1.448 Interviewer: On social media...and why?

1.449 Participant: My memorable comment [inaudible] [everyone laughs] like the best...

1.450 Interviewer: That you gaining weight?

1.451 Participant: Because that's, that's joh the one thing I've always wanted [inaudible]

1.452 Participant: Uhm with me was uhm on my birthday it was like lunch and I posted a picture and then [inaudible] thanks for the smiles and always greeting us, you friendly and wow the long conversations and stuff. You know but I mean it wasn't the first time getting that but I really appreciated it that people see that I am a nice person...

1.453 Interviewer: Ja

1.454 Participant: Uhm me uhm this new actress on a soapie so I saw that she liked all of my pics on Instagram and since I was like it can't be her and then I screenshotted [inaudible] like all your pics I snapshotted it and she commented like uhm this young beautiful it's hard to...not to show support for someone so wonderful whatever but I don't mind like...

1.455 Participant: O uhm... I don't, I don't know like uhm I don't remember this girl I don't know what she looks like it was dark and on top of that she, where she said this she actually took her whole body on top of the car just to tell me this. I don't know if she was already on something. It was my friendsst birthday and we were walking from Boho to Capellos Cause we had drinks like ad then we decided no just come and drink and then I had a swimming costume on and heels [laughs] and my roommate also had like another outfit and everyone just stopped and looked at us and then it was so quiet and then the bouncers were like joh and then some chick said you guys blew my mind I was never ready for you'll and we were like okay, she was like Bloem is not ready for you'll [laughing] I was like okay! And then I was like wow I am actually slaying joh! So to be honest I was actually like it, it stays with me because it was the first time a girl ever had a positive comment like when we would go out. Actually people [inaudible] and my friends would say but it was the first time going out and having a girl comment like positively. Usually it goes like what is she wearing, why is she dressing like this...

1.456 Interviewer: Ja

1.457 Participant: You know so it was the first time and I was like wow.

1.458 Interviewer: Ja

1.459 Participant: I really, I really...

1.460 Interviewer: It's fine if you don't know.

1.461 Participant: [laughs] ja

1.462 Interviewer: It's cool, it's cool. So uhm [long pause] everything that or rather...what does your most memorable comment...say about you?

1.463 Participant: Uhm it says that I am a... people's person...

1.464 Participant: uhm...sjoe well it says I am fierce...

1.465 Participant: Uhm...wow... I am confident about myself...

1.466 Participant: And...joh...girl I was slaying... or chopping it [everyone laughs] uhm...and then I am I didn't allow actually it actually shows the way I am so confident I haven't allowed other peoples negatives to stop me from being me...

1.467 Interviewer: Mmm

1.468 Participant: And ja. [inaudible] [everyone laughs]

1.469 Participant: Uhm I am gonna say [inaudible] the thing is eish...whenever [everyone laughs] whenever I am not comfortable and I am not happy then I begin to lose weight. So that's the thing with my appearance. Even last year when I moved to Bloem and then I had to go with some relatives. They tried to hard to find accommodation, where I'm gonna live, I can't cope [inaudible] and it's [inaudible] so, so they like if I am not happy then I go back. I started [inaudible] and then for me [inaudible] you are on that level...

1.470 Interviewer: Ja, okay.

[everyone is having a conversation that I can't follow] [everyone laughs]

1.471 Interviewer: So uhm we're done.

Focus group 2 (Female participants)

2.1 Interviewer: Okay uhm participants have signed their informed consent forms and they've been briefed on the nature of the study I will now begin with the questions. O uhm another thing uhm usually a focus group is about an hour or so...so ja just keep that in mind, but we are not really restricted to an hour...ja. Okay first question uhm which social media platforms are you on?

2.2 Participant: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.

2.3 Interviewer: Okay

2.4 Participant: WhatsApp, that's all.

2.5 Interviewer: Okay

2.6 Participant: Uhm WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram

2.7 Interviewer: WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram?...okay.

2.8 Participant: WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.

2.9 Interviewer: Okay

2.10 Participant: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter uhm Snapchat.

2.11 Interviewer: Mmm

2.12 Participant: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat.

2.13 Interviewer: Okay...okay cool. Would you mind speaking loudly so...I can get the thingy's. Uhm...which do you most enjoy and why?

2.14 Participant: Uhm...Tumblr because it's a wide variety of things that's on there.

2.15 Interviewer: Okay.

2.16 Participant: O well seeing as I only use WhatsApp I enjoy it cause it's private...

2.17 Interviewer: Mmm

2.18 Participant: It's only people that I know that actually get to contact me. And I can like stay under the radar.

2.19 Interviewer: Cool.

2.20 Participant: Uhm I like WhatsApp cause it's cheaper to use like the other one's chow data...joh [everyone laughs].

2.21 Participant: Uhm I like WhatsApp because it's most convenient and people I need the most are actually on WhatsApp so ja. All of the others are just for fun.

2.22 Interviewer: Okay...alright.

2.23 Participant: I like Twitter, I really enjoy to Twitter. Like people just flow their ideas out there and it's often just a lot of random banter but it's entertaining so ja

2.24 Participant: Uhm for me if I have to choose cause I should I say I am just on social media because I like to get into contact with people uhm but if I had to choose it would probably be WhatsApp as well...

2.25 Interviewer: Mmm

2.26 Participant: [inaudible] but like uhm basically it's also like closed off you only have to speak to the person you want to speak to...uhm then that is why I choose WhatsApp

2.27 Interviewer: Okay, cool. Uhm so how much time do you guys spend on social media?

2.28 Participant: [laughs] too much time

2.29 Interviewer: How much is too much time?

2.30 Participant: Every day

2.31 Interviewer: Like for how long?

2.32 Participant: Like literally the whole day. Until I fall asleep

2.33 Interviewer: The whole day. So if you had to like [clears throat] guess the amount of hours, how much, how much do you think that would be?

2.34 Participant: hours

2.35 Interviewer: Okay...okay.

2.36 Participant: Approximately two to three.

2.37 Interviewer: Two to three, and for you?

2.38 Participant: It would be like fourteen...ja

2.39 Interviewer: Fourteen, okay.

2.40 Participant: Mine would be six hours if I can...

2.41 Participant: I think I am also around the fourteen hours, whilst I am awake I am always on my phone.

2.42 Interviewer: Ja

2.43 Participant: I think I, I would keep it under five hours every day.

2.44 Interviewer: Okay

2.45 Interviewer: Okay...uhm [clears throat] so for how long have you guys had these social media platforms?

2.46 Participant: Uhm since about twelve years since I was twelve years old.

2.47 Interviewer: Since you were twelve, so how long has that been?

2.48 Participant: Six years

2.49 Participant: Five

2.50 Interviewer: Five years?

2.51 Participant: Sjoe guys...six years

2.52 Interviewer: Ja

2.53 Participant: Six years for me as well I started in grade eight.

2.54 Participant: I also started since I was twelve, so that's about ten years [laughs]

2.55 Participant: Uhm I remember I started with Facebook in ...

2.56 Interviewer: Ja

2.57 Participant: My first ever so that's about years...ja

2.58 Interviewer: Okay...okay...uhm okay uhm [inaudible] [long pause] okay the first question I am going to ask is what do you think uhm a selfie is?

2.59 Participant: Uhm okay so it's a photo that you've taken of yourself...

2.60 Participant: It should show who you are.

2.61 Interviewer: Show who you are? Okay.

2.62 Participant: A picture of myself simple.

2.63 Interviewer: A picture of yourself? Okay.

2.64 Participant: Uhm a picture that you take like not somebody else has taken it for you. So you know selfie lights, camera [everyone laughs] and...

2.65 Participant: Uhm a selfie for me is capturing the moment like if you feel some type of way capture it and you can remember this day, this day happened or I looked way or...So I don't know...

2.66 Participant: For me a selfie is the best picture like if I post something, a selfie on Instagram there are fifty other pictures that went with that picture but I picked the best one...

2.67 Interviewer: Ja, ja

2.68 Participant: Uhm for me I rather take a selfie to see how others see me through their eyes. So sometimes like cause you can't see yourself while sitting here so a selfie is the best thing. Like a mirror is there. But a selfie you can keep forever. So ja

2.69 Interviewer: Mmm... So...why did you guys bring these particular selfies today?

2.70 Participant: Uhm it's a selfie that I have recent good memories of...

2.71 Interviewer: Mmm

2.72 Participant: I have friend uhm in this selfie I didn't really know before But she was friends of friends so we were always together then on that day I started noticing she was really hot...

2.73 Interviewer: Mmm...okay so it means? What does it mean to you?

2.74 Participant: Uhm [long pause] like a lot uhm it means...like it probably means the world to me.

2.75 Interviewer: Okay

2.76 Participant: Is this the part where I describe what my picture looks like?

2.77 Interviewer: Yeah! You basically just saying why you brought that particular selfie today.

2.78 Participant: Whoop [long pause] uhm...I think it just reminds me of what I went... through. Allow me to say that maybe if I give a description later on then you will understand.

2.79 Participant: Uhm mine...I look very cute there, like I look you know you take the camera and you know joh I am so cute!

2.80 Interviewer: Ja

2.81 Participant: So I just took a picture and I was going to go remove my braids after a long time.

2.82 Interviewer: Okay

2.83 Participant: Especially taken on Sunday which means church[inaudible] is like church so I thought let me take a photo cause I look good you know [someone is laughing] you know so I took a photo just to...

2.84 Participant: I got this, well it's a selfie with lots of selfies in it. It's got four frames and in the one I am pulling a goofy face and the other one it's a pout which looks like I am kissing and the other one I got a really straight face and with the other one I look bored. And those are literally my four moods all the time [laughs].

2.85 Interviewer: All in one?

2.86 Participant: Yes, all in one. That's me.

2.87 Interviewer: Okay

2.88 Participant: Uhm for me so it was taken on uhm my first year valentines ball. Uhm so that was the first time I ever put on eye shadow for myself so then obviously I wanted to see how I look. And then it turned out I was really pretty so that why I chose to pick that selfie, that's why ja.

2.89 Interviewer: Okay. [participant laughs] so what do you guys uhm think these selfies say about you?

2.90 Participant: Uhm that we're having a good time. Enjoying ourselves

2.91 Participant: One word confident.

2.92 Interviewer: Okay

2.93 Participant: I feel like uhm I am very happy.

2.94 Interviewer: You were happy at the time?

2.95 Participant: I'd also like to say confident...ja

2.96 Interviewer: Okay

2.97 Participant: Ja confident is also a word that I would use [laughs]

2.98 Participant: I think uhm I for me it's like cause a lot of people would say I look pretty without makeup...

2.99 Interviewer: Mmm

2.100 Participant: But then from that selfie I could say for myself that I can also be pretty with make-up. So ja that's why [laughs]

2.101 Interviewer: Okay. So uhm what process do you usually follow to help you determine which selfie to post on social media platforms?

2.102 Participant: Joh! Which one you look the best.

2.103 Interviewer: Which one you look the best? [participant giggles] So the one where you look the best makes the cut?

2.104 Participant: Ja. Preferably with friends, so that people can see that you also enjoying your time with other people.

2.105 Participant: Okay I hardly put up pictures but when I do same reason as her [laughs]

2.106 Participant: The one that looks the best.

2.107 Participant: Ja I think I'll just go through all of them and you know sometimes they a hundred and something but you look through to check them. You know one mistake can maybe your eye is that way or you blinked weirdly...delete, delete, delete then you gonna get to that one.

2.108 Interviewer: So what determines that one?

2.109 Participant: It's like as I said let's say I am doing something on the picture that I feel like that doesn't look like my eye is looking that way or like I didn't blink properly you know when the flash hit's me. Yeah so I just look at it like that like I can [inaudible] nah this and this should be like this and this. Ja...I don't know [laughs]

2.110 Interviewer: So you must be perfect?

2.111 Participant: Yeah...

2.112 Interviewer: Okay

2.113 Participant: Uhm the picture that cuts it for me is a picture with good lighting and I need to look like I need to sort of like feel myself in the picture. and uhm sometimes it has to be with friends cause you know when like a church [inaudible] so you can't be saying I was at church and then you alone so [laughs] so a nice one from church [inaudible] or whatever so

2.114 Interviewer: Okay

2.115 Participant: I think for me like lighting is also very important like if I have a day where I really...put effort into how I look there is no way I am not going to document it cause [inaudible] that and also a setting for instance people who have me on social media would think I have a really good social life. I really don't. I only go out once in a while but when I do I make sure I get like a thousand [inaudible]

2.116 Interviewer: Ja

2.117 Participant: Uhm for me I think it's most of the time when I do smile...so I think that's the best... I would say and angle as well. The angle counts a lot because uhm high angle [inaudible] [laughs]

2.118 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm what, what kind of advice do you usually look uhm for from people on social media?

2.119 Participant:...Sjoe [laughs]...uhm normally it be whether there are enjoying when they are out partying and they are like informing me when there is a big event coming up.

2.120 Participant: Please just repeat the question

2.121 Interviewer: What kind of advice do you usually look for from people on social media platforms?

2.122 Participant: I don't look for advice, I really don't.

2.123 Interviewer: Mmm, and why do you think that is the case?

2.124 Participant: First of all we are very different so what works for you might not work for me so I don't really bother myself.

2.125 Interviewer: Mmm okay.

2.126 Participant: I would say like, like the makeup advice. You know when you go through those uhm pages and they have make-up tips. Yes, and...what else...I think that's all.

2.127 Interviewer: Why makeup in particular?

2.128 Participant: Because I really like the way people do it. Like some people are really good. There is this guy who is able to celebrities with makeup and that is so cool for me

2.129 Participant: [inaudible] like I just want to see it and I really like watching him

2.130 Interviewer: Okay

2.131 Participant: Uhm I never ask for serious things uhm...I normally ask about or what product or which product is the best if I am looking for make-up or a particular thing so. Those are the only things I'll ask.

2.132 Interviewer: Okay

2.133 Participant: I like looking for quotes and stuff I am really, I am really a quote wordy person. So even if I know this person might be putting up a front by saying [inaudible] I just have those words to reaffirm myself is important to me so I am always grabbing quotes.

2.134 Interviewer: Okay.

2.135 Participant: Uhm for me it's three things for the first one it's poses so I like to try out poses like what would work for me what wouldn't work for me you never know when you try and then the second thing is for food, I love food a lot so I like creating things and then for number three it's uhm learning big words from other people statuses. [participants laughing]

2.136 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm now we are moving on to the section of identity. Uhm...what would you define as identity?

2.137 Participant: Who you are

2.138 Interviewer: Who you are?

2.139 Participant: Who you are as a person...inside, not how other people see you

2.140 Interviewer: Mmm...okay

2.141 Participant: I'd like to think of identity as my personality as my belief...what I strongly believe and...stand for Ja

2.142 Participant: I think that identity is who you think...people think you are in a sense...like, like the person that you present ja that's what identity is

2.143 Interviewer: The person you present to other people? Okay

2.144 Participant: [inaudible] but I am just saying you have a certain idean of how people perceive you

2.145 Interviewer: Makes sense

2.146 Participant: Uhm identity for me is uhm...uhm your values, your strengths and your weaknesses and...what you really, really believe in about yourself. So they make...they make you, you know?

2.147 Participant: I think identity is who you become every day. I am saying that nobody should wake up the same person like they bed as last night so whoever you become the next day that is your identity

2.148 Interviewer: So it is like a continuous process of development?

2.149 Participant: Ja

2.150 Participant: Uhm...I think identity...uhm...my answer is a bit [inaudible] if there is like close people around you and somebody like mentions my name and people will be like okay that's her. So that's your identity and then obviously through other things like uhm... I don't want to put like what type of race you are whatever but then basically also like what is on the inside and how you portray yourself to others and once they hear your name that's your identity you know it is the person that you are to them...ja

2.151 Interviewer: Okay...uhm besides the selfie that you currently have, think of the last one or two that you shared on social media and what these say about you.

2.152 Participant: Uhm the last two I probably uploaded on social media was with friends uhm and I think it says also that I am having a good time being out with friends, I am not just in my room the whole time

2.153 Interviewer: Ja

2.154 Participant: The last one I uploaded was my graduation picture and that would tell you that I am determined the fact that I got on to that stage and graduated

2.155 Interviewer: Ja

2.156 Participant: Shows that I am a hard worker [everyone giggles]

2.157 Interviewer: Okay

2.158 Participant: Uhm...my last selfie...I was like just chilling in my room and I was bored but I needed to study but I needed to push myself [laughs] and I just like put on makeup facebeat and then I took a picture so I just think of like that I felt bad but I chose to do something that was fun. Ja

2.159 Interviewer: And what do you think that says about you?

2.160 Participant: Uhm...it says like I like to have fun in my own space...ja

2.161 Interviewer: Okay

2.162 Participant: Uhm...I think the last picture I put on social media was the one of, of I did my eyebrows like for the very first time, shaped my eyebrows for that first time so at that moment I was like feeling different cause it was the first time so I took a selfie and then ja

2.163 Interviewer: Okay

2.164 Participant: The last picture I posted on social media of myself was myself and somebody who I was friends with, who I am not friends with anymore and for me cause I used

to like always take photos and that photo was the whole point where I was like okay now I need to slow down cause things are constantly changing and I am always documenting things that are temporary. So ja

2.165 Interviewer: So what do you, what do you think that says about you?

2.166 Participant: That...uhm I think it says that I care a lot about what people think because if I didn't I wouldn't care if I had a picture of somebody who everybody knows I am not friends with anymore cause it's a good picture but the mere fact that I think that people are gonna be like how is this person still in your profile but you guys aren't friends with each other

2.167 Participant:...uhm the last picture I posted...one or two?

2.168 Interviewer: One or two

2.169 Participant: Uhm...it was a picture of me with a serious straight face uhm I did previously mention that I like picture where I smile but I think I try to you know put myself out there that I can also have a serious face and uhm...ja it turned out very well

2.170 Interviewer: Okay

2.171 Participant: And...ja basically that...how I feel about a picture

2.172 Interviewer: Mmm, uhm I am sorry what does that picture say

2.173 Participant: Say about me?

2.174 Participant: So it's just like sometimes my pictures are just all fun and games be happy and all of that but when you have to study sometimes you have to tone it down and be serious and uhm ja that could also be what my picture says about me

2.175 Interviewer: Okay...uhm do you think that social media is a great place for you to express yourself? To express your, your life, your world views and what you believe in most of that what you have mentioned?

2.176 Participant: Uhm it depends because it can be good but it can also be bad because...the world we live in today if you had portray yourself as you really are people would judge you. People don't want to be judged so people will rather portray this picture perfect person so that they don't be judged.

2.177 Interviewer: Mmm

2.178 Participant: I am sorry please repeat the question

2.179 Interviewer: Okay...do you think social media platforms are a great place to express yourself?

2.180 Participant: So a certain extent...I think so. The reason I say so is because even though it is a good platform to do so, people are not very real about it even if you want to put up something you sceptical you first think uhm are people gonna are people gonna think this way or that way. So for me I feel like even though you want to be real it's not real at the end of the day.

2.180 Interviewer: Because of the judgement?

2.181 Participant: Yes

2.182 Interviewer: That you scared of?

2.183 Participant: Yes

2.184 Participant: Joh I think for me it is a good platform to express yourself cause sometimes [inaudible] like sometimes life there are just a few things that you can't say out there cause people would be like ah but then when you go online you can say what you want to say and you will get people that would say hey we feel you we also feel like that and then add on to your knowledge. You know whatever you are expressing it becomes bigger than what it was. Like even if the thing was wrong people tell you a certain way to look at it and then you realise ja you know. So it's very good to express what you want to express and then build that knowledge

2.185 Interviewer: Mmm

2.186 Participant: I think it's a good place to express yourself like she said it's a good place to learn other people's opinions as well and...uhm you get like, like your perspective might be like narrow but once you uhm post the same thing there may it broadens it a bit but at the same time it is not good and then people will scrutinize you and they will find things that you really didn't mean or weren't even thinking about when you wrote. So maybe it is like a language thing or people are just negative out there so it's a good thing that you know

2.187 Participant: I, I agree with that, that it's good and bad but I think it's more good because at the end of the day you can put your ideas out there. If you choose to put something ignorant out there then you should be able to handle the backlash. I think everything is a learning curve or something so I can post something the actions could come back at me I could decide hey these bad things are actually valid and try to see how they think about it or I can leave it cause at the end of the day people are going to criticize you regardless of what it is. Somebody is always going to try to pick a hole in your opinion so I think it's fine.

2.188 Participant: Uhm ja I would also say like half and half uhm...the first part being good because you can express yourself...out there but then the bad thing about it is let's say you uploaded a video and you probably took that video multiple times in order to post the best one so that probably means you had to like think through how you put yourself out there so that you not judged by other people. So it also probably goes for the selfies as well, you take million selfies but you only choose one, and that's just the one side people see about you so that's not really expressing yourself on social media...so I think it's like depending basically on the condition or circumstances you in uhm...it can be good and bad

2.189 Interviewer: On that note uhm...how has social media interactions shaped your lives and how you view yourself?

2.190 Participant: Uhm...I feel like...it had a big part in who I am now.

2.191 Interviewer: Mmm

2.192 Participant: Uhm it played a big role because I always saw these pretty girls and like how they look so you always try to be like them. But then I came to a point in my life where I realised like they are their type of perfect but I can be my type of perfect.

2.193 Participant: Apologies please repeat the question

2.194 Interviewer: Uhm...how has social media shaped your life and how you view yourself?

2.195 Participant: Uhm [long pause] I think for me it's like more the thing of there's a certain...there's a certain way I think of things and there's a certain way that other people thinks of theirs.

2.196 Interviewer: Can you speak louder [laughs]

2.197 Participant: Must I speak louder?

2.198 Interviewer: Ja

2.199 Participant: Uhm [clears throat] I think that it's more like the thing of how I look at things I realise that there is actual people who look at things the same way that I do because I could see like uhm turquoise, the colour turquoise I could see it as green I could see it as blue but then...it's like the perspective thing where you see your thing but then that thing is I don't know if I am making sense but ja I saw it in other people who are the same and who are a lot the same and then I realised okay at least I can find people who I can vibe with on social media and profile myself and then you just I think for me you grow up a bit. There are certain things I had to do. [laughs] on social media. So ja I added knowledge

2.200 Participant: Ja [clears throat] I agree. It's like the good stuff neh...on social media like very informative stuff neh so like you read things and then uhm you gain knowledge or maybe people post like and say things and I realise people are actually suffering out there you know. But...uhm I wouldn't really say it shaped me in any way or something like that I am just...ja can deal with things

2.201 Interviewer: Okay

2.202 Participant: Uhm I think social media shaped me in a big way because I get to see how society is opening it's mind on a big scale for instance I struggled for the longest time with the whole do you hair. I mean you're a coloured but coloured, coloured because you don't take on certain characteristics that the rest of the coloured society does so then for the longest time I was like am I the wrong one, do I have an identity crisis and then as you go on social media and you realise hey but other people speak with certain accents even though they from another ethnic background. That require them to speak in a different way and all of that jazz so ja, social media shaped me in that sense.

2.203 Interviewer: Okay

2.204 Participant: Uhm...for me I think I would like to relate this to one of the previous questions. Uhm...basically...I think was the question about, we had to mention what three things would we want to get from social media I mentioned one of them as food so I think I can become a good wife one day so that is shaping me into learning a lot of you know kitchen

skills and a lot of those things and then then other part is also like it's uhm you can actually see other people's uhm should I say mistake uhm it's, it's really bad that it's happening to them but at least you can learn from okay this is what you not, this is what you don't have to do on social media because that leads to A, B and C and that might be like a really bad you know uh influence on your life

2.205 Interviewer: Mmm

2.206 Participant: So it's just too bad that it had to happen on other people but basically what it comes to you can learn from that and then shape your way forward.

2.207 Interviewer: Ja

2.208 Participant: Uhm...ja I think that's how I feel or that's how I am shaped by social media

2.209 Interviewer: Okay. You guys shouldn't be scared to comment on each other's opinions [everyone is giggling]

2.210 Interviewer: So uhm ja [attempting to start a next question, when participant interrupts]

2.211 Participant: Back to me first!

2.212 Interviewer: Oh ja! Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja, ja.

2.213 Participant: [laughs] the way that it shaped me well it's made me do a bit of self-perception. Thing is that when people put up something I don't like on WhatsApp [inaudible] I tend to get irritated and the only reason why I get irritated is because I am probably...how should I say I am a culprit of that too

2.214 Participant: Ja

2.215 Interviewer: You're a culprit of what?

2.216 Participant: Like I do the same thing, that's why I don't like it. They say that usually when you don't like something is because you are the same exact thing. So I feel like [everyone reacts to that statement] self-introspection [indistinct chatter]

2.217 Interviewer: Uhm...how do you think others perceive you on social media?

2.218 Participant:...uhm...I would have to say not in a bad way. Uhm I don't have a lot of friends on my social media platforms but the one's I do are the close friends that I have. So...that, that I can uhm... bond with just like five or six people or a few people at one time and be happy rather than be in a big crowd

2.219 Interviewer: Mmm...okay uhm I am gonna, okay just a few questions I am gonna just join them. Uhm the second part of the question is uhm is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

2.220 Participant: Uhm...not really uhm in a way I think

2.221 Interviewer: How so?

2.222 Participant: Uhm...on social media I am always with friends, I am always happy but you always get, you also get those times where you feel sad and you want to be alone. Because you need to be alone to better yourself uhm so I think like I am one of those people where I can be in big groups but I need to be on, on like sort of my own vibe to charge myself to be ready for a big crowd again. So in that way yes, but, but also I like the way the people think that I am always like I am okay always and I am always in a big crowd so I am always doing fine...ja

2.223 Interviewer: Okay. I am gonna repeat the question again

2.224 Participant: [laughs] ah thank you

2.225 Interviewer: How do you think others perceive you on social media [struggling over word media] and how is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

2.226 Participant: I think they think I am very private and I am shady

2.227 Interviewer: Yes [other participants are giggling]

2.228 Participant: And I like it so much cause now everybody is anxious to know why and I like that

2.229 Interviewer: Why do you think you like that so much?

2.230 Participant: Why do I think I like, there is literally no reason I just like people not knowing anything about me. That way I don't constantly have to do certain things or live in a certain way to prove to you that I am that person that you think I am ja

2.231 Interviewer: I am gonna, should I repeat the question again?

2.232 Participant: Yes cause that was so deep [everyone laughs]

2.233 Interviewer: Uhm

2.234 Participant: Cause I am really thinking about what they are saying

2.235 Interviewer: Uhm...how do you think others perceive you on social media platforms and how is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

2.236 Participant: Oh I think people perceive me as like blunt or rude and maybe like very opinionated because like whatever I feel at that moment I am gonna write it somewhere. It's gonna be posted somewhere. Cause that's what I wanna say. So ja I think ja but then I don't like that, I would like to be perceived as like I feel like I am such a giver guys I am such a giver to the point where you know in Joburg when I am walking like most of the people who beg they look at me cause they like know that I am gonna give them like so I am such a giver I have a warm heart like. Like it's just that you know when you like you, you have two sides of yourself in a sense cause I say what I wanna say when I wanna say it but at the same time I am not like rough like that. I am just someone who likes to give I guess and do things for people

2.237 Interviewer: Ja

2.238 Participant: So ja I think...is there a second one?

2.239 Interviewer: No, that was it

2.240 Participant: Okay [laughs]

2.241 Participant: Uhm I think I think they actually get to know who I really am because I like to post what means the most to me like whether it is, like they probably know, they probably know I like to eat chocolate, because I am always eating chocolate in pictures [another participant is giggling] then I always take pictures at the church, I like to take pictures with friends and family so in a way they get to know what I like and also I am also very outspoken like her...if you post something and I feel like I need to comment then I will but not like in a bad way or anything like that

2.242 Interviewer: Ja

2.243 Participant: But I comment [someone coughs] so maybe ja I think they know who I am a bit

2.244 Participant: But not in depth but they just know the basic stuff and she likes this and she likes that and she likes to speak herself

2.245 Interviewer: So it's that they come to know what do you think or who do you think will they see you as?

2.246 Participant: Uhm [long pause] I am not sure... I am really not sure

2.247 Interviewer: If okay uhm let's say I would pick one of your contacts from your contact list

2.248 Participant: Okay

2.249 Interviewer: And I were to ask that person who do you think you are you know? What would they say?

2.250 Participant: They'd probably [long pause]

2.251 Interviewer: Not sure?

2.252 Participant: Not sure

2.253 Interviewer: Okay we can leave it and we will come back

2.254 Participant: Okay

2.255 Interviewer: Okay cool

2.256 Participant: I think anybody who has me on social media thinks I am a really serious person who has her life together all the time and...for me it's, it's something that I don't know if I would like to change it cause it's always interesting when I am sitting by a person and they like o you're quite chilled and I am like ja that's actually who I am but in the same light I think I always I am so scared that I am missing out on something good because this is how people see me. Like I've often been told I didn't approach you cause...I've seen you say this and that about men [laughs] and I am just like I am sorry

2.257 Interviewer: Ja

2.258 Participant: It could have been great but unfortunately that's just the way my post set it up so

2.259 Interviewer: Ja

2.260 Participant: So ja

2.261 Interviewer: [laughs] and what do you uhm wait is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

2.262 Participant: To a, to a certain extent Like... I am not gonna change if it was different to an extent that it bothered me then I think I would have changed my posts ages ago and posted about stuff that is more light-hearted but I think that I like the idea that people need to get into my space to understand who I am like that effort, that one on one contact that you need to push for to get to know me, yes I enjoy that

2.263 Participant: ...uhm...for me the first part of the question I think people perceive me as...I think...cool and atheistic I guess...because [laughs] I tend to post pictures that are like that all right but then most people that knows me in person knows that okay uhm I am actually a nice, kind, friendly person if I would say that. And uhm then uhm the way [long pause] actually wait the first question is how they perceive me right?

2.264 Interviewer: Mmm

2.265 Participant: Ja so I think that's how they see me on social media sites but then if I, I, I feel like they also have that feeling or have that thought of I didn't know she was like this she has this side of her as well

2.266 Interviewer: Ja

2.267 Participant: And then for me uhm I probably would think is it a good thing or bad thing and uhm sometimes or in the past I would wonder a lot about what people would think and that would actually make me really upset. So I think over the past years I've like I've learned that I shouldn't really care about what other people think because it's your life it's not theirs, they are not living this in this body or how they judge you to be uhm and then would if I perceive it what, what was the second one?

2.268 Interviewer: The second question is, is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

2.269 Participant: Uhm [long pause] well I, I think also it's up to a certain point because obviously what I put out there is kinda like okay that's how they are gonna perceive me anyways so once I put a selfie that's the other side of me then that's how I want them to see me so it's also half and half like what I put out there is...probably what they would think about me and probably also what I would think about myself...I don't know if that makes sense

2.270 Interviewer: It kinda does

2.271 Participant: [laughs] all right

2.272 Participant: Uhm okay I think people on social media perceive me as very...very outgoing and very talkative uhm...I think that's what I am so it's fine if they perceive me like that cause that's what and who I am so ja

2.273 Interviewer: Okay...what kind of comments do you receive about your selfie posts?

2.274 Participant: Normally good ones. Overall good ones like the lighting was good and the angle is good, your make-up looks pretty

2.275 Interviewer: Okay...o and what was your most memorable comment and why?

2.276 Participant: Uhm I personally pick a picture of myself without my glasses and a really good friend of mine commented and said that I look really pretty without my glasses and uhm he said that he can see my eyes and that I have really pretty eyes and that he never noticed because I always wear my glasses so it made me feel good that like people can notice things about you that you didn't actual notice in a picture

2.267 Participant: Sjoe

2.268 Interviewer: What kind of comments do you receive about your selfie posts?

2.269 Participant: Take more pictures!

2.270 Interviewer: Take more?

2.271 Participant: No I am saying take more pictures.

2.272 Interviewer: O! Take more pictures, o that's the comment? [laughs] And what has the most memorable comment been?

2.273 Participant: [long pause] repeat that one again

2.274 Interviewer: What has the most memorable comment been?

2.275 Participant: Uhm...

2.276 Interviewer: And why?

2.277 Participant: You are way more confident than I thought you were. I have taken a picture with like blemishes I am pretty so I don't care like I am happy with the way I have blemishes whatever but that does not tell you anything about me the fact that I am able to put that picture there with my blemish and tell you that I am confident is for me that is the most memorable

2.278 Interviewer: Alright

2.279 Participant: Uhm I usually get comments that I was cute

2.280 Interviewer: You were cute?

2.281 Participant: Ja but it was a lot it's my mom and it's my grandmother the boys they are friends and ja

2.282 Interviewer: Mmm...and what has the most memorable comment been?

2.283 Participant: I think it was from my mom where she said joh this is a wonderful picture you look so happy and I am like when I took that picture I was not happy at all. And from that picture like the way I looked I didn't even look like everything is just not okay there

2.284 Participant: Ja

2.285 Interviewer: Ja [long pause] and why do you think that, that was so memorable?

2.286 Participant: Because it made me feel like as much as things are not good I still look good

2.287 Interviewer: Okay

2.288 Participant: Uhm...people always ssay you are so pretty and that you have a pretty smile all the time we are together all the time and then uhm this other picture it wasn't a selfie it was a picture and again it was a church so somebody said I look very elegant and I got a nice [inaudible] right so that comment was really the best comment because uhm as I am growing up I'd like to be elegant and I'd like to be [inaudible] so that just meant that I am actually going in the right direction. So ja

2.289 Interviewer: Alright

2.290 Participant: I have a lot of supportive friends so I know when I post a picture I am gonna get like seven emojis [laughs] from each of them so ja that's maybe my friends who I know post probably the most horrible picture and I know they will always comment. I know they are just those friends and then uhm a while back I was going through a break up so I was in shambles most of the time and then I uploaded a picture and one of my friends said single looks really good on you and I was like yes! This is what I needed [laughs] and ja from then everything's been better.

2.291 Participant: Uhm...what was the question again?

2.292 Interviewer: What kinds of comments, uhm what kinds of comments do you receive about your selfie posts and what has been the most memorable comment? And why?

2.293 Participant: For me most comments are like beautiful, slay, hey [everyone laughs] all of those in that line uhm and uhm ja I think it literally goes about what I said earlier I give that cool and aesthetic look so that's why I see those kind of comments uhm but I think the one that I remember the most is or that stands out the most is fire emoji not necessarily words but just the fire emoji

[everyone reacts to that statement]

2.294 Participant: [laughs] so ja

2.295 Interviewer: Okay, and what do you guys think these comments say about you? ... what do you think the comments says about you?

2.296 Participant: Uhm that other people can see me and look at my flaws or something that I thought was a flaw and then they make me feel like okay you did something messed up a bit but it's okay we're gonna be here and then we're gonna show you different ways of looking at

that mistake that you made and make you realise that it wasn't so much a mistake as a process of learning

2.297 Interviewer: Confident?

2.298 Participant: Yes thank you I was about to say I think I already answered that one [everyone laughs]

2.299 Participant: What was the question?

2.300 Interviewer: The question...uhm what does this say about you?

2.301 Participant: Uhm it says that there is some aspects of what I think I am Like who I am and people also tell me so it's like it confirms certain things about myself I know that I like I am talkative, I say what I wanna say and I am cute so it comes back and you are greT

2.302 Interviewer: Ja

2.303 Participant: Uhm I think I mostly agree with her like the first things obviously you think you look good so when people say you look good then like ja [participants are having a conversation among themselves] so thanks anyway but ja

2.304 Interviewer: Okay

2.305 Participant: Uhm for me it's just like the little things in life that really excite me that's what I've realised with the whole social media, whole ja social media in general and the selfies like how one fire flame emoji from the right person [someone is giggling] trumps all the likes I receive [laughs] trumps everything

2.306 Interviewer: Ja

2.307 Participant: So it is what it is

2.308 Participant: Can you please repeat the question [everyone laughs]

2.309 Interviewer: What does this say about you that's the question [laughs]

2.310 Participant: Uhm so for me uhm...uhm...I am gonna link this to all the other questions as well uhm so basically I've ever since I was young I've always wanted to portray this kinda look right, and then for my mom it's always like but you need to be more ladylike you need to be all of this so then now right like at this stage with the current stage of my life where I posted the selfies that I posted and all the people it's not rather, not necessarily selfies uhm that kinda look cool but also beautiful so basically taking like being a tomboy and being a ladylike and joining them together and I can put it out there and people can like you know literally uhm be like, like send heart emojis or whatever to say that looks cool on you that looks beautiful on you. So ja

2.311 Interviewer: Do people's reactions to your posts influence your view of how you see yourself?

2.312 Participant: I think in a way yes because if someone is gonna if you gonna post a picture and your eyebrows your one eyebrow is skew and somebody comments on that you're gonna be like take that selfie off now! [everyone is laughing] people can't see me like this

2.313 Interviewer: Ja

2.314 Participant: But then in another light uhm you also get to a stage where you realise that what other people think of you is important but it doesn't mean the world it's what you think of yourself that's gonna be the person you live and strive to become so

2.315 Interviewer: Uhm do people's reactions to your posts influence how you see yourself?

2.316 Participant: [laughs] not really just a bit not really

2.317 Interviewer: Just a bit?

2.318 Participant: Just a bit

2.319 Interviewer: Uhm explain that if you don't mind

2.320 Participant: Uhm

2.321 Interviewer: Okay I am gonna stand a little, cause my back is killing me Just a bit because I will think about what they said but I won't react or act on it like for me it is a thing of okay they said it then, then what then I leave it there.

2.322 Participant: I think also for me...for me I think also like a little bit like the little bit of influences I would say like when I feel like whatever I, I, I put out there a post or whatever and then someone comments something bad you like react to it cause it's like you don't think someone is going to say something and then it's just ah alright but then there is these other things where you're like okay no this hurt my feelings so I would sometimes get like a mind frame of how I want to be perceived. So if something comes up then I'll try and say okay maybe I should do this that or that just a little bit and the other part I really don't care.

2.323 Interviewer: Okay, so what goes uhm...bad if I could say...how can I put it? Cause you said there are something's that people say that you take cognisance of uhm what would those things be?

2.324 Participant: [inaudible] cause like I don't try to be mean I am just myself like when people say I am mean and you try to think like I try to think like conversations cause I talk a lot and then I am like hey I might have said something cause I talk a lot so but then I think I don't remember saying anything to that person so ja I don't like it

2.325 Interviewer: So...uhm it seems like a comment...so let's say you should post a selfie because I want this to be very selfie oriented

2.326 Interviewer: If you were to post a selfie and people reacted would that influence how you see yourself?

2.327 Participant: Ja it would

2.328 Interviewer: How so?

2.329 Participant: Uhm because there is a certain way that you want to see yourself normally you look you know that's how you are eyebrows and everything is on point if not you know so if somebody says something bad to me I'd be like okay let me go and see what they are talking about, but if I don't see a problem then I don't, I don't care but if I see a problem I might [inaudible] if it's really like something that is ah this needs to get off..mmm ja then I'll do it...ja

2.330 Interviewer: Okay.

2.331 Participant: Uhm...selfies like people always say as I said they always comment about my smile or how pretty I am or they will say I have big cheeks and stuff like that but most of the time it's things I am already aware of like I know I have a pretty smile, I know I am chubby so uhm ja

2.332 Interviewer: Okay

2.333 Participant: I think for me it's basically the same. By the time I post a picture like the likes and the comments are nice but me posting that picture is because I knew that is a good picture. There is nothing that anybody can tell me that's gonna make me take off that picture or unless it's somehow inappropriate and my mother comments but other than that not a chance I'll take a picture off that I have already decided that, that is a good picture

2.334 Participant: Uhm ja like for me uhm in the past I would always compare it to okay if like for instance I had followers that means I need likes so then it would end up to be like let's say and then I will always dwell on what the other followers think, think about it you know so then literally I would always dwell on what people thought about me and that literally made me upset and you know waking up in the morning let's say if I was still going to school I would just be down and then I've learnt through like you know like throughout the people that is in my life to like not uhm dwell too much on what other people think because that literally has negative influences on me, it makes me unhappy and all of those things so like now currently whenever I post a picture like I know what she said like if you know yourself you posted a good picture. Then it doesn't matter what you know the comments or what other people think about you and uhm even so that you still would want to you know that wanting to think about what other people think but literally now it's kinda like no that's like your life is not the best of what they think so ja

2.335 Interviewer: Okay. So do you believe that social media effect how people look at themselves?

2.336 Participant: Ja in a way. Cause if you get a lot of likes you will be like okay I did something right but if you have like likes then you're gonna be like why what did I do wrong cause I thought this was a pretty picture

2.337 Interviewer: Ja...so it's about receiving...validation?

2.338 Participant: [all the participants agree]

2.339 Interviewer: Okay

2.340 Participant: And there is a certain way that social media portrays you as a person so like a lot of girls would go to very [other participants help her with the word extremes] extreme extent to look like that. So in a way it does influence how people end up you know or how they do things you

2.341 Participant: There's a lot of trends that start on social media and then it just goes forever for instance I wake up an hour early to do my eyebrows every single day. I shouldn't have to do that, I could if social media have tutorials on how to have your eyebrows [everyone says ja] then I wouldn't directly but it's one of those things

2.342 Interviewer: Ja...okay so is there...anything else that you would like to add that you felt we didn't cover today?

2.343 Participant: I feel like social media is a good thing because you can interact with your friends but it also like I think everyone can agree people judge on what you put out but nobody wants to be judged so your rather gonna not be yourself and be someone else so it's mainly someone that your not and that's all because of social media. Sort of where you create a fake identity like catfish people.

2.344 Participant: I think social media also puts a lot of pressure even in the selfie culture on women more than anything because you have all these filters and you have everything. Men hardly use that [another participant says ja] men really don't care

Focus group 3 (Female participants)

3.1 Interviewer: Uhm...okay participants have been briefed on the study, the purpose of the study and have signed the informed consent forms we'll now commence with the purpose of discussion. So...which social media platforms are you on?

3.2 Participant: Uhm Pintrest, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook uhm ja

3.3 Interviewer: Okay

3.4 Participant: Uhm same! Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Pintrest

3.5 Interviewer: Okay

3.6 Participant: I have WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram

3.7 Participant: Okay, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp uhm Facebook did I say Facebook? And Pintrest

3.8 Participant: Uhm WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger

3.9 Participant: WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram

3.10 Interviewer: And which of these do you guys most enjoy and why?

3.11 Participant: Uhm... I think I like Instagram and Pintrest the most just cause I feel like I can get lost in like seeing everyone's lives and like really cool things forever so ja entertaining

3.12 Participant: I feel like for communication WhatsApp is my favourite or like ja it's easiest to use because of this new status thing that's come on you can see what is going on in people's lives and all that uhm and for like entertainment reasons I must say I do like Pintrest a lot like obsessed completely

3.13 Participant: I enjoy Instagram a lot uhm for the main reasons you don't need to see like normal people, you can meet famous people and everything inspiring and I like WhatsApp because I can speak to my mother and she's quite far so ja

3.14 Interviewer: Okay

3.15 Participant: Okay so [someone coughs] I also like Instagram because I can watch a lot of videos and find videos and what not and I like WhatsApp for communication [mumbling and inaudible]

3.16 Participant: I really like WhatsApp more cause I feel like it's very much more intimate, it's here it's so close it's not like Facebook. I don't like putting my life out there so [laughs] with WhatsApp when I post a status [inaudible] so I prefer WhatsApp

3.17 Interviewer: Okay

3.18 Participant: Ja

3.19 Participant: I like WhatsApp but I think I prefer Instagram cause like it's not limited you don't only see your friends you see friends of your friends, friends how they live and views and

3.20 Interviewer: Mmm

3.21 Participant: You see a lot on Instagram basically ja you can see the world like I, I like this page called the world's most beautiful destinations so there is stuff like that on Instagram which you cannot really find on WhatsApp

3.22 Interviewer: Mmm okay. And for how long have you had these social media platforms?

3.23 Participant: Uhm joh uhm probably since like grade eight so [someone else says] ja

3.24 Interviewer: So five years?

3.25 Participant: Ja five years

3.26 Participant: Ja like I think I have BBM [everyone laughs] so like joh Mxit [someone coughs] and BBM and then WhatsApp started being a thing and I think I was about thirteen or fourteen. But I only got onto Facebook, Instagram and Pintrest when I was like fifteen or sixteen

3.27 Interviewer: Uhm this was?

3.28 Participant: Four years, four five years ago

3.29 Interviewer: Ja

3.30 Participant: Uhm...I've been on Facebook since grade ten which means it's a long time ago about four years ago and then uhm WhatsApp I've been grade eight so that's six years ago

3.31 Interviewer: Okay

3.32 Participant: Okay so Facebook I think from grade nine but then I kept forgetting my password so [another participant is laughing - inaudible] and Instagram I think I started this year and Pintrest also this year uhm WhatsApp, joh when did WhatsApp come out [everyone is laughing]

3.33 Participant: Long ago

3.34 Participant: Ah I can't remember but when it came out that's when I started

3.35 Interviewer: And then you mentioned Twitter as well

3.36 Participant: Ja Twitter also this year

3.38 Interviewer: This year?

3.39 Participant: Ja

3.40 Participant: I think I started with WhatsApp when I was doing grade eleven almost all the social media networks I started being there like... making a profile when I was doing grade eleven [laughs] but I wasn't active I wasn't that active with WhatsApp I would go a week without it and then when I got to varsity because of the groups I started being active

3.41 Interviewer: Mmm okay

3.42 Participant: Uhm I started using WhatsApp...and Instagram all in grade eight.

3.43 Interviewer: This was?

3.44 Participant:

3.45 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm...how much time do you think you spend on social media?

3.46 Participant: O a lot! Uhm... like hours in a day? Or...

3.47 Interviewer: Ja

3.48 Participant: Oooh

3.49 Interviewer: You can break it down to that

3.50 Participant: Is it consecutively like days?

3.51 Interviewer: No you can choose if it's sporadic or consecutively... ja

3.52 Participant: Joh I don't ...ja I don't know how to work it out

3.53 Interviewer: Or if it's weekly

3.54 Participant: But like ja it's like a lot like cause I go on in the morning and then obviously like WhatsApp throughout the day you get messages and then ja...and then I go on like Instagram in the morning and like Pintrest and stuff and at night...I feel like I probably be like hours a day...or something like that if you add it all together

3.55 Interviewer: Mmm

3.56 Participant: Ja...cause like Pintrest you just [participants spoke over each other - inaudible] and an hour just went by and you're like wow okay

3.57 Participant: Definitely it is like the same like it depends with me like if it's a day or two before a test

3.58 Interviewer: Mmm

3.59 Participant: Uhm I reduce my...like I force myself okay you're not going to go on Facebook you're not gonna Instagram and Pintrest cause I know myself I'll be on Pintrest and then three hours later I am still there.

3.61 Interviewer: Ja

3.62 Participant: Like I, I stopped going on Pintrest when I get a your data is up message [everyone laughs] it's horrible [another participant says ja] so...so uhm I take like round four to six hours but before a test it will be less

3.63 Participant: Like you will just WhatsApp?

3.64 Participant: Ja, ja and then it will be like strictly if your mom asks you [inaudible] [everyone laughs]

3.65 Interviewer: Makes sense

3.66 Participant: Per day I think like I spend an hour on social media [inaudible] uhm but if the groups go mad...and if there is a lot of notifications I will go on Facebook so on my crazy days I go like two hours on Facebook

3.67 Interviewer: Mmm max? Okay

3.68 Participant: Okay I think now cause I don't have data so the WIFI [inaudible] two hours because I hardly use my phone because I don't know where it is

3.69 Interviewer: Mmm, so when you uhm do have access to WIFI

3.70 Participant: Ja I go on Instagram [inaudible] [everyone reacts to what she is saying] so maybe like four hours ja...especially on Instagram [someone coughs]

3.71 Interviewer: Okay

3.72 Participant: I don't think I can finish an hour on WhatsApp [laughs]. But ja especially this year I don't have time for my phone and I am not... a phone person so sometimes it irritates me...so if my phone irritates me automatically I am not going to go on any social media ja so...if I am really say I wanna spend time it's gonna probably be an hour [inaudible]

3.73 Participant: I don't really spend that much time. I only use it when I like really, really need to

3.74 Interviewer: Mmm

3.75 Participant: So it could be probably like four hours a day. But Instagram...could go three hours [someone laughs] like three hours like straight without taking a break. If my phone is flat, I charge it and then I use it again [everyone is laughing] three hours straight like I, I have calculated it like three hours from twelve to three

3.76 Interviewer: Mmm

3.77 Participant: Then I sleep [inaudible]

3.78 Interviewer: Okay, okay. Uhm so I want you guys to just take out the selfies that you brought with I know I didn't let you know but ja if you can find a selfie...a selfie

3.79 Participant: [long pause] can it be a selfie like this with someone else taking ag in it?

3.80 Interviewer: Uhm...it, it depends what do you define as a selfie

3.81 Participant: The thing is that I understand a selfie is you taking a photo like of myself but I never like I rarely do that and when I do it's like very ugly and then I send it to my friends [everyone laughs] ja

3.82 Interviewer: But do you have one? Or do you prefer that one?

3.83 Participant: Uhm I do but actually last I bought a new shirt...so I was feeling frisky...and I took one [everyone is laughing] [long pause] but I don't like them, they were for my friends so I was being extra [everyone laughs]

3.84 Interviewer: Take whichever one you feel comfortable

3.85 Participant: Can I don't really do the thing

3.86 Interviewer: I am gonna ask just a couple of things about them

3.87 Participant: Okay [indistinct chatter] [long pause - participants chatting among themselves about selfie choices]

3.88 Participant: Like I got photos but usually it's someone else taking photos

3.89 Interviewer: Mmm

3.90 Participant: Ja [long pause]

3.91 Participant: When I am in a selfie mood all faces comes out [everyone laughs] [everyone is discussing selfie choices - indistinct] [someone coughs]

3.92 Interviewer: Coolies uhm what do you guys think a selfie is?

3.93 Participant: I think it is a like a picture you take like of yourself...like for...I don't know just like a picture you take of yourself.

3.94 Interviewer: Okay

3.95 Participant: I feel like just the like selfie is...in a way like I feel like I don't take selfies I find it quite...like vein like those people who take selfies like one with shades, one with a scarf, one without both and one with both and then they post all of them on Facebook. I don't understand all too well, but uhm I do like taking a selfie, sending it to a friend and like pulling your face like I find that very cute but yes like I said it is taking a photo of just yourself like maybe your face ja

3.96 Interviewer: Okay

3.97 Participant: I think it's mainly...uhm...that you take it of yourself because there is not always in one like if me and my friend go out there is not really a third person that can take a photo. You can take a photo of you so you basically ja just ja

3.98 Interviewer: You taking a photo of you

3.99 Participant: Ja you taking a photo of you [laughs] because there is nobody else

3.100 Participant: Ja I also think it is you taking a photo of you or you with somebody else

3.101 Interviewer: Okay

3.102 Participant: Everything they just said [laughs] basically ja it's just you providing leadership for yourself

3.103 Interviewer: Ja

3.104 Participant: Taking your own picture basically and that's the dictionary explanation of a selfie [laughs]

3.105 Interviewer: Interprets it differently

3.106 Participant: I think a selfie is a like when you capturing your current emotion...you won't really take a selfie when you sad but when you happy ooh I look kinda cute let me take a selfie you understand so ja so you capture a current emotion so when you look back at the photo you are like ah I remember this day, I, I looked cute or this happened on this day

3.107 Interviewer: Mmm

3.108 Participant: Just capture...a moment and you, you remember

[another participant said something and everyone reacts and laughs]

3.109 Interviewer: Uhm why did you bring this particular selfie today?

3.110 Participant: Okay uhm...so when I take a selfie it is usually like ja I capture that moment or [someone clears their throat] it will be like I have to remember this moment in time like what I am doing right now. So uhm this photo has like really...like it was a really good day...uhm so ja we had to take a selfie so that we could...remember it so ja but I brought this one cause it was a really good memory like ja...you remember the day [inaudible] [someone whispers it's cute]

3.111 Participant: Uhm I brought this selfie uhm...mainly because I didn't have a lot of selfies but I don't know I think % of the time when I take photos with other people someone else is in it because we are either doing something fun or we are not being that responsible we just...basically living life if you know what I mean. So that is mainly when we take a photos like this was taken a night when we went out and I met new people and we took photos with them so it's and you're like super happy your like completely just satisfied with the moment you're in, you're not thinking of tomorrow or what happened or ja, that's why I chose this one.

3.112 Interviewer: Okay

3.113 Participant: So I brought mine cause we both have like red faces and it's not like a thing for me, that people accept me for me and she just does, my friend in the photo just does we can do weird stuff together and take selfies and it's personal for me because she accepted me for me.

3.114 Participant: Okay so I chose this one because this is like the first picture I took when I did my hair because I have always had natural hair so like I did this like whole outfit with my hair and I actually got the outfit and I was looking cute so I was like you know what I am gonna take a selfie

3.115 Interviewer: Okay

3.116 Participant: Okay I brought this one because I was from exercising [laughs] I was proud of myself and then you know my hair was so long in this picture when I took it I was like wow I was, I was so happy that I took the picture besides I felt like I was so comfortable with myself I looked fine [everyone laughs]

3.117 Participant: Ja, ja I brought this one because I really like it, cause I like the shades so I really like it

3.118 Interviewer: Okay, cool

3.119 Participant: That's why

3.120 Interviewer: Okay cool. Uhm what do you think this selfie says about you?

3.121 Participant: Ooh uhm I think [someone is whispering] [laughs] uhm I don't know I think it is that I like, I like capturing moments like it's not about uhm for me like ah I look pretty I think let me like take a photo type thing uhm that it's the moment that's important I think I don't know or I do weird stuff cause ja I am a little strange [says in a whisper] but ja [laughs]

3.122 Participant: Uhm...well...this particular photo...kinda hope it says that you know...that... fun like is in the picture...joy , being active uhm appreciation...kinda hoping that it screams that [laughs]

3.123 Participant: Mine is a [inaudible] and uhm...I take to be a weird person so I like...that it actually portraying that I have a weird side as well.

3.124 Interviewer: Mmm

3.125 Participant: And not just the face of this black face not being really interesting [everyone laughs]

3.126 Participant: So mine...this picture represents me actually starting to see myself as a girl and pretty and ja I feel like that this was a breakthrough because initially I didn't like pictures but when I took this it opened a whole I went from taking the fact, then taking half then my whole body and you know being comfortable with myself and actually [inaudible]

3.127 Interviewer: Sweet

3.128 Participant: Ja it's more guy-like presentation or look what she just said I feel like it portrays that I am so happy in my guy like presentational look...ja some pictures are just [inaudible] I don't like them. In this one I look myself, like I am this is the true me with my dreadlocks with my crusty look [laughs] that people categorise crusty but I do fine so I think it's a presentation of...the true me, myself and then [inaudible]

3.129 Interviewer: Okay

3.130 Participant: I just think that this picture basically...just says why I like it's chilled I am a very...chilled person, laid back so it just says it all basically ja.

3.131 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm...what processes do you follow to help you determine which selfie to post...on social media platforms?

3.132 Participant: Uhm...uhm...I don't oh, I don't really post a lot of selfies uhm on social media it's usually like uhm photos like of me doing something or ja it's not usually selfies but I think if it was a selfie it would probably be like...I don't know if it was like uhm if there was, if we were doing something so if it was like if we were making funny faces or something then if there is like more to it than just it being a selfie...like if you can see that there is a story behind it then I would post it like If you can see the story...through the photo then ja I'd probably post it. If it was just like a selfie I don't think I would post it

3.133 Interviewer: Okay

3.134 Participant: Ja

3.135 Interviewer: So do you think uhm things such as lighting matter and positioning?

3.136 Participant: Ja of course! Ja like

3.137 Interviewer: Those other processes [laughs]

3.138 Participant: Ja no of course ja okay I don't think I've ever posted a photo from like a bad angle

3.139 Interviewer: Ja

3.140 Participant: Ja, and like lighting is important as well and stuff ja

3.141 Interviewer: Okay

3.142 Participant: And you, it depends on who is in it

3.143 Interviewer: Okay

3.144 Participant: Ja

3.145 Participant: Like I am also kinda like that I, I don't ever think I have posted a photo of just me. It is always me with someone doing something uhm so that is always like that is an important aspect for me as well because I don't see the point in just posting a picture because everyone knows how I look but it's nice to have like when you doing something then I'll post because it kinda makes sense. But I obviously when I post a selfie you look at things like lighting, like if you look like your vibrant and not pale and...look like a ghost basically, and also me personally when I look at photos obviously I want to look at my eyes to see if they look pretty and [another participant says ja] bright if you know what I mean and you don't want like a double chin in there and you want your hair that is all like in place so uhm ja those are like some of the like if like the processes if I might say [another participant says mmm] like the things that I look at so ja

3.146 Interviewer: Okay

3.147 Participant: I would look at everybody's faces...if they look okay as well because uhm...I wouldn't want to embarrass someone...with my profile picture or something I posted

uhm...but if there is a story to that face I'd like to post it as well but uhm the, the main thing for me is like I want to have everybody look like themselves and not being copies uhm like I look different from this person but we both look good in the photo and then it's like everybody is beautiful in their own way

3.148 Interviewer: Mmm

3.149 Participant: So ja I would post that

3.150 Participant: I've never been much of a selfie I just like you know, you know when a selfie is great [chuckles] and you just want to post it, I just know when I want to post a picture and ja I never think much of it. Like the lighting is fine or I like the ways joh or whatever I just post it

3.151 Interviewer: Post it...okay fair enough

3.152 Participant: Just repeat the question

3.153 Interviewer: Question is...what process do you usually follow to help you determine which selfie to post on social media platforms?

3.154 Participant: I think it depends on the mood. It depends on what I want to say at that time. I don't really post pictures with other people in. If I like the picture it has to portray a certain meaning or have quote to that that relate to that picture. So it really depends on the message I want to send at that time I just don't post pictures of myself in general [laughs]

3.155 Interviewer: Okay

3.156 Participant: I think ja I, I totally relate to what she say cause ja Basically what she says...ja...the picture should have like a certain [inaudible]

3.157 Interviewer: Ja

3.158 Participant: Ja

3.159 Interviewer: Typically what would you guys want to communicate with your selfies?

3.160 What meaning would you want to put across?

3.161 Participant: Happiness

3.162 Interviewer: Happiness

3.163 Participant: Happiness, joy, appreciation or assert that you are comfortable being your own self [another participant says ja] basically. Because I feel like there has been a lot of misinterpretations of other people's personalities and with the selfie they are comfortable and can actually give out my version of my own definition of who I am. with that picture

3.164 Interviewer: Okay

3.165 Participant: And that I actually feel comfortable in that even though K* is wearing makeup and I am not wearing makeup, I am able to be like you know what...it's who I am, and

I am happy so it shouldn't portray you know...like differences that don't really matter that much...ja

3.166 Participant: I feel like substance is also a thing like a mean I have photos that I post that like there has to be something...more to it than just

3.167 Interviewer: A selfie?

3.168 Participant: Like when it's like with a book...that you're reading, or with your favourite coffee or in your favourite store it has to say something about like if you feel, if you feel your posting it you want people to know about you so then why not actually show them something of about you in the picture if you know what I mean. Like this is my favourite book, this is my favourite shirt, you don't have to caption it that but obviously if you are wearing it or holding it people will start to like understand that that's you [another participant says mmm]

3.169 Interviewer: Ja

3.170 Participant: So ja

3.171 Interviewer: okay uhm...[clears throat] does the selfie you brought with sum up who you actually are?

3.172 Participant: Uhm I don't think it sums up who I am but I think it uhm ja I think that joh that would be an intense selfie. Cause there is like a lot more to me than what is happening in the selfie

3.173 Interviewer: Mmm

3.174 Participant: Uhm ja so I don't think it sums up who I am.

3.175 Participant: I think with this specific selfie this is the...me that I want to be every day if you know what I mean. The I don't know it shows...it's a happy, carefree, social, person that I am on one side, that I enjoy the most about myself where on the other side it's the stressed out, studying, isolate myself person which I don't enjoy all that much but is necessary if I want to like pass. [everyone laughs] ja, ja and be a I don't, I don't know like obviously you can't get rid like rid of a part of yourself

3.176 Interviewer: Ja

3.177 Participant: Like it goes together so I think this isn't a complete representation of...or a it doesn't sum up the whole me, but it sums up the part of me that I like the most So ja

3.178 Participant: I think that sums up pretty much with me uhm...there's just like this is me...sometimes I get like sad or angry then it's not me anymore. So ja it sums up me pretty well

3.179 Participant: Ja...this picture I think doesn't sums up the whole me cause this is cute and heavy and [inaudible] [laughs] all of those things and uhm... I am also crazy and all those things so I think it's just like, like a tiny bit of meLike it doesn't represent the whole of me

3.180 Interviewer: Mmm ja...repeat the question?

3.181 Participant: No [everyone laughs] I think it sums up the whole of me but it has a portion of [inaudible] with it. In a sense that it doesn't have [inaudible] that's what I love but it gives an idea of who I am as an individual But then of course my character and my personality is not really summed up in this so well

3.182 Interviewer: Ja

3.183 Participant: And I don't think it can ever be summed up in any picture Because I am more than just what you see in the picture. But it does give you an idea of the person that I am

3.184 Participant: Ja I think my selfie as well is just a certain portion of who I am. Like a certain side of my self, it's not like the complete person.Ja

3.185 Interviewer: Okay...Uhm [clears throat] Do you believe that social media affects how people look at themselves?

3.186 Participant: Yes, ja I do. I think cause a lot of people uhm...post things on social media about like how great their life is or like how great they want people to think their life is I think like people will look at that...and they compare their life and themselves to that and then they like look differently on themselves because of what they think...other people are or ja some people uhm post things that like that they have great lives and they do like the most incredible things but really it's like not and I think people look at that and they like wow they so cool like what about me. Like look at me I am so not or ja then they feel ja...ja

3.187 Participant: Uhm I think a lot of people...connect their self-worth to social media...uhm like I find that with people justify how good they feel about themselves with the amount of likes they get or comments and I feel like that is such a uhm...unstable platform to be connecting your self-worth to or how you feel about yourself because let's say one day you post a photo and you get a bad comment or you don't get as many likes as you want then...it crumbles, that picture of you crumbles so I feel like, like there is people who is not like very popular on social media because they not very active on it, like they don't post a lot of things and stuff but... I, I met a few people that have so many followers, that get so many likes and stuff and then how...the extent to or the lengths to which they go to make sure like the perfect caption the perfect this, the perfect everything just to ensure likes and then they get the likes they want and then they are satisfied if you know what I mean. They like I, I feel like that is such a...that's such a...uhm it's not mean but it's a superficial representation of self-worth because you more than just

3.188 Interviewer: Likes

3.189 Participant: This photo and the likes and I feel like people don't see that anymore like or they don't think that if I don't get all these likes no one actually likes meIf you know what I mean so ja I think...I think social media has kind of...changed the way people view and feel about themselves and it's not always a good way because yes you do get a lot of likes but then they don't actually like themselves, like they trying to like themselves through the likes that they get

3.190 Participant: I think like uhm... it's almost like she said like people feel ugly...if they go to another person's Instagram that has likes and you only get like and it's not because uhm you are ugly it's because like that person just goes out more and like...people follow you because you have an interesting life. They don't follow you because you are just a normal person but still you feel that uhm you uhm tend to feel that you are not good enough. If people don't follow you so ja

3.191 Participant: I think it's like she said people you know when people get to social media they see [inaudible] she goes out and whatever. And then they tend to think that's what you need to be you know [everyone says ja] to be accepted and then they adopt that and then they change it to you know to adapt to their own thing and then they start getting they likes and everything they stay on it because I know people who are so vocal on facebook but when you meet them in person they are so shy they can't even look you in the eye and then you like wow I expected a different person. So I feel like people go to social media and find a certain identity [inaudible] for social media to be like

3.192 Participant: I don't think it's just a black and white kind of situation

3.193 Interviewer: Mmm

3.194 Participant: It depends on what is the reason for you to be on social media and what kind of people do you follow on social media, what message do they portray cause if you follow slay queens of course you're gonna want to go and be a slay queen [chuckles] but then if you follow people of impact for instance Vusi Thembakhwayo he doesn't portray perfectionism it's always about him doing something so I think what happens or the psychological changes that happens because of social media depends on what you associate yourself with. What are you gaining from social media? So it starts from there. What do you see automatically your mind is gonna want to move towards it so if you are following people who are doing something that you want to do, you might end up doing it as well. It depends on...what you do on your social media platform

3.195 Participant: Ja it, it differs from...one person to the other. Some people go on social media to...to just check on how they can look in order for people to accept them and stuff like that. Like she said she mentioned if I want to look like a slay queen I am gonna follow slay queens like Faith on Instagram because her life is great, you understand. Because I want to be uhm let's say a motivational speaker, I am gonna follow a motivational speaker. So it depends on what you want on social media, who you want to follow on social media. It's not always about you know uhm social media changing the type of person that you are. Ja...it, it could change you but it's up to you basically. If you want to change and be a better person or the person you're really not

3.196 Interviewer: Ja. So you saying you sort of have control or

3.197 Participant: You have control. Ja definitely cause you can create a name, you can create a password so you basically have the power to control what you watch, what you listen to, who you follow it's all in your hands

3.198 Participant: But I feel like people going through identity crisis or low self-esteem and low self-worth like...someone said uhm...you see what people accept and what is like popular so now you have low self-esteem or you don't know who you are so you think if I am like that I'll know who I am they try to find themselves in the wrong way and I think that's where they lean towards what society sets as being pretty, popular, this and that. So actually I agree with what you said I feel like you created your password, you created your account it's up to you but I feel like in a society in our society nowadays more people are losing who they are, or are now trying to find who they are within themselves [someone says ja] because they feel like what if it's not what society would want or agree with [someone says ja] so they just take whatever is given to them...but I feel like people should be like you like she said you choose who you want and do not want to be, you choose, you follow what you kinda take in as part of who you are so but it makes it very like she said it's not just black and white

3.199 Participant: It's a very differentcult area

3.200 Interviewer: Okay [sighs] uhm we're gonna move on to identity. What would you define as identity?

3.201 Participant: Uhm identity I think it's uhm the characteristics or ja the characteristics that make you who you are...so it's like...I don't know ja just like characteristics that make you unique or you as an individual, the things that make you.

3.202 Participant: Like it's a very differentcult concept but I like identity I think of like identify to identify...so for me when I look at someone else I...when you see them the first time like okay the first thing you see is their style, their how they look and then you get to their like... this is what they like, this is what they do, this is what they study and then you start connecting that so I think...but within yourself there is a certain like part of you that no one sees, that only you know. So I feel like that is your identity and then your identity what people see like the stuff you like and put in your room and how you speak, the jokes you make but it's all connected, it's not like two completely separate things but uhm...so ja I feel like it's what makes you who you are whether... your happy with it or not...so ja

3.203 Participant: I think that your identity is the person who you are comfortable with being. Uhm if I go out and I am someone else, it's not my true identity so it's fake so when you are comfortable with yourself that's your identity. Even if people don't see it. Try to portray the right identity

3.204 Participant: I think identity is actually how you see yourself regardless of how other people feel. Because if you see yourself and you accept that I am this and then you gonna start portraying it and that's gonna change how people see you. It's how you identify yourself, this is me out in the world [inaudible]

3.205 Participant: Uhm it's more or less what she just said. How you identify yourself as an individual... it's your brand, it's who you are basically and who you are can be portrayed in no it's actually not gonna be portrayed it's automatically gonna be reserved on how people see you even if they are going to make their own conceptions but it's how you present yourself, it's how you carry yourself [it's how you carry yourself as a brand basically]

3.206 Participant: Identity is basically for me it's your true self. It's when you cannot try and be someone else...it's just you ja...it's you being you, it's being creative if you creative, it's you, it's just you cause there is no one else like you said. That's why it's your identity. So ja

3.207 Interviewer: Okay. Besides the selfie you currently have think of the last one or two that you shared on social media. What do these say about you?

3.208 Participant: Uhm...I have no, can I check?

3.209 Interviewer: Ja!

3.210 Participant: Okay [laughs]

3.211 Interviewer: You guys remember?

3.212 Participant: Yes!

3.213 Interviewer: Okay good

3.214 Participant: Uhm ja I remember but it's with friends so it says that I like going out with friends and like doing things with them the thing is I, I tend to go uhm the last one I posted was with us going to a uhm escape room and it's like it's, it's something that I enjoyed a lot so uhm I think that it portray that I like [inaudible] [everyone laughs]

3.215 Interviewer: [laughs] okay

3.216 Participant: Ok so the last two pictures of mine I didn't [loud noise - inaudible] the lighting was bad but the picture was just awesome so I just love the picture

3.217 Interviewer: So what does this say about you?

3.218 Participant: Uhm

3.219 Interviewer: That you taking the picture?

3.220 cause I remember I wore a tight black dress so usually I would just wear things that are barely there so it shows a lot. So to me it was just like girl you look gorgeous

3.221 Participant: Ja

3.222 Participant: I posted a lot of pictures today because it was my friend's birthday [laughs] so I posted all of our selfies. But... I think they represented me at different times and at different moods. Cause some of them was us laughing at the bridge but some of them, the most interesting one the one that I love the most is the one that we took at my graduation day and we had so...we had serious faces, I think that's me % of the time [some participants laugh] [laughs] like I lighting but I don't love it in most cases so ja I really love it cause it's me, it's just me with my normal face that people take serious.

3.223 Participant: Ja

3.224 Participant: Okay the last selfie I posted. I was laughing so ja...on a daily basis I just discovered that I have a great smile [everyone giggles] so I'd like to keep at it ja...that's basically the last selfie posted.

3.225 Interviewer: Okay

3.226 Participant: Uhm ja I think mine was with my brother also we laughing or doing something silly. So I think wait what was the question?

3.227 Interviewer: Question ja uhm I am going to repeat the entire question uhm besides the uhm selfie you currently have think of the one last or two selfies that you posted on social media. What do these say about you?

3.228 Participant: Okay ja I think it just says that like uhm I am a family girl and ja I like to like have fun and be silly like I don't know like be comfortable enough to share that with other people as well. Ja uhm well the last one I posted was also with a friend

3.229 Participant: Also us with a friend we were also being...irresponsible, jolling ja [everyone laughs] and uhm but it was at her, at her like at my house but we will still having a good time like it was over Christmas so we were putting up decorations and making food and drinking wine and uhm we put up so many lights that we just like we went crazy taking photos and then it was just so magical and stuff so we were like this is perfect. So ja it just represents I don't know it was a, a happy time it's a once again it's like a satisfied moment like it's a very...perfect moment [everyone says ja]

3.230 Interviewer: Do you think social media platforms are a great place to express yourself? To express like your world views or your life.

3.231 Participant: Ja I think it is. Uhm with that there's a lot of like risk...that like comes with it but I do think, I think it is a good place to express yourself cause like in todays' in today uhm social media pretty much like runs the world. And like if you want to get a point across or if you uhm wanna get your voice heard like talking to people it's not really gonna be effective. But if you put it on social media like if it's striking enough and chances are it will be like around the world or whatever so ja like I think it is a, I think it's an effective place or uhm ja to express yourself.

3.232 Interviewer: You spoke about risks of

3.233 Participant: Ja

3.234 Interviewer: Risks you should consider what would they include?

3.235 Participant: Like uhm...if you're gonna say something uhm...there's uhm the whole world can see it so if you say something that's like...super controversial or...I don't know that people can take like the wrong way like you can get hate and like ja people can like cause they see it you can ja get hate for it and stuff, ja it's going around the world so like there is risk with that ja

3.236 Participant: I feel like uhm...I don't really agree with using social media to...uhm express like your emotions because I found most of the time when posting angry, sad uhm depressed, exhausted...you tend to like not think about what you wanna say and just it goes and like you said it' so worldwide and it's so out and you can't take it back uhm it can create problems that weren't there if you didn't like have social media with you at that moment when

you were feeling that angry or sad or whatever. I feel like but also like you said it's also a good way for I feel like social media should be more used for awareness than for like dropping hate if you know what I mean. Like a lot of people like I feel like they enforce their own views and opinions too much on social media I feel like if you feel that this is, you feel a certain way about something then create awareness of it and the people who feel the same way will agree with you and go with you and support you and instead of...like creating conflict with people who don't agree with you cause that's unfair, they don't feel the same way. So I feel like it's, it's, it's very risky because people are so easy to get offended and uhm take things the wrong way just because they want to create drama and conflict. And but on the flip side it's a good way for if you want to raise awareness for gender rights, for uhm...disability for all of that it's a way to get people you know who obviously know of it I mean there is a lot of things I know now that I wouldn't have known if I wasn't on social media

3.237 Interviewer: Ja

3.238 Participant: So ja it's a, it's very two fold. It's up to you how you wanna use it use it for ja, ja

3.239 Interviewer: Okay

3.240 Participant: I think that I don't really think it's a great idea like posting your world uhm things on there because uhm people tend to if you go and then start a conversation then they like ag please it gets too much, sometimes it just gets too much and then like okay this is not a good, it's a good cause but they are not interested because uhm the person is just like throw it with you the whole time. Basically uhm when you see the person they not even speaking about it, they just posting it on Facebook, social media. So people should practice what they preach on social media so that uhm you get, people see it uhm put in real contact as well and not just...portrayed on social media

3.241 Interviewer: Ja for the likes you feel that's the case?

3.242 Participant: I feel people...like they feel one way on social media and then in person they feel ashamed about it or they hide it or they not like that. Like I've seen so many people are so like...outspoken on Facebook and then or not Facebook specifically but on social media and then you get to them in person and then it is all bark and no bite and that just frustrates me because who are you really. What are you even

3.243 Participant: Ja so [everyone laughs awkwardly] [someone coughs]

3.244 Participant: For me as much as I like social media I still feel like face to face conversation [inaudible] because I can post something right now with me putting it in my own way and I know this will be offensive and then [inaudible] this is offensive and then you know but then when I said something right now you tell me no I feel like that's offensive and I've explained this to you now with nobody looking and you can reach the conclusion okay I understood it wrong but then When you say something and someone feels like it is offensive and they get hyped about it they will go on even if you try to explain it So I feel like you know conversations rather than you know talking about serious stuff on social media

3.245 Participant: Ja I totally agree with her I feel like...it's not a good place to actually voice like your opinion. This conversation group or individual is still the way to go because social media has become a platform where it is easy to victimise and be victimised because what you post and what you say it's really easy for someone to take offense to that hence I only post motivational things we all want motivation so nobody is gonna have a problem with that [laughs] and also you saying something when you sad, when you angry you basically even though you are not doing it intentionally but you inviting people into your space [someone say ja] so the moment they comment they might comment something that you don't want to hear. So it's really not a good place to talk about certain things, especially things that you feel strongly about and also there are so many invitations that we accept where it [inaudible] when you want a job, your social media when you apply for your profile and all of that and we want the [inaudible] they might decrease your chances to get a job because you have this political opinion

3.246 Interviewer: Mmm, mmm

3.247 Participant: Your open about this and your open about that so it's not really a way to go just keep it simple, keep it natural keep it intimate with the people around you. It's still going to make the impact...if what you say is really powerful and it has value [inaudible] overnight like on Facebook or Instagram media but it will still impact someone

3.248 Participant: Ja I think as long as you expressing yourself in a...in a good manner you understand. Yes there are times when you feel like posting like I hate this person cause they did A, B, C and D like the most common one men are trash that is like the most common one and I don't understand why should people like always, always express the fact that men are trash, if men are trash why don't you do something about that you understand

3.249 Interviewer: Ja

3.250 Participant: Why don't you rather post about okay men are trash why don't we implement something That will change the fact that men are trash. You understand but most people just go on social media express the fact that this is the current situation but they don't come up with a solution you understand? So it's better if you post something that has a solution

3.251 Participant: So ja. That's, that's the form of expression that I'd think would be a good one

3.252 Participant: I also feel like people have become comfortable with finding comfort in social media from posting when you angry so and post why she did this to me you know what [inaudible] [it sounds like someone is crying - otherwise just sniffing a lot] afterwards and then posting on social media. So I almost feel like that's affecting people now go to social media to find comfort and you know be okay and to know there is somebody out there [audio cuts out - inaudible]

3.253 Interviewer: Ja

3.254 Participant: And whatever you post you need to realise it actually defines who you are [someone says mmm] even if you put posting something cause you angry in the moment,

people are gonna take that you are actually an angry person cause I mean if they meet you in person they like o you always so angry oh you are so sad, oh you always so happy, oh you always ja so...it's very important what you portray on social media cause it could reflect on who you are

3.255 Participant: It's a, it's a like a quote I read like long ago

3.256 Interviewer: Ja

3.257 Participant: That was like told to us in school and it made a lot of sense what Suzy says about Betty says more about Suzy then about Betty. So I feel like that is what posts are if you like continue with like men are this men are that I feel like it [someone else says - says more about who you are] ja and I feel like it's a bit of void in the person like they have daddy issues or stuff like that if you know what I mean [another participant says ja] [another participant says mmm] or if you constantly like you said I hate this and I hate that it just means that ja you got a lot of hate and anger that you have unresolved so but ja it does say ja

3.258 Participant: I think if you say something to her...and she doesn't like it she can tell you now like I don't like it you resolve it and you forget about it [another participant says mmm]. Social media doesn't forget.

3.259 Interviewer: Retweeting [everyone laughs]

3.260 Participant: And the sad part is even if you delete it [inaudible] or the company that you are going to apply to they gonna have access to it and the damage is done [everyone agrees with the statement] [everyone is taking part in a conversation]

3.261 Interviewer: Ja

3.262 Participant: It stinks... like

3.263 Interviewer: Uhm [sighs] how has social media interactions shaped your life and how you view yourself?

3.264 Participant: Joh that's really big uhm...joh and how do I view myself? Joh uhm...does somebody else want to go first?

3.265 Interviewer: Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja

3.266 Participant: [inaudible]

3.267 Participant: Could you please repeat the question?

3.268 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm how has social media interactions shaped your life and how you view yourself?

3.269 Participant: Joh...to be quite honest it has caused...a bit of damage. Just a bit...because like you know when you having a conflict over the phone You gonna go and post about it You understand so not it's not now just you and the person who has conflict it's not just your conflict now everyone else who know the two of you who know about your conflict and you know they start to view you different or both of you different it's just complicated. Social media can

complicate your life so...from, from like the I think the past couple of months I've just tried just like not depend on social media. If I want to say something or I want to talk about something I just don't go on social media I just rather...try and shape myself...by just looking at myself and not onto social media. Ja basically

3.270 Interviewer: Okay

3.271 Participant: I think social media didn't have, it doesn't have [inaudible] cause I think the main reason for that is from a very young age I had association with certain companies so you know when you are a part of a certain MGO of a certain company they give you social media talk [inaudible] but then it's a way of saying hello you can't do this and this and this and I think that form of education kinda like trained me to use social media in a certain way. So now it has impacted me in a sense that it shows me a lot of possibilities and I can do everything and anything that I wanna do based on the people that I follow on social media who is doing great things and it also empowered me to see that if they can do it, I can do it too and I can even do it better so it has actually gained me a positive sense of understanding of my capabilities more than it has ever damaged how I see myself or how the world see me basically

3.272 Interviewer: Ja

3.273 Participant: Well...what's the first part? [laughs]

3.274 Interviewer: Uhm...how has social media interactions shaped your life and how you view yourself?

3.275 Participant: Okay so...shaped my life I think I've realised that you don't...like you don't actually have to tell people what is happening in your life like you don't actually you know tell people you sad, you're anxious [inaudible] because I've seen a lot of people doing that but I've also noticed that what she said that becomes you. So now when post something that out of whatever you used to post. Like wow okay what happened and also how it influence, how does it influence my life well I realised I have been sleeping on my cooking skills and also phew...phew what else? Food and laughing I don't know I just [someone is laughing] phew [inaudible] ja that's [inaudible] but it's fine

3.276 Interviewer: Ja

3.277 Participant: Social media has shaped me quite a lot because I was at a stage where I was really insecure about myself. Because I look a lot different from my family and from my friends and everything so uhm it shaped me and so for a year or so I just didn't go on social media because uhm it made me feel really negative about myself. It made me think I had to be this thin person uhm this beautiful blond with just makeup everywhere but it didn't like help me to shape myself [someone says in a positive way] so after I put it off like I wasn't on social media for a year I uhm grew myself and then I came back on social media I was like okay...so this is what I am not going to be...I am going to be myself and now I see things that I just don't want to be. So it shapes me in the way that uhm that I don't want to be and uhm I have like folders on my phone that's like just jokes so when I have a, a, a uhm a off day and I feel really sad or something I just go into that folder and I cry after like laughing a lot

3.278 Interviewer: Ja

3.279 Participant: Because joh this there's really funny stuff in this world [everyone laughs] so that's it made me like sad in the past but now I changed so it made me happy

3.280 Participant: Uhm I feel in a way shaping my life when I was like D* just said when I was younger...and just started out with social media, obviously you don't know...what it entails like you don't understand the extent of it or I didn't...no one like warned me of it so a lot of things went wrong. And I feel that...like...if you use social media to express your sadness or to tell people you're feeling sad it just creates this false empathy, they pretend to care and you like, like you invite people into your space that don't necessarily care if you gonna get better or anything just it's they just there...to say they there [everyone says ja] and uhm [someone coughs] so I feel like it has made me more cautious as to what I tell people like in person and over social media because even in person you can...telling someone something uhm and like over the phone like let's say we have a fight in person I feel like it actually gets resolved when it's over the phone the only thing people do is they send it to other people and then create even more drama and stuff so in that sense it has made me like grow up and be like toughen up and go to the person in their face and sort it out because over the phone it never works ou. It just goes south immediately [someone says yes] and uhm...so I feel like it has made me be cautious and like in the second identity part uhm I feel like as she said when I was also young and stuff and I just started out with social media I felt really...out like I wasn't like people on social media, I wasn't posting selfies every day with my coffee and stuff like that I just I was never like that but in a sense I felt forced to be like that because everyone else is doing it

3.281 Interviewer: Ja

3.282 Participant: And then you don't get as many likes and shares and all of that and then you just feel worse about yourself because you're not fitting into the world you are trying to force yourself to fit in so then I just left it completely I was like why force yourself into somewhere where you don't fit so I like for a long, long time I think I downloaded Instagram [someone coughs] last year in my first year and but in a way I am glad because now my identity isn't based on my like social media profile like, like she said after shutting it out for a while I grew as a person because you're forced to look at yourself and be like this is who you are so I don't know. I feel like...ja it's not my favourite thing ever but ja .

3.283 Interviewer: Okay

3.284 Participant: Uhm I think social media has uhm shaped my life quite a lot. I think just cause...uhm I look at a lot of things about like what I like and then it like shapes your opinion on things and it like... uhm it shows you what you do like I don't know like you see new things like all the time and then you like ah I actually like, like style for instance like clothes and stuff I feel like my uhm...got shaped a lot because I like follow so many different like accounts and then my style like changes all the time cause I am like ah actually like I really kinda like that kind of dress or whatever and then this week I am kinda over that and that kind of thing

3.285 Interviewer: Ja

3.286 Participant: It happens a lot I think in that kind of sense social media shapes that was just like one example but uhm shapes my...uhm...like preferences and stuff uhm and then what was the other one, the second one? Second part of the question is...uhm okay can I read the entire one?

3.287 Participant: Ja sure

3.288 Interviewer: How has social media interactions shaped your life and your view of yourself?

3.289 Participant: Oh view of myself...uhm...I think...I think...like it doesn't social media doesn't really make me view myself like differently uhm I think also because it's such a prevalent thing that like everyone says don't let social media do that to you so it's kind of learn and you try really hard to not let it uhm...but I think you do sometimes like fall down the hall and like see a really cool account or person that's like I don't know just living life the fullest and then you do look at yourself and your like dam like I wish I was a little bit more like that so I think in that sense you do like view yourself differently to social media but ja I don't think I did a lot like

3.290 Participant: Ja, I think I am very conscious of it that, that can happen so you kinda like know that that's just a picture it's not their life like don't let it get you down

3.291 Interviewer: Sweet. Uhm...how do you think others perceive you on social media and is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

3.292 Participant: Uhm I think people...see me as like very social cause a lot of my photos are like...me with all my friends and like or like friends doing stuff being places and new places and things but I think just being there like I am perceived as a social person or like to have fun and things with people and like that's pretty like I am happy with that, it's a good

3.293 Interviewer: Ja

3.294 Participant: Uhm presentation of who I am so

3.295 Interviewer: So you wouldn't like to be perceived differently?

3.296 Participant: No, no not really

3.297 Interviewer: Okay

3.298 Participant: Uhm I think cause I am not very active on social media in the sense of I don't post a lot of things on Instagram or Facebook...uhm but like from my lifetime stories most people get the idea that I do like being with friends and going out and love poetry and literature and all of that and uhm so I feel like my different social media portfolios don't all represent me equally because I am not active on them all equally [someone coughs] but I kinda do feel that like on Instagram and social media I am more of like my outgoing kind of...personality and being active and out there and but still also being behind my books / is shown but like, like I want people to get to know me through meeting me and getting to know like me in person not over social media so I feel like if you don't like what you see on social media and that's all you use as a base for getting to know me then I don't wanna know you

cause there is more to me than that...so I don't care too much how people see me on social media but more like getting to know me in person that's what important to me

3.299 Participant: I think that uhm people see me [struggling over words] as a outgoing person because I don't really post photos of just myself...I will like post photos of me with a group of friends or something like that so but sometimes it doesn't portray the whole me cause there is days where I just want to be alone and that's not the days I post photos uhm I only post photos when I am happy with friends and I don't post photos when I am sitting uhm or riding horse, or uhm sitting just sitting in the studio listening to music so there is a deeper side to me than what I post on uhm social media

3.300 Interviewer: Ja

3.301 Participant: So ja that's what I'd like people to see

3.302 Interviewer: Repeat the question?

3.303 Participant: No [everyone laughs] okay [inaudible]

3.304 Interviewer: Okay. How do you think others perceive you on social media platforms and [someone coughs] is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

3.305 Participant: I actually post a lot of memes and you know funny things I had been [inaudible] whatever how I feel like or being saucy or whatever [someone is whispering - being saucy] so I feel like [laughs] no I feel like that's how I want to be know I love laughing and I find a lot of funny things even things that you don't find funny so so to me if, if that's how people perceive me then...ja

3.306 Interviewer: Great

3.307 Participant: Joh I have a very serious profile [laughs] I think people perceive me to be a goal oriented young lady which I love so much because that's who I am and also a very serious Christian women [someone is saying mmm] like that's how, that's the image I have on social media and that's % of who I am. I am really satisfied with the image that I give to the world cause I think I am giving them my true self, my thoughts what I love and what I am about. But it's just that it makes people forget that I am human as well and I am also young because there is this other child I posted something and they commented hey bra you never experiment [laughs] it's cause they never expect me to post mean memes or to post something that is not funny or to do something that proves that I am out there I am young...ja it's a good thing that it shows my values, my morals, what I stand for but it doesn't give them a chance to understand that hey I am also young I do post a lot because of memes and all of that.

3.308 Participant: Okay ja I think that a lot of the times whatever I post it's I never try to go like way too hectic it really goes to show that I am not a complicated person I just post about if I choose to post about things that are like very motivational I'll just stick to that so...ja it, it is the type of person I am so...that the perception I do get from people

3.309 Interviewer: Ja, ja

3.310 Participant: So ja I think what I post and perceptions and everything is just ...it's okay

3.311 Interviewer: Ja

3.312 Participant: It's who I am

3.313 Interviewer: Alright

3.314 Participant: Also with me I also post a lot of [inaudible] I'll post uhm...uhm...gospel song, and the next thing is [inaudible] is very funny. So I'll post whatever I feel like posting it's my profile it's complicated and that's okay that's what I wanna post and I'll post it ja

3.315 Interviewer: Alright [everyone is giggling] Uhm what kinds of comments do you receive from your selfie posts...and...okay. There are two questions but I am trying to combine them. What kind of comments do you receive about you selfie posts and which of them are most memorable and why?

3.316 Participant: Ooh uhm usually like cause only sort of my people follow me so that they can see what it is so usually it's always like positive, very motivational things. I don't know if it's a pretty photo then like they'll be like ah pretty like that kind of thin or if it's like a silly one then they like... I don't know it's like banter but it's like harmless so I am like [inaudible] but it's like your friends so it's funny...uhm...I don't really post selfies so I don't know but it for like birthdays and stuff uhm then you know we would like post selfies cause you take selfies with your friends and they always like really bad and funny and stuff so...uhm I don't...I can't like think of one right now

3.317 Interviewer: Cool

3.318 Participant: O wait! The most recent one I put on my Instagram okay wait a long time ago but I was at home and it was one of my friends birthday and we went out and it was a little boomerang thingy where you like ja that one I don't know it's like the only one I can remember [laughs] uhm...the most memorable like the type of comment?

3.319 Interviewer: Yes

3.320 Participant: [inaudible] cause I don't have like a lot of followers and I don't have a lot of people but those that I do are like close friends so most of the time it's positive things like pretty picture, you look so cute, like your hair stuff like that and then so uhm so it's usually positive and then the most I don't think like I don't have a most memorable comment but I think the most memorable thing for me was when someone else posted like a picture of us on her Instagram captioned like how much she cares about me and like stuff like that was quite something

3.321 Participant: I also get like positive uhm...comments on my photos, mainly because it's my family and friends [chuckles] and my aunties being really weird so uhm ja and but the most memorable one for me was my cousin because I value his uhm like insight on me like really, so when he comments something good and or just says something in the line of mmm I like this photo

3.322 Interviewer: Ja

3.323 Participant: Well I never post a lot of selfies but I always get [inaudible] or whatever but the most memorable one I think is uhm a selfie I took when I took lots of pictures and actually people liked so much that [inaudible] it was me, me, me, me, me so I actually [inaudible] that picture and the comments I got to me it was just a normal picture but you know people actually liked it

3.324 Interviewer: Ja so what did they say about the picture?

3.325 Participant: They said they liked it, I am prettier with my hair cut

3.326 Interviewer: Ja

3.327 Participant: Ja it was just those types of things [inaudible]

3.328 Interviewer: Okay

3.329 Participant: [inaudible] but when I do I always have a deco [struggling over word] a deep quote [laughs] or something like that. Philosophical and that how I change their minds [audio cuts out - inaudible] [laughs] ja and the comments that I usually get of course they comment on the picture, but the comments actually go for the caption what's what I love the most, cause I want to hear what they think, I want to hear their opinions I want us to talk...ja. I know that I am pretty, I know [someone said something - laughs] yes [inaudible] ja that's one thing [inaudible] the comments that I get based on the caption that goes with the picture and the one that stands out was my graduation selfie [someone coughs] oooh. It was so nice seeing people reposting it ja that was really nice and how much there are, I don't like those kinds of talks because they make me [giggles] speechless. But that day joh it was amazing joh

3.330 Participant: Can you please repeat the question?

3.331 Interviewer: Yup. What kinds of comments do you receive about your selfie posts and what have the most memorable [struggling over word] comments been and why?

3.332 Participant: Okay uhm...I used to get a lot of positive comments and...like which I just find normal but then I just, I remember like these two pictures that I posted there was one which I posted like uhm a few weeks ago and the caption was like o wow I am so happy and people literally took that photo and reposted it joh you glowing who's the guy, they were asking me things like that and so I can't be happy on my own like

3.333 Interviewer: Ja

3.334 Participant: Ah guy come on and then there's another one which I posted like I think the, the caption was something like I look like Caster and everyone was like more like a meal more like buffet you know they just kept coming [another participant is giggling] and I was like wow so this is how people actually perceive me

3.335 Interviewer: Ja

3.336 Participant: This is cool

3.337 Interviewer: Ja

3.338 Participant: Ja [everyone is laughing and chatting]

3.339 Interviewer: Do people's reactions to your posts influence how you see yourself?

3.340 Participant: Uhm...joh...it depends who...I think, I think if it's just like random people then not really cause like if you post something on social media you obviously like it and obviously looked it for a while to be like okay I am gonna post it so if it's someone who I don't really like value that much or he's not like as meaningful in my life uhm then no they don't like it doesn't really affect me. But if it is somebody that uhm I like value then ja sometimes I write back you just like rewrite and you look at yourself sort of like joh should I post that like why and then little bit...only if they like are meaningful

3.341 Interviewer: Ja

3.342 Participant: Ja sometimes

3.343 Participant: Uhm like I, I, I don't think it changes anything about how I perceive myself but I must say it does like uhm...it is nice when you post a video and someone or many people comment like positive things it does like give you that reassurance that wow okay I thought this picture was really pretty and other people think it's pretty too Ja, ja, ja. But no I don't feel like if it doesn't get a lot of comments that I now like it's not nice if you know what I mean but still like I am not gonna now go let myself completely just fall apart like it happens sometimes you don't get all the comment and likes you want but that doesn't make, change who you are so

3.344 Participant: I also think that uhm if I post something then it's because I like it and I don't really care if somebody else likes it ut if they comment like and say I like this but like I don't really if somebody comments and there's something positive I am like okay thank you I would like say thank you and everything but it doesn't uhm like affect me

3.345 Interviewer: Ja

3.346 Participant: But I must say when the hot guy...comments on your photo [everyone reacts to this statement]

3.347 Participant: It just well to me uhm...it doesn't really affect me [someone coughs] obviously [inaudible] so if somebody says something negative I tend to be like okay ignore the comment, I just don't go deeper into it cause I've seen it happen a lot and sometimes people are just spiteful,. Even when the picture is great not from me from somebody else and they just be spiteful because you don't know why they being spiteful so I tend to just ignore them

3.348 Interviewer: Okay

3.349 Participant: It, it doesn't, it doesn't affect how I see myself or how I present myself as an individual but I feel like I know who I am what you say I am gonna consider it but it doesn't change me [nother participant says mmm ja] cause I am fine with what I know that doesn't mean that I [inaudible] I do but they don't have to be determined [inaudible] besides if I get a compliment from [audio cuts out - inaudible] it's a compliment it's my baby of course she knows she likes me she thinks I am pretty but if it's something that is said by someone that I

don't know very personally then it counts more than what my friend says. Cause I feel like [inaudible] and for someone else who isn't my friend it actually means something. So I think the comments I get from strangers even the small ones you get when you going to the bridge, those ones count more than the ones that comes from my friends [audio cuts out - inaudible]

3.350 Interviewer: Ja

3.351 Participant: For me, for me it doesn't really change who I am. It just makes me want to improve myself a lot more you understand like okay so this is how people see me I should actually be like this you know. It's not like just because people see me as a [inaudible] I should stay pretty no I should just try and become a better person next time they see me better than the person that their complimenting

3.350 Participant: Just makes me want to be on a quest for improvement each time so ja

3.351 Participant: Ja uhm with me I think uhm it just if someone says something critical not a negative it's a critic then I take it into account or if it's a compliment and I am not feeling well then I can actually you know [inaudible] refer to it whenever I am not feeling okay [inaudible] I was walking like life was just and this other guy was like [inaudible] and then he just walked away and I just stood there like okay [everyone reacts to this statement] Sometimes you feel like I am walking [audio cuts out - inaudible] and then I just walk like normally with more feeling but I feel like if it is a critic or it's a comment that would actually make me [inaudible] you know empower me

3.352 Participant: [inaudible] but if you just being spiteful then I am just like

3.353 Interviewer: Alright that's it uhm is there anything else that you would like to add that you felt I did not cover?

Focus group 4 (Male and female participants)

4.1 Interviewer: Participants have been briefed [someone coughs] about the study and informed consent forms have been signed, I will now commence with the questioning. Uhm what, what social media platforms are you on?..oh wait. [participant is speaking - inaudible] okay no it's cool. Which social media platforms are you on?

4.2 Female participant: I'll go first

4.3 Interviewer: Okay

4.4 Female participant: I am only active really on WhatsApp, but I do have Twitter and Facebook and YouTube

4.5 Interviewer: Alright

4.6 Female participant: Okay

4.7 Female participant: Same...I am only, only active on WhatsApp I have all the others I am just not active

4.8 Interviewer: What are all the others?

4.9 Female participant: Uhm Instagram, Facebook, Twitter ...ja those are the ones that I remember so far

4.10 Interviewer: Alright

4.11 Male participant: Uhm I think like most people uhm like all of us here are pretty active on what's this uhm WhatsApp and then Facebook not really that much I don't know about the others but I am not really on uhm active on thingy on, on Facebook.

4.12 Interviewer: Mmm

4.13 participant: Twitter yes definitely and then Instagram ja and for myself the other one that I am also active on is research cube. It is basically like for uhm scientist and everything so

4.14 Interviewer: Which, which is it?

4.15 Participant: Research cube it's basically a platform where scientists can just communicate ja their findings and, and everything

4.16 Interviewer: Which, which uhm research group is that?

4.17 Male participant: Uhm science.

4.18 Interviewer: Science?

4.19 Male participant: Yes

4.20 Interviewer: Okay, okay

4.21 Male participant: Okay I am like, I am like active very much on Instagram I load a story up every day I am that guy I am every day on Twitter [participants laughs] like I wake up to Twitter [participants laugh] you know and Facebook...no I just use it when I need people to like something of mine

4.22 Interviewer: Ja

4.23 Male participant: When I am doing a competition that's when I post about it and say guys please go and like my thing on Instagram

4.24 Interviewer: Instagram ja

4.25 Male participant: WhatsApp I am every day on it cause I have to be on it you know

4.26 Interviewer: Ja

4.27 Male participant: To keep in touch with Precious

4.28 Interviewer: [laughs] okay

4.29 Male participant: And the others like Pintrest and whatever I just have them there for the sake of just knowing... what someone that I want to get something what they've pinned on their account

4.30 Interviewer: Mmm

4.31 Mal participant: Then I just go and check there cause it's a really good platform if you wanna get your friends that have it...stuff that way you will see what they like

4.32 Interviewer: Intresting...okay

4.33 Female participant: Uhm...I like to go on WhatsApp, Pintrest I have Instagram and Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook...ja

4.34 Interviewer: Okay.

4.35 Female participant: I am very active on WhatsApp that's where I communicate most. Twitter I just use it to keep in contact with everything that is happening around

4.36 Interviewer: Mmm

4.37 Female participant: Like...I don't watch a lot of T.V so [inaudible] I get it on Twitter [everyone laughs] and then Facebook I only use it when I really miss someone I...I lost contact with

3.38 Interviewer: Mmm

4.39 Participant: Ja, just to catch up there

4.40 Interviewer: Okay

4.41 Male participant: I would be uhm I am active on WhatsApp and Instagram uhm Facebook I don't like it that well I just started a Twitter account few months ago [another participant says something] [laughter] ja uhm

4.42 Male participant: Uhm I have...I think all I think

4.43 Interviewer: What is all?

4.44 Male participant: [laughs] I have let's see WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram...do I have Snapchat?...I think so...uhm ja but I, I only use Twitter and WhatsApp but not that much. Twitter most of the time

4.45 Interviewer: Okay

4.46 Male participant: Ja

4.47 Interviewer: Alright. Uhm which of these do you enjoy the most and why?

4.48 Female participant: WhatsApp

4.50 Interviewer: Why?

4.50 Female participant: Because like that's where you get to talk to people [another participant says ja] [another participant says - it's instant communication]

4.51 Interviewer: Ja

4.52 Male participant: I really enjoy Instagram [participants are chatting and laughing amongst each other] Instagram is really good, it's really good.

4.53 Male participant: Others just post pictures of who they aren't

4.54 Interviewer: Twitter?

4.55 Male participant: Ja, that is where most people are

4.56 Interviewer: Ja

4.57 Participant: You can go[speak]

4.58 Interviewer: Okay

4.59 Female participant: For me

4.60 Female participant: I was gonna say I was just gonna say WhatsApp for me is the communication base like that I need to communicate with people

4.61 Interviewer: Mmm

4.62 Female participant: It's necessary Twitter is very necessary if you want to half also gain a lot of knowledge Twitter is there for that but I enjoy those a lot just WhatsApp and Twitter for me that's, that's about it.

4.63 Interviewer: Okay

4.64 Male participant: And then for me like Instagram ja that, that is where I give people like a piece of myself for them just to see who T* is you know cause like I, I, I, I post like cause the thing is like I am very much about good quality photos you know so if you post bad quality photos I unfollow you instantly [everyone reacts to that statement] literally I just open my

account and I just saw someone I unfollow what's my point that's my data you know so for me it's Instagram because of that

4.65 Interviewer: Mmm

4.66 Male participant: And then Twitter is my diary in all of this

4.67 Interviewer: Mmm

4.68 Male participant: Especially at night like

4.69 Interviewer: Mmm

4.70 Male participant: I post what I'm feeling at that time so for me it's between those two WhatsApp I just use it for my stories that's my meme thing

4.71 Interviewer: Ja

4.72 Male participant: You know very well

4.73 Interviewer: Ja

4.74 Male participant: That's like where I take memes and i just make fun of everything

4.75 Interviewer: Ja

4.76 Male participant: But those WhatsApp and

4.77 Interviewer: Instagram

4.78 Male participant: Instagram and Twitter those are my two where I let people in you know

4.79 Female participant: Uhm I don't necessarily enjoy WhatsApp I just I am on it like you said on a communication basis your obligated to when your trying to communicate with this generation but I am not necessarily [participants are giggling] I am not pro, I am not pro social media altogether

4.80 Interviewer: Mmm

4.81 Female participant: I feel like it's overrated so...that's basically me

4.82 Participant: So you want sms? [everyone laughs]

4.83 Female participant: I am the traditional...phone call

4.84 Participant: Okay

4.85 Male participant: Eish airtime

4.86 Female participant: Ja that's, that's the thing but...it also shows you winning. It, it shows effort more than anything...this is effortless. Texting is quite effortless.

4.87 Female participant: Uhm I enjoy Pintrest because it helps me with inspiration especially in terms of projects and so forth and Snapchat I enjoy for the filters [someone laughs] I mean

the filters are very nice. WhatsApp communication like you said...ja uhm Instagram obviously explore how else will you know what is going on in peoples lives...so ja

4.88 Male participant: Uhm I like Twitter cause it's sort of like a news platform [everyone giggles] you don't watch the I, I don't think any of us watches the news on T.V [another participant says ja] so [chuckles] it's, it does I think atleast half the job

4.89 Interviewer: Mmm

4.90 Male participant: Uhm and also cause I like football [another participant syas we need to talk footie there bru] ja...basically [laughs]

4.91 Interviewer: Okay

4.92 Male participant: Uhm WhatsApp I just have to do it man I just...have to use it to communicate ja

4.93 Interviewer: Alright...so long uhm for how long have you had these social media platforms?

4.94 Male participant: Oeg...

4.95 Female participant: Sjoe

4.96 Female participant: Okay for me...I've had Facebook for a long time and I was very active on Facebook

4.97 Interviewer: What's a very long time?

4.98 Female participant: For like say about two years or so and then I, I, I left it

4.99 Interviewer: Mmm

4.100 Female participant: Then I left Facebook...that was a lot for me

4.101 Interviewer: Ja

4.102 Female participant: It was an addiction. I would be on it every day all the time data like... it was very uhm...demanding in my life

4.103 Interviewer: Mmm

4.104 Female participant: And I left it because I realised joh this, this would probably ruin me [laughs] so cause I am a person that needs...myself and I found that I was probaby losing myself within the social media thing. It was just too big for me at the time, so I left it and right now I am just there following people, pages and things, not really active on it. And WhatsApp...like I've had WhatsApp I remember a time where I used BBM where it was still BBM [laughs] I used that a lot just for my friends uhm...but ja WhatsApp it's been like ever since I think WhatsApp I don't know when WhatsApp made it but I've been using that. And Twitter really since last year...ja I started using Twitter last year but ja that's ja

4.105 Interviewer: Okay

4.106 Male participant: [long pause] [laughs] okay Instagram I've had Instagram since I was on holiday that's where I got it cause I was like hey beautiful the sea let me get somewhere I can post these pictures. Then Twitter, I've had Twitter officially like I've had it in high school but I didn't use the account

4.107 Interviewer: Mmm

4.108 Male participant: Officially I started using it last year on February 24th. I even remember the day cause that's the day I made the mistake cause I am addicted to it now [laughs]

4.109 Interviewer: [laughs]

4.110 Male participant: Facebook, I had Twitter accounts one when I create and in grade 10 I forgot my password and I restarted my current Facebook from grade

4.111 Interviewer: So how long has that been...from?

4.112 Male participant: From that, I was in grade 10 in 2011 so

4.113 Interviewer: 7 years?

4.114 Male participant: Yes

4.115 Interviewer: Okay

4.116 Male participant: And then uhm what's this thing [participants laugh] WhatsApp

4.117: Ja

4.118 Male participant: I am gonna go through, I don't know see ever since I got a smartphone which was like grade

4.119 Interviewer: Mmm

4.120 Participant: Grade 9 or grade 10 I don't know when it came through [someone is attempting to get the correct date] ja so I don't know. Ever since then Pinterest I got it recently when two years ago and then ja

4.121 Female participant: I can't necessarily put a time frame, like an accurate time frame to it. But all I know is I...I got it the new social networks when everyone started talking about it and I realised I need to get hold of people and I can't through SMS's...so that's when I guess I started. Can't put a time frame.

4.122 Male participant: I started Facebook on when I was doing grade 9 ja

4.123 Interviewer: So that is 7 years

4.124 Male participant: years. And I started Instagram on when I was in matric

4.125 Interviewer: Mmm

4.126 Male participant: Ja so [inaudible] right now I just go there to see, I don't post anymore I don't make-up stories so ja [participant laughs]

4.127 Male participant: Uhm...I started social media as a whole when I got my blackberry is probably grade 9 so that was 2011 I think

4.128 Interviewer: Okay

4.129 Male participant: Uhm but I had Facebook before that uhm I used to use my friend's computer. I think we got it grade 7 and that was 2009? [other participants says ja] and we barely used it we just created it cause a friend of ours was like super excited about [laughs] it and then we were like okay fine let's do it uhm but over the years I've used it less and less and less and now...I don't use it at all

4.130 Interviewer: Mmm

4.131 Male participant: Uhm Twitter...I started Twitter probably... as well...but I've gone through like multiple accounts I keep on forgetting my password [laughs] uhm WhatsApp 2014 ja uhm...what else?

4.132 Interviewer: What else do you have?

4.133 Male participant: O ja Instagram, Instagram probably...uhm ja

4.134 Interviewer: Okay

4.135 Male participant: Uhm... I started Instagram in I think 2015

4.136 Interviewer: Okay

4.137 Female participant: Uhm Twitter I've had it since grade 8 but I never used it so I recently

4.138 Interviewer: How long ago was grade 8?

4.139 Female participant: That was like 2012

4.140 Interviewer: That's okay

4.141 Female participant: And then Twitter I got it again last year

4.142 Interviewer: Mmm

4.143 Female participant: And then Pinterest I've been using it since last year. WhatsApp I've been using it started like when BBM got outdated and everything

4.144 Interviewer: Mmm

4.145 Female participant: YouTube I started last year, Snapchat I started like when it started to do everything and then Facebook I've had it since grade 8 but I don't really log on so [participants are having a conversation among themselves]

4.146 Male participant: Uhm for myself I started Instagram and Twitter almost at the...same time which is basically in 2013

4.147 Male participant: I think but then with Twitter, I kept on forgetting uhm password like this guy so...ja and then WhatsApp basically maybe in grade 9 same with Facebook I think

- 4.148 Interviewer:** Grade was how long ago?
- 4.149 Male participant:** Uhm can't remember [another participant says 2011]
- 4.150 Male participant:** O shit ja [laughs] so, so, so ja that is basically that and the others like [inaudible] my second year which is like in
- 4.151 Interviewer:** Mmm
- 4.152 Male participant:** And ja...that's basically it
- 4.153 Interviewer:** Alright
- 4.154 Male participant:** Can I ask...are you gonna bleep the swearing if, if it happens?
- 4.155 Interviewer:** Uhm...no probably not [everyone laughs]
- 4.156 Male participant:** Alright
- 4.157 Interviewer:** Only if I feel I need to
- 4.158 Male participant:** No it's just I picked up something
- 4.159 Interviewer:** Okay, no it's ...if the interaction is genuine so ja
- 4.160 Male participant:** Alright
- 4.161 Female participant:** I started Facebook in 2015
- 4.162 Interviewer:** Mmm
- 4.163 Female participant:** I am still very into Twitter...and WhatsApp I've had for the longest time can't remember when
- 4.164 Interviewer:** Alright...sweet. How much time do you think you spend on social media?
- 4.165 Male participant:** My phone tells me [everyone laughs]
- 4.166 Interviewer:** Hey? Do you time it?
- 4.167 Male participant:** I think nowadays on Facebook...maybe an hour?
- 4.168 Interviewer:** Okay. An hour every day or...is it spread out?
- 4.169 Male participant:** No it's okay maybe in the week I would say like four hours
- 4.170 Interviewer:** Okay
- 4.171 Male participant:** In the week
- 4.172 Interviewer:** Okay
- 4.173 Male participant:** And then Twitter and Instagram combined I would say like 5 hours in three days
- 4.174 Interviewer:** Okay

4.175 Male participant: So...uhm what was the other one uhm research gate not like very much but then maybe like two hours in two days

4.176 Interviewer: Okay

4.177 Male participant: So uhm what was the other one? Research gate not really that much maybe like two hours every two days so

4.178 Interviewer: Okay, about an hour per day

4.179 Male participant: Ja an hour a day so...so...ja then WhatsApp...joh...probably every hour...every day [everyone laughs] [inaudible] is that a message? [everyone laughs] [everyone is laughing so loud I can't hear the conversation between the interviewer and the participant] so...so that

4.180 Interviewer: Okay

4.181 Male participant: So ja

4.182 Female participant: Ja for me uhm with Twitter it's...probably every morning 30 minutes...or so...an hour [everyone laughs] [participant is commenting - inaudible] What!? No, it has to be like I follow, I follow groups there that, that I gain a lot from so I have to see what day they posted uhm [loud noise] Facebook...[someone is whispering - inaudible] Facebook I, I haven't been using it cause of data really but it would be the same as the others. So then it's every morning probably sometimes at night so not that much

4.183 Interviewer: Mmm

4.184 Female participant: But WhatsApp every day, all day every day all day 24/7

4.185 Interviewer: 24/7?

4.186 Female participant: yes 24/7 365 [laughs]

4.187 Female participant: Uhm I use social media like 70 % of my day cause I mean I have like WIFI so I am always on it

4.188 Interviewer: Ja

4.189 Female participant: So I am always on it

4.190 Interviewer: Ja

4.191 Female participant: So it's not a train smash...so ja

4.192 Interviewer: So if, if you were to uhm...think...convert that 70 % how many hours would you think it is in a day?

4.193 Female participant: Okay roughly I would say I sleep like 6 hours in an 18 hour day. And then only Instagram uses like...maybe like 10 hours

4.194 Interviewer: A day?

4.195 Female participant: A day. But I don't use it like constantly

4.196 Interviewer: Ja [inaudible]

4.197 Male participant: Like cause I am on WIFI so I can be like ah let me just look and explore and then you continue working so it's like maybe 10 minutes, 10 minutes, 10 minutes

4.198 Interviewer: Mmm

4.199 Female participant: So ja. WhatsApp I barely use it, maybe like an hour

4.200 Interviewer: Mmm

4.202 Female participant: And then Pinterest I use like maybe two hours...a day...so ja

4.203 Interviewer: Okay

4.204 Male participant: [long pause] okay I just checked on my phone and looked at actually my battery's state cause that will tell me obviously. So my battery percentage it says that I use 63 % of my battery on Youtube, 25 % on, on, on what's this thing [inaudible] on Twitter 36 % of it, 24 % of it on WhatsApp and then 13 % of it on Instagram and 12 % on music...right. That's my battery percentage on those things so I would roughly say...like no, no, no not hours on all of those things right

4.205 Interviewer: Mmm

4.206 Male participant: That's even a lot for me

4.207 Interviewer: Okay it's less?

4.208 Male participant: It's less I would say in the 6 hours I probably use 24 hours from the

4.209 Interviewer: Okay

4.210 Male participant: On social media like I am taking the bit's and pieces

4.211 Interviewer: Mmm

4.212 Male participant: Like 20 minute there, you know putting it all together it makes 6 hours for me

4.213 Interviewer: Okay

4.214 Male participant: Entirely

4.215 Interviewer: Every day?

4.216 Male participant: Yes 2 hours on average

4.217 Interviewer: Okay

4.218 Male participant: Instagram and Facebook it's basically...two hours a day. Cause whenever I go on my laptop I click on two tabs...Instagram and Facebook so it's not...it doesn't take a lot of time for me to encounter into it so but uhm WhatsApp eish I would roughly say uhm... hours [inaudible]

4.219 Interviewer: Okay

4.220 Male participant: Like I don't really use it that much

4.221 Interviewer: Mmm okay

4.222 Female participant: I guess with me it's oh uhm as I said I am active on WhatsApp right so for me it would be maybe two hours...solely based on the fact that uhm because of my occupation, my current position but that's it

4.223 Interviewer: Okay

4.224 Female participant: Ja

4.225 Male participant: Uhm [long pause] I think...I probably spend most my time on Twitter...but it's, it's spread out across a day so I am not really sure how much time I actually spend on the, on the app but I think probably...an hour and a half to two hours

4.226 Interviewer: Mmm

4.227 Male participant: Then WhatsApp probably an hour at most...or maybe...half an hour [giggles] ja no it's an hour

4.228 Interviewer: On WhatsApp?

4.229 Male participant: On WhatsApp

4.230 Interviewer: Okay

4.231 Male participant: Uhm Facebook I can go months without going, logging on Instagram 30 min a day [participants are whispering - inaudible] [laughs] ja, ja I think that's it

4.232 Interviewer: Okay. [long pause] okay now we're gonna move on to your selfies uhm...I don't know if you were briefed T? So uhm I would have loved for you guys to have selfies...of yourself of course

4.233 Participant: [whispers of course - giggles]

4.234 Interviewer: Uhm if you don't have one now just...have one in mind cause the next couple of questions are going to be touching on your selfies...uhm what do you think a selfie is?

4.235 Male participant: Self-taken picture

4.236 Interviewer: Self-taken picture?

4.237 Male participant: Yes

4.238 Interviewer: Okay

4.239 Female participant: [long pause] ja it's basically...a picture you take of yourself

4.240 Interviewer: Okay

4.241 Female participant: Or friends or...ja something you take

[long pause - everyone laughs]

4.242 Interviewer: Okay [participants are all reacting to the long pause and laughing]

4.243 Male participant: Wait what...I didn't get the memo on the front camera

4.244 Female participant: Front camera?

[participants are having a loud discussion over the front and back camera] [quality, admin of picture taking regarding back and front cameras are discussed] [laughter]

4.245 Male participant: I don't know if there is a concrete definition but I think what they say just put the front camera, for now, please [participants all comments at once]

4.246 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm why did you bring uhm this particular selfie today or in your guys' case why do you have this particular selfie...in mind?

4.247 Male participant: For me, I was really happy because in that picture I am so uhm eish [inaudible] like my smile is out there

4.248 Interviewer: Ja

4.249 Male participant: So I was happy that I was able to do that picture that's why I am a very uhm happy man and so ja

4.250 Interviewer: Okay

4.251 Male participant: Does this have to be a selfie like just you?

4.252 Interviewer: It, it depends on, on your definition of a selfie

4.253 Male participant: Joh

4.254 Interviewer: So this is where that definition [participant laughs very loudly]

4.255 Male participant: That's even more like hectic

4.256 Female participant: Uhm...the reason why I have this uhm specific selfie is because I look bomb as hell [another participant says ja] uhm and plus I tried a different hairstyle that I've never done before

4.257 Interviewer: Mmm

4.258 Female participant: New-look and everything so I felt like it was the perfect moment to take a photo

4.259 Interviewer: Oh

4.260 Female participant: For me, it was...reliant on the whole backdrop of when I took the selfie. Cause that particular day I was uhm it was a new thing that I done I was very happy...with a good person...uhm [the other participants are laughing and having a conversation very loudly] assumptions guys but really it was for me...the quality [laughing] the quality of the selfie or the joy it brings me is the backdrop of when I took it and what was

happening in that specific moment. So it was like uhm a good ending to a good day sort of so it has a lot of meaning to me that's it...yes

4.261 Female participant: I feel like when people take selfies they try to create an illusion of perfection so and what's weird is that...social media is so fabricated that we are not in touch with reality. So when you take a selfie...it's almost as if you want to create this illusion you want to portray a picture to someone so that someone sees you in a particular manner, you want to seem appealing

4.262 Interviewer: Mmm

4.263 Female participant: So for me...if I were to take this picture in my subconscious I want to...look appealing [another participant says ja] but it's another sort of like let's take a selfie because hey everyone's doing it

4.264 Interviewer: Ja

4.265 Participant: In the conscious mind [interviewer and participant is having a conversation]

4.266 Male participant: [long pause] I don't like selfies but...in all honesty, I don't like actually being on it like I went through my page today like most of them are with people like the selfies in my phone

4.267 Male participant: Like there is a bunch of people around me

4.268 Interviewer: Ja

4.269 Male participant: So uhm for me like if I were to have one in my head other than that one it would be more like behind me it's, it's more like she said it would be more about the background behind me than the like in England that's the type of vibe and like she said I try and create this perfect image of you know jissie guys I finally made it to this place, you know because normally what I try when I take a selfie by myself I try to put it there and I try to make whatever is behind me smaller than me

4.270 Male participant: So then I try and do stuff like this behind me

4.271 Male participant: Because you can actually just do that angle wise. You know so for me it would be that type of illusion uhm thinking that whatever is behind me I can conquer it

4.272 Interviewer: Ja

4.273 Male participant: That's the type of...idea of send out you know one that is in my head

4.274 Interviewer: Ja

4.275 Male participant: [inaudible]

4.276 Interviewer: So the one that you have right now that you saw or I guess you can see one

4.277 Participant: Yes

4.278 Interviewer: What is...wait why, why, why did you take that particular one why did you end up choosing that particular one when going through your selfies?

4.279 Male participant: It was my sister's graduation

4.280 Interviewer: Mmm

4.281 Male participant: It was a happy day it was you know I was you know I was at Wit's for the day I was tired cause we kept on taking [inaudible] but it was just the feeling that it gave me it was just the proud you know like pride and a whole lot that I see so that's why I picked this like you see this is one where I am smiling and fresh haircut [everyone reacts to what has been said] I am just clean in that photo I have a suit and everything so ja

4.282 Female participant: [laughs] ja good people

4.283 Male participant: Good people you know...family

4.284 Interviewer: [someone is coughing] [laughs] okay

4.285 Male participant: Uhm ja the one I have in mind is...me and like a group of friends...that uhm that like I just well ja I met them this year Alright but it was almost as though when we took that selfie it was the start of like this friendship that you know we would still try to develop it's cool but it's also very honest...so I guess this selfie is just you know a new beginning I guess...I don't really have like that really deep [laughs] definition

4.286 Interviewer: Mmm

4.287 Male participant: Ja

4.288 Male participant: Uhm for me the selfie that I had in mind it is just me and a couple of friends of mine but they didn't know that I was taking the selfie so I just captured that [inaudible] cause I believe [inaudible] just capture the thought of them looking or something like that cause if they do like see you they be like like she said try to be perfect or something like that so I just capture the moment when they just themselves

4.289 Interviewer: Mmm

4.290 Male participant: You know with laughter and everything so ja

4.291 Interviewer: Ja. So uhm what do you want to communicate to others with this selfie?

4.292 Female participant: With that particular selfie?

4.293 Interviewer: Ja

4.294 Male participant: [long pause] for me that's taking my side [inaudible] that's why I communicate [inaudible]

4.295 Interviewer: Mmm

4.296 Female participant: So ja that's the communication I would say a picture is worth a thousand words ja. For me I feel like authenticity...cause selfies usually like we've been saying there is a lot of fakeness to it...there's a lot of uhm thought out joy or happiness or uhm something that someone wants people to think I have that I don't have. For me with this particular one would be hey you can really be happy like for real, for real happy and smile like

a joyful smile. It doesn't have to be one that you know is forced or one that this particular post has in and that people need to see that I am lit like for it's, it's just pure authenticity, pure happiness and joy that it is actually possible you don't need to just be you know taking one to make yourself feel better and rely on what other people's feedback is for me. Like that portray for me that I don't need other people to say they happy for me to be happy I know that I was happy. So...with this particular one, it would be that for me

4.297 Male participant: Okay I also agree with her. It's, it's a bit of hysterics I was also [inaudible] what I like to do is I like to is when I smile I don't really feel like my smile is beautiful or whatever but you don't have to best looking to be good looking so taking a picture...just take the picture makes you feel like actually right for you

4.298 Interviewer: Mmm

4.299 Male participant: Ja it's not about you being beautiful...okay

4.300 Female participant: Uhm...I slightly disagree with B*. Uhm because with, with the picture I have in mind with the selfie I have in mind I feel like just like everyone else and this is, this will sound cliché...you, you want a form of validation, you want, you want a form of affirmation. So this I think that is the reason why maybe I take selfies not that I do it all the time but it's almost as if you want, you want people to see that you actually you're, you're trying to conform in a way with, with what everyone is doing so might as well just do it to touch back on my previous answer. Doing it cause everyone else is doing it

4.301 Interviewer: Mmm

4.302 Male participant: Me myself I was just showing people I am fresh [inaudible] [everyone is laughing] you know I am in Joburg that's what I am communicating in that I am not gonna lie I am just you know literally your boy fresh

4.303 Interviewer: Ja

4.304 Male participant: He cleaned up nicely [another participant is laughing] that's what I am trying like you know. If you clean up

4.305 Interviewer: Mmm

4.306 Male participant: That's how you can look like that's what I am other than you know they already mentioned the other stuff if you are happy, you know I know they also say [inaudible] you know my sister was there but for me, it was the other side of it like my mistakes are behind me, they show that the trees were aligned in such a way that it was just perfect so yes that's what cause there was even a fountain-like [everyone is laughing] any way you guys can

4.307 Interviewer: Okay

4.308 Participant: Uhm...what am I trying to portray?

4.309 Interviewer: Mmm...or rather what are you trying to communicate?

4.310 Participant: To communicate?

4.311 Interviewer: With that particular selfie

4.312 Male participant: Joh that's, that's a difficult one hey. Uhm...probably...just [long pause] uhm showing people that or...what am I trying to communicate? O my word why is this so different?[participant says something - inaudible] I guess so...but I think it was a little bit more than that. I think maybe we're trying to say that you know...hey this is us and you know because the truth is like...we all kinda different uhm because like seven, seven of us seven...ja and we all different. There is an Indian guy there is...Sotho guy like there is a Twshana guy, there's me a Zulu guy, uhm so it's...ja just show that differentness can come together I guess...ja let's just say that [laughs]

4.313 Male participant: Uhm...I don't believe I was trying to communicate anything, I don't believe everything has meaning. Sometimes you just take a picture cause you want to take it

4.314 Interviewer: Mmm

4.315 Female participant: You don't have to have like a whole story behind it

4.316 Interviewer: Ja

4.317 Female participant: So I genuinely took that picture because uhm my friends wanted to see how my hair look so I took a picture and I showed them...that was literally it

4.318 Interviewer: Okay. Uhm [clears throat] what process do you usually follow to help you determine which selfie you will be posting to social media platforms?

4.319 Male participant: Process?

4.320 Interviewer: Besides using a front camera [laughs] [everyone laughs]

4.321 Female participant: I guess it's just asking your friends like how does this picture look? Should I post this one just asking for advice?

4.322 Interviewer: Okay

4.323 Female participant: For me, that's how I do it.

4.324 Female participant: That's just ja I don't, I, I can't go through all of them by myself

4.325 Interviewer: Mmm

4.326 Female participant: That's, that's weird [laughs] we have to be in a group and we have to decide as a group that this is the picture that needs to be up there [everyone laughs]

4.327 Male participant: I think with this it is literally either or this or that, that's it. I don't post pictures based on a certain process. I do it by myself actually like I don't ask my friends like she said. I would post pictures because I feel like this picture is beautiful then I post it.

4.328 Interviewer: So...do you take just one picture and then you post that picture or are there a series of pictures that you post? Sorry that you take

4.329 Male participant: Sometimes I post three pictures I don't take one picture, I take a couple of pictures.

4.330 Interviewer: So what determines that one picture that makes the cut?

4.331 Male participant: Oh uhm [long pause] I, I, I, I would say that for me it would maybe because the [inaudible] I have the kind of friends [inaudible] so I don't know if they would appear in a certain way they wouldn't like it...so I just try to see like how is it and then cause sometimes I close my eyes and then when I open them I did something so I just try to make sure that everyone is on the same level

4.332 Interviewer: Mmm

4.333 Male participant: And then [laughing] so, so, so ja [everyone is laughing and chatting with each other]

4.334 Interviewer: Okay

4.335 Male participant: Me I need a caption. Me that's my favourite thing like take the photo, if I only have in, in my head even like if I don't have the words for that and go with it...it's not gonna be on my social media one day. Like sometimes I've gone through Instagram where I had the photo there but if I didn't have the caption

4.336 Interviewer: Mmm

4.337 Male participant: I am not gonna post it and then secondly it started off like the background. What is going on behind me? It's like in the one photo which is perfect, then there is some weird thing there that is not in the background [participants laugh] like I need to make sure my background is clear and sometimes like I link it to a song and even me at that time like the thing is I can take a selfie and not load it up but three months later load it up depending on how I am feeling about that picture

4.338 Male participant: So even that moment that I took it like I am looking afraid of whatever or I am just [inaudible] also I have a thing I can take a photo but not post it or put it on my story cause then I feel like it's gonna mess up my profile like they staring at my Instagram account and then this one loves to be on my story cause it's might be removed after hours you know cause I don't feel like it's gonna be there and stuff like that

4.339 Interviewer: Ja

4.340 Female participant: For me, it's the caption, the background and my mood at the time...yeah. Those are my that's a process.

4.341 Female participant: O ok for me uhm...I take a lot of pictures. If I am gonna take a picture I am probably gonna take a lot of them because like I said the history I had with Facebook I had to make sure...it's good quality. And to make sure that I look pretty there and that the background also matters like it really matters, the background matters and nothing is really distracting from the main focus, the main focus would be me [another participant says hey - everyone laughs] and if I have friends I would definitely make sure that they look good as well cause, cause I don't want someone taking a picture of me then I look ugly in their picture [everyone laughs] like we always have a friend who always chooses the worst pictures of us and I get so mad at her cause we don't do that like you know, you don't do that. Like you

watch out for them [everyone laughs] so it's ja it's, it's a process I choose them myself I don't really ask people and I know when I don't look good as good as I should in the picture or not and I can tell Nah this is not my best and this one is so I do have I am very selective I don't really find it necessary to always be posting pictures of me not always

4.342 Interviewer: Okay

4.343 Female participant: Just when I feel like it...like hey you haven't seen me in a while [everyone laughs] or I wanna flex I look good in this then I'll put it out there so

4.344 Female participant: Uhm my process is okay basically I have like most of the time I don't think about like selfies you don't think [inaudible] and then I'll post it on WhatsApp and watch it on my story so the amount of people that are hyped up over the same picture that picture I'll post

4.345 Interviewer: On, on Instagram?

4.346 Female participant: Ja Instagram stories. So that's my process

4.347 Interviewer: Okay

4.348 Male participant: Is it me now? [everyone laughs] uhm...how do you take pictures? The process was...small like one guy was like hey guys we are all here like we, we were at church so it was the first time we were all there like at the same time

4.349 Interviewer: Mmm

4.350 Male participant: Cause normally we meet like in life group or something like that then we'll study so...that time we were all at church and I think most of us like dressed up really well [laughs] so one guy decided that yo let's take a picture

4.351 Interviewer: Mmm

4.352 Participant: And we took the picture. But...I don't think like personally I don't think I have a process like if I feel like I should take a picture I do if I feel like I should post it I do cause like if I, if I do post a picture it is probably after like a day or two I don't take the pictures and then post them

4.353 Interviewer: Mmm

4.354 Male participant: Immediately ja I also hardly take pictures

4.355 Interviewer: Alright

4.356 Male participant: Yes

4.357 Interviewer: Uhm...do you believe that social media affects how people look at themselves?

4.358 Male participant: Definitely

4.359 Participant: Mmm

4.360 Male participant: Definitely

4.361 Interviewer: How?

4.362 Male participant: Because the thing is now that like on the, on the, like what clothing brands do right they like show you they dress up a model

4.363 Interviewer: Mmm

4.364 Male participant: And you get there and see the model and how the clothes sit on them and then once you think that guys are a bit big and I am skinny right so I will never get that guy then already I can already tell already from looking at the guy, okay that coat one will not sit the same way on me

4.365 Interviewer: Mmm

4.366 Male participant: Two, the pants I'm gonna need, he is wearing straight leg jeans okay I am gonna need to get myself skinny jeans you know what I am saying there are a whole lot of things like even okay he is wearing a normal polo neck shirt I need to get myself a v neck shirt even in a smaller size because you know stuff like that determines a whole lot of stuff

4.367 Interviewer: Mmm

4.368 Male participant: And also it influences how you like stuff and they even use your favourite celebrities to influence that. Like I am a Ronaldo fan...so it means probably Nike will be one of my favourite brands, unfortunately not you know so but I am just like making some of this up

4.369 Interviewer: Mmm

4.370 Male participant: A lot of people have been loyal even

4.371 Interviewer: Mmm

4.372 Male participant: Once you get into locked into a brand you gonna be influenced a lot by you gonna check a lot of ideas and there is a lot of stuff that they sold at cotton on you know like even one-up it's not the white girls anymore you can tell cause they have cotton on I call the white girls especially on campus [someone laughs] I call them cotton on girls because they wear the grey uhm I don't know what you call it uhm coat

4.373 Interviewer: Mmm

4.374 Male participant: With jeans, Allstars, if it's not Allstars it's superstars you know like we have already that type of stuff so we are influenced a lot by social media in terms of brands

4.375 Interviewer: Ja

4.376 Male participant: Even you can take it to that side

4.377 Interviewer: Ja

4.378 Male participant: That's how I see it I mean there is even social media influence you know like guys and girls on Instagram just their account are created to influence how we dress

4.379 Interviewer: Mmm

4.380 Male participant: How we view things like if needed you to wear something as a [inaudible] the whole of probably million followers half of them is gonna start using it Rihanna* did it on Snapchat then she told you to stop using Snapchat, delete it how many people deleted Snapchat on that day

4.381 Interviewer: Mmm

4.382 Female participant: So social media does influence how we view things, lifestyle everything, it really does, unfortunately. It's sad but ja...it's reality

4.383 Participant: Uhm...I think for females...okay let me just obviously I speak from a perspective of females...uhm social media would affect us in terms of our...body shapes...right so...theres a and you can't contest there is a particular body shape that you are supposed to uhm adhere to I guess...and if you don't fit that you not eligible I don't know if that's the correct word your not eligible or for you to not be a certain standard and for me personally it now creates a...like a ball of insecurities as well cause if I can't fit that then I am not enough

4.384 Interviewer: Mmm

4.385 Participant: So...that's one of the main reasons why I am not on social media because it sort of like you are pressurised to meet certain standards enough though you, you don't have to cause sometimes you really can't but uhm no you, no you don't have to but that, that for me is just in terms of appearance it's all it always is about appearance and uhm how you are supposed to look how you are even suppose to pose or whatnot and when you don't your, your not a slay queen, you are not eligible

4.386 Female participant: For me also that's why I am against Facebook because it puts pressure on you whether you like it or not even if you can act strong-willed and say no I can resist this it's such a divide. It, it puts a lot of pressure on you cause...there is a lot of poses you have to have, filters you have to use, makeup, hairstyles, dress codes, everything it's, it's just this whole world of things it even influences say relationships you have to get a certain guy that looks like this and you, joh he can't be, he can't be shorter than you, he can't be too tall, all these things people you look up to is people you end up looking up to all those celebs all those things, you look up to them and if they do this you gonna wanna do it, if they have hair like this you have to want their sort of hair it's unconscious, it's conscious whatever but it's there

4.387 Interviewer: Ja

4.388 Female participant: There is a lot of pressure on you even your lifestyle, the club you go to, the standards uhm the people you have to have as friends, people you have to socialise with, the kind of groups you can't speak with these people you can't wanna speak with these people if you wanna get into this certain place it's a lot, it's just a whole lot of baggage and drama and frustration cause not all of us can get there. It really affects your whole life as a whole cause our, our paces are different and if somebody's dreams you don't know how they

got there and now you wanna get there quickly and you can't and then the pressure it's a lot it's a whole lot [participants chatting about the pressure and it being too much]

4.389 Participant: Okay now I will take away from what they said basically

4.390 Interviewer: Mmm

4.391 Male participant: What I can say is this God is giving you one face and you get yourself another one [inaudible] like they said you, not a slayer queen you don't meet those standards your body shape so it's a battle between two houses so [inaudible] Instagram, social media affects everything

4.392 Interviewer: Ja

4.393 Male participant: Uhm for me I would say what all three of them just said uhm it's a, it's a [inaudible] you know it's a matter of social protocol so in terms of social protocol it's basically the standards that you need to live under to classify the social media as normal

4.394 Interviewer: Mmm

4.395 Male participant: meet the quality or you don't really fit in so even if you have to do certain things [inaudible] wear some certain type of clothing [everyone laughs] and, and, and, and ja so for me [inaudible]

4.396 Interviewer: We can come back to it later it's cool.

4.397 Male participant: Uhm I think it just influences what we wanna look like, who we wanna be and...what we want people to perceive I guess uhm ja

4.398 Interviewer: Mmm

4.399 Male participant: Basically what everyone said, I think everyone said it [another participant says ja] basically

4.400 Male participant: Ja I agree with everything that everyone already said but I am saying I what I wanted to say was uhm so once you, once you deviate from the [inaudible] it's normal, I believe there is normal this type of way and normal that type of way to me I would say normal is there is like many definitions, I am going to do like normal like how many people are there in the world so if there is billion, there is definitions for normality so it's silly but ja and, and, and again what she said uhm in like makeup and everything...I believe for me like more specifically with girls

4.401 Interviewer: Mmm

4.402 Male participant: I usually hate when they put on make-up cause for me make-up okay for them makeup is not like to hide that they're ugly but mainly to compliment your, your beauty

4.403 Interviewer: Mmm

4.404 Male participant: In every aspect, they are all beautiful like in any type of way

4.405 Interviewer: Mmm

4.406 Participant: So

4.407 Participant: Uhm I am actually going to say don't put make-up on or too much make-up

4.408 Interviewer: Too much make-up [interviewer and participant having a conversation and everyone is laughing very loudly]

4.409 Participant: But I guess like...like I said too much make-up what is too much make-up? What is that exactly? [everyone laughs]

4.410 Male participant: I feel like...in general with females is do whatever you want to do to make us happy like if you feel like you wanna get plastic surgery and get boobs if that makes you happy then do that so if you saying no girls are wearing too much makeup, no girls shouldn't have these and what not that...that's not right for you to say that to say that we can't have too much make-up. If I feel like this is the right amount of make-up I am a do that because it makes me happy [another participant says right] that's how I see ja

4.411 Male participant: Even if it needs to become like to be a certain position with people, maybe you are trying to fit in is that okay?

4.412 Female participant: People have this perception that we want to do things to fit in we don't necessarily want to do that to fit in

4.413 Male participant: Most people

4.414 Female participant: Well this is how I see it okay? This is just how I see it, I see people don't want to fit in like if you check me out on social media like thick girls look out there, girls with risky outfit's no one necessarily wants to fit in, we do things to make us happy that's what we're doing I don't think like fitting in

4.415 Male participant: [long pause] but sometimes you could take it to be with some other people [long pause] because of the influence of oversea.

4.416 Male participant: [inaudible] it's the same, it's the same where we have on vuzun parents wrote to vuzun that they, to stop rich kids of South Africa because there was too much pressure on parents in terms of what that show was showing how rich kids in South Africa was living, the fact that at a kid could be driving a car that is worth over million and you know black parents cause that's, that's the people consumes tv that's black people and now you sit there and you watch that it, it, it like your kids come in there like when am I getting my uhm, uhm R [everyone is laughing] you see so stuff like that cause it can make some people like I've seen friends even ashamed of where they live like their parents have...it's a beautiful house in my eyes but then because of where they live they don't wanna say no you know I live in this neighbourhood

4.417 Male participant: I nearly fell into that, facing that you know when I was in high school I was like cause we were still building our house and I just didn't want people to come to see our house, I just went and then I realised that they are building it you know

4.418 Interviewer: Ja

4.419 Male participant: You know so they can come and see it because it's being built

4.420 Male participant: So hey man these things it's also it's just social media even moving to movies you know and T.V and all those things

4.421 Interviewer: Ja, moving to media now

4.422 Male participant: Then you end up going cause that's one of the reasons I hate reality T.V shows like I watched an episode of [inaudible] like not even minutes of that you become stupid. How much of that is pretending? The fighting scripted to, to a point where like to like in minutes I could pick that up, it's not normal to write a script and I can't watch it you know so she was also trying to portray a perfect image

4.423 Interviewer: Ja

4.424 Male participant: To the country and girls are gonna fall into that and think that is how you are leading up to me getting married that's the type of nonsense I need to be you know so it's sad

4.425 Interviewer: Ja

4.426 Male participant: it really is sad so

4.427 Male participant: I, I, I...I think it's unfair to...tell girls to not put on make-up...because [everyone is laughing] because social media creates this image that...you know...I think every guy likes and so every girl should be like that and so...it maybe I don't know but maybe some of them feel uhm it breaks them down like I don't know I, I, I don't know how to phrase this in the right way but I think it sort of makes them feel self-conscious about themselves.

4.428 Male participant: So in what I am trying to say basically is social media breaks people down and then when people are trying to uhm become a certain way or I don't know trying to build a certain image we still your not that person

4.429 Interviewer: Ja

4.430 Male participant: But then for who they were we still you know

4.431 Interviewer: You can never win

4.432 Male participant: Ja basically

4.433 Male participant: So ja I think it's unfair to say that as a guy ja

4.434 Interviewer: Ja

4.435 Female participant: Uhm on previous comments I feel like it's all on character like how you are as a person and your values to get like so influenced that you actually pressure your parents to buy you an expensive car I feel like doing that depends on you as a person like who you are if you gonna let such things like influence you and like what I believe is stand your man like always stand your man like doesn't matter how long it takes you to get to a point where you get to the point where you can buy the car the...I think you literally over and with social media nowadays people are now becoming like themselves, we are sticking true to our characters like if you wanna use for an example this O hair situation, girls are now becoming free with their hair, they have short hair, they become free, they becoming the person that they have always wanted to be like it surprises kind of a bit...ja

4.436 Male participant: Ja I like what you say like we shouldn't focus on the uhm negatives of social media but it also has its positives as well

4.437 Interviewer: Mmm

4.438 Male participant: [inaudible] when I see those people it gives me the courage to study I take my books and I study [another participant says ja] so that I can be successful in life as well

4.439 Interviewer: Ja

4.440 Male participant: Ja. So being creative I've, I've follow DJ [inaudible] the way he promotes his brand the way he conducts his businesses like it's really influencing me a lot like it tells you like feed your passion instead of working for someone

4.441 Male participant: Like the time your working when you feed your passion you make more money than when your working for

4.442 Interviewer: Mmm

4.443 Male participant: Ja

4.444 Male participant: For me, I was gonna say uhm the influence thing is the same when like black people

4.445 Interviewer: Ja

4.446 Male participant: Started barbie...girls like growing up they were barbie and then when we like you know the reason people started saying black, there is no black dolls we need black girls to see themselves also in that way like that, not just a light-skinned girl that's pretty [audio is scratching - inaudible] in Thailand and actually in the East like the uhm Asia they put lightening uhm thingies in their creams to make their ladies lighter because if you are [audio is very difficult to listen to] and black culture so at least from a young age you can start seeing your very own people as people of you know you know you can identify yourself you know sort of another influence [audio is scratching - inaudible]

4.447 Interviewer: Okay. So now we are moving on to identity. Uhm what would you define as identity?

4.448 Female participant: [long pause] sjoe [long pause] in terms of?

4.449 Male participant: Something that resembles you

4.450 Interviewer: Something that resembles you?

4.451 Male participant: Ja

4.452 Interviewer: Okay

4.453 Female participant: I guess you pick up your identity when you're from your parents, those are the first people you get to experience. So...you...adopt...their habit's and...their...routine and so forth and within that you adopt things like their religion so now you, you, you sort of try and transition into your parents' identity for the time being

4.454 Interviewer: Mmm

4.455 Female participant: Then obviously when you grow older you establish your own identity. I don't know

4.456 Male participant: Identity is who you are and who you grow into being. Do you know?

4.457 Male participant: Influenced by your surroundings...ja and people help define yourself. You make your own identity as she said

4.458 Female participant: Ja at a certain point you, you are able to create that identity. There's a point where really it's based on your surroundings and the people, your immediate uhm the people around you but at a certain point in your life where I can get my own identity, I can find out for myself who I am and choose to go this way and choose to say this is me. So at a certain point, you decide what your identity lies in and who you are

4.459 Interviewer: Uhm [sighs] [long pause] do you think social media platforms are a great place to express yourself? For instance, express your world views and just who you are in general?

4.460 Male participant: I think they are but it's risky because of, of, of, of, of like different opinions like I might see the world as I might think like okay you know uhm polygamy I think of it this way I don't want to get into it but I feel at the moment I express it what is another person who is a what you call it a monogamist

4.461 Interviewer: Monogamist?

4.462 Male participant: Yes. He what's he gonna say you know [door squeaking] so...cause I think I am one person I, I put my views out there I'll, I'll stand for my point so ja

4.463 Interviewer: Regardless of what

4.464 Male participant: Regardless of what anyone says it's your opinion we'll agree to disagree or disagree and move on you know it's life

4.465 Interviewer: Ja

4.466 Female participant: I was gonna say if you strong-willed [door squeaking] you can do it. It's an amazing place to do it. But if you at a point where you have a bit of lower self-esteem, you not that strong

4.470 Interviewer: Ja

4.471 Female participant: Then it could crush you. It, it, it might not be a good idea but if you strong enough to withstand cause people are, there's a lot of people out there and some are mean, some are critical, some will challenge you, so you have to be able to handle that you have to be able to partake in it and not let it crush you, you can't let it destroy you or get to your head too much

4.472 Interviewer: Okay

4.473 Participant: Ja

4.474 Male participant: Ja and if I may something about criticisms I think, I think like with criticism you have to understand the cause for me I, I, I am a type of person who is there is a situation [inaudible] because I think there is such a thing as constructive criticism so not in terms of criticism as a need to shut you down I feel like how you see it and you should try to relax and [inaudible]

4.475 Female participant: Ja I totally agree with what he said we should look at criticism like we should think of criticism as someone talking to us like criticism should be like a conversation we should take what people say and if people say something like really mean that will hurt you, think of it like karma will get them so don't act on it think of it, take it in, resolve it and then look at yourself and like okay my perspective maybe I should change a bit cause it kind of makes sense [inaudible] so ja

4.476 Interviewer: Alright. How has social media interactions shaped your life and how you view yourself?

4.477 Male participant: [indistinct chatter and laughter] [long pause] I think for me like with Twitter I, I, I, I've made myself to see the good side of Twitter cause now I see cyberbullying is real [another participant says ja] and it has in a way like I repost tweets cause like I said earlier for me I see Twitter as a diary, a diary that's open to everyone

4.478 Interviewer: Mmm

4.479 Male participant: To see, so like I, I get that some people will build you up, some will crush you. You know and, and for me talking on the platform it has made me very confident in the way of like how I talk about football the fact that now I used to think like the way I see football was not how other people see it until I started Tweeting about a match and then one guy would be like ah ja and then I thought I was the only one so it started not just being me and other people started agreeing and disagreeing so for me it, it made me confident in the way of like living more in like what I say and analysis of football alone cause you know next week I am studying like a whole football show by myself now so it's stuff like that and it was not just because I was waiting for validation from Twitter it was just that my point on a certain topic where it was not just agreed upon by one person. But you know...

4.480 Interviewer: Ja

4.481 Male participant: Jip so [inaudible] outside and it's always nice to think about an idea [inaudible] on social media about the same thing and then from there you guys can just get up on like that and who knows they might become like a thing one day and everything so, so it ja. For more people like people who don't go out maybe they don't like going out something like that [inaudible] and you just go on social media and just talking then you can hear what is going on and they can't wait to expose themselves and everything...ja

4.482 Interviewer: Ja

[participant and interviewer are joking with each other - everyone laughs]

4.483 Interviewer: Okay uhm how do you think others perceive you on social media?

4.484 Male participant: Joh

4.485 Male participant: Perceive you?

4.486 Interviewer: Ja

[indistinct chatter and laughter]

4.487 Interviewer: Or rather like let me link it to the next question uhm how do you think others perceive you on social media platforms and is it different from how you would like to be perceived?

4.488 Male participant: Ja most definite because for not for me [making noise with papers - inaudible] so for me like when people see T* on social media and he's very [inaudible] outgoing on social media so when you see him and the way he looks is very, very different [two participants are chatting and laughing] so, so, so I uhm it's very different

4.489 Interviewer: Ja

4.490 Male participant: The uhm why is like okay the thing is for the party I finished like two weeks ago [inaudible] k* digital ambassador so a lot of people obviously when they see this obviously on the video I have to be the [inaudible] you know stuff like that and even with I don't wanna say my posts perse but what they see on the universities media platforms with regards to me will be that he is a jolly person who I am but the thing is you know of the camera you know you are not that [inaudible] because, in a way you put up, you have to you are given a script so you will get that script [inaudible] move away from that it's the same thing like when they ask me a question what would you miss a lot about this? Just that I am being followed around on camera but not the attention because I don't like the attention. Lot of people think that so for me I would say that social media gives people uhm I've been called arrogant, fuck boy, I've been called all these other things which I am not even because I know girls that also the other thing, I know girls and I always say the thing of I normally leave people knowing I believe I know people because people also think that I'll go to graduation, literally when you go to graduation I'll be stopped by four or five of my friends not strangers not like hey [inaudible] you know so that type of thing so I'm known for knowing people so for me it sells an image that I am this cause you know I know a lot of beautiful girls I will not lie I know

beautiful girls so it's a whole thing of like this guy what about him and it's not that I am doing anything with these girls just because I am seen with P* and P* is a nice girl and then I bump into her at Cubana you know not that I go to Cubana but right now I am there and so it's a image that people see so also for me I believe I am the type of person I need my space but then on social media people don't see that

4.491 Interviewer: Ja

4.492 Male participant: They see me as you know the cool guy and I am not even a cool guy truly I don't think I am a cool guy...so ja that for me [everyone laughs] like you can imagine what people think about you only I know cause they told me...so ask your friends what they think of you

4.493 Female participant: Are we are you being literal?

4.494 Male participant: Yes [laugh]

4.495 Male participant: I was not fictional I was being like...people legit think that I am, I am not any of those things

4.496 Female participant: But then again do we blame people because that's what you put out there you know what I am saying like... I am saying like I know like [inaudible] that's how you are but then again what you put out there [inaudible] like do you really blame people [inaudible] like someone walking in the street and then they smile at you and you think no this person is lazy they are not doing anything do you get it? So like...do we really blame people for like having this idea of who we are because of the things we put out there

4.497 Male participant: Also sometimes it's not about that he can be literally very confident but I believe I am a naturally confident person and now because he is confident and I am confident I am obviously not gonna be attracted to you, people with lower self-esteem or I am going to go [inaudible] people with confidence and people might see it as arrogant cause we don't mind if P* [inaudible] she's a nice girl [inaudible] go talk to her. I am not think twice I am gonna go and be like hey P* whatever not that I am gonna mack on her but I am gonna have a conversation with her you see. So it's also sometimes sorry people should not apologise for who they are to other people [inaudible] if P* puts whatever she puts on she knows exactly why but someone is gonna overanalyse her the overthinkers you know so from the perspective of how people view things and stuff like that so it's very you know [inaudible] I am happy with the friends I have you know so type stuff like that

4.498 Interviewer: Okay uhm okay again two questions I am gonna make it one. What kinds of comment do you receive about your selfie posts and which of these comments have been the most memorable?

4.499 Male participant: Nice time

4.500 Interviewer: That's the comment you received?

4.501 Male participant: Ja

4.502 Interviewer: And the one that's been

4.503 Participant: Ja

4.504 Interviewer: Okay. What does nice time mean?

4.505 Male participant: Uhm [inaudible] for me nice time [inaudible] and just talking you know [inaudible]

4.506 Male participant: A few months on something else so...ja [inaudible]

4.507 Interviewer: Comments?

4.508 Female participant: Well for me...lately it's been cause I am [everyone laughs] cause I am a very uhm private person, I've always been very private, school I am very private [inaudible] if you need something I am there for you. But I am that person if I am, if I am struggling I wouldn't really go hey I am struggling. I usually have one person that I talk to and that's it

4.509 Female participant: So no one really knows me like so for me now with the things that I post I get stuff like o you very social nowadays or your very happy or you look very pretty you slay now I am, I am not that person you know I am not that expressive in a sense like I can be pretty but I am not always there was no reason I feel. So now when I have things to go to or things where I have to look you know uhm extra you know not really just simple it's, it's more of ja when I don't have to look basic where I really have to ja so now it's a thing of o it's different now it's that thing cause people perceive you best on what you give them because I didn't give them...they didn't really have anything to say but now because I am giving more they, they are making uhm comments and making decisions based on what they see I am getting it now. So if I am very bubbly and I don't show people I am bubbly, people are not gonna think I am bubbly really especially on social media so it's a thing of if I show them I am happy if I so them I am going out they gonna see it and they gonna comment on it so lately because I am showing more that's what I am getting from people so I feel like o now we see this is what you doing

4.510 Interviewer: Ja

4.511 Participant: You look happier wherein the sense I might have always been happy

4.512 Interviewer: Ja

4.513 Female participant: Just I wasn't showing it so ja

4.514 Male participant: I think I concur with that o well the first one uhm I am private I think, I, I enjoy spending time alone I, I like people a lot they [everyone laughs] I like spending time with people and having conversations I like this but I am, I am not that person a % of the time so I...I barely get like uhm feedback so to say cause I don't know really give or I don't provide people with enough details to receive feedback. But if there is something that I receive maybe it will be that I've grown up [everyone laughs] so ja

4.515 Interviewer: Okay

[participant and interviewer joking around - inaudible]

4.516 Interviewer: Is there anything else that you guys would like to add? That you felt that I didn't cover?

Appendix E: Reflexive Notes

All in all, I conducted four great focus groups. They went as smoothly as I had anticipated and most of the participants were excited to share their experiences. Naturally, I was anxious, however, the participants engaged sufficiently during the focus group discussions. The participants were honest, however, some held reservations regarding how to conduct themselves and whether or not they were allowed to use expressive language to adequately communicate their ideas. The participants were honest about their social media experiences which covered a broad spectrum, from positive to negative experiences and everything else in between. This level of openness made my job as a facilitator less stressful and the problems I had were mostly ensuring that everybody felt they were heard.

During the month of June 2018, I received my transcribed work and I started asking corrections where necessary. This process felt very long and tedious. Upon reading the transcriptions I noticed that I made unconscious but brief remarks to show that I was engaged in what the participants were saying. I spotted several “hmm” and “ja” remarks which left me feeling a little frustrated. However, this is a learning experience and I’ll be more conscious of how I engage with the participants in future. During this time I recall noticing negative remarks made about social media and personally, I did not think I would be able to integrate that into the research study, however, with time I realised that these negative experiences were part of the participants’ narratives. Naturally one would prefer to have favourable responses, however, the participants shared that body image issues and unrealistic standards were only part of a bigger life story and that they are still exploring what these mean to them.

During the analysis of the results, I worked tirelessly to get the work done adequately. I undermined this process and believed it would take me a matter of hours but I ended up spending days on the process because I had to read and re-read the transcriptions and I constantly find what seemed like newer themes that I previously hadn’t identified. The process began feeling long and tedious I also started feeling anxious and demotivated. I decided to disengage from research for about three days and helped my parents renovate the house. This wasn’t enough to stop me from thinking about the themes and stories that the participants shared. The process of writing up this whole manuscript was similar to what I experienced when analysing the data. I would get excited to start a new chapter because it meant the end was nearer however, the chapter would start feeling long and I would feel demotivated, take a brief break then re-engage

with the research process. Finally I managed to successfully compile the manuscript which seemed so far away when I started the process.

Appendix F: TurnItIn Report