

“I just don’t feel Worthy”

**A qualitative investigation of the relationship
between social media and self-esteem in young
adult South African women.**

Catherine Breedt

17130063

Supervisor: Suhaila Ameer

Research – RESE8419

Honours Psychology

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

From a South African perspective, there is a lack of knowledge involving the relationship between social media and self-esteem in young adult women. In an era where the use of social media influences many aspects of daily life, it is important to understand consequences of social media and how it influences self-esteem. Furthermore, large amounts of time are spent on various social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram where engagement with others becomes of great importance (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018).

The present study made use of a qualitative research design, and online semi structured interviews via Skype were conducted in order to maintain the safety of the participants and researcher during the Covid-19 pandemic. Three young adult women between the ages of 19 and 35 years who resided in Durban were interviewed and comprised the sample used in this study and thereafter, data collected was analysed thematically.

The findings illustrated that a relationship exists between social media and self-esteem in young adult South African women. The nature of the relationship, positive and negative, is dependent on the content that is engaged with at any given time. Content that surrounds the ideal body image has a negative influence on self-esteem and participants reported having a low self-esteem after engaging with content. A recommendation for future studies would be to use a larger sample to gather a wider range of data.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Contextualisation

It is not unknown that a relationship exists between social media and self-esteem. In a country like South Africa that is becoming more and more westernised, where technology is progressing and adapting, people are spending an increased amount of time on social media which undoubtedly has some form of impact. Social comparison takes place when people compare themselves to others (Festinger, 1954). This comparison influences an individual's self-esteem which is the feelings a person has towards themselves (Köse & Doğan, 2019). Low self-esteem, in relation to social media, can be experienced if a person negatively perceives them self in comparison to the content of social media (Köse & Doğan, 2019). In contrast, high self-esteem is also another factor to look at when conducting research because people can actually increase their self-esteem when using social media if they have a positive self-image (Köse & Doğan, 2019).

There is an overall lack of information regarding this specific area in terms of a South African context. For this reason, this particular topic within South Africa provided insight into how this phenomenon may be different to that in other countries and other research gleaned from international sources. Similarly, conducting qualitative research also provided insight into similarities of this phenomenon in terms of international and South African based research. With this being said, this study investigated self-esteem in terms of how it is influenced by social media, the impact social media has and the effects of social media. In addition to this, with regards to South Africa, there is an overall lack of indigenous information surrounding the relationship between social media and self-esteem with specific reference to women. By comprehensively defining social media, self-esteem and social comparison, a better understanding of these concepts was gained, and this then provided a well-defined foundation when progressing with the research. In addition to this, Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison Theory was used to inform this research by providing a comprehensive overview of what social comparison is. Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm was adopted to guide this research due to its emphasis on

subjectivity in research and the importance of individual experiences (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

1.2. Rationale

Jan et al., (2017) explain that social media can leave long lasting effects on individuals which makes this topic relevant. Many women use social media and are frequently exposed to celebrities and influencers who exhibit certain desirable features. This can cause their self-esteem to be lowered due to their social media usage (Motseki & Oyedemi, 2017). In addition to this, research from a South African perspective is needed because there is a shortage of recent, relevant information that can inform and educate those who use social media frequently. Qualitative research in this field can also allow for a better understanding of the relationship between social media and self-esteem due to most studies being quantitative in nature. Previous literature surrounding the impact of social media on self-esteem is largely international, with very few academic pieces referring directly to the South African context. In addition to the lack of knowledge of social media and self-esteem in South Africa, the research that has been published is largely quantitative, thus making the overall knowledge of this topic highly empirical, detracting from the subjective nature of self-esteem and how it is influenced by social media.

1.3. Problem statement

From a South African perspective, there is a lack of knowledge involving the relationship between social media and self-esteem in young adult women. In an era where the use of social media influences many aspects of daily life, it is important to understand the consequences of social media and how it influences self-esteem. Furthermore, large amounts of time are spent on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat where engagement with others becomes of great importance (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018).

1.4. Purpose statement

This research seeks to add to the body of knowledge about the relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of women within a South African context.

1.5. Research question and objectives

1.5.1. Primary research question

- What is the relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of South African women?

1.5.2. Research questions

- How does social media impact self-esteem?
- What are the effects of social media on self-esteem?

1.5.3. Research objectives

- To determine the relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of South African women
- To determine how social media impacts self-esteem.
- To determine the effects of social media on self-esteem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptualisation

Social media refers to a synergy of online platforms where content is created and uploaded to the public by members of a given platform (Köse & Doğan, 2019). Examples of social media platforms that will be used in this study include Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Social media is used to share information regarding the self and experiences to others via social media platforms (Köse & Doğan, 2019). In terms of this research, understanding what social media is and how it is used will provide insight into how social media influences self-esteem. The social media platforms this study will use include Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat.

Self-esteem can be defined as a combination of two facets; self-efficiency and self-worth (Köse & Doğan, 2019). In addition to this, Jan et al. (2017) defines self-esteem as an amalgamation of self-confidence and self-respect. Taylor et al., (2007, cited in Köse & Doğan, 2019) define self-esteem as the opinions and beliefs a person has regarding themselves and is acquired by socialising, receiving feedback from others and self-perception.

Social comparison occurs when individuals compare themselves to others based on certain physical characteristics. Bergagna and Tartaglia (2018) state that social media allows for social comparison to occur. Social comparison involves self-evaluations based on external information (Jan et al., 2017). Social comparison can result in and stem from positive or negative experiences. For the purpose of this research, social comparison will be used in order to determine levels of self-esteem in the sample of South African women.

2.2. Theoretical foundation

Social comparison theory will be used to inform this study. The theory explains that people evaluate themselves by comparing them self to others (Festinger, 1954). This comparison, according to Festinger (1954), is done in order to collect valid information about them self and then with the use of this information, people compare themselves to others who are perceived as similar. Italian researchers Bergagna and Tartaglia (2018), use Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison to inform their research on self-esteem and Facebook usage. The theory implies that a persons' self-esteem effects their social media use as it is a means for social comparison. If an individual has positive social comparison position, social media may be used to boost self-esteem by comparing themselves to others (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018). Jan et al., (2017) use Festinger's (1954) theory to explain that social media leads people to perform self-evaluations and comparisons based on other people's social roles, class, popularity, appearance and wealth. Social comparison, according to Gallagher (2017), occurs when time is spent on social media engaging in content that perceived as desirable.

When applied to this research, this theory will be used to explain how social media influences individuals' perceptions of self-esteem (Festinger, 1954). This theory will aid in identifying a relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of young adult South African women. In addition to this, Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory will be used to identify what aspects of social media have an impact on the self-esteem of women within South Africa.

2.3. Critical review of literature

- **Social media**

The term social media refers to a synergy of online platforms where content is created and uploaded to the public by members of a given platform (Köse & Doğan, 2019). In this day and age, websites, blogs, Wikipedia and online dictionaries are a thing of the past that are now overshadowed by the collection of social media sites available for use by anyone and everyone around the world (Köse & Doğan, 2019). Social media allows people to share information regarding themselves to social media platforms for the online community to see (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018). In the study conducted by Turkish researchers, Köse and Doğan, (2019) a few of the social media sites that were considered include, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. The relevance of these social media sites is that they will be used in this research study because people access numerous social media platforms and not just one exclusively.

Köse and Doğan, (2019) explain the above-mentioned social media sites as follows; Facebook is a user centred social media platform where people can post comments, pictures and videos and interact with other users by using the like, comment or share features. Facebook according to Bergagna and Tartaglia (2018), is widely used by a variety of ages ranging from adolescents to people over the age of 30. In addition to Facebook, Instagram is another platform where pictures can be shared. Instagram is exclusively centred around sharing photos where other users can comment, share, like and save content that interests them (Köse & Doğan, 2019). Snapchat is an application that is operated via mobile phones. The app allows users to share and post pictures that are automatically deleted 24 hours after the image is shared (Köse & Doğan, 2019).

Jan et al. (2017) further explain that Facebook, in addition to what Köse and Doğan, (2019) have explained above, is used to connect family and friends on a global scale and aids in maintaining these types of relationships. These researchers explain that social media can help its users feel more connected in terms of daily activities.

- **The effects of social media**

According to Köse and Doğan, (2019) research has shown that there is an influx of social media usage in recent years. The authors explain that this constant use of social media is seen as normal, however, it has been recognised that this normal

behaviour can turn into behaviour patterns that are deemed compulsive and unhealthy (Köse & Doğan, 2019).

A quantitative study conducted by Pakistani researchers, Jan et al. (2017) concluded that social media has a strong impact on self-esteem. The population these researchers used were 150 university students where results showed that there was a relationship between social media and self-esteem whereby upward and downward comparisons were made with others. Upward comparisons entail feelings of jealousy towards others' lifestyles and unappreciative of their contributions, and because of this, self-esteem is negatively influenced. However, other literature explains that social media has positive effects by allowing people a place to improve mood during difficult times and by giving people a place to express their identity (Jan et al., 2017). Another positive aspect of social media is that it allows introverted people to express themselves and communicate with others on an online platform because they may find face-to-face encounters intimidating (Jan et al., 2017).

A European based study conducted by Italian researchers Bergagna and Tartaglia (2018) explain that some studies show that Facebook, as a social media platform, has a positive influence on aspects such as self-worth, integrity and subjective well-being. In contrast, the researchers also explain that studies have shown that social media has negative effects but emphasise that this is only the case when it is used excessively. These negative effects can cause depression in frequent social media users if maladaptive social media use is present (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018). In short, the author implies that the problem lies with the way a person uses social media rather than the content of social media, as negative effects only exist when social media is used excessively or as a form of escapism. When conducting research, the results showed that females frequented social media more often and a negative correlation existed between self-esteem and Facebook usage. This negative correlation displays that when the use of Facebook increases, self-esteem decreases (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018).

Gallagher (2017) looks at women in particular in terms of social media use. The author explains that women are active in their social media consumption which leads them to develop a lower self-esteem as a result of being dissatisfied with the way they look. Gallagher (2017) touches on the notion of social recognition in terms of social

media. This recognition is displayed by other members of the social media platform in the form of likes, comments and shares. Social recognition in this sense can lead to an increase in self-esteem (Gallagher, 2017). It is important to note that social media addiction plays a significant role in terms of how much social media influences self-esteem in individuals (Gallagher, 2017). When looking at this from a South African perspective, it is important to address such factors when conducting research as it will provide insight into the relationship between social media and self-esteem from a South African context.

- **The content of social media**

As previously mentioned, the content of social media is created by the people who use these platforms (Köse & Doğan, 2019). The content that is shared by people on posts, statuses, comments and so on are perceived as successful as individuals are more likely to share positive information regarding themselves rather than information that may be detrimental to their image (Gallagher, 2017). Women on social media make comparisons in relation to others based on clothing, style, appearance, social relationships, romantic relationships and social activities. These types of social media content leads women to have lower levels of self-esteem due to a decreased level of self-worth (Gallagher, 2017).

Gallagher (2017) explains that women with certain characteristics would be more likely to compare themselves to models on social media and in advertisements, leading to the decrease in self-esteem and perceptions of the self. The content of social media and social comparison are inter-twined.

Motseki and Oyedemi (2017) provide insight from a South African perspective on the content of social media. These authors discuss the portrayal of western cultures in media and the values these cultures display. Westernised culture promotes the idea of thinness equating to beauty which persuades women within a South African context to aspire to attain these same physical features (Motseki & Oyedemi, 2017). With this being said, these authors imply that because of this representation on social media it leads to a lower self-esteem due to the perception of the ideal body image. Constant engagement with social media content that portrays a certain image of the self and brings about social comparison is detrimental to self-esteem (Motseki & Oyedemi, 2017).

- **Self-esteem**

Self-esteem can be defined in many different ways by multiple researchers from numerous countries. Turkish researchers, Köse and Doğan, (2019) define self-esteem as a combination of two facets; self-efficiency and self-worth. In addition to this, Jan et al. (2017) defines self-esteem as an amalgamation of self-confidence and self-respect. Taylor et al., (2007, cited in Köse & Doğan, 2019) define self-esteem as the opinions and beliefs a person has regarding themselves and is acquired by socialising, receiving feedback from others and self-perception. Bergagna and Tartaglia (2018) explain that people, regardless of their positive or negative self-image, need to either maintain their self-esteem or increase their self-esteem.

With this definition in mind, in terms of the application to this research having a solid definition, it will aid the research in terms of being as accurate as possible when looking at how self-esteem is influenced by social media in a South African context. As previously mentioned, there is a lack of overall research surrounding social media and self-esteem in women in South Africa and therefore, it is important to understand all aspects involving this subject.

- **Levels of self-esteem**

Self-esteem has been previously defined as a person's attitude about themselves (Gallagher, 2017). So therefore, low self-esteem can be defined as negative attitude towards the self. Low self-esteem is created by having a negative view of one's self (Köse & Doğan, 2019). Lower levels of self-esteem have been attributed to an increase in the use of social media (Jan et al., 2017). Jan et al. (2017) also explains that a lower self-esteem is a result of negative feedback from others, whereas positive feedback increases self-esteem. Low self-esteem has been linked to depressive symptoms and mental health in social comparison research (Gallagher, 2017). Research shows that women with low self-esteem spend more time on social media where they attempt to increase their self-esteem by comparing themselves to others (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018). Females inherently view themselves as inferior to other women but seek out information about others to increase their own personal self-esteem. With reference to this research, aspects such as this would be applied

in the data collection stages to determine if this is a universal factor or if it is just applicable to that of the Italian research.

High self-esteem is experienced when a person has positive opinions about themselves (Köse & Doğan, 2019). It is also influenced when people receive positive feedback on social media (Jan et al. 2017). In addition to this comment, Gallagher (2017) explains that having a high self-esteem will ensure that a person is less likely to be influenced by the social recognition of likes and comments on social media.

Due to the limited knowledge surrounding social media and self-esteem in South Africa, gaining an understanding of the different levels of self-esteem will aid in the research process. Comprehensively defining the above-mentioned levels of self-esteem will aid in determining the extent to which social media influences self-esteem and if it is a negative or positive impact.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Paradigm

Interpretivism is the chosen paradigm for this research study because it is subjective in nature (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The reason why this is the most suitable paradigm is that, in contrast to positivism, interpretivism views objects and people as inherently different from each other, implying that it is not accurate to quantify human experience (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Interpretivists reject the idea that there is only one reality shared by all, where human senses do not play a role (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). In addition to this, people are constantly changing due to their environments, thus further justifying that this is the appropriate paradigm to use when going forward with this research (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

The epistemological standpoint refers to knowledge in terms of its nature, how it is generated and how it is attained (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). With reference to this study, the goal of epistemology is to add to the literature about knowledge surrounding social media content as it is subjective and socially constructed (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

Ontology explains that reality is socially informed, and experiences are subjective to each individual (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Ontology, in the interpretivist paradigm, does not align with the view of reality as permanent and unchanging,

rather, reality is viewed as socially constructed where many realities are present, not just one (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Interpretivists believe that individuals' opinions, culture, background and so on, all have an impact on how reality is constructed and because of this, differences are evident which exposes the need for a subjective analysis (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

The axiological view in interpretivist research is defined as the values that aid in shaping research, this includes interpretations from both, the participant and the researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Applied to this research study, the axiology is rooted in the values of how women make meaning from social media content and how it impacts their self-esteem (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

3.2. Research approach

A qualitative research design was used to inform this study because it provided a subjective understanding of the relationship between social media and self-esteem. In addition to this, qualitative research is naturalistic and relies on the social environment in which people locate themselves (Maree, 2020). With the focus of this research centred around the relationship between social media and self-esteem, using a research approach that is subjective in nature allowed for an interpretation of the experiences of the participants. According to Maree (2020), qualitative research aims to provide insight and answers to questions based on the social environment in which they occur. The core of qualitative research originates from the need to understand the meaning that data provides such as the social meaning people assign to experiences and situations (Maree, 2020). This aligns with the purpose of this research study where the relationship between social media and self-esteem was studied in terms of how social media influences self-esteem and what effects social media has on self-esteem. The experiences that South African women have with social media and the way this plays a role in their self-esteem levels justifies the use of a qualitative design due to its subjective nature and emphasis on meaning.

In addition to this, previous literature is largely quantitative and westernised, thus allowing a different perspective to be taken with a qualitative approach in the South African context. The subjective nature of this research allowed for alternative means of assessing social media and self-esteem which was a suggestion from a study done by Gallagher (2017).

A phenomenological approach was used in order to focus on the experiences that people have in their daily life (Maree, 2020). This aligns nicely with the study as it allowed the researcher to focus on the experiences women in South Africa have with social media and how this interaction influences their self-esteem. Phenomenological research is meaning driven where data analysis in this area focuses on how people make meaning from their experiences (Maree, 2020). Emphasis is placed on individual experiences and in phenomenological research where the researcher needs to view the experiences the participants have through their perspective in order to receive a truly subjective understanding (Maree, 2020). In addition to this, the level of experience the researcher has, and their individual experiences is emphasised in phenomenological research (Maree, 2020).

3.3. Population

The population that was identified and was most applicable to this research includes female social media users between the ages of 21 and 31 in South Africa. Due to the present study addressing the need for more research within the South African context, it was important to identify and make use of women who reside in South Africa. In addition to this, the research was centred around social media usage, thus the need for the women to be active social media users. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on using a small population due to the emphasis on meaning of experiences and data collected (Maree, 2020).

3.4. Sampling

The sample population was more specific than the broad population (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2020). The sample included three South African women who reside in Durban and use social media regularly. These women were between the ages of 21 and 31 and vary in cultural background. Due to the nature of qualitative research, a smaller population was acceptable because an in-depth analysis was conducted in the data analysis phase of the research. The non-probability sampling method that was used was purposive sampling (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2020). Similar to convenience sampling, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to only include participants that met the criteria of the population sample perfectly, therefore improving the accuracy of the research findings (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2020). The criteria included; women between the ages of 21 and 31 who live in Durban and use

social media regularly. This age group was selected in order to focus the research on young adult women. In addition to this, the members of the sample population needed to be active social media users in order to receive accurate data.

The unit of analysis this research study will focus on is the feelings associated with social media usage and self-esteem in young adult South African women as a result of their social media usage. The unit of analysis mentioned directly relate to what this research seeks to determine within a South African context.

3.5. Data collection method

Ideally, face-to-face interviews would have been the preferred data collection method but due to COVID-19 the safety of the participants and researcher needed to be taken into consideration. The data was collected by means of online individual interviews conducted via Skype. The online interviews made use of the video image tool so that face-to-face contact was attained. This played an important role in the data collection as it allowed the researcher to pick up on any facial cues and body language that the participants displayed. This visual aspect of the interviews allowed the researcher to make further prompts or questions based on the certain reactions and answers of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews were used in order to allow room for certain topics to be elaborated on when the researcher felt it would be beneficial for the research (Jamshed, 2014). It was the most appropriate form of collecting data as it allowed room for probing questions where the researcher felt more information needed to be elicited. In addition to this, it was the safest way to collect qualitative data during this global pandemic and the participants could take part in the research from the comfort of their space of choice. An interview schedule (Annexure E) was drafted and used as a guideline when conducting the interviews. This allowed the researcher to stay on track and make sure all the important aspects were covered. In addition to this, a standardised set of questions was asked in each interview whereby the researcher elaborated and asked further questions based on the responses and lack of responses from participants (Jamshed, 2014). The interview schedule covered the topic of social media and self-esteem and aligned with the questions and objective of this study as they were centred around the effects and perceptions women have of social media and self-esteem. In addition, the interview schedule also included

questions directly relating to social media usage and if, according to the participant, they believed it had an impact or not. The answers to these questions were looked at in conjunction to body language and pauses made by the participants in order to take additional information into account.

The recruitment method the researcher used involved the social media platforms; Facebook and Instagram. A post was made on the researchers Facebook and Instagram page stating the characteristics of the sample and information regarding the purpose of the research so that the potential participants had an understanding of the criteria and nature of the study. In addition to this, once people had volunteered, a series of questions relating to the sample population was asked in order to determine which participants fit the stipulated characteristics, if they did not meet the requirements they were not included in the study. Once the participants were selected based on the abovementioned criteria, they received the consent form (Annexure C) which detailed the nature of the study, contact details of the researcher and supervisor and the consent form that needed to be signed by each participant prior to the interview. In addition to this a consent form pertaining to an audio recording (Annexure D) was also be signed prior to the interview and this informed the participants that the interview was recorded, and they were required to give their consent before any questions were asked.

The application of the data collection method began with first establishing the population parameters and identifying the sample population. Once the sample was identified, the recruitment process comprised of posting on social media platforms requesting participants. Social media was used because this research surrounds social media, so it was beneficial to source participants through this medium. Once participants were chosen through the purposive sampling method, rapport was established by making sure the participants were fully aware of the nature of the study, what was expected of them during the interview, what the research entailed and ensuring that their information was protected and that confidentiality is maintained. Once this was done, the consent forms were sent to participants, and once signed and returned, interviews were scheduled. Each interview was conducted via Skype and began with going over the aim of the research, reminding the participant that if at any point they wanted to withdraw they were able to do so, they were also reminded that all information provided was strictly confidential and

that they were able to speak honestly and openly during the interview. The semi-structured interview made use of a standardised set of questions that guided each interview. The researcher was able to make use of probing questions in order to find out more information and made sure to clarify the participants answers if it was unclear or ambiguous. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the interviews and stored them on a password protected device along with the audio recordings. The files were saved under markers such as participant 1, participant 2 and participant 3 so and so on that each interview and transcript would be easily identifiable by the researcher.

3.6. Data analysis method

Thematic analysis was the data analysis method used to review the data collected. Thematic analysis was the most appropriate form of analysis because it allowed for the identification of common chunks that appeared in the interviews when the participants provided answers for the semi-structured set of questions. In addition to this, it allowed room for probing questions to be asked if more information was needed regarding a specific theme or area of interest. It is important to note that thematic analysis aided in identifying new themes that presented themselves during the data analysis stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In relation to the purpose of this research, thematic analysis was the most appropriate form of analysis to use due to the subjective nature of this research. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the body of knowledge about the relationship between social media and self-esteem in young adult South African women. Using a qualitative approach was beneficial as it allowed for rich thematic data to be collected (Nowell et al., 2017). In addition to this, thematic analysis aligned with the research objectives of this study, namely; to determine how social media impacts self-esteem and the effects of social media on self-esteem. This form of data analysis allowed for commonalities and differences in the interviews and transcriptions to be identified that directly relate to the abovementioned objectives. Furthermore, the research questions; how does social media impact self-esteem and what are the effects of social media, are sufficiently answered by the conducted interviews and the thematic analysis that followed. It was beneficial to use this method of analysis as it allowed for themes produced by the literature to be identified

and new themes that emerged in the line by line thematic analysis process (Nowell et al., 2017). The identification of these themes and the data collected aided in answering the questions and objectives of this research.

Braun and Clarke (2006) elaborate on six steps to ensure a successful thematic analysis is undertaken and these steps were used during the data analysis process. Step one in the thematic analysis process was to ensure that the researcher was fully familiarised with the data that had been collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Due to the data collection method being online interviews, each interview was transcribed along with notes surrounding pauses and body language that the participants made. Step two was to create a coding system in order to assign certain features noted in the information provided during the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Step three involved identifying common themes that presented themselves during the data analysis stage and organising them into their respective categories. This led to step four which entailed revisiting the themes in order to determine if the coded information had a place within them. Step five required the themes to be named and defined in order to refine the content that each theme would have entailed. Lastly, step six required a report to be provided detailing the themes in order to give a comprehensive overview of what the data has provided (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The report will provide information into the validity and trustworthiness of the research that has been conducted and the results that will be produced.

Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to summarize large amounts of information while drawing attention to similarities and dissimilarities that came out during data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition to this, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify new information and form an understanding of this new content (Maree, 2019). The researcher ensured that an adequate amount of time was allocated to the data analysis section in order to generate a thorough write up (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The application of the data analysis section made use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps in the thematic analysis process. The application of the data analysis began with transcribing each interview. Each interview was given enough time to be transcribed to ensure no information was missed. The interview transcriptions were then saved onto a password protected device and given a code name to differentiate

between the interviews. This included the codes participant 1, participant 2, participant 3 and so on. This allowed the researcher to have a detailed understanding of the data that was collected. This was followed by conducting a line by line analysis on all three transcribed interviews. A line by line analysis, in terms of this research, was the most appropriate as it allowed the researcher to meticulously decode the data and identify existing and emerging themes. Each transcribed interview was analysed by using different colours to highlight and differentiate between themes and this was consistently maintained throughout each transcribed interview. This process was conducted electronically in order to maintain the safety of the data and confidentiality of the contents of the transcriptions. Once this was completed, the researcher then went through the data again and made comments to identify the pre-existing and new themes that emerged during the thematic analysis. These were categorised into main themes and subthemes in terms of corresponding categories. The next step that was taken in the data analysis included sorting through the coded data to determine if they were rightfully placed within each theme. The themes that were identified prior to the data analysis included the effects of social media, the content of social media and lastly, self-esteem with a subcategory of the levels of self-esteem. These themes were present during the thematic analysis where line by line coding was implemented. This form of coding led to the presentation of additional themes that were not previously identified in the literature. These themes included body image, time spent on social media and strategies to deal with social media usage. Each theme was then defined, and the information assigned to each theme was recorded in a thematic map format.

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Trustworthiness

The first criteria used in order to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research includes credibility. Credibility is centred around the findings of the research (Maree, 2020). This refers to two points, the first being if the findings align with reality and if the findings of the research are believable (Maree, 2020). In terms of this research study, the researcher ensured credibility by using successful pre-existing research methods such as semi-structured in-depth interviews (Maree, 2020). In addition to this, the use of an appropriate research design that aligns with the chosen paradigm increased the credibility of the research (Maree, 2020). A qualitative

research design with a phenomenological approach to data analysis ties in with the research question: To determine the relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of South African women. Credibility was also increased by the researcher familiarising themselves with the participants, in this study due to the researcher recruiting participants from their Facebook friend list, familiarity existed. Furthermore, the sampling method, purposive sampling, allowed the researcher to only include people who meet the criteria exactly, leaving no room for variety in the participants in terms of the stipulated characteristics. Additional measures that have been used to ensure credibility include numerous sessions with a supervisor who is experienced in the field of research and has provided guidance on the correct procedures involved in this research.

Transferability in qualitative research does not use generalisability to ensure validity (Maree, 2020). Rather, transferability focuses on the ability of the reader to form connections between the content of the study and their own research or experiences (Maree, 2020). With this being said, transferability in this research was displayed by providing a comprehensive description of the sample, research design and contextual factors. With this information, the reader was able to determine whether or not transferability is possible. In addition to this, using a purposive sampling method, as planned in this research, increased the transferability because attentive care was taken when selecting the criteria of the sample. By taking into account the criteria of the sample population, the idea that they are able to represent the population with reference to the contextual background and situation (Maree, 2020). As a result, it allows other researchers to assess the data provided and with this data, make connections about social media and self-esteem in terms of the greater female South African population.

In order to ensure dependability in qualitative research, it relies heavily on the credibility of the methods used within the study (Maree, 2020). Dependability will be illustrated by the research design of this study and how it is implemented during the data collection and analysis stages of research (Maree, 2020). With this being said, in order to increase dependability, a research journal will be used so that detailed notes regarding decision making, research processes and interpretations can be made. This will aid in adding detail when performing data analysis and writing up the findings.

Maree (2020) explains confirmability as the way in which the findings of a study are influenced by its participants. In terms of this study, the researcher ensured confirmability by acknowledging their own opinions relating to the topic and manage this researcher bias by reflecting during the data analysis process. In addition to this, limitations need to be acknowledged so that the researcher has a comprehensive understanding of the capabilities and restrictions of the research. Creating an audit trail would aid any reader in understanding and following the process that the researcher takes in a step by step fashion depicting the decision-making process and processes taken during the data collection and analysis phases. In addition to this, using quotes from interviews provided important information when interpreting the data and providing insight to the similarities and dissimilarities amongst the responses of the participants (Maree, 2020).

4.2. Presentation of findings

During the literature review, the themes that were identified include effects of social media, the content of social media and, self-esteem with a subcategory of the levels of self-esteem, namely high and low self-esteem. During the data analysis, new themes were identified along with corresponding themes to the literature. The new themes that emerged include; body image, time spent on social media and strategies to deal with social media usage.

4.2.1. Effects of social media

The primary findings of this study concluded that social media does in fact have an influence on the self-esteem of women within a South African context. The effects of social media are, however, unique to the experiences of each, individual participant but there are commonalities that overlap in terms of how social media affects them. As such, a quote from participant 1 includes;

“I kind of feel average like some days I’ll look at myself and look in the mirror and be like damn girl you’re gorgeous... then other days I’ll have looked on Instagram and seen all these beautiful girls and I’ll look at myself in the mirror and like damn I just hit a steady 2, I just don’t feel worthy.”

This depicts that social media can have a negative influence on self-esteem as shown by the response of participant 1. A quote from participant 2 states;

“I follow accounts like fitness or hockey players and so on and they’re all quite athletic built and thin and so then I feel like I’m inadequate.”

It is evident that social media has affected both participants, however, this has occurred in different ways with similarities being present.

4.2.2. Time spent on social media

The amount of time a person spends on social media is a notable factor in terms of how they are influenced by it. Participant 1 explains;

“Oh yes. My daily thing that tells you how long you’ve been on social media for, it would scare most people. “

Participant 2 states;

“Not frequent but I do go on a lot... with the lockdown there isn’t much else to do.”

This, therefore, shows that time is an important aspect when assessing the effects of social media and social media usage has been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2.3. Self-esteem

The overall response from the participants was that their self-esteem is very dependent on the content they are engaging with. To illustrate this, Participant 1 shares her feelings around self-esteem and how the content of social media has an influence.

“...it can have a really negative effect especially if there’s people with unrealistic beauty standards because they’ve had work done ... but it also gives false expectations especially if the viewer doesn’t know that the person has had work done and they think wow this person is naturally is this gorgeous and then hates on themselves because they don’t look like that.”

4.2.3.1. Low self-esteem

Low self-esteem is brought about by feelings associated with being unworthy and dissatisfied with one’s own personal appearance. Participant 2 states that she has a low self-esteem when engaging with certain content and states:

“I don’t look like this person so I’m, like, aw I haven’t reached my potential goal of like, a body type and then start a diet or something and get low self-esteem”

4.2.3.2. High self-esteem

High self-esteem or an increased mood is felt when engaging with content where the participant feels good about themselves. This mainly involves content surrounding family or friends or content that makes them feel happy and positive about themselves. This was evident across all three participants. To illustrate this, participant 1 states;

“...and when I see my family and friends and that I just feel really happy seeing that they are doing well in life...”

4.2.4. The content of social media

Participant 1 states;

“I follow people with power rather than people with, um beauty, like, people like Kylie Jenner ... um they don’t in my mind, contribute much to expanding the self and giving good impressions on people.”

It is evident that the content of social media has an impact on self-esteem. When looking at the data gathered from participant 2, she explains how different content affects her in different ways. Content of a positive nature or regarding family and friends sparks feelings of happiness whereas other content has the opposite effect.

4.2.5. Body image

Body image as a subtheme of the content of social media is an important feature when analysing how self-esteem is influenced.

Continuing from participant 2’s response above, content surrounding physical appearance of women’s social media posts has a negative impact where she states that seeing posts surrounding beautiful women who have the ideal body image brings about feelings of insecurity which directly influences self-esteem. Participant 2 also goes on to explain;

“because I haven’t achieved that type of body type ... that I’m not athletically built like them that I feel like I need to chase this ideal dream body.”

4.2.6. Strategies to deal with social media usage

Many people develop or learn strategies in order to cope with the overuse of social media as it aids in preventing adverse effects of social media usage. However, not everyone makes use of such techniques, rather, individuals prefer to control their behaviours by being mindful of how social media influences them. For example, participant 1 states;

“I try to remind myself that I am who I am. When I start to feel down I try to take a step back and I look at photos of myself where I feel really good about myself and say you still look like that and look in the mirror at a thing that I like... and I try to remind myself of things that I do like about myself.”

Whereas participant 3 claims;

“I’ve become more conscious about not letting what other people think of me impact me and if I want to post something I must just post it and not worry about what other people might think or say... my advice is to just change the way you think about social media and why you are actually using social media.”

4.3. Interpretation of findings

It is the researchers interpretation that the qualitative data collected explicitly shows that there is a relationship between social media and self-esteem within South African women, thus answering the research problem - there is an overall lack of qualitative knowledge surrounding the relationship between social media and self-esteem from a South African perspective.

The data collected contributes insight to the research problem as it aids in explaining a few of the effects social media can have on women’s self-esteem. These effects include; decreased mood and a negative self-image leading to a lowered self-esteem. However, the data also shows that this is dependent on the content that is being engaged with on social media. For example, influencers and athletes who possess a desired body type have an influence on self-esteem. This is stated by Participant 1:

“because I haven’t achieved that type of body type ... that I’m not athletically built like them that I feel like I need to chase this ideal dream body.”

And Participant 2 makes direct references to an athletic body type:

“I’m not athletically built like them that I feel like I need to chase this ideal dream body.”

Furthermore, there is a relationship between the time spent on social media and self-esteem. With a the Covid-19 pandemic, participants report spending more time on social media due to the restrictions on other activities which has influenced the overall interactions with social media thus, influencing self-esteem. Participant 2’s response to her time spent on social media includes:

“with the lockdown there isn’t much else to do.”

This reinforces the idea that time spent on social can have a negative influence on self-esteem, but the data collected emphasises that it is the content that is engaged with that has a negative effect.

In terms of self-esteem, it is influenced specifically by the content women are engaging with. As stated by participant 1, she feels unworthy and insecure viewing content surrounding physical appearance relating to the desired body type, whereas content surrounding friends or family bring about emotions of positivity, in turn, this is shown across all three participants leading to the interpretation that self-esteem is heavily influenced by the content of social media. This can lead to high or low self-esteem depending on what content is being engaged with frequently. Low-self-esteem is related to engaging with content that surrounds body image and the ideal appearance whereas higher self-esteem is related to viewing content that is perceived as positive, such as family and friends succeeding in life.

Strategies to dealing with social media usage are unique to each individual and differ due to personal experiences. It is evident from the data collected that strategies are conscious decisions regarding behaviour and are different from one participant to the next due to its personal aspect. Participant 3 explains;

“I’ve become more conscious about not letting what other people think of me impact me and if I want to post something I must just post it and not worry about what other

people might think or say... my advice is to just change the way you think about social media and why you are actually using social media."

Whereas, Participant 1 explains her strategy to dealing with social media:

"I try to remind myself that I am who I am. When I start to feel down I try to take a step back and I look at photos of myself where I feel really good about myself and say you still look like that and look in the mirror at a thing that I like... and I try to remind myself of things that I do like about myself."

This shows that being mindful and developing strategies is unique to each individuals' experiences where what may work for one person may not work another.

Lastly, the qualitative nature of the research, contributes to the research problem as it provides a subjective understanding of the participants unique experiences and relationships with social media platforms and the content they encounter.

4.4. Findings in context

The research conducted has confirmed that a relationship exists between social media and self-esteem in women within a South African context. The research findings have confirmed the outcomes of both, previous qualitative and quantitative literature, whilst contributing to the body of knowledge from a South African perspective. In terms of international and local literature, the findings of this study align with the previously published sources. With this being said, the contributions of this research are evident and provide a unique qualitative perspective of the relationship between social media and self-esteem in terms of a South African context, more specifically to the region of KwaZulu Natal. With a global pandemic taking place, the findings of this research also contribute to the knowledge surrounding social media usage during the Covid-19 pandemic. Previous literature does not factor in any form of global occurrence in terms of how it effects social media usage and in turn, self-esteem, hence the unique perspective of this research.

The present study has also concluded to what extent social media has influenced women in South Africa and to what effect. Jan et al., (2017) concluded that social media has a strong impact on self-esteem. This is supported by the findings of this research as the participants all are notably influenced by the content of social media

and the way in which the participant was influenced was dependent on the nature of the content they view.

Gallagher (2017) states that the problem lies with the way a person uses social media rather than the content of social media, as negative effects only exist when social media is used excessively or as a form of escapism. However, this research refutes this statement in terms of participants reporting that their self-esteem is influenced by the content they engage with rather than frequently using social media.

Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison Theory, when applied to the relationship between social media and self-esteem, explains that people evaluate themselves by comparing them self to others which then has an influence on self-esteem.

Furthermore, females view themselves as inferior to other women but seek out information about others to increase their own personal self-esteem, however, this does not always happen and can have an adverse effect (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018). This is supported by this research as participants all report on having a low self-esteem that is influenced by certain social media content.

In terms of the theme body image as a subtheme to the content of social media, Motseki and Oyedemi (2017) state that constant engagement with social media content that portrays a certain image of the self and brings about social comparison, is detrimental to self-esteem. This is supported by the research as content surrounding body image influences self-esteem negatively whereas content surrounding family and other positive aspects increase self-esteem and bring about feelings of happiness.

In addition to this, previous literature does not make mention of strategies in order to cope with the usage of social media, hence the additional contribution this research makes.

5. Conclusion

Even though self-esteem is defined differently across the world, definitions share a universal characteristic: it is the opinion about the self. The literature shows that there is a relationship that exists between social media and self-esteem in the populations of other countries. Different research has demonstrated different findings in terms of both positive and negative relationships between social media and self-

esteem in different contexts. The research surrounding South African studies are limited, hence the need for this research. However, cultural and environmental similarities have been used in order to justify the application of findings to the South African population in terms of the impact of social media and self-esteem. The content of social media plays a role in identifying what aspects of social media has an impact on self-esteem and if this is present in all individuals or only a few. The literature shows that content surrounding appearance is a contributing factor to lower self-esteem, but this is also influenced by the length of time engaging with social media (Motseki & Oyedemi, 2017; Jan et al., 2017). The different levels of self-esteem, high self-esteem and low self-esteem, are influenced by the positive or negative opinions of the self and are important when viewing the relationship between social media and self-esteem. This has been useful to determine the relationship from a South African perspective.

5.1. Addressing research questions, problems and objectives

The research collected provides answers to the research problem in terms of providing qualitative data, from a South African perspective, surrounding the relationship between social media and self-esteem.

In terms of the research question and objectives, the data collected provides conclusive answers to all. The research question is answered in terms of the predominantly negative relationship that exists between social media and self-esteem; however, this negative relationship only exists when a specific type of content is being engaged with. This content primarily involves images associated with body image and the perceived idea of an ideal appearance in terms of body image. However, content that is positive in nature and surrounds family and friends has a positive impact on self-esteem and a person's overall mood.

In terms of the research objectives, social media impacts self-esteem by the frequent consumption of content and the content that is being engaged with. It is a combination of these two factors that determines how social media impacts self-esteem in South African women. Furthermore, the effects of social media on self-esteem have also been determined. Self-esteem is negatively influenced by the content of social media in terms of the content surrounding women's physical appearances and the desire to look a specific way due to the oversaturation of this

sort of social media content. This allows women to feel negatively about themselves which decreases self-esteem, making them feel inadequate and unworthy

5.2. Ethical implications

Firstly, the researcher received permission from The International Institute of Education, Varsity College before the commencement of any data collection in the research process. Due to participants being between the ages of 21 and 31, informed consent was needed prior to the commencement of this research so that participants had a clear understanding of the research and what was expected (Maree, 2020). This was achieved by receiving a completed consent form found under Annexure C. The ethical considerations that this study took into account is the confidentiality and respect of participants. The identities of the participants and the contents of the interviews will not be shared with the public and any individuals not involved with the research study in order to maintain confidentiality (Maree, 2020). Permission to record interviews was needed in order to record each interview. This was attained through the completion of Annexure D. The recorded interviews are kept and stored safely on a password protected device that is only accessible by the researcher and was only used for the purpose of the research study. The researcher remained neutral and open when conducting interviews in order for the participants to feel comfortable and willing to progress through the interview (Maree, 2020). If, at any time, the participants wished to withdraw from the study, she may have done so and the data recorded up till that point would have been discarded (Maree, 2020). The participants were advised that they had the right to withdraw at any time during the interview if they did not wish to continue. The researcher remained judgement free during the course of this research in order to preserve the dignity of participants and to prevent inaccurate answers and behaviour. The social value of the research was to bring about a better understanding of the relationship between social media and self-esteem within a South African context (Maree, 2020). In order to ensure respect and consideration towards participants, the researcher followed standardised measures to inform the participants about the collected data and how the data will be used in the research (Maree, 2020).

5.3. Limitations of study

The limitations of this study include the following. To start, due to the nature of qualitative research, the sample size was small meaning that the results are limited to the sample used. In addition to this, the sample only included South African women making the findings limited in terms of international application of the research. This research is also only applicable to women, meaning that the findings will not be able to be applied to a male population. With interviews being the data collection method, a potential limitation could have arisen due to the self-report aspect of the interviews. This could have been a result of interviewees wanting to portray themselves in a favourable way rather than being honest with the researcher. Another contributing factor to the limitations of this research is the occurrence of the current global pandemic. Due to South Africans being restricted in their movement, it is possible this confinement could have led to an increase in social media usage that may not have been present before a nationwide lockdown. This significant environmental change may have influenced the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The recommendation for future research on this topic within a South African context would be to use a larger sample size when conducting qualitative research to gain a more accurate result. Due to interviews being conducted in the online space, connectivity issues may also pose as a limitation to the ease at which answers, and questions are given as a result of irritability towards poor connection

5.4. Implications of findings

The implications of the findings for future research in terms of the research conducted is that it contributes from a South African perspective in terms knowledge surrounding social media and self-esteem. In addition to this, this research focused on the relationship between social media and self-esteem specifically in young adult women. The findings provide a unique perspective as research from a South African context is limited. Furthermore, it provides knowledge surrounding social media and self-esteem from a qualitative perspective as previous research has been largely quantitative. With this being said, it provides a different way of measuring the impact of social media on self-esteem due to the abundance of quantitative literature.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: FINAL RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY DOCUMENT TABLE

Title: “I just don’t feel Worthy” A qualitative investigation of the relationship between social media and self-esteem in

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors /Sources	Lit Review Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data collection Method (s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To determine the relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of young adult South African women.	What is the relationship between social media and self-esteem in a sample of South African women?	There is a lack of research from a South Africa context. Research in this field can allow for a better understanding of the relationship between social media and self-esteem.	(Festinger, 1954) (Gallagher, 2017). (Köse & Doğan, 2019). (Jan, Soomro & Ahmad, 2017). (Bergagna & Tartaglia, 2018). (Gallagher, 2017).	Theme 1: Social media Theme 2: Self-esteem Theme 3: Levels of self-esteem Theme 4: The effects of social media	Interpretivism as it is subjective nature. Epistemology: add to the literature about knowledge surrounding social media content as it is subjective and socially constructed.	Qualitative research approach Population South African women between the ages of 21 – 31.	Online interviews via Skype	Remain judgement free. Maintain confidentiality. Informed consent. Right to withdraw. The research will benefit society.	A relationship exists between social media and self-esteem but is content dependent in terms of if it has negative or positive effects on young adult women	Using a larger sample size. Broaden the location of where participants are based. To conduct this research at a time where a global pandemic is absent in order to identify the influence it has.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories	Theme 5: The content of social media.	Ontology: reality is socially informed, and experiences are subjective to each individual. Axiology: values how women make meaning from social media content and how it impacts self-esteem.	Sampling Non-probability sampling. Method: Purposive sampling. Sample size: 3 people.	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Lack of qualitative knowledge surrounding the relationship between social media and self-esteem from a South African perspective.	To determine how social media impacts on self-esteem. How does social media impact of self-esteem? To determine the effects of social media on self-esteem. What are the effects of social media on self-esteem?	Self-esteem. Social media. Social comparison.	Social comparison theory.				Thematic analysis	Small number of interviewees. Only women are being interviewed. Increase in usage due to global pandemic might influence sample. Self-report may lead to bias. Global pandemic.	Contribute to the body of knowledge about the relationship between social media and self-esteem from a South African perspective in a sample of women. Contribute to the qualitative literature within a South African context.	

young adult South African women.

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



20 July 2020

Student name: Catherine Breedt

Student number: 17130063

Campus: Varsity College Durban North

Re: Approval of HPS1 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

ANNEXURE C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants To whom it may concern, My name is Catherine Breedt and I am a student at Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Suhaila Ameer about the relationship between social media and self-esteem in young adult women in South Africa. The aim of this research is to add to the body of knowledge surrounding this topic because there is an overall lack of literature in South Africa. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the relationship between social media and self-esteem in South African women from a qualitative perspective. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study? I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you will aid in the process of understanding the relationship between social media and self-esteem in South African women. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to interview you for a period of 30 – 45 minutes via Skype. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study? Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your relationship and experiences with social media and how it influences your self-esteem. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study? • Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected? I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide? Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Art Honours in Psychology. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.
What happens if I have more questions about the study? Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:
Catherine Breedt

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:
Suhaila Ameer

[REDACTED]

Consent form for participants					
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Catherine Breedts about the relationship between social media and self-esteem in young adult women in South Africa. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • I agree to be interviewed for this research. • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research. • I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview. • I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signature</td> <td>Date</td> </tr> </table>				Signature	Date
Signature	Date				

ANNEXURE D: CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING
CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Catherine Breedt to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the relationship between social media and self-esteem in young adult women in South Africa. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

ANNEXURE E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is your opinion about social media?
2. Are you a frequent user of social media?
3. What do you use social media for the most?
4. What are your most used social media platforms?
5. Do you like using social media?
6. How do you feel when you are on social media?
7. What sort of social media content do you find yourself gravitating towards when you are on social media?
8. How do you feel when you interact with this content?
9. Would you say you have a high or low self-esteem?
10. In your opinion, do you think social media has an impact on your self-esteem?
11. Do you think social media has a positive or negative impact on your self-esteem? In what ways?
12. Do you feel social media pressurizes women to look and act a certain way? If yes, please elaborate.
13. With a global pandemic taking place, do you feel it has had an impact on your social media usage? Has it increased or decreased?
14. How do you think social media affects you?
15. Do you have any strategies that you use in order to minimize the impact of social media on your self-esteem

ANNEXURE F: DAFE ASSIGN ORIGINALITY REPORT

Blackboard

SafeAssign Originality Report

RESE8419_VCDN1 • Safe Assign Plagiarism Practice

[View Originality Report - Old Design](#)

Catherine Breedt

Submission UUID: 50eadba3-633b-0c6f-7eb1-e1e0ac0ae8cf

Total Score:  High risk 100 %

Total Number of Reports

1

Highest Match

100 %

RESE Final Report - Catherine.docx

Average Match

100 %

Submitted on

28/10/20

20:22 GMT+2

Average Word Count

12,188

Highest: RESE Final Report - Catherin...



Attachment 1

100 %

Word Count: 12,188
RESE Final Report - Catherine.docx

Institutional database (10)

100 %

1

My paper

10

My paper

6

My paper