

A FEMINIST STUDY OF WOMEN USING MOBILE PHONES
FOR EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN KADUNA,
NIGERIA

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Parents, Prof. George and Dr. Jane
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, which I submit in consideration of the award of a Doctor of Philosophy is my own personal effort. I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis does not breach copyright law and has not been taken from other sources except where such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify how Nigerian women have adopted and are using mobile phones for social capital building and empowerment. The study which is qualitative in nature utilises interviews to gather the experiences of the mobile lives of 22 women. Results obtained are analysed using a theme template analysis approach. This project will contribute to our understanding of the role of mobile technologies in developing regions and economies. This study adds to our understanding of how women in Nigeria use the mobile phone to maintain social capital. The study expands our understanding of what socialization and empowerment mean to women in developing countries. The study adds to the literature on the implication of new communication technologies and social networking sites (SNS) for social capital. The findings point out that for the women in the study, the major benefit of owning a mobile phone is the ability to remain connected with family, friends and kin, no matter where life leads them to. Additional findings show that the mobile phone creates opportunities for the women to expand their social networks to include people that they ordinarily would have not had the opportunity to be connected with.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.0. INTRODUCTION

This research is motivated by a study conducted by the Cherie Blair Foundation for women. The research, which was co-sponsored by the GSMA Development Foundation, and studied the mobile phone gender gap in some low income and middle-income countries in Asia, the Middle East, South America, and Africa. My research streamlined the focus and scope of this study by refining its methods and applying it to women in Nigeria. The study aims to explore how women in Nigeria are using mobile telephones to maintain social capital and at the same time empower themselves.

This is a significant and much-needed piece of research. As with the Cherie Blair Foundation research (GSMA, 2010), this project will contribute to our understanding of the role of mobile technologies in developing regions and economies, as well as in empowering and engaging women, and help us to better understand how we can challenge barriers to their social inclusion. The research seeks to bring to light measures that government, mobile communication providers and other stakeholders can adopt for women's development. Also, beyond this, the research will contribute to the new and expanding area of research on mobile communication technologies, as well as an understanding of wider patterns of social engagement with technology in Nigeria.

This research is beneficial to government, policymakers, mobile services providers and other major development stakeholders, as it will highlight the values of providing Nigerian women with mobile phone service, contribute to the growing body of knowledge on technology and development in Nigeria, and provide viable suggestions to policymakers and NGOs on the best

ways to use the mobile phone to help excluded and marginalized women and at the same time encourage women to explore the world of mobile technology.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1. Empowerment

The term ‘empowerment’ has a different meaning in different sociocultural and political contexts. Part of the difficulty in defining empowerment is that this term derives from the word and concept ‘power’, which in itself is a highly contested concept (Lukes, 1974). Therefore, it is not surprising that there are various definitions of the concepts, and each definition reflects the different ideological political positions of the person, group of persons, or organization that is proffering the definition (Czuba and Page, 1999). Crawley (1998) suggests that the concept of empowerment is used to justify development propositions that are rooted in diverse ideological political positions, and as such, is fraught with mixed feelings amongst people (Nwagbara *et al*, 2012). Gajanayake (1993) defines empowerment as enabling people to understand the reality of their situation, reflect on the factors that are shaping the situation, and most importantly, take steps to effect change and improve it (Nwagbara *et al*, 2012). Gajanayake’s definition is most compelling for this study because it does not portray power as an object that is handed-over to the powerless, rather it recognizes the efforts and processes the marginalized need to undergo.

From a feminist research point of view, empowerment is beyond having access to decision-making, it further involves the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as being able and entitled to occupy the decision-making position (Rowland, 1995; Gajanayake, 1993; Nwagbara *et al*, 2012). This involves undoing negative social constructions so that the people affected come to perceive themselves as having the capacity and the right to act and have influence. That being so, feminist researchers have, in their attempt to make a case for women’s involvement in the process

development, argued that women should be considered and involved at every stage of the development process. They also argue that it is important to consider the perspective of women in the journey to development, such that, if one proposes development of women to be very integral in the development process of any society, then it is worth having them deeply involved by keeping them informed, taking their perspective into consideration, and implementing policies that support and benefit women. According to Malcom (1999) ‘the tools of development, information and connectivity ought to remain accessible to women as though our world depends on it, therein lays the crux of empowerment’ (Huyer and Sikoska, 2003: 6)

1.1.2. Mobile technologies

The explosive growth of the mobile phone is one of the most significant development trends in the past decade or so (Jagun, Heeks and Whalley, 2007; Duncombe, 2011). Apart from being a tool for communication and socialization, the mobile telephone can also be considered as a tool for development, engagement, and empowerment. Studies show that developing continents such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America are the biggest benefactors of the benefits that come with exploring the vast potentials of mobile devices (GSMA, 2011; Duncombe 2011). In particular, the GSMA (2015) noted the mobile ecosystem plays a significant role in global economic progress and welfare. In addition, GSMA (2010) noted that the mobile phone has enabled more than 2 billion people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to become more productive in terms of increased job opportunities, increased chances of business thus bringing real and sustained economic growth to these regions, but of course, mobile phone ownership and usage across many developing countries is severely skewed along class and gender lines.

The mobile phone has already redefined the consumer’s daily experiences as well as created new job opportunities and services for many. Examples of the services include but are not restricted to,

the provision of m-banking, m-health facilities, and e-learning facilities. The advancement in the use of mobile phones shows that these devices have transcended being tools for communications, to become a mechanism for socio-economic development. Innovative mobile solutions are helping the developing world and poverty-stricken countries with opportunities to overcome socio-economic challenges (GSMA, 2015). However, regardless of the lauded benefits of the mobile phone, there is a good proportion of the world's population who are not connected by phone of any kind. According to the International Telecommunication Union, there are over 7 billion mobile subscribers worldwide, with this number likely to rise to over 9 billion by 2020 (ITU, 2015). Although mobile phone ownership and usage is on the increase, there are about 3 billion people in low and middle-income countries that do not have access to mobile phones, and 1.7 billion of these are women. Low earning women in emerging economies are the biggest losers in terms of the social and economic benefits that come with having access to a mobile phone (Gayatri, 2011).

Nigeria is one of the developing countries in the Global South, and like most, if not all of its counterparts, Nigerian women are in an economically and socially disadvantaged position. Studies (Amos and Parmar, 1984) have shown that the current situation of women's marginalization can be traced back to structural problems of colonialists treating men as more important than women who were subjected to the roles of domestic help and even sex objects. Ahl (2003) attributed factors that have hindered women's active participation in their communities, and even families, to be patriarchal, religious, cultural, and poverty. In order to address these problems, the United Nations in 2015 came up with the fifth goal in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and part of the measures taken to achieve this goal is the use of information communication technologies (Madeley, 2015).

There are various challenges that inhibit a woman's ownership and use of mobile phones. Such challenges could be economic, cultural, educational, and religious factors, which affect the woman's ownership and active usage of mobile devices (Murthy, 2011; GSMA 2011). Included in the factors are the cost of maintenance, social norms, security and harassment, and network and service delivery (GSMA, 2015); and it can be seen that these challenges act individually or together to create often complex patterns of technological usage, and social exclusion.

Therefore, it is on this basis that this study seeks to understand, through the sharing of personal experiences, if and how Nigerian women have adopted and are using information communication technologies (ICTs), and mobile phones specifically, to enhance their social and economic productivity? The study, therefore, seeks to explore what women do with mobile devices, the limitations placed upon them, and the possible new opportunities afforded by mobile phones.

1.2. JUSTIFICATION, AIM, AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

This study is a significant and much-needed piece of research especially in this period when international as well as local organizations are working hard to end women's subordination and marginalization in the world. As noted earlier, the world is plagued with various manifestations of the expressions of gender inequality, however, it is not uniform across countries. Different approaches have been found effective in the fight against gender inequality and women empowerment and one method is access to ICTs. In Nigeria, mobile phones are considered as the form of ICT that has the widest coverage and accessibility in the country, therefore it is considered to be able to achieve more in terms of empowering women than any other form of technology.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the extent to which women in Nigeria use mobile telephones for empowerment. The specific objectives include to: a) explore what the women use mobile

phones for and what this means to them; b) consider the economic and social benefits that woman stands to gain from owning and using mobile phones; and c) determine social factors and barriers that may affect women's acquisition and use of mobile phones in Nigeria

1.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one, the introductory chapter, provides background into the topic of research, outlines the research aims and objectives, as well as the justification for the research. It also provides a brief summary of the structure of the whole work.

Chapter two is titled social capital and women's empowerment in the era of new communication technologies. This chapter explores Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putman's standpoint on social capital. The chapter also goes on to explore the impact social capital has on women's empowerment and the benefits and downsides of social capital to women empowerment. Subsequent sections in the chapter present a brief history of mobile telephones and theories of technology which explores ongoing debates on technology and the feminist arguments of technology. After exploring debates on technology, the chapter moves on to explore how new communication technologies assist with social networking and the implication for social capital.

Chapter three is titled technology and women's empowerment. This chapter first begins with a brief overview of Nigeria's history from women's perspective then it delves into the literature on gender equality and women's empowerment. It further explores the literature on women's empowerment in Nigeria and the factors that cause limitations. The chapter also looks into the role of information communication technologies in empowering women and how women adapt them to suit their needs. The section of the chapter explores the history of Nigeria's telecommunication sector, its development, and challenges faced.

Chapter four is the research methodology chapter. The chapter begins with an introduction then proceeds to provide a background into the chosen research approach – a feminist approach - and a justification for why it is imperative to study women, and Nigerian women in particular. The next section discusses the different qualitative research methods and a justification for why they were not chosen for this study. Subsequent sections discuss the study design and the chosen research method of interviews. Following that, sampling and participant recruitment are discussed, after which the fieldwork experience and data collection are discussed. Finally, a description of the research participants is presented and issues surrounding consent, and data analysis are discussed.

Chapter five is titled mobile phone use. This chapter explores the various day to day use of mobile phones as described by the participants. Also, using data collected, the chapter discusses the benefits and downside of mobile phones to women.

Chapter six is titled mobile phones, social networking, and social capital. This chapter explores networking maintaining especially as it has to do with existing family ties. The chapter also explores the participants' pleasant and unpleasant experiences with Facebook and WhatsApp. Lastly, the chapter discusses the benefits of socializing in online communities.

Chapter seven is titled mobile phones, women, and empowerment. This chapter explores and discusses women empowerment from the perspective of the participants and the factors that limit women's empowerment. Next, the chapter explores the benefits of mobile phones in business and the impact of mobile banking on women empowerment.

Chapter eight is the conclusion of the research. As the title suggests, this chapter neatly ties up the arguments and discussions presented in this study. Furthermore, this final chapter presents the strengths and limitations of this study, as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE ERA OF NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

2.0. INTRODUCTION

The concept of social capital is not new. Certainly, the first documented use of the concept was by Lyda Hanifan in 1916 (Brian, 2007). However, there has been considerable and increasing interest in social capital theory in recent decades, as evidenced by its use in various disciplines and subject areas. This interest in the concept of social capital stems from the idea that it integrates sociology and economics, and combines a number of ideas including, civic engagement, social cohesion, and civic tradition. This quality makes the concept useful and applicable to not just sociology and economics scholars (see Billups, 1994; Woolcock, 1998; Torsvik, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Karabarbounis and Neiman, 2014) but also business, social policy, political studies scholars, and many others (see Cooke and Wills, 1999; Portes, 2000; Newton, 2001; Healey and Hampshire, 2002; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004; Lee, 2009).

Many studies advocate the positive impact social capital can for many sectors in the community (see Fukuyama, 2001; Healey and Hampshire, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Wiesinger, 2007; Taşdemir, Bahar and Cayiragasi, 2017). However, as we shall see, there are also limitations and potential issues with this concept. Just like social capital, it has been argued by many that new information technologies have been found to bring benefits to every sector of society, but sibilantly, there are many who warn of the limits and even dangers of technological advances. Therefore, this chapter critically explores the concept of social capital, and in particular, seeks to link this into debates relating to the changing nature and rising significance of new media technologies. More

specifically, the chapter explores the three main debates of what social capital entails and the criticisms of these debates. Next, the chapter explores the two main types of social capital and provides an overview of the history and development of the mobile telephone, focusing on the possible benefits and disadvantages of mobile telephones. The next section explores two theories of technology - technology determinism and feminist debate-and afterwards, the effect of technology on social networking sites are explored. Finally, we delve into debates on the impact of new communication technologies on social capital.

2.1. WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

According to Keeley (2009), the concept of social capital first appeared in a book by Lyda Hanifan, published in 1916 in the United States. The book discussed how neighbours could work together to oversee schools. Hanifan described social capital as “those tangible assets [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit” (cited in Brian, 2009: 102). Even though Hanifan offered arguably the first documented definition of social capital, probably the most widely used and recognised are those put forward in more recent times by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (1993). In recent decades it has become a very popular and appealing concept for social scientists and policymakers alike. A growing number of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and economists, politicians, and various agencies have employed the concept to explain various economic and social outcomes. However, despite the vast literature, there is no single, universally accepted definition of social capital, and just like other terms that we have dealt with here, such as empowerment, the use and meaning of this concept depend on the political, sociological, and economic ideological underpinnings of how it is being employed. Despite the different ideological underpinnings and varying definitions, the various

theories of social capital are all rooted in the notion of trust, norms, informal networks, and that 'social relations are valuable resources' (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009; Gudmundsson and Mikiewicz, 2012). In addition, the commonality of most definitions is that they emphasize social relations that generate productive benefits, be it at individual or group levels.

2.1.1 Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu was a French sociologist that was interested in the dynamics of power in society. Bourdieu was also concerned with the nature of culture, how it is reproduced and transformed, how it connects to social stratification, and the reproduction and exercise of power (Claridge, 2004)? In his first definition of social capital, he described it as a means for members of elite professional groups to secure their positions, as well as that of their children. In Bourdieu's (1977) definition he defined social capital as

capital of social relationships which will provide, if necessary, useful 'support': a capital of honourability and respectability which is often indispensable if one desires to attract clients in socially important positions, and which may serve as currency, for instance in a political career (Field, 2005: 17).

This position was subsequently revised when he stated that

social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986: 248, cited in, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119).

Unlike most definitions of social capital that present social networking as mutually beneficial to every member of the group, Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital highlights the exclusionary nature of social capital. In Bourdieu's opinion, people seek out social networks that would be beneficial to themselves. He specifically pointed out that social capital is used by the elite class to keep the masses out of their social circle and it is also used by the middle class to link

themselves with the elite class, whilst actively trying to separate themselves from the poor. The above description brings out the dark side of social capital in the sense that, contrary to the popular opinion of social capital being a situation where every member of a social group can benefit from group membership, for Bourdieu, social capital can be seen to serve the interest of a selected few.

In their critical evaluation of Bourdieu's work, Baron, Field, and Schuller (2000: 5) suggest that in Bourdieu's theorization, social capital acts as a multiplier of economic and cultural capitals, whilst at the same time it is created and maintained by the conversion of economic capital and cultural capital in the "unceasing efforts of sociability". In other words, it is not enough to have just anyone as friends, rather we are expected to choose friends that are wealthy and well connected (Martikke, 2017) and by so doing, you become wealthy and well connected yourself. Furthermore, Gudmundsson and Mikiewicz, (2012) agree with Baron, Field, and Schuller's statement while pointing out that Bourdieu stresses the interconnection of social capital with economic and cultural capital in the reproduction of class inequalities and hierarchies. Another critic (Field, 2000) of Bourdieu's theory suggests that it only highlights the dark side of social capital. In his analysis of Bourdieu's concept, Field (2008) argues that Bourdieu's work was heavily influenced by Marxist sociology, and as such, he was primarily concerned with understanding the social hierarchy and the role social capital plays in its maintenance. Field also suggests that Bourdieu was interested in ways social capital could be combined with other forms of capital to create and reproduce inequality. However, this criticism has also been considered as a strength by other scholars (see Fowler, 1996), as most social capital scholars have been criticized for discussing only the positive aspects of the characteristics of social capital, whilst giving little or no consideration to its potentially negative consequences.

2.1.2 James Coleman

According to Coleman (1990: 302)

‘social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common. They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure’.

To simplify it, social capital does not exist in one form, it depends on the actors at play and the situation at hand. It also exists in the structures of the relations between actors and among actors (Coleman, 1988). Therefore, what might be considered as social capital in one situation might not be in another. The values of social capital can be economic or noneconomic depending on the situation. In his opinion, social capital exists in situations where people are bonded by strong ties of family, cultural, political and religious affiliations. Using examples from the local fabric Balogun Market in Lagos, Nigeria to explain Coleman’s concept of social capital: to an outsider, there is no visible boundary between merchants. If the fabric needed is not available in the store visited, the merchant can redirect you to another merchant who would probably have what you want. In fact, using his mobile phone, the merchant is most likely to call other stores around and ask if they have what the customer needed and if they could bring samples over for the customer to have a look at. The reward for doing this could be that the merchant gets a percentage of the sales or the merchant is confident that his neighbours will do the same for him when the need arises. Another example of social capital is when a merchant leaves his/her store in the care of the neighbour with the confidence that sales will be done while he/she is away and the proceeds of the sale will be handed over upon return. One thing that is evident in these examples is the display of trust. Another thing that is evident from these examples the fact that although social capital is intangible, it exists in the relationships people share with each other.

According to Blaxter and Hughes (2000), Coleman implied that social capital is either generated within the household or between households. For instance, an important source of household social capital is the amount of time a family spends with each other or the number of time parents spends with their children. In Coleman's analogy of how family social capital can lead to an increase in human capital, he indicated that there would be a lack of social capital in the family if there are no strong relations between the children and the parents (Coleman, 1988: S111). An instance of how social capital can be within households is seen when clergy, neighbours, and kin act to reinforce teachers and parents in dissuading young people from playing truant or skipping school (Field, 2008:28). This makes Coleman's definition of social capital both individualistic and collective. Coleman (1994: 302) viewed social capital as 'a capital asset for the individual' but saw it as built up of 'social structural resources' (Field, 2008: 28). Coleman (1990) further stated that social capital 'exists in the interest, even the intrusiveness, of one adult in the activities of someone else's child' (Field, 2008: 28).

One thing that is evident from Coleman's theory is that trust and reciprocity are paramount for social capital to exist (Burt 2001). Members of social groups and communities help out each other with the unspoken assurance that when the need arises, they, in turn, will be helped. Going further, Coleman (1988: S98) observed that that social capital is productive and facilitates the achievement of certain ends that would be impossible in its absence.

A major difference between Coleman and Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital is that Bourdieu conceptualization brings out the negative side of social capital (see Field, 2000; Field, 2008). Bourdieu presents social capital as a tool used to reinforce social classism and social inequality in general. In addition, in Bourdieu's theory, people invest in social relationships that will ultimately be of benefit to them. In other words, people make it a point of duty to know or be

linked to the “right people”. On the other hand, Coleman’s conceptualization of social capital emphasizes general group benefits. This is in the sense that every member of the social group is expected to directly contribute to and benefit from the resources available to the group. For Coleman, social capital is a public good available to everybody while for Bourdieu, social capital is a scarce commodity that is only a function of the mechanism of class reproduction (Bourdieu, 1986).

2.1.3 Robert Putnam

Putnam’s (1993) definition of social capital refers to ‘features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’ (Tzanakis, 2013). Just like Coleman, Putnam treats social capital largely as a public good (Tzanakis, 2013). Putnam’s theory of social capital is centred on creating networks of civic engagement and political participation and the socio-economic development of the United States of America. In his popular book *Bowling Alone* (2000), he bemoaned that communities are dying because there is a sharp decline in people’s participation in organized societies (Putnam, 1995). He further suggests that a decline in organized groups’ socialization can potentially lead to a decline in the economic development of a country (Putnam, 1995:5). Putnam suggests that when people are less interested in actively participating in organized groups (for example, PTA), be it formal or informal and when already existing members do not engage in social events organized by the groups, the communal life which is supposed to be the essence of such groups get lost and people become less familiar with one another.

Similar to Coleman's argument, trust and reciprocity are essential for communities and social capital to thrive. And these only thrive in communities where members have frequent social interactions. This point was summarized in the statement below,

For a variety of reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved (Putnam 1995: 2).

This means that when members of a group come together, to socialize, protest a cause together, help one another when the need arises, or even come together to discuss issues that affect the wellbeing of the community, trust for one another arises. In other words, norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement bring about social trust (Putnam, 1993). For Putman, there are two major kinds of reciprocity; balanced reciprocity, where there is a simultaneous exchange of equally valuable goods, and generalized reciprocity, which is an imbalanced exchange at a given time accompanied with future expectations that the exchange will be rebalanced (Gobetto, 2016). The last kind of reciprocity is more likely to arise when there are consistent networks of social exchange.

Putnam's conceptualization has received many criticisms. It has been criticized for being too presumptuous and focusing only on the positive side of social capital and ignoring the negative side. It has also been accused by Misztal (2000) of adopting a 'rather circular' definition of social capital that lacks theoretical precision (Field, 2008). He has been criticized for his conceptual vagueness, and as Portes (1998:1) argues, Putnam has made out social capital to be 'a cure-all for each of society's many ills'. Furthermore, though Putnam does acknowledge that there is a negative side to social capital, he has been criticized for not giving it adequate attention (Field,

2008). Certainly, Putnam's concept of social capital does not do justice to individual social capital. It focuses largely on group social capital.

Specifically, there are three key criticisms of Putnam's theorization of social capital. These are that, as Tarrow (1996: 393) argues, that contrary to Putnam's suggestion that associations are meant to serve the same purpose of encouraging civic engagement and fostering the political and economic wellbeing of the society, associations are formed at different times to serve different purposes. This criticism is applicable in contemporary times, in relation to online social engagement. Various studies have demonstrated that people seek out online social networking for numerous reasons. For instance, it could be for entertainment purposes (Cheung, Chiu, Lee, 2010), for interpersonal connections (Cheung, Chiu, Lee, 2010), to stay connected to family old friends and school mates (Wei and Lo, 2006; Ellison, Steinfeld and Lampe, 2007; Quan-Haase and Young, 2010), to get information (Westerman, Spence and Van Der Heide, 2014; Kim and Sin, 2015), to maintain social presence (DiMicco and Millen, 2007; Cheung, Chiu, Lee, 2011), for emotional support (Kroenke, Kubzansky and Schernhammer 2006; Hether, Murphy and Valente, 2016; Willis, 2018; Shensa et al., 2019), for education (Garton, Haythornthwaite, and Wellman, 1997; Rogers, 2003; Wodzicki, Schwämmlein-Moskaliuk, 2012), and much more.

Second, social capital is not homogenous. What might constitute social capital in one time and place will not necessarily in another. In particular, Edwards et al (2003: 14) criticized Putnam for ignoring actors' subjective understandings that are fundamental in shaping the emergent meanings assigned to every relationship. In other words, what Edward et al was trying to establish is that different people for different reasons form different relationships and even the same person will have different reasons for forming relationships with various people. This further means that every relationship formed is aimed at serving different, and if possible multiple, purposes. It could also

mean that at various times or different points in time, the same relationship can potentially serve different purposes. For example, using the relationships between a Nigerian woman who has married and moved away from home and her virilocal family, at the point she conceives and begins to bear children, her parents most likely play the role of emotional support, giving advice on the best childcare practice. The same parents/family play the role of financial support if the family is ever in financial trouble.

Third, physical geography is no longer paramount for social trust and social capital building and maintenance. In Putnam's theory, for social trust and social capital to be maintained, members of communities or social groups need to be actively involved. In the sense that they need to have regular meetings/visits and participate in regularly organized social events. However, as highlighted, contemporary patterns of networking and social capital building does not require regular physical contact. New communication technologies have made it possible for individuals to build and maintain social capital with people that do not share the same geographical or temporal space. As a matter of fact, modern social capital researchers (see Boase and Wellman, 2004; Norris, 2003; Gated and Anderson, 2006) argue that in this present time, distance should have little no effect on social trust and social capital because new communication technologies supplement community. They also possess the potential of strengthening social ties by filling up the gaps that would otherwise have existed as a result of distance.

The point of the criticisms above is not to obstinate Putnam's theory but to show the limitations in his conceptualization of social capital. The major issue with his theory is that Putnam was more interested in group or association social capital, therefore, he did not take into consideration individual social capital, which is what this study is more specifically about. Another limitation is that although he chose to focus on the positive side of social capital, he prescribed a strict and rigid

set of conditions for social capital generation and maintenance. Regardless of the fact that society as we know it is evolving, Putnam is still hanging onto traditional ways as the only way to build and maintain social capital. This is a major limitation. Society has undergone a digital revolution and this has affected the way people socialize. The effect of new communication technologies on social capital is discussed later on in this chapter; however, the next section explores the possible role social capital could play in affecting women's empowerment positively or negatively.

2.2. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Social capital is therefore based on 'trust' and 'reciprocity'. Various studies (Mayoux, 2001, Bebbington et al, 2006) show that social capital is very useful in empowering women socially and economically. Social capital can be understood as those aspects of social relationships that can be converted into other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Portes, 1998). Putnam (2000: 19) defines social capital as '...Connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. And, Ostrom (2000: 176) defines social capital as 'the shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules, and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity'.

Three main points are evident in the definitions above. First, members of social networks share common values and norms; second, they trust each other; and third, members of social networks benefit from each other. In particular, there are 2 major types of social capital identified by Putman: bonding and bridging social capital. One of Putman's major contributions is his discussion of bridging and bonding capital. Though Putman attributes the origins of these categories of social capital to Gittel and Vidal (1998) it is undoubtedly Putman who popularizes their use.

2.2.1 Bonding social capital

Leonard (2004: 929) explains that “bonding social capital occurs among homogeneous populations and that it is often parochial and only benefits those with internal access”. In other words, bonding social capital only exists between people with a sense of common identity (“people like us”) — for example, family, close friends and probably people who share our culture or ethnicity. Claridge (2018) explained that bonding social capital provides material and emotional support, and is more inward-looking and protective. Bonding social capital refers to networks with a high density of relationships between members, where most, if not all, individuals belonging to the network are interconnected because they know each other and interact frequently with each other. One thing about bonding social capital, especially the one that exists between family members is that an individual does not choose or seek to be part of the social group. People are born into families and as such are automatically members of the social group. Various studies (Bourdieu, 1986; Kovacheva, 2005) have demonstrated how people exploit the familiarity and bond shared in families for their benefits. This could be in the form of financial aid, emotional support, advice, and childcare, for example. Bonding social capital works on the premise that the support given will be reciprocated when the need arises.

While critically evaluating bonding social capital, Leonard (2004) notes that the very pillar upon which bonding social capital thrive — tight bonds of trust and solidarity — may ultimately prevent its entrepreneurial members from reaching their full potential. To further explain this point, Leonard stresses that this is because individuals depend only on the group will be limited in the assets they have access to. This means that if an individual only depends on bonding capital, such an individual will only have access to the limited resources, assets, and financial aid the group can produce, thus, leaving no room for expansion and growth. Simply put, bonding capital is not

sufficient for development. Putnam (2003) argues that bonding social capital is good for getting by but bridging social capital is good for getting ahead. This means that in order to be successful and be at full potentials people need to form ties outside their immediate social group, and such ties are referred to as bridging social capital.

2.2.2. Bridging social capital

Bridging social capital refers to links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity, for example to distant friends, colleagues, and associates (Brian, 2007). Catts and Ozyga (2005) also defined bridging social capital as a resource that helps people to build relationships with a wider, more varied set of people than those in the immediate family. Unlike bonding capital that focuses on the needs and interests of the group member themselves, bridging social capital is more likely to consist of less intimate, even “weak” ties (Granovetter 1977), and focuses on relationships that span different groups, linking heterogeneous groups together and providing a means of strengthening the larger society (Frank and Yasumoto 1998; Paxton 1999). Wuthnow (2002) observed that bridging points only to the value of transcending social differences. Examples of such social differences include, class, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, and region. In his work, Putnam (2003) observed that bridging social capital can pave the way for acquiring other forms of capital such as financial or human capital. Similarly, Martikke (2017) suggests that bridging social capital can be particularly effective when it comes to finding employment because bridging ties are good for the acquisition of new information. From the definitions and explanations above, it seems clear that for any woman to benefit from bridging social capital, that person needs to be willing to go all out and expand her social network beyond her immediate social group, and one of the ways to easily achieve the expansion of social networks in this present time is through the use of new communication technologies and social media.

2.3. BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The potential benefits of social capital can be determined by looking at the kinds of bonds an individual or group has created. For example, according to Bourdieu (1989), the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously, aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term. In other words, networks of relationships are not randomly built rather they are deliberately chosen and established for future long term or short term benefits. Unlike Bourdieu, who describes social capital as the main reason for social networking, Coleman (1994) sees the creation of social capital as a by-product of activities meant for other purposes. In other words, in Coleman's opinion, people do not directly invest in social capital, hence, when a person decides to render a helping hand to a neighbour or a person makes a new friend, he/she is not thinking that in the future the neighbour or friends will be of assistance in the future. The person is simply engaging in a neighbourly gesture or simply wants to have a friend. Coleman's position is, therefore, more suitable in explaining social networking and social networking on social media platforms.

Social capital exists in different forms. In Nigeria, it could either be in the form of structured groups or informal groups and associations. For example, in Nigeria, clans, and communities come together to sponsor its members to obtain an education. Also, family members within a clan are compelled to make a monetary contribution (usually a fixed amount) in the form of a family levy. Funds raised from these contributions are used to help out family members that are experiencing financial challenges.

Bourdieu (1986) highlights that proximity and physical participation are paramount to social capital. In his opinion, the level of benefits accrued from social groups depends on the individual's presence in the group. As in the example stated in the paragraph above, the clan cannot come to the aid of family members that default in payment of their levies until they have paid up all outstanding levy. Also, members who have registered strong presence (whether financially, materially, etc.) are most likely to have other members of the family (with weaker presence) volunteering to be of help in other ways other than financially. This form of gratification supports Bourdieu's (1986: 52) explanation of the various kinds of benefits members of a social group can reap. In his opinion, normal relationships based on workplace or neighbourhood or in this case family can be transformed into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights).

Social capital has proven to be useful in women's empowerment process. Studies conducted in Bangladesh show that through the creation of social groups like Mahila Samakhya ¹, allows illiterate women to have access to information on any problem they might have in any area of life (Janssens, 2010). Social capital has also proven to be useful in the reduction of poverty among women in the rural community (Mayoux, 2001). For example, micro-credit programs grant loans to poor women with no collateral based on their memberships of certain social networks (Dowla, 2006; Mayoux, 2001).

¹ The Mahila Samakhya program was initiated in 1987-1989 to translate the goals of National policy on Education and Empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly of women from socially and economically marginalised groups.

Group-based programs, for example, co-operatives and micro-finance provisions targeted at women contribute to individual financial empowerment. Similarly, another study conducted in Bangladesh also shows that women, especially women in rural areas, have been able to obtain loans from microfinance banks through the social groups they belong to, despite not having any collateral (see Dowla, 2006). The funds obtained via group-based schemes are invested in the expansion of individual businesses. The investment in one's economic activity leads to more income available for the woman to control.

Social capital leads to economic empowerment which in turn leads to women's ability to renegotiate changes in gender relations leading to social and political empowerment. According to UN (2009), long-standing inequalities in the gender distribution of economic and financial resources have placed women at a disadvantage relative to men in their capability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from broader processes of development. Thus, an increase in a woman's income in the family or society can lead to a boost in her position in the family and society. Financially stable women that make contributions to the finances of the home are usually consulted when there is a need to make decisions that affect the wellbeing of the family. Their opinions are not just sought, but also taken into consideration. More so, women will be present for key decision-making forums shaping the allocation of economic and financial resources and opportunities in their societies when they are known to make significant contributions to the flow of income in that society.

Women's economic empowerment is assumed to lead to increased well-being for themselves and their families. Apart from an increased income for the woman, an increase in social capital can lead to an increase in wellbeing for the family as well. For example, from a personal perspective on social groups formed on the basis of work association. During prolonged work action strikes

that have no pay attached, women that are members of an association/union/forum for women at their workplaces are entitled to relief material provided by the association. These materials mostly come in the form of food items, house supplies and sometimes little cash. Such supplies sustain the family and at the same time cushion the effect of the prolonged strike on family members. Furthermore, empowering the woman through social capital leads to an increase in the resources available in the family, because there would be income flowing in from multiple sources and this would reduce the financial burden on the man.

However, on the other hand, the World Bank (2000) suggested that community pressure may be harmful to individuals. It also suggests that traditions and common practices and norms of the community or social groups can stifle the growth and creativity of individuals who do not comply with the set code of conduct outlined by the group. Such people could be ostracized from the group.

2.4. BRIEF BACKGROUND OF MOBILE TELEPHONES

Castells (2007) suggests that as the television in the 1950s and the Internet in the 1990s, mobile telephony has emerged as one of the defining communication technologies of our time (Campbell and Park, 2008). The piece of technology has not evolved in its features over time but it has also evolved in what it symbolizes to people around the world. Jon Agar (2003: 162) considering how the mobile phone has meant different things to different people worldwide, eloquently describes the mobile phone as “a way of rebuilding economies in eastern Europe, an instrument of unification in western Europe, a fashion statement in Finland or Japan, a mundane means of communication in the USA, or agent of political change in the Philippines”. According to GSMA intelligence (2019), there are over 5 billion mobile subscribers in the world.

A brief historical overview of mobile telephony by Castell (2007) notes that mobile telephony first began to take off worldwide in the mid-1900s, such as with the first in-car phone, which dates back to the late 1940s. By 2000, there was one mobile phone to less than two mainlines, and by 2003 mobile phone subscriptions had overtaken mainline subscriptions for the first time. Within the span of about 10 years, mobile telephony has moved from being the technology for a privileged few, to essentially a mainstream technology. Since then, mobile telephone subscriptions have continued to rise, effectively doubling the number of lines available worldwide. In some countries, primarily developing countries, mobile phones are serving as a technological substitute for fixed lines, and to an increasing extent, certain classes of people in developed countries are also substituting fixed lines for mobile phones. Statistical records show that by 2003, there were 1.162 million mobile phone subscribers (ITU, 2003). Going further, statistics show that by 2013, 56.5% of the world's population are mobile phone users. In 2019, this number has increased up to 67.1% of the world's population, so far (see figure 2). With the steady annual increase in the number of mobile phone subscribers, it has been predicted by major Information technology companies that the total number of mobile phone subscribers will increase to over 2 billion by the end of 2019 and over 8 billion by 2023 (see figure 3).

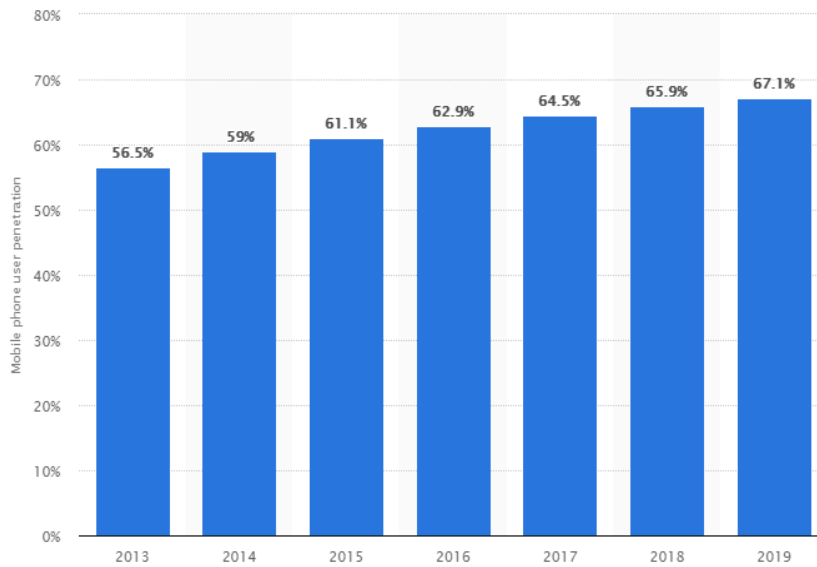


Figure 2: Mobile telephone user penetration by the percentage of the population worldwide from 2013 to 2019 (Rumman and Szilágyi, 2018)

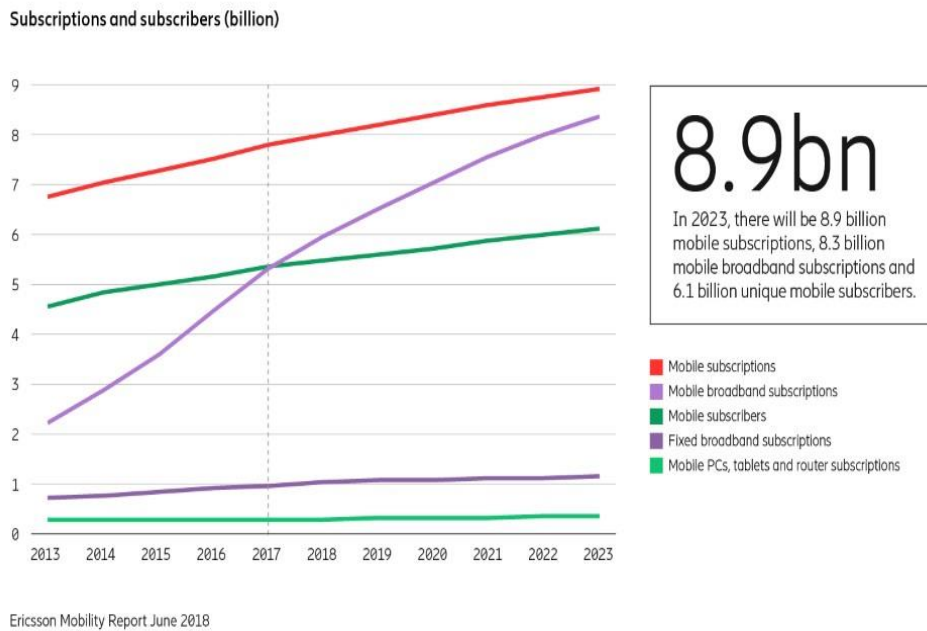


Figure 3: Mobile subscription possible penetration rate by the year 2023 (Ericsson Mobility Report, 2018)

The wide penetration of mobile phones has sparked many debates and discussions on their impact on all aspects of humanity. Numerous studies (see Kim, Mims and Holmes, 2006; Maginnis, White, and Mckenna, 2000; Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013; Crompton and Burke, 2018) suggest that mobile phones can be useful in delivering access to learning materials to people even outside classroom setting (see Thornton and Houser, 2004; Alexander, 2006). This is popularly referred to as m-learning. Increasing numbers of institutions of higher education offer courses using mobile wireless technologies as alternative teaching and learning tools. In discussing the benefits of mobile phones to higher education, Maginnis, White, and Mckenna (2000) suggest that “mobile wireless technologies can overcome the limitation of educational flexibility with wired technology” (Kim, Mims and Holmes, 2006: 78). In other words, the flexible and portable nature of mobile technologies makes them more suitable for improving the efficiency of teaching-learning. This point is supported by studies conducted in Japan (see Thornton and Houser, 2005), finding in that study show that mobile phones can be effective for effective tools for a broad range of educational activities among which is delivering foreign language materials to students. Furthermore, Mehdipour and Zerehkafi (2013) suggest that m-learning provides people with access to training when it is needed, training at any time; training at any place and learner-centred content. However, critics of using mobile technology as augmented learning argue that though there is evidence to suggest that mobile technology facilitates learning, there is no evidence to suggest how it promotes new learning (Valk, Rashid and Elder, 2010).

Similar to the educational sector, studies (see Kaplan, 2006; Patrick et al, 2008) suggest that mobile phones could be an effective health care intervention, especially in developing countries. In particular, they suggest that mobile phones are useful in disseminating health-related information that could be of benefit directly to people, thus encouraging people to be more aware of, and

educated on, health-related practices. In addition, Patrick et al (2008) noted that there are health-related applications ('apps') for mobile phones that help people keep track of their weight, heart and blood pressure, exercise routine and so on. Findings in their study show that these applications and a combination of routine SMS notifications, help people be more self-efficient in managing their health. Also, other studies (Lund, 2009; Mechael, 2009) show that mobile phones are useful in delivering general health-related information to pregnant women; providing access to information online and via regular SMS; empowering women with phone numbers they could contact in cases of emergencies or if they have any questions.

In developing countries in Africa, mobile phones have been noted to help micro-entrepreneurs improve the way they do business. Saunders et al (1994) argue that "telecommunication (in this case, mobile phones) can contribute to economic development in the following way: better market information; improved transport efficiency and more distributed economic development; reduction of isolation and increase in security for villages, organizations, and people; increased connectivity to and coordination with international economic activity" (cited in Donner, 2008:2). In Rwanda, Donner (2008) observed that mobile phones allow micro-entrepreneurs in rural communities to develop new business contacts and also improve their social networks, hence improving their business opportunities. Similarly, in Tanzania, the findings indicate that mobile phones contribute to reduce poverty and improve rural livelihoods by expanding and strengthening social networks thus leading to an increase in people's ability to deal with emergencies; cut down travel costs; maximize the outcomes of necessary journeys; increase temporal accessibility; and amplify efficiency of activities (Sife, Kiondo, and Lyimo-Macha, 2010). The use of mobile phones also reduces the costs of doing business and increases productivity by helping rural traders and fishermen to secure better markets and prices; avoid unnecessary wastage and allowing them to

promptly communicate business-related information (Abraham, 2006). In addition, Chen and Dunn (1996) observed that mobile phones allow micro-entrepreneurs to effectively operate businesses from home. While so many studies seem to attest to mobile phone ability to alleviate poverty in rural communities, participants in a study conducted in Tanzania seemed to disagree (see Sife, Kiondo, and Lyimo-Macha, 2010). Part of the argument of the study is that though mobile phones are important for conducting business and economic activities that contribute to economic development; however, mobile phones do not alone alleviate poverty. Simply put, this means that mobile phones offer so many things that can be useful in improving people's quality of life (for example, m-banking which improves the way people transact), nevertheless, for many people, instead of decreasing their poverty, it can increase it by increasing household expenditure.

2.5 THEORIES ON TECHNOLOGY

2.5.1 Debates on technology determinism

Over the previous few decades, new information and communication technology (ICT) has become very important, if not central, to human living. Technology is so vital to human existence that it is interwoven into almost every, if not all sectors of life. Human beings, regardless of one's location or social status have always depended greatly on technology, for one thing, or the other. According to Wajcman (2010) technologies feed, clothe, and provide shelter for us; they transport, entertain, and heal us, they provide the bases of wealth and of leisure. The rapid spread and influence of technologies are part of the reasons for arguments that are typically grouped together as 'technology determinism'.

The general argument of technology determinism is that technology has an important, if not overriding, effect on our lives (Adler, 2006). This statement in itself is not entirely wrong; however, the technology determinism point of view of how the effect takes place is often more

debating. Dafoe (2015: 1052) defines technological determinism as approaches that emphasize: (1) the autonomy of technological change, and (2) the technological shaping of society. The argument of technology determinism is divided into 2 main points of view, or a 'hard' and 'soft' technology deterministic point of view. Hard technology determinism posits that technology has the power to effect change and allows little scope for human autonomy or choice (Lawson, 2013). Soft determinism, on the other hand, acknowledges human autonomy or choice (Lawson, 2013). Whatever the point of view, technology determinism believes that technology drives social change, be it for good or not. McLuhan and Fiore (1967) who are key proponents of technology determinism argue that technology is an extension of human skill that alters our perception of the world. In particular, they argue that new technologies, such as television were at that time, changing society; not through its content, but through the type of literacy it encouraged; perception and cognition are fundamentally changed, and therefore so is social interaction and society as a whole (Drumm, 2015).

The argument of technological determinism goes beyond the provision of basic technology for enhancing human comforts, such as improved farming techniques or improved system of transportation; rather it looks at the impact of technology on human social relations. According to technology determinists, technology directly or indirectly impacts the way we live together socially. It changes the way people think and how they interact with one another. This implies that social progress is driven by technological innovation and human beings are somewhat powerless to the impact of technology on society. This point of view also implies that societal change is influenced positively or negatively by technology without the interference of cultural, religious and political views of the individuals or societies involved. This point of view is in itself arguably because human decisions are constantly influenced by society. As defined by traditional theorists,

humans are cultural beings, therefore culture, religion, and politics guide how we define our society. To counter the argument of technological determinists, Wajcman (2010) suggests that technology is just one external factor of many that influences how people interact. In other words, technology alone is not enough to influence people's behaviour and how people interact. Rather it integrates itself into the existing communication patterns and thus amplifies it.

Technological determinists believe that technology's effects on society are inherent rather than socially conditioned. Simply put, this school of thought propagates that uses made of technology are largely dependent on the structure and design of the piece of technology involved and not on the individual interpretation given by the user. In an attempt to refute this thought, Winner (2001), suggests that at most times, in designing a piece of technology, the designer is guided by his/her cultural, political, and social ambition. Thus, one can argue that the social effect of technology is contingent on the cultural, social, and economic conditions of the user and they can be designed consciously or unconsciously to open or close certain social options. For example, the internet was consciously created to ease communication between two computers (people) at different locations. However, over time, with various enhancements, society has found other uses for the internet that are not necessarily positive. Such as increased instances of surveillance of individuals.

Critics of technology determinism insist that the relationship between technology and society cannot be reduced to a simplistic cause-and-effect formula. Rather, the relationship is best described as an intertwining, whereby technology does not determine but '...operates, and are operated upon in a complex social field' (Murphie and Potts, 2003:22). Mackenzie and Wajcman (1999) further argue that the path of innovation and its social consequences are strong, if not entirely shaped by society itself through the influence of culture, politics, economic arrangements, regulatory mechanisms and the like. Technology itself is not as important as the economic or social

system in which it is embedded. Outside the system, technology remains human-made inventions that do not have a mind of their own. Technologies' power or impact only comes into play when it is wielded by someone or society. As, Smith and Marx (1994) suggest, the social effects of technology are complex and contingent (Mackenzie and Wajcman, 1999). Hence, what matters is not the technology itself, but the social or economic system in which it is embedded. Furthermore, gender studies scholar Wajcman (2004) observes that the social shaping of technology goes beyond usage to include design and technical content.

Older literature (see Cockburn, 1985; Wajcman, 1991, 2004) on technology and gender mostly linked technology as an extension of male dominance. The general gist of the literature is that technologies were designed by men for men to use. This meant that only men could possibly possess the knowledge and technical know-how to handle technology. Therefore, while it was considered befitting for men to study science and technology-based courses like engineering, mathematics, women were expected to study courses that were less challenging and more homely, that is if they were allowed to get an education in the first place. According to Wajcman (1991), women were discouraged from studying core science and technical courses because such courses entailed spending a lot of time reading and that could potentially pose a distraction from house duties, family care. Women's technical training usually revolved around learning how to operate whatever piece of technology at home. For example, how to use the refrigerator at home. According to post-modern and post industrialist theorists, men's monopoly of technology served to promote patriarchy, while women's lack of technological knowledge further fuelled the culture of total dependence on men. The cultural stereotype of interlinking technology with masculinity is not produced and circulated by technology itself, rather this gender inequality is produced and circulated by educational systems, youth cultures, social institutions, family and the mass media.

In recent times, modern debates on gender point out that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed and regularly negotiated. Thus, this means that there are no technologies for men or for women, nor are there subjects or roles that are meant specifically for one gender. Furthermore, the modern inquiry into gender and technology has shifted from the role of technology in promoting patriarchy and gender inequality to women's participation in the production, shaping, and use of technologies. This means that recent studies are actively recommending bringing information technologies closer to women: changing technology development methods, increasing women's participation in system development and implementation, modifying the "masculine" culture of IT at various levels from societies, to industries, and to organizations and educational institutions (Huang, 2019). In doing so, it is important to maintain consciousness of the different external social factors that could potentially control women's interaction with technology; for example, race, ethnic background, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, family, age, class, individual experiences and needs, individual personality and attitudes. These external factors at one point or another act alone or intersect to influence women's interaction with information technologies.

2.5.2 Feminist arguments on technology

According to Harding (1996), feminist criticism of science, in this case, technology, evolved from asking the "woman question" in science to asking the "science question" in feminism. That is to say, rather than asking how women can be treated equitably within and by science, feminism criticism is interested in how science (and technology) can be used for emancipatory ends (Wajcman, 2010:146). In their criticism of technology, feminists are interested in the social factors that shape different technologies, the way technology reflects gender divisions and inequalities, and the way gender is embedded in technology itself (Wajcman, 2010). Furthermore, in its debate against technology, radical feminism argues that gender power relations are embedded deeply

within technology. This perspective argues that technology reproduces patriarchy and calls for new technology-based female values rather than male values (Wajcman, 2007; Wajcman, 2010). Radical feminism based its arguments on the assumption that women's needs are different from men's needs, and as such, women are not always well served by technologies; thus, making them victims of patriarchal technoscience.

However, recent debates on technology by socialist feminists view the situation from the relationship between women's work and technology. Feminists within this category are much more positive on the possibility of technology to transform gender relations and empower women. The advent of mobile phones, internet, and cyber cafes has paved the way for women, particularly women with access to these facilities, to take advantage of these technologies (Baro and Endouware, 2013). Although the emphasis was on women in highly industrialized countries, records show that even women in less industrialized countries that have access to ICTs have been able to improve their economic and social lives.

Many post-modern and cyber-feminists embrace the use of web-based technologies. Post-modern and cyber-feminist argue that the internet reinforces the end of the embodied basis for sex differences. They also argue that digital technologies make possible the blurring of boundaries between male and female as well as human and machines. This is made possible because the internet can be described as an open playfield where anybody is free to do as they please. Control on the internet still remains difficult to achieve. The open nature of the internet can be considered as both a blessing and a curse. It can be considered as a blessing because it provides a good platform for the woman's voice to be heard and it also provides a large and diverse audience for the woman. It is also a good source of education and knowledge for the woman. It can be considered as a curse because it exposes the woman to the risk of unrestrained cyber-bullying and

exposure to inappropriate material. It can also expose the woman's weaknesses thereby forcing them to create and live an alternate life that is not a real representation of who they are.

2.6 TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites (SNSs) are a type of virtual community that has grown tremendously in popularity over the previous decade or so. In particular, several studies have explored its impact on young people's lives (see Campbell, 2005; Pain et al., 2005; McMillan and Morrison; 2006); women's lives (see Gupta, 2018; Colley and Maltby, 2008; Schwartz, 2013; Das and Das, 2013); its influence on politics (see Weare, 2002; Asaro, 2000); and its influence on socio-economic development (see Donner and Tellez, 2008). Scholars (see Boyd and Ellison 2007; Rains and Brunner, 2015; Stoycheff, Liu, Wibowo and Nanni, 2017) define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, interact with streams of content, and emphasize interpersonal communication as the primary activity. In defining social networking sites. Boyd and Ellison (2007) further point out that social network sites (as they preferred to call them) are unique because beyond allowing individuals to meet and form connections with strangers, they also enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks to the public. Since the launch of (what was probably) the first social networking site - SixDegrees.com - in 1997 (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; McIntyre, 2014), social networking sites have evolved from competing to replace existing ones, to competing for users' time and attention among a growing number of sites (McIntyre, 2014).

Scholars in various studies (see Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007; Brandtzæg and Heim, 2009; Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert, 2009; Wellman et al, 1996) have explored people's reason for using social networking sites. Findings from these studies suggest that people join social networking sites to meet people with common interests and form new relationships. People looking to start new relationships (romantic and otherwise) often turn to social networking sites to find and connect with people who have similar interests. Sometimes, these relationships remain online, while at other times they transcend to another setting. Another reason people join social networking sites is to reconnect with old friends, acquaintances, and old school mates. Social networking sites are considered a cheap alternative way to keep in touch and stay updated with friends and it also considered a good place to reconnect with people that one has lost contact with. In other words, social networking sites help strengthen already existing offline relationships (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe. 2007; Ellison and Steinfield, 2006). Social networking sites provide people with the opportunity to socialize with other people from different parts of the world (Kobler et al., 2010). This is simply demonstrated through commenting on people's posts on their walls, posting messages via inbox or even on the walls, going through people's pictures and even 'liking' or 'hearting' them. In addition, studies show that people join groups they can identify with just so they can meet with and identify with people that might be experiencing similar circumstances as they are (Nabi, Prestin and So, 2013; Kanayama 2000; Leimeister et al. 2008). Wellman et al (1996) show that people join groups on social networking sites to be a part of a community or identify with a cause. The users of social networking sites have also highlighted access to information as a reason for engaging with social networking sites. Studies (Brandtzæg and Heim, 2009; Baumgartner and Morris, 2010) show that people go online to read news updates. People also go online to access information on fashion, politics, travels, cultural events and recent

happening around the globe. Apart from information gathering, Brandtzæg and Heim (2009) also noted that people go online to engage in debates on trending topics with different people. Social networking sites provide a platform for people from different parts of the world to come together and discuss their opinions on any incident in the world.

However, there are upsides and downsides to online social networking. The upsides are the same as the reasons (as discussed above) why people engage with online social networking. A summary of the benefits of using SNSs includes the potential for increased social capital, social support, and relationship maintenance (see Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe, 2007; McEwan, 2013; Nabi, Prestin, and So, 2013).

Over recent years, online social networking has evolved. Studies (Millen and Patterson, 2002; Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter and Espinoza, 2008; Goswami, Kobler Leimeister and Krcmar, 2010) into online social networking have observed that the world has become more reliant on technology as an integral part of living, making it impossible to imagine life without being connected. Thus, there is a shift from a discussion of being “on” or “off” line to always being online. Boyd (2012), explained it in this statement

I spend plenty of time socializing face-to-face with people, watching movies, and walking through cities. And I even spend time doing things that I’d prefer not to—grocery shopping, huffing and puffing on the treadmill, and so on. All of these activities are not in and of themselves “online,” but because of technology, the online is always just around the corner. I can look up information, multitask by surfing the web and backchannel with friends. I’m not really online, in that my activities are not centred on the digital bits of the Internet, but I’m not really offline either. I’m where those concepts break down. It’s no longer about on or off really. It’s about living in a world where being networked to people and information wherever and whenever you need it is just assumed. I may not be always-on the *Internet* as we think of it colloquially, but I am always connected to the network. And that’s what it means to be always-on.

In the text above, what Boyd, is trying to point out is that unlike in the past, in the world today, there is no clear definition between being online and being offline. Modern technologies, such as mobile phones especially, have succeeded in blurring the lines between offline and online. So it does not really matter if one is actually online, so long as one remains connected on the various social media channels, they are online. In other words, it is a lifestyle. Like Boyd said, whether one chooses to look at the message or updates now or later does not change the fact that they are still always accessible to the world and the world to them.

While technology sceptics (Choliz, 2010; Roberts, Yaya and Manolis, 2014; Kuss and Griffiths, 2017; Pearson and Hussain, 2017) describe this kind of human-technology relationship as being over-reliant or even an addiction, newer technology scholars describes it as “always on lifestyle” (Boyd, 2012) or “constant connectedness” (Chayko, 2014) that is fuelled by human nature to always remain accessible to information, and the desire to connect with, interact with and understand other people. Newer technologies are equipped with the means to ensure that these basic human needs are easily met, hence, they form a mutual, possibly even symbiotic relationship with people. Though mobile phones have their perks, they also have their complications, hence what remains key is finding a balance between both worlds (Boyd, 2012). In other words, there is no disputing the pervasiveness of technology, its potentials of complicating human life, while at the same time enriching it. But for some, of course, it also has negative consequences; which we will explore more below.

2.7 SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE ERA OF NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Prior to the evolution of new communication technologies, the internet and social media, people primarily formed social networks by joining clubs and forming informal associations in

communities, religious organizations, schools, workplaces etc. However, in recent times, there has been a change in the way people can socialize. The internet has made it easier to build social relationships that eventually could become useful social capital. With the advent and widespread of social networking sites like Facebook, for example, it is easy to not only build new relationships that may or not be beneficial with unknown people, it is also possible to maintain existing ties and relationships (Mayoux, 2001). Halpern (2005) observed that people no longer needed to rely on the clumsy institutional setup to socialize, instead they can just pick up their phones and arrange to see their friends for dinner. Halpern's opinion shows how easy socialization has become. People are able to socialize and form social groups and networks online. Currently, efforts are being made to explore the influence of information communicating technologies on communities. While it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the important role new communication technologies play in building and maintain social capital (see Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe, 2007; Halpern, 2005), it is still important to note that the influence of new communication technologies on social capital is not entirely positive. Thus, bearing that in mind, this section will be exploring the three main debates on the effect of new communication technologies (especially mobile telephones, the internet, and social media) have on social capital.

The first debate argues that ICTs create networking infrastructure which encourages the formation of social capital (see Clark, 2007; Pierce and Lovrich, 2003; Gaved and Anderson, 2006). This belief is stemmed from the fact that with ICTs people have access to a much wider community than they would physically. One of the benefits of having access to a wider network is the amount of information, and support (emotional and physical) such a person is able to access. Social media and social networking sites have become a useful tool for building groups or associations that mainly target women. According to Leigh Cuen (2017: online), 'every day, thousands of women

around the world are joining secret Facebook groups where they crowdsource their questions about careers, sex, money and everything in between'. This statement summarizes the essence of what modern-day social capital and what women's empowerment involves. Cyber-capital, as it is called by Kuah (2008), is the most common form of capital among modern day women. Nowadays, women's support groups are not necessarily about physical finances, rather they involve, for example, skills building, information sharing, emotional support and knowledge acquisition on certain areas of life. Women reach out to each other for help in areas of their lives where they are experiencing struggles.

Schaub (2012) observed that mobile telephones enhance social capital by promoting larger and stronger social networks, preserving social ties, and enhancing the functionality of social networks by making members reachable. Studies show that migrants use mobile telephones to exploit their social networks. For example, Vancea and Olivera's (2013: 190-194) study conducted on three migrant groups of women in Catalonia shows that mobile telephones allow migrant women to engage in transnational communications with their families. Furthermore, the findings from the research show that among other things, mobile telephones allow women to feel closer to their families and actively engage in life back home. The findings in Vancea and Olivera's studies give credence to the school of thought that suggests that mobile phones are particularly suited for the maintenance of social capital because they facilitate perpetual connectivity with existing close ties (Ling, 2004). In addition to supporting the maintenance of strong ties, new communication technologies have been recorded to be useful in bridging social networks, especially through social media. Studies show people joining groups with a common interest in social networking sites such as Facebook. Such groups could support online support groups for mothers, especially new mothers (see McInnes and Chambers, 2008; Renfrew, McCormick and Wade, 2012). Another

example is discussion groups for families with chronic medical illnesses (see Gonzalez, Steinglass and Reiss, 1989; Ekas and Likenbrock and Whitman 2010). The benefits of online social networking are that you get to have access to a diverse group of people with so possibly the same experience as you. The disadvantage of such groups is that because of the diversity of the group, there is the risk of being exposed to people with untoward behaviour. In other words, chances are some cyberbullying might take place.

The second debate is that the internet and new communication technologies weaken existing communities. Scholars who are wary of the potential dangers of new communication technologies and the internet argue that internet-users tend to neglect their family, friends, relatives and neighbours (see Kraut et al, 1998; Nie and Hillygus, 2002). Stoll (1995) argues the internet is causing people to become socially isolated and cut off from genuine social relationships, as people tend to hunker alone over their computers to communicate with anonymous strangers. Furthermore, to emphasize the effect of communication technologies on familial social relationships, women participants in White, Shade and Brayton (2003) suggest that new communication technologies have the potential of hindering social relationships, especially within the family. In simpler words, the more time people spend on their devices means the less time they spend with family. Kraut et al (1998: 1019) also suggest that “whether social uses of the Internet have positive or negative effects may depend on how the internet shapes the balance of strong and weak network ties that people maintain”. In other words, in order to judge how the internet affects the people’s relationships, we have to look at how it could potentially affect relationships with family, friends and kin (bonding capital) and how it affects their relationship with weak ties, including weak online ties (bridging capital).

Nie and Hillygus (2002) in a study suggest that any negative impact of the internet and new communication technologies depends on when, where and the purpose (my addition) it is being used for. Sum et al (2009) support this line of thought when they noted in their study that “the internet is a two-edged sword with the ability to do both harm and help”. Studies show that the internet and new communication technologies have the potential of doing harm to familial relationships if family social time is spent with members of the family busy on their gadgets. Kraut et al (1998) further suggest that people who rely heavily on the internet for social capital building purposes are most likely to end up with more weak ties than strong ties. This could potentially result in a decline in physical communities as we know them.

The third debate on the effect of new communication technologies on social capital is that it supplements community. Wellman et al (2006) noted that people use the new communication technologies like the internet and mobile phones to maintain existing social ties. Haythornthwaite and Wellman (2002) also observed that new communication technologies augment traditional methods of communication and maintaining social capital. There are many studies that discuss the role new communication technologies play in enhancing the building and maintaining of social capital. For instance, Yang et al (2008) suggest that “ICT, including mobile technologies, are developed to extend human communication capability by breaking through the limits, such as time difference and geographical distance, and enables human interaction with greater mobility than ever before”. This means new communication technologies, including mobile telephones, allow people to maintain contact with existing community members, like family, friends and kin regardless of their geographical locations. This is ultimate of great benefits to individuals because it reduces the risk of losing one’s social network just because one is not able to have constant face-face communication with other members of the social group. Kakihara and Sorensen (2002) also

argue that ICT, particularly mobile technology, is continuously reshaping human interaction. With new communication technologies, especially the mobile phone, people are able to carry their social groups or communities around with them.

2.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter first explored the three main theories of social capital and as noted earlier on the commonality of all three of the theories is that they lay emphasis on social relationships that produce some form of collective or individual benefit. Pierre Bourdieu in his conceptualization describes social capital as a tool used by elites and working-class to reinforce social classism and social inequality in general. Coleman, building on Pierre Bourdieu's concept developed his own theory in which social capital is benefited by every member of the community or social group. In Coleman's theory, every member of the group either directly or indirectly contributes to the wealth of the group and every member is allowed to draw from the pooling wealth when the need arises. While social capital is hoarded and circulated only with the circle of selected few in Bourdieu's opinion; Coleman, on the other hand, believes strongly that trust and reciprocity are needed for social capital to thrive in any society. Putnam, on the other hand, is a bit similar to Coleman, in the sense that he presents social capital as a good that is reproduced based on trust and reciprocity. However, it is different from Coleman's in the sense that in his opinion increased social capital leads to the economic development of the society. In other words, it focuses more on the welfare of society than the individual.

The next section in the chapter explored the two major kinds of social capital and the benefits and downsides of social capital to women empowerment. The following section explored how socialization has evolved in light of new communication technologies. It further explores what this means for social capital building and maintenance. As noted earlier, the meaning or effect new

communication technologies have on socialization and social capital is, to a large extent, dependent on the purpose, time, where it is being used.

The third and fourth sections of the chapter explore the history of mobile phone, focusing on its impact in the different sectors of society and the 2 major theories of technology-technology determinism theories and feminist debate on technologies. The crux of technology determinism theory is that that social change is driven by technology but challengers of this point of view suggest that technology alone cannot drive change rather, technology, influenced by other factors can become an agent of change. Feminist arguments on technology, on the other hand, argue that while gender power used to be deeply embedded within technology, in recent time it has become useful in blurring gender lines. Going further, this chapter also explores the role of new communication technologies in enhancing people's social lives. This chapter argues that newer communication technologies such as mobile phones allow people to expand their social networks beyond physical space and time. This chapter also argues that the amount of impact these technologies would have on an individual's lives depends on how much of it is consumed by the individual.

CHAPTER 3: TECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

3.0. INTRODUCTION

Technology can play a key role in the process of developing people and society. Information communication technologies have succeeded in permeating almost all sectors. This permeation ranges from ICTs in communication, banking, education, health, agriculture and much more. According to Malcom (1999), there are opportunities for connecting modern science and indigenous knowledge for the betterment of all. That is to say, ICTs cannot perform alone. For ICTs to be effective in any society, they need to be wielded by individuals that have good knowledge of what it is, how it works, and how to implement it for the good of the people involved. Specifically, this chapter first presents a brief overview of Nigeria's history from women's perspective. Then it goes further to provide an understanding of the relationship between gender and empowerment. The chapter also explores social, cultural and political factors that encourage the marginalization of women in Nigeria. Then it proceeds to discuss existing debates on the role of information communication technology in empowerment and gender equality and the history of the Nigerian telecommunication sector.

3.1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S HISTORY FROM WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE

Created by the British in 1914, Nigeria is the most populated African country, with more than 186 million people and almost half of this population are women (BBC News, 2019). It is also the eighth-most populous nation in the world. The nation has nearly four hundred ethnic groups and has a landmass of 923,768 square kilometres (Otite, 1990). Politically, the country operates a

federal system of government. Nigeria is therefore structured administratively into 36 states with a Federal Capital Territory and 774 Local Government Areas (Alemika and Ogugua, 2001). Nigeria became independent of British rule on the 1st of October 1960 after over 60 years of centralized colonial rule (Lovejoy, 1991). A few years before independence, the country was divided into three large regions, North, East and West, with each region exercising a limited form of self-governance. The regions corresponded roughly with the three largest ethnolinguistic groups - the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the East, and the Yoruba in the West (Lovejoy, 1991).

The pre-colonial history of Nigeria is filled with human movement and settlement (Mayowa, 2014; Erim, 2013). According to Walker (2008), there are three important points to note about Nigeria's pre-colonial history. First, the spread of Islam began over a millennium ago, predominantly in the North but later on extended to South-Western Nigeria. The creation of Sokoto Caliphate extended Islam within the area of present-day Nigeria. This history helps account for the dichotomy between North and South and the ethnical divisions in the North that have been so pronounced. Second, the slave trade had a profound influence on virtually all parts of Nigeria. The transatlantic slave trade accounted for the forced migration of about 3.5 million people between the 16th and 19th centuries. The social implications of the slave trade are still evident in the country to this day. In particular, conversion to Islam and the spread of Christianity were both intricately associated with issues relating to slavery and with efforts to promote political and cultural autonomy. Third, though the colonial era was relatively brief, it brought many rapid changes and the impact of the colonialism is still felt in Nigeria today.

From the point of view of women, history has it, that societies in pre-colonial Nigeria believed that women and men complimented each other (Agbese, 2003). Ethnic groups were structured around kinship that determined the productive and reproductive roles of members of the society. Kinship

is still today a strong factor in Nigeria and the family is one of the strongest and respected institutions in the country. In Nigeria, a person's kin consist of their parents, siblings, relatives, friends and in-laws, and they all play an important role in the life of the person (Agbese, 2003). During the pre-colonial period, children were considered economic assets to the family because they provided necessary labour on the family farm; therefore, the ability to produce children increased the value and standing of a woman in the family as it meant more wealth and power for all of the family. In the Igbo culture, in the circumstance that a woman could not bear a child, she had the power and control of marrying a wife for her husband that could bear children for them (Agbese, 2003).

Furthermore, though society at that time was patrilineal, power was not primarily determined by gender, but rather seniority. In other words, while inheritance and authority were granted to men only, age was the most important factor in determining who got to participate in government, perform certain duties, or earn certain titles (Agbese, 2003). For example, the oldest daughter of a home in Igbo land always retained the title of *Ada* (first daughter); even after she has married and left the family. Certain rights are performed only by the *Ada* and certain benefits come with the title. In addition, history suggests that women also acted as leaders in pre-colonial Nigeria. Queen Amina of Zazzau, Moremi of Ife, Princess Inikpi of Igala land, and Queen Kambassa of Ijaw are all examples of women that used their position in the society too, directly and indirectly, influence decision making (Agbese, 2003). Pre-colonial scholars suggest that because positions of power were determined by kinship, age, or merit, gender played a far less significant role. Nzegwu (2001) suggests that this was a society where both men and women respected each one another's contributions to the development and wellbeing of society; no one gender was privileged nor devalued. Studies (such as Agbese, 2003; Chuku, 2015) suggest that women made significant

contributions to household economies, through farming, business crafts, and house to house exchanges. Furthermore, women-only groups in pre-colonial Nigeria were effective for fighting male, economic, political and social oppression. While memberships of these groups were not compulsory, it was both desirable and inevitable for most women at that time. These collectives encouraged financial and emotional independence amongst women and they ensured that men who were reported for physically abusing their wives were punished for it. Thus, even though pre-colonial times were not perfect, the literature here would seem to suggest in terms of equality and empowerment, they were far more equal than the colonial times that were to follow.

The role and power of women in society changed significantly under British colonial rule. However, as Guyo (2017) argues, colonialism alone is not to be blamed for the changes in women's role and status in the society, as the (associated) rise in of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria also played major roles in this too. However, contrary to popular opinion (Denzer, 1994) colonialism did not liberate women from a barbaric and oppressed existence. Historical studies (see Falola, 2002; Okeke, 2000; Falola and Heaton, 2008) suggest that colonialism and religion, both Christianity and Islam, set women back, and helped create and enforce a system characterised by male domination and the subordination of women. For instance, following the establishment of Sokoto caliphate in Northern Nigeria by Usman Danfodio, Islam became a major driving force in shaping communities in the North and the roles of women subsequently played in society. Over the years, many women in this region have been forced to give up their active economic, social, and political role, to live a life a dependency and seclusion (VerEecke, 1993). Importantly, Callaway (1987) highlights that Islam itself does advocate the isolation and social marginalization of women, but rather, this is how the religion has been used by male clerics in parts of Nigeria to ensure that women are not be allowed certain freedoms or hold public offices. Similarly, in South

Eastern and South Western Nigeria, women were also stripped of their political powers following British colonialism and the conservative Christian values on the role of women in a society that this brought with it (Okome, 2002). As Arezki (2013) suggests, this colonialist period subordinated women and defined their (women's) access to education, political offices, employment, and wages.

3.2. UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA

Empowerment is critical to promoting development in any society, and this can be achieved through identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving the disempowered more autonomy to manage their own lives. Power is an essentially contested concept (Lukes, 1974). Typically, the concept, power, is seen to exist in four key forms. First, 'power over' perspective explains power as the ability to get someone or a group of people to do or act as you want (Weber, 1978; Dahl 1957). Second, 'power to' perspective explains power as the ability or capacity of an individual or group of people to act (Arendt, 1970; Pitkin, 1976; Hobbes, 1985). Third, 'power with' has to do with finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength to achieve collective goals (Oxaal and Baden, 1997; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002). Fourth, 'power within', as proposed by writers such as Foucault (1979) and William et al (1994), has to do with self-regulation but also reveals the opportunity for resistance and empowerment (Rahim, 1986).

Luke (1974) explains that the confusion on how to conceptualize power is borne out of the political and social interest of the scholars involved. Therefore, considering this research adopts a feminist approach, which is interested in gender-based relations of domination and subordination and how these intersect with other forms of oppression, this study seeks to focus on the role of power in challenging forms of domination and oppression. This definition is well suited within 'power

with', which eventually leads to 'power within'. Out of the numerous definitions and explanations of power by different feminist groups, Miller (1982) and Held's (1993) explanation of power as transformative and empowering remains relevant to this research. Held's point of view presents power as one's capability to nurture, empower and transform one's self as well as others. Similarly, Miller (1982: 2) asserts that viewing power as domination is masculine. From a woman's point of view, power is perceived differently. In her words, '...women may want to be powerful in ways that simultaneously enhance, rather than diminish, the power of others'.

Therefore, according to the Narayan (2002) empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions that both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context, which govern the use of these assets. In the same vein, scholars such as Bush and Folger (2004) and Alsop et al (2006) have, in their own words, defined empowerment as an individual or group of people's competencies to make decisions that affect their lives as well as their capability to take actions on decisions as it affects their lives or communities. Ergo, empowerment is the expanding forces of an individual or group of people to take individual or public choices and activities that could not just influence their lives yet the lives of the general population around them. The above definitions support Czuba and Page's (1999) explanation of empowerment as a product of relational power process. In their opinion, for empowerment to happen, two major things need to be in place: first of all, there has to be power, and second, power needs to be dynamic, in the sense that it needs to be able to change, expand, and circulate but if it is static then the process of empowerment is not feasible. That being so, the idea that technology can be used to empower people or change people's lifestyles appears problematic.

Furthermore, Obayelu and Ogunlade (2006: 65) describe empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people or disadvantaged people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold responsible the institutions that affect their lives. This definition was proffered in an analysis and discussion of how information communication technologies could be employed for sustainable poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Hence, in order to understand the role technology plays in empowerment, it is important first to understand what the concept of empowerment entails, and then consider its role within this study.

Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations, in all spheres of life (Srivastava, 2009; Bustamante-Gavino and Rattani, 2011; Wadesango, 2011). Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to; and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions (Acha, 2014). According to Fadeye and Olanegan (2001: 66), women empowerment is a process of enabling women to actualize their potentials. It also entails the dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue, disempower, and dispossess women (Fadeye and Olanegan, 2001: 96). In addition, empowering women, especially in Nigeria, means, giving credence to the efforts of women to contribute the creation of wealth, contribute to decision making at both family, societal and national levels, reduction of the present state of vulnerability, decreasing women's dependency on men as well as women's passivity in the society.

In 2015, Nigeria's population was projected at about 183 million people (national bureau of statistics) of which about 91 million are females. Despite the large population of women in the country, women are still marginalized and underappreciated for the role in the family and society

at large (Yahaya, 1999). In his research on the problems mitigating against women empowerment in Nigeria, Yahaya (1999: 132) observed that Nigerian women have potentials to evolve a new economic order and accelerate social change and good governance. Asaju and Adagba (2013) reinforce that these potentials are necessary to transform society into a better one.

According to Awe (1990), Nigerian women have long been contributing their quota to the development of the nation; however, their potentials have not been fully tapped due to some constraints. Although there have been recorded improvements, little as it may be, in the number of women holding significant positions in public office as well as women holding significant positions in the industries, the gap between men and women remains wide. Nigerian women are still relegated to the background because they lack the educational, economic and political power necessary to actualize their innate potentials (Asaju and Adagba, 2013; Yahaya, 1999).

Awe (1990) perceived the importance of women from their roles as managers of peace and stability at home. Awe further stresses that women, especially mothers plan, organize, direct and coordinate all resources at home to the benefit of all members of the family. Effective management of the home promotes national development but wherever this is lacking, the reverse is usually the case (Asaju and Adagba, 2013; Yahaya, 1999). In the agricultural sector, women have made a significant contribution to food production and processing (Olawoye, 1985: 18-23). In his opinion, they assume this status because they are largely responsible for the bulk production of crops, agro-based food processing, presentation of crops and distribution of yields from farm centres to urban areas. The UNDP (2016: 1) further emphasized that ‘to advance women development, we need to get women not to only participate actively in productive activities but also to get a fair reward for their labour’.

In order to achieve sustainable women's empowerment in Nigeria, there is a need to begin at the grass-root level of educating girls with not just formal education but also identifying and equipping them with skills that eventually become useful in their economic development. This is very crucial, considering that a lot of Nigerian young girls, especially in northern Nigeria, are often forced into early marriages. Statistics provided by NBS (2016) show that the total number girls that successfully completed their secondary education with the possibility of moving on to higher education dropped to 49% in 2015 from 49.2% in 2011. Furthermore, there has been a drop in the total percentage of women that have attained higher education (university, polytechnics and colleges of education, from 41.3% in 2010 to 38.4% in 2015. On a yearly basis, the number dropped by 5.4%. It has been noted that the bulk of this drop is recorded in northern states in Nigeria. This mostly stems from the dominant cultural and religious beliefs of this area, which do not tend to encourage the education of women. Hence, while it is important to encourage formal education of women, it is also important to ensure those that may not be fortunate to attain full education, are at least, well equipped with skills that can help them be economically empowered and less dependent on men.

Arene (1993) observed that the success of a lot of women both at home and in their careers has helped in debunking the widely held notions about the ability of working-class women to fulfil their maternal roles. In her paper titled: 'The Nigerian Women in the Workplace'. Arene (1993:5) noted that,

There is no validated research that professional housewives bring up children better than professional service ladies. The children of working women certainly do no less well than the children of pure housewives. On the contrary, it is to be expected that happy and fulfilled professional career women and mothers will apply the benefits of their knowledge, their vast exposure, more balanced judgment, in educating their children and running their homes. They will also be a greater inspiration to their children.

Arene (1993) argues that women must adopt a mentality for winning because the frustration of the past led to many of them pegging their aspiration low. In her opinion, women should grant themselves intellectual liberation and cast away timidity while expressing informed and enlightened boldness and confidence. Furthermore, rather than depend on the use of feminine attraction, Arene is of the opinion that women should be able to match aspiration with ability, ambition with qualification; and be informed while exploiting legitimate opportunities to foster their career potentials.

The empowerment of women is a process whereby women perceive themselves as equipped for undertaking decisions and making choices about their lives, which thus requires adequate levels of self-confidence and assertiveness (Huyer and Sikoska, 2003). The idea that empowerment signifies testing the boundaries of patriarchy at all its levels of expression (Makama, 2013), and arguably implies that for women, empowerment is the process whereby they are able to challenge, and if possible, change existing social institutions and norms, which they believe could mitigate their effective performance in society. It has been noted by Mama (2006) that the male domination of almost every sector in the world has led to a gender gap in various countries in the world, thus the need for gender equality. Although, countries in the Global North have been able to almost, if not completely, close the gap, the same cannot be said of countries in the Global South. In the Global South, regardless of studies that have demonstrated an improvement in women's participation across different sectors, which can arguably be used to depict the closing of gendered lines, the process is slow. One of the major factors enlisted as being responsible for the continued marginalization for women is the high illiteracy rate amongst women in the Global South (Acha, 2014). Furthermore, apart from illiteracy, religious and societal norms are also strong factors that

determine the independence of women in many developing countries and regions (Dollar and Gatti, 1999). These factors will be explored further in the next section of this chapter.

There is no one template for the empowerment process that can be applied in every scenario. However, scholars have suggested a bottom-up approach as the most effective in the empowerment process. Friedmann (1992) suggests that the bottom-down approach presents people as active and involved in the process of change. It also portrays peoples as participatory active voices in their own development. Thus, in empowering women, there is the need to listen to and work according to the specific needs of the affected parties and not force a pre-set plan to them. This line of thought seems to support Jetti's (2006) claim that women's empowerment is not something that can be handed down, as welfare or aid. Rather empowerment arises out of women's interests and in their own understanding of what needs to improve to enhance the quality of their lives.

Recent UN conferences have advocated that women's empowerment is central to development (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). In its bid to achieve development especially in developing countries, the UN proposed its third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to promote gender equality and empower women (UNDP Report, 2000). Part of the targets in this goal was to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015 (UNDP Report, 2000). Although this goal was not fully achieved, the UN recorded substantial improvement in developing countries. According to its report:

- women make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside of agriculture, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990;
- the average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled over the past 20 years; however,

- women continue to experience significant gaps in terms of poverty, labour market and wages, as well as participation in private and public decision-making (UNDP, 2015).

In view of the successes of the MDGs and the need for sustainable global development, the UN in 2014 came up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The fifth SDG, Gender Equality, like the third MDG, still views gender equality as very crucial to global development. The aim of the goal is to put an end to all forms of discrimination, oppression and achieve empowerment of women and girls, using every means possible including the use of communication technologies.

3.3. GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION IN NIGERIA

It is common knowledge that women account for approximately half the world's population. Various studies (see Chowhry, 1995; Batliwala, 1994) have been conducted to determine the place of the woman in the development process of any country and the popular conclusion is that development is pointless without the active participation and input of the women in that country. Despite this popular opinion, discrimination and marginalization of women still exist in the world. Gender discrimination refers to the practice of granting or denying rights or privileges to a person based on their gender. This kind of discrimination leads to unfair treatment directed to an individual or a group on the basis of their gender which denies them their rights, opportunities or resources (Olaogun, Adebayo and Oluyemo, 2015). In Nigeria, Women are under-represented in almost every sphere of social and political life (Kangiwa, 2015). Historically, inequality has always existed between men and women. It exists either in the form of denied access or unequal access to power, economic opportunities, rights, status and privileges in the society.

In the past, women's economic empowerment was measured in terms of their access to agricultural innovations. A study conducted on women in Pella village of the defunct Gongola state shows that only men were members of cooperatives, benefitted from government loans, and new agricultural innovations (Nema, 1987). In another study conducted on 600 Berom women by Ayu (1987), it was suggested that the women were aware and desired to benefit from government loan schemes as well as agricultural innovation but had no direct access to them. Access was usually obtained through their husbands and most times, if at all it was obtained, it was limited in the sense that either they were forced to use what was made available to them by their husbands or the husbands completely disapproved and would take the money from them.

Historically, women have been subjected to marginalization, oppression and injustice both in public and private life. Women's oppression could either be fuelled by national policies that undermine women rights, customary or cultural practices that undermine the relevance of women, or religious practices that place women below men. These factors which sometimes act together to limit women empowerment and gender equality include:

3.3.1. Illiteracy

Although there are more literate girls in the world now, there are still a good number of uneducated girls, even more so, that girl child education is a major issue of concern in most developing countries around the world. In Nigeria, local cultural practices and traditions have placed great importance on men as heads of family and worthy leaders in society. That is why families, especially in rural communities prefer to send their male children to school. The education of girls is often deemed unnecessary and a waste of scarce resources especially, when she is simply expected to marry and become a full-time wife and mother. Girls are usually taught by their family wider society that their duty largely revolves around home maintenance and childbearing, thus

they are educated to be good wives to their husbands and good mothers to their children. Yahaya (1999) noted that girls are often not recognized for their achievements or potentials, rather, they are judged on their physical appearance, services and submissiveness.

Ada (2007) observed that many states and local governments within the country do not take into cognizance the peculiarities of including the girl-child in their provision of education to its indigenes, especially in Northern Nigeria (Ifijeh and Odaro, 2011: 4142). The UNICEF (2006) reported that only 20% of women in the North West and North East are literate and have attended schools. Barriers to girl's education include poverty, lack of adequate infrastructure, early marriage, cultural and religious misinterpretations.

3.3.2. Patriarchy

Patriarchy refers to male domination both in public and private spheres. Feminists mainly use the term 'patriarchy' to describe the power relationship between men and women. Thus, patriarchy is more than just a term; feminists use it as a concept, and like all other concepts it is a tool to help us understand women's realities (Sultana, 2011).

From time immemorial, Nigerian society has been a patriarchal society (Aina, 1998, Asiyanbola, 2005). Patriarchy has been a major feature of traditional Nigerian society, culture and social structures. Patriarchy is defined as a structural set of social relations with a material base which enables men to dominate women (Kramarae 1992; Lerner 1986; Humm 1989; Aina 1998, Walby 1990). It is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to men while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the position, roles and activities of women in the family and society at large (Makama, 2013: 116). Patriarchy, as pointed out by certain scholars is said to have its roots deep in tradition or culture and religion. Traditionally, men were perceived to be the stronger of the sexes and this strength was reflected

in the types of jobs and roles they played in the family and wider society. In addition, men are often considered to be the primary providers for the family (Carrigan et al., 1987; Aweda, 1984). This assumed role of family provider is of course not always the case, as previous research conducted by Kandiyoti (1988: 277) highlights that in Africa, it is the woman who is primarily responsible for her own and her children's upkeep, including meeting the costs of their education, with variable degrees of assistance from her husband. However, the traditional assumption and structures of men as the head of the household persists in most societies and cultures, and particularly so in many areas in the Global South.

Patriarchy still exists in modern-day Nigeria, although the government is making efforts to have more women hold public seats, and more women have developed an interest in participating in politics at different levels. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the number of women working in cooperates and even heading departments and projects. In academia, female academic staff in universities, secondary and primary schools have increased (UNESCO, 2013). Family settings have been redefined in modern times. Unlike the typical family setting of the past, both men and women have assumed roles of provider of the family. Often, both husband and wife work to provide for the family. Some couples come to a decision to divide family expenses between themselves in order to have an organized system of running the home. However, this is mostly obtainable in families from the southern and eastern part of the country. The northern parts of Nigeria tend to still be more traditional in terms of gender roles, primarily due to cultural and religious restrictions placed on women (Salaam, 2003; Christian Aid Nigeria, 2015). This role of religion in restricting women's empowerment will be explored further in the subsequent section.

3.3.3. Culture and Tradition

Culture is part of the fabric of every society. It shapes ‘the way things are done’ and our understanding of why things are done in a certain way or why things are the way they are (Schalkwyk, 2000: 1). Culture is explained as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (Serageldin, 1999). Culture develops over time as people interact with one another. It is made up, learned and transmitted down generational lines. In the cultural school of thought, gender identities and relations are mostly negotiated and defined by culture and not necessarily physical appearance (Oluyemo, 2014).

Appropriate social roles and meanings are attached to being male or female and although these meanings are constantly challenged and are often being redefined, in developing countries are still often behind in terms of challenging and changing traditional gender structures. While the specific nature of gender distribution differs in various societies, the general notion is that women have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal and limited power over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives (Schalkwyk, 2000). In Nigeria for example, there are still cultural laws that prevent women from inheriting property or owning land. Also, in Nigeria, the practice of giving preference to male children above female children still exist, not just among the poor and uneducated but also among the rich and highly educated classes. Traditional culture promotes gender inequality in society as it is passed down from one generation to another (Ezejiofor, 2011) and most times, regardless of how disadvantaged they are, they are also propagated by women themselves. Examples of such are the shaving of hair and maltreatment of widows in Eastern Nigeria and early girl-child marriage in Northern Nigeria (Ezejiofor, 2011;

Korieh and Okeke-Ihejirika 2008; Oluwakemi, 2017). Shaving of hair of widows is usually carried out by women in the community. When a woman's husband dies, she is expected to shave her hair and wear mourning clothes (usually black or white) for a long period of time, say 6-12 months. These rules are usually enforced by the women association of that community. Also, sometimes, when a woman is accused of being responsible for her husband's death, she is expected to drink the water used for washing his dead body. If she lives after drinking the water, then she is considered innocent. If she dies, she is dimmed guilty (Ezejiofor, 2011; Korieh, 2008).

Although Nigerian women have come a long way from the era where parents were literally ashamed at the birth of a female child, there still exist many practices that need to be challenged, and there is still a long way to go in terms of gender equality.

3.3.4. Religion

Religion is defined as beliefs, feelings, doctrines and practices linking people (usually a community of believers) to a sacred higher-level spiritual being (Njoh, 2006: 32). Religion forms an integral part of people's everyday life. Although it might be more conspicuous in some societies than others, it provides a guide, along with tradition and culture for what should be considered wrong or right in societies.

The 1999 constitution of Nigeria prohibits gender-based discrimination, however, customary and religious laws continue to restrict women's rights in Nigeria. Attempts at complete eradication of gender-based discriminations still remain somewhat futile because states in Nigeria possess the authority to draft its own legislation. Therefore, while some states like Lagos, for example, is progressing in abolishing all forms of infringement on the rights of women and girls, other states like Zamfara and Sokoto (mostly states in northern Nigeria) that practice Sharia law tend to still have laws and practices in place that do not protect the rights and interest of women or girls.

Examples of such practices include early marriage of girls below the age of consent of 18, restriction of women's movement in the society, whereby women are not allowed to sit in the same taxis with and young and unmarried women are not allowed to be in certain areas without being accompanied by an elderly person or the husband, and strict dress codes among others.

A cross-examination of factors that promote gender inequality and hinder women's empowerment reveals that none of the factors acts alone. Rather, they are intertwined and interwoven with one another. Furthermore, the line that separate one from the other is almost if not totally blurred so that it often difficult to tell, for example, where the lines of culture stop and those of religion begin. Nigeria has always been the kind of country that places a high value on traditional culture and religion. Cultural and Religious beliefs tend to contribute largely to Nigerian women's gender discrimination and low social status. Some of these beliefs have been practised for so long that they are embedded in the societal perception almost as legal norms (Olateru-Olagbegi and Afolabi, 2013). For instance, in Northern Nigeria, religion and culture have been tightly fused together that is it is almost difficult, if not entirely difficult to tell which practice is borne out of tradition and custom or which is as a result of religion. Society, being aware of that continues to devise new means of manipulating citizens.

3.3.5. Poverty

Poverty is one of the most influencing factors on women's empowerment. Studies have shown that women are over-represented in the least profitable occupations, such as small scale farming and trading (Elborgh-Woytek *et al*, 2013; Morton *et al*, 2014). Recently, more women are taking jobs in decent workplaces that used to be dominated by men. In developed countries, there are more women holding significant positions in public offices compared to developing and least developed countries.

Women in developing countries, such as Nigeria, do not have enough resources to give them the leverage to do as they will (Mustapha, 2014). Although there are a good number of women that have economic power, they still typically depend on their husbands or families for permission to exercise their power. Apart from a very, the majority of women who are not in paid employment tend to be in petty trading, small scale farming, teaching and other businesses so that they can yield just enough for them to look after themselves and their children. Ngozi (2002) demonstrated that since most women do not have the required wealth, they cannot secure the required collateral to obtain a bank's loan, and due to their social position, they cannot establish the kinds of financial network available to men. These realities restrict woman's choices in business, and they will look for work that does not require high capital investment and requires less personal involvement (Kamal, Wojoud and Rana, 2009)

3.4. ICTS, GENDER, AND EMPOWERMENT: THE USE OF ICTS FOR EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

As discussed earlier, gender discrimination can be traced back to the colonial era in Nigeria. Prior to that time, women made an arguably equal contribution to the family as men, thus their role in the family and society was more than reproductive but productive (Goyal, 2011). During the period before the colonial era, while men farmed cash products, women were responsible for growing food crops and vegetable for family consumption. The colonial era, however, witnessed a clear distinction in the roles of men and women. While men were used for plantation farming, women were recruited to serve in homes as cleaners, cooks and sometimes, sex slaves (Chatterjee, 1989; Brand, 1987). In the late 1900s, it was discovered that the differences between the work experiences of men and women led to the differences in gender (Boserup, 1970). Meaning that

while men were employed by colonial masters to work on plantations, mines etc., women were relegated to roles of housekeepers, objects of entertainment and sometimes sex slaves, thereby worsening their position in the society. Thus, the logic above suggests that gender definitions came as a result of the work experiences of both sexes. To solve the problem, the modernization approach was adopted. The approach assumed that exposing women to the same kinds of professional training as men would make women as productive as men in the external world. However, this process was not as successful as expected because new opportunities and experiences were mostly made available to men, thus, women remained marginalized (Goyal, 2011: 114). As pointed out by WID, instead of a rise in the position of women in the homes, new technologies increased the bargaining power of men, thereby leading to a decline in the woman's relative position (Goyal, 2011: 114). This just further strengthens the argument that modernization alone cannot improve the position of women. Thus, for development to be successful, it needs to take a gender approach, and this involves challenging the institutional and cultural labels placed on men and women (Goyal, 2011: 114). It goes without saying that challenging "male-ness" and "female-ness" entails an adjustment in the roles of both sexes in the home and society. It entails the man's willingness to be more domesticated and nurturing, and the woman's willingness to be more active outside the home.

Gigler (2004) notes that the potential impact of information and communications technologies (ICTs) on development has recently become a much-contested issue within the development discourse (Ogato, 2013). According to Goyal (2011), ICTs correct the original distortions in production technologies and allows women to gain economic independence and status without imitating men. On one hand, proponents of ICTs highlight the positive impacts of mobile phones, internet and other forms of ICTs to create economic, social and political opportunities (Gigler,

2004; Goyal, 2011) for the poor and marginalized people in developing countries. Studies (Kaplan, 2006; Hawkins, 2002) show that new forms of ICTs have granted the marginalized new opportunities that they would normally not have access to. For example, through the mobile phone, internet and affordable data plans, women in rural areas of developing countries can have access to education, health-related information (Kaplan, 2006; Hawkins, 2002). Also, they are able to get information on certain skills that they can apply in their self-development process (Maurer, 2001).

Critics, on the other hand, claim that ICTs, due to existing socio-economic inequalities will favour the privileged segments within society and not reach the economically and socially disadvantaged, thus leading to a widening of the socio-economic gap within developing countries (Ogato, 2013). Therefore, according to the UN (2005), it is important to note that for ICTs to be harnessed more effectively for development and poverty elimination, ICT must be fielded as tools for broader strategies and programs for building opportunity and empowering the poor. It is also important to identify the specific changes required in each developing country and the role ICTs can have in effecting these changes as well as the best approach in tackling these changes. ICTs are sociotechnical or socio-material configurations that exhibit different degrees of determination and contingency at different moments in their relationship. The capacity of women users to produce new, advantageous uses of artefacts is dependent on their broader economic and social circumstances. For example, a young woman in the West may experience her mobile phone as a liberating extension of her body. For a mother, it may primarily be a tool to keep track of her children. For women working as traders in Bangladesh, the mobile phone provides the means to run businesses such as selling communication services to other women. There is enormous variability in gendering by place, nationality, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and generation and thus women's experience of ICTs will be diverse.

It has been observed that ICTs are an important contributor to empowerment. Information and communication technologies have given us remarkable tools to achieve the enhanced vision of development strategies (Malcom 1999), and it has become a potent force in transforming social, economic, and political lives globally (Hafkin and Taggart, 2001). To a large extent, a country's level of development is measured by its level of technological savviness. It is perceived as impossible for a country to be deemed as 'developed' without being connected to global information networks. Scholars supporting this school of thought have argued that ICTs could be instruments for women's dynamic cooperation in enhancing their circumstances, thus, basic access to information and enhanced communication could end the isolation of women and enhance wellbeing, access to conceptive administrations, financial development, and in addition, ease neediness (Huyer and Sikoska, 2003: 5). Scholars (Marcelle, 2002; Primo and Khan, 2005; Ogato, 2013) supporting this argument have suggested that ICTs could be instruments for women's dynamic cooperation in enhancing their circumstances, thus, basic access to information and enhanced communication can end the isolation of women and enhance wellbeing, access to conceptive administrations, financial development and in addition ease neediness (Huyer and Sikoska, 2003: 5). Alongside information, is participation (engagement) which fosters empowerment by encouraging people to get involved in the development process through physical involvement, taking initiatives, being vocal about their needs and asserting their autonomy of power in their various communities.

Information communication technologies are the most recent, and arguably effective, way of effecting or getting people to be proactive in development processes. Even though most studies into the use of ICTs for empowerment have lauded the increase in women's access to information,

education, and participation as the major criteria for measuring women's empowerment, UN Instraw's (1998) has a slightly different opinion. In its words:

Inequality to date, has been monitored through the use of statistical data on the rates of participation in education, infant and maternal motility rates, labour force involvement etc. but although this data is useful in indicating improvements or deterioration in women's status, they do not show the processes that are involved or whether there has been any social transformation in power relations, attitudes or beliefs. Women may be better off in terms of income or a higher number of women in parliaments, but this does not necessarily mean that they are "empowered". We do not know whether social inequalities are persisting or whether women have increased their abilities to control their lives according to their own criteria..... we also do not know the relative position of women who are poor.

In other words, increased income and participation is not a clear indication of empowerment. The state of empowerment is much deeper than is usually assumed; it is not a universal state and can vary from society to society.

Some scholars argue that improving women's access to ICTs only represents a potential for enhancing their capabilities and thus does not automatically have to lead to positive outcomes on empowerment (Gigler, 2004). Gigler further stresses that there is no direct relationship between accessing resources (such as ICTs) and empowerment. Gender has no causal influence on ICTs or vice versa, but rather the dynamic interplay between them is what matters. In other words, using women's access and use of mobile phones for instance, what is most important is how and what the women use the mobile device for.

3.5. WOMEN'S USE AND ADOPTION OF MOBILE PHONES

Studies (see Balasubramanian et al, 2010; Lim et al 2011; Comfort and Dada, 2009; Olatokun, 2007) have shown that women all over the world have adopted, and are still adopting, and using mobile phones for various purposes. While someone in a more developed country may be

advanced in their adoption and use of mobile phones, women from the least developed countries are not exactly left behind. Obayelu and Ogunlade, (2006) demonstrate that women from countries with developing economies, such as Nigeria, are beginning to use mobile phones for banking, shopping, accessing health information, connecting with family and friends, building social networks, and accessing information locally and internationally. Technology and economics experts have predicted that increased participation of women in the mobile world would lead to more economic prosperity for the country in question. In other words, a country that has more women actively using new digital technologies (including mobile phones), would experience economic growth. Hence, the new information technologies, such as mobile devices and the Internet, are considered important instruments for advancing socio-economic development.

In the past, women's access to traditional media and technologies were limited by a whole lot of factors that were either structural or personal. In fact, Obijiofor, Inayatullah, and Stevenson (2005) highlight that factors that tend to put barriers on women's access and use of mobile phones are more structural than personal. These factors range from financial incapacity, illiteracy, lack of technical know-how, social class, family hierarchy, lack of government policies enforcing women inclusion and participation, patriarchy, religious and cultural beliefs, and many others. Although all these factors were at play all over the world at some point, the Global North seems to have been better able to control the influence these factors have had on the disempowered. The Global South, however, on the other hand, has not been able to completely disentangle itself from the influence of many of these factors. A study conducted by GSMA (2011) on women's mobile phone use in various countries in the Global South confirms this; however, this is not without improvement (GSMA 2015; Obijiofor, Inayatullah, and Stevenson, 2005). Previous studies (Balasubramanian et al, 2010; Lim et al 2011; Comfort and Dada, 2009; Olatokun, 2007) conducted show that women

are not only beginning to indicate interest in Information communication technologies but are actually adopting and adapting technology to suit their daily living and lifestyles. In a study conducted by Lim et al (2011) Singaporean women's use of mobile phone to access health-related information showed that although the participating women were willing or intend to access health issues via their mobile phones, their actual use was restricted by technology design or the type of information provided on the Mobile Web Application. In the same vein, in his study of the availability and accessibility of ICTs by women in academic in South West Nigeria Olatokun (2007) discovered that although there were reported restriction in terms gender access to ICT and internet facilities, women were not willing to use the mobile phone beyond their everyday necessary task. This is because of the level of technological know-how the women were exposed to. However, on the other hand, Balasubramanian et al, (2010) in his study of rural women in India use of mobile for business and life-long learning observed that although the participating women had little or no exposure to any form of formal education, they were able to use the mobile phone to challenge existing gender and social stereotypes, albeit, it was impossible to measure if change actually occurred. All the studies highlighted above with the exception of Balasubramanian et al (2010) used Appropriation (availability and accessibility) as a yardstick to measuring women use of ICTs for empowerment and it is insufficient. Appropriation in Silverstone's domestication of technology framework refers to access, ownership and possession of technology. In Silverstone et al (1992:2), appropriation refers to the moment a piece of technology is acquired by a consumer and technology is owned, it has to be accepted into, and made to fit in the existing culture of place and time. But, Balasubramanian et al (2010) on the other hand, pointed out that in order to get the true picture of the role of mobile phone in the empowerment process of women then Objectifying, Incorporation and Conversion ought to be taken into account as well. Berker et al (2006) explain

Objectifying as the active shaping of Information Communication Technologies to merge with the physicality of the household. Silverstone et al (1992) simply explain objectification as the use of a piece of technology within the household economy. Incorporation according to Silverstone et al, (1992) refers to the ways in which technologies are used in the temporal context. Berker *et al*, (2006) incorporation as the process of ascribing meaning within the household rituals and rules. Lastly, Conversion according to Silverstone *et al*, (1992) refers to the way technology is used as currency. Berker et al, (2006) explain conversion as the kinds of things consumers do to signal to others that their participation in consumption and innovation.

The benefits and limitations of ICTs access and utilization are both collective and individual. As pointed out by Danjuma, Onimode, and Oche (2014), the collective benefits include economic growth, improved healthcare and education, capacity building and cultural transformation. The individual benefits include increased self-confidence (Rabeyah, 2009), reduced isolation, access to markets, empowerment and access to health information. Presently in Nigeria, it is apparent that there are many women who can and are constantly using different forms of ICTs on a daily basis. For example, women are using the internet to access information, and in particular for social networking. Women groups and forums have been created across different social media platforms with the aim of bringing Nigerian women from all walks of life, locations (some within and outside Nigeria), and age groups together to discuss different topics that affect Nigerian women. Examples of such groups and forums include Babes Redefined and Mamalettes on Facebook. Such groups and forums help build social capital for women especially those with lesser social status. Bonds formed online, which sometimes transcend beyond the forum are transformed into a genuine friendship. Hence, the real benefit of such groups is that new relationships are formed, while old ones are strengthened.

3.6. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR AND ITS CHALLENGES.

During the colonial era, in 1886, Nigeria's first cable connection was established between colonial offices in Lagos and London. In 1893, government offices in Lagos were provided with telephone services. These services were later expanded to include Illorin and Jebba. Between 1946 and 1952, a three-channel line carrier system was commissioned between Lagos and Ibadan, and this was eventually expanded to Oshogbo, Enugu, Illorin, Kano, and Benin. The purpose of providing the three-channel line carrier was to establish communication links between the colonial offices in London and Lagos, the commercial centres, and local authorities around the country.

In 1960, Nigeria gained independence with less than 100,000 telephone lines. Although several attempts were made in the following decades by the government to address the issue of telecommunication development, it was not until 1985 that Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), a government-owned and operated service, was established. The advent of NITEL led to an improvement in telephone services, however, the improvement was very minimal. This is because, despite the variety of services NITEL provided, the telephone penetration rate was still as low as eight direct exchange lines per thousand inhabitants. Another major challenge was that rural areas in Nigeria had little or no penetration because of the lack of telephone infrastructure. Urban areas also had inadequate facilities to meet the telephone demands of the people living there.

Following the failures of NITEL, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) was established in 1992 to regulate the sector. The Nigerian Communication Commissions is tasked with three main objectives; creating a regulatory environment to facilitate the supply of telecommunication facilities and services, facilitate the entry of private entrepreneurs into the telecommunication market thus breaking NITEL's monopoly, and promoting fair competition and

efficient market conduct (Adomi, 2005; Ige, 1995). Following the deregulation in 1992, the mobile communication services made its entrance into the Nigerian telecommunications market in 1993 with NITEL providing a national service alongside a Lagos Service provided by the Mobile Telecommunications Services (MTS). Some of the services provided by these companies were voicemail, paging and voice services over the analogue E-TACS network. MTS shut down due to failure to pay interconnection charges to NITEL (Nkordeh, Bob-Manuel and Olowononi, 2017). Prior to 2001 when the country's telecommunication sector began to boom, the number of telephone lines in Nigeria increased to about 700,000 lines, but this could still not meet the growing demands for telecommunication services by Nigerians.

In 2001, under the administration of the first democratic president, former president Olusegun Obasanjo, Global System for Mobile (GSM) communications was introduced in Nigeria. Since its establishment, the telecommunication sector has grown quickly, and GSM communication has rapidly become the most acceptable means of communication. Thus, by the ending of 2001, there were 2,271,050 active subscribers. As the years went by, the number increased rapidly to 95,886,714 in 2011. Below is a graph that suggests the growth of mobile subscription from 2002 to 2018.

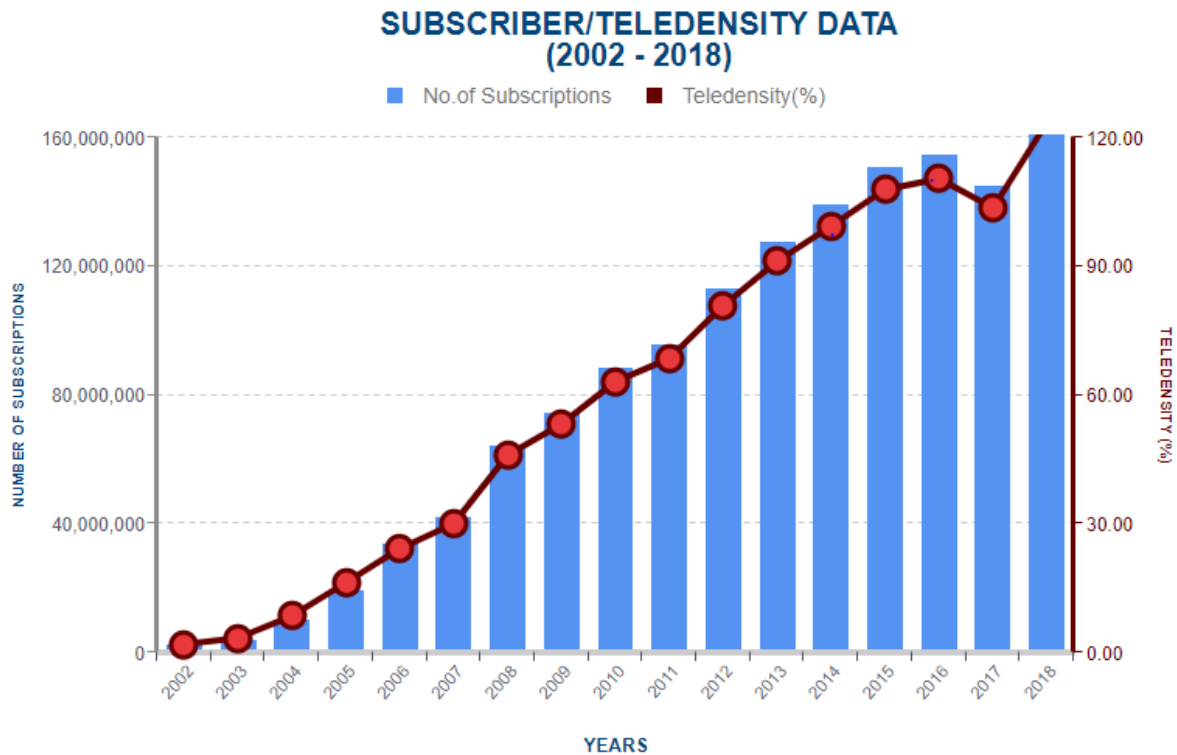


Figure 1: illustrating mobile subscription penetration from 2002 till 2018 (NCC, 2019)

Further analysis by the NCC (2019) suggests that mobile telephone penetration grew from 113,195,951 in 2012 to 154,529,730 in 2016. By December 2018, the Nigerian Communications Commission (2019) recorded that the number of active subscribers on the telecommunications network was 172,871,094. At this point, it is important to note that these figures might not be an accurate reflection of the number of people who own a mobile telephone, as a good portion of mobile subscribers may own more than one SIM card.

According to Nkordeh, Bob-Manuel, and Olowononi (2017), despite the growth of the telecommunication sector and its contribution to the economic development of the country, it still faces challenges and limitations that affect its reaching maximum productivity. For example, telecommunication operators have to deal with inadequate and erratic power supply. According to Nkordeh, Bob-Manuel, and Olowononi (2017), the electric power supply is not able to satisfy the

requirements of the mobile communications sector in Nigeria. In order to maintain a regular network, the operators have resorted to powering their Base Transmission Stations (BTS) with diesel-powered generators that have an automatic trigger whenever there is any form of power outage from the mains supply. Since self-generation electricity constitutes the highest cost of production, the GSM operators charge high tariffs to make up for the cost. Added to poor electric supply is the issue of poor social amenities, especially in rural areas where some of the masts are located. Because of the poor conditions of social amenities in rural communities, telecommunication companies are compelled to provide these amenities in communities they intend to erect masts in or else they are denied access to communities in these areas. Examples include roads, pipe-borne water etc. Another challenge is the lack of major transmission equipment in the country. Studies (such as, Ndukwe, 2003; Nkordeh, Bob-Manuel and Olowononi, 2017) suggest that most if not all of the instruments and equipment used by the operators in Nigeria are imported and these imports are subjected to long tedious authorization and clearance processes, which in turn, delay network deployment. In addition, these organizations are usually levied with high taxes from the federal government. In Nkordeh, Bob-Manuel and Olowononi's opinion, the GSM operators are confronted with multiple taxations that are placed on their equipment by several tiers of the Federal Government. For example, in Abuja Capital Development Authority, a 3 million Naira fee was levied on every base station in the city. Also, adding to the high cost of purchasing and maintaining equipment, telecommunication providers are often faced with the problem of regular vandalism, destruction, and theft of their equipment. This is due to the poor security system in the country. The Nigeria Communications Week Investigation (2010) reported that telecommunication providers have been forced to close down some of their bases in the

northern part of Nigeria and the Niger Delta region due to regular vandalism and destruction of their property.

3.7. CONCLUSION

To summarize the discussion of the chapter, we have begun by firstly exploring Nigeria's history from women's point of view. The section briefly explored arguments that colonization and religion may have arguably created structures that promote gender inequality in Nigeria. The section also argues that pre-colonial times in Nigeria witnessed more equality between men and women, with women leaders in different communities in history; for example, Queen Amina of Zazzau. The next section tries to provide an understanding of the relationship between gender equality and empowerment in Nigeria. After which we explore the kinds of gender-based discriminations women are faced within the country. Following that, the role information communication technologies in promoting gender equality and eventually development are explored. Ogato (2013) notes that ICTs must be locally appropriated by women in order to facilitate their empowerment and build on existing socio-economic and organizational community structures, so they can lead to the collective empowerment of all women. In order to ensure the entire population reaps the many benefits of ICTs, Best and Maier (2007) opined a clear understanding of the specific needs of women and other disadvantaged group is imperative. However, the many benefits of ICTs cannot be effective if it does not address women's access to and control over technology in relation to the opportunities that abound to use the resources in their context. More so, there are some 162.5 million people in Nigeria, 49% are female, some 80.2 million girls and women, and investment in women and girls will increase productivity, promote sustainable growth, peace and better healthcare; and in turn foster development. If empowering women involves them being able to make decisions that affect not only their lives but the lives of those around them, then, the ability

of the women to utilise, incorporate, and convert the mobile phone as it suits their needs and demands can be considered as empowerment.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

4.0. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have provided an overview and review of the existing literature on women's empowerment, its contextual meaning in Nigeria, and debates on the role of mobile telephones in empowering women. This chapter provides an overview and justifications of the chosen research approach, the methods used, sampling technique, the fieldwork experience, and methods of data analysis. As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, this research is all about exploring how women in Nigeria use their mobile phones to maintain their social capital and at the same time empower themselves. In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives have been set in place: to explore what the women use mobile phones for and what this means to them; consider the economic and social benefits that women stand to gain from owning and using mobile phones; and determine social factors and barriers that may affect women's acquisition and use of mobile phones in Nigeria.

More specifically, this chapter first explores why this study is important. It provides justification for why this study is on Nigeria and Nigerian women. The chapter also discusses why it is important for this study to be feminist research. The chapter proceeds to discuss quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and justify why it would not be using a quantitative approach and methods. The next section provides a background on qualitative research methods and a justification for not selecting them as a research method. The chapter then proceeds to discuss the qualitative interview research method and the justification for selecting semi-structured interviews as the chosen method for data gathering. The next section discusses sampling, participant

recruitment and the field experience. The subsequent sections provide a brief background of the selected participants, the problems encountered on the field, and finally an analysis of the interview.

4.1. RESEARCH APPROACH: WHY STUDY WOMEN?

This research adopts a feminist epistemological approach to research. The world of feminist epistemologies is built on the assumption that a person's knowledge is largely determined by their social position. A feminist perspective regards women as oppressed and disadvantaged by a patriarchal system. Patriarchy refers to systems and structures that are created by men to benefit men to the detriment of women. According to early feminist scholars, the power imbalance between men and women in a society is often reflected in their representations of the world as they view it (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1989). Dominant and accepted knowledge is created by men, while women's perspectives and voices are often silenced (Gray, 2014: 27). As Harding (1987: 7) suggests "...only partial and distorted understandings of ourselves and the world around us can be produced in a culture which systematically silences and devalues the voices of women". Hence, a feminist perspective seeks to give women a voice and understand their lives, and society more generally, from their perspective.

In essence, for there to be a holistic representation and understanding of the world around us, it is important to view the world from the perspectives of both men and women and the only way to fully do so is to allow women to share their experiences. Furthermore, in Harding's (1987) analysis, she surmises that there is no "woman's experience" rather there are only "women's experiences". This means there is not one generic story that covers all women's experiences and lives, but instead each story or experience is unique to the women involved. The uniqueness of

each story is influenced by their class, race, culture, religion (Harding, 1987), and (as in the case of Nigeria) tribe, and often these factors will intersect causing conflicting experiences.

Women all over the globe are faced with different kinds of struggles on a daily basis (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007). Thus, the concept of feminism possesses different meanings to people depending on their race, class, culture, and most especially their struggles. For instance, feminism could mean fighting against gender-based discrimination in society or workplace, but it may also mean fighting against the feminization of poverty especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. It also means fighting against the abuse of girls and women. More so, the struggle against female genital mutilation, patriarchy, and cultural practices that hinder female rights to inherit and own property. Once again, depending on the location or region, the definition of feminism differs, and the above list is not exhaustive of women's individual and collective struggles. Regardless of the struggle, it is safe to say that all feminists share some commonalities and goals, and that is to give voice to women's lives and experiences, improve the quality and life chances and choices for women and girls, and to overcome gender inequality and the oppression of women (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007).

4.1.1. Why study Nigeria and Nigerian Women?

Nigeria is one of the developing countries of the world and the country is vast. It is blessed with abundant human and material resources. But the country is facing many social, political, economic, and religious challenges that are threats to achieving sustainable development. One of the challenges confronting the country is gender inequality. Several attempts have been taken by the government and other non-governmental organizations (both local and international) to bridge the gap created but gender inequality as well as foster development in the country. While there seems to have been some successes, progress has been slow. Nigerian society is a very traditional one

and as such, remains very patriarchal in nature (Makama, 2013). This sets the tone for women's structurally unequal position in the family and society at large.

Women in Africa and most developing countries have been largely dominated by their male counterparts (Ebekue, 2017: 85). For a long time, women in Africa have been excluded from mainstream circles ranging from politics to the core of most social setups. In Africa, and specifically here Nigeria, gender has a clear and stringent social bearing on its citizens. A man is expected to do certain things while a woman has her roles succinctly set-out and fulfil traditional roles that subject them to the authority and jurisdiction of men (Makama, 2013; Ebekue, 2017).

This study is interested in Nigerian women, because, even though there may have been some progress in bridging the gender gap in Nigeria, there is still a lot of work to be done. Nigerian women, unlike their counterparts in some other parts of the world, are still facing substantial discrimination in the home and in a society that limits their opportunities to develop their full potential on the basis of their gender. Instances of discrimination against women include unequal rights in the labour market, low level of educational attainment, higher levels of poverty compared to men, biases against women's employment in certain branches of the economy or types of work and discriminatory salary practices. In some establishments, women are not allowed to get married or pregnant because it is thought that it will reduce their productivity and of course profit (Makama, 2013).

4.1.2. Feminism and research methods

Research has been described as a systematic investigation or inquiry whereby data are collected, analysed, and interpreted in some way in an effort to "understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts" (Mertens, 2005: 2). Methodology, on the other hand, can simply be described as a model employed by a

researcher in carrying out a particular research project. As explained by Gray (2014) the choice of method is influenced by the methodological approach chosen, which is in turn influenced by the theoretical perspective adopted by the researcher, and in turn, by the researcher's epistemological stance. There are three major research methodologies in social research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methodologies. The quantitative research methodology adopts the positivist approach to research (Sale, Lohfeld, and Brazil, 2002). In quantitative researches objectivity is key and as such, the researcher and the research subjects remain independent entities throughout the process. In their criticism of quantitative research, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 110) pointed out that "inquiry takes place as through a one-way mirror"; which means that the researcher and the research subjects have no influence on each other and as such cannot influence the outcome of the study. To ensure that the results of the research are objective, the techniques employed in these kinds of studies include written or orally administered questionnaires with a limited range of predetermined responses, randomization, blinding, and highly structured protocols (Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil, 2002; Bryman, 2015). According to Carey (1993), sample sizes in quantitative studies tend to be larger than those used in qualitative research to ensure that samples are statistical representative (Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil, 2002). Feminist researchers over the years have made their case against quantitative research and why it remains unsuitable for feminist studies (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1989). In their argument against quantitative research methods, feminist often argues that the quantitative researcher is often detached from the research. They also argue that there is an obvious power imbalance between the researcher and the 'subjects' that they study. Feminists further argue that the dominant ideology created by social hierarchies, including gender, shape and inform the questions quantitative researchers seek to address. For example, measures are constructed with a pre-set category of responses. These pre-set categories of responses produce

data that can be best described as fragments of decontextualized human experiences (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1989). Another fault in this method is that it often marginalizes and undermines the experiences of women. (Carby, 2007; Crenshaw, 1989; Collin, 2000)

This feminist critique of quantitative methods has been challenged as being ignorant of the possibility that both quantitative and qualitative methods exist to serve a different purpose and therefore no one is better than the other; rather one is simply more suitable for the particular case required. According to the challengers, feminist researchers need to, from time to time, step outside their paradigm of always reasoning along gender lines, so they can see new ways of seeing and explaining things (Babbie, 2015: 34). Therefore, it is important that researchers are not religiously wedded to only one particular methodology, but rather, seek to employ what best suits their aims. And equally, it is important to recognize that women's lives are not just shaped by their gender, but also various intersectional processes. Furthermore, in an attempt at highlighting the importance of quantitative methods in qualitative research, Silverman (1985: 17) posits that simple counting can help the researcher avoid the temptation of selectively using snippets of the respondents' conversations or responses to further support their interpretation.

Having discussed the debate on the suitability of quantitative research, this study chooses to not adopt the quantitative research methodology because as discussed earlier on in the section the nature of quantitative research methods renders it unsuitable for the topic being researched. This study aims to address questions that deal with issues that can be considered by the participants as personal or private. Issues like their empowerment, factors that limit their empowerment, their socialization process, how they choose to socialize, whom they choose to socialize with and why they choose to socialize? In order to do justice to such issues, the participating women need to be able to freely express their opinion and feelings without any constraint of a rigidly constructed

research instrument, because every detail matter, even the littlest emotions and feelings expressed by participants are very vital and are therefore taken into consideration when documenting, analysing, and discussing the data collected. Such cannot be captured through the use of quantitative methods. Another reason why the quantitative method of research is unacceptable in this study is that quantitative research is more likely to generalize the findings, which is not what this study seeks to do. The findings of this study remain unique to the participating women and do not in any way reflect the experience of all Nigerian women. Hence, this study adopts a qualitative research method, and this will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Lofland (1971) noted that qualitative research methods are efficacious in describing a given social issue through the words and experiences of those directly involved. Lofland depicts qualitative research as the process of uncovering the characteristics of a social phenomenon, its causes, and consequences. Qualitative research asks questions, such as: ‘what kinds of things are going on here?’, ‘what are the forms of this phenomenon?’, and ‘what variations do we find in this phenomenon?’ (Lofland, 1971: 13). There are five main types of qualitative studies, namely: grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, ethnographic study, and interpretive studies. This study is an interpretivist study. In an interpretivist study, the researcher is interested in understanding how the participants make meanings of situations or phenomenon (Merriam, 2002). One of the founding fathers of interpretivist school of thought, Wilhelm Dilthey, emphasized the importance of understanding and studying people's 'lived experiences' which occur within a particular historical and social context (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 7). This study is an interpretivist study because this piece of research is interested in understanding, studying, and sharing the experiences of the participating women. In order to achieve this, the study adopted an interpretivist

interview research method. At this point, it is important to note that there are other qualitative research methods, such as participant observation, focus group discussion, document and textual analysis, and biographic methods/historical analysis. The reasons for not using these are set out briefly here.

Participants' observation method entails the researcher joining the constituent study population or its organizational or community setting to record actions, interactions or events that (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 35). This method is integral to anthropological and ethnographic research because it provides 'direct experiential and observational access to the insiders' world of meaning' (Jorgenson, 1989: 15). In other words, it allows the researcher the opportunity to directly experiencing the phenomenon for themselves. Direct observation offers the researcher the opportunity to observe, record and analyse behaviours and interactions as they occur. This means that information that comes out of such research will mostly be based on the researcher's perception with little or no input from the participants. This makes observation method unsuitable for this study. Rather as Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 35) said, '...it is a particularly useful approach when a study is concerned with investigating a 'process' involving several players, where an understanding of non-verbal communications are likely to be important or where the behavioural consequences of events form a focal point of study'. Focus group discussion usually involves several respondents brought together to discuss the research topic as a group under the supervision of a facilitator or moderator (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Berg, 2001, Wilkinson, 2006). Focus groups provide a social context for research, and an opportunity to explore how people think and talk about a topic, how their ideas are shaped, generated or moderated through conversation with others (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Rubin and Rubin (1995: 140) explained that "in focus groups, the goal is to let people speak off one another, suggesting dimensions and nuances of the original problem that any one individual

might not have thought of. Sometimes a totally different understanding of a problem emerges from the group discussion". Ritchie and Lewis (2003) further asserted that 'focus groups also allow participants to hear from others and they also provide an opportunity for reflection and refinement which can deepen participants' reflections into their own circumstances, attitudes or behaviour'.

Wilkinson (2006) highlights the potential of allowing participants to build upon the responses of fellow participants as both a strength as well as a weakness. It is a strength because it allows respondents to react and build on the responses of other group members, which often leads to the production of more elaborate accounts than are generated in individual interviews. It is a weakness and the reason the method is not used in this study, because, there is always the possibility of one or more participant always taking the lead or being the spokesperson of the group or voicing his/her opinion first. This could influence other group members' opinions, in the sense that every other idea or account that will be shared afterwards will be built on the first opinion expressed, which may not necessarily be the best. In simple terms, there is the possibility of the overshadowing of minor or less vocal participants who could have an equally intriguing story or opinion to share by the more vocal personality. In feminist research, there is, therefore, the risk in focus groups of downplaying the importance of any participant's story, and hence, this can best be obtained in a one-to-one conversation with the participants where they are free from the interference of other people's stories. Documentary analysis involves the study of existing documents, either to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings which may be revealed by their style and coverage. Documentary sources are most useful when situations or events cannot be investigated by direct observation or questioning (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) and for this reason, it is not applied in this study. The biographic or historic method entails the use of life stories, narratives and recounted biographies to understand the phenomena under study. It

encompasses the study of a range of different types of material, both written and spoken, including life and oral histories, biographical and autobiographical accounts and 'documents of life' (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

Berg (2001) criticized these methods by stating that not all research questions can be answered through the use of archival data. Another criticism of this method is the question of the genuineness the content of the text. Wilson (1989: 137) suggests that "documents cannot be taken to reflect the truth unless they are really what they appear to be rather than forgeries or frauds". Furthermore, many official and existing documents would be seen in feminist research as partial at best, and often constituting dominant patriarchal knowledge.

4.3. STUDY DESIGN

4.3.1. Intersectionality and Women's Empowerment in Nigeria

Intersectionality is often concerned with the various factors that shape women's experiences. Intersectionality scholars (Lober 2011; Jordan-Zachery, 2011; Shields, 2008; Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013) believe gender and patriarchy cannot always be used alone to explain the circumstances surrounding all women's experiences. In their opinion, for example, people from different social classes, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and even religions will not have the same struggles in life (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 2013). At various points in time, in different peoples' lives, all of these factors, and others will play a role in defining the kinds of struggles and opportunities that individuals face in life, and sometimes they act simultaneously or independently of patriarchy. Thus, an intersectionality approach offers an understanding of the multiple, complex dimensions of inequality and power structures that create roles of domination and subordination under the rubric of, for example, race, class, gender, and sexuality (Rogers and Kelly, 2011).

Collin (2000) explains intersectionality using the concept of “matrix of dominations”, which refers to how these constant intersecting oppressions are organized, regardless of the particular intersections involved. In her opinion, beneath the surface of all intersections lies traces of structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power dominance. This argument arose and first gained footing with the rise of black feminism, which suggests that the experiences of women of colour were marginalised by white feminism. According to black feminists (such as Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Collin, 2000), it would be erroneous to assume that both white and black women are faced with the same problems. In their opinion, the experiences of black women, as well as women of other races, were unique in the sense that they not only had to deal with their patriarchally-defined positions in the homes, workplace, and society, additionally, black women had to deal with being a “black woman” in a white man’s world. Furthermore, Smith (1983) stresses that black women’s experience of sexism is shaped equally by racism and class inequality.

There is a lot to examine when considering ICT, and in particular mobile telephone use for empowering and developing Nigerian women, like the factors responsible for the current situation of women in the country, which of these factors is more pressing than the other, and how can a mobile phone be applied in tackling the issues? Mobile telephones have been widely available for over a decade in Nigeria and unlike any other form of communication technology, the mobile telephone has been able to permeate almost every segment of the society. However, despite the wide penetration and general acceptance and adoption of the device, there still remains widespread poverty in the country, especially among women. In light of this situation, one can only question if access to a mobile telephone or other forms of technology is enough? Therefore, using intersectionality to explain women’s empowerment in Nigeria, one needs to consider other factors

apart from the patriarchy that could be responsible for women's oppression? For example, existing cultural practices, hegemonic control, interpersonal power domain, institutions, religious practices, patriarchy, colonialism, social status, geographical location, possibly colonialism, and level of education and exposure. A good understanding of the role and extent to which these factors interfere with the women's empowerment will pave way for well-informed theory on how to tackle women's oppression using technology (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 2013; Smith, 2013). This is in agreement with Lorber's (2011) perception that global feminist research needs to be more sensitive to multiracial or multi-ethnic perspectives and try not to impose western values on data analysis. Hence, similar to Lober (2011) and Smith's (1983) arguments, the aim of intersectionality within this study is to ensure that the diverse experiences of all the women involved are represented.

To achieve the set aim of exploring the extent to which women in Nigeria use mobile telephones for empowerment and social capital building and maintaining, this research will adopt a qualitative research approach, primarily using the semi-structured interview as the main method of gathering data. A qualitative interview approach is most suitable where the researcher is more interested in gathering rich detailed answers to questions posed. Using this method implies that the researcher is primarily concerned with reflecting the interviewees' point of view on the topic (Bryman, 2005). Interviews will be explored more in the next section.

4.4. INTERVIEWS

This research study employs the use of semi-structured interviews. Interviews are described by Suoninen and Jokinen (2005) as a form of conversation that collects the understandings of an interviewee or gives voice to a certain person or group. Interviews are one of the most commonly used methods in qualitative research studies. Interviews can be described as ways for participants

to get involved, talk about and express their views, perceptions and interpretations of a given situation (Kajornboon, 2005). According to Meyers and Newman (2007:3), qualitative interviews are like night goggles ‘permitting us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is looked at but seldom seen’.

There are various kinds of interviews (Kothari, 2004; Kajornboon, 2005), examples of which are: structured interviews, group interviews, unstructured interview, and semi-structured. In a structured interview, there is an already prepared script that has to be followed strictly with no room for improvisation. It is the most rigid and less fluid of all the other types of interview. In this form of an interview, the same questions are asked of all the interviewees (Kajornboon, 2005). Group interviews involve interviewing more than one person at the same time. It could be conducted by one or two people at the same time. The researcher could either participate as the moderator or get someone else to moderate it while he/she observes. The group interview could either be structured or unstructured.

The third form of a qualitative interview is the semi-structured interview and as mentioned earlier, it is the method applied in this study. Morse (2016) described semi-structured interviews as less rigid than a structured interview and less fluid than unstructured interviews. Furthermore, Bryman (2015) pointed out that semi-structured interview is a more in-depth form of interview and it is best suited for exploring the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues, they also allow opportunities for further probing for more information or the clarification of answers (Barriball and While, 1994). In this method, there is some form of interview schedule that serves as a guide during the interview process. However, there is room for improvisation and adjustments during the process. It is less structured because it is more interested in the interviewee’s opinion or experience on the topic of discussion. Because of the relaxed nature

of semi-structured interviews, the researcher needs to be mindful of the possibility of the discussion being derailed or side-tracked or in the words of Silverman (1985) the possibility of the research undergoing several ‘re-specifications’ during the periods of study. Hence, care needs to be taken to ensure that the topic of discussion is not utterly lost.

An advantage of using semi-structured interview instead of group interviews is that semi-structured interviews reduce the risk of participants’ opinions being overshadowed by others in the group as can sometimes be the case with group interview (Gray, 2014). Another advantage is the flexibility of the method. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has a list of topics to be covered but does not necessarily have to deal with them all in one interview. Also, the order of questioning may be altered, depending on the flow of the whole interview process and there is room for some alterations in the sense that some questions may be omitted or integrated (Gray, 2014). This gives room for participants to discuss the topic and possibly raise additional or complementary issues that could form an integral part of the research. This is supported by Beardsworth and Keil’s (1992) observation that ‘the open-ended, discursive nature of the interview permitted an iterative process of refinement, whereby lines of thought identified by earlier interviewees could be taken up and presented to later interviewees’ (Bryman 2004:321). Therefore, the characteristics and the flexibility of this method are the reasons why the semi-structured interview is why it is considered as the best suited for this study.

4.5. SAMPLING AND PARTICIPANTS RECRUITMENT

Sampling is the process of choosing the research units of the target population which are to be included in the study (Sarantakos, 2012). Specifically, in qualitative studies, sampling involves decisions not only about who to include but also about the setting, events, and social processes

included (Huberman and Saldana, 2014; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2013). There two major broad kinds of sampling technique, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is generally considered more rigorous, suited for statistical research, and less suitable for qualitative research (Marshall, 1996). Types of probability sampling include simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling and multi-stage sampling (Bryman 2015; Gray, 2014).

In non-probability sampling technique, the sample is not necessarily statistically representative, rather, samples are often deliberately selected to reflect certain features or groups within the sampled population, or at times, merely on the basis of convenience (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2013). This kind of sampling technique, hence, is more suited for gathering in-depth data in small-scale research, where statistically representative is less important. There are various kinds of non-probability sampling technique and they include purposive sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling, self-selection sampling, and snowball sampling. For this research, the purposive and snowball sampling techniques were adopted.

Purposive sampling is precisely what the name suggests; members of a sample are chosen with a 'purpose' to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion. In purposive sampling, the researcher exercises control over who the participants will be. This decision is based on the researcher's notion of who is best suited to provide the best insight into the phenomenon under research (Gray, 2014). Purposive sampling is considered to be suitable for small scale research like the one being conducted. This opinion was reiterated by Kothari (2004) when he stated that purposive sampling can be adopted in small scale inquiries and research studies by individuals because of its inherent ability to save time and money.

This study also employed snowballing in recruiting participants. Snowballing is described by Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) as best suited for situations where the focus of the study is a sensitive issue and therefore requires knowledge of insiders to locate respondents to participate (Gray, 2014). Although the topic of the research is not necessarily sensitive, this approach is still particularly suitable because it was not easy locating a sizeable sample of women who would be willing to participate in the research. Snowballing was also deemed a suitable method of recruiting participants as the first set of participants were able to invite their friends and colleagues to also participate. In this research the first participant recruited was a hairdresser, who proved very useful and successful in encouraging her customers to participate, and many of them did. Another participant took me to her office to meet her colleagues and interview them. Although I could gather many willing participants from her office, I was at risk of having the same kind of people giving me the same kind of response. However, I soon realized that the women lived different lives outside their offices and the questions asked were not really about their work, and when it was about their work, I was more interested in their other businesses outside the office. Hence, in this way, I was able to gather a range of a number of participants with a range of individual experiences and opinions.

4.6. FIELDWORK AND DATA COLLECTION: THE INTERVIEW

Before delving into how the fieldwork unfolded, it is important to note at this juncture that the initial plan in this study was to attract women from a wide background (cultural, religious, economic, and age). The fieldwork in Nigeria took place during an intense period of data collection between January and April 2017. The research was focused on Kaduna state, Nigeria. Kaduna state is a state that can be classed as both urban and rural. This is in the sense that the state is host to one the country's federal universities, Ahmadu Bello University; it is also host to the teaching

hospital, the Aviation College, College of Education, and a Polytechnic. The town is also considered as semi-rural also because it is surrounded by so many small rural villages and settlements. In addition, Kaduna state is a multi-cultural and multi-religion state that has people of different tribal and cultural backgrounds resident in it. Therefore, because of these reasons the state was picked as suitable for the study.

First contacts were made after church services. The decision was made to use a local church as my initial point of participant gathering, as the church provided a community of different women from different walks of life, plus I needed to start somewhere. An example of the kind women that could be found in the church included, the literate, semi-literate, uneducated, business owners, employed, unemployed, those still going to school, and more. The meetings which were usually initiated after church services involved me walking up to people, telling them about my research, and asking if it was something they would be interested in participating? Although most people I spoke to were interested in the research itself, the interest seemed to dim the moment they found out they had to be involved in an interview. In retrospect, even though the church was considered as a potential place to meet participants, having it as the first point of contact was not a deliberate action. It just sort of just happened that way. I attended a church service one Sunday and after service, while I in the process of greeting people I had not seen in a long while, some people asked where I had been, and why I was back. I replied that my visit was purely research-based, and I proceeded to tell them about my studies. This then seemed an ideal opportunity to start recruiting participants. Despite the fact that the women seemed to find the study interesting, they were a bit hesitant to participate. But eventually, I had four women from the church agree to participate and then started to get a lot of referrals from them to others. Some women asked me to come to their places of work and business so they could introduce me to their colleagues and clients as the case may be. Hence,

though participant recruitment began at the church, it spread out and attracted women of different religious and cultural backgrounds. After some struggle, I was introduced to the head of a women's empowerment organization and I gave a brief presentation on what my research was all about, then she introduced me to some young women in her staff that I could interview and the women, in turn, introduced me to others and thus the snowballing process continued. Aside from the women's empowerment organization, I was able to make contact with other participants at hair and nail salons that I visited. Other places where I met participants were the local shop, the library, and the market. The variation in the places that I recruited participants made it easier for me to, as much as possible, have a wide variety of participants, certainly in terms of ethnicity and religion.

Though I had initially thought that gathering participants would be easy. The whole process turned out to be much more difficult than I first anticipated and required me to 'put myself out there' more than I imagined. Karnieli-Miller, Roni, and Liat (2009) and DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) describe this experience of 'putting one's self out there' as a means of creating a welcoming, non-threatening environment in which the interviewees are willing to share their stories; and I realized that the more I opened up to the participants, they, in turn, opened up to me more.

4.7. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The research set out with the intention of exploring the experiences of women of different backgrounds, a wide age range, with different levels of exposure and possibly of the rural and urban locality. However, as the fieldwork progressed it became obvious that the willing participants were mostly young women between ages 25-55, and resident in Kaduna state. Two of the participants were recruited at the church and nine women were recruited at the centre for women development. Four were recruited at the hair salon, three were recruited at the market,

and four were recruited at the university. Regarding the level of literacy, all participants have attained more than the minimum level of literacy, in other words, all the women have been exposed to formal education. While most have obtained a first degree from a higher education institution, few are still undergoing their university or college education. Eight (8) women were married with children while 14 were unmarried women. In addition, about six of the participants were currently postgraduate students. Most of the participants either had two jobs or had a main job and small business they operated. In this study, there are Christian and Muslim participants and also women from different tribes (See appendix 2). Finally, all participants are subscribed to more than one mobile network and owned more than one mobile phone or a multi-sim phone.

4.8. CONSENT

Every participant was given an information sheet as well as the consent form. However, most, if not all still wanted me to also verbally describe my research to them. Appointments were booked based on the convenience of both participants and me; however, a good number were willing to be interviewed on the spot. For those that booked appointments for future dates, follow-ups were done via phone calls and/or text messaging to confirm or arrange appointments.

Eventually, 24 women were interviewed but two out of the 24 participants later requested that their interviews should not be used, while one requested that her interview could only be handwritten as she did not want to be recorded. Some others were initially a bit hesitant about being recorded for the fear of either sounding ignorant or saying the wrongs things; however, when the interview began they settled in. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed afterwards. Each session took about 30-50 mins and transcription took about and 1-2 hours depending on the length of each session (see appendix 1 for a sample of transcription).

The informal conversation was the style used in most of the interviews. The first two interviews were a bit more formal and rigid, which resulted in the interviewer not getting much from the participants. The first woman interviewed was a hairdresser which and I made contact with her by walking into her salon for a hair appointment. She expressed that she was willing to participate for a number of reasons. First, because it would be her first experience as an interviewee for an academic research study, and second, the study was being conducted in a foreign university, and third, because she was going to make money from the business I brought her at the same time. All these reasons combined increased her enthusiasm. It is important to note that though she was initially excited, she was nervous at the start of the interview. Our combined excitement and nervousness put some strain on the session and there were moments of awkward silences and awkward laughs. Amidst the awkwardness, I could see the holes and gaps in my questioning approach and the questions. So, after some reflection, I made some adjustments and additions before the next interview.

The adjustment and addition of other questions are not entirely out of place in the semi-structured interview. As a matter of fact, it is one of the qualities of the method that made it suitable for this study. As highlighted earlier, qualitative interviews create an avenue for participants to fully express their feelings and understandings of their experiences. To achieve this the interviewer asks questions like what kinds of things are going on here and what makes each experience unique (Lofland, 1971). Therefore, getting the richness of the uniqueness of the individual experience requires minor adjustment,

4.9. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Some of the problems encountered during the research process have been discussed in the fieldwork and sampling sections. However, there were some other unforeseen problems that were encountered along the way and these issues contributed to the researcher's inexperience as a qualitative field researcher.

As difficult as it was to gather willing participants for the research, it was more difficult to get people to meet in public places. Being a lone researcher requires one to take serious measures to avoid being in dangerous situations. One of the measures includes ensuring all meetings with participants are done in public places that are convenient and neutral to both interviewer and participants, for example, parks (Elwood and Martin, 2000). Apart from participants that were interviewed at their places of work or at the hairdressers, others were interviewed at their homes. Attempts to get the others to meet at public places proved difficult as they preferred meetings to be held at places familiar to them and at their convenient times (Longhurst, 2003: 150). Some participants, especially the working mums demanded that we meet at home, so they could watch over their children as well as carry on with their home chores while conducting the interview. In Nigerian culture, meeting someone at home, even if it is someone you are not so familiar with is not entirely out place. To be welcomed into another person's home signifies acceptance by that person. It also creates a sense of familiarity with the possibility of friendship between the people. Also meeting the participants at home exposed me to their natural setting. Though interviewing at home was convenient for the participants, it came with some disadvantages. For example, children crying or demanding their mother's attention during the interview process thus causing breaks at odd points and sometimes the participants might lose focus by the time they returned to the interview. Although some might argue that these distractions add to the originality of the

interview, I agree with this line of thought and even though it could happen to anybody, it is often common with women.

Another problem encountered was getting participants to honour their commitment. Some participants cancelled their appointments while others did not show up at all. When asked the reason for cancelling or not showing up, some claimed they did not have time to spare for an interview while others said they changed their minds. Two women insisted that I interview others before getting to them, which I found out was a tactic to avoid being interviewed. Regardless of the difficulty, most participants were willing to grant immediate interviews, especially those I met at their places of work.

As expected, another problem was keeping participants on topic. One of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is their flexibility, which gives room for participants to express in great details their opinions or experiences. This makes for rich data, but at the same time, there is the possibility that some of the information collected will be irrelevant. The chances of this happening were reduced by politely steering the conversation back to the topic or by rephrasing the question without necessarily altering the meaning in order to ensure that the participant understood what was being asked.

Another challenge was that some women were reluctant to participate for the fear of sounding ignorant or unintelligent. When approached to participate, some of the women said they did not know what to respond. One woman said she was not sure she was educated enough to participate. Another expressed fear of saying the wrong things.

Apart from the fear of giving the 'wrong' information, some participants were not really open to having conversations. Two of the participants were more inclined to give answers in short

sentences. They seemed very nervous during the recording process but when the recording process was paused or ended, they seemed fine and could interact better, and shared more information once the recorder was turned off.

There were also instances when my position as a foreign student conducting an interview was problematic for some participants. At first, I thought the fact that I was raised in this community would make it easy for me to be accepted and people would be willing to participate. However, on the contrary, I sensed some measure of withdrawal from some participant's when they discovered that I was studying for my PhD abroad. Such times made me aware that although I might think that I am the same (an insider) as the people in the community, in reality, I am not (Merriam et al., 2001). My position as a young woman who is also an international student created an awareness of the possibility of a difference in social and financial status between the participants and I. Interestingly this awareness evoked different responses from participants. For example, while some participants were intrigued to know what life abroad was like and what the requirements were to travel and/or live abroad, some other participants expressed their displeasure at my ability to afford to live abroad especially with the harsh economy in the country. Therefore, I was compelled to ensure that, as much as possible, regardless of my position as an outsider, I did not come across as intimidating. Common to almost every participant was the initial panic over what to say. Almost, if not all the women I met with were worried about what the questions were going to be and about the answers they would give. I found out that the best way to ease them into the research was to give them a run-down of the kinds of questions on my interview guide and I always asked if there were any questions they were not comfortable answering? During this process, the participants became relaxed and started answering the questions without much need for encouragement.

4.10. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW

Data analysis began after the completion and transcription of the 24th interview. This researcher organized the data collected and examined insights and emerging understandings that developed through data collection (Patton, 2002). All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher to ensure as much accuracy as possible. Data analysis was carried out using a theme template. In theme template analysis, the text is analysed through the use of an analysis guide, or ‘codebook’, consisting of categories of themes relevant to the research questions (Cassel et al, 2005; King, 2004). The qualitative data analysis package NVivo was used for the initial stages of coding. NVivo is a useful organizational tool which allows the researcher to organize segments of the text to particular themes, carry out complex search and retrieval operations quickly, and link research notes to the set codes (King, 2004; King, Cassell and Symon, 2004).

All participants were assigned pseudonyms which are used when being quoted to maintain their anonymity throughout. Data storage is protected by the use of backup copies on multiple internal and external computer databases which are kept under password protection and lock.

With the use of qualitative analysis, this researcher examined the data through searching for patterns and themes. A pattern is defined by Patton (2002), is a descriptive finding, whereas a theme takes on a more categorical shape.

The first step in the analysis process involves open coding of all interviews, field notes, and interviews. Open coding involves identification of where patterns and processes become apparent through the data. Throughout this open coding process, a codebook (Patton, 2002) was developed to continue with the organizational flow of the data being classified. Open coding also entails organizing the data and gaining familiarity with it. This researcher identified processes, events,

words, and recurrent ideas that appear to be similar, and grouped them into open codes (Patton, 2002).

The next step was selective coding. Selective coding was completed on all data collected. Within this process, open codes were combined to develop a restructured understanding of experiences among the participants. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes are usually attached to chunks of data and take the form of a straightforward descriptive label or a more evocative and complex one (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). I looked at each transcript separately when generating initial codes, working through the transcripts line by line and commenting on and describing features of the data which stood out to me and which I thought could be coded in a meaningful way. I reviewed these codes on several occasions modifying them to provide more clarity in their ability to capture meaning within the data.

Following the completion of the coding process, the researcher used Microsoft Word to display all the codes before combining ones which appeared to reflect an overarching theme. Themes were revised by discarding, merging, splitting themes and re-naming them in order to enhance clarity for the reader. The researcher re-visited the transcripts throughout the process of coding and constructing themes in order to check that revised themes retained a meaningful link to the data.

4.11. Conclusion

This chapter provides amongst many things a justification of why it is imperative that women studies are conducted? As highlighted out in the second section, women's studies are necessary to create a balance in the existing literature, which continues to be male-dominated. The section also provided a justification on why it is necessary to conduct a study on Nigeria and Nigerian women.

Subsequent sections of this chapter provided a justification of why the study chooses to adopt the interpretivist approach using the semi-structured interview method. The section also provides a justification of why the other research approaches and methods are not suitable for this study. Summary of the sections is that the semi-structured approach was the chosen method because of its flexibility and ability to provide in-depth insight into the mobile life and experiences of each of the participants. Moving on, the next sections explored the field experience of the researcher; how participants were recruited, where they were recruited, who the participants are, and challenges the researcher was exposed throughout the process.

CHAPTER 5: MOBILE PHONE USE

5.0. INTRODUCTION

There exists a very large number of studies that argue that mobile phones are the most adopted and used piece of technology in this era (see Pew Factsheets, 2018; Froehlich et al, 2007). Previous studies show that mobile phones have pretty much permeated every sector of our society and lives. Initial researches into mobile phone use focused on the growing penetration of mobile phones and how it had become more adaptable and widely accepted compared to landlines. Further down the line, researchers (see Carroll et al, 2003; Wei and Zhang, 2008; Rice and Katz; 2008; Agwu and Carter, 2014) started exploring how people have adopted and adapted mobile phones to their everyday lives and the impact the device has on daily living. This kind of study has been done across different gender, geographical regions, and age ranges.

Mobile phones have become an integral part of everyday life for many people, helping people stay connected to work, friends, and families providing ubiquitous information access, and entertainment. In 2017, GSMA intelligence recorded that two-thirds of the world's population is connected by mobile phones. (GSMA, 2017). In Nigeria, the National Communications Commission recorded an estimate of 162 million active mobile lines (NCC Statistics Report, 2019).

On that note, drawing on the women's experiences this chapter explored mobile phone uses, the benefit of owning and using a mobile phone and the downsides of mobile phones, that is if any exist. More specifically, the first section of the chapter delves into mobile phone use. It explores all the possible ways women find mobile phones useful. Going further, the second section of the

chapter discusses the benefits of mobile phone to women, and the third section discusses the perceived disadvantages of mobile phones.

5.1. USES OF MOBILE PHONE

This section is split into two parts. The first deals with the use of mobile phones as a communication tool, while the second part discusses other general and non-communicative uses of mobile phones. The non-communicative uses revolve around the various applications the phone possesses as well as the functions it performs.

5.1.1. Communication (Calling and text messaging)

Mobile phones provide the means for people to communicate with family, friends, co-workers and the world at large at any time and at any location. Unlike older communication devices like fixed telephones, mobile phone users can easily reach or be reached anyone in any part of the world, provided they can receive the signal in their current location. At this point, I note that this section will not be dealing with communication via messaging application and social networking sites because these will be dealt with in the following chapter.

In Nigeria, The National Communications Commission (NCC), recorded that in Nigeria there are more mobile phone subscribers and users than landlines. The National Communications Commission noted that there are 147 million mobile phone subscribers in January 2018 (Vanguard, 2018). The portable nature of the device, its affordability and its wide network coverage are some of the reasons it has become the most accessible form of connecting people (Carroll et al., 2003). Comfort and Dada (2009) observed that mobile phones provide a quick and reliable means of contacting family and relatives. Likewise, Gurumurthy (2006) observed that 'new communication technologies have made it possible for people to communicate, network and collaborate on a more

global scale than was possible before'. Similar to Kazanka and Dada's as well as Gurumurthy's observation, the interviews conducted in this study suggest that the participants primarily use their mobile phones to communicate with family, friends, kin, business partners, colleagues and clients through voice calls, text messages social media, and/or messaging applications. For instance, when asked to point out what they used their phones for all the participants first mentioned call and texting family.

GIMBI: The main thing I use my cell phone is to make phone calls, at work, at home, and to call loved ones and stuff like that.

Alisha: I make calls. I call family and friends, but I call family especially.

As highlighted earlier, the ability to reach and be reached at any given time and location is a major benefit of having and using a mobile phone for the participating women. Initially, when the mobile phone was still gaining in popularity in Nigeria, calls were expensive thus not encouraging people to use them very often. According to a National Bureau of Statistics NBS Report (2017) in 2008 calls to the same network (On-Net) averagely cost N36.48 per minute while a call to different networks (Off-Net) averagely cost N42 per minute. However, with the gross decrease in the cost of calls and text messages, participants observed that they are able to reach family and friends whenever they need to because calls and text messaging are now cheaper than they used to be averagely N25 per minute both off-net and on-net (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2018). In the participants' experience, the mobile phone has not only reduced the cost of communication but also the stress of trying to get messages across to someone in a different town by other means.

Rose: My phone is important to me because before I needed to write letters to family people that are far but now all I need to do is dial their numbers on the phone and I get to talk to them and deliver whatever message I have.

Louise: I remember those time, my aunt will have to write letters to send home and then she'll give the letter to someone who was travelling back to the village. Sometimes, the letter gets

passed from hand to hand. Since it is going to the village, it will probably go through many hands and people will know that her daughter (referring to the aunt) wrote a letter to her (referring to her mum). And sometimes, someone might even open the letter and read it before it gets to her.

Kike: Looking back when I didn't have a phone and now that I do, I'll say life has become easier. I can't imagine going to visit a friend and on getting there, I find out she's not home. It is easier with a phone now because I can just call her to confirm she's home before I set out to visit.

Rose, Louise, and Kike have experienced what life was like prior to when mobile phones became popular and more widely accessible. In their comments, they try to compare what communication was like before mobile phones, and they acknowledge that mobile phones have saved them the extra time and energy that would have been spent in a bid to send messages across to someone in another town. From Louise's comments, the mobile does not just guarantee quick delivery of information, it also guarantees secure delivery of information and privacy as well. When asked which they preferred, between calls and text messaging, and the reason for their preference, some participants said they sometimes preferred calling because they get to speak directly with whomever they wanted to speak with and they could ensure the message is received immediately.

For example, as Shade stated:

... My mode of communication depends on my mood and the circumstances. Sometimes I might not be in the mood of hearing people's voices, so, I send messages. Other times, if I need to pass a message across, I call because then I can ensure the message has been passed across. But if it a text message the person can claim to not have received the text even if it shows read at your end. The person can blame network error...

Even though it was not expressly stated above, it can be assumed that it is important to Shade that she ensures that whatever message she intends to deliver is received and understood by the appropriate recipient and at the right time and for her to achieve that, she would call. Similarly, Kayjay in agreement with Shade said, "I prefer to call because I feel like texting waste time, in the sense that you'll have to wait for the second party for a response but if I call, I get to pass the

message immediately and be sure that it is received”. Nevertheless, other participants expressed a preference for text messaging and chatting on the popular mobile messaging application WhatsApp and this is explored more in the next chapter. One of the participants, Gimbi explained why people would prefer texting and messaging

You know Nigerians now; we like cheap things so it’s cheaper to chat with someone on WhatsApp. Someone that isn’t close to you [as in proximity or relationship wise], it’s easier you just chat with the person than making phone calls

My understanding of Gimbi’s explanation is that the preference of text messaging and instant messaging via an app over calls stems from the fact that it is cheaper to send messages to any network than it is to make a voice or video call. It would also appear like Gimbi is implying that texting and messaging over an app are more suitable methods of communicating with people you do not have a tangible relationship with. I would imagine that this is because, with texting, one can avoid the awkward silences and the unnecessary need to make small talk with someone not so familiar (Fox, 2011).

5.1.2. Education/ Skills Acquisition

In Nigeria, the government, as well as NGOs, are making efforts to adapt mobile phones as useful learning tools. Examples are the integration of mobile phones into the nomadic education (Aderinoye, Ojokheta, and Olojede, 2007), and sexual and reproductive education (Akinfaderin-Agarau et al, 2012). Mobile learning encourages flexibility; students do not need to be a specific age, gender, or member of a specific group or geography, to participate in learning opportunities (Aderinoye, Ojokheta, and Olojede, 2007).

Sharples (2000) noted that by virtue of its highly portable, unobtrusive and adaptable nature, mobile phones fulfil the basic requirement needed to support contextual life-long learning. People

have been known to visit YouTube, Instagram and other social media to watch videos that teach one skill or the other. Some of the participants agreed to have, regularly or occasionally, visited YouTube through their phones to learn how to make beads; cook a dish; and even decorate a house. None of the participants indicated receiving general, sexual or reproductive health information. This is probably because they might not be subscribed to such services, do not know about such services, do not have access to it, or possibly did not want to admit to this in an interview.

5.1.3. General uses

Apart from being a communication tool, participants suggested that mobile phones had replaced many traditional devices such as alarm clocks, photo albums, storage devices, maps, diaries, cameras, and even bibles. During the interviews, most of the interviewees admitted to sending work-related reports and emails using their mobile phones. For example, Kayjay said, “on Mondays, I do work plans when it’s my turn to do them. When I’m done with the work plan, I transfer it to my phones and send them to everybody via email”. Another participant, Kike admitted to using her mobile phone to store different recipes she would like to try out in the future. Also, as at the time of the interviews, Kike was actively looking for a new job. She shared how she is able to quickly make job applications regardless of where she is because she has her CV stored on her phone. In her words, “I have my CV stored on my phone so all I need to do is a copy, paste and I fill job applications online”.

In addition to being useful for sending emails, storage device and job application, Fumbi noted that she uses the alarm clock and bible applications on her phone, daily. Another participant, Gimbi, noted that she uses her phone as a note pad and diary to write out her to-do list. Alisha, on the other hand, uses the google map on her phone for direction, especially when she is in an unfamiliar area. She also uses her phone to search the meaning of words she is not familiar with.

As highlighted earlier, mobile phones, especially smartphones are designed to be more than simply a communication tool. They are designed with facilities and applications that allow users to more fully integrate their devices into their daily living. Miller (2015) noted that the prevalence of mobile phones throughout the world is an indication of how important it is to humanity. In Miller's opinion, people have become so intertwined with their mobile phones than it is would now be difficult to live without them. Previous studies (Carroll et al, 2003; Ansari, Channar and Syed, 2012; Wang, Xiang and Fesenmaier, 2014) on the adoption and appropriation of technology show that users often appropriate the technology according to their lifestyle and individual needs. In Mackay and Gillespie's discussion of the social shaping of technology, it was observed that people are not malleable subjects that submit to the dictates of technology – as per a technological deterministic argument (Mackay and Gillespie, 1992: 698-699). But instead, people are more inclined to define the functional purposes of technology to suits their existing social and cultural needs. To quote Mackay and Gillespie (1992: 699) “goods are neutral, their uses are social, and they can be used as fences or bridges”. In particular, in this research, it can be seen how each participant appropriated their mobile phone to suit their specific needs. Also, the way each of the women uses her phones could be seen to be a reflection of their existing social circumstances. What I mean by this, is that women that maintain a small social circle and hardly engage in social activities appear to be more likely to use their phones for the basic purpose of calling and texting mostly s small group of family and few friends. For example, Mrs J shared how she primarily uses her phone to call and send messages to her husband. She is of the opinion that mobile phones are a necessity for married couples because they can communicate with each other through it. However, she pointed out that she does not partake in social media and other messaging applications because she believes they are a waste of her time. Likewise, Mrs M and Jay also stated

that they only “do the basics on their phone”. When asked what “basics” means to them, they both said calling, texting, reading the bible, and very occasionally, Facebooking. In addition, these patterns of usage also reflect the different phases of life of each of the women. For example, Kike using her phone as storage for her curriculum vitae shows that she is still at that phase in life where she is exploring her career options and is still actively job hunting. Thus, it only seems fitting that she has her curriculum vitae handy so she could apply for jobs on the go. Generally speaking, most of the younger women seemed more willing to explore the fuller possibilities of their phones and the applications on them. It appears that they seemed to do a lot more and want to get the most from their phones, but the older women seemed satisfied with only using the basics operations on their phones. At this point, I would like to point out that I believe that how much of the phone is explored by each of the women is not the crux of the issue, rather what is important is if the women are satisfied with their phones. Simply put, regardless, it does not necessarily matter if one woman only chooses to use her phone for calling and messaging, or if another chooses to pay bills via phone, access GPRS, use her phone as a diary or alarm clock, etc. The most important thing to be considered is what the users get from this experience, such as helping them maintain strong and good quality social networks – and the next section will discuss the advantages people derive from owning and using mobile phones.

5.2. BENEFITS OF MOBILE PHONE

This section will explore the advantages of owning and using a mobile phone for their users. It is important to note at this point that, the advantages discussed in this section, although mostly referring to women are not necessarily unique to women alone, but here it is women who are the focus of this research. The advantages of owning and using mobile phones include that it provides

means of connection, access to information and skill acquisition, security, remote parenting, access in an emergency, and convenience.

5.2.1. Connection

Connection, be it in the traditional sense or virtually, is paramount in the building and maintaining of social capital. While older sociological literature argues for the importance of connections based on spatial and geographical proximity (see Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 1993), newer literature argues for more dispersed and distant connections based on common interests and needs (Hampton 2016; Hampton and Wellman, 2003; Quan-Haase et al, 2002; Quan-Haase and Wellman; 2004). One of the major advantages of mobile phones is its capacity to bring people in different geographical locations together. Mobile phones afford women the opportunity to build and maintain multiple relationships, some of which might be strong ties and a lot of which may be weak ties. Women using mobile phones are able to connect with family, friends and acquaintance, make new friends and establish a new relationship by either calling, texting, or visiting social media websites – and social media will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. As discussed by one of the participants, Bola,

It (mobile phone) connects you with other people, for example, skype gives you the opportunity to physically see how other people you haven't seen in a long time are doing".

This means that with the mobile phone, one is not limited by time or geographical space. People are now able to reconnect with old friends and even form new friendships with different people in different locations around the world. Also, with web-based multi-media applications like Skype, one is able to see who one is communicating with without waiting until you are within the same physical space. As discussed in the section above, this fits into Licoppe's (2004) theory of connected presence. Licoppe suggests that communication technologies are exploited to provide a

continuous pattern of mediated interactions that combine into connected relationships, in which the boundaries between absence and presence eventually get blurred (Licoppe, 2004: 135-136). Likewise, Fortunati (2007) observed that mobile phones allow an individual to simultaneously maintain multiple presences in different locations both physically and virtually. In addition to connecting people with other people around the world, one of the participants (Gimbi), observed that mobile phones also provide company for women, especially for stay-at-home mothers. In Gimbi's opinion, mobile phones also provide company for women who have limited contact with the outside world because of religious restrictions. As discussed in Chapter 7, in northern Nigeria, culture and religion (Islam) have in many cases placed restrictions on women's movement and contact with the wider world (see Zakaria, 2001; VerEecke, 1993). Women are sometimes expected to not go out except if it is absolutely necessary, and then it often has to be with the permission of their husbands, and most likely in the company of a chaperone (VerEecke, 1993). Mobile phones can then be very useful and beneficial to women in such situations because this means that with internet-enabled smartphones, such women are still able to have active and meaningful social lives. It also means that they have the world at their fingers and as such, they can explore it. However, this is only possible if they are allowed to, and can, own and use mobile phones, and women, especially women that are laboured religious restrictions are able to form so many dispersed communities with a wider world without necessarily having to leave their homes. One of the greatest perks of owning and using a mobile phone is the simple capability of reaching anyone when the need arises. This goes beyond the somewhat complicated art of connecting people that seemed to be deprived of basic connection or the ability to enable people (especially women) socialize with a wider network of people. In simple terms, for example, the fact that Alisha can call her mum midday to check up on her and know how her day is going, or the pleasure Mrs J derives

from speaking as regularly as possible to her husband who is stationed in different state from her, is still a connection. Other simple forms of connection are being able to reach buyers, sellers or business partners to confirm or cancel an appointment, order, or sale, without having to make the effort to physically meet with them. Hence, mobile phones have the important ability to bring people at different physical points together without them physically being together. Furthermore, a study in conducted on south Asian women argued that “mobile phones have facilitated a real-time interaction between the local and global” (Shruti, 2017). In other words, as my participant Eugenia described it, *If I want to know the latest happenings in London that just happened yesterday, maybe the grand wedding that everybody is talking about, just google it and you’re there.* This means that with the mobile phone, people can share, from the domesticated space of their houses, in the lives or events of other people across the globe. Besides, Shruti demonstrates why mobile phones are more popular than computer and laptops even though they probably do the same thing. Her point was that the portable nature of smart mobile phones allows for the blurring of private and public spaces. This means that women can carry their personal lives with them wherever they go. It does not matter if they are travelling, married and relocating from family or at work, they are able to communicate with their parents, children, husbands, partners, relatives, friends and kin whenever they desire.

5.2.2. Access to information

This benefit can be explored from different angles. Firstly, it will be explored from the angle of getting information online via the web, and secondly, it also explored from the angle of having immediate access to information that affects market change. The latter is mostly of benefit to the businesswomen in this study. One of the major advantages of having constant access to the internet

via mobile phones is the constant access to information. One of the participants explained this when she said,

...if you need information urgently it is at your fingertips, especially when you have an internet-enabled phone, all you have to do is search google or any other search engine”.

My understanding of Bola’s statement is that mobile phones give immediate access to information when it is needed, and this is regardless of the location or time that the information is needed. Fortunati (2007: 525) observed that unlike fixed telephones, mobile phones allow people who are nomadic or sedentary communicative rights. Although Fortunati was referring to people’s use of mobile phones for communicative purposes, it gives credence to Bola’s observation. This means that unlike other forms of technology, for example, landlines and desktop computers, mobile phones are most suitable for immediate access to information. This quality of the internet is often misconstrued as a disadvantage especially by people who are not at par with new communication technologies. Ma (2011) opined that the internet and the World Wide Web have the potentials of negatively affecting people’s character or disrupting people’s daily lives. Csikszentmihalyi (2014) also argued that new technologies like mobile phones can cultivate addictions in individuals. While a good number of the participants seemed to be at par with this line of thought, one of the participants, Mrs A pointed out that the contents we find online, whether good or bad are put there by people.

I can’t say the phone has a negative side, but I think it is people that are tarnishing the image. People post nonsense, pornography and all sorts.

Mrs A’s point of view not only disagrees with Ma’s opinion, but it also disagrees with arguments of technological determinisms that view the relationship between society and technology as cause-effect kind of relationship. Her statement seems to agree more with the arguments of the cultural

theorist Wacjman (2010) who posits that technological devices on their own are human-made devices, and even though they might possess the potentials of being useful in effecting change, whether for good or bad, they cannot work on their own because they need to be wielded by a user. It also supports Shaw's (2014) that the internet and digital technologies allow people with access, the means of cultural production. In other words, the internet did not invent the production of nudes or pornography. They already existed in magazines, erotic books, televisions, tapes and CDs long before the internet came into existence. Granted, circulation might have been a bit slower before internet and anyone with access would have knowingly purchased a copy or would need to have tuned into the channel. However, with the internet, it is there and very accessible and if care is not taken, it can be thrown in your face without your consent. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Mrs A, the internet is not the responsible for production, it is just a tool for fast circulation. A contrast to May's opinion is that of Eugenia another participant that strongly believes that mobile phones can affect people negatively. She made this assertion when discussing the disadvantages of using mobile phones. Even though she was asked if dangers listed by her were because of how people use their phone, she asserted her belief that mobile phones could change the way people behave. Two of the participants, Faye and Gimbi, also noted that there are both positive and negative uses of mobile phones. In their opinion, women can use their mobile phones to learn new skills such as bead-making, baking, cooking, etc. and these skills can potentially be translated into money-making ventures.

Going further, another aspect of information gathering is market surveillance. Studies in Kampala, Nairobi (Komunte, Rwashana and Nabukenya, 2012) and India (Jensen, 2007) suggest that mobile phones are used by entrepreneurs, small business owners, fishermen, and farmers to contact potential buyers and sellers and compare market prices. Similar to what was observed in the

aforementioned studies, one of the participants, Zainab, a lecturer as well as a poultry farmer shared the role mobile phone plays in her business.

For my business, I built up contacts and links with caterers and event planners so when they have an even to plan and cater for that requires poultry meat they contact me. So apart from the retailers in the market, I get to supply events the meat they need. I also reach out to people to let them know I have chicken for supply in case they know people that might be interested. Sometimes I have people order in advance like 2 months or so. So, I get to raise the required amount for them. Most of the time, seasons, festivals and weather conditions affect the prices of chicken. So, I need to monitor the market regularly to know when there is a hike or fall in price. And I do that by contacting the people I buy chicks from and they always keep me informed.

I think what Zainab is saying above is that with her mobile phone she is able to reach different categories of people like retailers in the market, event planners, and even regular people to let them know that she has poultry for sale. In addition to using her phone to advertise her business, she can monitor and keep track of changes in market prices by reaching out to her contacts in the market. Although she did not outrightly mention it, I would like to believe that within the comfort of her house, Zainab is able to achieve free marketing as well as maximize her market profit and this is all because she has a handset she uses.

5.2.3. Sense of security and safety

Another benefit of using a mobile phone is the sense of security it brings. One of the participants shared how she feels safe knowing that she can easily reach anyone at any time and also be reached at any time.

Alisha: As a lady, the most important benefit of owning a phone to me is the fact that I can easily know where my family are. I feel safe knowing that I can easily get in touch with them. They know where I am at any given point and I know where they are. It makes me feel safe. For example, I travelled 2 nights ago to Minna, Niger state and the driver that was to bring me back to Kaduna agreed to drop me off at a certain location. I called my dad and brother to inform them and before I got to the agreed

location, my dad was already there to pick me up. At every point in the journey, I kept updating my dad on where I was, he was tracking my journey. Even though I returned to Kaduna late, at about 11 pm, I wasn't worried because I knew someone will be there to pick me up. Assuming there was no phone now to make this arrangement with my dad, I might have still gotten home eventually but it would have been with some difficulty.

In Alisha's opinion, knowing that her family is just a call away should the need arise, gives her an assurance of safety. The ability to communicate with family at all times gives not just Alisha assurance but her father as well. In a way, he is able to effectively perform his perceived duty of protecting his daughter because he can tell where she was at any given time. This could also then be considered as an example of remote parenting.

5.2.4. Remote parenting

In every household, each family member participates in a number of different domains other than the home and family. Examples of such domains include work, school, leisure activities outside the home, and peer groups (Christensen, 2012: 438). As expected, these individual activities could potentially create an imbalance between work and family. There are ongoing arguments on the role that new communication technologies play in the relational dynamics of families. On the one hand, there are scholars like Livingston (2002) that argue that new communication technologies have the tendency to encourage the privatization of individual spaces in the home thus diminishing the value of family space. On the other hand, there are studies that suggest that new communication technologies are useful in creating a balance between work and home life, especially for women (Christensen, 2009).

Silver Christensen's (2009) inquiry into the role of communication technologies in connecting family members suggests that communication technologies, such as mobile phones, are used by parents and children to mediate feelings of closeness while they are physically separated.

According to Wei Lo (2006), women, in particular, use mobile phones to show love to their family members while they are away. Similar to Wei and Lo's observation, a participant in this study, Mrs M said that 'as a mum, the phones help me keep track of my children, where they are, what they are doing, who they are talking to and who they keep as friends'. Speaking about her children, Mrs M described them to be in high school and university. This means that they are likely to exercise their freedom when choosing who they hang out with, where they go, and when they go out and come in. However, as a mother, Mrs M feels it is still her job to monitor and be aware of her children's activities, even though they might feel they no longer need to be monitored. In explaining how she still gets to keep track of what goes on in the lives of her children, Mrs M said she calls them frequently to know how they are doing, who they are hanging out with, and where they are hanging out. She further shared how she, from time to time, peruses her children's phones in order to get the information she feels they are hiding from her. While speaking to Mrs M, I sensed that mobile phones do more than just help Mrs M stay informed on what goes in her children's lives. In addition to staying informed, I sensed that being able to keep track of her children even though they are grown-ups, gives Mrs M a feeling of relevance in her children's lives. According to Mrs M, she feels fulfilled knowing that she is not entirely detached from her children. In other words, for Mrs M and other women in her position, mobile phones allow them to still perform their perceived duties as mothers from time to time. They can call to check up on their children whenever they wanted to and they know that they are just a phone call away if their children ever needed them. On a general note, Mrs M's experience lends credence to Rakow and Navarro's (1993) observation that mothers, whether stay-at-home-mothers or working mothers appreciate the ability to reach or be reached.

5.2.5. Useful for emergencies

One of the participants, Zainab noted mobile phones are useful in reaching out for help in cases of emergency. In her opinion,

..women should be the ones that use phones the most. Because apart from working-class ladies, the children are always with their mothers...For example, sometimes the child might be sick and the woman might not be mobile so she might need to call her husband from wherever he is or maybe a neighbour to come help her..

In her discussion, Zainab was trying to point out how important it is for all women, not only working-class women to have access to a mobile phone. In her opinion, she further emphasised that it is as important for stay-at-home moms as it is important for working-class women to be reached at all times and be able to reach anyone at any time. A study conducted by Potnis (2016) in India a participant that had no mobile phone expressed worry about not being able to get information for the doctors, family, friends or even being able to contact people when the need arises. Similarly, another study conducted in rural Sri Lanka showed that women use their phones to seek help medical advice and help for their children from their parents or extended families (see Handapangoda and Kumara, 2013). In the same vein, women in a study conducted in Kenya shared how having a phone have helped in times of emergencies. For example, one participant shared how she was able to contact her husband to call for help while she was home alone and sick, and another woman highlighted that she used her phone to let her husband know that she was safe during the crisis while at the same time getting the same reassurance from him.

5.2.6. Convenience

The most often identified advantage of having and using a mobile phone was their convenience. All of the participants mentioned how mobile telephones made their lives easier. The convenience that comes with using a mobile phone is not only restricted to communication but other aspects of

life. Participants pointed out that people use mobile phones to coordinate day to day activities. This is the case for all categories of women-single, married, employed, unemployed, business and mothers alike. As pointed out by some of the participants the mobile phone makes it easy to coordinate their home lives and work lives, keep track of their children as well as carry out their business or work activities. As for the businesswomen interviewed, the nature of their businesses requires them to travel often, but they are able to minimize travelling since they can conduct some of their business transaction over the phone without necessarily having to be physically present. This means that women that find themselves in this kind of situation will have more time for other activities, like spending more time with the family, and will not have to feel guilty for having a business that takes them away from their family regularly.

In addition to making life more convenient, mobile phones have been known to be useful tools in effective time management. As noted in the excerpts of *Married but Available* (Nyamnjoh, 2009), having a mobile phone can save on time, money, and energy that would have been spent to jobs such as running errands. Likewise, participants in this study observed that mobile phones have spared them the need to unnecessarily spend resources trying to communicate with people. In other words, it can be said that mobile phones compress the distance between people.

5.3. DOWNSIDES OF MOBILE PHONES

5.3.1. Expensive to maintain

One of the potential downsides of owning a phone is the fact that it can be expensive to run (Kazanka and Dada, 2009), certainly for many people in developing countries such as Nigeria. May, a participant in this study, expressed that she is worried about the financial implications of owning a mobile phone. In her opinion,

It could be a financial burden in the sense that it makes you spend. You have to buy recharge cards. I wish I didn't know this *737* (code for mobile recharge). I can't just be without money in my phone even if I'm not using it. Then I used to be much disciplined with the amount I spend in a month but now I find myself spending about 10% of my monthly income on calls and communication, I think it's not so good.

From May's point of view, notwithstanding the advantages of having a phone, it has become a burden because it has considerably increased her monthly expenditure. Considering the prevailing rate of poverty in Nigeria, it does not seem out of place that people will consider mobile phones a financial burden, especially when they have to spend a lot on phone calls and text messages. To avoid, unnecessary expenditure, one could consider not buying recharge top-ups until they are needed, but one concern is what happens if an emergency occurs and there is no place to purchase recharge top-up? Or moreover, there is of course also the fear of missing out (FOMO). Of being excluded or missing a vital piece of information by not having or using your mobile device. I would imagine that these are some of the reasons that May and many others feel compelled to keep her phone active and paid-up even when they do not have an immediate need for it. When asked if all the calls were worth it, she responded, "some of the calls are worth it, some are just gist (gossip)". In other words, some of the conversations she felt were unnecessary and she could do without them, but she ends up spending more than she should just to be able to engage in this unnecessary gist.

5.3.2. Nuisance and time-waster:

Smiths' (2012) study on the influence of mobile phones on social life suggests that excessive use of the mobile phone can result in time-wasting. Similar to the finding in Smith (2012), participants in this study agree the mobile phone can be both a time waster as well as a time saver. Although Smiths' study was conducted with teens and young adults, this study appears to at least partially

support his findings. According to Kike, a young participant, the mobile phone can potentially become a nuisance in the sense that people are able to reach you at any time of the day, especially odd hours of the night, without consideration to what you might be doing at that time, like sleeping.

Kike: It can be disturbing, and a nuisance and it can also be a distraction and a time-waster. Nuisance in the sense that people have uncontrolled access to you at any time. Sometimes I would be sleeping at night and someone will be calling, and I wonder if they don't know it is late.

From Kike's statement, it appears like she does not appreciate people using their mobile phones as an excuse to display a lack of respect for people's time or engagement. Similar to Kike's opinion, Kwan (2007) suggested that because mobile phones provide an avenue for constant communication, they "can interrupt at the most inconvenient of times, under the most inconvenient of circumstances". The findings in this study are quite similar to Smith's (2012) observation. As discussed earlier on in this chapter and previous chapters, participants observed that mobile phones can save on time and energy; however, on the other hand, some participants also observed that they spent too much time on their phones doing nothing worthwhile. Two participants, Faye and Eugenia specifically suggested that unlike the past where women were more likely to be engaged in more productive activities (this is debatable) women nowadays, especially women that own smartphones are more likely to spend more time engaged in unproductive activities such as chatting or even scrolling through pictures on social media platform.

5.3.3. Addiction, distraction, and negligence

There are ongoing debates as to whether people do, or even can, become addicted to their mobile telephones. While some scholars (such as, Lin et al, 2014; Salehan and Neghaban, 2013; Thomée, Härenstam and Hagberg, 2011; Haug et al, 2015) suggest that over-reliance on new information

technologies like mobile phones can possibly lead to addiction, other scholars (like, Shaffer et al, 2000; Morahan-Martin, 2005) argue that there is no such thing as technology addiction. Rather they advocate for seeing this as an over-reliance on technology rather than an addiction. However, some participants believe that there is the possibility of becoming addicted to mobile phones, especially smartphones with internet facilities.

Gimbi: Yea, it could be addictive. If you're not careful, you could lose track of time. Especially when you are chatting. I've heard stories of people that missed their stops while commuting because they weren't paying attention rather they were chatting. It is all part of the addiction.

Eugenia: Some people are so addicted when it comes to chatting that they forget other responsibilities they should be doing. Responsibilities like I place food on the fire and I'm chatting and that food probably is indomie (noodles) and is supposed to spend 10 minutes on the fire and I'm chatting I was carried away for 30 minutes. Maybe the only thing is that until she starts perceiving something is burning. Now comparing it to a young lady that is newly married and she's so addicted to chatting and that thing happened and probably as she was perceiving the smell her husband just comes. What is she portraying, it has started already and if she doesn't call herself to order, it continues, like subsequently, it happens like before you know it starts creating issues.

The first thing I observed from Gimbi and Eugenia's narrative is that both women clearly insinuated that mobile phones can be addictive especially when the phone has facilities that support chatting. Secondly, both women believe that it is easy for people to get carried away (distracted) while chatting and this consequently result in negligence and poor conduct of one's duties. Thirdly, Eugenia implied that continuous negligence could result in potential marital issues. Furthermore, one of the participants, Bola, believed that unlike the popular opinion of mobile phones make lives easier, they have in fact, made life more complicated in the sense that, she now relies heavily on her phone to do the things she would have been to handle prior to when she got a phone. In other words, Bola worried that she has become overly reliant on her phone to do basic things and she

also worried that she may not be able to think or act for herself if her phone was taken away from her.

It is important to note at this juncture that not of course all these potential demerits are not necessarily about the devices themselves. Rather, the demerits here are more often the various ways people use their devices. For example, spending time chatting with family, friends and kin is not necessarily bad in itself, it only maybe become a problem when it is done in excess and to the detriment or negligence of other responsibilities. Moreover, there are certainly many potentially positive uses of mobile phones such as in education, politics, health etc. And as the data has shown, there are also potentially many social uses of mobile phones which are not necessarily problematic in themselves, such as, as will be explored more in the following chapter, how members of online social networks have been directly or indirectly useful to each other. And, there is, of course, nothing wrong with simply wanting to spend time socializing, be that in person or on a mobile phone. Hence, it proves extremely problematic and difficult to ascertain when socialising too much becomes an issue, or if it ever is? What is the difference between spending time on face-face chat and spending time on phone chat? The perception of some, such as numerous theorists and some within this research, is that socialising ‘too much’ only becomes a problem when done via technology.

However, the critical point made by Mackenzie and Wajcman (1999) is that the information technologies do not have the power to effect change themselves, but rather they are constantly shaped by the various ideological ambitions of the user. Thus, it is not the technologies that are the issue, but it is how, and how much, an individual uses them, and moreover, how others perceive this.

5.3.4. The decline in face-face interaction

Turkle (2011:15) argues that new technologies allow us to dial down human contact, to titrate its nature and extent. In simple terms, it means that people have conveniently swapped human contact and face-face interactions with the relationship they have with and on their phones. In her book titled *Alone Together*, Turkle argues that technology-based communications, especially texting, were first created as alternatives for when face to face or direct communications could not be achieved. However, in recent times mobile phones have become the primary mode of communication and socialization for most people. An example given by Turkle is a group of friends sitting together in a café but everyone in the group is busy scrolling or typing on their phones. No conversation is ongoing. Similar to Turkle's example, one participant, Salamatu, suggested that people have too easily replaced physical relationships with virtual ones,

It [mobile phone] affects our relationship with one another. I could be sat here with someone and I won't care about the person because I am busy on my phone. But before now, if I am sat for a while, one or two things would have made me turn to notice the person next to me and before you know it, a conversation would have started. So, we substitute real relationships for virtual ones that might end up not being meaningful and in the process we miss the world happening around us.

In this extract, Salamatu tells of how she gets lost in her phone when she is in a public space. Her description is similar to another participant Hadiza's observation, 'I went for a cousin's wedding and instead of us guest having a lively environment, everybody was glued to their phones'. From these narratives, it seems that for many texting or just scrolling through one phone while dining with friends and family is a common if not acceptable form of practice. Salamatu and Hadiza's narratives give credence to the assertion made by Misra et al (2016) that networked technologies such as smartphones make it possible for people to be in a persistent state of "absent presence". This means that with devices that support internet connectivity, people are able to be physically

and perceptually present in one environment but at the same time immersed in a technologically mediated world of elsewhere.

The absence presence argument suggests that this has resulted in a decline in face-face interactions. For example, similarly, Rotondi, Stanca, and Tomasuolo, (2017) suggest that smartphones reduce the quality of face-face interactions. Moreover, some scholars suggest there has been a general reduction in people's motivation to engage in casual social interaction with strangers face-to-face (Kushlev et al, 2019; Kushlev, Dwyer and Dunn, 2019). Salamatu would appear to agree with Kushlev et al when she said, "before now (prior to mobile phones) if I am sat for a while, one of two things would have made me turn to notice the person next to me and before you know it, a conversation would have started". In other words, she is admitting that prior to owning a smartphone, she took more interest in other people around her or at least acknowledged their presence. However, that is not the case anymore.

5.3.5. An instrument of oppression:

Katz and Sugiyama (2006) consider how people use their mobile phones as a status symbol and individual statement. Moreover, Katz and Sugiyama noted that mobile phones can be very much a fashion statement like the clothes people wear. Although their study made reference to people decorating their phones with expensive stones and accessories, the findings from this study still seem to support their assertions. For example, Bola, a young participant pointed out mobile phones have become fashionable pieces and that at times, people can use it as a marker of status. In her opinion,

I won't encourage it in the sense that women now use it in the form of showing off their status. For example, if I am holding a Blackberry Passport phone, the next person knows that I am holding a plot of land. If I can afford to hold a plot of land in

my hands at any time, others would expect and imagine that I should have more than that as assets.

My understanding of Bola's narrative is that she sees people as using their mobile phones to send a message to others about their social class, status, and wealth. This is done by making sure that you are publicly seen using expensive brands of phones. This observation also supports the findings in Plant (2003) study. Plant's research for Motorola illustrates how men and women use their mobiles for public display — for competitive advantage, or as a status symbol. And, as Plant writes, female teenagers 'are particularly aware of the fashion aspects of their mobiles, competing to acquire the latest, coolest models and to customize them in the latest, coolest ways' (Plant, 2003:44).

5.4. CONCLUSION

As noted in the introductory section, this chapter is about the various and multiples uses of mobile phones, the potential benefits of owning and using a mobile phone, and the potential downsides of mobile phones for some. First of all, I discussed the communicative and general uses of mobile phones. I further discussed how regardless of all the important things mobile smartphones can now be used for, communication remains the major driving force behind the women's decision to own and use a mobile phone. For the participants in this study, the ability to contact or be contacted by family, friends, kin colleagues, business partners at any given point in time is the major reason the participants own and use mobile phones. I also discussed how there is no general preferred method of communication. How the women choose to communicate either via text messaging, messaging application, or voice calls all depends on the circumstances or situation at that particular time. In addition to the communicative use of mobile phones, I further discussed, using appropriation

theory, how the women explore and integrate other non-communicative features of mobile phones to suit their daily living and lifestyle.

Going further, in the second section of this chapter I discussed the benefits derived from owning and using mobile phones. In this section, I maintain that the benefits of mobile phones revolve around the conveniences and luxuries mobile phones afford the women on a daily basis. While the benefits mobile phones bring to society is regularly discussed in mainstream studies, scholars such as Salehan and Negahban (2013) argue that it is not entirely all positive. In their opinion, while people are enjoying the conveniences mobile phones bring, people need to be watchful of the possibility of becoming over-reliant on, or too attached, to their devices. Salehan and Negahban (2013: 2633) suggests that mobile phones could easily facilitate the formation of bad habits or even addiction. For example, technology can be intensely used by people within and outside work requirements (Porter and Kakabadse, 2006) thus leading them to dedicate too much time to work, outside of normal working hours. In addition, I also discussed how mobile phones could potentially lead to a decline in face-to-face social interaction. Lastly, I discussed how people can use mobile phones as a tool for demonstrating social class status.

Conclusively, having discussed the potential benefits and disadvantages of mobile phones, I would like to reiterate the opinion of one of the participants, Mrs A, who would appear to agree with Wacjman's (2010) that technologies being human-made as they do not alone have the capacity to effect change, whether positive or negative. I am therefore of the opinion that most of the potential benefits or disadvantages mobile phones can to their users are largely dependent on the person wielding the device and the purpose for which it has been employed.

Chapter 6: MOBILE PHONES, SOCIAL NETWORKING, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

6.0. INTRODUCTION

There are ongoing debates on the effect of new communication technologies, such as mobile phones, have on social capital. While some scholars (such as, Putnam, 2000; Di Maggio Hargittai and Neuman, 2001) argue that information communication technologies and social media are causing a decrease in social capital, others argue modern communication technologies supplement traditional means of socialization (see, for example, Wellman et al, 2001), as well as bring people together (see, for example, Hampton and Wellman, 2003; Quan-Haase and Wellman, 2004). This chapter, therefore, explores women's use of mobile technologies, and in particular, their use of social media and networking apps, such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The chapter explores how women through social media as well as messaging applications to build social networks of communal relationships that serve multi- purposes. This chapter also examines women's interest in maintaining already existing relationships, their experiences on social media, as well as the benefits derived from the various groups they subscribe to.

More specifically, the first section explores how women use mobile phones to maintain existing ties with family and friends, mostly the former. The first section also discusses how having a mobile phone can help women cope with the impact of getting married can have on their social and family lives, such as moving away from their families and home towns. This chapter further considers how mobile phones can reduce the sense of detachment and loss that arises as a result of the relocation and how the women have been able to effectively still maintain their relationships

with exiting their families even though they have moved away. The next section discusses women's pleasant and unpleasant experiences with Facebook and WhatsApp. This section also explores the reasons why these women tend to prefer WhatsApp as a more suitable platform for socialization instead of Facebook. The last section then explores the benefits women enjoy from online socialization, be it on online communities/groups or just in general.

6.1. NETWORK MAINTAINING: TIES WITH FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

There are some clear advantages, as well as disadvantages, to the use of mobile phones and social media, particularly in relation to social networks and capital. Szreter (2000) defines social capital as the social relationships between people that enable productive outcomes (Sum, et al, 2008: 203). Some of the key benefits of owning and using an internet-enabled smartphone, as identified by most of the interviewees, are the ability to maintain contact with family and friends without being restricted by geographical space (Donner, 2007) or time, reconnect with lost friends, and make new friends. In particular, this section focuses primarily on the role that mobile phones play in assisting women in maintaining ties with family and friends, as this emerged as a particularly key theme for many of the interviewees.

As observed earlier, out of all the participants, only one is originally from the town where the research was undertaken. For all the other participants, it was either that their parents moved there from their original state in order to pursue a better livelihood or education, or that it was that the women themselves who had relocated to the city, again in pursuit of higher education, better livelihood, or because they got married and their husbands were living in this city. Past studies show that changes in social networks can potentially affect one's social capital. For example, Putman (2000) argues that one of the possible causes of decreased social capital in the United

States is the increase in families moving to megacities for job reasons. Putnam's analogy, therefore, would appear to be applicable to this scenario, and it could be argued that the relocation of people to megacities from smaller cities, communities, and rural areas may have led to a decline in social capital. However, equally, it could be argued that new technologies, and especially mobile phones, are revolutionizing how we build and maintain social capital. For example, in this research, and also in Kenya as Murphy and Priebe (2011) observed, mobile phones have proven useful in assisting women to cope with virilocal marriages. In other words, it helps women keep in touch with their birth families and friends in their home towns. As part of the findings from their study in Kenya, it was observed that 70% of the women called siblings or other relatives compared to 30% of men. Moreover, similar to what was observed in Murphy and Priebe's study, the participants in this research consider it important to keep in touch with their extended families and mobile phones have afforded them a cheap, safe, and more convenient means of doing so. For example, Nafis, a participant who moved away from home in pursuit of her career and business said 'The phone has made it easier to communicate with family. It has saved the stress of having to travel to visit family'. By stress, one can only presume that Nafis is referring to the cost of travelling from one town or state to another, the potential dangers one is likely to face on the road, such as road bandits, and the physical strain such long journeys on poor roads can exert on the body. Having to frequently repeat such a rigorous journey on a regular basis can potentially put one off from performing it all together, and that means there will probably be little or no communication between the women and their families. However, with mobile telephones, women do not have to travel so frequently, but can still remain in close contact with their families.

In Nigeria, as in many African countries, when a woman gets married, she is expected to move from wherever she is settled or from her parent's home to her husband's house, wherever it may

be. Sometimes, depending on the culture, especially in the northern parts of Nigeria, married women are more likely to end up living with the parents of the husband, while the husband may live in another town. This type of settlement is referred to as patrilocal or virilocal residence. Virilocal or patrilocal residence can be explained as a situation whereby wives move to their husband's residence after marriage (Marlow, 1994; Kramer and Greaves; 2011). Virilocality is mostly favoured when men are the sole breadwinners of the family (Marlowe, 1994). Women who find themselves in virilocal settlements will most likely have to embark on long-distance journeys to visit with their parents, siblings, or relatives that they grew up with. As the wife of the house, they would typically need the permission of their husband to go visit their family, and the frequency of the visit would usually depend on their financial buoyancy, the distance of the journey, and the kind of relationship the husband has with his in-laws. With all these factors to be considered it may take months or even years before a wife gets to see her family. However, with the advent of mobile phones, women do not necessarily have to wait for such a long period of time before they can see and speak to their family and relatives. This observation was aptly summarized in the following statement by Murphy and Priebe (2011: 13) that 'mobile phones are not themselves mobile, but help rather isolated rural Kenyan women reach family, friends and, spouses for varied purposes. In other words, mobile phones possess features that enable their users to connect to other people at great distances, such as distant family.

Studies of personal networks suggest that women are more likely to have closer networks comprising of kin than non-kin members (Fischer and Oliner 1983; Wellman 1985; Marsden 1987). Maintaining family social capital has been shown to be of benefit to both women who are away from their birth families and the families they left behind, and the role mobile phone plays in this process is often invaluable. For example, Morawczynski's (2009) study in Kenya shows

that women that have had to relocate from their families are able to send money back home through mobile banking and call credits to their family and siblings upon request, as well as, check on the wellbeing of their parents, siblings and relatives, and contact their parents for advice on matrimonial issues as well as advice on childcare. In other words, it means that although the women have relocated, they are still able to perform important roles in caring for and supporting the families they left behind, as well as receiving support and advice from them. Also, being able to keep in touch with family gives the women a feeling of still being an active part of the families they left behind. Nafis has an older sister, Bilkis, who got married and had to relocate to the United Kingdom with her husband because he is resident there, and she stated that:

I have a sister [Bilkis] living in London with her husband. She had health issues before she left Nigeria for London. After they left when she starts having her health challenge, her husband will call me on a video call and she'll speak to my mum and me. My mum is always happy to speak to her. Initially, she wasn't happy and didn't want to go to London but since she could see and speak to my mum on a video call, she's not so sad anymore. It has made living abroad easier for my sister. We still get to discuss family matters through the phone.

My understanding of Nafis' story is that, prior to Bilkis' marriage and relocation, her mother played a crucial role in providing care for Bilkis whenever she had ill health. Thus, this probably caused Bilkis to worry that relocating to the United Kingdom was definitely going to bring an end to the physical care and support her mother provided. Therefore, even though the video calls on mobile phones did not provide the same kind and level of care she was used to, they helped reduce feelings of emotional deprivation and provided some substitution for face-face communication. This narrative above then supports the position of Wellman et al (2001) on the effect of mobile phones and the internet on nonlocal ties. They argue that online interactions fill in some of the gaps between face-to-face meetings. However, it does not explain whether online communication adds depth to existing relationships as proposed by Taylor and Harper (2003) or if it just maintains

the existing status quo? In my opinion, online communication is capable of doing more than just maintaining the existing status quo. Firstly, using the case of Bilkis' sister again, the existing relationship was a mother/carer-daughter relationship. Relocating abroad has changed the mother/carer-daughter relationship to just mother-daughter relationship and even though it seems like one aspect of their relationship (the care-giver part) is suffering or probably lost, what should be noted is the possible deepening of the mother-daughter relationship in other ways. Distance is typically known to either put a strain on relationships or create a sense of appreciation for the relationships we have. Therefore, I think new communication technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, and social media make it more likely that the latter is achieved. In other words, they can possibly maintain the existing status quo and at the same time add depth to the relationship. Going further, it is worth mentioning that Bilkis' mother is also a benefactor, in the sense that, she is still able to see and communicate with her daughter. This will probably reduce the feeling of losing her daughter to another family and the sad feeling that comes with having a child in a faraway land is also reduced (Kazanka and Dada, 2009) and replaced with an assurance that she is surviving and even thriving. Thus, it can be said, just like Coleman (1988) suggests, that social capital is not only for the benefit of the actors but also for the benefit of the community around, and in particular, their extended families. Also, although Bilkis is married and relocated, she is still able to participate in family meetings and contribute to family decision making processes. In essence, she is still an active member of the family she left.

Similar to Nafis story, Kike is a 28 years old single woman. She has four friends who she has been very close to from childhood, and they went through almost every life stage together. However, recently, marriage and careers have caused her friends to relocate to other states. Kike expressed how she has been able to cope with her best friends getting married and moving to different towns.

It [mobile phone] has helped me keep my sanity considering all my friends have moved to other towns. I still maintain regular contact with them and I don't feel so alone and left out.

In Kike's story, although her friends might have gotten married and moved on with their lives, they are not cut-off from each other's lives. They regularly call and chat with one another. They have a group chat on WhatsApp and even though it might not be the same as face-to-face meetings they can still "hang out" together and chat as they used to when they were all together. By so doing, the bond they share as friends is not lost. When asked if they still get to see each other, Kike responded in the affirmative. Also, from her comments, it appears that she had to struggle with coping with her friends moving on. This could probably be because she was not moving on as they were or simply because she missed them. Nevertheless, regardless of the reason, she felt less left behind because of her mobile phone and hence their distance did not necessarily put as much of a strain on Kike's relationship with her friends as it might have done.

Coleman (1988) argued that when social capital is used, it grows (Siisiainen, 2000). Social contact is an important aspect of social capital (Putnam, 2000). While traditional modes of socializing include visits, encounters, and attending social events (Kimball and Rheingold 2000), there has been a change in the way people socialize and the way community is built and perceived. Over time, many interactions are now increasingly mediated by computers and mobile phones, which may suggest a more impersonal form of communication (Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christoloulides, 2011). However, it is not that these are necessarily more impersonal, but rather that this has resulted in the creation of more complex and heterogeneous networks in society. Thus, community as we used to know it, is no longer measured only by local neighbourhoods (Quan-Haase and Wellman, 2002), and people do not only socialize with people they are opportune to physically meet. Instead, nowadays, community is defined by social networks of interpersonal ties

(both online and offline) that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging, and social identity (Wellman, 2001; Quan-Haase and Wellman, 2002). These benefits of social network will be explored in subsequent sections.

Contemporary technological innovations, such as most notably the internet and mobile phones, are affecting how people socialize and although Putman (2000) believes they are a disruption to social capital building, there is evidence to suggest that mobile phones and the internet supplement social contact. Looking at the situation of the married women in this study, older modes of socialization would require that they made frequent visits to their families for them to maintain social capital, irrespective of financial implications and the risks, such as navigating poorly maintained the road and the possibility of getting robbed en route. The risks along with the cost and stress of travelling can result in it taking years before one is able to visit their family. These factors work together to foster emotional and relational distance between family members. However, Salamatu, one of the research participants, explained that these factors and their resulting issues have been dealt with by the alternative the mobile phone provides.

Before the GSM, if you needed to know how your parents are doing, you would have to travel all the way from Lagos to Zaria, you know, the risk on the road and all that, but it has been made much easier. Yes, you can come once in a while because the physical contact is still very important, but it has been made much easier. You can call people all around, your relatives and friends to find out how they are doing.

As suggested above, though mobile phones serve as a substitute by providing an alternative to face-to-face communication, it is important that we do not undermine the importance of physical contact as emphasized by Putnam (2000). In Putnam's opinion, physical contact is very crucial to building or maintaining social capital. In other words, out-of-sight means out-of-mind, thus, the more people spend less time in each other's company the more likely social capital is going to diminish. However, contrary to Putnam's opinion, newer scholars of social capital (for example,

Wellman et al, 2001) suggest that instead of total isolation due to lack of physical contact and participation, what is now obtainable are newer forms of hybrid relational networks embedded in the internet, social networks and messaging applications. An upside of using these new forms of communication technologies is that it allows people to form social networks with a wider and more dispersed collection of people than they would have otherwise been able to (Wellman et al. 2001).

Also, in his argument for trust and reciprocity, Putnam suggests that people help or do things for people because they believe that they will be helped in return when they are in need of it. Therefore, using Putnam's analogy, every gesture showed towards a neighbour, or in the case of Bilkis and Kike who were worried about losing contact with their loved ones, is carefully orchestrated and aimed at ensuring that in the future, the recipients of the gesture and goodwill will reciprocate. However, critics of Putnam's work, such as Poulsen and Svendsen (2005), point out that not every gesture of goodwill act is aimed at fetching a return, and sometimes people just do nice things for other people because they simply want to be nice. In the light of this criticism, there is no evidence that suggests that Kike's reason for wanting to stay in touch with her friends is purely instrumental and because she may want some form of assistance from them in the future. It appears that Kike seems to be more interested in simply keeping in touch with her friends because of the bond they have shared over the years.

6.2. PLEASANT AND UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES WITH WHATSAPP AND FACEBOOK

This section makes an argument for the importance of stable and unchanging networks. As discussed above, most of the communication by the women are with their families and existing friends, and this is because the women are more interested in making sure that their social circle consists of people that they are already familiar with; such as family members, kin and old school

mates, and old friends. In order to be able to control their existing network, some participants prefer using WhatsApp messenger instead of Facebook. This section is not aimed at making direct comparisons between Facebook and WhatsApp, rather, it is aimed at exploring, using the participants' experiences, their preference for WhatsApp as a more suitable platform for socializing for them, as this has to do with their privacy, exposure to improper content, control of network, and control of conversation.

6.2.1. Privacy

Madden (2012) suggests that women who use social networking sites (SNS) are more likely to want to keep their accounts private. However, it is difficult to achieve complete privacy on social networking sites like Facebook. There is always the risk of being hacked or not properly applying the security settings, thus risking having your private information made public. These reasons and more are why participants in this research suggested that they preferred using WhatsApp to Facebook. In their opinion, WhatsApp is more personalized and gives an assurance of maintaining people's privacy. Such as can be seen in the comments made by Zainab and Rose:

Zainab: I am not a Facebook person. WhatsApp is it for me.

Rose: Yes, I have a Facebook account, but I don't use it [...] I think there's more privacy on WhatsApp than Facebook. Nobody can enter your file and download your pictures. They can only see your display picture that is if you put one. It is only your phone contacts that use WhatsApp that can see you.

As suggested by Rose, privacy is a major reason for this preference. On WhatsApp, the public is unable to scrutinize or invade one's private space, which is something that is often seen as more problematic on Facebook and most social media platforms. Rose's concerns are also similar to those expressed in other studies, such as those conducted by Krasnova et al (2009) in Berlin, Acquisti and Gross (2006) in the USA, and White, Shade, and Brayton (2005) in Canada. In their

studies, the participants were similarly worried about an unwanted audience being able to view their shared contents and having access to private information as well as their schedules. Several studies, for example, Fogel and Nehmad (2008) and Acquisti and Gross (2006), suggest that women are often more concerned about privacy protection than men are, thus, women are less likely to post private information about themselves on Facebook and are often more conscious about who they add as friends on Facebook.

6.2.2. Control

The participants had two major control issues: control of what that they are exposed to, and control of the type of people they encounter online. Regarding control of content the women are exposed to, the majority of participants expressed concerns about unwillingly being exposed to unpleasant posts like nude pictures, content with strong language, and pornography. In particular, some of the participants believed that social networking sites could be potentially bad for women because there is the risk of being an unwilling viewer of sexually explicit content. For example, this was a concern expressed by Nafis:

There a group a friend added me to. The day she added me to the group, there was a nude picture that was posted. I couldn't even open the picture. It was very bad. So, I deleted myself from the group.

Nafis' suggests that even though she would like to be able to socialize with a more diverse community online, she is not interested in getting involved with anything that could potentially jeopardize her personal moral code. This supports some of the worries expressed by women participants in White, Shade, and Brayton's (2005) research. There are many benefits that come with being a member of a group on social networking sites, and these benefits will be explored in the next section of the chapter; however, members of social media groups can only enjoy the accrued benefits of that group if they feel like they belong there. In other words, if they feel out of

place, such groups end up becoming more of a nuisance, as it is the case with Nafis. Without disputing that group membership on social networking sites such as Facebook typically grant a person access to a more dispersed network of people than they would have ordinarily been able to access locally, this accessibility comes with the increased possibility of being exposed to all sorts of people who may or may not share the same moral values or live by the same ideologies as yourself. Nonetheless, when asked if she is on any group on WhatsApp, Nafis said

I am on a group on WhatsApp. It is a group for businesswomen [name of group]. The group admin is in Kano. She's my best friend. You can post pictures of your goods and wares on the group and people get to see them and buy. The group admin lives in Kano. I've come to know different people through the group. I've formed friendships on the group....

Comparing Nafis' stories of her experiences on both Facebook and WhatsApp I get the feeling that she identifies more with the business women's group on WhatsApp. In particular, she mentions the name of the WhatsApp group, but she could not remember the group she was added to on Facebook. Also, the administrator of the group is an old school friend of Nafis, and hence this could be a key of the influencing factor as to why she feels more comfortable in this group, as it consists of people she feels are like her. Additionally, this group offers Nafis a platform to advertise her goods and wares to potential buyers, as well as meet new people and make friends. Additionally, membership on WhatsApp groups are always exclusive, you have to be on the phone and WhatsApp contact list of the administrator to be invited into the group and that is usually possible if you are in the least an acquaintance of the administrator. Secondly, having knowledge of who the administrator gives the group added legitimacy, which in turn helps potential members know if they are at risk of getting exposed to unfavourable situations like Nafis on Facebook. Taking all this into consideration, it is easy to see why Nafis would prefer being a member of this WhatsApp group than the one on Facebook. However, it is worth noting that the downside of

WhatsApp groups is that they do not have the capacity of connecting people to broader networks of people in the same way as Facebook can.

On a similar note, Mrs A. observed that she avoids Facebook because she feels that ‘there is no sanity there’. She also worried that some of Facebook’s contents were inappropriate, therefore, she stays away. For Mrs A, WhatsApp is also more suitable for her socializing needs because she feels that ‘it is more matured’. She further explained that she does not WhatsApp just anybody, rather she WhatsApp’s only friends and relatives. My understanding of Mrs A.’s opinion is that as much as she would love to socialize more widely, she also wants to be in control of who she is socializing with, and hence it is preferable for her to interact with people who she already knows. As beneficial as social media, Facebook especially is, it is also an unpredictable place where all sorts of people with different backgrounds, opinions, and ideologies can be found. This can make it seem a potentially unknown and even dangerous environment for many. Mrs A.’s position is further supported by Eugenia:

Okay, thanks to WhatsApp now that one has to have a mobile number before you can chat with that person, so it means if that person doesn’t have a mobile number that person might not be able to chat with you. But talking about Facebook, somebody will just see you and who you may know and before you know it you [are] friends with that person. The person will send you a request. Probably you might think this person should just be, okay let me just accept this person and before you know it the person will end up being somebody that you might not like his kind of person. In the sense that probably you’re a very secure type, you don’t talk much and meeting someone that is very raw, you meet such people and you discover that the person is just telling you all sort of trash that a point you start getting pissed off....

My understanding of Mrs A’s statement and Eugenia’s narrative is that they do not like the risk involved in Facebook’s friending process. The risk is that there is the possibility of adding a new friend with the hope that he/she is ‘reasonable’; however, over time, it may turn out that he/she is

(in their opinion) not. One theme that is central to Nafis, Mrs A., and Eugenia's stories is the lack of interest in connecting to strangers and the increasing need to maintain connections with people they already know. Though one can argue that Nafis claims to have built new relationships from the group; however, I would also argue that those new relationships might not have been formed if her old school friend did not create the group. Ergo, this scenario can be described as something old birthing something new or the ripple effect of friendship, rather than Nafis actively seeking out new friends. Considering Nafis, Eugenia and Mrs A., strong opinions about Facebook, the question that comes to mind, is why bother joining or staying on the site and why not leave? I get the sense that as much as the participants are wary of Facebook and all that could possibly go wrong on it, they still want to be a part of it, so, this has created conundrum of wanting to exist in the world of social networking but not being a part of the world of social networking. My point here is that as much as the participants do not like having strangers invade their privacy nor exposing their personal lives to the general public to view, they still like the other benefits that come with Facebooking. For example, seeing updates on the lives of acquaintances, old school mates and strangers, and reconnecting with old school mates that they would not really classify as close friends. At this point, I would argue, that could be a potential reason the participants are still active on Facebook. I would also argue that argue the participants are aware that they are not utterly unable to take control of their networks on Facebook, however, if one is interested in growing a bigger and more diverse community, one has to deal with the risk of getting linked to people who do not share the same ideologies about life but this is not to say that they cannot be useful.

Prior works, such as Quan-Haase and Young (2010) and Church and de Oliveira (2013) observed that both Facebook and WhatsApp fulfil similar social, communication, and pleasure stimulating needs. However, as these interviews highlight both are seen and used differently by the women in

my research, in the sense that on Facebook your information and profile is seen as more outward-facing, to the whole of your network and beyond, while WhatsApp is perceived as a more closed network of existing friends. For my research participants, WhatsApp is seen to allow for close intimate communication between users, which is more similar to what is obtainable in face-face conversations and this is seen as more suitable for maintaining social ties with family and existing friends, which is the main goal for most of the participants.

With WhatsApp, the user is more in control of who they converse with, how the conversation goes, where the conversation stops, and where they pick up from. WhatsApp, therefore, makes it easier to mimic the type of social networks that a person would typically have with family and close friends offline. Also, as suggested out by Mrs A. and Eugenia, the chance of encountering strangers on WhatsApp is unlikely. However, with Facebook, considering it consists of a much more diverse network community, there is less control. For example, Eugenia observed that each time she adds a new ‘friend’ on Facebook, it is a risk, and this is because one is not always sure of the kind of person you are exposing yourself to. Moreover, on Facebook you are not only connected to the individual, but also (to some degree) the contacts of that individual; ergo, the risk is not just from primary contacts but secondary contacts as well.

6.3. DO PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNITIES (GROUPS)?

According to Butler et al (2002), people do communities because they expect to benefit from them, one way or the other, directly or indirectly. Prior studies suggest that members of online groups often participate as a way to gain access to inaccessible information that is relevant to their work, hobbies, health, and other topics in which they are personally interested (see Ogan, 1993; Von Hippel, 2001; Galegher, Sproull, and Kiesler, 1998). Additionally, some studies suggest that

people join online communities because they seek a place they can escape from the ‘real world’, have sociable interaction, and build self-esteem (Butler et al, 2002).

Therefore, it is on this note that this section specifically explores the women’s experiences of being members of online social groups and the benefits they have personally enjoyed from online social networking. The most popular social media used by all the participants is Facebook; thus, discussions in this section will primarily focus on Facebook. Additionally, it is important to point out at this juncture, that there may be some overlaps in the benefits of online groups discussed in this section and the benefits the women enjoy from owning and using a mobile phone, which is to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

6.3.1. Social support from a more diverse community (Fostering bridging social capital):

Much of the research on online communities shows that they support the maintenance of existing ties and the formation of new ties. Ellison et al (2007) observed that people use online communities to form connections with other people outside their pre-existing social groups and these communities are formed around shared interests as opposed to geographical location. Funmbi, a wife, mother, and a medical doctor noted how online communities have proven useful for new mothers that have jobs. In her experience, there are online communities or groups that exist to provide emotional support to women, especially new mothers that may be overwhelmed with settling into their roles of motherhood and at the same time, still adjusting to their roles as wives and career women. Ridings and Gefen (2004) noted that online communities are sometimes the ideal place for people to seek information from strangers. On a similar note, Constant, Sproull, and Kiesler (1996) suggest that what makes these online communities unique compared to traditional communities is the volume of weak ties that are available and willing to share useful information

as well as offer the support needed. Funmbi's account supports the argument of Wellman et al (2001) for online social networks. Wellman et al argue that people find social support, companionship, and a sense of belonging through online social networks even though they are composed of people that hardly know each other. Putnam (2000) refers to this dimension of relationship as bridging social capital. In the context of emotional and social support, the weak ties share their personal stories of how they coped with the stress of the transition and sometimes professionals on the group offer advice on how to deal with post-partum blues and as Fumbi puts it:

[...] that's why social media is wonderful. If you go online, you'll see that there are other people like you, going through a similar phase like you then you'll realize that you're not alone nor are you unique in your feelings and experiences. You'll also see how people coped with the pressure. So it gives you a community of friends that you don't have to maintain friendship with, though it has its downsides.

6.3.2. Information gathering and civic engagement:

Aside from social and emotional support, information gathering is another major reason for joining and participating in online groups. Bridging ties facilitate the exchange of information between distinct groups and help to expedite the flow of ideas among members (Ridings and Geffen, 2004). Studies conducted in Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, and Tokyo (Lin et al, 2013) show that amidst other things, people seek out civic and political information online as well as discuss public affairs. Likewise, in Nigeria, it has been observed that social media enhances exposure and awareness and facilitate the exchange of ideas, opinions, data among people (Adaugo, Ovute and Obochi, 2015; Shabir et al., 2014). It was also suggested that social media has a democratizing capacity. On the same note, Louise, one of the participants suggested that one of the reasons she goes on Facebook is to see what people are posting about. In her words, 'I go to read the news. For example, [the president] is back and everybody is posting about it... I am in a group for my

village. I am from Akwa Ibom, so I joined an [name of group] group on social media...Once in a while, I just say one or two things...’

Members of Facebook groups like [name of group] are usually composed of people that are indigenes of the state who reside either outside or within the state. The platforms serve as a source of news updates on events that affect the state, and from time to time, additional information is shared amongst members. Now, while the members of the group might not know all of the other members, they share a common interest, which is based upon being from the state. On such a platform, ideas and opinions on how the state could improve on its affairs are exchanged.

Although Louise shared how members of “[name of group] group engage in discussions and debates on matters relating to the progress of the state, she did not say if the ideas are physically acted upon. Therefore, it means that there is the possibility that all that happens is what scholars like Mustapha, Gbonegun, and Mustapha (2016) refer to as ‘virtual engagement’. Admittedly, the members may derive a sense of satisfaction that they are actually making contributions to the development of the state, but the question remains that if they are? Or if they are simply spending time arguing and debating online, but there is no direct action taking place to improvement in the situation of the state or its people. So, while on one hand, we have evidence from other countries that suggest social media have actually facilitated civic engagement, which in turn have led to physical development, we also have, on the other hand, evidence from Nigeria that suggests social media could potentially weaken political participation, particularly by limiting citizens to the realm of virtual engagement alone.

6.3.3. Making friends (bonding social capital) and entertainment:

Dogrue, Menevi and Eyyam (2011) suggested that the internet has the capability to connect you to someone new from the other end of the street or the other side of the planet. It is currently the

easiest and fastest way to make connections with other people in other parts of the world. It really does not matter if the aim is to reconnect with an old friend, an old teacher, start a new relationship (romantically or not) with new people, or build a professional network, social media is arguably the best place for that. In particular, research shows that people use the internet to contact others with similar interests simply for the purpose of making friends and “hanging out” together (Floyd and Parks, 1995; Rosson, 1999; Ridings and Gefen, 2004). Kike, agreed with this point of view when she said “as a single lady, you get to meet people online, especially guys. You chat with people”. What Kike is suggesting is that social media is a good place for single people to meet and interact, especially with potentially new romantic partners. Internet dating is now very common. While some of the relationships formed online do not go beyond chatting, some will end up metamorphosing into more traditional relationships, such as romantic relationships. Several studies have demonstrated how relationships are created and maintained over the web and social media (Whitty and Gavin, 2001; Ellison, Heino and Gibbs, 2006). Through the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, new acquaintances can be formed, and networks created, whether around a group of mutual friends or a common interest. In this way, Internet social networking can be seen as a catalyst to help create new offline friendships that would otherwise not have existed. Some of these friendships transcend to physical relationships while some remain online. To support this line of thought is Silver and Huang (2019) suggestion that social media users are more likely to connect and interact with people who are different from them. In essence, social media gives people the chance to connect and form bonds with other people that they would otherwise have not been able to bond with. Through social media people of different religion, race, ethnicity and nationality are connected and form bonds over a common cause.

One thing worth noting is that I observed that Kike did not seem to be bothered about the potential risks of online dating. The risks include the possibility of meeting a stalker or meeting people that might exploit the anonymity of online relationships to recreate a virtual identity that is not a true representation of themselves, often referred to as ‘catfishing’. The danger in the latter is that the woman might end up falling in love with someone that does not exist, or is at least, not the person she thought they were. However, as suggested earlier, Kike did not seem to be bothered about the potential risks of online dating as she appears to not be interested in taking an online relationship offline. On the same note, studies show that people use social media to pass time. Just like it has been observed in previous studies, such as Dogruer, Menevi, and Eyyam (2011), and Mazman and Usluel (2011) this study observed that some people use social media to entertain themselves and pass time.

Interviewer: Do you use social media?

Bola: Yes. Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram, only when I am bored, and I want to look at pictures.

Gimbi: On Instagram, there’s a group I follow called INSTABLOG NAIJA. I get news and updates on happenings around mostly gossip too.

6.4. CONCLUSION

For any form of social capital to thrive there is a need for regular social interaction. As discussed in this chapter and the literature review earlier in the thesis, the old ways of building and maintaining social capital tended to involve regular face-face interactions. Putman (2000) feared that social capital is increasingly declining, and this is as a result of people’s preoccupation with moving away to megacities in search of a better life and people’s unwillingness to spend time in each other’s company (engage in activities that bring people together). However, modern scholars

of social capital propose that while people may not have the time to regularly engage in traditional modes of socialization, it is still possible to build and maintain social capital using information communication technologies and this chapter supports the argument. As discussed earlier, the internet and communication technologies such as mobile phones expand people's chances of connecting with an even wider network of people. Communication technologies also allow people to be able to form so many networks of communities with people in more dispersed geographical and cultural locations. Through the internet and social media, people have become unlimited in their ability to connect with other people around the world that share similar likes and interests as they do.

As highlighted in the introductory section and throughout the chapter, the women in this research are more interested in maintaining existing ties than creating new bonds. This is not to say that there was no interest in creating a new bond at all, but rather that the former is of higher importance.

First of all, in this chapter, I have argued that contrary to what was obtainable in the past, nowadays, physical distance is less likely to diminish family social capital. This is because modern communication technologies, such as mobile phones are constantly redefining how we socialize. The presence of mobile phones and the internet allows people to socialize with people in any part of the world without the inhibition from geographical and spatial interference. Secondly, I determined that with mobile phones and the internet, women, especially married women who may have been disconnected from their birth families and the community where they raised because of marriage, can now remain connected with their families and birth communities. So, contrary to what Putnam (2000) worries about diminished social capital as a resultant effect of reduced physical socialization, we have new communication technologies filling at least some of this gap. At this point, it is worth noting that I am not proposing that communication technologies be used

to replace physical socialization in its entirety, rather I am arguing for the role communication technologies play in assisting women to cope with some of the challenges that come with virilocal or patrilocal marriages. I am also arguing that unlike Putnam's assumption that social capital is lost or diminished, this study demonstrates that social capital still exists and people are now more equipped to expand and diversify their social networks. This means that community have evolved from what they used to be. In other words, the old parameter used to define social networks- physical proximity and contacts have evolved. Now, community could be defined as a network of people one has a relationship with both online and offline. To further buttress this point, Hampton (2016) argues that there are many variable reasons and ways people get to build bonds other people. For example, people get connected for information they could get, opportunities and much more. They further argue that the modes of connections could either be through the old-fashioned physical gathering ort through newer modes of communication technologies and the internet, which is more obtainable today.

Going further, this chapter explores the steps taken by the women to ensure that they effectively manage how they socialize online. The second section of the chapter points to that women are more likely to want to use WhatsApp to fulfil their socializing needs because it has more potentials of mimicking the benefits of the traditional method of socialization. Simply put, WhatsApp gives the privacy and measure of control women desire to have in the process of socializing.

Nevertheless, even though these women were keener on using WhatsApp for socializing with family, friends and kin, they still from time to time, and more regularly for others, use Facebook to fulfil other socializing needs. Thus, the last section of this chapter explores how virtual communities serve to provide access to social support from a more diverse community, such as for information gathering, source of entertainment, and as a platform for socialization and making

new friends. As observed in previous studies, women turn to social media and virtual communities for one or more of these benefits, depending on their situation. Internet-enabled phones provide the women access to a wider network of so many weak ties that can be exploited for their personal gain and one of the benefits of having this type of ties at one's disposal is that you do not have to form a friendship with them. In other words, there is no limit to the number of useful networks a woman can be linked to.

CHAPTER 7: MOBILE PHONES, WOMEN, AND EMPOWERMENT

7.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore what empowerment means to the women in this research and how they use mobile phones for economic empowerment? As mentioned previously in the thesis, most of the participants had other businesses they ran alongside their normal day jobs. These businesses were all small scale but still provided essential extra income for the women. Therefore, this section will explore how the women build and maintain their professional networks, the kinds of groups they belong to, and the activities they engage in.

In particular, this chapter will explore the participants' standpoints on women's empowerment, and the factors that limit empowerment. The factors include patriarchy, poverty, educational barrier, poor infrastructures, and cultural and religious factors. In particular, this chapter will explore these issues by drawing on the women's personal experiences and opinions on the real and potential impact of these factors on their and others' lives. Going further, the chapter explores how mobile phones contribute to women economic empowerment *vis a vis* the benefits of using mobile devices in small business and the benefit of mobile banking to women.

7.1. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

There is a long and complex discussion and debate on what constitutes empowerment and how individuals and groups can be empowered. While many definitions of empowerment are central to power and access and control over resources (see Rowland, 1997; Page and Czuba, 1999; Sen, 1999; Kabeer, 2005; Narayan-Parker, 2005; Luttrell et al, 2009), some definitions focus on the inequalities between men and women (Tembon and Fort, 2008; Kabeer, 2005). Many economists

and business scholars see empowerment as a means of improving productivity within established structures, while social activists concerned with poverty issues see empowerment as a local grass-roots endeavour, designed to inspire the poor to challenge status quo (Papart, Rai and Staudt, 2003). Gender and development researchers (such as Young 1993; Sen and Grown 2013) see empowerment as the ability of individuals to maximize the opportunities available to them without interference from the state or constraint from any institution. Even though the GAD definition is an improvement from economist and business standpoints, the major challenge with this definition is the problem of choices available to them. Who defines what is available or not; what is the criteria for deciding who get what; and finally, why are the individuals not allowed to decide for themselves what their choices are? I would imagine that feminist researchers had this thought in mind when they came up with an explanation for empowerment. Feminists' standpoint on empowerment sees empowerment as more than having access to decision-making processes. It entails people perceiving themselves as able and entitled to occupy the decision-making space. It also entails undoing negative social constructions, so that the people affected can come to view themselves as having the capacity to act and have influence (Rowland, 1995). Also, for Batliwala (1994: 130), empowerment is 'the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power'. It requires political action and collective assault on cultural as well as national and community power structures that oppress women and some men. Lastly, Kabeer (2001) defines empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.

However, specifically in a Nigerian context, Fadeyi and Olanegan (2001) have proposed that empowering women involves enabling them to achieve their full potential. This involves giving credence to the efforts of women to contribute to the creation of wealth, enabling them to contribute

to decision making at both family, societal, and national levels, reducing their vulnerability, decreasing women's dependency on men, and challenging women's passivity in the society (Fadeyi and Olanegan, 2001). Hadiza corroborates this point of view in her discussion of what empowerment ought to be from her community standpoint.

...So, the empowerment comes through by fostering women's capabilities in different fields of life. I'll use an example of the community where I stay in Tsibiri. An example of empowering women through agriculture is teaching them how to make vegetable gardens within their homes because women around my community don't go outside of their home. Marriage keeps them bound in their home, so a way of sustaining their families and probably people around their community is home gardening. There is a woman not too far from our house that produces onions. We buy from her once in a while and most at times when we don't have sufficient onions at home, we run across the road to buy from her and she sells at a reasonable price. Once in awhile she sells to people in the neighbouring community and that form of business has empowered her by her not only relying on her husband but sending 3 of her children to school using that. There are other entrepreneurship skills that she's good in. she bakes "WARA" (bean cake) for breakfast. I'll regard that as self-empowerment for that woman. She empowered herself independently of what was going on around her, but I'll want to believe that she used that opportunity when a non-profit organization came to the community and enlightened the women on ways they can improve the skills they have....

Before I explore what Hadiza is narrating, one thing is obvious from Hadiza's account is the subtle interchange of empowerment and poverty alleviation. This type of usage is what Batliwala worried about when she noted that 'empowerment', which had virtually replaced terms such as poverty alleviation, welfare and community participation, was in danger of losing its transformative edge. In her opinion, it is important to distinguish between empowerment and other forms of development. However, as proposed by the likes of Friedmann (1992) what may constitute as empowerment to one person might not be to another. Hence for the woman/women of Tsibiri, empowerment could mean being able to have the basic skills and training on how they can improve their living conditions. So, for the Wara seller, being able to make decisions and take actions that are aimed at improving her children's life's options indicates of the state being empowered, even

if it is on a small and individual scale. This supports scholars (such as East, 2000; Staples, 1990) argument of empowerment as both a process and an outcome. On one hand, it is a process because it is fluid, often unpredictable, and requires attention to the specificities of struggles over time and place (Papart, Rai and Staudt, 2003). In other words, in the case of the Wara seller, her current struggle is to be able to do something improve the living condition of her and her family and also be able to give her children more options than she had a child. These do not sum up all her struggles rather they form part of her struggles. On the other hand, it is an outcome can be measured against expected accomplishments (Papart, Rai, and Staudt, 2003). So, the ability to decrease her dependency on her husband, increase her financial independence and renegotiate her position in the family, such that, she is able to decide and act towards her children's education can be described as being empowered.

Additionally, in the statement above, Hadiza implied that it is still possible to attain empowerment without necessarily going against certain religious rules or traditional norms that govern the lifestyle of a group of people. In other words, sometimes, in the process of empowerment, instead of outrightly challenging or disregarding the values and belief systems of the people involved, we might want to first of all consider the possibility of striking a balance between what they already know and what is about to be introduced; even if this is temporary, until the necessary adjustments are made. It goes without saying that, striking such a balance increases the chances of getting more people (especially people in these kinds of closed community) actively participating in the process of empowerment. Further, she adds her opinion on how individual empowerment can be achieved:

...I feel, based on how I have interacted with these women. I feel empowerment should be based on self-realization and orientation. We have grown up in a community where were always dependent on men. Men do everything for us, so women already have that mindset that I am going to be depending on a man". When I get married, a man will fend for me. So, I think empowerment should start from the mindset. A woman needs to be re-

oriented, she needs to make the conscious effort of saying I can be independent of a man. If there is that re-orientation then I think we can begin to penetrate into women's lives by not just only one subject matter, agriculture. We can also look at other areas...

This point of view fits into previous debates (see Eccles 1993; Jacob and Weisz, 1994; Tiedemann, 2000) on how society saliently imposes gender stereotypes on women right from when they are young, and that they grow up believing such stereotypes to be their realities. Hence, women are raised to believe things like some professional fields are masculine, or that she is incapable of looking after herself. In the home, a girl is taught to know her place in the home as a subordinate and dependent who will one day grow up, get married to a man that will provide all her needs. From Hadiza's point of view, there is a need to consciously take actions that would change women's self-perception, as it would go a long way in the process of empowerment. In other words, when girls and women begin to perceive themselves as people that are capable of taking responsibility for themselves, then it makes it easier to work towards improving other areas of their lives. Hadiza's opinion supports Jetti's (2006) argument that empowerment is not something that can be handed down. Rather, it proceeds out of the women's own genuine desire to improve their living conditions. It also suggests that women need to have a clear understanding of what is needed to be done to enhance the quality of their lives. It points to the fact that women are the key players in their own empowerment process. Secondly, it also points out that the process of empowerment begins with doing away with certain negative mind-sets that hinder the productivity of women at large. Only after changing such mental orientations can women be able to challenge existing norms, precepts and policies that mitigate their productivity.

Nevertheless, as important and valid as Hadiza's points are, I would argue that they only scratch the surface of what it entails to achieve women empowerment. Admittedly, yes, there is a need to come to self-realization and put in efforts towards the process. However, as proposed by the likes

of (Grown and Gupta, 2005; Makama, 2013; Agbalajobi, 2010; Othman, 2006) women empowerment also involves challenging existing structures, institutions, laws and practices that promote gender inequality in the country. For empowerment to be achieved, it will take more than self-realization and women involvement. It is a wider social problem that needs every sector in the society, every arm of the government and every member of the society consciously working together to achieve gender equality. Feminist and women development scholars (Maholtra, Schuler and Boender, 2002) explained this when they proposed that there are two levels to women empowerment- institutional level and micro levels. At the institutional level, women empowerment should emphasizes the importance of participation and social inclusion, while at the micro-level, empowerment is embedded in the idea of self-efficacy and the significance of the realization by individual women that they can be the agents of change in their own lives (Friedmann 1992; Chambers 1997; Narayan et al. 2000)

7.1.1. Factors that limit women empowerment

As highlighted earlier, there are key factors that hinder women's empowerment and mobile phone use, and amongst these are patriarchal control, educational level, poverty/ limited access to funds, poor technology and infrastructures, religion, and cultural factors.

7.1.1.1. Patriarchal factor

Nigeria has always remained a patriarchal country (Aina, 1998). As noted earlier, patriarchy is a system of social stratification that encourages male domination whilst placing constraints on the activities of women in society. In Nigeria, like most African and Asian countries, patriarchy is a major backbone upon which cultural and traditional systems in the country are built. This is much so that it is seen as the acceptable and normal way of living, which is rarely challenged. Within these systems, men and women have different roles. In patriarchal societies, men occupy the most

important roles while women occupy subordinate roles and are often oppressed. As described on the Daily Kos (2011) ‘patriarchy is generally not an explicit ongoing effort by men to dominate women. It is a long-standing system that we are born into and engage in, mostly unconsciously’.

This means that, although men are the major benefactors of the social benefits of patriarchy, both men and women could be responsible for perpetuating patriarchy. For instance, women usually mete out the harsh treatment of widows in the eastern parts of Nigeria. An instance of such harsh treatment is the shaving of widows’ hair to signify that she is in mourning. This shaving of hair is usually done by other women in the family (Agumagu, 2007; Samuel, 2009) who may have or have not had their hair shaved in the past. Notwithstanding the dehumanizing nature of this practice, women tend to accept the practice as culture and tradition of the people. Thus, in order to maintain their membership in the society, practices such as this, are accepted and unquestioned (Samuel, 2009:186-187).

Prior to when mobile phones attained their popularity across most social class, studies conducted in some rural communities in Asia and Africa showed that mobile phones were considered as household commodities, and husbands were often in possession of the phones (Tacchi, Kitner, and Crawford, 2012). This was mostly the case in low and middle-income families. The popular theme in such research studies is that the husbands of such homes were most likely to be the person who purchased the only mobile phone in the house and as such it was always on his person and if the wife needed to use the phone she would have to seek her husband’s permission (Tacchi, Kitner, and Crawford, 2012). However, in this study, the participants are capable of deciding for themselves whether they want to get a phone, what kind of phone to get, when they could get a phone and how/when to use their phones. Nevertheless, when asked to share their opinion on their husband being able to control how they use their phones, some participants expressed their dislike

of the idea, deeming it unnecessary and even a form of abuse for a man to monitor, deny or impose an embargo that limits his wife's use of the mobile phone.

Q: DO YOU THINK MEN OR HUSBANDS SHOULD HAVE SAY IN WHETHER THEIR WIVES OWN OR USE MOBILE PHONES?

Zainab: I do not think men should have any right to decide if women should use a phone.

Fumbi: I think two adults with will and decency should not have to regulate each other's use. If as an adult woman, I am always on my phone, and as result, I neglect my husband, if pointed out, I should be able to regulate my use myself, but it shouldn't be imposed upon me

Mummy M: I think if a woman uses her phone properly, her husband will not be inquisitive about what she does on her phone. My husband doesn't touch my phone nor pick my calls. He knows that the nature of my job makes people call me frequently. He knows the kind of wife he has so he does not worry about me doing shady things on my phone.

Alisha: I do not think it is right for men to control women's use of mobile phones. I think women should be allowed to use their phones as they feel is best. From a northern point of view, you know men are allowed to do what they want but when it comes to the women they feel women need to be controlled.

The ability of the women to deem it inappropriate for their respective spouses to control their mobile phone use showed that they are willing to challenge existing norms and statutes created by tradition, that give men the power to control and manipulate the lives and activities of women.

Women's ability to expand their capacity to challenge and act is made possible when the women are empowered and have access to opportunities that they would not have access to in the past. As seen from the profile of the women, the majority of the women are well educated, with good jobs and businesses, and they contribute to the family income. In other words, they do not completely depend on the men for their financial needs to be met. Thus, in their homes, the women are seen more as equal partners than subordinates to their husbands. Women also see themselves as people

that get to have a say in their preferences as it has to do with not only their mobile phone use but also possibly other areas of their lives.

While most women expressed how they did not want their husbands regulating their ownership and use of mobile phones, one of the participants believes that there is nothing wrong with men's controlling their wives mobile phone use. In the participant's opinion, religion and culture (which will be explored further in subsequent factors) permit men to have control over their wives and as such, it is within the man's right to decide what his wife can or cannot do with her phone.

Interviewer: Do you think men or husbands should have to say in whether their wives own or use mobile phones?

Kayjay: Yes, they can decide. I think their (men) major concern is social media. Even in the use of social media, they may have specific ones they would rather their women use and others they won't want them using...

This response supports Rowland-Serdar and Peregrine's (1991: 608) opinion that,

there are certain messages that are deeply internalized in female children and believed by adult women. In their opinion, the point of these messages, which can be summarized into three main points: (1) the belief that men have the right to control women's lives; (2) the belief that men are essential for the well-being of women; and (3) the belief that women are responsible for the well-being of relationships; is to emphasize male domination and discourage women from thinking more of themselves vis a vis empowerment.

7.1.1.2. Poverty or financial factor:

Finance is the backbone of any economy. It can determine the level of economic activities of an individual or a country at large. Researchers Adegrooye and Adegrooye, (2008) found that lack of finances and lack of access to loans mitigate against women empowerment. Different studies conducted in several African and Asian countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Bangladesh (Rahman, 2001; Kabeer, 2001; Schuler et al, 1996; Kim et al, 2007; Okibo and Makanga, 2014) observed that women that take advantage of the micro-finance loan schemes

available in their communities, contribute the household income thereby improve living conditions of themselves and their families, indirectly increase their social status in the family and community, in some cases earn the respect of their husbands and finally improve their self-confidence and overall productivity. However, one study in Bangladesh (Schuler et al, 1996) recorded that increased access to finances led to increased violence against the women. This is because unlike when they had nothing, there was nothing to fight for but now they are more prone to engaging in physical struggles because have something to protect.

In this particular study, participants did not outrightly enlist poverty and lack of access to financial assistance as a factor that limits women empowerment however reports from previous researches in Nigeria show that: firstly, women are the poorest in low-income countries (Atolagbe, 1999; Okojie, 1998; Okojie, 2002); secondly, women feel the impact of poverty more than men. For example, a girl in poverty is most likely to be denied access to education while a boy may get selected to be educated. Women in a study conducted in multi-cities in Nigeria identified poverty as multidimensional but essentially relates to the inability to provide the basic needs of life like food and shelter and clothing to make life worth living (Adepoju, 2019). One of the major factors that encourage poverty is unemployment. Other factors include the absence of high income paying jobs and increase of low income paying jobs, poor education (this will be explored further) etc.

As mentioned earlier, the participants in this research did not discuss poverty as a factor that affects women empowerment. The reason for this could be because they are mostly employed women, businesswomen, or both. However, Adepoju (2019) noted that one of the strategies women adopt to deal with poverty is to undertake more than one job and this means that women are shifting from the traditional norm of staying at home and shielding themselves from the harsh realities of the

world. In a way, it means that the harsh reality of the economy has forced women to do their bit in contributing to improving the household economy.

Consequences of poverty on women include lack of voice, autonomy over choices and eventually subjection to exploitation (Adepoju, 2015). Some of the ways women poverty can be reduced are by increasing girl-child retention in schools, increasing women's wages, employing more women into skilled jobs and creating more government-assisted programs to alleviate poverty amongst women.

7.1.1.3. Educational factor

As mentioned in the section above, the high rate of illiteracy among women is a major factor that contributes to women poverty. Women with little or no educational qualification are less likely to explore their full potential in the country. Lack of education can result in poor self-esteem, no employment, and employment in very low wages paying jobs. Adepoju (2015) noted that poorly educated women are more likely to be bullied in their homes and communities.

Suleiman (2009) noted that without education, it would be difficult to become genuinely economically empowered and relevant in the country and the world. Ebele (2003) noted that education increases women's chances of employment, thereby empowering them economically and improving their status in society. Previous studies (Stromquist, 1990) highlighted poverty and patriarchy as some of the factors that discourage women from going to school. May, one of the research participants and works at Center for Girls Education (C.G.E) observed that,

some parents feel like it's a waste of money to send a girl to school when, at the ending of the day, she'll end up in the kitchen or in *kunle* (confinement) house and restriction. So, there is this cultural and religious restriction on women.

My understanding of the May's statement is that society has not done a good job with placing importance on women education and this is because of religious and cultural beliefs that have

made it an unimportant investment. Admittedly, there is a global and national clamour for girl-child education and gender equality in children's access to formal education; however, there are no laws that make it mandatory for children to be educated. The need to educate a child is usually left to the parents' discretion. Also, the quality of education the child receives is dependent on the financial situation of the home. Old Nigerian traditional practices advocates for the grooming of girl children to be good domestic wives. In other words, the only kind of education a girl should be receiving is how to maintain a house, perform kitchen duties, and look after the children and her husband.

The last decade has witnessed an improvement in the rate of girls' education. Statistics from the national literacy survey conducted in 2010 by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2010) shows that 50.6% of adult women are literate in English (see appendix 1). While 65.1% of the adult men are literate in English. Adult women and men mean people from 15 years and above. Even though more men are literate compared to women, the gap seemed to be closing when compared to past statistics.

The Centre for Girl Education is a research-based NGOs that is aimed at providing basic educational training for girls in rural areas especially. The centre aims to provide basic elementary and/or secondary education to girls in rural parts of northern Nigeria that have no access or are denied access to formal schools. Considering that a lot of the participating girls are either married already or will be married at young ages, the whole point of this is to educate the girls on basic literacy and numeracy skills and empower them with some vocational skills that they could explore as money-making ventures. As noted by another participant, women empowerment can be achieved by first of all making formal education accessible to women. In Salamatu's opinion, one

of the ways to empower women and eradicate poverty among women is to train them on vocational skills that can be implemented into money-making ventures.

7.1.1.4. Poor infrastructural development

In this study, poor infrastructural facilities are defined as the poor conditions of schools, hospitals, transport, electricity access to loans and information communication technologies. Although the infrastructural development is generally not top notch, rural communities are more affected than urban cities. Studies conducted in rural areas show that women in rural communities are mostly faced with no access to quality health care facilities which leads to an increase in the mortality rates; no access to good water supply which leads to poor health conditions and eventually higher mortality rates; little or no access to schools which leads to increased illiteracy amongst women and eventually poverty. Women in rural communities are also victims of poor communication technologies infrastructure and poor transport facilities. Okechukwu, Nebo, and Jude (2016) highlighted that a lot of women in rural parts of Nigeria travel long distances on foot and these journeys are not voluntary. Such journeys are usually for the sole purpose of going to the market for trade purposes. Women travelling such journeys may have to carry heavy loads of goods on their heads or push a heavy load of goods on wheelbarrows.

As implied earlier, women in urban areas have arguably better experiences with the infrastructural system of the country. Arguably, they have access to better schools, better roads, better water supply, better health system etc. compared to rural communities. However, studies (such as, Aliyu and Ahmadu, 2017) show that there is still a shortage even in the urban region which has resulted in overcrowding and overusing of the existing facilities available. Knowing that the lack of reliable access to basic services severely impedes women economic empowerment (Malik et al, 2016), the participants did not discuss these as barriers that impede their empowerment and development. This

could be because they have lived in these conditions for so long that it has become the norm. It could also be because like other members of society, they have found alternative ways to cope with the poor infrastructural services. For example, in order to cope with the poor and unstable network services people subscribe to more than one mobile network provider, thus, it is not uncommon to see one person with multiple handsets or a handset that have slots for multiple sims. Two of the participants, Gimbi and Kayjay, admitted to owning more than one sim card. Even though having multiple subscriptions to different networks seem to be a solution to the poor network services problem in the country, it poses as a deterrent to women economic development because it means they would potentially be spending more money to fund their multiple lines. In simpler words, money that could have been invested in other places will be spent buying recharge cards for multiple lines.

7.1.1.5. Cultural and religious factors

A couple of participants noted that religion and cultural norms and values encourage patriarchal domination. Concerning the role religion plays in promoting women disempowerment, Salamatu, a wife, mother and a catholic said

...for example, I am a catholic, it cannot be heard of that a woman will become a priest. At least in the Pentecostal churches, you can hear of a woman being a pastor but not in the Catholic Church. It is impossible. The best I have heard is a woman taking the bible reading, or altar girls but that's just it. In church societies, women can lead but why can't they be allowed to be priest? I think it is kind of biblical...then I think in that same book (referring to the bible) a woman was only referred to the man, not to her service to God. In other words, a woman's service to God is through her husband or something like that...Yes, I am a married woman and probably my husband might be dead too but you are just referred to as a woman because of the man that is your life...your service to god is related to your service to your husband...I think that's why marriage is encouraged in our religions and societies. Because they just feel that you can't serve God well if you remain single. As a man, you can remain single because you want to serve God properly but not for women.

From Salamatu's point of view, religion promotes patriarchy, especially orthodox Christian religions, like Catholicism. It encourages ideas of male superiority over women. The value of a woman's worth becomes obvious when she is attached to a man. This means that a woman's social identity is tied to the man in her life and without a man, you remain invisible (a nobody). Therefore, the choice to remain unattached to a man will most likely earn you the title of a deviant. Salamatu's opinion is in line with Attoh (2017) who stated that

religion has influenced the relationship between men and women for centuries and entrenched male domination into the social structure of society, thus, reinforcing patriarchy.

In addition to religion, culture is also considered as a factor that hinders women empowerment. Nigeria is a country with over 400 hundred ethnic groups, and each has its unique customary practice with some similarities across cultures. Customary practices in Nigeria, promote the marginalization of women. Often times, the traditional practices that limit the performance of women in society are most times encouraged and performed by women. As pointed by May

..to be honest, it isn't only men that discriminate, For example, when they (women) see a girl on bicycle, they'll remind you that you're a girl and shouldn't be seen with your legs across a bicycle. It is only a few that go out of their way to prove that they have what it takes and sometimes, they go through a lot....even the women discriminate in the sense that they make the daughters feel feminine and fragile. Even from the womb, when they are aware, they're carrying female children, they act in a strange way to feminize the child.

May's story supports the argument of gender and feminist scholars (Hartley, 1960; Oakley, 1981; Vineetha, 2017) that argue that socialization of genders is not just restricted to society but is also done within the family. For example, the clear definition of gender roles in house, chores, choices of games that are acceptable to both genders, encouragement of behaviours that are acceptable from one child but unacceptable from the other, and deciding which colours and toys are suitable for a child but unsuitable for the other. As innocent as these choices and actions might seem, they

saliently influence how a child defines herself-as weak and inferior compared to her male counterparts. Crespi (2003) explained this in the statement below

The way we are, behave and think is the final product of socialization. Since the moment we are born, we are being moulded into the being the society wants us to be. Through socialization, we also learn what is appropriate and improper for both genders.

Additionally, as a girl, she is raised believing that as a result of her gender, she is limited in her life choices and opportunities. This supports Butler et al, (2002) claim that there has not always been a fixed definition of male and female genders. However, over time, society through the lens of pre-set customary boundaries have and are still renegotiating gender (Cameron, 1997). In other words, gender is socially constructed, concept that has been redefined over the years and it has played an important role in the propagation of patriarchal ideology of whether a girl should be formally educated and to what level, what kinds of subject/courses is she allowed to study, what courses is she expected to excel at, if she is educated, should she be allowed to work? What kind of job is she allowed to do, and what level is of promotion is she allowed to attain? Furthermore, studies (such as, Raheel, 2016) have discussed how older women are more likely to promote gender inequality by imposing on the younger generation certain norms and values that encourage patriarchy, thus, teaching them to believe and accept the flaws in the society to be anything but flaws.

Nigeria is a very religious country and oftentimes, religion and cultural practices often intersect and intertwine (Aina, 1998) that at some point it becomes hard to tell one from the other and it is almost, nearly impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins. Cohen (2007, 2009) argued that religious texts and doctrines shape the ways that culture develops. Aina's position on the strong intersection between religion and culture is supported by one of the participants Hadiza when she said "...unfortunately for us in this country, we have married religion and culture together, so

we have not allowed them to play their independent roles because they are independent at some point. It is unfortunate that we have married them together which has affected us negatively”. Tsibiri community is a small community in Giwa Local government area of Zaria, in Nigeria, and it is located in the north-western region of the country. Like most of the northern regions, Islamic norms shape the common way of life of the people. Thus, women are often restricted in their activities as long as it is within the household premises. Examples of some of the religious-cultural practices that limit women empowerment in Nigeria include a ban on western education, especially for female children in Northern Nigeria, denial of women inheritance of land and property thus causing them to not have assets for loan collateral, women unable to make unanimous decision that affect their health, specifically reproductive health, and traditional practices that encourage patriarchy and violence against women.

As mentioned in the literature review, reforms in Nigerian constitutions have seen the passing of laws that protect the right of women in the country. However, these laws are not fully enacted because customary and religious laws are still upheld in some states in the country which leads to a conflict of interest.

7.2. MOBILE PHONE BUSINESS

Over 90% of the interviewees are entrepreneurs with small scale businesses they engage in. In most cases these businesses serve as an additional source of income for the majority of the women because they have regular day jobs; however, for a few, their small businesses is their only source of income.

Economic researchers summarized the economic benefits of using mobile phones in microenterprises to a reduction in the cost of the transaction, increase in income and productivity

and enhancing market efficiency and competition (Donner and Escobari, 2010; Chew, Ilavarasan and Levy, 2015). On this note, this section will specifically be exploring the benefits of using a mobile phone in businesses. The benefits include: improve customer service, means of cheap publicity, mobile shop, and boosting productivity

1. Improve customer service: for the women with multiple jobs and businesses to run, one of the benefits of using their mobile phones in their businesses is that it makes it easier for them to plan and organize appointments. This can then be done at the convenience of both the client and the business owner. Appointments can be cancelled or rescheduled if the timing or circumstances are not right for either the service provider or client. Two of the participants shared how they are able to confirm or cancel appointments with clients, using their mobile phones. Rose a hair-dresser who owns her own hair salon stated that

As for my business, when a customer comes early in the morning and I'm not yet at the shop, they can call me and I'll hurry over. If I have an appointment with a customer, I can call them and remind them that I am available to make their hair. Maybe there is no light and they wanted to retouch their hair. I can call them when there is light and they'll come over to retouch their hair. I don't like my phone going off because of my customer. I have a generator in case there is no light to charge my phone.

Similarly, Eugenia has a similar experience with her mobile phone and her business.

At times I'll be in the office and I'll have a customer waiting for me in the shop the easiest way to get me is to call me. At times I'll fix an appointment for a certain time and I might just be so carried away with what I'm doing in the office, so, the best way to also contact me is just calling me or send me a reminder, I have an appointment with you for so so time. I could excuse myself if I'm less busy, go do my business.

Both women are engaged in the same kind of business; however, Eugenia has a main job and her hairdressing business is an added source of income. Nevertheless, for both women, they rely heavily on their mobile phone to organize and plan their business from day to day. Additionally,

having a mobile phone has made it easy for Rose and Eugenia to communicate with their customers which can lead to the establishment of a unique trust relationship between them and their clients. As Rose put it earlier, “..maybe there is no light and they wanted to retouch their hair. I can call them when there is light and they’ll come over to retouch their hair”. First of all, this kind of open communication between client and service provider contributes to bridging the gap of formality. I believe this kind of little ‘extra’ treatments encourages clients’ to be loyal because they believe that Rose is looking out for their interest by offering them cheaper services (electricity) instead of the expensive service (generator). This is very essential for small businesses that thrive on interactions and loyalty from clients.

2. Means of cheap publicity: often small business owners rely heavily on social media as an effective tool for publicizing their goods and services. And participants in this study highlighted that they employ the use of their mobile phones, social media, and WhatsApp to publicize their crafts and wares.

Question: DO YOU USE YOUR PHONE FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Louise: Yes, I do. Whenever I return from my journey, I call my customers and tell them I am back, and these are the items I have. In fact, most times, people send pictures of what they would like me to get for them and I try to get the items for them.

GIMBI: I do buy and sell (trading). I sew bedsheets and sell them to people....Because I sew bed sheets, I have to get in contact with my customers so any time I have new stock, I have to call them.... WhatsApp and Instagram are my phone’s frequently forms of communication. Because I get to put pictures of my bedsheets and market them.

Kike: I have a BBM channel for my business and 100 people have subscribed to the channel.

The observation of the women corroborates the finding in previous studies (Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christoloulides, 2011) conducted on the benefits of using social media for marketing, which suggests that social media has become a very important marketing tool, given its wide adoption by the public. Similarly, Qualman (2010) pointed out social media has transformed the way we do business. In his opinion, social media allows users to stay connected with their networks as well as keep them updated on products and services. Thus, instead of having to invest money that may not be available on hiring an advertising agency, the women can invest the money in something else such as the expansion of their business.

3. Mobile/ online shops: Another benefit of using the mobile phone and social media for business is that small-scale traders have been able to conduct their businesses without necessarily owning a shop. This is very cost-efficient. In other words, the mobile phone and social media allow people to conveniently operate their businesses from home thereby boycotting the extra expense of renting a shop and the money that would have been used to pay for rent could be invested into the expansion of the business. Having a mobile store also means that the business owner is more flexible and can process orders on the go. She is not bound by physical space to be able to conduct her business. The mobile phone serves as a useful tool that allows women that have been restricted by religious practices from going out to the market to comfortably engage in their business without necessarily defaulting any religious laws. As noted by women empowerment scholars, a financially empowered woman is less likely be dependent on her husband for everything and she is more likely to input on the decision making processes that affect not only her wellbeing but the wellbeing of the people around her, like her children (Mayoux, 2001). This is the case as noted in Hadiza's story of the bean-cake seller in her community. It might not be much but according to Hadiza, despite the

restriction and how little the woman's financial freedom might be, she has been able to secure education for her children, thereby opening them to the possibility of a better future.

4. Boost productivity: there are many ways the mobile phone can help in boosting productivity. For Fumbi the medical doctor, being able to find a common ground on which she could establish a relationship with her patients can be considered as increasing productivity. As she put it,

In my career where I have to talk to a lot of different people from various works of life, it always helps to have a common ground with them. So, when your knowledge base is broad it helps to relate with them. You can share common knowledge of their background and so forth. Then you'll have an open ground and the person gets comfortable enough to share their problems with you.

Fumbi explained that with her internet-enabled phone, she is able to read up different things online as well as read up on the cultural background of her patients. Basically, for her being able to connect with her patients helps her effectively do her job. Other participants shared how mobile phones have increased their work efficiency by giving them access to emails even while they are on the field.

Kayjay: On Mondays, I do work plans when it's my turn to do them. When I'm done with the work plan, I transfer it to my phones and send them to everybody via email.

Gimbi: In my daily job, if you and colleagues are going to the field and need to go different directions, it helps to keep track of what your colleagues are doing even though you aren't together.

Faye: I get to and receive emails, WhatsApp colleagues, I don't have to carry my laptop around.

From the narratives above, it seems obvious that the women have substituted their laptops for mobile phones. This is probably because of the attributes of the device that makes it portable, handy and a lot less heavy than a laptop.

7.3. MOBILE BANKING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Studies (such as Wandibba, Nangendo and Mulemi, 2012; Morawczynski, 2009) show that mobile financial services promote financial inclusion amongst women. A case study on the role of M-PESA² in empowering poor women in Kenya shows that having access to these services have caused a shift in the home dynamics. This is in the sense that women are no longer relegated to the traditional roles of reproductively and home maintainers while men are providers and controllers of everything that is financially related. With the introduction and adoption of mobile financial services, more women have been empowered to share the role of providing for the family (Wandibba, Nangendo and Mulemi, 2012). Additionally, women are empowered to engage in income generation and management activity. In cases where women are already involved in financial management activities such as payment of bills and purchasing supplies for the homes, mobile financial services enable them to do so more efficiently. Just like the women in Kenya, the participants made a similar observation. Some of the participants shared how having access to mobile banking (m-banking) has helped in reducing the stress in hassle involved in going to the bank and possibly queueing for long periods of time.

Eugenia: talking about mobile banking the stress of going to bank if I want to make transactions, probably I want to send money to somebody is something I can just sit in the comfort of my home and just type digits and that is all. But when you talk about going to the bank, you know the stress of taking transport going to the bank, seeing lots of queues, very frustrating, of course, it has saved me all of that stress..

² M-PESA a mobile financial service was introduced into the market by Safaricom, Kenya's largest mobile operator in March of 2007. The application facilitates a variety of financial transactions through the mobile phone. Users can check their account balance, make deposits and withdrawals, pay bills, purchase mobile phone credit, and transfer money to other users.

One of the participants expressed how her reservations about m-banking changed after an incident that left her without television subscription; she expressed regret about not subscribing to the m-banking services when her bank offered her the chance to do so.

Mrs A: You don't have to go to the bank. You can sit in the comfort of your house to pay bills, transfer money and so on. For example, one time, I was at home watching an interesting program, and then my TV subscription just expired. I was sad and I kept saying to myself, "had it been I had this app (mobile banking) on my phone, I would have just easily paid and not stressed myself. I have decided that in this New Year, I would explore my phone more.

From the narratives above, having access to m-banking has empowered the women in the sense that they are able to coordinate with ease, payment of bills and manage their time and resources effectively by avoiding unnecessary queuing. The ability to do all of the above changes the structure of women depending on men to handle financial related matters. In place of dependency, women are more likely to become more confident and have increased bargaining power in the home.

7.4. CONCLUSION

As pointed out in the literature review by Page and Czuba (1991) there is more than one definition of empowerment, and the definition and approach taken depends on the people involved. In this light, this chapter explored what empowerment means to the participating women. It also explored how patriarchy, poverty, prevalent illiteracy among women, overuse of available resources and lack of access to good infrastructure, culture and religious practices intersect to define the women's life experiences. As demonstrated above, none of the factors acts alone. It is either the act simultaneously or the aftermath of one lead to the other.

Furthermore, in this chapter, I observed that living in an urban area does not guarantee access to better infrastructure nor does it guarantee that women will be treated better; however, it is either the impact of the factors are not as heightened as rural areas or people in urban areas have found

better ways of coping with the deficiencies in the system. For example, to reduce the risk of infant and mother mortality rate at birth, families with the financial means send their wives abroad to give birth (this is not the only reason why people opt to bear children abroad). I guess the question is should we be coping with the system or changing the system? This is what empowerment means to feminist scholars. It involves changing the systems that do not work for marginalized as opposed to finding ways to cope with systems. Empowerment in this context also means knowing that as a woman, it is within your right to demand and take more than the society is willing to offer and it is at this juncture that we are expected to go against all odds to break every barrier of limitations.

Different societies adopt different measures suitable for them to overcome poverty and the barriers to gender equality. For the women in this study, it is having multiple sources of income. In my opinion, every challenge or barrier against women empowerment and gender inequality is designed to keep women in poverty and total dependent on men. Women in this state are mostly exposed to bullying, violence and marginalization both in the home and the society. Therefore, in a bid to overcome poverty and its resulting consequences, the participants are investing in having multiple sources of income. As established in the chapter, having multiple sources of income increases the financial status of the women, which in turn increases their status in their families and probably their society. On the same note, since the women are financially buoyant enough purchase and finance their phones, they get to make decisions on how they use their phones. The ability to make decisions is limited only to their mobile phone use, but also all other areas of their lives and their children.

At this juncture, one question that comes to mind at this point is, considering that the majority of the participants have seemingly checked all the personal boxes (educated, employed/ business owners) are they absolutely free from the oppression and marginalization? The answer is no. This

is because achieving women empowerment take a lot more than individual efforts, it requires both individual efforts and collective efforts of society doing away with institutions and statutes that limit women productivity. It also includes the promotion of laws and bills that protect women rights. It further includes doing away with religious and customary laws and practices that diminish women status and encourage gender biases in general. Until these changes are effected, women in Nigeria will never be fully empowered. Yes, they are able to attain financial stability and independence, however, this does not guarantee full empowerment as a situation may present itself in which money cannot protect them.

CHAPTER 8: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.0. INTRODUCTION

Jay, one of the participants summarized how important mobile phones are to human beings in this simple sentence “without phones, our lives will be boring”. Mobile phones have become so interwoven into almost every fabric of human existence that it is almost impossible to imagine life without it. This study initially set out to (to some extent) replicate the 2010 GSMA studies on women’s use of mobile phones in developing countries around the world. However, some of the differences of this research (from the outset) to that conducted by the GSMA are that this study employs a solely qualitative and feminist approach to research, using semi structured interviews as its main methods of data collection. In particular, this study initially aimed to explore how women in Nigeria adopt and use their mobile phones for personal empowerment.

However, in the process of undertaking the study, it became apparent that the women were primarily interested in using their mobile phones for building and maintaining social networks and contacts. This discovery, along with the advice from my supervisors to keep an open mind and be led by the data, resulted in a change of focus in the project to explore more generally how women in Nigeria use their mobile phones, and what this means to them. In order to achieve this, the following objectives for the project were set out: to explore what the women use mobile phones for and what this means to them; to consider the economic and social benefits that women stand to gain from owning and using mobile phones; and to determine social factors and barriers that may affect women’s acquisition and use of mobile phones in Nigeria.

8.1. SUMMARY OF THE WORK

The first research objective was, therefore, to explore women use mobile phones for and what this means to them? This study categorized the women's use of mobile phone into three main categories: communicating, education and skill acquisition, and general uses. In the case of communication, women primarily use their phones to keep in touch with their families, friends, and kin. While there is no definite general preference for texts or calls, some women acknowledge that they preferred voice calls because it allows them to ensure that the intended message is received by the recipient. Other women indicated a preference for text messaging because it is cheaper for them. With regards to education and skill acquisition, this study points out that government and NGOs are adopting the use of mobile phones as useful tools in providing informal learning to people. The participants in the study highlighted that they visited YouTube channels and Instagram to learn a skill. For example, how to make beads, how to cook a dish, how to decorate a home, and how to braid hair. As pointed out in Chapter 5, none of the participants made reference to accessing health or reproductive educational material through their phones. As for general uses, the women highlighted that they use their phones to access their work emails, store CVs for impromptu applications, and to entertain themselves. Also, participants observed that they engage in the use of applications such as bible apps, diaries, and google maps. Furthermore, this study highlighted other benefits of using mobile phones and these benefits, and these benefits typically revolve around the conveniences mobile phones afford the participants in their daily living. These conveniences include easy communication, quick access to information, accessibility in case of emergency, and a sense of security and safety.

The second objective of the study is to consider the economic and social benefits that women stand to gain from owning and using mobile phones. This study argues that women are more interested

in the social benefits than what they stand to gain economically. More importantly, some of the women in this study have been able to exploit their social networks for their social and economic benefit. This study also points out that through mobile phones, the participating women, especially married women, are able to maintain ties with their families, communities, and old friends. This study also emphasized the importance of maintaining familial social capital for both the women and their birth families. The argument is that for the women, they do not feel left out or cut off from their families, and for the families, they do not feel like they have lost a daughter to marriage. Thus, this, to an extent, supports the arguments of scholars (such as, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe, 2007; Halpern 2005) who advocate the positive influence of new communication technologies on social capital. The summary of their argument is that newer communication technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, and social networking sites, supplement older forms of socialising (Mayoux, 2001), enhance social capital (Schaub, 2012; Vancea and Olivera's 2013), and supplements community (Yang et al, 2011; Haythornthwaite and Wellman, 2002).

In addition to the benefits of being able to maintain old ties, this study notes that mobile phones also expose women to a wider network community than they would have otherwise had access to, thereby increasing the amount of support they can get when the need arises. To support this argument, this study shared the experiences of some of the participants who were members of online communities on social networking sites, and in particular women-based communities, and how they deliberately seek out these kinds of communities in order to connect with other women that may have similar experiences as them. Another social benefit that the mobile phone gives is constant access to information. Information is power and over time, and studies (such as Jensen, 2007; Komunte, Rwashana and Nabukenya, 2012) have shown that having access to the right kind of information can expand a person's world of possibility. Likewise, this study has highlighted

some of the opportunities people tend to be exposed to including, new job opportunities, security-related information, changes in market prices, and news updates on national and world politics. Subsequently, this study also pointed out the role mobile phones play in enabling women to effectively manage and organize their businesses and personal lives. It highlights that with a phone, women are able to run businesses without having a physical business space and conduct business transactions without necessarily physically meeting with the person they are transacting with. The benefit of this is that it brings extra income into the home and increases the status of the woman in the family. Another benefit of this is that women who are restricted in movement due to religious or cultural restrictions are able to run businesses and earn a living without defaulting on their religious or cultural beliefs.

The third objective of the study is to determine social factors and barriers that may affect women's acquisition and use of mobile phones in Nigeria. To answer this objective, this study explored the factors that limit women's acquisition and use of mobile phones. The study also argued that these factors include patriarchy, poverty, prevalent illiteracy amongst women, lack of access to good infrastructure, and how culture and religious practices may intersect to define the women's life and mobile experiences. In this research it has been observed that living in an urban area does not guarantee an escape from the social factors that could potentially inhibit women's mobile experience, rather what is probably obtainable from living in an urban area is the possibility of these factors being better managed by the government or that women in urban cities are typically better equipped to cope with the situation.

8.2. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.

This thesis, like all research, has both strengths and limitations. First, the number of participants may be considered by some to be relatively small. This particular limitation may also suggest for

some that the findings cannot be generalized to a wider population; thus, it has to be interpreted cautiously. However, the underpinning methodology provides a robust rationale for such a sample and also a justification that there is no rule of thumb to the amount of interview that is “enough”; as Baker and Edwards (2012) succinctly put it, the number depends on the study. This study was not specifically designed to evaluate the quantity or necessarily to be representative of a particular population, but rather to provide insights into an important but significantly under-researched area and group. This study also acknowledges that the participants are not necessarily a representative of all women in Nigeria, thus they cannot form a wider representation of all Nigerian women or women in the world. In particular, most of the participants are young to middle-aged women, living in an urban city, and have been exposed to at least secondary school education (mostly, higher education). The participants are mostly employed with businesses of their own and most if not all of the participants are not originally indigenes of the state – and their reasons for relocation include family, marriage, business or education.

As for the chosen research method, others can debate that using a different method, such as a quantitative or mixed method approach would have brought different, and more valid, findings. However, the strength of the chosen method is that it allowed the gathering of deep and rich perspective that are peculiar to the participants. This methodological approach is crucial in this respect, as it provided detail narratives that could be analysed in-depth and to provide insights into their lives and life choices.

8.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For future research, it may be of benefit to explore this study in other regions of the country. Also, the same study could be replicated in rural regions to understand if women in rural areas share similar experiences and meaning with their phones as women urban areas. In other words, it is

worth exploring the experiences of women from different geographical, social and economic backgrounds to know to what extent these factors affect their experiences.

8.4. REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

8.4.1. How I got into the study

Some background into what inspired this study has been provided in the introductory chapter. As mentioned in the first chapter, this research was influenced by a study conducted by the GSMA and the Cherie Blair Foundation in 2010. The GSMA study was particularly interested in the mobile gender gap in some low and middle-income countries in South America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East (GSMA, 2011). Nigeria was not one of the case studies, but I considered repeating the study but using a more in-depth approach. I wanted to know if the findings were going to be the same. I guess this was the thinking of the traditional (non-feminist) researcher within me. So, the question here is, how I ended up becoming a feminist researcher?

I have not always been a feminist researcher. My first study was a quantitative study and that was my undergraduate project. My second study, which was my Masters dissertation was a mixed method approach, though more of quantitative than qualitative. So, I was hoping, or should I say I thought this study was going to be qualitative or at best, mixed method. So, here I am in my first year trying to get used to being a PhD student in the first place and I must say was a bit overwhelming. I cannot express my feelings on paper, but I will try. At first, I was excited to be on this journey and it was because I never anticipated that I would be here at all. I was excited about my research because women doing research is very rare in Nigeria. I was also worried about not being able to find literature on Nigeria. Then I got excited to be contributing to this under-researched area. Sometimes, I panicked and worried that I might not be able to actually do it, that something might happen along the way and I will not be able to finish the study. I worried that

because my educational background was in Nigeria, my supervisors would not understand what I am all about. This made me work hard and worry more. But my supervisors always said to me, just write. Keep writing. That is the only way you can get it done. So, I wrote.

It was a few days to my interim assessment and I started to realise that my study was most likely a feminist study. I had no clue what a feminist study was? I was trying hard not to panic so much. I read about it, wrote a bit about it. I just had my interim assessment and so many questions were asked about feminist research. I answered what I could, and I had to tell them I was just catching up on that research approach. My examiners were kind enough to let me off the hook and suggest materials for me to explore.

8.4.2. The struggle with feminisms approaches. Bearing in mind that I am from a background where feminism is not celebrated.

So, I began to realise what I was doing, and what I wanted to do, was feminist research. This was an unexpected turn for me, and I struggled a bit with this. There are two major reasons why I struggled. Firstly, because I already had an idea of how I wanted my study to go. Once again, the positivistic side of me was in charge. I planned to replicate the GSMA study with little or no (if possible) changes and hoped to get the same results. Therefore, as study started going in a feminist direction was a major turn of events for me that I did not anticipate. At this junction, I must add that my supervisor always said to me and I quote, “do not be too rigid in your study. It is important to let it develop organically. If you do, you might just discover that you will end up with a study that is totally different from what you initially set out to find”. I never understood what he meant, nor did I like that possibility. Secondly, I struggled because where I come from, feminism has not yet been embraced. Identifying as a feminist meant attracting attention to yourself and not the right kind of attention. I was not prepared to have that kind of attention and I was more worried about

what my family would think of me. So, I came up with a plan: to do a feminist study but not be a feminist. In other words, detach myself from the study and feminist ideologies. The flaw in that plan is that it goes against everything feminist study stands for, and as I later found out, it is impossible to successfully conduct feminist research without becoming one.

At this junction, I was at a crossroad. On one hand, I was genuinely interested in telling the mobile stories of the Nigerian woman. I had come to the point where I had become excited and was looking forward to where the research would lead me. On the other hand, I was torn between assuming a new identity that is unfamiliar to me. I knew there was no way I could effectively conduct feminist research without understanding what it meant for me, and the study as well. First of all, I realized that I needed to know how my family would react to me conducting feminist research. So, in one of my calls to parents, I casually slipped it in that my study has taken a turn and is now a feminist study and it did not seem to matter to my parents, though my sister, expressed some scepticism. So, all that was left was for me to figure out what this meant for me and my study. At this point, I began researching with more interest what feminism meant for me and my study and this led me to figure out the intersecting factors that affect my positionality in the study as well as the positionality the researched.

8.4.3. Interviewing “my own people”: Insider-outsider

In this section, I will explore how I was able to manage my positionality in the field across multiple divides of power and social differences. Also, in this section, I will specifically explore how I managed the researcher-participant power dynamics and the epistemological approach I employed to ensure that the research volunteers (participants) understanding and interpretation of what the mobile phone and empowerment mean to them were accurately represented.

Just before I embarked on the fieldwork, I became increasingly aware of the potential power dynamics that could affect the outcome of the study. At first, I thought that the fact that I was obviously Nigerian (one of them) and was born in that town will make it easier for the women to be comfortable around me, thus encouraging them to share their stories with me. However, that was not entirely the case. Granted, I can say I have an idea of what life could be for the women, but I have been away for a while, things might have changed. For every time I had to introduce my research to any participant and I mentioned that it was being studied in the United Kingdom, I sensed withdrawal on the side of some of the participating women. Also, during the course of the interviews, sentences like “you’re abroad so it is different for you” kept reoccurring. I did not really like that. I wanted them to see me as one of them, after all, I am (or was) one of them, so I thought. But that was not the case. This made me increasingly aware of the power dynamics between me and the participants, and in particular two things. First of all, as much as I would like to think and present myself as the same as the women I was interviewing, I was not, at least not at that point in time. At that point in time, the women saw me as the person who has been privileged to escape the socio-economic hardship of the country, who was living the good life abroad and probably has no clue what life back home was like. The second thing I realized is that the women were to some extent right and that if I carried on as I was, I would most likely end up with responses that were unreal and not a true reflection of what the women thought and how they felt. Therefore, I resolved that if I could obviously not change my positionality, I could at least change their perception of me. So, I shared more of my home stories and as much as possible left out information about my life in the United Kingdom. Also, I changed the way I introduced my research. I mentioned that it was an ongoing school project and most times it seemed like the women just assumed that I was a student at the Federal University in the town. That the women

were not aware that it was an ‘international school’ project I felt made them more relaxed in their interviews. They did not mind voicing how they felt. They were less afraid of sounding unintelligent, and as such, were more of themselves. Another thing I observed was that the participants were more willing to share their opinion, thoughts and experiences when the interview went in a conversational style. During the course of the interview I discovered that the more I put myself out there, that is, when I shared my stories and experiences with the women they were more likely to open up to me and share theirs as well. In other words, as much as I wanted to hear their stories, they also wanted to hear mine. This made the interview go smoother and develop organically. This supports Hastrup’s (1992) opinion that stipulates that “a researcher is positioned by her/his gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, and so on, as well as by her/his biography, all of which may inhibit or enable (as the case might be in my study) certain research method insights in the field” (cited in, England, 1994:249). Also, Lober (2011) argues that when researchers construct patterns of social reality from the daily experiences of the participants they do it from the standpoint of their own social reality and even if the researcher and the participants are of the same gender, they probably would differ in their past or present social location. In other words, even though the researcher in this study, like most of her participants is a young Nigerian woman, her experiences and social reality are not entirely the same as that of her participants. Thus the researcher is mindful of this throughout the study process.

Upon reflection of the data collection process, I noticed that in conversations with the participants, I drew on my inner status so much so that it would seem like I was compensating for my outsider status. In other words, it felt like I had to work hard at proving to the women that I was one of them and that my “privileged status” made no difference. This supports the argument of Meriam et al (2010) that power dynamics of the interview process is negotiated by the interviewer, the

interviewee and the culturally embedded interview context constructed by both. For example, one of the participants, Salamatu said she thought “it was inappropriate and imbalanced to be researching only women’s use of technology because everybody uses it, both men and women”. However, she appeared to be comfortable discussing this because it had to do with gender discrimination in Nigerian society.

8.4.4. Positionality while analysing the data

During the analysis process, it became apparent from the women’s narratives that it is more about the social benefits than the economic benefits, which is what I was hoping it would be. Often times, regardless of the questions asked, the narrative always seemed to steer back to the role mobile phones play in helping to maintain their relationships with family, friends, and kin and how these relationships have continuously provided support of various kinds when needed. Although this was not what I originally set out to find, it turned out that it was the story the women want to be told. So, after several coding and recoding attempts, it became apparent that social capital and social support networks were what was key for these women and to my study. Thus I set aside my original preconceived notions of the many economic benefits mobile phones could offer, and instead let the women’s stories and narratives speak about the important role mobile phones play in supporting them and linking them to friends and family; and it is through this that I learnt to be, and embrace, being a feminist researcher.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Do you have a mobile phone?
2. Discuss your opinion on women owning or having access to mobile phones.
 - What is your opinion of women owning and using phones
 - What is your opinion of men controlling women's phone use?
 - Do you think it is okay for men to control women's phone use and why?
3. Has owning a mobile phone affected your life?
 - In your business/job/career?
 - In your personal life?
4. Describe in your opinion, how your phone has affected or changed your life.
5. Are there any negative effects of owning and using a mobile phone?
6. Are there factors that limit your use of the mobile phone?
7. How have you dealt with them?

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interviewer: Tell me about yourself?

Interviewee: My name is Eugenia*. I live in Wusasa, Zaria. My highest level of education is Postgraduate Diploma in Education, National Teachers' Institute along Kaduna road. Yeah, I work at CGE (Centre for Girls' Education). I work as a mentor supervisor.

Interviewer: What do you do at CGE?

Interviewee: Our major obligations are to go to safe spaces, observe the safe space that is supervising both the mentor and the girls. Take reports, you write it and send. That's our major obligations. Of course we have other things that we do.

Interviewer: Do you have a mobile phone?

Interviewee: Yes I have a mobile phone.

Interviewer: What do you do with your mobile phone?

Interviewee: Hmm plenty. I make calls I send text messages, I do research on the internet. We send our reports, as I said we take our reports on the field. We send it every week. Ehm... Mobile banking, lots more.

Interviewer: What bank do you use?

Interviewee: First bank... Well, it has, it has positively, let me say it has affected me. Okay, talking about mobile banking the stress of going to bank if I want to make transactions, probably I want to send money to somebody is something I can just sit in the comfort of my home and just type digits and that is all. But when you talk about going to the bank, you know the stress of taking transport going to the bank, seeing lots of queues, very frustrating, of course, it has saved me all of that stress. Okay, I do business, I'm into the business. I have a salon. In Wusasa. I have a salon there. We fix, we retouch, we carve, makes-ups, light makeups not a deep one. Actually, its light makeups we do, we do fixing of nails and other stuff like sales of nails and other stuff like sales of weave-ons (hair extensions) and other things.

Interviewer: Do you go to the market to purchase your goods?

Interviewee: Yeah, I purchase them from the market.

Interviewer: What role does your phone play in your business, can you link your phone use to your business?

Interviewee: Let me link my business now to my calls. At times I'll be in the office and I'll have a customer waiting for me in the shop the easiest way to get me is to call me. At times I'll fix an appointment for a certain time and I might just be so carried away with what I'm doing in the office, so, the best way to also contact me is just calling me or send me a reminder, I have an appointment with you for so so time. I could excuse myself if I'm less busy, go do my business.

Interviewer: How about your personal life? Do you engage with any social media?

Interviewee: Yeah. facebook, twitter, WhatsApp. Which other one? Those are majorly the ones. Like I am a strong fan of Facebook. . And talking about Whatsapp, I can't do a day without chatting.

Interviewer: Who do you chat with?

Interviewee: Family, friends random all.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what are the benefits of owning a mobile phone?

Interviewee: Well, talking about the positive aspects, its aver y good one for a woman to own a mobile phone. Let's say, ladies. It is a very good thing. At least, you, at times you discovered that you don't, you'll be so carried away with so many things that you don't have time to visit people but the easiest way you could just [ehm] send out information or talk with family friends is through the social media. Talking about Whatsapp, let's assume my wedding is coming up and I have [ehm] sample of ashoebi girls I want to use, I could just create a group, send the information to my friends and loved ones and that has saved me making calls, travelling showing them the ashoebi and all of that. Okay, [ehm], another way is, as a lady, you, gone are the time ladies use ovation in picking up fashionable styles. Like looking good and all of that. These days you easily pick up your phone, google it and you're there. If I want to know the latest happenings in Lagos that just happened yesterday, maybe the grand wedding that everybody heard about, just google it and you're there. It makes things easier. It makes you get easy information. Now talking about the negative aspects of it. As a lady, it exposes us to so things, so many negative things. Negative thing in the sense that, you

discover that a lady is having [ehm], a Whatsapp, you discover that out of like, okay thanks to Whatsapp now that one has to have a mobile number before you can chat with that person so it means if that person doesn't have a mobile number that person might not be able to chat with you. But talking about Facebook, somebody will just see you and who you may know and before you know it you're friends with that person. The person will send you a request. Probably you might think this person should just be, okay let me just accept this person and before you know it the person will end up being somebody that you might not like his kind of person. In the sense that probably you're a very secure type, you don't talk much and meeting someone that is very raw, very raw, you meet such people and you discover that the person is just telling you all sort of trash that a point you start getting pissed off. Secondly the way they're doing the Facebook these days, honestly, it is not born again at all. I was going through my Facebook just some days back, seeing pictures like "he exposed her... He exposed her after having sex with her, he did that after. You know you just see some kind of useless pictures, videos, and you just discover you just don't have an option you're just seeing them. You must know. So that is just some of the things I'm talking about. And some people are so addicted when it comes to chatting that they forget other responsibilities they should be doing. Responsibilities like I place food on the fire and I'm chatting and that food probably is indomie and is supposed to spend 10 mins on the fire and I'm chatting I was carried away for 30 mins. Maybe the only thing is that until she starts perceiving something is burning. Now comparing it to a young lady that is newly married and she's so addicted to chatting and that thing happened and probably as she was perceiving the smell her husband just comes. What is she portraying, it has started already and if she doesn't call herself to order, it continues, like subsequently, it happens like before you know it starts creating issues. With the economic recession, no man would want you burning his food. That is just the truth. If you burn the first one, he could let it slide, the same for second and third but by the fourth, he might be forced to speak up one day.

Interviewer: But is it really the phone's problem and not a case of user misuse?

Interviewee: No, I'm talking about how it affects us. On a good day, she could adjust herself and talk to herself that this is not what I should be doing but being that she's so addicted and carried away, so addicted. But comparing it to when her husband gets her a Nokia torchlight, tell me

how she can chat? She won't spend so much time chatting on her phone of which most might be gossip.

Interviewer: Do you have any limitations with your phone?

Interviewee: I would love to be able to do more of my office work on my phone. We do a lot of excel and Microsoft word but it is not just interesting doing it on my phone. There are some things you would want to do but you search and can't find but on the system, you can easily get them.

Interviewer: Do you think it is necessary or important for women to own and use phones?

Interviewee: It is necessary and very important depending on how they use it. Generally, I see a phone as a means of communication and not a means to corrupt ourselves or do things that are not right. We should allow our phones to take too much of our time or giving our phones too much of attention. I have seen couples even at the point of sleeping time, the wife or the husband will still be chatting. We shouldn't just allow it to overwhelm us, everything has a limit so we should use phones with a limit.

APPENDIX 3: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Names	Age	Occupation	Highest level of education
EUGENIA	27		Bachelors degree
GIMBI	26	Postgraduate student, small business owner (Makes bedspreads) and office assistant	Bachelors degree
Nafis	27	Trader and office assistant	Bachelors degree
May	36	Research supervisor	Degree
Kayjay	31	Research assistant and part-time lecturer	Bachelors degree
Rose	35	Small business owner (Hairdresser)	Diploma
Faye	30	consultant	Masters
Alisha	25	Lawyer	L.L.B
Shade	31	Small business owner and consultant	Bachelors degree
Zainab	31	Research assistant and poultry farmer	Postgraduate Diploma in Education
Fumbi	34	Medical Doctor	

Madam A	36	Student and housewife	Secondary school leaving certificate
Madam J.	35	Nurse	Bachelors
Constance	25	Student and apprentice hairdresser	Secondary school leaving certificate
Mummy M.	50	Small business owner	Diploma
Kike	28	Office Administrator	Bachelors
Hadiza	28	Research consultant	Masters
Jay	29	Postgraduate student	Bachelors
Salamatu	31	Pastry baker	Bachelors
Bola	29	Banker and Postgraduate student	Masters
Lydia	32	Postgraduate student and businesswoman	Bachelors
Mercy	29	Postgraduate student, businesswoman	Bachelors

APPENDIX 4: MAP OF NIGERIA PIN-POINTING KADUNA



APPENDIX 5: ETHICAL APPROVAL



Research, Innovation and Academic
Engagement Ethical Approval Panel

Research Centres Support Team
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University of Salford
M5 4WT

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24 March 2017

Dear Camilla,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION–HSR1617-59–‘A Study of Women's Adoption and Use of Mobile Phone in Nigeria.’

Based on the information you provided I am pleased to inform you that application HSR1617-59 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/or its methodology, then please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting Health-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue McAndrew".

Sue McAndrew
Chair of the Research Ethics Panel

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