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Parental Perceptions of Family Communication Within the Context of Modern Technology

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Abstract

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Technology

by

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Abstract

The increasing dependence or reliance on the usage of technology to connect with each other is influencing family communication today. Face-to-face family communication is becoming more and more devalued. Considering the value of family communication, parents should play the most important role of sustaining it to enhance family relationship. Using the family systems theory as a foundation, the purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand parental experiences concerning family communication within the context of modern technology. This study used purposeful sampling and semi-structured interviews from 7 U.S. citizens, men and women aged 30-55, from St Lucie County, Florida. The research question focused on the perceptions and experiences of parents concerning the influence of technology on family communication. A questionnaire was used to collect the required data. Data were analyzed using MAXQDA software. The results of the study are organized by theme, and each theme relates to the perceptions and experiences of parents of family communication within modern technology. Each theme has both positive and negative effects on family communication, as well as their social skills, communication skills, and relationship-cultivating skills. Further generic qualitative research into the area of effective family communication and how technology can be effectively implemented to narrow the gap between teens and adults in communication styles is recommended. Future research with a larger sample size should be conducted on how parents perceive technology to family communication. Findings in this study contribute to positive social change by introducing program modules with strategies for parents to learn the art of communication that would motivate teens to connect face-to-face, be more attuned to human contact, and less addicted to technological devices.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving God, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. My parents have never left my side and are very special. I also dedicate this dissertation to my many friends like Jonathan D. Willard, David Yetter, and church family who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my best friend Marie H. Joseph (wife) and my 12 wonderful children for being there for me throughout the entire doctorate program. All of you have been my best cheerleaders.

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I would like to acknowledge and thank my school division for allowing me to conduct my research and providing any assistance requested. A special thanks to all the participants who agreed to contribute their times and life experiences to make my dream possible. Thank you everyone for your excitement and willingness to provide feedback made the completion of this research an enjoyable experience.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Technology is a tool that contemporary society uses to communicate, educate, and entertain (Menshikov, Lavrinenko, Sinica, & Simakhova, 2017; Stephens & Barrett, 2016). For example, 73% of the population in the United States has reported sending and receiving messages via Short Message Service (SMS; Stephens & Barrett, 2016). Technology is quickly changing modern economic processes at the micro and macro levels, automating and upgrading all areas of national economies such as the provision of services and the production of goods (Menshikov et al., 2017). Information and communication technologies are erasing geographical distances and borders for family communication (Menshikov et al., 2017). Many new tools for the transmission, storage, and exchange of information across great distances are being developed such as search engines, wikis, content advisors, information aggregators, groupware, tagging, mapping, meta tags, and cloud collaboration (Menshikov et al., 2017). Other information gathering and sharing platforms on the Internet such as blogs and news portals, podcasting, social networks, and Rich Site Summary feeds (RSS-feeds) are also changing common and well-established concepts of communication and cooperation (Menshikov et al., 2017). Information and communication technologies are advancing and influencing the ways in which a family interacts. However, the rapid progression of technology is complex and makes it difficult to observe technology's influences and to assess whether family relations are being affected in positive or negative ways.

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand parental experiences concerning family communication within the context of modern technology.

Researchers have found that quality communication is a vital part of a healthy

relationship, and is needed to nurture intimate relationships (Sciascia, Clinton, Nason,

James, & Rivera-Algarin, 2013). These researchers have also found that the lack of

quality communication in a family can be detrimental to family relationships (Janjani,

Momeni, & Mohammad Reza Saidi. 2017; Sciascia et al., 2013), resulting in divorce,

teenage suicide, and misbehaving children (Vieira, 2015). Alessondra (2013) agreed that

while technology is a convenient tool for conversation sharing worldwide, it can also

adversely affect family communication.

The aim of this study was to contribute to the existing body of literature regarding

parental experiences with the use of modern communication platforms and the influences

on the quality of effective communication within the family unit. Chapter 1 is organized

into the following sections: background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the

study, research questions, theoretical foundation, conceptual framework, nature of the

study, definitions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and

summary and transition. The participants for this study will include parents of children

between ages 12 through 17. Participants were drawn from the population of St. Lucie

County in Florida.

Background of the Study

Burns and Pearson (2011) researched family communication. The study was

performed utilizing three different environments and seeing how those environments

affected communication and family satisfaction. This quantitative research showed the

effects that environments have on family communication and satisfaction in everyday

talk. The article also shed light into the differences of family dynamics and the variables that make communication within family a unique endeavor.

Hertlein (2012) summarized the work of technology from 2000 through 2014 in the lives of families. It emphasized that 72% of US citizens over the age of three used the Internet while 60% of children from ages 7-17 have used their own cell phones. Approximately 58% of married couples have one computer or more in the house. Twenty percent of Americans played games via social networking sites; three quarters of households spent time in computer video gaming with approximately 57% of people reporting spending 3-7 hours texting per day. This quantitative research stated that only 0.0063% of articles published in couple and family therapy journals, between 1996 and 2010 discussed the use of technology. When it came to couples and family scholars, the theories published have been very limited in application. Hertlein described how technology influenced the way couples and families established rules, roles, and boundaries and how they interacted with one another and the outside world. This article furnished a multitheoretical model that was based on three theories that moved beyond a presentation of specific problems associated with Internet usage such as online infidelity, porn usage, and cyber violence.

Lanigan (2009) emphasized the influence that the modern technologies of information and communication have on the lives of families, communities, and individuals. Lanigan reported on the rapid advancement of the information and communication technologies. Lanigan also reported on multifunctional technological devices such as computers, cell phones, and personal digital assistants that have the

capability for fundamental impacts. It was reported that 90% of modern technology users carry wireless devices. Computers and cellular devices are used at the highest level of function. The article reported that a computer could be found in 61% of the households in America, and 87% of them have some kind of Internet access. Lanigan talked about four components that played a role in how information communication technologies affected a family's life. These components were individual traits, extra-familial influences, technology characteristics, and family factors. Many prominent family researchers have called for more studies concerning the effects of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on family life, in order to advance knowledge and understanding of the effects. This article's focus was to examine the literature related to the impact of ICTs on families and propose a sociotechnological family model that not only encompassed existing technology but also provided a framework for understanding yet to be developed technologies. This quantitative research had an online survey that was completed by 97 families. The findings showed that 68% of participants said computer use increased the sense of connection to friends and family. One third of participants said that email encouraged more frank communication. This study differs from my proposed study in methodology and population.

Lindberg, Nilsson, Zotterman, Söderberg, and Skär (2013) used this quantitative research to review other articles that used ICT in the home care field for communication between patients, family members, and healthcare professionals. The results showed that interest in information communication technology in home care had expanded from 2007-2009; no current results were shown.

Medici and Herritt (2014) studied effective communication; effective communication is the key to keeping families happy and healthy. The focus of that study was that family members became professionals in communication. This quantitative research showed that effective communication can be very challenging; however, it was the accomplishment of every interaction both professionally and personally. Communication was very important for it gave structure and sustainability to family wealth. The researchers found that family communication was also very complicated through relationships and history when checking for positive and negative effects. Interactions among family members over the years have had an effect on subsequent interactions both inside and outside the family. This article offered ways to manage technology on family communication by self-listening. It encouraged the careful use of electronic communication such as text or email, by noting careful attention should be taken to avoid messages that trigger emotions. The researchers found that 65% of what a family member said was nonverbal. The article's main focus was to see what the effects of technology on family communication were. The difference between this study and my proposed study is that this study was about effective communication to sustain family wealth, while my study is about the perspective of parents on family communication in modern technology.

Rudi, Dworkin, Walker, and Doty (2015) used a quantitative methodology to provide information on how parents used technology and communication technologies when it came to family communication. The authors talked about communication interactions of parents with children via technology. They acknowledged that family

communication had expanded the use of social and mobile media devices and communication formats like text message, email, facebook, and videoconferencing services such as Skype. Information and communication technologies offer families various formats for collaboration, information exchange, and spending time together. The authors emphasized the importance of family relationships. They acknowledged the lack of information on parents using technologies, for little is known about which technologies parents use to communicate with specific family members, their children, their children's other parents, and extended family members for parenting purposes. My study's methodology differs from this study's methodology.

Salvatore, Clinton, Nason, James, and Rivera-Algarin (2013) wrote about family communication and innovativeness within the context of family firms or companies. This quantitative research had many variables that can influence how communication can or will be conducted within different family structures and or environments. The article had four valuable contributions to add to the literature: (a) strong theoretical basis to differentiate within the family firm's population in terms of innovativeness, (b) shedding new light on how family involvement may influence innovativeness, (c) building a bridge between the communication literature and the family's business field that may guide future researchers, and (d) implement a trans-level unit of analysis by considering communication at the family's level and innovativeness at the firm's level.

St. George (2008) talked about the effectiveness of technology on family communication. This quantitative research reported that technology did not cause weakness in family life. Rather, families have compensated for the stress and hurry of

modern life with cell phone calls, e-mail and text messages, and other new forms of communication. Sixty percent of adults reported that the new technologies have no effect on the closeness of their families, while 25% of them stated that cellular phones and online communication made their families closer. The findings of this research were based on a nationally representative poll of 2,252 people, which explored technology's use and profiled a group of 482 adults who were living with minor children. My study differs from this study by population and methodology. My participants were drawn from the population of St. Lucie County in Florida. The group as between 8-12 parents who have children between the ages of 12-17. I conducted face-to-face interviews as the form of data collection.

Xiao and Stanton (2011) provided information on parents' perceptions regarding adolescent communication within families. This quantitative research emphasized the important communication between parents and children. It acknowledged that problematic communication between parents and children was a risk factor for adolescent psychosocial adjustment. Adolescents who have open communication with their parents engaged in less sexual risk-taking behaviors. There was a better relationship between parents and children with open communication because it served as a protective factor for children against the development of depression and anxiety and engagement in antisocial activities. Participants of that study were about 336 inner city low-income African American parent-youth dyads participating in a community-based randomized controlled violence prevention effectiveness trial in an eastern metropolitan city. At the time of survey, there were 193 males and 143 females, youths of 9 through 15 years of age.

However, the focus of that quantitative study was to bring parents and children to the knowledge that open communication was the key for a better relationship amongst family members. That study's methodology and population was different from my proposed study's methodology and population.

Problem Statement

Family communication is becoming more and more devalued by an increasing dependence or reliance on the usage of technology (Burns, & Pearson, 2011; Hertlein, 2012; Leonardi, 2013; Lindberg et al., 2013). Technology has proven to be an essential tool if it is used effectively. It has the potential to accomplish many things, including nurturing relationships within families, friendships, and business environments (Lanigan, 2009). As of 2015, 93% of married couples with children below the age of 18 have a computer in their homes, 94% have reported going online from home, and 95% of married couples are using cell phones (Rudi, Dworkin, Walker, & Doty, 2015). According to Hertlein (2012), 72% of United States citizens over the age of three use the Internet while 60% of children from ages 7-17 have personal cell phones. Approximately 20% of Americans play games via social networking sites. The utilization of technology in America today influences family communication as technology has become a necessary tool in connecting to each other (Hertlein, 2012).

Technology is important in family life and family communication. From an ecological perspective, technological advances affect the types of goods purchased, how many families have access to these goods, and how some local families contribute to the local economy through the provision and selling of goods they produce (Edwards, 2015).

Technological advances have changed the way people live their lives. They have changed how people shop for goods and services, how people learn, and even how people read. These are just a few of the specific activities that have been affected by technology (Edwards, 2015; Huisman, Edwards, & Catapano, 2012). The increased usage of technology can impact family communication and is affecting the emotional and social development of the new generation with the result of increasing suicides, social ineptitude, divorce, and behavioral challenges (Gardner, 2010; Casey, 2012; Lindberg, Nilsson, Zotterman, Söderberg, & Skär, 2013; Leonardi, 2013; Syairah & Syairah, 2013; Rosen, 2014).

Although the aforementioned researches regarding the use of technology in family communication illuminate important findings, I have found no research that has examined the influence of technology on family communication from the perspective of parents. Given such, further research is warranted that could help fill this lack of research. In this study, I intended to fill an existing gap in the current literature regarding the perceptions of parents on technology's influence on family communication

Purpose of the Study

Communication is a vital part of a healthy relationship, and it is needed to nurture intimate relationships (Sciascia et al., 2013). A lack of quality communication in a family can be detrimental with the effects of divorce, teenage suicide, and misbehaving children (Sciascia et al., 2013; Vieira, 2015). While technology is a convenient tool for sharing conversation worldwide, it can also affect family communication (Alessondra, 2013). The aim of the study was to contribute to the existing body of literature regarding

parental perceptions about technology that influences the quality of the effective

communication within the family unit

Research Question

What are the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the influence of

technology on family communication?

Theoretical Foundation

This study is founded on the family systems theory introduced by Bowen (1998),

which stipulated the emotional connection of families and how each member contributed

to each other's success or failure. This theory was developed over a lifetime of research

on families as an emotional unit (Hare, Canada, & Lim, 1998). Bowen acknowledged that

the family is a system where each member often played a role. He further stated that there

should be an obligation to the response of each other according to the role assigned by

relationship agreements (Kott, 2014). Family systems theory applies to this study in the

sense that with the evolution of technology, families have adapted the style of

individualism where each person is living in isolation from the strong family connection.

This theory will be applied to the present research to view parental perceptions of family

communication and family systems in the face of technology. The theory is the

foundational framework of this present research for dysfunctional communication

patterns in the family as well as functional patterns of relating called congruent

communication, which is a helpful way of communicating in families (Peters, 2014). This

theory is a demonstration of how an individual can approach personal family members

and deal with issues.

Nature of the Study

This study followed a qualitative paradigm with a generic study approach. Generic studies search for understanding of how people interpret, construct, or make meaning from their world and their experiences (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). The generic study approach helps researchers understand people and their behavior in a social, cultural, and economic context (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). The approach is relevant to my topic, in that, I conducted interviews and observe parents in St. Lucie County, FL to collect data to gain an understanding of their experiences of the effects of technology on family communication. With this group of participants, I also conducted reporting sessions of the data to further study the parents' different perspectives of the issue. A preliminary descriptive examination of the experiences of parents will be done. The generic study approach helps researchers understand people and their behavior in a social, cultural and economic context (Hazzan, & Nutov, 2014). It can also help to identify the cause of a social or human problem (Hazzan, & Nutov, 2014).

Definitions

Technology: A body of knowledge devoted to creating tools, processing action, and the extracting of materials. It is human knowledge which involves tools, materials, and systems (Ramey, 2013). Technology was first defined by Bigelow in 1829 as principles, processes, and nomenclatures of the most conspicuous arts, particularly those which involve applications of science, and which may be considered useful, by promoting the benefit of society, together with the emolument of those who pursue them.

Communication: It is sending and receiving information between two or more people. It is the act of conveying intended meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs and semiotic rules.

Sociotechnology: The study of processes on the interaction of society and technology. It is an important part of socio-technical design, which involves complex interactions between humans, machines and the environmental aspects of the work system—nowadays, this interaction is true of most enterprise systems (Trist, 1981). Sociotechnology has been attributed to Bunge (1998) and defined as a grouping of social engineering and management science, which is a form of technology, distinguished from other branches of it such as engineering, biotechnology, information technology and general technology. Sociotechnology is seen as the creation, modification, and maintenance of social systems.

Multitheoretical: A theoretical perspective is important for research because it serves to organize our thoughts and ideas and make them clear to others. Often, researchers /sociologists use multiple theoretical perspectives simultaneously as they frame research questions, design and conduct research, and analyze their results.

Scope and Delimitations

I addressed parental perception concerning family communication in the face of modern technology. The specific focus was chosen because parents have great authority and ability to guide their children's actions and model positive behavior in order to unite family in reference to effective communication. This focus was also chosen to contribute to the body of literature in reference to effective communication and healthy family unit.

The study's population is comprised of eight-12 parents of children between the ages of 12-17 within St. Lucie County, FL. This excludes parents from other surrounding counties. The exclusion may influence the study due to different levels of education, maturity, and parents not giving an honest assessment of their situations.

Limitations

First, the population size of the study is a limitation. The eight-12 individual parents for the study may not provide enough information for the validity of the study. With face-to-face interviews, the parents might not answer questions with all honesty or some parents might be extra careful when giving information about their children. Additional limitations may also lie within the levels of analysis of the perceptions. The differences in the individual levels of perceptions may be useful to explain unique forms of behaviors.

Significance of the Study

This study focused on the parental voice and their insights concerning the influence of technology on family communication in the face of technology's growth and increased usage. Potential findings from this research that could advance knowledge in the field might be participants' perceptions about the importance of functional and supportive family relationships. The essential ingredients of successful family relationships are identified and may be explored further through ongoing research around this complex topic. While family construction can take on different shapes and purposes, each family as a unit needs communication to survive and to build relationships. This

study may assist practitioners become more effective in working with families and also help them to understand how communication techniques are taught.

Summary and Conclusion

While there are many voices concerning the influences of technology on family communication, ranging from practitioners to lay people, I have been unable to find literature on parental experiences of family communication. This present study aims to fill this gap through the use of a generic study methodology. This chapter has several sections detailing the introduction of this generic qualitative study. It has provided substantial background of the study, the problem statement and the gap of the study, the purpose of the study, the research question, the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, the definitions, the scope and delimitations, the limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will present the literature of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Information and communication technologies have proven to be essential tools if used effectively. They have the potential to accomplish many things, including nurturing relationships within families, friendships, and business environments (Kowal, Zeligowski, & Wawrzak-Chodaczek, 2015; Leonardi, 2013; Lindberg, Nilsson, Zotterman, Söderberg, & Skär, 2013; Romero-Ruiz et al., 2017). Demographic reports of 2015 showed that 93% of married couples with children below the age of 18 who reside within the United States had a computer in their homes, 94% reported going online from home, and 95% were using cell phones (Rudi, Dworkin, Walker, & Doty, 2015).

Technological advancements have changed the way people live their lives. How people shop for goods and services, how people learn, and how people read, are among the many ways lives have been affected by technology (Edwards, 2015; Huisman, Edwards, & Catapano, 2012). The increased use of technology, however, has also impacted the quality of family communication and negatively affected the emotional and social development of the new generation; the results of which have been an increase in suicides, social ineptitude, divorce, and behavioral challenges (Leonardi, 2013; Lindberg et al., 2013; Rosen, 2014; Singh, 2014; Syairah & Syairah, 2013).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand parental perceptions concerning family communication in relation to technology. This study will contribute to the existing body of literature regarding parental perceptions of technology that affect the quality of communication within the family unit. To conduct this review of the literature,

I started with a wide focus on the importance of technology on family communication then narrowed the focal point to research on the effects of technology on family communication.

I conducted research on family relationships and their implications or meanings as a basis for relationship skill building. The objective of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of recent literature on the following topics in relation to the effect of technology on family communication:

1. The effectiveness of communication: The research will furnish groundwork for what already exists about the effectiveness of communication.

2. Family relationships: I will explore research on the significance of family relationships as a platform for the credibility and validity of the research.

3. Parental perceptions of family communication: Existing literature about parental perceptions of family communication will be reviewed to support the stated social problem. Research and statistics on parental perceptions of family communication will be presented. Research will focus on the influence of technology on family communication and its effect on the emotional and social development of the younger generation.

Literature Search Strategy

The topic of this research relates to many overlapping fields and areas of study. A variety of search engines and databases were used to identify relevant books, journal articles, and other sources. Walden University library search engines such as Thoreau,

EBSCO, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest Central were used to pursue lines of inquiry related to the study; I also used SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar to discover appropriate peer-reviewed articles.

To identify peer-reviewed and scholarly articles, I used combinations of the following terms and keywords (using Boolean identifiers) to search the data bases mentioned above: *family, family communication, family system, effectiveness of communication, family roles, technology, informational technology, use of technology, influence of technology on family communication, technology and family communication, parental perception, parental communication, family relationship, parental perception of family communication,* and *communication.* Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature as it relates to the effect of technology on family communication, technology's impact on family members, and the significance of family relationships.

Theoretical Foundation

In an effort to understand the complex family unit, researchers developed the family systems theory from the general system theory that originated in the mid-20th century and was founded by Bertalanffy in 1968 (Wilson, 2009). Bertalanffy was a biologist who wanted to contradict the mechanistic models that were employed in the sciences of that time. Bertalanffy's theory was developed for the purpose of testing the correlation or relationship within and or between complex systems of organisms (Wilson, 2009). Bertalanffy wanted to show that organisms were more than robotic entities, but that they were complex, organized, and interactive (Wilson, 2009). Since then, systems theory has been applied to many fields of study including the social sciences. Later, it

was applied, specifically, to the family unit when Bowen (1998) developed an amended version of it that became the family system theory which is applicable, specifically, to family interactions as both individuals and as a unit. The family systems theory introduced by Bowen identifies the emotional connection within families and how each member contributes to the other's success or failure. The family system theory was developed over a lifetime of research on families as a physical and emotional unit (Hare, Canada, & Lim, 1998).

Bowen (1998) acknowledged that the family is a system, and that each member plays a role within that system. The theorist further stated that there is an obligation of family members to respond to each other according to the role assigned by the informal relationship agreements (Kott, 2014). Family systems theory applies to my study, in that, with the evolution of technology, many families have adapted the style of individualism where each person is living in isolation from one another and, as a result, family communication and interaction have been affected (Kott, 2014). Researchers have found that technology has diminished the necessity for emotional engagement and instead has fostered a more surface connection (Edwards, 2015; Huisman, Edwards, & Catapano, 2012).

This theory is also the foundational framework of my research as it pertains to communication patterns within the family (Peters, 2014). It is also the functional pattern of relating called congruent communication, which is a helpful way of communicating in families (Peters, 2014). Congruent communication is a communication pattern in which the person sends the same message on both verbal and nonverbal levels. The theory sets a

foundation of how an individual can approach personal family members and deal with issues.

The main premise of the family systems theory is that the family unit is organized to carry out the daily challenges, tasks of life and, to help adjust to the developmental needs of each member (Kott, 2014; Priest, 2015; Vieira, 2015). The theory is also based on the concept of holism because the family must be seen as a whole. Wilson (2009) acknowledged that family systems theory's patterns (patterns of family communication) and importance adhere to effective communication dictate the success of the family unit remaining a unit (Bowen, 1976). Communication is very important within a family and unity is strongly dependent on the communication that is articulated, genuine, and free (Peters, 2014). Each member retains his or her personality but needs to practice effective communication in order to achieve an intimate and loving relationship with one another and as a unit (Peters, 2014). Communication promotes understanding, emotional support, clarity, builds trust, confidence, and better relationships (Medici & Herritt, 2014). Without communication the family systems as a unit is threatened and society is weakened (Medici & Herritt, 2014).

The Use of Technology in Today's World

Technology plays a major role in the contemporary world. Carvalho, Francisco, and Relvas (2015) noted that "information and communication technologies (ICTs)," which they defined as including "hardware (e.g., computers, smartphones, game consoles) and software (e.g., email, videoconferencing, online social networks) that sustain the digital culture," (p. 100) and, "have progressively become part of our

everyday lives" (p. 100). This is unlike 20 years ago when face-to-face communication was the primary method of communicating (Stafford & Hillyer, 2012). At that time, video game systems, books, and television were the main social networks (Carvalho et al., 2015; Coyne, Padilla-Walker, & Howard, 2013). Now, social media has become an extension of broader social interests and roles that can improve the social lives of users throughout the world (Grizane, & Jurgelane, 2017; Salcudean, & Muresan, 2017).

For example, the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project conducted a survey in the United States in 2013 and found that among American adults, 86% had Internet access, 90% owned a cellular phone, and 42% had a tablet computer (as cited in Carvalho et al., 2015). Among teenagers in the United States, 95% are online every day, and 74% have Internet access on tablets, cellular phones, and/or other devices (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2014). Carvalho et al. (2015) asserted that "in recent years, the advances and incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into everyday life have potentially created new interaction scenarios and rearrangements in current family and social relational models, based on a network society" (p. 100).

Although technology is advancing and has become a powerful tool that people in contemporary society can use to communicate and educate, it can, also provide a wide range of access to media that can be more harmful than beneficial to users (Coyne, Bushman, & Nathanson, 2012; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012; Williams & Merten, 2011). Awareness of this impact has led to debates on whether or not the influence of technology and its omnipresent availability result in positive or negative consequences in

different areas of life (Brake, 2016, Darling, Osei-Yaw, & Sheehy, 2015). To some

researchers, it can be difficult to observe technology's influence on the ways families

interact because technological advances are progressing rapidly (Fong & Mizera-

Pietraszko, 2015). Technology is ubiquitous (Lever-Duffy & McDonald, 2011), and

technological tools have become essential to productivity in the 21st century (Edwards,

2015). It has become a means of convenience in business, a form of entertainment in

family life, and a vehicle of innovation in the world of science (Lanigan, 2009). Some

researchers have even suggested that the use of technology be considered on various

levels of analysis, such as technology as a part of a system, technology as a tool, and

technology within a society (Jones, 2012).

With the growing usage of technology, people are communicating and socializing

more. However, there is not much quality time spent on meaningful communication; a

skill set that can be developed with practice and courage such as recognition, time

together, and empathy (Alessondra, 2013; Casey, 2012; McDaniel & Coyne, 2014; Nie &

Erbring, 2010). Communication is a vital part of a healthy relationship, and it is needed to

nurture intimate relationships (Sciascia et al., 2013).

The Effect of Technology on Family Relationship

On many levels, the advancement of technology influences the way in which

couples and families establish rules, roles, and boundaries, as well as how they interact

with one another and the outside world (Hertlein, 2012). Computer communication such

as instant messaging and social media often create the illusion of a level of intimacy in

relationships; however, they can also lead to a lack of intimacy in the daily lives of

individuals and families (Hertlein, 2012). In the debate concerning whether technology negatively or positively affects communication and family relationships, there is a great deal of research to support both sides (Burns & Pearson, 2011; Hertlein, 2012; Kennedy et al., 2008; Lanigan, 2009; Leonardi, 2013; Lindberg et al., 2013). However, despite this abundance of research I have found no research that has examined the influence of technology on family communication from the perspective of parents.

Technology enhances society because it promotes communication and convenience in multiple areas of life (Lanigan, 2009). Technology has positive effects on family relationships as it helps them to communicate with each other. It offers many opportunities for family members to talk about the things they see online. It provides a medium for families to learn about each other's interests and to acknowledge and share their interests. Technology is also helpful to education by making vast amounts of information available to users any time of day or night (Syairah & Syairah, 2013).

There is no doubt that ICTs help busy families stay connected (Bacigalupe, 2011; Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012). Parents can check in with their children at any time to see where they are and what they are doing or use GPS tracking on their children's cell phone. Children can also easily reach their parents if there is an emergency or a problem. In this way, technology releases parents from time constraints and provides, through a variety of devices, the maintenance of family safety (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012).

However, researchers also argued that technology can negatively affect the very foundation of a family system (Carvalho et al., 2015). Technology has changed the way

the family, as a unit, socializes and maintains relationships. Since the evolution of

technology, people have neglected old-fashioned forms of communication that involved

spending time with one another (Huisman et al., 2012; Williams & Merten, 2011).

Nonetheless, while technology is a wonderful tool for families (Bacigalupe, 2011;

Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012) it can also keep families apart.

There can be a disconnection between family members in the same home where they

become isolated from each other instead of building personal connections (Carvalho, et

al, 2015; Huisman et al., 2012). Technology affects family relationships where parents

are too busy with work at home due to the availability of computers and other portable

devices (Syairah & Syairah, 2013).

Because access to technology has increased greatly in recent years, people now

have access to the Internet from a variety of places (Hertlein, 2012). Hertlein (2012)

asserted that "the increase of accessibility implies greater choice and control while

greater access to others also extends one's sphere of influence beyond the local context"

(p. 377). The rapid advancement of ICTs and access to multifunctional technological

devices such as computers, cell phones, and personal digital assistants have made a

fundamental impact on society (Lanigan, 2009).

Effective Family Communication

Families are extremely influential regarding human behavior, particularly in the

area of communication (Burns & Pearson, 2011; Schrodt et al, 2008). Burns and Pearson

(2011) acknowledged that a "family communication schemata are uniquely shared world

views that provide individual family members with value and belief systems'' (p. 172).

Researchers have observed and scrutinized the impact of communication within families

with regards to conflict style, family satisfaction, child socialization, communication

competence, healthy life behaviors, communication apprehension, and many other

variables (Burns & Pearson, 2011). However, the previous researchers focused primarily

on the macro level of the communication within the family instead of the communication

that takes place daily among family members (Burns & Pearson, 2011).

Medici and Herritt (2014) studied the effective communication that is considered

to be the key to keeping families happy and healthy. Medici and Herritt focused on

family members becoming skilled in effective communication. Effective communication

skills require effort to learn and determination to maintain. Effective communication is a

good interaction both professionally and personally (Medici & Herritt, 2014). Interactions

among family members, over the years, have an effect on subsequent interactions both

inside and outside the family unit (Medici & Herritt, 2014). Medici and Herritt offered

ways to manipulate technology on family communication by self-listening. Self-listening

encourages the use of electronic communication carefully either as text or e-mail,

however, there should be careful attention paid to avoid the messages that trigger emotion

(Medici & Herritt, 2014). Without effective communication, life can be in chaos and the

family unit can be in turmoil (Kott, 2014).

Burns and Pearson (2011) researched family communication in a study that was

performed utilizing different environments to see how those environments affect

communication and family satisfaction. Burns and Pearson acknowledged that "looking

at these family communication variables will provide a more micro level understanding

of how families from each of the family communication environments communicate on a daily basis" (p. 172). Burns and Pearson's "indicate[d] that each of the family communication environments dimensions predict[ed] different types of everyday talk and that the expressiveness dimension and the everyday talk variables of joking around, recapping the day's events, and relationship talk significantly predict[ed] family satisfaction" (p. 179).

Burns and Pearson (2011) focused on high and low conformity orientation (the degree to which families create homogeneity of attitudes, values, and beliefs). Burns and Pearson stated that "families having high conformity were similar to a traditional family structure. This means that these family members give up time with friends and other outside sources of entertainment to spend more time with family members and all members share space and money" (p. 173). However, families low in conformity have accepted that all relationships are similarly or uniformly important while choosing to spend time away from the family. Family members with this kind of orientation persuaded or promoted private escalation of outside individuals even if it placed the family in a secondary position. As a result, the children respond to family members and others based on their types of families' orientations (Burns & Pearson, 2011). The types of family orientation dictated the types of communication style within the family (Burns & Pearson, 2011). For example, a family of high conformity appeared to be more engaged with how family members interacted. Burns and Pearson noted that as "resulting in members being less likely to confirm what others said, because of the number of rules and norms high conformity families have in place" (p. 174).

Family Roles or Relationships

The family is considered to be a unit that is distinct from other forms of social organizations (Sciascia et al, 2013). It is known as a necessary component of society that never stops growing and developing. However, there are enormous differences in how these developments or progressions are manifested. Families are bound together by the way they develop their beliefs about how relationships are supposed to be structured (Blair, & McCormick, 2014). They are socialized into society, and they provided for basic social needs (Sciascia et al, 2013).

The family is thought of as a social unit that invents its own representational globe where they not only shape relationships and behaviors and socialize members in the direction of their own families, but also in the direction of the larger society (Sciascia, et al, 2013). Over time, a family member is shaped in the family by his/her action, reaction, and reflection on the interactions. The family creates a process of symbols within the family to share interpretations of meaning that produce similar behavioral answers within individuals and others as members, according to the alignment of themselves among meanings seized by others in the family (Sciascia et al, 2013). Members engage to the growth or enlargement of family roles and norms of behaviors. However, the most important character for families is family communication (Blair & McCormick, 2014; Sciascia et al, 2013). Sciascia et al (2013) acknowledged that "it is through communication that family members create mental models of family life and through communication that those models endure over time and across generations" (p. 431).

The Influence of Technology on Family Communication

When it comes to communication and the interaction of parents with children via technology, family communication has expanded with the use of social and mobile media devices and communication formats, text messaging, email, Facebook, and videoconferencing services such as Skype. In 2012, approximately 83% of children downloaded free mobile game applications (Hertlein, 2012). According to a nationally representative survey of 802 teens and their parents by the pew research center (Madden et al. 2013), 93% of teenagers between the ages of 12 through 17 have a computer in the home (Cyr et al., 2015). More children use technology than adults, which has resulted in a decline in parents' ability to protect their children from online predators, cyberbullying and pornography (Cyr, Berman, & Smith, 2015; Hertlein, 2012). Hertlein (2012) stated that "in some ways, parents' roles have diminished because children and adolescents are more adept at using communicative technologies than adults" (p. 379). Parents' lack of understanding technology can result in the lack of parents monitoring children when they are utilizing websites (Hertlein, 2012). According to Xiao et al. (2011), there are perception gaps between parents and children's reports of the openness in family communication where parents are more likely than their children to perceive lower level of openness in family communication. The lack of parental perception concerning communication within the family affects society by allowing family units to dissolve (Lanigan, 2009; Leonardi, 2013; Lindberg, et al, 2013). The effects of broken homes, ultimately, produce behaviorally challenged young adults (Casey, 2012).

There are different perspectives about the effectiveness of technology on family communication (Lindberg, et al, 2013). Information and communication technologies can offer families various formats for collaboration, information exchange, and time together. Even so, little is known about which technologies parents use to communicate with specific family members such as their children, their coparent or spouse, parents, and extended family members (Carvalho et al., 2015; Coyne et al., 2013).

Hertlein (2012) acknowledged that more teens and young adults have access to technology than their parents do. He found that children are more literate in technological communication devices than their parents, and that could be a hindrance to communication within the family. Technology has been deemed positive and negative in its influences in actions and decision making (Cyr et al., 2015; Hertlein, 2012). For some people, technology is the universal thread that connects us all in one way or another (Hertlein, 2012).

Casey (2012) found that technology has proven to be a distraction from intimate time with one another and it has become a hindrance to the art of verbal expressions. Nearly half of parents and teens surveyed said that they email, text or talk on the phone while eating together (Hertlein, 2012). Two out of five youth and one-third of parents surveyed have used two or more screens open on their devices simultaneously during this time period (Casey, 2012). Half of the students and one-fifth of the parents studied had checked email or text messages in bed in the prior 7 days (Hunter, 2011). These behaviors can have a negative impact on family dynamics such as lack of communication, lack of community, and a lack of quality time (Hertlein, 2012). A lack of

quality communication can be detrimental to any relationship (Sciascia, et al, 2013).

Children need to be anchored in the assurance that they matter and that their concerns are

important (Rudi, et al, 2013).

The Influence of Technology on Society

While the use of technology can cause people to socialize and share more

(Lindberg, et al, 2013), the quality of communication has diminished (Alessondra, 2013;

Casey, 2012; Lindberg et al, 2013; Taylor, 2013). Technology affects society in many

ways. Teenagers, for example can develop antisocial behaviors, exhibit poor academic

performance, view or listen to inappropriate content on the internet, adopt negative

behaviors from violent games, and exercise less (Syairah & Syairah, 2013). In the

workforce social media can create counter productivity, and cause distraction (Syairah &

Syairah, 2013). For example, in a recent study by Dunlop et al. (2012) regarding possible

contagion effects on suicidal behavior via the Internet and social media, of the 719

individuals aged 14-24 studied, 59% reported being exposed to suicide-related content

through Internet sources (Dunlop et al., 2011; Luxton, June, & Fairall, 2012).

Similarly, according to a new survey by the American Academy of Matrimonial

Lawyers, one in five divorces involved the social networking site Facebook (Gardner,

2010) and more than 80% of U.S. divorce attorneys said social networking in divorce

proceedings is on the rise. In July 2014, researchers from the Pontificia Universidad

Catolica de Chile's School of Communications and Boston University's College of

Communication found a 20% annual increase in the rate of divorce (Rosen, 2014). Nie

and Erbring (2010) have found that the more time members of society spend using the

computer, the less time they spend in person with family and friends. These issues can be resolved through quality time and meaningful communication within the family unit.

Summary and Conclusions

I explored parental perceptions on the usage of technology in family communication and its effects on said family relationship and dynamic. Technology is a very useful tool in the 21st century; it has provided many benefits to the world of business and the health care system. It has given families a more mobile avenue to communicate. However, there are concerns of its influences on family communication and its implication for effective communication within family in spite of the increasing usage, and ultimately society as a unit. This current literature review has verified the significance of parental perception of family relationship; its scarcity within technology and the present awareness that research is limited regarding these significant problems. It is clear that there is a need for current researches that address the necessity of family communication. This study will help to decrease the gap in the literature by furnishing information about parental perception experience from family communication in the face of technology. Generic study is the chosen research method to confine the lived experience will come from the perspective of parents' perception of family communication. Chapter 3 gives a description of a detailed plan for the proposed study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

I followed a generic qualitative study research design. The qualitative research approach helps researchers understand people and their behavior in a social, cultural, and economic context (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014; Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). It also helps researchers contribute to a social or human problem (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). A generic study approach seeks to reveal the essential meaning of the phenomenon in-depth within an environmental context (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). Using a generic study methodology, the researcher seeks to obtain a thorough knowledge and present a clear picture of an individual and a program (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). Generic study methodologies examine a bounded system overtime and in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in that setting (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). The purpose of this generic qualitative study is to understand parental experiences concerning family communication within the context of modern technology.

The aim of this study was to contribute to the existing body of literature regarding parental experiences with modern technology that influence the quality of effective communication within the family unit. In Chapter 3, there is a provision of the rationale and justification for choosing generic study approach, a description of the research design, and a description of the role of the researcher within the study. This is followed by an overview of data collection methods, data analysis, sampling strategy and sampling size, issues of trustworthiness, confidentiality, ethical procedures or concerns, and a description of the process to be used for data collection and analysis. Each section details

the methodology of researching and writing this generic qualitative study. Chapter 3 ends

with an explanation regarding the trustworthiness of the data, the protection of

participants, and any ethical considerations that may have arisen in the study.

Research Design and Rationale

What are the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the influence of

technology on family communication?

Descriptive and Interpretive Generic Study

I followed a generic qualitative approach design. A generic study approach aims

to provide a rich description of the phenomenon under investigation. A generic study

allows for the examination of different resources to gain an understanding of an issue. A

generic study seeks to make discovery and understanding of a phenomenon, a process, or

the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved (Caelli et al. 2003). Generic

studies combine compatible tools and methods from more than one established

methodology (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014).

Generic qualitative studies have the ability to draw on the strengths of established

methodologies while keeping or preserving the flexibility that causes generic approaches

attractive to researches whose studies do not fall neatly within a precise or specific

established methodology (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). Generic studies search for

understanding of how people interpret, construct, or make meaning from their world and

their experiences (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). The generic study approach also

helps researchers understand people and their behavior in a social, cultural, and economic

context (Hazzan, & Nutov, 2014; Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). Generic qualitative

inquiry makes investigation on reports of the people of their subjective opinions, beliefs, attitudes, or reflections on their experiences, of the things in the outer world (Fragoulis, et al., 2018).

Generic study methodologies examine a bounded system in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in that setting. The generic method is best for this study due to factors such as convenience without sacrificing quality, economical, and effective in answering the RQ. Generic approach allows flexibility and prescriptiveness (Kahlke & BA Hon, 2014). This approach is generally highly inductive. The use of open codes, categories, and thematic analysis are most common (Kahlke & BA Hon, 2014). The researcher chooses the generic approach because of its uniqueness or because of its typicality. I interviewed and observe eight to 12 parents in St Lucie County, FL to gain an understanding of their different perspectives and experiences with the use of technology on family communication.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument responsible for the integrity of the study (Raheim et al., 2016). The researcher is to bring knowledge, beliefs, and experiences to the research process (Yates & Leggett, 2016). A researcher will inform participants about the importance of the study (Probst, 2016), explaining to them the purpose and contribution of the study to the existing body of literature. The researcher is responsible for making sure all consent forms are signed and participant are sufficiently informed of their roles and responsibilities within the study (Raheim et al., 2016). Participants will be informed that they have the freedom to quit the study at any

time. The participants who consent to contribute their time and responses will not be connected in any way to the researcher; they will be strangers who have been recruited from different backgrounds.

The researcher guides the data collection process. Data are mediated through the researcher instrument rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines (Unluer, 2012). To fulfill this role, the research participants need to know about the researcher instrument. Consequently, a researcher will describe relevant aspects of self, including any assumptions and biases as well as any experiences and expectations that qualify the researcher to conduct the research. A researcher will keep a separate journal explaining or explicating personal reflections and reactions, or insights into self. The researcher will utilize semistructured, open-ended interview questions and will allow for exposition.

I acknowledge that there are biases, limitations, and views that he must manage throughout the data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting phases of the research process. Though there are different views concerning the role of bias within the research process, Snow (2017) stated that bias is a feature central to both opinion and argument writing that allows researchers the freedom to investigate ideas that spark their interests and integrate experiences, prior knowledge, and abilities to construct strong written work. The reality that bias plays an important role in constructing opinion and argument pieces is crucial. In qualitative research, a researcher's biases and values do impact the outcome of the study conducted (Snow, 2017); bias is the basis from which a

researcher can make a unique contribution, one that resulted from a combination of personal qualities and data collected (Snow, 2017).

Self-Reflection

I was raised in a family of 12 where a minimum amount of technology was used. The technology consisted of a small radio with limited stations. My family and I frequently spent time together, had meaningful communication, and appreciated each other's tone, facial expressions, and body language. Currently, I am the father of a large family of 11 children, and my children's ages range from 5 months to 17 years old. In my experience as a father, I have come to appreciate the benefits of technology, but I am also aware of the negative impact it could have on family communication. Technology has specific usage in my home such as providing help with homework and contacting family members.

Except for necessity, my teens do not have personal cell phones nor are they allowed to have private access to computers. They have been taught that family time is essential to achieving successful relationships. The limitation of technology involvement in our family communication has helped the children to be more in-tuned to their own feelings, each other's feelings, and their environment. I am in favor of less technological communication and more face-to-face communication in families. According to Husserl's findings, I should put aside my individual biases to reach the genuine conclusion of the study. Tufford (2014) also suggested that the researcher starts with a process of self-reflection to identify his or her beliefs regarding the nature of the phenomenon under study. He also encouraged setting personal beliefs aside in an attempt to see the

phenomenon as it really is (Tufford, 2014). By writing down my reflections, I became aware of my biases and assumptions, and I will set them aside to engage in the research process without preconceived ideas regarding the subject of investigation (Tufford, 2014).

Methodology

The participants who were selected for the interview were parents of teenagers ranging from ages 12 through 17. Participants were 30 to 55 years of age. They were females chosen from different religious backgrounds or religious groups for the validity of the study. All participants were citizens of the U.S. The study and the purpose of the study were announced to the participants in person, face-to-face, and confirmed by e-mail. They will be given the choice to consent to the research.

Sampling Strategy

To determine the distinctiveness or the uniqueness of the participants in the study, the researcher will use purposeful sampling strategies (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). This involves a deliberate approach to participant selection according to their individual life experiences (Marshall, Poddar, Fontenot, & Cardon, 2013). A criterion sampling strategy was used in selecting participants for this study as a criterion sampling strategy involves seeking individuals who meet certain criteria or had a particular life experience (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). Participants for this generic qualitative study were purposefully sampled by passing flyers from amongst the people of St Lucie County who reside in Fort Pierce, FL. I contacted all the participants individually, face-to-face, and hoped that all the participants (candidates) would agree to participate in this study.

Although there could have been unlimited participants, I chose to limit the study to a certain number of participants, as a representative sampling. This choice is of eight-12 individual mothers from eight-12 different families to determine the participants are the primary data collection; I had one set of response from each participant. The choice of mothers being the specific participants' pool is to receive a perception from the mothers that may have been different from the male perception. The mothers may help the qualitative nature of the study by providing sufficient detail and emotional content to acquire a balanced study. The population size of eight-12 was chosen because I felt this size fairly represents the population. This size allowed me enough room to analyze collected data without being overwhelmed with too much information.

Sample Size

The aim of qualitative research is to gain a deep understanding of a specific organization or event, rather than gaining a wide surface explanation of a large sample of a population. Qualitative research aims to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behavior (Pistrang & Barker, 2012). Determining a sample size to provide adequate data to answer the research question is the most challenging decisions to be made (Boddy, 2016). A sample size must adequately represent the identified population. It is important for a researcher to choose an adequate sample size because it will make it difficult to know the significance of the participants' experience. Two considerations are offered about sample size: sample size needs to be large enough to provide appropriate diversity that is represented in the population of interest, and the sample size should be small enough to

allow for the identification of consistent patterns (Marshall, Poddar, Fontenot, & Cardon, 2013). The sample size for this study reflects the goal of the study, which is to conduct an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. In qualitative inquiry, there are no rules for sample size; it depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources (Marshall, Poddar, Fontenot, & Cardon, 2013). I will choose 8-12 mothers, parents of 12-17 years of age teenager to gather information about parental experiences on family communication in modern technology.

Data Collection

For this qualitative multiple case study, participants were used as primary data collection; interviews were the primary source of information. I scheduled a time to sit with participants, individually, to present the details of the study such as the procedures of the data collection. After which, I had them read and sign the consent forms to proceed with the interviews. The interviews took approximately 1.5 hours with each participant. Each interview was arranged to accommodate the participant's schedule and was conducted in St Lucie County in Fort Pierce, FL. The location of the interviews was quiet and private (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The interview was done in a private room in the local library in Fort Pierce, FL. This was essential to ensure that participants were as comfortable as possible throughout the interviews. A small digital data recorder was used with the permission of the participants to make sure the data collection was accurate. I saved each interview in a digital folder on the recorder. Later, the files were downloaded directly to a computer and burned to a CD, providing three duplicate sources of original

material in case a back-up is needed. To ensure confidentiality of the data and the secrecy

of the participants, I used numerical codes instead of the formal names of the participants

to identify data (Namageyo-Funa et al., 2014).

Interviews and Interview Protocol

An interview protocol portrays or illustrates the procedure of the interview as well

as scripts to be used before and after the interview. It furnishes prompts to remind the

interviewer of the necessary items, including collection of informed consent and other

information of interest. It is a procedural guide for directing a qualitative research study

(Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). An efficient interview approach provides engagement for the

participants as well as encouragement to furnish useful and plain information (Beshara,

2014; Chenail, 2011; van der Graaf, et al., 2017). Each participant needs or deserves

attention for comfort before the interview begins; the interviewer needs to use

professional skills during the interview such as appropriate eye contact, respectful

distance, kind and considerate responses, and open-ended questions.

Informed Consent

The reason for ensuring informed consent is to sit down and have an honest

conversation with the potential participants concerning the study, interview procedures,

and expectations for future communication (Shepherd, 2017). I explained (a) my goals

for the study, (b) why I feel their contribution is helpful to achieving my goals, (c) how

the process will take place, and (d) what the benefits and disadvantages of the study are.

Participants were informed that the interview was recorded. An interview guide provided

a clear focus for the data collection. I ensured confidentiality of the data by making sure

all data were secured in a locked cabinet. There was a consent form to be signed after the participants know about the expected experience for the interview and their right to withdraw from the project at any time. Signing the consent form is to secure the confidentiality of the participants to prevent them breaking the confidentiality clause.

Reasonable steps were taken to protect the participants from harm by identifying and minimizing any potential harm. Researchers must question the participants after the interview to detect and deal with any harm, distress, and confusion of the participant (Shepherd, 2017). Shepherd (2017) stated that "the rate and severity of harm experienced by participants in the different arms of the study will not be known until after the study is completed,but altering an individual's care subjects him or her to different risks of harm" (p. 357). At the end of each interview, there was a dialogue with the participant to request any feedback on the study itself and address any concerns expressed by the participant. I also clarified for the participants that professional counseling was available in case any harmful feelings arise as a result of the interview.

Data Analysis

The goal of qualitative research is to understand fundamental concepts among the data and any relationships among them (Pistrang, & Barker, 2012; Schaefer, 2016). Qualitative research data are examined by making search and discovery on abstract concepts, or themes, among the data (Schaefer, 2016). The data are connected to the research question. The question in this study seeks out detailed answers that would illuminate the experiences of parents concerning the increased technological usage within family communication. This research aims to contribute to the existing body of literature

regarding parental experiences with modern technology that influences the quality of effective communication within the family unit.

In a qualitative research study, various forms of data analysis are needed, such as reading and listening, memo writing, coding, and creating various graphic displays (Schaefer, 2016). Coding will be in the form of analyzing the data for emerging patterns, concepts, and or trends. I used maxqda software to record the coding. There were several pages of transcripts and detailed field note observations from the interviews. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) stated that each transcript must be well read while listening to the tape recording of the interview to better examine, interpret, and synthesize the data of the research. To familiarize myself with the content of each transcript, I read each transcript several times while paying close attention to the text.

The quality of the transcript can be influenced in many ways. It can be influenced by the quality of the recording because the use of inadequate or inappropriate equipment may lead to errors in the transcript (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The quality of the transcript can be influenced by the interview's location because the quality of a recording in a noisy place is susceptible to background noises (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) and may lead to errors in the transcript. A transcript can also be influenced by the researcher's attitude regarding the topic and by his or her assumptions regarding the data (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). A transcript can be influenced by the background information of the research and the interviewees, which is either given or withheld from the transcribers in cases where the researcher is not the transcriber (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Mero-Jaffe (2011) asserted that an

accurate interview transcript can still represent poor quality data if the interviewee has inaccurately conveyed his or her knowledge or beliefs.

Each transcript may be full of broad descriptions, specific events, and interpretations. Miles et al. (2014) encouraged researchers to read the interview transcripts several times to distinguish broad descriptions, events, and interpretations of events. The researcher may include clarifications of the potential impact of emotional content and the importance of privileged data in the transcript (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Memo writing can make the reader and interviewer aware of initial reactions and views regarding the transcripts. It also gives permission to the researcher to make a distinction within the transcripts and the interviews (Miles et al., 2014). I used codes to label, compile, and organize my data. The codes allowed me to summarize and synthesize what is happening in my data. I input my data collection and interpretation of the data; my coding became the basis for developing the analysis.

Verification of Trustworthiness

A researcher has many strategies to employ in order to establish credibility or trustworthiness in a study. These strategies include, but are not limited to, triangulation, peer-review, rich description, maximum variation, reflexivity, and engagement. The trustworthiness of a study is essential; it is imperative that the researcher pay close attention to these processes to ensure internal and external validity (Rose, & Lennerholt, 2017). I identified and articulated any biases I embrace, scrutinized how my understanding shifts throughout the project, and attend to how these biases might have an effect on the interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

I followed specific research guidelines established by human research ethics committees to ensure that aspects of ethical research (informed consent, minimizing harm, privacy, and confidentiality) are clearly stated in research proposals to help ameliorate participants' safety (Kendall & Halliday, 2014). Each participant knew that his or her contribution to this project is voluntary. The participants were aware that they can choose not to answer any question that makes them uncomfortable. Individual permission forms were signed by each participant before the interviews are recorded. All the information of the study such as the purpose, the procedures, matters of confidentiality, and participant safety were discussed, and informed consent was collected after the participant decides to participate in the study.

Data for the proposed multiple case studies, including hardcopy transcripts of interviews, will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office. I will also maintain electronic and print data files on two different password-protected computers and will be responsible for validating the authenticity of each file. This was made clear to participants before they agreed to participate in the study. It was explicitly stated in the informed consent signed by each participant.

Data collection was carried out as a partnership between researcher and participants. I also reviewed the proposed interview questions for cultural relevance. The interviews' tape recordings were manually transcribed rather than electronically transcribed to assure nuances of expressions in participants' comments. Each participant in this generic qualitative study approved his or her interview transcript before data

analysis begins, and member checking for accuracy was repeated throughout the analysis stages. A numerical code was used to avoid using the real names of the participants.

Ethical challenges may arise even though there were no projected jeopardies or threats to participants from this research. Haahr, Norlyk, and Hall (2014) acknowledged that each interview has different experiences and suggested unpredicted or unanticipated events necessitate the research to apply ethical judgment and to be well-informed and perceptive. Developing ethical awareness becomes necessary when attempting to identify and deal with any prejudices and assumptions that may arise because of unanticipated ethical problems.

Participants were informed that an executive synopsis or summation of the results will sustain a fraction of this researcher's doctorate of philosophy from Walden University. I aimed to examine and discuss cases with my dissertation committee members, while using numbers instead of the real names of the participants. After the completion of the interviews, participants who completed the interviews were offered a $25 gift card from Walmart as compensation for their participation. Compensation was not be offered until the end of the interview because throughout pilot testing concern emerged that the offer of compensation might insult individuals of financially sound backgrounds (Killawi et al., 2014).

Summary

Chapter 3 included several sections detailing the methodology used in this qualitative multiple case study. Following a discussion of case study rationale, the chapter provided substantial background information on the research question, the role of

the researcher, sample selection, sample size, data collection, data analysis, issues of

trustworthiness, confidentiality, and ethical procedures or concerns. Chapter 4 is a

presentation of the findings from this research study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this study, I used a generic qualitative approach to examine parental perceptions concerning family communication within the context of modern technology. Quality communication is a vital part of a healthy relationship and is needed to nurture intimate relationships. However, a lack of quality communication in a family can be detrimental to family relationships (Enns et al., 2016; Sciascia et al., 2013; Skeer et al., 2017). Poor family relationships can result in higher rates of divorce, teen suicide, and behavioral issues in children (Vieira, 2015).

The aim of this generic qualitative study was to contribute to the existing body of literature by filling a gap in research regarding parental perceptions of and experiences with the use of modern communication platforms and their influences on the quality of effective communication within their family unit. The research question that guided this study was as follows:

What are the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the influence of

technology on family communication?

This chapter is organized into the following sections: research setting, demographics, data collection, results, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, study results, and summary. The participants for this study included individual parents of teenagers ages 12 through 17.

Research Setting

The interviews were conducted between December 28, 2018, and February 2,

2019 in the city of St Lucie County, FL. All interviews were conducted in a private room

located in a local public library. I distributed recruitment flyers by going door-to-door. I

was contacted by the participants who met the research criteria in response to the flyers. I

scheduled a date and time to interview each of the potential participants. Before each

interview began, I reviewed the Informed Consent with the participant and asked them to

sign the consent form. I let the participants know that the interview would be recorded.

Each participant consented to the interview being recorded.

Demographics

The participants were U.S Citizens who self-identified as parents of teenagers

ranging in age from 12 to 17 years of age. The participants consisted of six married

females and one single male parent. Participants' ethnicities consisted of one Native

American, one African American, one Dominican, two Anglo-Americans, and two

Blacks of Haitian descent. All participants were proficient in English and did not need

interpreters. The parents in this study were of legal age and mentally competent to answer

the questions posed to them in the interviews.

Table 1

Summary of Participant Demographics

Name	Age	Ethnic Background	Gender	Marital Status	Age of Teenagers
Participant 1	55	Black Haitian Descent	Female	Married	15
Participant 2	51	Native American	Female	Married	12, 14
Participant 3	56	White	Female	Married	17
Participant 4	49	White	Female	Married	15
Participant 5	48	Black American	Female	Married	13
Participant 6	47	Dominican	Female	Married	15
Participant 7	30	Black Haitian Descent	Male	Single	12

As shown in Table 1, the average age of the participants was 48. The names of the participants were not used to ensure confidentiality. Data contained in Table 1 includes information conveyed by the participants whose stories are narrated as profiles below.

Participant 1 was a married, 55-year-old Black Haitian female who is the parent of a total of 5 children; one of whom is a 12 year- old daughter. She lives with her husband and children.

Participant 2 was a married, 51-year-old Native American female who is the parent of a total of three children; two of whom are 12- and 14-year-old sons. She lives with her husband and children.

Participant 3 was a married, 56-year-old White American female who is the parent of a total of 3 children; one of whom is a 17-year-old daughter. She lives with her husband and children.

Participant 4 was a married, 49 year- old White American female who is the parent of a total of two children; one of whom is a 15-year-old daughter. She lives with her husband and children.

Participant 5 was a married, 48-year-old Black American female who is the parent of a total of three children; one of whom is a 13-year-old daughter. She lives with her husband and children

Participant 6 was a married, 47-year-old Dominican female who is the parent of one 15-year-old daughter. She lives with her husband and her teenage daughter.

Participant 8 was a single, 30 year- old Black Haitian male who is the parent of a total of three children; one of whom is a 12-year-old boy. He lives full time with his children.

Data Collection Process

A total of seven participants were interviewed for this study. I collected data via personal interviews to generate in-depth information from the participants' perceptions and experiences regarding family communication within the context of modern technology. These substantial descriptions are embedded or ingrained into the interviewees' first-hand experiences and were the basis of the data collection design and process. The data collection intended to provide relevant information regarding parental perceptions of family communication that may be important for family outcomes. The use of a qualitative method was the best practice to help ensure that questions are true to respondents' realities rather than researcher assumptions and to ensure that appropriate language and vocabulary were used.

In qualitative research, the Researcher is the primary instrument and facilitates the direction of the interview process. I conducted the interviews over six weeks in private rooms in two different public libraries in St Lucie County, FL. The interview duration ranged from 55-75 minutes. Each participant provided written consent for the use of a digital tape recorder to record the interviews. I monitored the tape recorder by hand and tested it prior to the interviews to guarantee proper recording. Later, the tape recordings would serve as a means to check the accuracy of the participants' answers. After the interviews, I thanked the participants and ensured them that I would contact them during the research process. My external storage, which is a file cabinet, will be used to store the transcripts from the interviews. This external storage will be locked and secured for five years.

 I collected data for this study through individual interviews. The selection of the design was primarily due to the desire to gain an understanding of parents' perspective of family communication in modern technology. This design is the best fit for the topic needs. According to Alpi and Evans (2019), the qualitative researcher gains access to the participants' natural environment and is the leading research instrument used to collect and analyze data. Qualitative researchers need to understand that their biases might influence the study's outcomes. A researcher cannot claim that what is described is true or valid because particular strategies have been put in place through the method. Instead, the aim is to make the process of data analysis as visible and transparent as possible.

As part of my role as the researcher, I provided ease of access for the participants to ask questions about the interview. I aimed to make my decisions and the thinking,

values, and experiences behind those decisions visible to both myself and to the reader. I

engage with the idea and enact practices that might make some degree of transparency

possible. I followed the rules and paid attention to the reliability, validity, and objectivity

of the study. In relation to interviewing, I was nonreactive in order to increase the

reliability of the interviewee's responses, that is, that the same answers would be given if

the questions were asked at another time, in another place, even by another interviewer. I

then coded, analyzed, and interpreted all the data gathered throughout the research. No

variations in the data collection method from the plan presented in Chapter 3 or the IRB

application occurred. No unusual circumstances were encountered in the data collection.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire contained 21 questions ranging from possession of technology

to perception of technology. The methodology involved the qualitative analysis of data

collected from the interviews. The interviews were aligned to note similarities and

differences in the answers from various participants for each question. I transcribed

recorded interviews precisely and uploaded transcriptions into MAXQDA software for

analysis. The number of participants was recorded under multiple codes depicting

themes/categories. Themes were recorded based on the number of participants who

answered the same questions with similar answers. This process was done by utilizing

coding to match data from the narration of the participants. After transcribing all of the

interviews and coding them in phases, I analyzed the data. From the answers to the

research questions, I identified six themes after encrypting the data as described below.

Coding

The primary task of the qualitative researcher is to analyze data by organizing it into categories based on themes, patterns, concepts, or similar features. The process of coding means to sift through data and, as recurring themes, patterns, or concepts are noted, labeling pieces of data to indicate what theme, pattern, or concept they reflect (Alexander & Diefenbeck, 2019). Coding is the action of finding pieces of information that provide validity to the research question. It involves tagging relevant sections of passages that contain descriptive words and then grouping emerging themes and categories to gain a better understanding of the commonalities that exist (Alexander & Diefenbeck, 2019). Coding is a longstanding method that has been utilized extensively to unify text as well as to point out what is emphasized in a unit of text. Coding is in the form of analyzing the data for emerging patterns, concepts, and or trends. I uploaded all the transcribed interviews into MAXQDA software for cording purposes.

Data analysis has five-phases: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2015). I applied this method for its accuracy and validity. The first step was to assemble the data by conducting interviews with the participants. The collected data helped answer the research question posed in this study. Participants' interviews were transcribed into a Word document. I then input the data into the MAXQDA program, where the interviews were coded and later analyzed for themes and or categories. The last step was to draw conclusions. This process involved illuminating any connection between themes or categories to the main research question (Yin, 2015).

The following themes and categories emerged from the data collection: (a) the importance of or role of parental supervision, (b) technology's limited usage, (c) the lack or loss of family quality time, (d) differences in communication methods between the older generation and younger generation, (e) the attachment teens have to their phones, and (f) influences of technology in education and on teens' social development. The process of coding was easy because each participant was asked the same questions. The aim was to discern similarities and differences in the answers, then categorize them. The coding was done based on the question-by-question method. The first code was tag as types of communication technology capable devices used in the home, how many members had tech devices, parents' perspective on technology, teens using technology, benefits of technology, disadvantages of technology, the influence of technology on family's communication, teens' behaviors, education, and so on. Table 2 shows the details of the participants' supporting phases. Table 2 lists selected significant statements and recurring expressions that contributed to the six themes. Each theme is discussed below in the following subheadings in no particular order of occurrence.

Table 2

Summary of Themes

Themes	Supporting Phrases
The importance of or the role of parental supervision	Participant 1 stated "I taught my children how to use technology effectively, sparingly and or as needed." "There is a time where all technology or devices are put away for the benefit of family communication, especially in dinner time" (Participant 5).
Technology's limited usage	"My children are not spending the night on the phone and or spending time on technology in their room" (Participant 1). "My children are monitored, and there is a time limit for the devices because family time is more important than technology time" (Participant 6).
The lack or loss of family quality time	"With the cell phones and tablets, communication with the parents is mostly out of the window" (Participant 5). "It becomes a burden when we sit together where everyone wants to be on their phones, or not paying attention, nor communicating with each other; it affects that part of the family" (Participant 7).
Differences in communication methods between the older generation and Generation Z	"I like face-to-face communication to see better; the person may be saying something, and the person may sound one way, but when you see what is going with the sound, there is a whole story with that; thus, face-to-face communication builds relationships" (Participant 2). "Computers and technology have nothing to do with our relationship in the household" (Participant 6). "I don't like technology because we lose communication within the family" (Participant 8).
The attachment teens have to their phones	"Technology has made my children keep to themselves more; they entertain themselves in the room without any interaction or communication with each other within the family; so, socializing is less due to the amount of time spent on individual devices separately" (Participant 3). "My children can always be on their phones; they don't even want to text parents or siblings; they are busy on their phones" (Participant 8).
Influences of technology in education and on teens' social development.	"My child is always too busy in the phone and tablet to read and do schoolwork where we, parents, must keep motivating" (Participant 3). "My teen finds things that are more attractive than what she can find on her homework, for example, she can watch movies, cartoons, and play various games all day long" (Participant 5).

Evidence of Trustworthiness and Credibility

To establish trustworthiness, authenticity, credibility, and dependability of a study, a strict data collection procedure needs to be in place; rigorous methods of analyzing all data collected safeguarded integrity, validity, and quality of the study (Cope, 2014). Trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Connelly, 2016). In each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers (Amankwaa, 2016). Although most experts agree trustworthiness is necessary, debates have been waged in the literature as to what constitutes trustworthiness (Leung, 2015). To ensure trustworthiness and qualitative rigor, during the interviewing, I bracketed my thoughts and bias by writing down my thoughts and reflections. One of the strategies utilized in this study to ensure quality work was the use of the tape recorder. I repeatedly listened to the tape recorder to verify the substance of the data.

Credibility of the study, or the confidence in the truth of the study and therefore the findings, is the most important criterion (Connelly, 2016). Credibility refers to the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher (Cope, 2014). Credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her experiences as a researcher and verifying the research findings with the participants (Cope, 2014). The credibility of this study relied on the coding procedures, which guided the research and ensured the right expression and emergence of theoretical groups that revealed the problems.

Transferability

Transferability is known for providing readers with evidence that the research study's findings could apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Amankwaa, 2016). The study of transferability is supported with a rich, detailed description of the context, location, and people studied, and by being transparent about analysis and trustworthiness (Connelly, 2016). The researcher should provide sufficient information on the informants and the research context to enable the reader to assess the findings' capability of being "fit" or transferable (Cope, 2014). A researcher could never be able to be specific in the science used to transfer information. A researcher can only provide enough information to the reader to conclude that this circumstance necessitates a new application. I ensured that the narrations of the participants are well described enough to aid in the growth of the theoretical account and my analyses of the data.

Study Results

Many potential participants were initially approached for this study with follow-up reminders made through phone calls periodically to be certain of participants still wanting to be involved in the study. Ten initially responded, eight consented, two declined, and one was dropped due to not meeting the criteria of the study. Participation in this study was strictly on a voluntarily basis, and each participant provided the necessary consented form prior to the interviews. The individual participant was briefed on the purpose of the study and was given the opportunity to ask a question to ascertain their understanding of the material/information. Complete confidentiality was maintained.

All seven respondents reported that they possessed and used technology for communication purposes (mainly cell phones) except, two participants that stated they use computer/tablet in addition to cell phones. Six of the seven Participants reported that all members of their families possess cell phones. One Participant said all adults have cell phones, but teens are allowed cell phones based on maturity level. All participants reported using cell phones for messages. However, all participants use face to face for in-depth communication. All participants acknowledged that technology is convenient because it provides a faster communication outlet. Technology connects globally and allows the ability to complete specific tasks quicker.

The results are organized by theme, and each theme relates to the perceptions, and experiences of parents of family communication within this modern technology.

Theme 1: The Importance of or Role of Parental Supervision

The results showed that three participants mentioned parental supervision and the role said supervision plays in helping the new generation balance the use of technology. Supervision means care, charge, guidance, headship, regulation, stewardship, superintendence, and surveillance. These words paint a picture of hands-on parenting that engages in every aspect of their children's lives. It is not just needed but required. Lack of parental supervision can cause and or allow children to develop certain habits that are not healthy; for example: children can inter dangerous situations without the maturity level require to discern the authenticity of the circumstances and consequences. It is a parent's responsibility to guide, and care for children as they grow, and that includes what they use, watch, do, and how, when, what, and why. Technology has become

ubiquitous. It influences various aspects of life, both professional and private. It is used for shopping, communication, connection, and relationship building and maintenance. However, they are dangers as well. These dangers include but not limited to children accessing information that is potentially damaging emotionally, socially, spiritually, physically, and psychologically. Parental supervision provides a safe environment for children to develop interpersonal skills that would guide them in life. Parents are to lead by examples; hence the need for structure and or boundaries. They keep children safe and protect their humanity. If the current generation wants a healthy predecessor, it begins with healthy children that are part of the generation z.

For example, five out of seven participants stated that they believe that technology is not good for teens. Participant 1 said that "I do control the technological access of my children for they are on a computer, tablet, and phone as needed and no one under 18 years of age is allowed to be in the room with devices." Participant 3 said that "it is essential to monitor your children while they on the computer for there are a lot of sick people out there who are looking to destroy kids or families."

Participant 4 stated that "I face time with children when I am out, but I monitor them by tracking how they use the device because they are a lot of information that children should not have access to." Participant 5 said that "technology is limited in my house; my children know that they must be monitored and break down the time to how much time they spent on it." Participant 6 stated that "I don't allow devices or television watching at the dinner table; my children do not like it, but it builds our family relationship."

Theme 2: Technology's Limited Usage

Six participants stated that technology usage requires a limit. This limitation would allow children to learn balance. It would provide the children with opportunities to develop social skills, explore their surroundings, refine their practical communicational skills, and stimulate their imagination. Technology is a useful tool; it can be when used with discipline and caution, but it can also be a device that causes pain due to people using it. There have been teens who have committed crimes both self and others due to being antisocial and feeling that they have no friends and or they think not heard. Sometimes these issues can be resolved through family communication. Parental perspective on this family communication implied that unlimited access to technology without constructive guidance and surveillance could harm this generation eventually. Self-control is one component one needs to lead a successful life and business.

For example, six out of seven participants stated that technology must be used with a limit, whether a teen or adult uses it. Participant 1 noted that technology is very limited in her life; "I am on the phone as needed, on the computer as needed; thus, I use the same principles for my children; technology does not distract me at all." Participant 2 noted that "too much technology in the home can cause the children to be more introverted instead of being more social." Participant 4 said that "technology is good but must be limited, monitored, and there should be a time down to how much time to spend on." Participant 5 said that "I limit the amount of time that has been spent in the devices and regulate the family time." Participant 6 said that "too much time spending on technology like online, watching videos, and others wasting time and then become a

problem." Participant 7 stated that "technology is the only way, nowadays to communicate with everything, and get through everything, talk to people, send messages, communication; however, it needs a limit."

Theme 3: The Lack or Loss of Family Quality Time

This point was particularly important because it focuses on one of the effects of technology usage without parental control and or limitation. All participants complained about the lack of family quality time and quality communication. Due to an increase in technology access to children and teens, social interactions have suffered. Communication is essential because it helps a family grow in maturity level, maintain a healthy relationship and boundaries, promotes healthy familial culture, safe environment for self-expression, and productive contribution. Children learn fundamental lessons of control, effective communication, and self-awareness, which emotional intelligence is a by-product of. Technology gives the ability to send and receive information; it makes life a little more convenient in areas such as shopping, education, medicine, networking, etc.; but the question is, what is the cost? Social media, while the intentions maybe were to connect people from all over in the world, but it has become something that causes concern for parents due to its accessibility by all, with good or bad intentions. Its attraction has caused addiction to the teens where they value a device more than human relations.

For example, all seven participants stated that technology had robbed family quality time. Participant 1 said that "technology has taken away the beauty of hearing the voice of the person, the eye contact, and the actual presence of the persons

communicating when texting." Participant 6 expressed her feeling by saying, "it becomes a burden when we sit together where everyone wants to be on their phones, or not paying attention nor communicating with each other while we are sitting, so it affects that part of the family." Participant 7 stated that "technology has not enhanced communication into the family; we have lost face to face communication with our children, and they are always on their phones; they don't even want to text you because they are busy on their phones."

Theme 4: Differences in Communication Methods Between the Older and Younger Generations

Participants gave their point of view of this modern technology versus the younger generation. All seven participants said that they prefer face to face communication. Participant 1 stated, "I prefer face to face communication because technology has taken away the person hearing your voice when someone is texting, eye contact and some of the affection; however, it is different for my children because they would prefer texting or calling me even if they are in another room in the house."

Participant 2 stated "face to face is better to see the person that you are talking to, which is the opposite of my teens' preference." Participant 3 said that "we, parents, prefer face-to-face communication in our house, but socializing is less due to the amount of time the teens spent on individual devices separately." Participant 6 stated that "face to face communication builds better relationships." Participant 7 said that "I prefer face to face to communicate with others because I can tell how you are feeling in your emotions if you are speaking to me by looking into my eyes, or just communicating with me."

Participant 8 said that "I don't like technology because we lose communication within the family."

Theme 5: The Attachment Teens Have to Their Phones

Most participants said that teens are passionate about technology. Participant 1 stated that when her teens transitioned from child to teens, they talked less with parents, for they attach more to their phones. "They have less time together with the family; they spend more time on phones watching videos and listening to music with headphones, and they cannot hear anybody." Participant 2 stated that "my teens rely on their internet, their cell phones, and video games. They always want to do more on computers and phones. They would have liked to do everything on the internet and spending time with their friends." Participant 5 stated that "my teens like their phones more than anything else, even us as parents." Participant 6 said that "it was effortless to talk when they were children, now they are always on their phones and they think they know everything. There is a huge gap in my family communication." Participant 7 said, "my teens are always on the phones while they have less communication with us as parents."

Theme 6: Influences of Technology in Education and on Teens' Social Development

Two participants stated that technology slows down the teen's education, and social development. Participant 3 said that "my teens are too busy to have time to read and do schoolwork where we, parents must keep motivating them. They are too busy to socialize with family and others face to face." Participant 4 stated that "my teens don't want to read, and they seem prone to it." According to Participant 4, teens find things that are more attractive in their devices than what they can find on their homework. For

example, "they can watch movies, cartoons, and play various games all day long, which are more fun than doing homework."

However, five out of seven participants said that technology helps their children's education and social development. Participant 1 stated that technology had not affected her children negatively because they are doing well in school. She taught them how to use technology effectively, sparingly, and or as needed. "My children are not spending the night on the phone and or spending time on technology in their room." Participant 2 stated that technology helps her teens to be better in school. They only use computers for school purposes because a lot of their books are on the computer as well as music lessons.

Participant 5 said that technology helps improve her teens' education for they can search more from the internet; there are a lot more available to supplement their books. She stated that "I use the ABC Mouse website for my children, and it has improved their reading and their knowledge." She believed that if teens go on the proper things, they can learn a lot of good stuff for the future. Participant 6 stated that technology could not affect her teens' education because they are not overused. She said that "by not controlling how much technology your children use, they can freely watch whatever they want, which can expand their minds to something that you are hoping they not get into." Participant 7 stated that "my teens do good in education because they use technology under parent's supervision."

Summary

I aimed to explore parental perceptions of family communication in the face of modern technology. I conducted this research to discover through face-to-face interviews with seven parents who served as participants for the study. The questionnaire contained 21 questions aimed at answering the stated research question. Based on the data collected from all seven participants, I concluded that technology has a positive and negative influence on family relationships. The six themes mentioned above have both positive and negative effects on family communication. Participant 3 stated that the lack of parental supervision could cause and or allow children to develop certain habits that are not healthy; for example: children can inter dangerous situations without the maturity level require to discern the authenticity of the circumstances and consequences. Participant 5 stated that technology is a useful tool if it is used with discipline and caution, but it can also be a device that causes pain due to people using it. Participant 1 said that technology gives the ability to send and receive information; it makes life a little more convenient in areas such as shopping, education, medicine, and networking.

Based on the themes, technology has both positive and negative effects, social skills, communication skills, and relationship-cultivating skills. Chapter 4 included several sections detailing the results of this generic qualitative study. To present the findings, the chapter has provided the results, research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. Chapter 5 includes the conclusion of this research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand parental

perceptions and experiences concerning family communication within the context of

modern technology. This study followed a qualitative paradigm with a generic approach.

Generic studies seek to understand how people interpret, construct, or make meaning

from their world and their experiences (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). A preliminary

descriptive examination of the experiences of parents was conducted. The generic study

approach helps researchers understand people and their behavior in a social, cultural, and

economic context (Renate & Kahlke BA Hon, 2014). The study was conducted to

contribute to the existing body of literature regarding parental experiences with the use of

modern communication platforms and the influences on the quality of effective

communication within the family unit.

The questionnaire contained 21 questions designed to answer the following

research question: "What are the experiences of parents regarding the influence of

technology on family communication?" These questions have relationship with the

conceptual framework and the existing literature of the study; for example, the

attachment teens have to their phones correlates with the literature reported that 95% of

American teenagers are online every day (Rudi et al., 2015); the lack or loss of family

quality time correlates with the existing literature reported that technology affects family

communication by using devices on dinner tables (McDaniel & Coyne, 2014). The

importance of or the role of parental supervision correlates with existing literature that

adolescents who are supervised have open communication with their parents and engaged in less sexual risk-taking behaviors (Edwards, 2015; Huisman et al., 2012). There is a better relationship between parents and children with open communication because it serves as a protective factor for children against the development of depression and anxiety and engagement in antisocial activities. Technology's limit usage correlates with the existing literature for twenty percent of Americans played games via social networking sites; three quarters of households spent time in computer video gaming with approximately 57% of people reporting spending 3-7 hours texting per day (Carvalho et al., 2015; Coyne, Padilla-Walker, & Howard, 2013).

Interpretation of Findings

Findings confirmed what has been found in the peer-reviewed literature in many areas. Literature confirmed that information and communication technologies have proven to be essential tools with effective use. Information and communication technologies have the potential to accomplish many things, including nurturing relationships within families, friendships, and business environments (Kowal et al., 2015; Leonardi, 2013; Lindberg et al., 2013; Romero-Ruiz et al., 2017). The participants confirmed in Question 10 that technology increased family communication in many ways. It can enhance family communication by connecting one another with information, by providing better connection amongst families.

According to literature demographic reports of 2015 showed that 93% of married couples with children below the age of 18 who reside within the United States had a computer in their homes; 94% reported going online from home, and 95% were using cell

phones (Rudi et al., 2015). Eighty percent of the interviewees stated using cell phones for texting, calling or messaging, and 100% of the interviewees agreed that they used the Internet in some way.

I stated in Chapter 2 that technological advancements had changed the way people live their lives. How people shop for goods and services, how people learn, and how people read, are among the many ways lives have been affected by technology (Edwards, 2015; Huisman et al., 2012). Eighty percent of the interviewees noticed behavioral changes in using technology, while all seven parents stated that technology had influenced the effectiveness of their family's communication.

According to literature, technology has a negative impact on family communication; it is confirmed by 60% of the interviewees that technology does not help in effective communication. Six out of seven participants noted that technology had contributed specific deficits to their families. According to literature, 95% of teenagers are online every day in the United States, and 74% have Internet access on tablets, cellular phones, and other devices (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2014). The result of question confirms it; all seven participants said that they used cell phones and sometimes computers to access the Internet.

In Chapter 2, I referenced the use of technology in today's world where to some researchers, it can be challenging to observe technology's influence on the way families interact because technological advances are progressing rapidly (Fong & Mizera-Pietraszko, 2015). Technological tools have become essential to productivity in the 21st century (Edwards, 2015). It is confirmed by Question 5; the participants stated that

technology is a faster communication outlet; it is good just as medical purposes are functional; technology is a good thing in the 21st century, which is an age of information.

According to literature technology has negative aspects where there is not much quality time spent on meaningful communication; a skill set that can be developed with practice and courage such as recognition, time together, and empathy (Alessondra, 2013; Casey, 2012; McDaniel & Coyne, 2014; Nie & Erbring, 2010). It is confirmed by Question 8 that face-to-face communication was needed to connect sound with gestures.

It is stated in the literature that information about effective family communication is the key to keeping families happy and healthy; it is a good interaction both professionally and personally, and it keeps life away from chaos while building the family unit (Edici & Hrritt, 2014). This is confirmed by the interviewees in Question 7 that communication is very important and very effective in their family.

According to literature the roles or relationships of the family is essential because a family is a social unit; it is a necessary component of society that never stops growing and developing (Blair & McCormick, 2014; Sciascia et al., 2013). Five of the participants stated that they had a good relationship with their children, where they have an open line of communication to discuss anything; however, two participants reported that they barely had a relationship with their teens.

According to literature, technology affects society in many ways. Teenagers, for example, can develop antisocial behaviors, exhibit poor academic performance, view or listen to inappropriate content on the Internet, adopt negative behaviors from violent games, and exercise less (Syairah & Syairah, 2013). Researchers have found that suicide

rates increase through Internet sources (Dunlop et al., 2012); one in five divorces involve the social networking site Facebook. More than 80% of U.S. divorce attorneys said social networking in divorce proceedings is on the rise. There is a 20% increase in the rate of divorce (Dunlop et al., 2012; Rosen, 2014). However, four participants stated that technology did hurt their children's education by spending too much time on devices like talking on the phone, watching cartoons, movies, and play various games.

Limitations of the Study

There are possible limitations to qualitative studies. This study was limited by the population size. The seven participants in this study were not enough to achieve data saturation, the point at which data had become tedious, and no supplementary information could be collected. Data saturation is generally made with 10 participants, and with higher confidence by using 13 participants (Francis et al., 2010). Only seven participants in this present study were not enough to secure data saturation. While the careful selection of participants sought to ensure a broad range of parental perceptions and experiences of family communication in this modern technology, the low sample size might affect the available results.

With face-to-face interviews, the parents might not have answered questions with all honesty, or some parents might have been extra careful when giving information about their children. The data were collected with parents who only have adolescents of 12 through 17 years of age. The research was done only in St. Lucie County; more counties could have been different. Most of the parents were raised with limited or no experience of technological usage. They might not have been fair with their answers, or they might

have over judged this generation. The interviews were based on personal experiences, while everybody has different backgrounds. Parents may have lied with the answers, or there might be prejudice. Nevertheless, the low sample size might have produced a data saturation problem. Future studies will have to reveal if more participants lead to additional insights.

Recommendations

This study was conducted in one county and with a very small sample size. It is the first to delve into perceptions and experiences of parents of family communication in this modern technology. I discovered a new area of research and addressed a gap in the literature. The results and interpretation of this study brought questions that could allow motivation and inform future research. The low sample and lack of saturation caused a limitation for the study, which might be an impact on the results. Future qualitative studies, with more resources available, should address this issue and drastically expand the sample size.

Another line of research could further discover the apparent benefits of parental perceptions of family communication in this modern technology. Giving the nature of this present study, the results were not easily generalizable. Future studies could have other ways of investigation in which the experiences and perceptions of different populations differ.

Finally, I would recommend further research into the area of effective family communication and how technology can be effectively implemented to aid the gap between teens and adults in communication styles. Future qualitative studies, with a

regular schedule between parents and teens to have an intimate conversation, would need to be done to address the issue of technology in family relationships. Technology offers ways to connect with families in different geographical locations but offers little to permit a platform for a more in-depth conversation or human connection. Future research should be done about how parents perceive technology about to family communication.

Implications

I specifically focused on parents with adolescents from the age of 12 to 17 years old. This demographic was chosen to address the need for effective communication within this age group. Adolescents are a fragile group because they are in a mode of transition from children to teens on the threshold of adulthood. They are finding their identity and their interests; however, there are too many temptations with the potential to lead them astray without the guidance of parents and effective communication. This present study was consistent with these findings. The small sample size and lack of data saturation notwithstanding, it provided evidence that explained why support from parents was conducive to family communication. The support that parents provide, the desires to facilitate positive or hinder negative socialization, their positive relationships with teens, and their facilitation to helping them, all contribute to increasing better relationships for family. Future research should further delve into these areas.

Family communication is essential because it promotes healthy relationships, practical communication skills, the development and maintenance of social skills, and the creation of an environment of trust (Edici & Hrritt, 2014). I recommend training for parents to learn the art of communication that would motivate children and teens to

connect and be less addicted to devices and more attuned to human contact. This action would help parents merge the gap existing in their communication methods within the family. I recommend research conducted from teenagers' views as to what barriers prevented a desire for in-depth communication and being open with their parents. Finally, I recommend further research on this topic with larger sample size and more counties.

The family unit is essential. Its structure and its health dictate society's wellbeing. It is vital that each member of the family perform his or her role, contributing to the family to make it better and more successful. As a parent, I feel obligated to help families to offer insight to parents, professionals, and society into helping create policies that would help families succeed at every stage of transition.

At the beginning of this project, I had preconceived ideas on how to address the research issue. However, the deeper I delved into the problem, the more it became clear that there is more to learn and bring to light. This project is the launchpad of a most significant initiative for parents' voices and concerns to be heard and policies to be made from this point of view. However, there is still much to learn and explore to gain a deeper awareness of this problem. This study's potential impact on social change at an individual level is that parents would have to understand the elemental tools to parenting involved in intentional open and effective communication, discipline, and consistency in building and maintaining family time and holistic health. Parents seem to have disconnected from being hands-on and moved to more passive parenting.

Throughout the study, the data revealed that teens are attached to their cell phones and have a lack of interest in face to face communication or family time (Alessondra,

2013). Dinner time has fallen by the wayside due to both parents working and children having more freedom in decision making and assuming more authoritative roles. This disconnect must be acknowledged and removed for social change to take place. Parents need a deeper self-awareness to help understand Generation Z's culture and balance the old and the new to build a healthier family experience. This self-awareness would lead to a successful family connection in which each member would be productive and healthy.

Family communication would become a norm rather than an occasion. Parents would build and maintain an environment of trust by being role models in effective communication. This vision will help produce healthy and happy family units in which children/teens are comfortable to express themselves with their siblings. This open communication system would allow parents to be proactive in problem-solving, preventative intervention, and family security through trust and loyalty. When families are healthy, practice effective communication, and create boundaries through discipline, the new generation will reflect these characteristics through their role and contribution to society. The result would impact the organizational structure, foundation, and performance. The future employees would have learned about effective communication skills, how to articulate vision into words, emotionally intelligence, and loyalty. These characteristics are essential to productive working environments because effective communication involves the physical, mental, spiritual, and social aspects of a person. The need for effective communication on an individual, family, organizational, and societal level is imperative.

The impact of this study on the societal level would provide training for families concerning effective communication and its effects on happiness and the health of the family unit. Parents may also have avenues through which they can learn about cultures' characteristics, generational differences, and similarities, how they communicate, and what motivates them. This may also ensure security policies for children using the Internet. Parents may also learn about their role in managing family time and intentional communication endeavors within their homes.

Methodologically, the implication would encourage further research into this topic of study for the benefit of families and society in general. Theoretical effect is to bring awareness to the role of a healthy family unit, its part in society, interactions and influences on the environment, and family structure. This will open potential endeavors into family rehabilitation in which each member acknowledges his or her role and performs it efficiently.

When each member of a family system collaborates by contributing their best for the success of the family as a unit, the world will be a better place for all involved. The empirical implication of this study will hopefully provide a more significant interest in the area of research concerning family communication and potential technology addiction.

Conclusion

Based on the literature review, technology has both negative and positive influences on society and culture but needs balance. Technology is ubiquitous; it permeates lives because its convenience seems limitless in theory, such as its usefulness

and purpose for online shopping, communication, networking, training, and information. Technology can be used as a vehicle to aid for family connections, businesses, organizations, and educational institutions. Nonetheless, parents must recognize they need to be hands-on in how much time their children spend online and what they do with their time online. Parents must be able to navigate the unknown territory of technology by being aware of their own biases and prejudices concerning this evolving platform.

The findings give a voice to parents' view concerning influences technology has had on family communication. Technology is a useful tool, but it cannot replace family interaction, human connection, the emotion, the sound, and the feeling of face to face communication. Too much technology or time in tech is destructive; there is a need for balance and human connection that grounds us all for healthy human experience.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

Parental Perception of Family Communication in the Face of Modern Technology
Walden University

Qualitative Interview

> You are being invited to take part in a research study exploring the parental Perception of Family Communication in the Face of Modern Technology. This research will involve in-depth interviews and be an opportunity for you to provide your perspective and feedback about your personal experiences.
>
> To be eligible for this study, you must be a parent or legal guardian who is raising one or more 12 through 17 years child. Your opinions and experiences are valuable to understanding the perception of parent on family communication in the face of modern technology. This data can be used to improve family communication research that is more useful for practitioners. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding to participate.
>
> This study is being conducted by a researcher named Litermin Joseph, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Litermin will be the primary investigator, and will personally collect all data during this study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand parental experiences concerning family communication in relation to technology. This study will contribute to the existing body of literature regarding parental experiences of technology that affect the quality of communication within the family unit.

Definitions:
Important terms and definitions as they relate to this study:
1. The effectiveness of communication: The research will furnish groundwork for what already exists about the effectiveness of communication.
2. Family relationships: I will explore research on the significance of family relationships as a platform for the credibility and validity of the research.
3. Parental experiences of family communication: Existing literature about parental experiences of family communication will be reviewed to support the stated social problem. Research and statistics on parental experiences of family communication will be presented. Research will focus on the influence of technology on family communication and its effect on the emotional and social development of the younger generation.

Participant Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
• Engage in one taped, interactive interview answering open ended questions over the phone or face to face.
• Provide detailed feedback about your experiences in understanding parental perceptions concerning family communication in relation to technology.
• This feedback may be positive, negative, or both. It is important to share honest feedback in order to determine parental perceptions concerning family communication in relation to technology from your unique viewpoint. However, the entire interview is strictly confidential and any identifying information will be destroyed upon completion of the interview.
• On average, each interview will take 30-40 minutes to complete.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel may feel uncomfortable answering.

Risks of Being in the Study:
There are minimal risks for participating in study. However, you could experience feelings of discomfort or uneasiness in sharing negative experiences related to describing personal or organizational barriers in applying empirical research to your professional practices. Participants may find that answering questions for this interview may reveal feelings to themselves that they were not previously aware of. If you feel uncomfortable or distressed at any time during this interview you should feel free to terminate participation.

Benefits of Being in the Study:
Processing both positive and negative emotions and experiences can be mildly stressful. In contrast, participants may benefit from participating in this interview by feeling empowered and valued as part of parental experiences concerning family communication in relation to technology. Participants may feel encouraged by having a chance to include their own voice in a research project which directly relates to their profession. Further, participants can benefit the parents concerning family field in relation to technology by improving the quality of this research project through contributing unique and valuable opinions and experiences. Results of this study will contribute to an action plan to improve collaboration between researchers and family communication.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. As the primary researcher, Litermin Joseph, will be the only individual to view and maintain your contact information. As soon as data collection is completed, interview will be assigned a unique number and any identifying information connected to the interview will be destroyed immediately. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. The researcher will not save any identifying information or include any identifying information for any individual or organization in reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the primary researcher Litermin Joseph at any time.

Litermin Joseph
772 5284028
Litermin.joseph@waldenu.edu

Please print a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Participant's Electronic* Signature

_____

Date of consent

_____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

**Please note: Your informed consent form will remain in a locked cabinet separate from any data collected and is only viewable by the primary researcher

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

The main purpose of the questionnaire is to have some basic background information about yourself.

1. Gender: _____ Female _____Male

2. Age___18-21___22-25___26-30____31-41___41 and over

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? _____

4. What is your ethnic background?

☐ White

☐ Black

☐ Latino (any race)

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

☐ Native American

☐ Other (Please specify): _____

5. Do you have any religious preference? If yes, what is it? _____

6. What is your marital status? _____

7. How many teenagers live in your household? What age?

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What types of communication technology are mostly used by your family in your

    home?

2. Which members of the family have cell phones?

3. What mode of technology do you use most to access the Internet?

4. Which do you use most to send messages?

5. What is your perception of technology? Why?

6. How do you feel about teens using technology?

7. How important effective communication is in your family?

8. What method do you prefer to use for communication?

9. To what extent has your use of technology enabled you to maintain effective

   communication?

10. How has technology enhanced your family's communication?

11. Tell me about your family's usage of technology for communication purposes?

12. What specific benefits have technology contributed to your family?

13. What specific deficits have technology contributed to your family?

14. How many types of technology are used for communication purpose within your

    family?

15. How have these types of technology helped effective communication in the

    family?

16. Have you noticed any behavioral changes in yourself due to technology usage?

17. What effect (if any) has technology had on your child/children's education?

18. What are the changes in communication that have occurred as your child

transitioned from child to teen?

19. What is the relationship between you (parent) and the teen?

20. How do you believe technology has influenced those changes?

21. Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not covered with these

questions?