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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

School of Human and Community Development

Discipline of Psychology

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN SUSTAINING AND MAINTAINING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUT-MIGRANTS IN LIMPOPO: MODIMOLLE VILLAGE

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March 2021

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A research report submitted to the School of Human and Community Development, Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research by coursework.

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Date: March 2021

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude to the following individuals:

My supervisor Prof Maria Marchetti-Mercer for her consistent academic support throughout the writing of the thesis and for her constructive feedback which really helped to sharpen my thesis. Thank you.

My son Lehumo for being such an amazing child and having allowed me to finish this thesis. You are loved beyond measure.

To my family, my mother Diana, my brothers Marwale, Tshegofatso, and Kabelo, and my sisters Raseekele and Mahlako, thank you very much for believing in my potential and being there when I needed you the most. I am forever grateful.

To my friends Sontaga, Sydwell, Poppy, Tumi and Nomsa, thank you very much for believing in my dreams and offering me both psychosocial support as well as academic support when I needed it the most.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to the National Research Fund (NRF) for funding my research. Thank you very much.

Glory be to the almighty God!

Abstract

As economic activities in the urban areas of South Africa increase, more and more individuals from the rural parts of South Africa are drawn to the urban areas in search of better economic opportunities. However, those who are left behind must establish ways to maintain connectedness and preserve relationships with those that have left.

The increase in the availability and use of information communication technologies (ICTs) is progressively allowing more people to maintain relationships with those family members who are geographically distant, allowing those left behind to stay in touch with those who have relocated to other parts of South Africa.

This study forms part of a larger research project focusing on the role of ICTs in maintaining relationships in African families where out-migration by family members has occurred. The focus of this specific study was on South African rural families whose children had migrated to urban areas of South Africa.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of a qualitative study with ten elderly people over the age of sixty whose children had out-migrated from the village of Modimolle in the province of Limpopo, South Africa. The aim was to understand their experiences around the use of ICTs in maintaining connectedness with those who had out-migrated. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data.

The results reveal that technology provides some sense of immediacy in communication with those family members who are geographically distant, as opposed to old methods of communication which were infrequent. However, some challenges are encountered such as lack of familiarity with and/or knowledge of the most recent forms of technology such as WhatsApp, Skype, and Facetime, which may hinder this type of communication. There also

appears to be a preference for face-to-face communication which can be achieved through visits, but this again is impeded by financial restrictions and logistical limitations. Importantly, the costs associated with the use of technology, such as the purchase of mobile data, also appear to be a hindrance in maintaining relationships across distance. This research therefore highlights that continuing economic and consequently digital disparity may be a barrier to maintaining family relationships for rural South African elderly people, despite the presence of more advanced forms of technology.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Historically South Africa has witnessed many different migratory patterns (Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020). Internal patterns of migration have often been linked to economic reasons as various populations from the rural parts of South Africa moved to the cities and urban areas to look for employment opportunities (Kok et al., 2006). This trend has been well documented and dates back to the years 1867, when the first diamonds in the country were discovered in Kimberley, and 1886, when the Witwatersrand gold fields were opened. Many people flocked to the urban areas, more specifically to Kimberley and Johannesburg, where the demand for labour was high (Kok et al., 2006). The apartheid years saw many Black families being broken up as both men and women had to move to the cities to look for work. These patterns have continued beyond the first multiracial elections in South Africa in 1994 due to the economic disparity between people living in the rural areas and those in the urban areas. Consequently, people in the rural areas continue to move to the cities and urban areas to look for employment opportunities (Kok et al., 2006).

Those that move to the urban areas leave many of their family members behind. The elderly people and children are usually the group of people left behind as a result of labour migration (Démurger, 2015). Migration has a profound impact on these people (Démurger, 2015). Variety of emotions are likely experienced by those left behind as a result of other family members' decision to migrate (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b).

In recent years, research on international migration has focused on how migrant families use ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) to maintain relationships across

distance. ICTs have arguably changed the possibilities for sustaining connections and support amongst migrant families (Baldassar, 2016; Issa, 2015).

In comparison to the international landscape, research in this area has been limited in South Africa, often focusing mostly on the international out-migration of middle class South African families (Mabandla, 2018; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a, 2012b; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020).

Subsequently, much is not known about the use of ICTs in rural South African families to maintain connectedness with family members who have left to the metropolitan areas in search of better work opportunities. This study hopes to provide some insight into this phenomenon and highlight the challenges and benefits associated with ICT use in this population.

Although technology enables people to maintain relationships across distance, a number of factors may hinder this process (Van Biljon et al., 2013). Socio-economic factors such as low levels of income may at times make it difficult for elderly people to maintain connectedness with their children across distance due to the high operating costs associated with the use of ICTs (Takavarasha & Adams, 2018). Practical factors such as those related to the use of a mobile phone, including the size of the font on the display screen and the size of the buttons of the mobile phone, can hinder elderly people from using mobile phones effectively for communication purposes with their migrant children across distance (Van Biljon et al., 2013).

Furthermore, most of the research that has been carried out to explore how elderly people use ICTs to sustain and maintain relationships across distance with their adult migrant children focused mostly on the experiences of elderly people in well-resourced communities who have easy access to technological resources (see research by Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b,

2017; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020). By comparison, the experiences of rural South African elderly people whose children have left for the more thriving urban areas has been ignored.

In this thesis, I describe the experiences of a group of elderly people residing in Modimolle village, a rural village in the province of Limpopo, South Africa, around the use of ICTs to maintain ties with their adult children who have out-migrated to the urban areas and cities of South Africa.

These participants were interviewed to illustrate the impact of out-migration of adult children on the elderly people left behind and their experiences around the use of ICTs to maintain ties with their adult children across distance. Below I provide a short overview of the area in which the research study took place in order to allow the reader to understand the context within which the research took place.

1.2 Brief contextual overview of Limpopo province

1.2.1 Location and general situation

The province of Limpopo is located in the northernmost part of South Africa (Makhura, 2002). The province shares international borders with three neighbouring countries of South Africa, namely Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Makhura, 2002). In addition, the province also shares national boundaries with three South African provinces, namely Gauteng North West, and Mpumalanga (Cadman, 2007). The province of Limpopo is considered to be the fifth largest province in South Africa and covers about 123 910 square miles of the country (Cadman, 2007). Its location is shown in the map in Figure 1, and a more detailed view of the province is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1

Map of South Africa



Source: *South Africa Maps | Printable Maps of South Africa for Download*, (n.d.)

Figure 2

Map of Limpopo Province



Source: *Map of Limpopo* (n.d.)

A large part of the Limpopo province is mainly rural (Harrison, 2004). According to Statistics South Africa, the province of Limpopo is ranked the fifth most populated province in South Africa. In the year 2016 the province had a total population estimate of 5 799 090 people

(Statistics South Africa, 2016). Part of its population is comprised of mainly three tribes, namely the Tsonga, the Pedi and the Venda tribes (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

Traditional authorities such as chiefs and traditional leaders provide a strong backbone for a large part of the population in rural Limpopo (Brynard & Musitha, 2011). According to Brynard and Musitha (2011), traditional authorities are responsible for "local government and land administration" (p. 114) in the rural parts of the province. Moreover, the traditional authorities play a pivotal role in advising metropolitan and district municipalities in matters related to traditional communities such as traditional leadership, customary laws, the development of plans relating to issues that traditional communities experience, and the development of traditional laws that apply to the traditional communities (Sekgala, 2017).

Apart from having a strong structure of traditional authorities, the province of Limpopo also consists of six municipal districts namely Bohlabela, Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg (Pauw, 2005). The authorities of these municipal districts are responsible for overseeing local municipality functions and ensuring that there is provision of service delivery in rural parts of the province such as rural health, maintenance of roads, tourism and district planning (Atkinson, Van der Watt, & Fourie, 2003).

1.2.2 Socio-economic profile of Limpopo

1.2.2.1 Employment

The Limpopo province is ranked the second province in the country of South Africa with the highest level of unemployment (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The level of unemployment in the province increased by two percent between March 2018 and March 2019 (Statistic South Africa, 2020). When contrasted with all the nine provinces of South Africa, the province of

Limpopo experienced the largest increase in the expansion of the unemployment rate in the same time frame of up to 4,3% (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

Due to the largest part of the province being rural, the conditions in the province are substandard when contrasted to the other provinces in the country of South Africa (Gyekye & Kyei, 2011). Although the province is rich in minerals such as platinum and gold, the minerals are exported to other places and that in turn causes about the exportation of services as the minerals are returned in the form of goods (Gyekye & Kyei, 2011).

1.2.2.2 Poverty

The Limpopo province has the highest level of poverty when contrasted to the other provinces in South Africa (Limpopo Provincial Treasury, 2012). The province is also reported to have the highest rate of adult poverty with a total percentage of 67,5%, according to the living conditions survey conducted by Statistics South Africa (2018).

1.2.2.3 Municipal services

Service delivery in the province of Limpopo also presents a challenge (Statistics South Africa, 2016). About 75,5% of the total household population does not have access to clean drinkable water, placing the Limpopo province in second place amongst the provinces in the country with regard to a low percentage of households having access to clean drinkable water (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

Access to basic sanitation services is also a problem in the province. In the year 2016, about 637 896 (40%) households in the province used pit toilets located in their yards as their main source of sanitation facility, of which only 447 735 (20%) households used pit toilets with ventilated pipes (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The total number of households that used

flush toilets connected to the municipal sewerage system as their main source of sanitation facility was 332 597 (20,8%) (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

The majority of the households in the province of Limpopo have access to electricity. About 84% of the total population in the province had access to electricity in their households through prepaid meters in the year 2016. Moreover, 7,4% of the population had access to electricity through in-house conventional meters. Only 5,6 % of the population did not have access to electricity (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

Access to refuse removal is also one of the main issues in the province. In the year 2016, the majority of the population, about 66%, used dumping sites as their main source of refuse removal facility. Only 22% of the total population in the province reported having access to either community or private company waste collection services. When contrasted to the rest of South Africa, the province of Limpopo has the highest percentage of households without access to refuse removal in the country (Statistics south Africa, 2016).

1.2.2.4 Access to internet services

About 104 404 of the total number of households in the province had access to internet services in the year 2016 (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Of these 104 404 households, 64 025 were headed by males (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The Limpopo province ranked first in terms of provinces with the lowest household internet access in the country at 1, 7 % of households having access to the internet in 2018 (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

1.2.2.5 Telecommunications

The province of Limpopo is the second province in the country with the highest number of people who use mobile phones exclusively (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

1.3 Outline of the remainder of the thesis

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides a historical overview of the process of migration in South Africa. The chapter further discusses the theories behind the motivation to migrate. Different types of migration fluxes in South Africa are then discussed as well as the characteristics of internal migrants in South Africa. The impact of out-migration by family members on elderly people left behind is then considered and this includes a discussion on the impact of out-migration on family structure and functioning as well as the psychological impact of out-migration. This chapter concludes with an overview of how families left behind as a result of out-migration by family members maintain ties with those family members who are geographically distant from them through the use of ICTs and physical visits.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides the research methodology chosen for the research study. The theoretical framework of the research study, the rationale, objectives, aims and research questions of the study are covered. Next, the chapter discusses the research design employed in the research study. Furthermore, the chapter describes the characteristic of the sample employed in the study, the sample size, the sampling technique employed in the study, and participants' information. The chapter further describes the method of data collection and analysis employed in the research study. In addition, the chapter discusses the trustworthiness of the research study and the reflexivity of the researcher during the research study. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the ethical considerations adhered to during the research process.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the process of data analysis of the data collected from the research participants. This includes the interpretation of the themes and sub-themes as well as verbatim quotes from the research participants' individual interviews. The themes of the research study are divided into subsections, namely reasons for migration, decision to migrate, "licence to leave", impact of the decision to migrate on those left behind, ways of coping with losses associated with migration, the gendered nature of migratory moves, chosen ways of communication, challenges linked to the use of ICTs, and the importance of visits.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This presents the discussion of the themes and subthemes from the research results and includes verbatim quotes from the participants' interviews as well as references to literature substantiating the themes and sub-themes discussed.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter outlines how the aims and objectives of the research study were achieved as well as the limitations of the study. The chapter further goes on to discuss the key results of the research study. The chapter concludes with the recommendations of the research study for the purpose of future research as well as the implications of the research study for use by mental health specialists.

I now discuss the literature review pertinent to the research study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I give an overview of the most relevant theoretical aspects related to the research project. Firstly, I differentiate between different types of migratory processes, namely emigration, immigration, internal migration, labour migration, and circular migration within the context of South Africa. Secondly, the theories about the motivations behind decisions to migrate are discussed with an emphasis on the economic theories of migration.

Furthermore, the chapter gives a brief overview of South African migration as well as immigration. Thereafter, the chapter discusses the impact of labour migration on Black families and the elderly people left behind. Following that, the chapter gives an overview of the different types of communications that families dispersed by geographical distance use to maintain connectedness. The chapter then concludes with a discussion about the role of visits in families separated by distance.

2.2 Conceptualising migration

2.2.1 Definition of migration

The concept migration is inherently difficult to define as acknowledged by Kok et al. (2003). However, when defined in relation to the human population, the concept migration refers to an individual's or population's patterns of movement to a wide range of predestined places (Eigelaar-Meets, 2018; Van Rooyen, 2000). Bartram et al. (2014) define the concept migration as the geographical relocation of an individual to a far place outside their place of origin.

2.2.2 Different types of migration in South Africa

2.2.2.1 Emigration

Emigration refers to the departure of people from their country of origin, in which they have permanent citizenship, to another country, with the intention of residing there and obtaining permanent citizenship (Sironi et al., 2019; Van Rooyen, 2000). Therefore, the move is described relative to the migrant's place of origin, which is the point of departure (Urquia & Gagnon, 2011).

Important to the concept emigration is the term emigrant, which refers to a person who left their place of origin to settle somewhere else outside of their country (Sironi et al., 2019; Urquia & Gagnon, 2011).

2.2.2.2 Immigration

The term immigration refers to the spatial movement of people into a destination country other than that of their origin, with the motive of making the destination country their usual place of residence (Sironi et al., 2019; Urquia & Gagnon, 2011). Urquia and Gagnon (2011) explain that the movement is described in relation to the migrant's destination country / country of arrival.

Important to the term immigration is the term immigrant, which refers to an individual who moves into a country other than that of their origin, with the motive of making the country of destination their permanent place of residence (Sironi et al., 2019; Urquia & Gagnon, 2011). The move can further be understood in relation to the migrant's destination country (Urquia & Gagnon, 2011).

2.2.2.3 Internal migration

Internal migration is the change in residence of people within a country and includes the departure of people from the rural areas to the cities or nearest towns or provinces (Sharma, 2004; Sironi et al., 2019; Van Rooyen, 2000). The term includes the permanent and temporary movement of people who willingly move to a new place such as rural-urban migration as well as the displacement of people from their usual place of dwelling within a country. Furthermore, the term covers the movement of both citizens and non-citizens who move within a country (Sironi et al., 2019).

In the South African context, internal migration is most commonly seen as the "movement of people from rural to urban areas" (Kok et al., 2003, p. 8). An individual who moves from their place of origin to another district or place within the same country is referred to as an out-migrant at his place of origin (Kok et al., 2003), whereas an individual who moves to a predestined place is referred to as an immigrant (Kok et al., 2003).

2.2.2.4 Labour migration

Labour migration is the departure of people from their native land to places such as metropolitan areas and where there are job opportunities (Kok et al., 2003). The purpose of the movement therefore is gaining employment in the destination place (Urquia & Gagnon, 2011).

2.2.2.5 Circulatory migration

Circulatory migration is the temporary departure of people to different places for a specific period of time which subsequently ends when the migrant moves back to their place of origin permanently (D'Haese & Vink, 2003). Usually, people involved in circulatory migration leave their place of origin temporarily for the urban areas and as such they usually maintain

communication as well as ties with those that they have left behind in their places of origin (Kok & Collinson, 2006).

2.3 Theories of migration

Several factors may influence people's decisions to migrate, with economic motivation seeming to be one of the main factors, especially with respect to internal migration from rural to metropolitan areas. Below I am going to discuss some of the most salient theoretical perspectives of migration to explain the motivations behind individuals' decision to migrate. The following theories of migration will be discussed, namely the push-pull theory of migration, macro theory of migration, new economics theory of migration, neo-classical theory of migration, and the Dissatisfaction and Relative Opportunities of Migration Motivations Model.

2.3.1 Push-pull theory of migration

The push-pull theory of migration was proposed by Everett Lee in 1966. The theory explains an individual's motive to migrate as being influenced by both push and pull factors (Van Hear et al., 2018). Push factors are those attributes or situations that an individual is dissatisfied with about their native land whereas pull factors are those attributes that make another place outside of one's native more appealing (Thet, 2014; Van Hear et al., 2018). Push factors include lack of prospects for advancement, poor economic conditions, underdevelopment and unemployment, whereas pull factors include better working conditions, facilities, higher wages and employment opportunities (Portes & Böröcz, 1989).

The theory further argues that an individual's motive to migrate from their place of origin is also influenced by the stage of the life cycle that they find themselves in (Lee, 1966). According to the theory, the decision to migrate is not always completely rational, with adult

children customarily being influenced to exit their childhood stage of development into the adulthood stage, and to enter into the labour force or pursue their education (Lee, 1966). Those that have spent a prolonged period in their place of origin and created memories of their youth there might therefore perceive their place of origin positively, while on the other hand exposure to the area of destination might allow people to make a judgement on positive factors that attract them and negative factors that repel them from their migration destination (Lee, 1966).

2.3.2 Macro theory of migration

The macro theory of migration was developed by Lewis Martin in 1954 (Kurekova, 2011; Massey, 2015). Central to this theory is the concept that labour migration occurs as a result of regional disparities in supply and demand of labour (King, 2012; Kurekova, 2009). Usually, the migration destination has a higher demand for and supply of labour as compared to the migrant's place of origin (Kurekova, 2011). Furthermore, the theory highlights that the geographical difference in demand for and supply of labour often results in wage differentials between capital rich and capital poor countries (Kurekova, 2011).

The motive to migrate is also well explained by the micro version theory of the macro theory of migration, namely the micro-economic model of individual choice developed by Todaro (1969). He sees an individual decision to migrate as a rational choice made by an individual as a result of geographical difference in labour supply between their place of origin and the migration destination (Arango, 2000). Moreover, individual rational actors calculate the cost and benefit of their migratory move with the assumption of benefiting from a "positive net return" (Massey et al., 1993, p. 434), more specifically a monetary return from the migration move (Massey et al., 1993; Massey, 2015).

However, Massey (2015) argues that although people migrate as a result of expected positive net returns in their migration destination, potential migrants must first make certain

financial investments that will facilitate the act of migration, such as the travel expenses to the migration destination and the cost of supporting themselves while looking for employment opportunities.

2.3.3 The new economics of migration model

Unlike the macro theory of migration, the new economics theory of migration proposed by Stark (1991) gives deeper insight into the motive to migrate (Kurekova, 2011; Massey, 2015). The theory explains an individual's motive to migrate as being rooted in maximising their household economy (Arango, 2000; Massey, 2015). Those that migrate do so to maximise their household's income through the sending of remittances to diversify their household's sources of income (Arango, 2000; Massey, 2015). Simply put, remittances are monetary transfers by migrants to their households of origin (Strielkowski et al., 2017).

The theory further argues that migration decision making process is not made in isolation but collectively by the migrant and their family (King, 2012; Kurekova, 2011; Massey, 2015). Families therefore allocate labour to individual family members to either work in the local economy or in foreign places to maximise the household income (Arango, 2000). The reason for sending some family members to work in foreign work places is rooted in the argument that should the local economy of the migrant's place of origin deteriorate to such an extent that it results in unemployment or the loss of money, the household members left behind can rely for support on those that have migrated (Massey, 2015).

Migration of a family member is therefore perceived by the migrant's household of origin as some form of "self-insurance" (Abreu, 2012, p. 9) that will benefit the household left behind in times of need, such as during times of unemployment in the migrant household of origin (Abreu, 2012).

2.3.4 The Dissatisfaction and Relative Opportunities of Migration Motivations Model

Sandu et al. (2018) proposed the Dissatisfaction and Relative Opportunities of Migration Motivations Model. Central to this theory is the concept that an individual's motive to either migrate or stay in the same place is influenced by certain key spheres of life, namely education, natural and health amenities, friends, family and housing, and job and income. The theory argues that an individual's dissatisfaction with one or more key spheres of their life is likely to cause them to migrate to another place with the hope of substantially improving their key spheres of life there (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Sandu et al., 2018; Ullmann et al., 2011). The need to change one's sphere of life is therefore the main driver of migration according to this theory (Sandu et al., 2018).

2.4 Migration and South Africa

South Africa is a country that is historically defined by migration, both internal and external (Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020). However, in this research study the focus is on the internal migration of Black people and this receives the most attention in the following discussion.

2.4.1 Internal migration in South Africa

Internal migration in South Africa began in the 1800's (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006). At that time, subsistence farming was dominating the economy in South Africa and only four harbour towns existed in South Africa namely Durban, East London and Cape Town (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006). However, towards the early nineteenth century, severe droughts struck the country, and that affected the production of goods in the agricultural sector (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006).

The prolonged drought, which lasted for a period of three years between the years 1921 and 1923, drove white farmers and settlers to the cities and urban areas to pursue other occupations, more specifically in commerce and trading (Ballard, 1986). By the year 1960,

76% of Afrikaners had already occupied South African small towns, which were historically known as urban areas (Welsh, 1969).

Although the majority of the Afrikaner farmers who migrated to the urban areas were lacking the skills to work in the urban areas, a few were able to be equipped with skills relevant to work in an urban setting (Welsh, 1969). In 1924, the "civilised labour" (Phillips, 2005, p. 113) policy was launched, a policy that favoured white labour with its aim of eradicating unemployment and poverty amongst white people by empowering them with the necessary skills for working in the urban areas of South Africa (Phillips, 2005). The civilised labour policy therefore influenced the mass migration of White people to the urban areas of South Africa (Gelderblom et al., 1994).

Unlike the internal migration of White people in SA, which was driven by the results of a natural disaster, the internal migration of Black people was predominantly motivated by a lack of labour opportunities (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006). Apartheid policies, more specifically the Black Land Act, Act No. 27 of 1913, did not permit Black people to rent or own land outside the area which the government had allocated for them (Modise & Mtshiselwa, 2013). That led to the oscillatory migration of Black South Africans in which they moved to-and-fro between their rural homestead and the metropolitan areas (Stapleton, 2015).

The discovery of the first diamonds in Kimberley in 1867 and the opening of the Witwatersrand gold fields in Johannesburg in the year 1886 led to an increase in economic activities in the urban areas and more demand for cheap labour (Harington et al., 2004). Men from the former homelands of South Africa were then employed in these mines as miners (Harington et al., 2004).

However, the restriction of movement and settlement policies instituted by the apartheid government forced men to leave their families behind in the rural areas as they were

not permitted to migrate along with them (Posel, 2004, 2010). This resulted in women to take on the double role of being the father and the mother in the family (Posel, 2004). Women, children, and the elderly people left behind became surplus, "people whose labour contributions were not needed" (Hall, 2017, p. 13).

Posel (2004) argues further that the movement of women from the rural parts of South Africa to the urban areas was not only limited by the apartheid laws, but also by the existence of "internal structures of control", such as the influence of husbands, fathers and chiefs in prohibiting the movement of women to the urban areas and encouraging women to participate in "traditional roles" aimed at rural production and to "keep home fires burning" (p. 2). The abolition of the influx control policies in post-apartheid South Africa has however brought about an increase in female migration to the urban areas, as migration of families to the urban areas was no longer prohibited (Posel, 2010; Von Fintel & Moses, 2017).

Although there has been a rise in migratory movement of women in post-apartheid South Africa, the migration of males in the country continues to outnumber that of females (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Male migration is dominant in six provinces of South Africa, namely in Limpopo, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, Free State, Northern Cape and Western Cape (Statistic South Africa, 2011). Only three provinces in South Africa recorded a high level of female internal migrants, namely Eastern Cape, North West and Mpumalanga (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

2.4.2 Migration into South Africa

Migration of Africans into South Africa dates to the discovery of minerals such as diamonds in Kimberley in the year 1869 ("Migration Data", n.d.). A large number of labour migrants were drawn into South Africa from various African countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe to work in the mines as the demand for labour in the mining industry increased

(Crush et al., 2005; "Migration Data", n.d.). By the 1970's, South Africa already had a total of 260 000 labour migrants in the mining industry from various African countries as far as Tanzania (Crush & Tshitereke, 2001).

Migration of Africans into South Africa rose significantly at the end of the apartheid period (1948 – 1994) in the country (Isike & Isike, 2012). Economic crises and political instability in some African countries such as Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo brought about a rise in migratory movement into the country as many of the inhabitants of these countries fled to South Africa ("Migration Data", n.d.). Since that period, South Africa has become the major receiving country of African migrants in the entire Southern African region, and has also received migrants from other countries outside the Southern African region such as Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Ivory Coast and the Democratic Repulic of Congo (Isike & Isike, 2012). According to recent statistics, South Africa is home to about 3.9 million foreign nationals (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

2.4.3 Emigration from South Africa

The phenomenon of emigration from South Africa is not unique, as there has been movement of people across continents, from one place to another, and from one region to another since the birth of mankind (Van Rooyen, 2000). Historically, emigration from South Africa was triggered by societal and political crises that the country was faced with (Goldin, 2002; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b). For example, political unrests such as the Sharpeville massacre in the 1960s where Black people were protesting pass laws or the Soweto riots in 1976 led to the emigration of many people from the country (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b; Van Rooyen, 2000).

Moreover, some Black political activists also left the country to work in exile against the South African apartheid government (Modi, 2003). The term exile refers to the departure of people from their native country to other countries to escape "persecution" (Van Rooyen,

2000, p. 1). Others left on account of their experiences of racism as brought about by the apartheid government (Myburgh, 2004). Those that emigrated, emigrated to various countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Great Britain, and the United States of America, (Adepoju, 2003; Schilling, 2015).

Crush et al. (2005) argue that the end of the apartheid period also marked an increase in emigration of highly skilled labour, more specifically in the health care sector. Factors such as confrontation with pandemic diseases like HIV and AIDS, low salaries and poor working conditions motivated health care workers to emigrate to other countries (Bezuidenhout et al., 2009; Crush & Frayne, 2007). Moreover, Mattes and Richmond (2000) further argue that many of those that emigrated did so due to concerns about the security of their jobs in South Africa and emigrated to other countries with the certainty that their jobs would be much more secure there.

Consequently, the emigration of highly skilled labour in South Africa led to what is termed the "brain drain" (Crush et al., 2005, p. 20) where the state spends large sums of money on training highly skilled labour but does not get the anticipated returns on the investment, as those that have been trained emigrate to other countries (Crush et al., 2005). However, South Africa is responding to the 'brain drain' situation by employing highly skilled labour from its neighbouring countries (Schilling, 2015).

The recent wave of emigration from South Africa is also attributed to the high levels of violence and crime in the country (Bornman, 2005). In a year, South Africa loses about 25,000 people to emigration (Smith, 2019). The years 2011 and 2015 saw a peak in emigratory movement from South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2016). About 25,7% of the South African population emigrated to various African countries and overseas in 2015 (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

2.5 The impact of migration on those left behind

Compared to the large body of work examining the experiences of those that migrate, there is not much literature focusing on the experiences of those left behind when an individual or a family migrate. This is particularly the case when it comes to the rural areas of South Africa. Most of the literature on South African migration focuses mainly on the experiences of middle-class South African elderly people who are left behind because of the emigration of family members to countries outside of South Africa (e.g., studies by Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020; Swartz & Marchetti-Mercer, 2019). Moreover, most of the literature that exists focuses on transnational experiences of families in the Global North (eg., studies by Baldassar, 2007, 2016; Falicov, 2005, 2007; King & Vullnetari, 2006). Therefore, most of the research that exists does not focus on the impact of emigration in the South African context on those that are left behind (Ferreira, 2015; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b, 2017).

2.5.1 Household fragmentation

As pointed out earlier, the impact of migration on those left behind in the South African context dates back to the years of apartheid where black labour migrants, particularly men from the rural parts of South Africa, were not allowed to migrate with their households to the urban areas of South Africa, and as a result left their families behind in their places of origin (Posel, 2004). During that period, the majority of women in rural parts of South Africa took on the dual role of being the father and the mother in the family (Posel, 2004). Although the laws that restricted the movement of black South African families have been removed and family co-residence is now permitted, black African families in the contemporary South Africa remain stretched between the urban and rural areas, with children left behind in the rural areas who do not reside with their parents (Hall & Posel, 2019; Posel, 2010).

Hall and Posel (2019) argue that the absence of parental co-residence in most black South African rural families can currently be ascribed to the migration of women to the metropolitan areas in substantial numbers as a result of the high rates of unemployment in the rural parts of South Africa. This forces them to make the difficult choice of migrating to the urban areas to seek income generating activities while also meeting the demands of parenting from a distance. Moreover, Ardington et al. (2009) add that the parents' decision to migrate to the urban areas and leave their children behind is not taken in isolation. They argue that the decision is dependent on the availability of a substitute caregiver, which in most cases in black South African families is the grandmother of the children in the migrant's place of origin. Black parents in South Africa are therefore often regarded by their migrant children as their primary source of support (Mtshali, 2015).

While these families are often viewed as "fragmented", Hall and Posel (2019) argue that the practice of grandmothers caring for their grandchildren might be regarded by families as a way to retain an "unfragmented household" (p. 3). This practice might therefore reflect the order in which family relationships in Black South African families are organized where grandparents are often on the "forefront of parenting support" (Mtshali, 2015, p. 75).

2.5.2 Psychological impact of migration

2.5.2.1 Migration as a "loss"

The experience of migration by family members is often accompanied by feelings of loss (King & Vullnetari, 2006; Knodel & Saengtienchai, 2007; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020; Miltiades, 2002). Boss (2004) uses the concept ambiguous loss to describe the sense of loss experienced by those that are left behind. Ambiguous loss is explained as a kind of loss where those that have migrated are physically absent but psychologically present in the mind of their close relatives.

2.5.2.2 The impact of the "loss" on those left behind

Boss (2004) further argues that "ambiguous loss is the most stressful loss" (p. 553), as it tends to create confusion in families regarding who does and who does not constitute part of a family. This is unlike a "clear cut loss" (p. 553) such as death where family members tend to get clarity about their loss, with death certificates and mourning rituals providing some sense of proof regarding the loss (Boss, 2004).

Those left behind may even experience feelings of "hopelessness" (Boss, 2004, p. 553) which can inadvertently lead to feelings of ambivalence, passivity and, depression which can lead to guilt and anxiety (Boss, 2004). In addition, they may even experience mixed "emotions ranging from sadness to elation, from loss to restitution and absence to presence" (Falicov, 2002, p. 274). This resonates with research conducted on parents left behind in South Africa following the emigration of their adult children (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b). Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) further argue that the emotional reaction of those left behind might reflect the quality of the bond that parents share with their migrant children. Most importantly, their emotional reaction may reflect the psychological reaction of mourning the "ambiguous loss" of those that have migrated, as the experience of migration by a family member is at times likened to that of a "death" (Falicov, 2013, p. 78).

Moreover, those that are left behind, more particularly elderly people, experience feelings of loneliness and isolation (Baldassar, 2007). This resonates with research findings of King and Vullnetari (2006). Lombard and Kruger (2009) propose that social isolation in elderly people occurs because they feel detached from their immediate social networks, whereas emotional isolation can be experienced as a result of the absence or loss of an "attachment figure" (p. 23). Furthermore, some of those left behind experience sleep disturbances, feelings of sadness and despair (Ferreira, 2015). However, although parents left behind experience their

children's decision to leave as painful, they did often give their children the "licence to leave" (Baldassar et al., 2006, p. 37).

2.5.2.3 Dealing with the loss

There are often no specific rituals to help families deal with the painful psychological experience of their ambiguous loss, although some people have their own "private rituals" (Ferreira, 2015, p. 129). Those that are left behind often adopt mechanisms of "overcoming", "enduring in silence" and "not overthinking" (Falicov, 2007, p. 162) to deal with the ambiguous loss of their children.

Boss (2009) cautions that although those that are left behind often adopt the mechanism of "absolute thinking" (p. 11), which is the avoidance of feelings associated with ambiguous loss, they should not avoid these feelings as it is not necessarily an unhealthy strategy to engage with these feelings to cope with the harsh psychological experiences associated with a loss. Falicov (2007) suggests that people should express their painful experiences instead of blocking them.

In addition, Ferreira (2015) suggests that people should attempt to deal effectively with migration grief, i.e. the painful psychological experiences associated with the migration of a family member, as that is more likely to result in their "psychological growth" (p. 132). Those left behind should allow themselves to deal with their realities by mourning for that which is lost, since that will more probably determine how individuals move forward emotionally (Ferreira, 2015).

On the other hand, Neimeyer (2000) suggests that families separated by migration, and more specifically those left behind, should engage in a process of "meaning reconstruction" (p. 552) whereby they strive to find new meaning and value in their lives with that which they are

left with after the loss. Falicov (2002) argues that families should also strive to develop "relational resilience" (p. 278), a process by which families summon the strength to cope with the persistent stress caused by the migration of a family member. To develop "relational resilience", those left behind should perceive life as being meaningful, manageable and comprehensible (Falicov, 2002).

Moreover, Neimeyer (2001) argues that those left behind should not experience their loss in private. They should rather situate their loss in both a relational and a social context and use their cultural and social context to construct meaning of their ambiguous loss. The successful resolution of grief brought on by ambiguous loss can therefore influence one's psychological well-being positively and help parents left behind to adjust and "learn to live with the loss" (Ferreira, 2015, p. 133) caused by the migration of their adult children.

2.5.3 Remittances

Labour migration does not necessarily always lead to negative consequences, as those left behind often benefit positively from such migratory moves (Smit, 2001). As pointed out earlier, those left behind, more specifically the elderly people, often receive financial assistance in the form of remittances from their better established children who have migrated (Falicov, 2002). Remittances are defined as transfers in cash or in kind by migrants to their households of origin (Yang, 2011). Those that migrate also send consumable goods such as groceries besides remitting money to their households of origin (Tazanu, 2015).

The act of remittance is not unique in migrant families and dates back generations to when families would send money to their nuclear and extended family members out of a moral obligation to help sustain kith and kin (Kleist & Vammen, 2012). Remittances serve different purposes in families and can be used to ensure the households left behind have sufficient funds for food, general consumption, and savings (Carling, 2008). Casale and Posel (2006) point out

that the main source of income for most black households in rural South Africa is remittances transfer.

However, Biyase and Tregenna (2016) maintain that the motive for remitting differs across individuals. They suggest that there are three kinds of motives which explain why individuals remit to their household of origin, namely tempered altruism, self-interest and altruism (Biyase & Tregenna, 2016). An individual who remits altruistically remits to their household of origin with the sole intention of helping those left behind financially and caring for them (Atamanov & Van den Berg, 2010) . Furthermore, an individual who remits for altruistic reasons does this because they care about maintaining an appropriate level of consumption for those left behind as well as their general well-being (Fonchamnyo, 2012).

On the other hand, a migrant who remits out of self-interest remits to their household of origin due to arrangements that they have made with their household of origin. Arrangements with the family may include taking care of the migrant's assets at home and as such the migrant remits for the care of their assets by those left behind (Kemegue et al., 2011) . Therefore, a migrant who remits out of self-interest does this in exchange for something in return (Biyase & Tregenna, 2016).

In contrast to the migrant who remits out of self-interest is the migrant who remits due to tempered altruism. Remittances in this case are sent because they are seen as being made in a "co-insurance framework" (Biyase & Tregenna, 2016, p. 3). The migrant in this case only sends money to the household in times of financial difficulties (Biyase & Tregenna, 2016). Lastly, within the tempered altruism behaviour of migrant remittances is the migrant who remits as a result of the "loan repayment" (Biyase & Tregenna, 2016, p. 3) behaviour. This type of remittance is sent to the migrant household of origin as a way of repaying them for having invested in the migrant's future education (Biyase & Tregenna, 2016). In South Africa

the concept “Black tax” is used to describe this kind of remitting behaviour, where “Black individuals” (Fongwa, 2019, p. 2), mostly employed graduates, are expected to use a specific portion of their savings or income to provide financial support to their families and members of their kin (Fongwa, 2019). This kind of remitting behaviour however reflects the “strong bonds” (Sibiya, 2018, p. 25) prevalent in Black families, which need to be maintained despite geographical distance (Sibiya, 2018).

Lu and Treiman (2011) add that the process of out-migration does not only financially benefit families left behind through the sending of financial remittances by those that have migrated. They emphasise that families also benefit from “social remittances” (p. 1122). Levitt (1998) defines social remittances as the transfer of “ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital” (p. 926) by those that have migrated to their places of origin. He distinguishes between three types of social remittances, namely normative structures, systems of practice and social capital (Levitt, 1998). The exchange of these kind of remittances occurs when those that have migrated visit or return to their households of origin, and in some instances through the exchange of telephonic calls (Lu & Treiman, 2011).

Labour migration therefore does not only financially benefit families left behind by improving their financial circumstances, as the benefits at times extend beyond financial remittances (Lu & Treiman, 2011).

2.6 Family communication and relationships across distance

The term family is defined as a group of people who are biologically related or related by marriage (Steel et al., 2012) . Olivier and Wallace (2009) however define the term family as a “collection of people” (p. 204) who are separated by distance but still maintain a relationship with each other across space. For the purpose of this research study, the term family is used to

describe a collection of people who are biologically related or related by marriage, but who are geographically dispersed as a result of migration.

The term communication is defined as "the transfer of symbolic information" (Gutteling & Wiegman, 2013, p. 27) between people, which can be interpersonal or can occur across distance (Gutteling & Wiegman, 2013). Family communication therefore refers to the transfer of symbolic information between a collection of people who are biologically related or related by marriage and which occurs either interpersonally or across distance.

Komito (2011) argues that families dispersed by geographical distance find it difficult to maintain interpersonal communication with each other as a result of the high costs of transportation to and from their places of origin. To address this, families separated by distance therefore may have to use multiple forms of communication to maintain connectedness with their family members across distance (Ferreira, 2015).

2.6.1 Different types of communication used by families dispersed by distance

2.6.1.1 Past methods of communication: Letter writing/ Telephone/ Public pay phone "containers"

Historically, migrant families used letters to maintain communication with their families across distance, as letters were the most popular form of communication during that time (Stanley, 2016). Letters were used to maintain relationships of care and also to exchange information, often specifically pertaining to remittances, with those that had migrated (Foner, 2005). These letters were also used by migrant families to communicate important information on matters such as emergency situations and the well-being of family members, and information pertaining to the spending of remittances (Francisco, 2015). However, these letters were

infrequent as they took a long period of time to be delivered to their destination and thus left families feeling detached and isolated (Francisco, 2015; Wilding, 2006).

A significant change in the patterns of communication of migrants took place in the 1990's (Wilding, 2006). During that period, the use of the telephone as a medium of communication became more prominent after the costs associated with its use were reduced (Baldassar et al., 2006; Vertovec, 2009). Low-cost calls allowed people to have access to the use of the telephone network, which previously had been regarded as being too expensive (Vertovec, 2009). Families perceived telephones to be a reliable source of communication with those family members dispersed by distance and the majority of households owned a telephone (Wilding, 2006).

However, in South Africa, households in the disadvantaged areas often did not have the luxury of having access to a telephone. The South African government therefore imposed a Community Service Obligation on the mobile communications company Vodacom to provide those living in the disadvantaged areas with 22,000 land lines (Benjamin, 2002). Vodacom then established phone shops that were made from containers used for shipping goods. These containers accommodated ten phone lines each (Benjamin, 2002). Users of these phones were charged approximately sixty cents per phone unit (Benjamin, 2002) . These public phones therefore enabled people to communicate in areas where accessibility to the use of a telephone was an issue (Reck & Wood, 2004).

2.6.1.2 New forms of communication: Information communication technologies (ICTs) and Social media

The introduction of new technologies has allowed families dispersed by distance to bridge the gap by the establishment of new ways of maintaining connectedness and relationships of care across distance (Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020). These new technologies allow families

separated by distance to construe a “virtual co-presence” (Baldassar, 2008, p. 252) and thereby maintain emotional connectedness.

Below I discuss ICTs as a new form of technology and their role in sustaining and maintaining family relationships of migrants across distance.

Ferreira (2015) defines information communication technologies (ICTs) as those “technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications” (p. 28) and includes the mobile phone, the internet and other mediums of communications such as Skype. Other types of ICTs include social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Facetime (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011). The introduction of ICTs has helped to transform as well as to ameliorate migrants’ networks and saliently contribute towards the mental health of families and the psychology of migration (Bacigalupe & Camara, 2012).

- *Mobile phones*

  Increased mobility as a result of migration has led to more people using a mobile phone to facilitate virtual co-presence and connectedness across distance (Ferreira, 2015; Laurier, 2001; Licoppe, 2004). In South Africa, the adoption of the mobile phone as a means of communication dates to the 1990’s when mobile phones became commercially available in the country ("A pilot cellular phone project", 2013). The mobile phone seems to be the form of new technology most preferred by migrant families in comparison to any other type of communication technology because of its directness, simultaneity, and spontaneity (Issa, 2015). It is also considered to be the most popular form of voice communication (Bacigalupe & Camara, 2012).

  The mobile phone is also more specifically considered to be the most important channel of communication between older parents and their migrant children (Baldassar, 2007; King & Vullnetari, 2006). Unlike the old forms of communication, the mobile phone

allows families dispersed by distance to maintain connectedness and maintain family relationships anywhere due to its ability to be operated regardless of one's physical location (Wajcman et al., 2008). Through the exchange of phone calls, elderly parents are able to maintain emotional ties with their migrant children across time and space (Baldassar, 2007, King & Vullnetari, 2006). Baldassar (2007) also points out that the frequency of the exchange of phone calls between elderly parents and their adult migrant children tends to increase when the mental and physical health of the elderly people is not good, which again is aided through the use of mobile phones.

Biocca and Harms (2002) further argue that through the exchange of phone calls, the mobile phone facilitates social co-presence, the "sense of being with another in a meditated environment… the moment-to-moment awareness of co-presence" (p. 14) in one's intentional, emotional, and psychological state of being. The ability to exchange communication and hear another person's voice explains why the mobile phone is an important form of communication for migrants and their families (Horst, 2006).

- *WhatsApp*

WhatsApp is defined as a "cross-platform mobile messaging app" which affords its users the opportunity to exchange messages "without having to pay for SMS" (Gamer, 2018, p. 3). The application uses internet services such as data to enable its users to exchange messages (Kumar & Sharma, 2016). This application can be installed on laptops and tablets as well as smart mobile phones (Rajaraman, 2018). It enables its users to exchange video clips, text messages, audio clips and pictures with other people who use the application, and also allows its users to communicate through real time video and voice calls (Rajaraman, 2018).

WhatsApp has shown to be a useful application used by families left behind to maintain connectedness across distance with those that have left because of migration (Ferreira, 2015, Marchetti-Mercer, et al., 2020; Swartz & Marchetti-Mercer, 2019). It helps reduce feelings of alienation as it allows for immediacy in communication as well as visual communication such as video chatting with those that are geographically distant (Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020).

- *Social media*

  Social media is defined as a "category of online discourse where people create content, share it, bookmark it and network at a prodigious rate" (Asur & Huberman, 2010, p. 1). Facebook and Twitter are examples of social media sites (Komito, 2011). Social media technologies play an important role in the lives of migrants and non-migrants as they allow them to maintain connectedness across distance with the members of their kin and their families (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Unlike past methods of communications, which included spoken and written communication such as the telephones and letters, social media allows people to share visual communication through the sending of images or pictures as well as video chatting (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Komito (2011) maintains that this lessens the social and emotional costs associated with migration.

2.6.1.3 Limitations of ICTs in facilitating family relationships across distance

Although ICTs help families to maintain connectedness and emotional ties across distance (Baldassar, 2007, King & Vullnetari, 2006), there seems to be some form of exclusion in their accessibility, more specifically exclusion in accessibility by the poorest of the poor who cannot afford the costs associated with operating them (Skuse & Cousins, 2007) . As mentioned by Marchetti-Mercer (2012b), Castells (2002) uses the term "digital divide" to describe the inequality in use and accessibility of ICTs. In South Africa, those in the middle class seem to

have easy access to different types of ICTs and seem to not experience difficulties in maintaining connectedness with their family members across distance (see research by Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b), whereas those in the lower socio-economic class, particularly those in the rural areas, find it more difficult to maintain connectedness with their family members across distance as a result of low levels of income and high operating costs of ICTs (Takavarasha & Adams, 2018).

In addition, those in the lower socio-economic class, and more specifically the elderly members thereof, seem to lack the necessary skills to use ICTs and often need assistance from a young member of the family or a relative to access as well as to use ICTs due to lack of familiarity with them (Kang, 2012). Selwyn et al. (2003) argue that the lack of exposure to and familiarity with new technologies in elderly people could be attributed to them having left the educational system before the introduction of information technologies. Moreover, this population might have not been exposed to these types of technological advances when growing up and might find it difficult to keep track of and use these new technological developments (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). This may possibly lead to the elderly people relying on more traditional forms of communication (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). However, the assistance that they receive from relatives as well as young members of the family may help the elderly people to become exposed to ICTs as well as to become familiar with them for communication across distance (Kang, 2012).

The elderly people's use of ICTs to maintain connectedness across distance is not only limited by lack of familiarity and exposure (Kang, 2012), but also by the design of the mobile phone, as it tends to not cater for their needs (Van Biljon et al., 2013). Selwyn et al. (2003) argue that the design of the mobile phone lacks the features essential for elderly people's use, such as large buttons, large fonts on the display screen and audible ringing tones, making it difficult for elderly people to use the mobile phone efficiently for communication purposes

(Selwyn et al., 2003; Van Biljon et al., 2013). However, Van Dyk et al. (2012) suggest that when a mobile phone is designed, it should be designed in a way that takes into account age related constraints such as impaired dexterity, hearing and vision, as the needs and expectations of older adult mobile users are often not met by current mobile designs (Gelderblom et al., 2010) .This resonates with Maguire and Osman's (2003) research findings that elderly people prefer mobile phones with bigger icons, bigger fonts, a large screen size and bigger buttons.

Kabbar and Crump (2007) however argue that the use of ICTs is not only influenced by physical accessibility. They emphasise that the access to knowledge and skills related to ICTs are also a requisite for the adoption of ICTs. Moreover, they maintain that community support in the use of ICTs may also play a significant role in the use and adoption of ICTs (Kabbar & Crump, 2007). They suggest that community leaders and organisations should promote the uptake of ICTs in disadvantaged communities as these people tend to have influence in their communities and are trusted by them (Kabbar & Crump, 2007). They further suggest that an integrated ongoing training in the use of ICTs, which is home-based and targets the elderly people, should be developed to teach them the necessary skills to use ICTs.

Lastly, another factor which limits the use of ICTs for communication purposes across distance is the desire on the part of those who have left to conceal information which may provoke anxiety, such as information related to their health, in order to protect their families (Baldassar, 2008). Technology may therefore be used to hide unpleasant information from family members across distance so as to not create unnecessary concern for those left behind (Baldock, 2003).

2.6.2 The role of visits

Lastly, I discuss the role of visits as a way of augmenting the use of ICTs in maintaining family relationships in migrant families.

The term visit is defined as the act of going to another person's home to spend some time there with them (Stevenson, 2010) . Marchetti-Mercer (2012b, 2016, 2017) and Mulder and Cooke (2009) argue that in maintaining relationships of care by families separated by distance physical presence is often preferred over the use of ICTs, which tend to create only an "illusion of intimacy" (Mulder & Cooke, 2009, p. 387). The need for physical presence is often rooted in the fact that families "need to see" their family members or relatives "with their own eyes" to confirm "for themselves" (Baldassar, 2008, p. 260) whether they still are in good health (Baldassar, 2008). This contrasts with maintaining relationships of care through ICTs, where families separated by distance tend to conceal certain information from their families left behind to protect them from anxiety provoking information (Baldassar, 2008).

Visits also allow families to maintain physical co-presence specifically in times of crisis (Baldassar, 2014). They allow families separated by distance to provide practical support such as caring for the sick as well as childcare (Baldassar, 2014). This is unlike the use of ICTs, which often limits people's ability to give practical support or negotiate crises and conflicts that could arise because of continued remote interaction (Wilding, 2006). Furthermore, O'Flaherty et al. (2007) suggest that some situations such as "meetings" require physical co-presence to allow people to establish relationships of "trust and commitment" (p. 820) through informal socialising, body language and small talk. Relevant examples of situations that also require physical co-presence are not limited to but include occasions such as funerals and weddings (O'Flaherty et al., 2007).

Baldassar (2014) maintains that although visits allow families separated by distance to establish co-presence and "closeness" (p. 394), they tend to be unidirectional with the elderly performing ritual visits such as visiting their adult children at the time their children are born to provide practical support with the new-borns. Marchetti-Mercer et al. (2020) however argue that often elderly people are unable to visit their distant children frequently, which is often due

to their inability to handle long journeys as well as the expense associated with such travels. The issue of financial constraints is also explored by Ferreira (2015).

King and Vullnetari (2006) also found that the cost associated with visiting trips tend to limit families' ability to visit each other. Wilding and Baldassar (2009) further argue that the ability to visit seems to be connected to one's social class, where those in the lower socio-economic class tend to visit less frequently because of the lack of funds to finance frequent return travels, whereas those in the middle class tend to have the financial resources available to permit such travels (Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020).

Shrestha et al. (2017) point out that various factors should be taken into consideration when looking at the "ideal public transport" (Shrestha, 2017 et al., p. 347) for elderly people, such as affordability and accessibility. In terms of affordability, Shrestha et al. (2017) suggest that public transport fares for elderly people should be reduced at both local and national level as a low income following retirement might act as a barrier to elderly people's ability to travel. Furthermore, they suggest that public transport should be designed in such a way that it is easily accessible to elderly people, for example by incorporating attributes such as low floors and stepless entrances and providing designated seats for the elderly to help them sit comfortably while travelling (Shrestha et al., 2017).

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed some of the salient theoretical aspects linked to migration behaviours, especially in relation to the South African context. The impact of labour migration on families left behind was highlighted, as well as the impact of the process of migration on the psychological well-being of those left behind. I also discussed how families maintain connectedness with their family members who are geographically distant through the use of ICTs and visits.

In the next chapter I discuss the research methodology pertinent to the research study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the research study. Firstly, I will discuss the theoretical framework that was used to understand the use of ICT's in rural migrant families. I will then discuss the rationale for conducting the study and outline the aims and objectives of the research study as well as the research questions underlying the study. The research design that informs the research study will also be outlined. This will be followed by the description of the sample used in the study as well as its characteristics. The instruments used to collect data about the impact of out-migration in Modimolle village, namely semi-structured interviews will be outlined. This chapter will further discuss the procedures of data collection and the method of data analysis used in the research study. It will then conclude with the discussion relating to the trustworthiness of the research study and some thought on the process of reflexivity experienced as part of the study. Lastly the ethical consideration pertinent to the study will be explored.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The impact of migration on families can be best understood from a systemic perspective. Dallos and Draper (2005) define a system as "any unit structured on feedback" (p. 24). Systems theory sees a family as an interconnected and interdependent unit in which each part is connected and dependent on the others. Each part in the unit influences and is influenced by the other parts. When the parts interact with each other they produce coherent patterns that are identifiable. The identifiable patterns are as result of the sum of all the parts interaction and that makes the

system whole (Dallos & Draper, 2005). Importantly, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2012) argue that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 91). This means that the system functions as a result of the effort of all its parts not just individual effort (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012).

The family can also be seen as a system which is made up of different subsystems and these are part of the larger system that carry out certain functions within the whole system. Therefore, the individual members of the family carry out certain tasks to keep the entire family system going and what happens with an individual will impact upon the remaining members of the system (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012).

Systems theory also sees a family as operating in a circular way. The actions of one family member are interdependent on those of other family members. Each person in the family influences the other in a recursive manner. When there is a change in one family member, this can cause about a change in all the members of the family and influence the relationships in the system (Titelman, 2014) .

Furthermore, families also go through certain life cycle events which impact their functioning irrespective of their composition or cultural heritage. Marker events can be those events that require sudden change and adaptation such as a child leaving home, marriage, or the birth of a new child. These marker events cause the family structure as well as its functioning to change such as change in roles (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012).

It could be argued that the out-migration of an adult child can be seen as one of these marker events. Therefore, when one member of the family leaves home, the family structure change as it is no longer whole. The departure of one member of the family may also bring about change in family roles. The role of the member who left must be filled by those that are

left within the family system (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012). This is therefore of relevance when looking at the impact of emigration on the family.

In addition, beyond the family system, there is the ecosystem within which the family system functions. This is a larger system which also impacts upon the functioning of the family. The ecosystemic perspective also helps us to understand the family functioning in relation to various social systems within which it finds itself. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2012) argue that the behaviour of certain families and individuals are influenced by the multiple social systems within which they are nested in.

Systems theory is therefore a useful lens to understand internal migration in relation to families that are left behind in rural areas of South Africa. Migration can be seen as a marker event that impacts these families significantly. The family left behind must make changes and adapt its structure and shared roles due to the departure of one of its members. Family roles must be re-organised to accommodate the roles that the person who migrated played (Loveless & Holman, 2007).

3.3 Rationale

This study wanted to explore the use of ICT's amongst elderly people living in rural areas in South Africa, who were left behind due to migration by a family member(s) to the urban areas.

This group was chosen as literature in international migration suggest that ICT's are particularly useful in maintaining family relationships across distance, and this study wanted to examine whether this was also the case in rural areas of South Africa where out-migration has taken place. This was deemed to be particularly relevant given the digital divide existing between disadvantaged communities and internet access and more privileged groups regarding technology and internet access.

3.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows. Firstly, to understand how Black parents whose children have migrated from rural areas to more urban settings maintain communication with their children. Secondly to understand the type of information communication technologies that these families use, and lastly to examine the challenges that these families face around the use of these technologies as well as possible benefits.

3. 5 Aims

The aims of the research study were as follows:

- To investigate the effect of out-migration on Black South African rural families left behind.
- To investigate the use of ICTs in Black South African rural families that have been separated by migration.
- To investigate the manner in which ICTs can potentially address the psychological impact of migration.

3.6 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the motivations underlying the decision of some of the inhabitants of the village of Modimolle to out-migrate?
- What are the psychological effects of out-migration on Black South African rural families left behind?
- How do Black rural families maintain communication with those who have migrated to urban areas?

- What types of technologies do they use to keep ties with those family members who have migrated?
- What challenges do these families face in terms of using the technologies to maintain family ties?
- Do these families budget for the use of technologies to maintain contact, and if so, where in their hierarchy of priorities is expenditure on technologies to keep families in touch?
- How does technology use interact with, change, and become changed by access to physical visits?
- To what extent do family members consider contact through technology to be inferior to, superior to, interlinked with, or distinct from face to face interaction?
- How do families use technology to keep in touch and to perform caring roles?

3.7 Research design – Qualitative research approach

A qualitative research approach was used for this research study. Qualitative methodology is used to explore and understand the meaning and experiences that individuals ascribe to a human problem or a social problem. Data in qualitative research approach is collected from the research participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research focuses on the meaning and experiences attached by the research participants and allows the researcher to closely interact with those being researched to understand their experiences. In order to gather the necessary data, the researcher often uses an interview that is structured, although in some cases it can be unstructured. The interview is conducted in such a way that it encourages the research participants to feel at ease and be able to speak freely (Neuman, 2006).

Five philosophical assumptions underpin the qualitative research approach namely the ontological, epistemological, rhetorical, axiological and methodological assumptions. These will be explained briefly.

3.7.1 The ontological assumption

The ontological assumption acknowledges that each person sees the world or reality differently, from their own point of view. This means that the way the researcher sees reality is not necessarily how the participants see it, and there may even be a variation of realities between the participants themselves. These variations in realities between participants can be highlighted using different quotes from the participants to understand their multiple realities (Tsang et al., 2019) .

3.7.2 The epistemological assumption

The epistemological assumption refers to how well the researcher understands the participants, either from an insider's perspective, outsider's perspective or somewhere in between. The epistemological assumption can clarify where exactly the researcher places themselves in seeking to understand the participants being researched. In the qualitative approach it is of paramount importance that the researcher draws closer to the participants in the study to capture their experiences as closely as possible (Tsang et al., 2019).

3.7.3 The rhetorical assumption

The rhetorical assumption refers to the language that the researcher uses for the presentation of the data from the participants, such as first-person pronouns. The essence of using the first-person pronoun is that it helps the researcher to reflect what the participants actually said

without stripping away the essence of their experiences and realities by using the academic language of the researcher (Tsang et al., 2019).

3.7.4 The axiological assumption

The axiological assumption postulates that there are biases, and that the researcher has certain values and that these have the ability to shape their narrative. Therefore, the researcher's interpretation of a phenomenon or reality in relation to that of the research participants is considered when interpreting the information obtained from the participants (Creswell, 2007).

3.7.5 The methodological assumption

Lastly, the methodological assumption relates to how the researcher conducted the research, namely how they obtained the information that they got from the participants. In the qualitative approach inductive logic is used whereby the researcher first collects data from the information provided by the participants and then creates a theory to describe the data collected. (Creswell, 2007).

In summary, qualitative research values the richness and depth of the information collected from the research participants to understand their realities (Neuman, 2006).

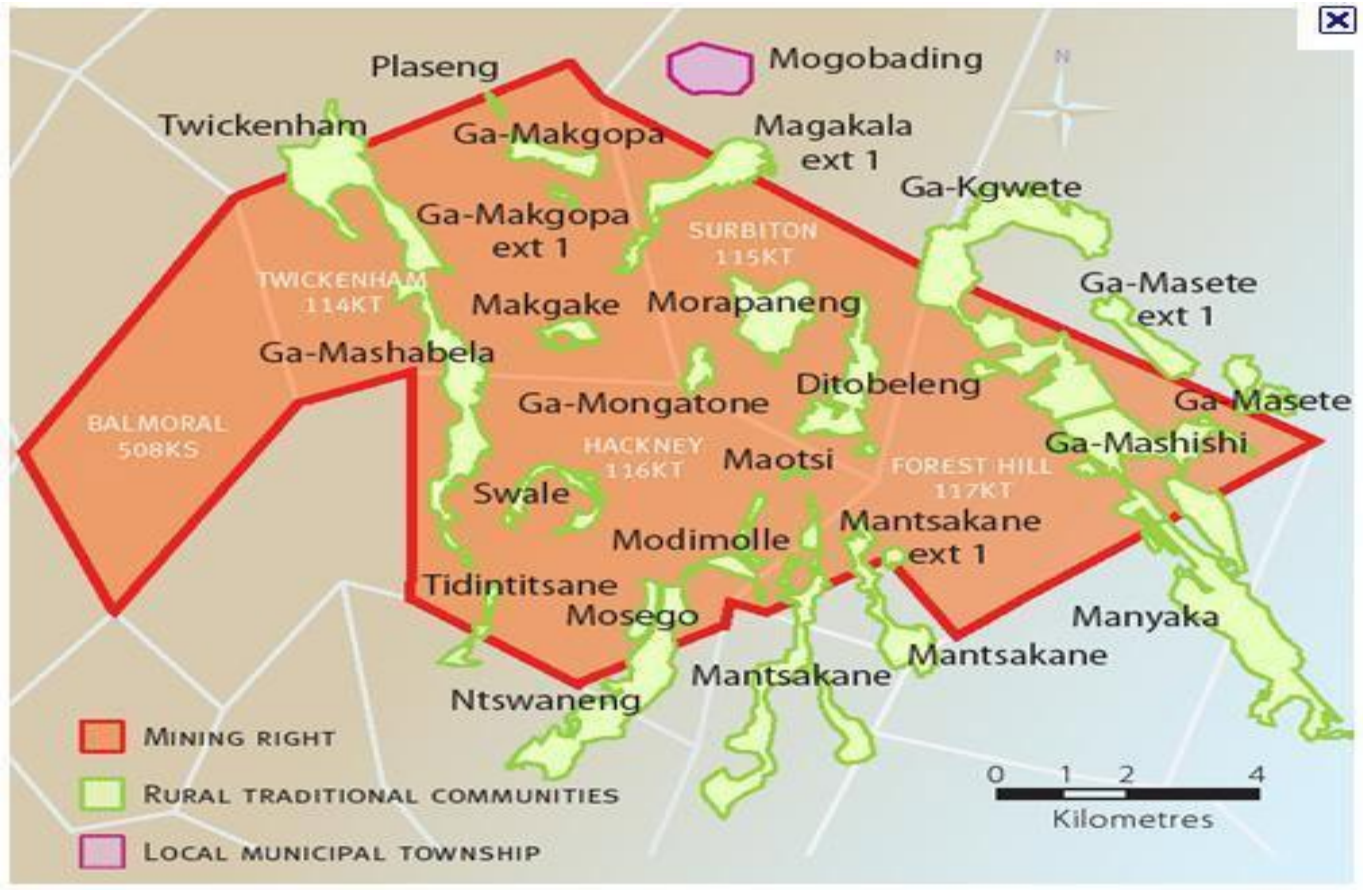
3.8 Sample and sampling

The target population for the study were Black elderly people living in the village of Modimolle in the Limpopo province who have been left behind by family members who out-migrated to the urban areas in South Africa. The village of Modimolle was chosen as the research context as I had personal relationships in the village and was therefore able through a key informant to access participants.

Modimolle is a small village situated in Ga-Mashabela at the Sekhukhue region in the province of Limpopo. The village alongside its surrounding villages falls under the Kingship of Mashabela. The village is surrounded by numerous mines namely Dilokong mine, Marula Platinum mine, and Twickenham Platinum mine. During the apartheid years and before the establishment of mines in the area and its surrounding, most of the residents used to work in farms in Marbel Hall and Groblersdaal. However, some residents used to secure employment and work in distant places as far Gauteng and other provinces within the country of South Africa.

Figure 3

Map of Modimolle and its surrounding villages



Source: *Angloplatinum-Sd-2008.Pdf* (n.d.)

The rationale for choosing this specific sample was the fact that the people who are usually left behind are the elderly people, as they are often not employable because of their age. The criteria for inclusion in this study included being over the age of sixty and having a child who had migrated from the rural area of Modimolle village for at least three years. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling was used to obtain research participants. Initially I used purposive sampling which is a type of sampling technique in which participants for a research study are selected based on certain characteristics which are relative to the research study (Emmel, 2013). I then moved to snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a type of sampling technique in which participants for a research study are obtained through references or contacts until the desired sample is accumulated (TerreBlanche et al., 2006). Snowball sampling was

very effective in this research study, as elderly people living in the village were able to refer me to other elderly people whose children had migrated from the village and were over the age of sixty. During snowball sampling, participants use social networks to refer the researcher to potential participants whom they have already established contact with (Jawale, 2012).

Initially, I was referred to two elderly people in the village of Modimolle who were over the age of sixty and whose children had out-migrated. I was referred to them by my mother-in-law after explaining to her that I was looking for elderly people over the age of sixty for a research study.

Consequently, the two elderly people that I was referred to identified other elderly people over the age of sixty that they knew in the village of Modimolle. I then contacted other potential participants and eventually accumulated the appropriate sample size through the references from the two elderly people selected through the purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2014).

In many instances other family members of the elderly person left behind were present during the interview, such as daughters, grandchildren and spouses of the elderly persons. These individuals often assisted the elderly people in understanding and clarifying questions.

Considering that the participants were often not fluent in English, an indigenous language of South Africa, Sepedi, was used to conduct the semi-structured individual interviews. All the questions in the semi-structured interviews as well as the ethics documents were translated into Sepedi prior to the data collection.

In the end ten participants were interviewed. This number was deemed sufficient, as in qualitative research it is the richness and depth of the data that is of paramount importance rather than the size of the sample. In-depth, information-rich non-random samples are more

valued in qualitative research (TerreBlanche et al., 2006). Despite the small sample size employed in this research study, rich in-depth data was collected from the research participants.

Due to the small sample used in this research study, concerns might be raised regarding the generalisability of the findings from the research study. It is however worth noting that data was collected until I reached data saturation, and as I was getting the same information from the participants, I therefore did not need to interview more people. Qualitative research is characterised by its small non-random sample size (Blanche et al., 2006). Blanche et al. (2006) maintain that small non-random samples provide the researcher with in-depth and information-rich data.

3.9 Participants' information

In this section I provide some background information on each of the participants.

3.9.1 Family 1: Mavis

Mavis is a black female pensioner aged 64, who is also a widow. Her husband died twenty years ago. Mavis has two sons, Koketso and Thato. Her younger son, Thato, migrated to Daveyton in Gauteng Province and works at a mine in Boksburg. However, her older son Koketso is unemployed and lives with her, including Koketso's two children, Tebogo and Kamogelo.

In her youth, as a married woman, Mavis was unemployed. Her husband was working in Gauteng. To support her family, Mavis used to cut and sell wood in the village for a living. Moreover, she also used to make and sell brooms in the village.

Mavis also used to work as a child minder in the village. She used to take care of children from various families in the village in exchange for money. Furthermore, she also used to plough the land and grow vegetables of different kinds to sustain her household.

3.9.2 Family 2: Josephine

Josephine is a sixty-two-year-old black female pensioner, who is also a widow. Her husband died six years ago. Josephine has seven children, Lerato, Bontle, Patience, Lizzy, Agness, Matshepo and John. All seven children work in Gauteng. Four of her children, Patience, Lizzy, John, and Lerato, live in Tembisa and the other three, Agness, Matshepo, and Bontle, live in Alexandra.

Historically, her household has always been poor, and it was only when her children left for Gauteng and found employment that the circumstances of her household improved, as her children were able to remit back home.

3.9.3 Family 3: Peter

Peter is a sixty-five-year-old married man. Peter has been married to his wife Mantwa for 25 years. They have seven children, four boys namely Kholofelo, Refiloe, Sipho and Leruo, and three girls namely Tumi, Kgotlelelo and Seipati. His wife Mantwa is unemployed. Only his three oldest sons, Kholofelo Refiloe and Sipho, are employed and are migrants in Gauteng and Mpumalanga. The eldest son, Kholofelo, works and lives in Carletonville while the second eldest son, Refiloe, works and lives in Pullens Hope, Mpumalanga province. The third eldest son Sipho works at a mine in Boksburg.

In his youth, Peter was a migrant in Gauteng. He used to work in Secunda at a mine. However, he left his job and returned to the village after he discovered that he had a chronic illness which threatened his job at the mine.

Peter tills the land and grows vegetables on his small farm, which he sells to people both in and outside of his village to sustain his family. He also receives a social grant for his chronic illness as well as a pension which he uses to sustain his household.

3.9.4 Family 4: Merriam

Merriam is a sixty-six-year-old black female widow. Her husband Billy died 20 years ago. She had four children with Billy, three girls called Bushang, Lebogang and Moipone, and one boy child, Tukiso. All of Merriam's children are married. However, she shares a home with her son, Tukisho, who mostly resides in Steelport because of his work. Tukisho's wife Elizabeth works in Midrand, Gauteng. Two of Tukisho's children, Bikano and Hunadi, live with Merriam.

3.9.5 Family 5: Sandra

Sandra is a black female pensioner aged 73. She is also a widow. Her husband Tebogo died 25 years ago. Sandra had five children with her late husband. One of her children, her second-born son, died six years ago. All her three daughters, namely Bokang, Nomsa and Botshelo, are married outside of the village. Her eldest son James works in Kempton Park and lives in Tembisa.

3.9.6 Family 6: Portia

Portia is a seventy-four-year-old Black female pensioner. She is also a widow. Her husband Ben died 30 years ago. She had three daughters with him, namely Leago, Thoriso and Phokeng. Two of her daughters, Leago and Phokeng, are unemployed and she lives with them and her three grandchildren, Leago's two daughters and Phokeng's son. However, her youngest daughter Thoriso works at a mine in Rustenburg.

3.9.7 Family 7: Sarah

Sarah is a sixty-one-year-old married Black woman. She has been married to Molemo for 35 years. They have nine children. Her six daughters, Kedibone, Rachel, Sontaga, Simphiwe, Thabang and Kgakanego are married and reside outside of Modimolle village. Her two boys Mogale and Kgaoletso both live in Daveyton, Gauteng due to work. Sarah and her husband are both unemployed and live together with their last-born son Kagiso, who has just returned home after completing his college studies in Tembisa.

3.9.8 Family 8: Mmabatho

Mmabatho is a seventy-one-year-old widow. Her husband died 30 years ago. Mmabatho had seven children with her late husband Phillimon, three daughters called Makobo, Zinhle and Moithuti, and four boys, namely Kgomotso, Kabelo, Kgatle and Tshegofatso. Six of her children are unemployed and reside with their partners around the village. Only her second-born daughter, Zinhle, is employed. Zinhle lives and works in Kimberley as a domestic worker. Mmabatho lives with Zinhle's daughter, Poifo.

3.9.9 Family 9: Lebo

Lebo is a seventy-three-year-old woman. She is also a widow. Lebo had nine children with her late husband Thuso. However, three of her children have died. She is left with only six children, namely Judy, Boikano, Rorisang, Tumisang, Ezabel and Noko. Four of her children, Judy, Rorisang, Ezabel and Boikano, are married and live in their own homes outside of the village. Her deceased son, Lefa, was working in Daveyton as a teacher. Two of her children, Noko and Tumisang, are both unemployed and she shares a home with them.

In her youth, Lebo used to work as a domestic worker for an Afrikaner family in Pretoria. She worked for the family for 27 years before she returned to Modimolle village.

3.9.10 Family 10: Mathato

Mathato is a sixty-seven-year-old widow. She has six children, namely Euphonia, Tshegofatso, Kabelo, Mahlako, Tetelo, and Nthabeleng. Mathato lives with three of her children, Euphonia, Nthabeleng and Kabelo, and Tshegofatso's children, Natha, Lerato, Kamogelo and Tebogo. Two of her children, namely Tetelo and Tshegofatso, work and reside in Germiston. Her eldest daughter, Mahlako, works in Pretoria as a high school teacher. All her remaining three children, Euphonia, Nthabeleng and Kabelo, are unemployed and reside with her in the village. In her youth, Mathato used to work in Marble Hall at a farm picking up wool. She left Marbelhall to reside in the village after her husband fell sick. Her husband passed on and she currently lives with her children and four grandchildren.

3.10 Data collection

3.10.1 Ethical clearance

Initially, ethical clearance for the research study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC non-medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand. Subsequent to obtaining ethical clearance, I approached the King of Modimolle in his role as the gatekeeper to the village, to ask for permission to conduct the research study and accumulate participants from his village.

After obtaining the permission from the King of Modimolle village, I went from house to house to gather participants in order to conduct individual semi-structured interviews with them.

3.10.2 Instruments

A semi-structured interview was used to collect the relevant data from the participants. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the researcher asks the research respondents during the interview process questions that they have prepared before the interview process. The questions from the semi-structured interview are open-ended, allowing the research respondents to respond to questions in their own words (Blanche et al., 2006). Furthermore, it allows the researcher to explore certain issues that respondents perceive as being crucial to them in a more conversational manner by asking them questions using a predetermined list of questions (Clifford et al., 2010). Semi-structured interviews seemed appropriate to explore how participants made use of ICTs to maintain relationships with those who have out-migrated from Modimolle village to other parts of South Africa.

The semi-structured interview used consisted of twelve open-ended questions whose purpose was to enhance the depth and richness of the data regarding the participants' experiences of out-migration by family members and their experiences around the use of ICTs. The semi-structured interviews were translated into Sepedi, as the participants were not fluent in English.

3.10.3 Procedure

Prior to the commencement of the interview process, participants were issued with participants' information sheets, which contained information pertaining to what was expected of the participant should they be willing to take part in the study (Appendix A). I explained the purpose of the research and answered questions that they had regarding the research study. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also addressed in the information sheets, which had been translated into Sepedi. Participants were briefed that pseudonym were going to be used when reporting about them and their families in order for them to remain anonymous.

Subsequent to explaining the purpose of the research, I sought informed consent from the research participants to record the interview (see Appendices B and C).

After obtaining informed consent from the participants, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with the ten participants in their homes. The questions were open-ended and explored issues such as the reason why their family members had migrated, the impact of out-migration on the family members left behind as well as the type of technologies that these elderly people use to maintain ties with those family members who have out-migrated (Appendix D).

The semi-structured interview schedule was written and conducted in Sepedi to accommodate the elderly people, who were not fluent in English. The duration of the individual semi-structured interview was approximately 45 to 60 minutes in length. Furthermore, the individual interviews conducted with the participants were audio-recorded, with their permission.

During the semi-structured interview, I sometimes explained the interview questions to the participants using my own words to make sure that they understood the questions that I was asking them. I also used a language and style that the participants understood instead of strictly relying on the interview schedule to ask questions. I also asked the participants their title names prior to the interview process and referred to them accordingly throughout the whole interview to show respect to them as is required in Sepedi culture when addressing elderly people. A title name is a distinctive descriptive name that is chosen for an individual by their family (Stevenson, 2010).

All the participants were asked similar questions, although the order of the interview questions sometimes differed, depending on the responses of the participants.

After conducting the interviews with the participants, I listened to the interview recordings and transcribed them. Subsequent to transcribing the interviews, I translated them into English. I was careful about not losing the participants' accounts of their experiences when transcribing and translating their interviews. A Sesotho-English dictionary was used when translating the interviews into English, as well as the Google translate App. Post translation, I gave the translated interviews to my peers who spoke Sepedi language to read and validate whether the translated interviews carried the same meaning in English.

The transcribed and translated interviews as well as the audio recordings were then stored in a password protected computer.

3.11 Data analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define qualitative data analysis as "…working with data which are textual, non-numerical and unstructured, organising it, breaking it into meaningful units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others" (p. 145).

In this research study, the thematic content analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2013) was used to analyse the data obtained from the participants' interviews. The six phases of thematic content analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013) were used to analyse the data. The six phases outlined are familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining the coded themes, defining and naming the themes, and lastly producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2013)

Data analysis began when I was listening to the audio recordings of the interviews while transcribing them. Throughout the transcribing and translating process I familiarised myself with the data. After transcribing and translating the interviews, I then re-read the interview

transcripts to immerse myself into the data collected from the research participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

I then read through the data again and started taking notes and highlighting important information that was emerging from the interview transcript and addressing the research questions. Notes relating to the important information that emerged from the data were written in the margins of the interview transcript. The notes were then coded to summarise and describe the underlying meaning of the important information that emerged from the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

I then re-read the other interview transcripts to identify similar codes and new codes that emerged from the data. After identifying the codes that described the important data in all the interview transcripts, I collated all the codes that were similar to each other alongside with the relevant quotes from the transcripts. The collated codes were the codes that appeared repetitiously in more than one interview transcript in the form of a pattern.

The collated codes were then grouped together based on similarity alongside with their relevant quotes. Subsequently, I tried to find the most descriptive wording for the codes that were grouped based on similarity. The aim here was to describe the underlying general term for the codes as well as a general underlying meaning of the collated codes. The wording to describe the general underlying meaning of the collated codes is referred to as a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2013) stated that a "theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p. 63).

I then reviewed the themes to check if they truly describe the underlying meaning behind the similar collated codes. To achieve that, I reviewed the codes and their relevant quotes. Those codes that were not captured by the theme were then omitted.

After refining the themes, I revisited the collated data and linked it with the relevant accounts of the research participants. I finally reported the themes in my research report alongside with the participants' accounts captured in the themes. Throughout this process I consulted with my supervisor, especially when it came to the process of defining and naming the themes.

In the findings section of this research report, the themes that emerged from the data analysis are discussed in detail. The discussion section of the research findings of the study shows how the research questions and aims of the study were addressed and how they relate to the existing literature.

3.12 Trustworthiness of the study

In research, the trustworthiness of the study refers to "the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study" (Connelly, 2016, p. 435). In the simplest sense, for the quality of the study to be considered worthy by the readers, as a researcher I must be transparent about the procedures and protocols of my research study (Connelly, 2016).

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research study, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1986) criteria for achieving this. The four criteria they outline are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

Credibility in research refers to how believable and trustworthy the research findings of a study are and whether the findings reflect the experiences of the research participants with a particular phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I established credibility by doing a member check with the research participants during and after the interview to validate and clarify their responses. I paraphrased the responses of the participants during and after the individual

interviews to clarify their responses. I then went on to ask participants critical questions to validate their responses during and after the interview process (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Dependability refers to the reliability of research data over time and circumstances (Hall & Roussel, 2014). I ensured the dependability of the research study by checking whether the results of the research study correspond with those of other similar research. This was done to confirm whether the results I acquired were precise and affirmed by the information I gathered from the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Confirmability refers to how well the research findings of a study represent the information obtained from the research participants. In the simplest sense, data findings of the research study should describe the words of the participants as well as their setting instead of describing the perceptions of the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2008). I established confirmability of the data by being transparent about the procedure of data gathering, how the data obtained from the research participants was analysed and the manner in which the research study results were analysed, such as explaining how thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. In addition, I ensured confirmability of the study by including thick verbatim accounts of the data collected from the participants to show that the themes that were reported in the findings were accurate and consistent with the verbatim accounts of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). This was done to prove and affirm that the results from the research study were obtained from the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Transferability refers to the applicability of the research findings to other settings other than that of the research participants (Hall & Roussel, 2014). I ensured the transferability of the study by giving a brief description as well as the characteristics of the village and research participants where I conducted the research. This was done to ensure that those who read the

research study can evaluate the applicability of the study to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

3.13 Researcher's reflexivity

Reflexivity in qualitative research is of great importance in ensuring rigour in a research study. Reflexivity in research refers to the researcher's ability to critically scrutinize how their role and actions impacted on the research process by constantly reflecting on and interrogating their response to the research participants, and the context of the research participants (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexivity also refers to the intentional and unintentional influence that a researcher exerts on the research process (Jootun et al., 2009).

Reflexivity in research helps to improve the quality and validity of the research process, as the researcher becomes aware of how they might influence the research study and thus ensures that the research study is rigorous (Jootun et al., 2009). Paroo (2006) defined reflexivity as the researcher's continuous reflection on their presence, behaviour, preconceptions and values in relation to those of the research participants, which can ultimately have an influence on the interpretation of the research participants' responses.

I reflected on how I might have influenced the research process. Throughout the process I kept a reflective diary to record my own interpretations and potential biases that surfaced during the research study. I became aware of how my own personal understanding of out-migration might have played a role in my interpretation of the data. I have always understood out-migration to be as a result of poor economic resources in the migrant's area of origin. According to my knowledge, people out-migrate because of economic reasons and do so in order to find employment and help their families left behind financially. I therefore assumed that the elderly parents left behind saw the phenomena of migration as a positive move which would benefit them financially as those who out-migrate would send remittances to their

households of origin. The sending of remittances by those who had out-migrated seem to be a norm in most Black families especially those in the rural areas of South Africa. I realised how these ideas could potentially influence my interpretation of the data allowing for possible biases. I therefore made a concerted effort to approach the research participants with an open mind allowing them to share their own subjective experiences with me.

Another aspect which had an impact on the research process was that I had not realised how my dress code would affect the participants' perception of me. In one instance, at the beginning of the data collection process, I was wearing casual clothes and the oldest daughter of the elderly person mistook me for a government employee trying to take advantage of her mother by robbing her of her pension money, as her mother was vulnerable because of her age. As the researcher, I tried to explain to the daughter that I was conducting a research study but unfortunately, she did not accept my story. I then had to withdraw from conducting the interview so as to respect the participant's autonomy. I then became aware of how the way I was dressed influenced the research process. I went into the research process with the preconceived idea that I should dress according to the participants' standards. However, that influenced how the families of my research participants perceived me. Moreover, the fact that I am a young black woman studying towards a postgraduate degree may have been experienced as threatening by participants and therefore somewhat limited their responses.

Furthermore, most of the families that I interviewed knew my in-laws, which might have influenced their responses during the interview process and the amount of information they were willing to share. There might have been response bias as a result thereof. I also became aware of the fact that the responses from the research participants were not from them alone and at some point, the participants' children and grandchildren helped them to answer some of the questions that were asked during the interview process.

On the other hand, to break the ice and encourage the participants to feel at ease during the semi-structured interviews, I asked the participants their title names and addressed them by their title names to make them feel respected during the interview process. In Sepedi culture it is of paramount importance to address elderly people by their title names to show respect for them. Being aware of the relevant cultural customs may have allowed me to connect with the participants in a more effective way.

The length of the interviews as well as the nature of the interviews made me experience compassion fatigue, as I was exposed to the participants' emotional experiences and accounts of their children's migration experiences. Compassion fatigue is defined by Figley (1995) as an "affective process in which an individual observing another person experiences emotional responses parallel to that person's actual or anticipated emotions" (p.9). A reflective journal was therefore used to keep record of my own interpretations and personal biases as well as those of the research participants in the research process.

3.14 Ethical considerations

Although the study was part of a larger research project which had already gained ethical approval, the research proposal for this specific research study went through the required ethical process as was required by the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical). I commenced the research study only once it had been granted ethical approval.

Firstly, I ensured that the research study was ethically compliant by issuing participants with information sheets containing all the important information pertinent to the research study (Appendix A).

Important to the ethical consideration of the study was impartiality. I ensured impartiality in the research study by being transparent as well as honest about the purpose of the research study and what was expected of the research participants when they consented to taking part in the research study. Research participants were also briefed about voluntary participation in the research study and having the option to withdraw from the study should they feel the need to.

Furthermore, I also ensured integrity of the research process by following the ethical principles outlined by Blanche et al. (2006). These ethical principles are ensuring participants' autonomy, maintaining respect for the dignity of persons, non-maleficence and beneficence.

I ensured autonomy in the research by firstly obtaining consent from the research participants to take part in the research study and pointing out to them that they had the right to withdraw at any stage. Regarding respect for the dignity of persons, I protected the identities of the research participants by using pseudonyms instead of the participants' real names when reporting the findings of the research study. I also used pseudonyms when reporting on the participants' information to ensure that participants' relatives remain anonymous.

Non-maleficence was also ensured in the research study by ensuring that no harm befell the research participants during the research study. I ensured that the participants' information was protected at all cost (Blanche et al., 2006).

With regard to beneficence, I briefed the research participants about the purpose of the research study as well as the benefits of taking part in the research study. I informed them that the research study would improve their knowledge about the impact of migration and the use of technology by those left behind because of the migration by family members to the urban areas. I then also briefed the participants that the information they shared with me would be used for my Master's degree research report.

I also obtained permission from the King of Modimolle in his role as the gatekeeper to the village to conduct the research study. Thereafter, consent was sought from the research participants who voluntarily agreed to take part in the research study. Subsequently, the research participants were issued with consent forms to fill in and sign prior to the commencement of the individual semi-structured interview (Appendix B).

3.15 Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview of the methodology and the research design underpinning the research study were discussed. The method of data collection employed in this study presented an opportunity to understand the experiences of the families that are left behind because of out-migration by family members as well as their experiences around the use of ICTs.

In the next chapter I discuss the themes I identified through thematic analysis of the data collected from the participants on the experiences of those left behind when family members migrate, as well as their experiences around the use of information communication technologies.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss several themes that were identified during the thematic analysis of the individual interviews with the research participants. The themes identified in this chapter relate to the elderly people's experiences of their children's out-migration and their experiences around the use of ICTs to maintain ties with them.

The following main themes were identified during the thematic analysis of the individual interviews with the research participants and are discussed below:

- Reasons for migration
- Process around the decision to migrate
- "Licence to leave"
- The psychological impact of the decision to migrate on those left behind
- Ways of coping with losses associated with migration
- Gendered nature of migratory moves
- Chosen ways of communication
- Challenges linked to the use of ICTs
- Importance of visits

There are also a number of specific sub-themes which were identified under each main theme and are expanded on.

4.2 Reasons for migration

4.2.1 Socio-economic environment with limited resources

All of the participants reflected on the factors that had motivated their children to out-migrate to more urban parts of South Africa. There seemed to be certain factors working together that had driven the decision to move away from home. The most notable factor seemed to be the low socio-economic environment which the families found themselves in.

The majority of the elderly people identified household poverty as being the major driver of their children's move to the cities: *"They left because of the poverty we were experiencing. Poverty will make you leave"* (Portia). Mavis also emphasised this: *"He left because he could see that we were struggling to make ends meet and we did not have food to eat"*.

The unemployment of both parents coupled with household poverty seemed to have also motivated the participants' children's relocation to other places to look for employment to help sustain their households left behind in rural areas: *"It was hunger, you know in this rural area we always find ourselves attacked by hunger where you'd find in a family both parents unemployed"* (Lebo). Mmabatho reiterated the role of low household income in the decision: *"They said: 'Mommy, we can see that you are struggling to take care of us with your social grant money because it is never enough.' They became aware of the fact that my grant money is not enough to feed the entire family"*.

Lack of employment opportunities in the village also seemed to be one of the major drivers of moving from the rural areas to the urban areas:

> *There is no work here apart from when a person leaves and goes to Gauteng. If you choose to reside here in our village, you will be jobless, as there are no jobs around*

here. You would end up in a very difficult situation. All my children who left, left for work reasons (Peter).

Mmabatho also reported that her child left because of the lack of job opportunities in the village: *"He said: 'Mommy, it is better to leave, maybe I will find employment somewhere else"*.

4.2.2 Need to develop independence

In some instances, the need to develop independence also seemed to be one of the motivating factors for adult children's out-migration from the village to urban areas. One participant shared her child's sentiments: *"It is better that I leave and look for work so that I can be able to do things for myself"* (Sandra). Josephine also reported that her child left because she felt that she had grown up and wanted to establish some sense of independence: *"She said she was going to look for work because she had grown up"*.

4.3 Process around the decision to migrate

Although the participants reported various reasons that led to their children moving to the cities and urban areas, most of the participants admitted that they had been excluded from their children's migration decision making: *"They are the ones who decided for themselves because they could see that things were hard at home"* (Josephine).

Only a few participants reported that they had formed part of their children's decision to migrate: *"It was a family decision."* (Lebo). The decision to migrate also seemed to be influenced by those that had already migrated: *"It is my son's wife … My son's wife was working in Gauteng"* (Merriam).

4.4 "Licence to leave"

Although several participants were not included in their children's initial decision to migrate, their children's moving to other places seemed to have ultimately been dependent on their parents' approval thereof or "licence to leave": *"I ended up approving their decision to migrate, to go out there and see what life has in store for them"* (Peter). Moreover, the parents' approval or disapproval of their children's decision to migrate seemed to be dependent on their children's reason for leaving home: *"When a person tells you that they are leaving home because they are going to seek employment, you approve of their decision"* (Merriam).

The approval of the decision to out-migrate seemed in many instances to be linked to the perceived economic benefits associated with the move: *"I supported their decision to migrate and encouraged them to go and look for work so that they can be able to buy this child's clothes"* (Mmabatho). As mentioned earlier, for some parents, the act of migration by a child was the potential remedy for improving household circumstances: *"We saw that as the potential remedy for the hunger we were suffering"* (Lebo).

Mavis commented on how she convinced her other son to approve of his brother's decision to migrate to the urban areas in search of work opportunities so that he would be able to help sustain the family left behind: *"Free this person. He would stay but what are we going to eat?"*

4.5 The psychological impact of the decision to migrate on those left behind

4.5.1 Mixed emotional experiences

Although parents did acknowledge that they gave their children the "licence to leave", they seemed to experience mixed emotions in reaction to their children's decision to move to the urban areas. In some instances, parents reported that they felt some sense of joy in reaction to

their children's decision to move, as the move was going to be beneficial for the household left behind: *"I was very happy and asked God to be with them and wished them to find employment"* (Merriam).

On the other hand, the thought of being geographically distant from their children seemed to be extremely difficult for parents to bear: *"I felt sad at the same time because it was far"* (Portia). Some parents acknowledged that they felt lonely, as they were left all by themselves and had nobody to keep them company:

> *It was painful when they left. It is unbearable. What is hard for me is the fact that I am left alone. You know when I cook, I do not share the food with anyone. Is eating alone on your own without any company nice*? (Mmabatho)

For some participants, the thought of losing relationships across distance was exceedingly difficult: *"It is painful. It is painful because no one would want to part ways with their family"* (Lebo).

Some participants also seemed to experience some distress in reaction to their children's migration to the urban areas and appeared to find it difficult to accept that their children had left: *"Your heart would just be in doubt. Sometimes you would find yourself waking up in the middle of the night"* (Mavis). Some also worried about their children's youth and their ability to cope: *"Initially the decision almost affected me because I felt like I was persecuting the child at an early age. You start to worry when they tell you that they are leaving"* (Josephine).

Eventually Merriam seemed to have resigned herself to her child's decision to migrate: *"We did not experience any problems or difficulties or maybe being hurt due to him leaving. We accepted that he went to look for work"*.

4.5.2 Impact on family functioning

The migration of children did not only affect parents emotionally, but also appeared to have a significant impact on the functioning of the family left behind. Most importantly, there seemed to be a shift in roles, as the parents left behind had to take on the role of parenting their grandchildren because their adult children had moved to the urban areas: *"We are left with your children…"* (Merriam).

Family communication also seemed to be impacted by the distance: *"…we can take a long period of time not being able to be in touch with them…"* (Peter).

4.6 Ways of coping with losses associated with migration

The departure of their children was experienced specifically as an immediate loss of relationship with their children: *"No one would want to part ways with their family"* (Merriam). Participants seemed to use various coping strategies to deal with their children's relocation to the cities. Some parents reported that they had to comfort themselves with the notion that their children's migration was for a good cause, since they themselves could not offer their children a better life: *"You console yourself and comfort yourself…because you yourself cannot offer them anything…"* (Merriam).

Some reported that they had accepted their children's decision, to protect their children from constantly worrying about the emotional well-being of those left behind: *"You would see that you had to accept so that the child does not constantly worry* [about the family left behind] *wherever she is"* (Josephine). Another participant added, *"…but if a person wants to* [out-migrate], *we just have to accept that…"* (Mavis).

It seemed that those participants who had themselves migrated at some stage in their lives found it easier to cope with their children's out-migration, as they were aware of the

potential benefits associated with the move: *"I never had any problem…well, I found that it was a must for them to out-migrate as we also had once out-migrated to Gauteng"* (Peter).

However, some parents just found it difficult to deal with the departure of their children from home: *"Your heart would just be in doubt. Sometimes you would find yourself waking up in the middle of the night"* (Mavis).

4.7. The role of gender in migratory moves

The majority of the participants reported that it was their male children who had out-migrated to the cities to look for employment. In the three instances where daughters had out-migrated to the urban areas, it tended not to be work-related. One participant reported that her daughter had left for the city to live with her spouse, while another one stated that her daughter had moved to the city for educational reasons. Only in one instance had a daughter migrated to the urban areas in search of work opportunities.

4.8 Chosen ways of communication

Most participants reported that they used mobile phones to stay in touch with those family members who had out-migrated. For example, Portia stated, *"We talk over the phone"*, and Mavis said, *"We either make a phone call or do whatever, we then communicate with him"*.

The majority of the participants found the mobile phone to be useful as it allowed for immediacy in communication with those that had left home: *"It allows us to communicate at that particular moment in time"* (Peter). This was further emphasised by Sandra, *"If I want to talk to you right now, I just do that right now"*. Sarah added, *"We just load airtime. You make a phone call and talk to the person"*.

The mobile phone enables those left behind to quickly inform their children of what is happening back home: *"You can give me a phone call and say, 'Things are like this and this here'. You notify the person about funerals and weddings*" (Mavis). This was further emphasised by Mmabatho, *"When I am having problems or when I am sick, I just make a phone call to inform the other person"*.

Furthermore, participants felt that the mobile phone allowed them to maintain communication with their children despite geographical distance: *"We can communicate with people who are distant from us"* (Josephine).

Some participants contrasted past methods of communication with the modern use of mobile phones to illustrate the value of modern technology:

> *Back then when we were communicating, we were using …what do they call it? When we were supposed to communicate, we were supposed to write a letter. The letter will take long period of time to get delivered to its destination. So now in this very moment in time you can be able to talk to someone in Gauteng with this phone* (Peter).

4.9 Challenges linked to the use of ICTs

4.9.1 Psychological and age-related challenges

Although the majority of participants reported that the mobile phone allowed for immediacy in communication with their children who have out-migrated, some reported several limitations. For example, some participants felt that conversations with their children who are far away tend to be limited: *"Through the use of the cellular phone we would not be able to conclude what we are talking about"* (Merriam).

Some participants reported that their use of the mobile phone for communication purposes with those that left was limited because of age-related impairments. In some

instances, it was because of poor vision: *"I cannot read the names on my contact list. When the names of the people who are on my contact list appear on the screen, I cannot read them. There are certain letters I cannot read"* (Mmabatho). Josephine added, *"We have poor vision and also we struggle with regard to how to dial the numbers"*.

Moreover, some participants found the use of the mobile phone for communication purposes to be specifically challenging when it came to maintaining relationships of care. They felt that people sometimes hide certain information, especially related to their health status:

> *Sometimes a person can tell you over the phone that they are feeling better or recovering from their sickness and that makes you uneasy about their condition because you cannot see them in person to tell if they are really recovering* (Peter).

Sandra referred to the mobile phone as a "liar" as those that are far tend to lie about their whereabouts: *"The cellular phone is a liar. I would probably just lie and say I am elsewhere only to find out that I am at the doorstep"*.

4.9.2 Economic challenges related to the use of the mobile phone

The majority of the participants relied on a social grant for older people from the South African government for a living. As the grant amount is quite small, they seemed to find it difficult to make financial provision for the use of the mobile phone to communicate with their children across space. Some participants reported that it was only when they received their social grant pay-outs that they were able to buy airtime and communicate with their children who had migrated: *"*[We buy airtime] *only when we collect pension money"* (Mavis). Peter also reported difficulties related to the costs associated with the use of a cellular phone, *"It is only money, because we can take a very long period of time not being able to get in touch with them"*. This was supported by Mavis, *"The difficult thing is that sometimes you find yourself not having money to buy airtime"*.

It seemed that most participants prioritised other expenses such as for food over the costs associated with the use of mobile phones: *"When I have received my pension money, I am able to buy maize meal"* (Mavis). Peter added, *"When we have money, we use it for other things because they are the priorities and that is better"*.

The majority of the participants reported that it was not always possible to make financial provision for the use of technology to connect with those that are geographically distant from them: *"We do need money but unfortunately we do not have it"* (Sarah).

4.9.3 Unfamiliarity with the use of ICT platforms for communication purposes

In many instances, it was not only the financial limitations that seemed to prevent the participants from maintaining ties across distance. Participants also seemed to be unfamiliar with the use of mobile data and the internet for communication purposes with their children across distance: *"Ah, do I know what data is, my child?"* (Merriam). She also added that they used mobile phones which did not provide access to mobile data or internet services: *"I am using a cellular phone that does not have any features. The one that is used is to receive calls only"*.

Moreover, many participants seemed to be unfamiliar with the use of other ICT platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, to maintain communication with their children: *"No, we do not know about such..."* (Mavis). Sandra added, *"I do not even know what that is. I just know how to say 'hallo' and then that's it"* (Sandra). However, Josephine seemed to associate the use of such platforms with the younger generation: *"No, those are your things"* (Josephine).

4.10 Importance of visits

Many participants also believed that actual visits played an important role in maintaining relationships with those family members that had moved away. For them, visits seemed to afford them the opportunity to have unlimited conversations with their family members who lived far away: *"Visiting each other plays an important role. We are able to talk the entire night"* (Mavis). Merriam added, *"When we are seated like this, we are able to conclude what we are talking about appropriately and we are able to spend the entire night talking to each other. We talk about issues from beginning till end"*.

Generally, visits seemed to allow the participants the opportunity to check on and be informed about the well-being of their family members. They could see whether they were in good health or not: *"You are able to check on each other and sometimes you find out that the other person is not in good health"* (Portia).

Sarah reported that visits generally bring some sense of joy: *"We make each other happy when we see each other"*.

Some participants reported that visits tend to make it easier to resolve problems with their family members who are far away, and also allow them the opportunity to make physical contact: *"Through visits we can resolve problems amongst us through word of mouth and also physically through the exchange of handshakes where necessary"* (Peter).

However, the opportunity to visit regularly is often limited by the financial expenditure associated with these visits: *"Lack of money makes visiting difficult. We do not have money to use for our visiting trips because in order for one to visit they must use money*" (Sandra). Peter added, *"It is the financial costs that come with paying someone a visit that makes it difficult to visit"*.

In some instances, the participants reported that their opportunity to visit was further limited by having to care for their grandchildren: *"Visiting is very difficult because I have my grandchildren here. We are left with your children, so we cannot even visit our relatives just to give them a special visit to go and see them"* (Merriam). Mmabatho added, "*You see now I am looking after my grandchild. Would you carry your grandchild on your back and say I am visiting this particular place?"*.

Some participants' ability to visit seemed to be also impacted by age-related physical impairment: *"It is difficult to go and visit other family members who live far because I have a problem with my legs and also a problem with having to carry my grandson on my back. My legs are very troublesome as I cannot walk for a long period of time"* (Mmabatho). As a result, in these instances the family visits seem to have become one-way visits: *"They are the ones who visit us regularly. We visit when there are special occasions. We are grown-ups. You cannot visit someone who is far anymore*" (Josephine).

4.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the themes identified in the data analysis process as they relate to elderly people's experiences of migration by family members to the urban areas. In the following chapter I focus on how the findings of this study fit with the existing literature as outlined in the literature chapter and how the research questions have been answered.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of migration from the rural parts of South Africa to the urban areas in search of better employment opportunities is not new. As economic activities in the urban areas and cities of South Africa increase, more black people from the rural parts of South Africa are drawn to the cities in search of better jobs. The aim of this research study was to shed some light on the impact of out-migration by family members on those left behind, more specifically the elderly people left behind, as well as their experiences around the use of ICTs in maintaining family relationships across distance. The participants in the research study originate from a poorly resourced socio-economic environment.

The following research questions were posed at the beginning of the research study:

- What are the motivations underlying the decision of some of the inhabitants of the village of Modimolle to out-migrate?
- What are the psychological effects of out-migration on Black South African rural families left behind?
- How do Black rural families maintain communication with those who have migrated to urban areas?
- What types of technologies do they use to keep ties with those family members who have migrated?

- What challenges do these families face in terms of using the technologies to maintain family ties?
- Do these families budget for the use of technologies to maintain contact, and if so, where in their hierarchy of priorities is expenditure on technologies to keep families in touch?
- How does technology use interact with, change, and become changed by access to physical visits?
- To what extent do family members consider contact through technology to be inferior to, superior to, interlinked with, or distinct from face-to-face interaction?
- How do families use technology to keep in touch and to perform caring roles?

5.2 Discussion of findings

Generally, the results of the study emphasise the role of mobile phones as the tool of choice for maintaining relationships between those left behind and their adult children who have out-migrated. They also highlight that elderly parents in poorly resourced areas face a number of challenges with the more advanced technology, mostly because of financial limitations but also because of lack of familiarity with technology. However, one of the advantages that was presented is the immediacy of the communication. Ultimately, physical contact remains the participants' preferred way of interacting with their loved ones, but visits are often impeded by financial restrictions as well as physical challenges linked to travelling.

When looking at the themes identified during the data analysis, more information regarding the participants' experiences was highlighted.

Firstly, the results highlighted the motivations underlying the decision of some of the inhabitants of the village of Modimolle to out-migrate. Generally, it appeared that the lack of employment opportunities in the village was the most important deciding factor: *"There is no*

work here apart from when a person leaves and goes to Gauteng. If you choose to reside here in our village, you will be jobless, as there are no jobs around here" (Peter). This is not surprising, taking into account that the Limpopo province has the second-highest level of unemployment in all provinces in the country (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This is reflected by the lack of job opportunities in the province, which ultimately pushes young adults from the village to seek work opportunities elsewhere in the country.

Furthermore, the results highlighted how small household incomes often motivate young adults to move to urban areas in the hope of finding job opportunities in their migration destinations to help tfeed their families left behind: *"They said: 'Mommy, we can see that you are struggling to take care of us with your social grant money because it is never enough.' They became aware of the fact that my social grant money is not enough to feed the entire family"* (Mmabatho); *"He said: 'Mommy, it is better to leave, maybe I will find employment somewhere else'"* (Mmabatho). These results are not surprising, considering the socio-economic environment of the participants. The participants come from a poorly resourced environment and their children may have possibly been dissatisfied with the lack of job opportunities in the village as well as small household incomes. Both job opportunities and household incomes belong to an individual's key spheres of life, according to Sandu et al. (2018). The dissatisfaction with these key spheres of life may have led the participants' adult children to resort to out-migration in the hope of securing employment in their migration destination in order to improve these key spheres of their lives (Sandu et al., 2018). Most importantly, these results reflected how the decision to migrate in African families is often made based on the socio-economic conditions of the migrants' household of origin (Massey, 2015). The motive to migrate in Black families may therefore be rooted in the fact that migrants want to maximise the household income in their place of origin (Arango, 2000).

While the reasons to migrate from the village seemed to be influenced by poor socio-economic conditions, it was surprising to learn that in many instances parents were originally excluded from their children's migration decision making: *"They are the ones who decided for themselves because they could see that things are hard at home"* (Josephine). This supports the findings of Marchetti-Mercer (2012a), who found that adult children tend to decide on migration by themselves and only later share their decision with the rest of the family. However, parents did tend to give their children the "licence to leave" described by Baldassar et al. (2006): *"When a person tells you that they are leaving home because they are going to seek employment, you approve their decision"* (Merriam). The approval of the decision to migrate seemed in many instances to be linked to the perceived economic benefits associated with the move: *"I supported their decision to migrate and encouraged them to go and look for work so that they can be able to buy this child's clothes"* (Mmabatho). Parents' approval of their children's relocation to urban areas also seemed to be linked to the perception that their children's migration would help improve the household circumstances, as their children were going to secure employment in the urban areas and provide additional financial support by remitting back home: *"We saw that as the potential remedy for the hunger we were suffering…"* (Merriam). These results reflect how the parents' approval of their children's decision to migrate tends to be given because they expect that their adult children will provide financial support for the family left behind. Fongwa (2019) described this financial support as "Black tax" (p. 2). However, these kind of expectations by elderly parents reflect the "strong bonds" (Sibiya, 2018, p. 25) prevalent in Black families and the importance of meeting family needs despite geographical distance (Sibiya, 2018). The approval of the decision to migrate may therefore be perceived by elderly parents as some form of self-insurance that will be beneficial for the household left behind in times of need, such as during times of unemployment in the migrants' household of origin (Abreu, 2012).

Although parents did give their children the "licence to leave" (Baldassar et al., 2006) because of the perceived economic benefits associated with such a move, most of the participants acknowledged that their children's migration from the village was stressful for them. They experienced sensations of loss related to the relationship with their children because of the distance: *"It is painful because no one would want to part ways with their family*" (Lebo). Some participants reported feelings of loneliness as they were left all by themselves: *"You know when I cook, I do not share the food with anyone…is eating alone on your own without any company nice?"* (Mmabatho). Some participants reported feelings of sadness in reaction to their children's out-migration: *"I felt sad at the same time because it was far"* (Portia), and in some cases distress in reaction to their children's migratory move: *"Your heart would just be in doubt. Sometimes you would find yourself waking up in the middle of the night"* (Mavis). These results resonate with Grinberg and Grinberg's (1989) view that the quality of the bond between those left behind and those that have migrated determines the type of emotional reactions experienced by those left behind to the migration of those that have left, and reflect parents' close bonds with their migrant children. Other research has also shown that parents tend to experience feelings of loss when their adult children migrate (see research by King & Vullnetari, 2006; Knodel & Saengtienchai, 2007; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020; Miltiades, 2002). Moreover, parents' loss of special bonds with their migrant children might possibly be experienced as a kind of "death" (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 67). Therefore, the prevalence of such emotions might possibly be the parents' way of mourning the "ambiguous loss" of their migrant children (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989).

The emotional reactions of the participants reflect the findings of Ferreira (2015) on South African emigrants. She found that the psychological responses of parents left behind in reaction to their children's emigration included sleep disturbances, sadness and despair. They

also resonate with the research results of King and Vullnetari (2006) on the impact of mass migration on older people in rural Albania. They found that elderly people left behind experienced feelings of loneliness, loss and isolation in reaction to their children's migration. Therefore, there seems to be a universal theme of a negative psychological experience, characterised by feelings of loss, by parents in reaction to their children's migration, irrespective of their nationality, race, or social class.

There also seemed to be a sense of emotional ambivalence amongst participants in reaction to their children's moving to the urban areas: *"We ended up being thankful because they left because of work"* (Sarah). It seems that although parents experienced their children's migration as particularly stressful, they understood the reasons behind their children's relocation, more specifically the financial benefits of such a move for those left behind. This is consistent with the research findings of Marchetti-Mercer (2012b) on the impact of emigration on those left behind. She found that parents tend to show emotional ambivalence when their children leave home. Although the children's decision to migrate is not pleasant, parents tend to understand this decision because of the perceived advantages of such a move.

Although parents appear to have experienced their children's decision to migrate as emotionally and psychologically costly, they seem to have adopted various coping mechanisms to deal with the departure of their adult migrant children. Some parents reported that they had come to accept their children's departure from home because their out-migration was for a good cause, as those that had left were going to help sustain the family left behind: *"You console yourself and comfort yourself…because you yourself cannot offer them anything…"* (Merriam). Some parents seemed to block the negative feelings associated with their children's out-migration to protect their children from constantly worrying about the emotional well-being of their parents left behind: *"You would see that you have to accept so that the child does not constantly worry* [about the family left behind] *wherever she is"* (Josephine). These results

are consistent with Falicov's (2007) view that most parents who are distressed by being separated from their children tend to adopt mechanisms of "overcoming", "enduring in silence", and "not overthinking" (p. 162) in order to deal with such distress. These might therefore be the participants' ways of trying to avoid feelings associated with the ambiguous loss of their adult migrant children (Boss, 2009).

In order to bridge the gap of distance, the participants emphasised the role of mobile phones as the tool of choice for maintaining relationships with their adult children who have out-migrated: *"We talk over the phone"* (Portia). However, most participants reported that they were unfamiliar with the use of data and more advanced technological apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook: *"Ah, do I know what data is, my child?"* (Merriam). They also do not have access to smartphones: *"I am using a cellular phone that does not have any features"* (Merriam). This explains why they use a simple mobile phone, which only allows them to call and text, as their only tool of communication with those that have migrated. Furthermore, the choice of the mobile phone as a communication tool could be influenced by how the mobile phone facilitates social co-presence, the "sense of being with another in a mediated environment and the moment-to-moment awareness of co-presence" (Biocca & Harms, 2002, p. 14). The ability to feel another person's presence by hearing their voice may therefore explain why the mobile phone is an important form of communication for migrants and their families (Horst, 2006).

These results differ significantly from the research findings of Marchetti-Mercer et al. (2020) on South African middle-class families. They found that these families used different ICT platforms such as Skype, Facetime and WhatsApp to communicate with their migrant children living overseas. These results might therefore reflect the digital divide between low and middle-class South Africans, where familiarity with and exposure to different types of ICTs is not the same and is dictated by economic means. A further explanation as to why the

research participants may lack exposure to and familiarity with these ICTs is that they had left the educational system before the introduction of these technological advances (Selwyn et al., 2003). They may find it difficult to keep up with the new technological developments and may have therefore opted to rely on more traditional forms of communication such as phone calls only (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Although the results highlighted unfamiliarity with other types of ICTs as a possible barrier to elderly people's ability to maintain communication across distance, one of the advantages of mobile phones is the immediacy in communication: *"It allows us to communicate at that particular moment"* (Peter). Through the exchange of phone calls, families are able to maintain communication with those who are geographically distant and it also allows for healthier interpersonal relationships across distance: *"We just load airtime, you make a phone call and talk to the person"* (Sarah). Moreover, through the exchange of phone calls, those left behind are able to instantly relay important information to their migrant children across distance about the situation at home: *"You notify the person about funerals and weddings"* (Mavis); *"When I am having problems or when I am sick, I just make a phone call to inform the other person"* (Mmabatho). This is unlike the methods of communication in the past, such as writing a letter, which were infrequent: *"Back then when we were communicating, we were using…what do they call it? We were supposed to write a letter. The letter will take a long period of time to get delivered to its destination*" (Peter). Therefore, today's technology, more specifically the mobile phone, has made communication much easier as it allows families to maintain communication despite geographical distance, in comparison to old methods of communication that were used decades ago (Francisco, 2015). Moreover, ICTs seem to have also provided the potential to mitigate what Baldassar et al. (2006) refer to as the "death of distance", and they allow people to stay in touch with one another despite geographical distance (Issa, 2015), as expressed by Merriam, *"It connects us with people who are far"*. These results

reflect how ICTs have assisted those that are left behind to construe and imagine relationships with those that have left, allowing for some form of "virtual co-presence" (Baldassar, 2008, p. 252).

Although the participants reported that the mobile phone allowed them immediacy in communication with their children across time and space, they also highlighted that they experience a number of challenges with more advanced technology. Firstly, the participants' concern was around the issue of technology being used by those that are geographically distant to conceal information regarding their health in order to protect their families from anxiety-provoking information (Baldassar, 2008): *"Sometimes a person can tell you over the phone that they are feeling better or recovering from their sickness and that makes you uneasy about their condition because you cannot see them in person"* (Peter); *"The cellular phone is a liar…"* (Sandra). These results echo research findings of Baldock (2003) on long distance migrants and how they hide unpleasant information from each other so as not to create unnecessary concern. These results also reflect how the elderly parents make use of technology to maintain relationships of care during times of ill-health through phone calls, although they tend to doubt the authenticity of the information shared with them across distance.

Furthermore, the results of the research study highlighted other challenges that elderly people in poorly resourced areas experience with the more advanced technology, mostly because of financial limitations: *"Sometimes you find yourself not having enough money to buy airtime"* (Mavis). These results are not surprising considering the socio-economic environment of the participants. The participants might not have sufficient financial means to allow them to prioritise or budget for the use of technology and may be prioritising other basic needs such as food as opposed to the use of technology: *"When we have money, we use it for other things because they are priorities and that is better"* (Peter). This supports the view of Kilkey and Palenga-Mollenbeck (2016) that not every person can afford ICTs, more specifically people in

the lower socio-economic class and the elderly. Small pension or grant pay-outs for the elderly may therefore explain why the participants do not have enough funds for the use of technology (Takavarasha & Adams, 2018).

Financial limitations seem to not be the only challenge faced by the participants. In many cases a lack of practical skills in using the technology involved also hindered the process: *"When making a phone call, I would ask for assistance so that they search for him* [her son] *on my phone…"* (Josephine). These results are consistent with research findings of Kang (2012), who found that parents left behind by their migrant children tend to use assistance from a relative or young member of the family to access as well as to use technology due to lack of familiarity with the new developments of technology. However, on a more positive note, Kang (2012) argues that the assistance received from relatives and young members of the family can help elderly parents left behind to use as well as to become familiar with the use of technology.

Other challenges highlighted by the results that the elderly people face when using new technological developments include challenges related to age impairments, such as poor vision, which hinder them from using these technologies effectively for communication purposes:

> *The challenge I face when using the cellular phone is that I cannot read the names on my contact list. When the names of people who are in my contact list appear on the screen, I cannot read them…there are certain letters I cannot read* (Mmabatho).

These results echo the research findings of Van Biljon et al. (2013) that the elderly people in the rural areas are unable to connect effectively with those family members who are dispersed by distance because of the lack of essential features in the design of the mobile phone. One of these features would be large fonts on the display screen which would make it easier for elderly people to use the mobile phone effectively for communication purposes.

Moreover, the participants raised another concern regarding the use of the mobile phone. They found that conversations often tend to be too short: *"Through the use of the*

cellular phone we would not be able to conclude what we are talking about" (Merriam) and do not allow the participants to discuss or resolve certain issues: *"When using the cellular phone, you are unable to fix things but you can agree on certain decisions"* (Peter). These results reflect how ICTs often limit people's ability to negotiate crises and conflicts that could arise remotely as a result of continued interaction (Wilding, 2006).

Ultimately these results reveal that physical contact remains the preferred way of interacting with one's loved ones, which cannot be replaced by the use of technology: *"When we are seated like this, we are able to conclude what we are talking about appropriately and we are able to spend the entire night talking to each other"* (Merriam); *"We see each other face to face and when there are mistakes, we rectify them"* (Mavis). These results echo Marchettti-Mercer's (2012b) findings that elderly parents left behind experience technology as being useful but not as rewarding as physical contact. Some situations require physical contact to allow families to establish relationships of trust through informal socialising, body language and small talk (O'Flaherty et al., 2007).

One way to address the limitations inherent in ICTs is the use of visits. Visits allow the participants to physically examine the well-being and health of their family members, unlike attempting to maintain relationships of care through the use of technology where people tend to conceal anxiety-provoking information such as illness (Baldassar, 2008): *"You are able to check each other. You check on each other and sometimes you find out that the other person is not in good health"* (Portia); *"We are able to check if our relatives are still well"* (Sandra). These results are consistent with Baldassar's (2008) research findings where she observed that the elderly parents' need for the physical presence of their children tends to be rooted in the fact that parents "need to see" their family members or relatives "with their own eyes" to confirm "for themselves" (p. 260) whether they are still in good health.

Although visits seem particularly important, more specifically during times of ill-health, they are often impeded by financial restrictions associated with the costs of travelling: *"Lack of money makes visiting difficult. We do not have money to use for our visiting trips because in order for one to visit they must use money"* (Sandra). These results resonate with King and Vullnetari's (2006) research findings that costs associated with visiting trips tend to prevent families from visiting each other often and enjoying healthier interpersonal relationships. In the case of these participants, low incomes as a result of retirement may be acting as a barrier to having the financial means for their travelling trips. However, these results differ significantly from the research findings of Marchetti-Mercer et al. (2020) on South African middle-class families. In these cases, the elderly parents left behind had the requisite financial resources available to permit them to travel more freely. Wilding and Baldassar (2009) may therefore be correct when they argue that the ability to visit seems to be associated with one's social class, where those in the lower socio-economic class tend to visit less frequently because of the lack of finances to sponsor frequent return travels.

Elderly parents' ability to visit also seemed to be hampered by physical challenges linked to travelling, such as discomforts caused by age-related impairments: *"It is difficult to go and visit other family members who live far because I have problems with my legs and also problems having to carry my grandson on my back"* (Merriam). Interestingly, this is consistent with research done on middle-class South Africans where it was found that elderly parents found it difficult to travel by air and also experienced discomforts due to age-related impairments (see research by Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b). Whilst the mode of transport and access to financial means were different, these participants also experienced travelling as being uncomfortable because of age-related impairments.

On the other hand, it was also noteworthy that some participants reported their ability to visit as being hindered by having to care for their grandchildren: *"Visiting is very difficult*

because I have my grandchildren here. We are left with your children, so we cannot even visit our relatives just to give them a special visit to go and see them" (Merriam). These results reflect the role of Black elderly parents in Black families in that they are often viewed as the "primary source of support" (p. 75) and usually play the role of custodial grandmothers (Mtshali, 2015; Mabandla, 2018). Apart from the fact that such roles limit the elderly parents' ability to visit, they reflect the systemic impact of migration on Black families where grandparents are pushed to the "forefront of parenting support" (Mtshali, 2015, p. 75; Mabandla, 2018). However, this practice differs significantly from that of middle-class South African elderly parents, whose adult children tend to migrate with their children (see research by Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020). The difference in this practice might therefore reflect the interconnectedness and interdependence of Black families as a unit and highlight how the departure of one family member brings about change in family roles, as the roles of those who left must filled by those that are left behind (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012).

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the results of the research study in an attempt to answer the research questions of the research study regarding the role of ICTs in maintaining and sustaining family relationships by Black elderly people left behind as a result of the out-migration of their adult children. Generally, the discussion of the study highlighted the mobile phone as the tool of choice for maintaining relationships between those left behind and their adult-children who have out-migrated. The results have also highlighted that elderly parents living in poorly resourced areas experience a number of challenges with the more advanced technology because of financial limitations and lack of familiarity with technology. However, one of the advantages that was presented is the immediacy of the communication. Ultimately,

physical contact remains the preferred way of interacting with one's loved ones, but visits are often hampered by financial restrictions as well as physical challenges linked to travelling.

In the next chapter I give a brief conclusion of the research study and discuss the limitations pertinent to the research study. The study concludes with the discussion of recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary of findings

In this research study, I have attempted to show how the process of out-migration by family members has an enormous impact on the parents left behind. As part of the data collection, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with elderly people over the age of sixty living in a rural area of South Africa to capture their experiences around the migration of their adult children as well as their experiences around the use of ICTs with their migrant children across distance. The research study highlighted that elderly parents experienced the out-migration of their adult children as being exceedingly difficult to cope with, as parents experienced feelings of loneliness, sadness, distress and in some instances emotional ambivalence in reaction to their children's out-migration.

The research study provided insight about the advantages and disadvantages of the use of ICTs, more specifically in maintaining ties between those that have out-migrated and parents left behind in the rural areas. The study highlighted how those left behind appreciate the availability of ICTs, as they provided them with a way to ameliorate the losses associated with migration by allowing them immediacy in communication with their adult children. They also tend to prefer using mobile phones. This is experienced as an improvement over past forms of communication such as writing letters, which were infrequent and took a long time to be delivered to their destination.

Most importantly, the results of the study highlighted how elderly parents in a poorly resourced socio-economic environment found it difficult to maintain connectedness with their adult children due to limited finances and the costs associated with the use of ICTs. The study

further reflects on how elderly people in a poorly resourced socio-economic environment are not exposed to and familiar with other ICT platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, which could be used as alternatives forms of communication with their adult children across distance. This is in contrast to elderly South African parents from middle-class backgrounds (see research by Marchetti-Mercer, 2012; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2020). This highlights the digital divide that exists between the lower and middle classes in South Africa.

In addition, the study highlighted how the technical design of a mobile phone may not cater for the elderly. They tend to struggle with its use, more specifically with the small fonts on the screen which makes it difficult for them to read names and telephone numbers. As a result, they struggle to maintain connectedness with their migrant children and often have to rely on assistance from their grandchildren to communicate by mobile phone with their adult children who are geographically distant.

6.2 Limitations of the research study

Firstly, it should be noted that the results of the study reflect the experiences of elderly people from a poorly resourced socio-economic environment with a distinct culture. Consequently, the transferability of the research study to other settings should be cautiously considered and issues such as the cultural context and socio-economic status of the group should be taken into account. It should be noted that should the study be replicated in a different socio-economic environment and cultural setting, the probability of it yielding different results is high and therefore a generalisation of the research results to other settings should be treated with caution.

Subsequently, it should be noted that the research method adopted in the research study, more specifically the qualitative research approach used, could also have an impact on the nature of the research results yielded from the study, and that the replication of the research

study using a different research approach could yield different results. Therefore, the transferability of the research results to other research settings should be tentatively considered.

Moreover, the sample for the research study was predominantly female and might be skewed in terms of responses. Furthermore, it should be noted that the adult children who migrated were not interviewed and their responses might have provided a different perspective.

6.3 Recommendations

Firstly, the findings from the research study have highlighted the distressing emotional and psychological effect of their adult children's out-migration on the elderly people left behind. They experienced feelings of sadness, pain and worry in reaction to their children's out-migration. Although there are no specific rituals to help families deal with the painful emotional and psychological experiences of the ambiguous loss of their adult children because of migration (Ferreira, 2015), families left behind could benefit from developing rituals that will help them in coming to terms with their adult children's migration. Those left behind should allow themselves to express these painful experiences, as dealing effectively with such emotions might lead to their psychological growth. Avoiding the feelings associated with such experiences is an unhealthy way of coping with the harsh psychological experiences associated with migration (Ferreira, 2015). Moreover, those left behind should engage in the process of meaning reconstruction, whereby they strive to find new meaning and value in what they are left with after the migration of a family member. One of the ways would be appreciating the positive impact of their children's migration in the sense that it will benefit them financially, as those that have migrated will send remittances back home to maximise their household incomes in times of need (Arango, 2000). Mental health practitioners could also use these results to understand the psychological and emotional impact of migration on those left behind

and offer them psychosocial support by encouraging them to see the migration of their adult children from a more positive perspective and by offering them psychological counselling.

Secondly, the results of the research study gave insight into some of the challenges that elderly people face in their use of ICTs to maintain emotional ties with those that have left. Those left behind reported that although ICTs help them to maintain connectedness with their adult children across time and space, they often found the cost associated with such technological advances prohibitive. Due to small household incomes, they often could not make provision for these costs. Governmental intervention is therefore recommended to provide financial relief for the costs associated with the use of ICTs in poorly resourced socio-economic environments to enable families left behind in these environments to enjoy healthier relationships with the members of their kin across distance.

Another factor that seemed to place a limitation on the elderly parents' use of technology to maintain interconnectedness with their migrant children was related to the design of the mobile phone. The size of the font on the display screen and the size of the fonts on the buttons of mobile phones presented difficulties. These factors often hinder elderly people in maintaining and sustaining relationships across time and space. It would therefore be useful if mobile phone designers could design phones which would address the needs of the elderly people, keeping in mind age-related constraints such as impeded dexterity, hearing, and vision. The needs and expectations of older adult mobile phone users are often not met by current mobile designers (Van Dyk et al., 2012). Mobile phone designers should explore features essential to elderly people, such as large buttons, large fonts on the display screen and an audible ringing tone, to enable them to use the mobile phone effectively for communication purposes across time and space (Maguire & Osman, 2003).

Moreover, the results of the research gave insight into how elderly parents in poorly resourced socio-economic environments are often unfamiliar with other forms of ICTs, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, for communication purposes with their adult children across distance. Programmes should be introduced in rural areas aimed at creating awareness about different types of ICTs that can help the elderly people to maintain connectedness with the members of their kin across distance. More importantly, these programmes should also be aimed at providing an integrated ongoing training on ICTs for the elderly people, teaching them the necessary skills to use these ICTs, as accessibility to these technological advances alone is not sufficient for elderly people (Kabbar & Crump, 2007). The implementation of such training can potentially help bridge the digital divide between the elderly people in poorly resourced environments and those in the upper and middle classes.

Furthermore, the results highlighted the elderly people's need for physical co-presence with the members of their kin, which can be achieved through visits. They highlighted how these visits are important, more specifically during times of ill-health as they help them to provide physical support during those times. However, they reported that these visits are often limited due to the financial expenditure associated with travels. Public transport fares for the elderly people should be reviewed to make it easier for them to travel.

Lastly, the results highlighted how the elderly people's ability to visit tends to be restricted by age-related physical impairments such as painful legs. This often limits the elderly people's ability to maintain physical co-presence and healthy relationships. Public transport should therefore be designed with the elderly people in mind and should ideally be equipped with attributes such as low floors and stepless entrances, and designated seats for the elderly people to help them to sit comfortably while travelling (Shrestha et al., 2017).

6.4 Suggestions for future research

Future research could further explore the role of ICTs in maintaining and sustaining family relationships, focusing on elderly people from various cultural backgrounds in different South African rural areas so as to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the use of ICTs in rural migrant families.

Future studies could also explore how the children of adult migrants who were left to live with their grandparents use ICTs to maintain and sustain relationships with their parents. This will help to understand the family dynamics around the use of ICTs in migrant families better.

Future studies could also explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families separated by distance, considering that travel restrictions have made sustaining relationships between family members more challenging. Families are prohibited from visiting each other. More focus should therefore be placed on the exploration of the role of ICTs in helping families separated by distance to maintain emotional ties during the pandemic and to also explore the psychological impact of the pandemic on families separated by distance.

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Appendices

Appendix A1: Participant information sheet

PSYCHOLOGY

THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Participant information sheet

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN SUSTAINING AND MAINTAINING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUT-MIGRANTS IN LIMPOPO: MODIMOLLE VILLAGE.

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by myself Ms Lactricia Maja of Psychology at the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand as part of my master's degree in psychology.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate.

The purpose of this research project is to explore how the various technologies now available to people (in my case I will focus mainly on cellular phones with new smartphone applications), have impacted upon family relationships and relationships of care. I also wish to look at issues of access to mobile technology.

If you consent to participate in this study, the interviewer will ask you to do the following:

1. To take part in an interview regarding your experiences of using mobile technology to stay in touch with your family as well as maintain family relationships. This should last approximately 60-90 minutes. It is necessary for me to record the interview in order to remember as much detail as possible.
2. To provide her with some biographical information especially regarding your family of origin.

No risks, discomforts, or inconveniences should arise because of your participation in this study. If however any of the questions cause you any discomfort, you may discontinue your participation. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study.

Some questions regarding family members who have migrated might evoke certain emotions or psychological trauma. Should such situations happen, you are advised to go to Modimolle clinic or hospital to get professional help from social workers and psychologists for support.

It is not likely that you will benefit directly from participation in this study, but the research should help us learn more about how African families separated by internal and external migration maintain family connections.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Anonymity will be maintained by means of a code number that will be connected to the different participants.

The interview will be transcribed by a person who will not be privy to the identity of the interviewee(s), and thereafter the recordings will be destroyed. The transcripts will however be kept in electronic form for the period required by the University of the Witwatersrand. Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside of the study. I will, however, use the information collected for my dissertation and publishing and/or presentations in an academic context.

If you do choose to participate please can you fill out the consent form attached and give them back to me.

IENTIFICATION & CONTACT DETAILS OF SUPERVISOR

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer
School of Human and Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
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Appendix A2: Translated participant information sheet

SAEKOLOTŠI

SEKOLO SA TSA BOTHO LE TSWELOPELE YA SETSHABA

Letlakala la tshedimošo la motšeakarolo.

HLOTLETŠO YA TEMA YEO TSHEDIMOŠO YA THEKNOLOTŠI YA DIKGOKAGANO E BAPALAGO GO PHEGELELA LE GO SWARANTŠHA KAMANO YA LAPA MOO YO MONGWE WA LELAPA A FALATŠEGO MO SELETENG SA LIMPOPO: MOTSANENG WA MODIMOLLE.

O mengwa go tšea karolo go diphatišišo tšeo ke di dirago ke le Lactricia Maja wa Saekholotši Sekolong sa tša Botho le Tšwelopele ya Setšhaba Yunibesithing ya Witwatersrand jwalo ka karolo ya tikirii yaka ya Masters ya Saekholotši.

Go tšea karolo ga gago ke ka boithaopo. O swanetše gore o bale tshedimošo yeo e ngwadilwego ka mo fase gomme o botšiše ka se sengwe le se sengwe seo o sa se kwešišego, pele o ka kgetha go tšea karolo goba go se tšee karolo.

Morero wa go dira diphatišišo tše ke go hlotletša ka mokgwa woo mehuta ye mengwe ya theknolotši yeo e lego gona mo bathong (ka lehlakoreng laka ke tla ke tsepeletše mo go megala le theknolotši ya yona ya go hlalefa), e bilego le seabe dikamanong tša lelapa le go hlokomeleng ga ba lelapa. Ke nyaka go lebelelala le mathata ao a tlago le go šomišwa ga megala le intanete.

Ge eba o kgetha go tšea karolo mo diphatišišong tše, motho yoo a tlago go botšiša dipotšišo poledišanong o tlile go go kgopela gore o dire dilo tše di latelago:

1. Go tšea karolo mo poledišanong mabapi le maitemgelo a gago a go šomiša theknolotši ya mogala go kgokagana le ba lelapa gammogo le go phegelela kamano le ba lelapa. Poledišano ye e šwanetše go tšea metsotso e masometshela goya go metsotso e masomesenyane. Go a hlokega gore ke gatiše poledišano ye gore ke tle ke kgone go gopolala dilo ka moka tšeo re boletšego ka tšona ka botlalo.
2. Go fa motho yoo a tlago go botšiša dipotšišo tshedimošo mabapi le taodišophelo ya gago kudu kudu mabapi le lelapa la gago.

Ga go kotse, go se lokol+loge, goba matshwenyego ao a swanetšego go tšwelela ka lebaka la go tšea karolo mo diphatišišong tše. Ge eba tše dingwe tša dipotšišo tše di go dira gore o se kgone go phurulloga, o na le tokelo ya go emiša poledišano. Ga go na kotlo yeo o tlilego go e fiwa ge o ka kgetha go emiša go tšea karolo mo diphatišišong.

Dipotšišo tše dingwe tšeo di tlago botšišwa di ka iša maikutlo a gago fase goba go go gopotša selo sa go go kgopiša goba go se go thabiše mabapi le yo mongwe wa lelapa yoo a falatšego. Ge selo sa mohuta wo se ka go hlagela, o eletšwa gore o ye kliniking goba sepetlele go yo hwetša thušo go tšwa go saekolotši goba go badirela leago gore ba go thuse gore o fole moyeng.

Ga go seo o tlilego go se hwetša thwii ka baka la go tšea karolo mo diphatišišong tše, empa diphatišišo tše di tlile go thuša ka go ithuta ka mokgwa woo malapa a Ma-Aforika a kgaoganywago ke go falala ga yo mongwe wa lelapa le ka mokgwa woo a phegelelago dikamono tsa selelapa ka gona.

Tshedimoso efe kapa efe yeo e hweditšwego mabapi le diphatišišo tše, yeo e hlathago ka wena e tla swarwa bjalo ka sephiri gomme e tla phatlalatšwa feela ka tumelelo ya gago. Go se tsebiwe ga gago go tla phetagatswa ka mokgwa wa go somisa dinomoro tša sephiri tseo di tlago go kgokaganya batšeakarolo ba bangwe.

Poledišano e tlile go ngwalollwa letlakaleng ke motho yoo a sa išego felo ka thlatho ya gago le ya batšeakarolo ka moka. Lephephe leo go ngwalollotšwego poledišano ya kgatišo go lona, le tla beiwa ka mokgwa wa elektroniki go fihlela ka nako yeo e kgotsofalelwago ke Yunibesithi ya Witwatersrand. Tshedimošo ka wena e ka se phatlalatšwe ka ntle ga diphatišišo, empa nna ke tlile go šomiša tshedimošo yeo ke e hweditšego mo poledišanong go ngwala le go bega ka dinyakišišo tša ka lefelong la boithutelo.

Ge o kgetha go tšea karolo, o kgopelwa gore o tlatše letlakala la tumelelano ya motseakarolo poledišanong gomme ge o fetša go le tlatša o le bušetše go nna.

HLATHOLLO LE MOKGWA WA GO IKGOKAGANYA LE MOHLOKOMEDI WAKA PROJEKENG YE.

Ge eba o na le dipotšišo mabapi le diphatišišo tše, ke kgopela gore o lokolloge go ikgokaganya le mohlokomedi ka nna:

Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer.

Sekolo sa tsa Botho le Tšwelopele ya Setšhaba
Yunibesithi ya Witwatersrand.
Johannesburg
011 7174518

maria.marchetti-mercer@wits.ac.za

Appendix B1: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

I.....(full names), agree to participate in the following research project, "Exploring the role of Information and Communication technologies (ICT's) in maintaining and sustaining family relationships in Limpopo: Modimolle village

I agree that the interview be audio recorded.

The researcher has explained the research to me and what my participation will involve.

I understand that:

-Participation is strictly voluntary and have the right to withdraw from the study should I feel the need to do so.

-My name and identifying information will change in the reporting of the study in order for me to remain anonymous.

-Voice recordings and transcripts of interviews will be stored on a password protected computer.

-The researcher may use anonymous quotes in the research report.

-The research will be presented in class/conference.

Signature .....

Appendix B2: Translated Participant Consent Form

Letlakala la tumelelano la motšeakarolo

Nna……. (maina ka botlalo), ke dumela go tšea karolo mo projekeng ya diphatišišo eo e latelago, “Hlotletšo ya tema yeo thekenolotši ya tshedimošo le kgokagano e e bapalago go phegelela le go swarantšha kamano ya lapa mo seleteng sa Limpopo: motsaneng wa Modimolle.”

Ke dumela gore poledišano e gatišwe ka lentšu.

Monyakišiši o nthlaoloseditše ka diphatišišo tšeo a di dirago le gore ke eng seo se nyakegago ka nna ge ke tšea karolo diphatišišong tše.

Ke kwišiša gore:

Go tšea karolo gaka mo diphatišišong tše go dirwa ka boithaopi gomme ke na le tokelo ya go emiša go tšea karolo go diphatišišo ge nka bona go hlokagala go dira bjalo.

Leina laka le tshedimošo eo e hlathago ka nna e tla fetošwa mo pegong ya diphatišišo gore ke se tsebiwe.

Dikgatišo tša lentšu le matlakala ao go ngwaletšwego poledišano a tla lotiwa go khomputara yeo e šireleditšwego ka go bulwa ka dinomoro goba maletere a sephiring.

Monyakišiši a ka šomiša ditsopolwa tša go hloka leina mo diphatišišong.

Diphatišišo di tlile go hlagišwa ka phaphošing ya boithutelo/kopanong.

Mosaeno……

Letšatšikgwedi……...

Appendix C1: Consent form for interview recording

Consent form for interview recording

I……give my consent for my interview with Lactricia Maja to be recorded.

I understand that:

1. The recording will be confidential and only Lactricia and her supervisor will have access to them.
2. Throughout the essay write-up, I will be referred to by a pseudonym and no identifying information will be revealed.

Signature……

Date…….

Appendix C2: Translated consent form for interview recording

Fomo ya tumelelano ya kgatiso ya lentsu ya poledišano

Nna…….ke go fa tumelelo ya gore poledišano yaka le wena Lactricia e gatišiwe ka mokgwa wa lentšu.

Ke kwešiša gore:

1. Kgatišo ye ya lentšu ya poledišano, e tla swarwa bjalo ka sephiri gomme ga go motho yo mongwe yoo a ka bago le tumelelo go poledišano yeo e gatišitšwego.
2. Ge go ngwalwa diphatišišo, leina laka la nnete le ka se šomišwe gomme bakeng sa leina laka go tla somišwa leina la maaka.

Mosaeno…….

Letšatšikgwedi……

Appendix D1: Semi-structured interview schedule

1. How old are you?

2. Please give me a bit of background on your family

3. Please describe who has left home and how they arrived at this decision?

4. Were you part of the decision?

5. How did you feel when your children/grandchildren decided to leave home?

6. What was the most difficult part about the decision?

7. What technologies do you use in order to keep in touch and maintain ties?

8. What do you find difficult/ what do you find useful about using these technologies?

9. Do you have access to the internet /data?

10. Do you have to make financial provision in order to make use of these technologies?

11. How do you use these technologies to keep in touch and to make sure you still take care of each other?

12. Do you find that having access to cellular phones and other types of technologies has made a difference in how you stay in touch as opposed to the time when these were not available?

Appendix D2: Translated semi-structured interview schedule

Leago la poledišano leo le hlamilwego

1Lena le mengwaga e mekae?

2 Ke kgopela le nthlaolosetše ka bokopana ka lelapa la gago go tloga kua moragonyana.

3 Ke kgopela gore o nthlaolosetše gore ke mang yoo a faladilego ka mo gae le gore sephetho seo a se tšerego sa go ya go falala nageng e nngwe o se fihleletše bjang.

4 Naa o be o re karolo ya sephetho se?

5 Naa o ile wa ikwa bjang ge bana ba gago/ ditlogolo tša gago di sepela ka gae?

6 Ke eng seo se bego se le se boima go ba se bothata ka sepheto se?

7 Ke mehuta efe ya theknolotši yeo le e šomisago go kgokagana gammogo le go phegelela dikamano tša lelapa?

8 Ke eng seo o se hwetšago se le se sethata goba se bonolo ge o šomiša theknolotši?

9 Le šomisa inthanete goba di data?

10 Naa le hloka go šomisa mašheleng gore le kgone go šomisa tše dingwe tša ditheknolotši tše?

11 Naa o šomiša mohuta ofe wa theknolotši gore o kgone go kgokagana le go netefatša gore le hlokomela le ba lelapa?

12 Le nagana gore go ba le mogala le mehuta ye mengwe ya theknolotši e dirile phapano ka mokgwa woo batho ba kgokaganago ka gona ge go bapetšwa le ge mehuta ye ya theknolotši e be se gona?

13 Le na le go fela le etela ba lelapa bao ba dulago kgole? Goba ke bona ba le etelago kgafetša?

14 E kaba go bonolo goba go thata go eta? Ke eng seo se dirago gore go eta go be bonolo goba go be go gothata?

15Ekaba go kgokagana le ba lelapa ka go etelana go nolofatša/ go tšea karolo e bohlokwa?

16 Le šomša theknolotši bjang moo le dulago gona? Ekaba le šomiša megala le batho ba bang ba leloko la setšhaba?

17 Ekaba o hwetša tšhomiso ya megala e gatelela goba go palediša batho go hlokomelana ka sebele?

18 Le hwetša thekgo ya mohuta mang gotšwa go ba lelapa bao ba falatšego goba ba sepetšego ka gae?

19 Ekaba go na le nako e nngwe moo le bonago theknolotši e le palediša go hlokomela ba lelapa?