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GORDON INSTITUTE  
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University of Pretoria

Research Report: **Influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.**

**Sazi Gcaba**

11041031

A research report submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration.

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## **1. Abstract**

Intergenerational influence is the transmission of information and beliefs from one family generation to the next. Intergenerational influence is at work whenever older generation seek advice from younger generation, or vice versa. The study investigated the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

The study followed a convenience research design. A total of 597 online questionnaires were sent to Nedbank Group Technology employees aged over 44 via email. A total of 66 complete, complete, usable, online questionnaires were completed. The key finding was that young opinion leaders are likely to positively influence older generation regarding mobile internet usage. The finding is consistent with previous studies.

## **2. Keywords**

Intergenerational influence, Consumer Socialisation, Opinion leaders, Generation, Mobile internet

## **3. Declaration**

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I, further, declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Sazi Gcaba

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## **5. Chapter 1: introduction to Research Problem**

### **5.1 Research Problem**

This research report investigated the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### **5.2 Significance of the Research Study**

“The internet may seem like a pervasive presence in much of the world, yet in many countries, including some developed ones, going online is a far from universal experience” Pierce (2010, p. 1).

Studies show that there is an increase in the use of internet by older generation (Laukkanen, Sinkkonen, Kivijarvi, & Laukkanen, 2007). On the contrary, a large proportion of older generation do not use internet at all (Pierce, 2010), and are less likely to have access to the internet (Richard, 2011), (Liu & Li, 2010). Internet use decreases as age increases (TNS, 2011). This suggests that older generation are under-represented in the internet community.

Khan (2009) based on the study done in UK, reported that older generation believed they were too old and that the internet is only for younger generation. Pierce (2010) argued that lack of access to internet by older generation has become such a global concern because more of the world’s important information is primarily available online. However, there have been limited attempts to widen access to the internet, amongst the older generation (Richard, 2011).

Most consumer behaviour studies have focused on young generation (Schrodt, et al., 2009), and frankly, marketers have been reluctant to target older generation (Niemela - Nyrhinen, 2007). The majority of the consumer behaviour studies have been conducted in developed markets such as Europe and the USA (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2009), and this may limit their applicability in developing markets such as South Africa.

There is gap in the literature in this field. This is evidenced by limited research on mobile internet adoption in different markets (Vatanparast & Qadim, 2009).

For many in Africa, mobile is the primary access point to internet, has a greater reach in South Africa than any other medium (TNS, 2011). Mobile is seen as offering an alternative for bridging the digital divide (Srinuan, Srinuan, & Bohlin, 2011). As a result, this study will focus on mobile internet instead of internet.

This study seeks to contribute to academic literature by testing factors that can positively influence one generation over the other regarding mobile internet usage.

### **5.3 Background information**

Moore, Wilkie, and Alder (2001) defined generation as a cohort, or a group of people born at the same time, who by virtue of having come of age under the same historical circumstances are likely to share important characteristics that mark them as a social aggregate for example generation X and baby boomers.

In the context of this study, the younger generation is defined to be aged between 16 - 24 and older generation between 45- 60.

#### **5.3.1 Internet and older generation**

Conventional wisdom suggests that as a person gets older, the more averse they become to new technologies. On the contrary, today's older generation is different to their predecessors. They regard themselves as being much younger than their actual age (Sudbury & Simcock, 2009). They show more willingness to try new products (Laukkanen, Sinkkonen, Kivijarvi, & Laukkanen, 2007), new media and technologies (Kumar & Lim, 2008).

Furthermore, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of technology by older generation (McCloskey, 2006). For example, in study done in Finland, the most eager

to begin using the mobile banking services are older people 50 years of age and above (Riquelme & Rios, 2010).

Therefore, the notion that older generation spend little, resist technology and are slow to adopt new products needs to be re-assessed. McDonough (2010) cautioned marketers not to pigeonhole the technology as an exclusive product of the younger generation.

In contrast, Khan (2009) argued that the older generation believed that the internet is only for young generation. Similarly, Kumar and Lim (2008) argued that older generation sparsely use mobile phones or desktops for internet services. It, therefore, follows, that the older generation is underrepresented in the internet-using community (Liu & Li, 2010).

### **5.3.2 Internet and younger generation**

The young generation are early adopters of new technologies, extensive users of the internet (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martin, 2011), and mobile services (Liu & Li, 2010). Mobile phone has become an essential part of a lifestyle for young generation. Many would not leave home without their mobile (Pierce, 2010).

A study in the US on mobile phone usage reported that the young generation outnumber all other users in terms data transmitted/received (Kumar & Lim, 2008). Similarly, a study conducted by Goldstuck in 2011, reported that mobile internet access is strongest among young generation.

This suggests that young generation are likely to be suitably experienced to provide guidance on mobile internet.

### **5.3.3 Overview of mobile internet**

Mobile internet is defined as the use of the internet via hand-held devices such as mobile phones, smart phones, personal digital assistants and laptops (Srinuan, Srinuan, & Bohlin, 2011).

TNS (2011) argued there are a number of online activities that mobile internet can enable such as:

- **Communication** - connecting and sharing with others online;
- **Information** - browsing for things to buy online, websites, search engines, source general information and learn online.
- **Management** - paying or checking your bills, topping up mobile phone/prepaid electricity;
- **Entertainment** - purchasing online for example cinema tickets.

#### 5.3.4 Shift from web to mobile

Mobile connections in Africa are forecasted to grow from 620 million in September 2011 to 735 million by end of 2012 (GSMA, 2011). Africa has overtaken Latin America to become the second largest mobile market by connections after Asia, and the fastest growing mobile market in the world (GSMA, 2011). While the United States (US) economy is 9 times the size of Africa's, interestingly Africa has twice as many mobile phones than the US (Simons, 2012).

Globally, the use of the mobile internet is increasing at a rapid rate (Vatanparast & Qadim, 2009). This growth is spurred by the proliferation of low cost smartphones (Hoehler & McHenry, 2011). Mobile is the predominant to the web in many developing countries. For example, in China, mobile internet users account for 66% of the internet population (Zhou, 2011), in India, 59% (Kadle, 2011) and South Africa 68% of the internet population (TNS, 2011).

Mobile internet could become a game changer for Africa. For example, mobile internet can enable the recycling of innovation from Africa to the West (Simons, 2012). In addition, studies show that there is a direct relationship between mobile penetration and gross domestic product (GDP). The World Bank reports that for every 10% increase in mobile penetration there is a 0.81% point increase in a developing country's GDP (Mfuphi, 2012). Access to internet is important to peoples' ability to participate in the economy and society, bringing with it health, education, financial and government

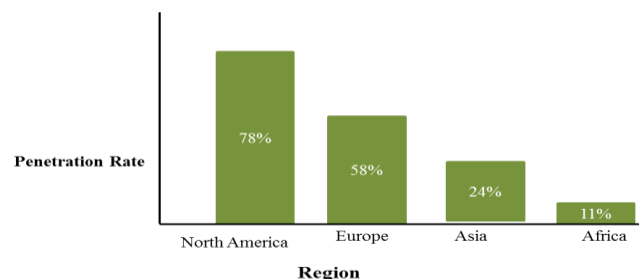
services that help make people more prosperous, empowered and efficient (Simpson, 2012).

In general, internet use has a positive effect on contact with family and friends and large percentages of internet users who use the internet at work said that using the internet at work has improved their performance or productivity (Pierce, 2010). A study showed that 47% of South Africans agreed that the internet improves their self-confidence (TNS, 2011).

For business community, mobile internet extends their consumer reach, and opens up opportunities such as mobile gaming, mobile commerce, and mobile marketing (Liu & Li, 2010). Already, in South Africa 45% of online shoppers spent more online in 2011 than previous years (Zeenat, 2011).

Despite the huge strides, internet penetration in Africa still lags significantly behind the rest of the world. This is illustrated by figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Internet penetration by region, March 2011 (Internet World Stats, 2012)**



The key question is whether young generation can positively influence the older generation to improve internet penetration through mobile internet usage.

### **5.3.5 Mobile ascendency in South Africa**

Doorn (2012) argued that South Africa has one of the lowest broadband penetrations in the world. At 13.8%, this rate is way below the 30% world average. On the other hand, South Africa is on the right track to improve internet penetration. Internet use is up 25% in 2011 and is expected to be 20% in 2012 will be 20%, taking user base past 10 million mark and 20% penetration (Doorn, 2012).

By 2020, it is expected that there will be 15 million internet users in South Africa. This is partly because the wholesale price of data has declined by 90% since 2007 and data spend has increased significantly by 50% since 2010 (Gedye, 2012).

The question is would young generation play a meaningful role in improving internet usage amongst older generation.

### **5.3.6 Low socio economic reality in South Africa**

According to Eighty20 (2012), based on the report done by University of Cape Town Unilever Institute, 60% of households, that is 36 million South Africans, earn less than R5000 per month. The report suggested that R5000 was the tipping point. When people earn more than this their lives begin to change for the better. 77% of this group have no matric, their number one aspiration is to get a job and finally, 30% of this group consume less food when money is tight. This explains why this group is considered to be low socio economic group.

### **5.3.7 Mobile internet usage in South Africa**

As already indicated, the young generation are extensive users of internet (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martin, 2011). In terms of internet usage, search (Google), social media (Facebook, Mixit, and Twitter), news and utility (Wikipedia) dominate (Hoehler & McHenry, 2011).

Social media is the primary online activity, more so in the younger age groups of 16-20 years, (TNS, 2011). In fact, that 69% of mobile internet users use Facebook in South

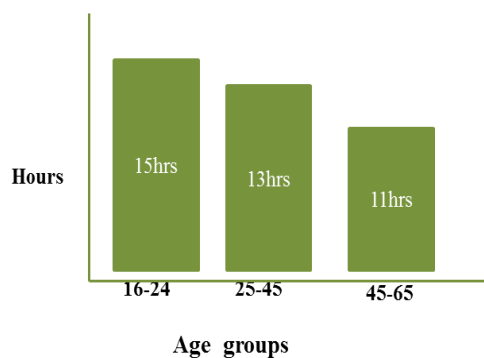
Africa, and this is highest in the world together with Indonesia (Doorn, 2012). This further suggests that social networking sites are likely to become an effective medium to reach out to consumers. While 57% say social media are a good place to learn about brands, only 40% would make a purchase via this platform (TNS, 2011).

Analysts are forecasting mobile search volume to surpass desktop search by 2015 (Cooney, 2011). Already, some evidence of this is beginning to show in South Africa. 26% of smartphone users research products on phone, and changed minds as result (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011), and 56% go online with their smartphones several times a day (Hoehler & McHenry, 2011).

On the cautionary note, most South African web sites are not optimised for mobile internet (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011). This, probably, partly explains why only 4% of all consumers in South Africa use the internet to research, and close to 2% to purchase (TNS, 2011).

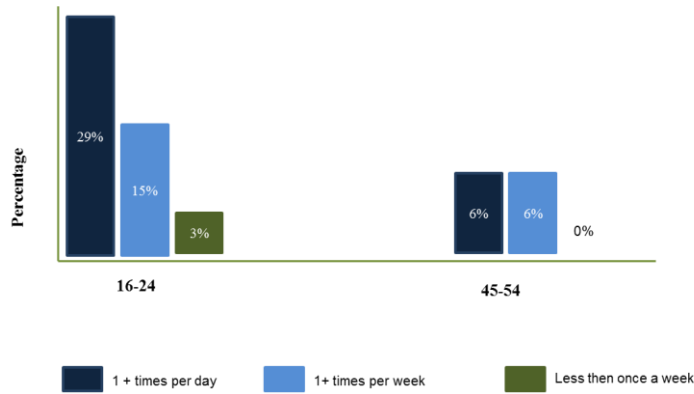
Studies show mobile internet usage is geared towards young generation. This generation on average spends more hours online than the older generation. This is demonstrated by Figure 2 below

**Figure 2: Mean hours spent online across age groups (TNS, 2011)**



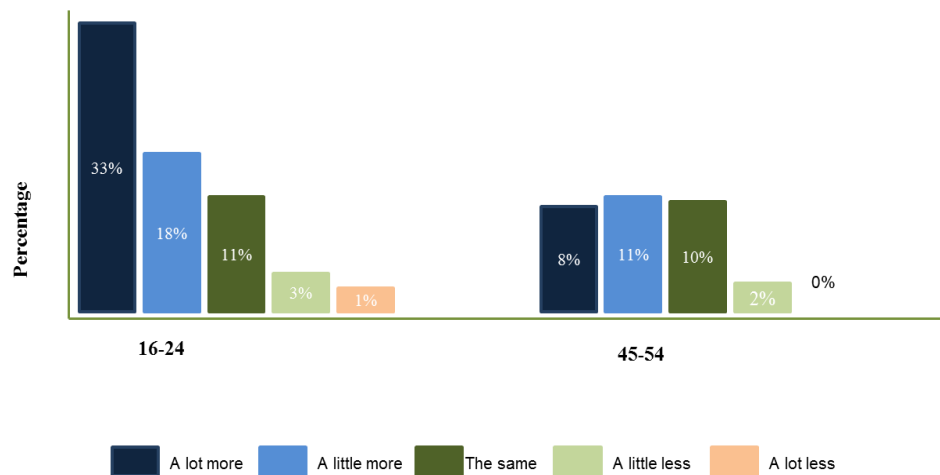
In addition, the Google research in Africa suggests that young generation frequents mobile internet more than older generation. This is illustrated in the Figure 3 below

**Figure 3 : Frequency of Mobile Internet access (Google, 2012)**



Finally, the Google research in Africa further suggests that internet usage has grown significantly more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54. This is further illustrated by figure 4 below.

**Figure 4 : Internet Use compared to a year ago (Google, 2012)**



The logical conclusion is that younger generation are likely to be suitably experienced to provide guidance on older generation on mobile internet.

## **5.4 Research Purpose**

The conventional wisdom that older generation resists adoption technology and new products such as mobile internet need to be re-assessed.

The purpose of the research is to test whether young generation can positively influence older generation to increase the usage of mobile internet.

## 6. Chapter 2: Literature Review

The core of the conceptual model is intergenerational influence theory. The theory originates from consumer behaviour theory.

In this section, literature related to intergeneration influence is reviewed. Intergenerational influence is defined. The factors expected to guide the development of the propositions are reviewed. Thereafter, a conceptual model is proposed.

### 6.1 Influence defined

Several researchers have come with largely similar definitions of influence. In 2004, Krishnan argued, based on the work done by Yukl in 2001, that influence is the effect, either intended or unintended, of one party (the agent) on another person's (the target's) attitudes, perceptions, behaviour, or some combination of these outcomes.

Burns and Flurry (2005) defined influence as the use of power to achieve an outcome. Wang, Holloway, Beatty and Hill (2007) defined influence to be “when an individual acts in such a way as to intentionally change the behaviour of another individual” (p. 1118).

Kaufman (2011) defined that influence is the capacity or power of a person to produce an effect on others by intangible or indirect means.

Finally, Manning (2012) contended that “influencing other people is about getting them to do things that they would otherwise not do” (p. 26).

This study used Manning's definition. This study investigated whether the younger generation can influence the older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### 6.1.1 Influence strategies

This section details influence strategies. The influence strategies that are considered most important are informational, referent, reward, legitimate, expert, legalistic /coercive, bargaining, persuasion, request and assertion.

Building on that Bokek-Cohen (2011) argued that a every person can use a variety of influence strategies, depending on his or her own characteristics, the characteristics of the individual he or she is trying to influence, the nature of the purchase and its importance to the individual, and other situational factors.

Understanding the influence strategies is a necessary step in understanding the basis for the relative influence of young generation (Palan & Wilkes, 1997).

**Informational influence strategy** is based on the young opinion leader's ability to explicate information, provide persuasive explanations or arguments, about mobile internet (Leonidou, 2005).

**Expert influence strategy** is defined as the degree of which young generation could use their extensive experience, and expertise on mobile internet to influence older generation to use mobile internet (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

**Referent influence strategy** is based on the belief that the older generation wants to identify with the younger generation because it possesses some attractive characteristics (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

**Reward influence strategy** refers to providing older generation with various economic and non-economic rewards to encourage them to use mobile internet (Bokek-Cohen, 2011). It is not likely whether this strategy can work in the context of the young influencing the older generation. This is because older generation possess greater financial resources than young generation.

**Legitimate influence strategy** is the degree to which a person is perceived to have the right to exert influence or the right of one person to prescribe the behavior or beliefs of another person although he/she cannot implement sanctions (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

**Legalistic/coercive influence strategy** refers to the belief that one party has the legal right or can take legal action to enforce the other's compliance (Leonidou, 2005).

**Bargaining influence strategy** refers to the intention of creating agreement based on mutual gain and mutually satisfactory outcomes. They take the form of "If you do this, I'll do that" (Palan & Wilkes, 1997).

**Request influence strategy** refers to asking for a particular item to be purchased. In past studies, these tactics have ranged from a fairly direct request, such as "Can I have this?" (Palan & Wilkes, 1997).

**Assertion influence strategy** involves the use of direct, persistent and forceful requests for what is wanted (Mangleburg, 1990).

On the other hand, Goodrich and Mangleburg (2009) argued there are three types of influence namely informational, utilitarian and value-expressive.

Informational influence refers to the consumer's search of information with the aim of choosing the right product or brand. Informational influence is similar to "expert" influence strategy (Bravo, Fraj, & Montaner, 2008).

Utilitarian influence refers to compliance with the wishes of others to achieve rewards or avoid punishments. utilitarian influence relates to "reward" and "coercive" power (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

Value-expressive influence refers to the need for psychological association with a person or group, reflected in the acceptance of the others' positions (Bravo, Fraj, & Montaner, 2008).

Value-expressive influence is comparable to “referent” power (and to a lesser extent, “legitimate” power, with identification implying acknowledgment of one's right to influence).

### 6.1.2 Principles of influence

Group influence refers to the consumer’s sense of belonging to the family group. Bravo, Fraj and Montaner (2008) argued that this sense of belonging leads one generation to behave in the same way as the other generation and to follow their recommendations.

In terms of individual influence, Kaufman (2011) based on work done by Cialdini, identified six principles of influence namely: reciprocity, consistency, social validation, liking, authority and scarcity.

**Reciprocity** refers to the fact that every human society feels the obligation to reciprocate. If you do something for older generation, they will feel obliged to do something for you.

**Commitment and consistency** refers to the phenomenon that people respond positively to those who are consistent in their messages.

**Social validation** refers to the fact that people often make decisions by observing the decisions of others.

**Liking** refers to the fact that people respond more readily to people they like and people they feel more comfortable with because they share similar associations.

**Authority** refers to the fact that people respond more positively when they respect the authority of a person providing information.

**Scarcity** refers to the fact that competition for scarce resources has powerful motivating properties, and evidence shows that people find scarce products more attractive.

## **6.2 Intergenerational Influence**

More than five decades of research has proven that people can be influenced to change behaviour by appealing to a specific set of deep human drives and needs (Kaufman, 2011).

### **6.2.1 Studies of Intergenerational influence**

According to Mittal and Royne (2010), research studies on intergenerational influence began in the 1970s, focussing on intergenerational similarities in consumer buying styles, for example between college students and their parents regarding store preferences, financial planning, and life insurance.

On the other hand, Perez, Padgett and Burgers (2011) based on several authors argued that early studies focused on social influence, political effects, patterns of decision in the family, and consumer behaviour.

Recent studies on intergenerational influence have sought to explain the determining factors of the influence, the transmission process and its effects on young adult consumer behaviour (Bravo, Fraj, & Montaner, 2008). Recent studies have focused on beliefs, attitudes, and skills that underlie all consumer actions at the marketplace (Mittal & Royne, 2010).

However, studies investigating the importance of intergenerational influences in explaining adult behaviour are scarce (Sekhon, 2007). Therefore, more research is required to clarify how intergenerational influences are utilised by older generation in their decision-making processes (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989).

### **6.2.2 Definition of Intergenerational influence**

Intergenerational influence is defined the transmission of information, beliefs and resources from one family generation to the next (Moore & Bowman, 2006). According to Shah and Mittal (1997), intergenerational influence was at work whenever older generation seek advice from younger generation or vice versa.

Heckler, Childers and Arunachalam (1989) reported that intergenerational influence is strongest and most enduring for convenience goods for example, food items and for "negative" goods for example, insurance, funeral parlours.

On the other hand, Moore and Bowman (2006) argued that intergenerational influence is strongest within religious and political arenas, and weakest on certain lifestyle dimensions.

### **6.3 Role of Consumer Socialisation in Intergenerational influence**

Zahn-Waxler (2010) defined socialisation as to the process of learning one's culture, how to live within it. It includes acquisition of moral norms, attitudes, values, roles, language, and symbols that ensure continuity of cultures.

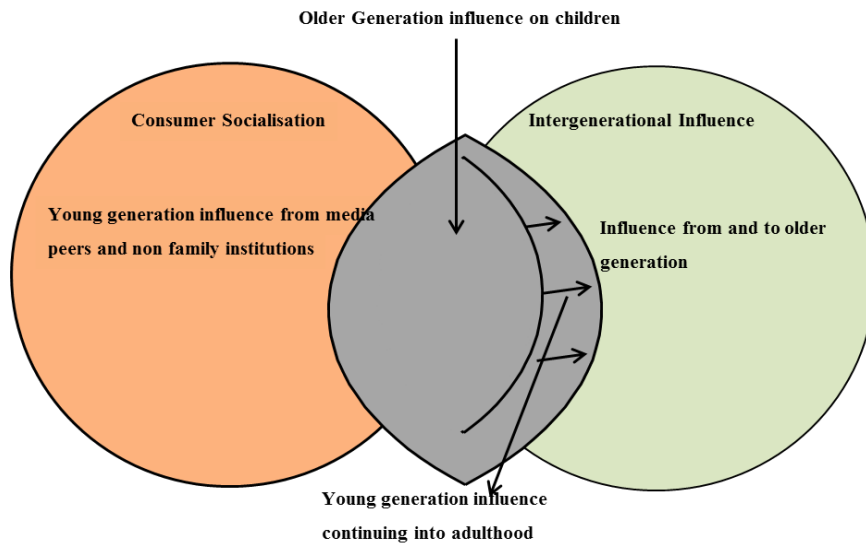
Building on the socialisation theory, Ward (1974) defined consumer socialisation as "processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace" (p. 2).

The consumer socialisation theory is relevant in this study because it provides a broad framework to study consumer behaviour (Lueg & Finney, 2006).

Sekhon (2007) argued that the conceptual basis for intergenerational influences is rooted in the consumer socialisation theory. Consumer socialisation provides a theoretical framework for understanding the influence of one generation over the other.

Intergenerational influence and consumer socialisation are similar, and at times used interchangeably, it is therefore useful to compare and contrast the two concepts. This is best illustrated by Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Consumer Socialisation versus Intergenerational influence (Shah & Mittal, 1997)**



Shah and Mittal (1997), based on work done by Moschis (1985) argued that consumer socialisation can occur from within and outside of the family but intergenerational influence is limited within the family.

Shah and Mittal (1997) asserted that consumer socialisation is unidirectional from older generation to young generation, whereas intergenerational influence can occur in either direction that is old to young and vice versa.

Building on that, Perez, Padgett and Burgers (2011) noted that consumer socialisation begins with early childhood whereas intergenerational influence begins much later, in the adult years of the young generation.

## **6.4 Reverse Intergenerational Influence**

Bravo, Fraj and Montaner (2008) reported that most studies have focused on the intergenerational influence flows from older generation to young generation.

However in some situations, Mittal and Royne (2010) argued that the young generation acts as the influencer, while the older generation is the influenced. They label this phenomenon as reverse intergenerational influence. They are two different types of reverse intergenerational influence namely reciprocal socialisation and yielding.

### **6.4.1 Reciprocal socialisation**

When reciprocal socialisation occurs, it means that older generation actually learn and internalise new values, skills and roles, taught by young generation (Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, & Foxman, 1987). The young generation act as an influencer for older generation' consumer socialisation processes.

### **6.4.2 Yielding**

In the context of the study, yielding refers to older generation simply complying with a young generation's wishes or requests, without internalisation of values, skills or preferences (Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, & Foxman, 1987).

Furthemore, Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, and Foxman (1987) argued that assertiveness of the child, leads to more yielding by the mother. For example, it is expected that more child-centered the mother is, the more likely yielding to occur. However, some research did not support these assertions (Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, & Foxman, 1987). The results showed that effect of a child's assertiveness on yielding was not significant. This implied that that the degree of assertiveness has little influence on yielding of the mother.

This implies that older generation may or may not comply with young generation's influence on mobile internet.

## 6.5 Development of Intergenerational Influence

Moore, Wilkie, and Alder (2001) argued that most researchers assume intergenerational influence flows from older generation to younger generation, a simple asymmetrical causality model. In support, Heckler, Childers, and Arunachalam argued in 1989, that the intergenerational influence which is investigated most often is the influence of mothers on daughters.

However, studies showed that this assumption cannot be made in all situations and that in some situations the younger generation acts as the influencer, while the older generation is the influenced person and most of these studies were published in the 1980s and 1990s (Burns & Flurry, 2005).

Consequently, there is therefore a need to examine whether and how the role of younger generation on family decisions may have changed (Wang, Holloway, Beatty, & Hill, 2007), particularly because research studies indicated that the relative influence of young generation increases as they mature (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

In addition, studies indicated that intergenerational influence was strongest

- In a household with higher socio-economic status that is single parent home (Mangleburg, 1990), households with higher incomes (Flurry, 2006), and or higher educational levels (Flurry, 2006);
- When the strength of the relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989);
- When one generation perceive the other to possess expertise on the product category (Shah & Mittal, 1997);
- When one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information, (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009);
- When one generation aspire to be like the other (Neeley & Coffey, 2007);

## **6.6 Learning mechanisms for Intergenerational Influence**

Sheth and Mittal (2004) based on several authors, concluded that there are two key learning mechanisms that are applied to the context of reverse intergenerational influence namely cognitive learning and experiential learning.

They argued that for reverse intergenerational influence to occur via cognitive learning, it is important that an open family communication structure exist. In the context of the study, young adults are likely to influence older generation by directly communicating to them, advising or persuading them of technological and innovative products.

Sheth and Mittal (2004) advised that for reverse intergenerational influence to occur via experiential learning, the older generation in the family is likely to learn if he or she observes an association between two stimuli. For example, when a mother always sees her daughter smiling and singing when she uses a specific product/ service, the mother starts to associate that product/ service with positive feelings of happiness.

## **6.7 Factors affecting Intergenerational Influence**

This section examined factors that impact the influence of young generation over older generation.

Research studies indicated that the influence of young generation varies based on family socio economic characteristics, strength of family relationship, perception of expertise, perception of opinion leadership, perceived similarity of lifestyle and across products.

### 6.7.1 Family socio economic characteristics

A number of researchers have examined the effect socio-economic variables (mainly social class and income) on socialisation and young generation's influence in family decision-making (Flurry, 2006).

Moschis and Churchill (1978) asserted that social class affects consumer socialisation and that younger generation from higher socio-economic backgrounds have more opportunity for consumption and are more aware of products available in the market.

Building on that, Flurry (2006) advised that families with higher socio-economic backgrounds likely to provide better opportunities for influence and be more receptive to the young generation's opinions on mobile internet.

Interestingly, recent studies have shown that younger generation have increasing sources of personal income (Flurry, 2006). Because of the resources they provide, they are likely to have greater influence in family decisions.

This view, however, is contrary to Ward (1974) who asserted that socio economic status plays no role in family decision making.

Similarly, Mangleburg (1990) reported that a young generation in a single parent home is likely to participate in family decisions more than a young generation in dual parent households. While a larger number of young adults in the household may mean that young adults contribute more overall to decision-making relative to the older generation, but that each individual young adult may have less influence.

The definition of family is particularly important in developing countries. For instance, Chikweche and Fletcher (2009) advised that Western societies are likely to adopt the concept of a nuclear family, which focussed on the immediate group of father, mother and siblings.

However, large areas of South Africa, the concept is of an extended family is made up of the nuclear family as well as other relatives and this is likely to be dominant.

While this did not imply that the extended family is not evident in western societies, because some ethnic groups in western societies also subscribe to the concept although, this factor is not nearly as prevalent compared to subsistence markets (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2009).

In summary, the theory suggested that young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status (Flurry, 2006).

### **6.7.2 Strength of family relationship**

Shah and Mittal (1997) considered perceived strength of the family relationship (SFR) to be the main determinant of intergenerational influence. They describe this construct as the degree of trust and respect, harmony of relations and communication between young generation and older generation, in all areas of life, and not just in the marketplace context (Moschis G. , 1985).

Dimitriadis, Kouremenos, and Kyrezis (2011) defined trust as belief in competence of a person to perform a specific task. They argued that trusting beliefs are described through four distinct dimensions. Firstly, competence, this refers to one's belief that the other party has the ability or power to do what one needs to be done. Secondly, benevolence , this refers to one's belief that the other party cares about and is motivated to act in one's interest; Thirdly, integrity this refers to one's belief that the other party makes good faith agreements, tells the truth, acts ethically and fulfils promises. Finally predictability, this refers to one's belief that the other party's actions are consistent over time.

Lueg and Finney (2006) advised that interpersonal communication serves an important role in the consumer socialisation process. Thus, family interpersonal communication is expected to have an impact on young generation's influence in family decision making.

According to Bordogna and Albano (2006), in a socio-oriented communication environment the young generation are likely to avoid controversy and does not argue,

since he or she does not want to risk offending others. In the context of the study, this result in a social distance between young generation and older generation.

In a concept-oriented communication structure, the young generation is encouraged to develop his or her own ideas. Moschis (1985) suggested that a concept-oriented family communication structure would foster greater participation in family decisions, while a socio-oriented structure would deter participation. Building on that, Chikweche and Fletcher (2009) argued that the influence of young generation in consumer decision making is likely to be different in developing countries than Western countries. They argued that the younger generation developing countries are unlikely to have as much influence as their counterparts in the Western countries who are likely to influence choice of products.

The strength of the family relationship is in turn influenced by a number of factors, like proximity, communication patterns and family cohesion (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989). A positive relationship is expected to exist between strength of the family relationship and intergenerational influence. Intergenerational influence likely to be stronger when strength of family relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989). Without strength of family relationship strength, however, intergenerational influence is likely to be minimal at best (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

In short, the theory suggests that the greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### 6.7.3 Perception of expertise

Neighbours, relatives, co-workers, and friends are all part of a consumer's social system and serve as potentially important sources of influence on purchase behaviour (Childers, 1986).

Childers (1986) asserted that personal influence or communication involving face-to-face interactions between the communicator and receiver has been noted historically as a powerful factor in explaining and predicting consumer behaviour and long been viewed as important to marketers (Flitzmaurice & Comegys, 2006).

Expertise represents the extent to which a person is perceived to be knowledgeable or possesses special information about a particular subject for example (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

The theory suggests that whichever generation perceives the other to possess expertise on the product category, a specific brand or other marketplace phenomena, that generation will seek and receive intergenerational influence from the other (Shah & Mittal, 1997). For example, within a family, if young generation are acknowledged by older generation as experts on mobile internet, then the older generation are likely to sought young generation's advice (Burns & Flurry, 2005); (Flurry, 2006)

The theory suggests that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

If older generation does not perceive the young to possess expertise, then intergenerational influence would unlikely to sought, and, if given, it was unlikely to be accepted, even in the case of high strength of family relationship (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

#### 6.7.4 Perception of opinion leadership

Consumers influence other consumers in several ways (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). For example, Flitzmaurice and Comegys (2006) based work done by, Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet in 1948 who reported that voting decisions were influenced by relatives, friends and co-workers. This is because information from the media moves in two distinct stages - from the media to the opinion leaders and from the opinion leaders to masses (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007).

##### **Who are the opinion leaders?**

Opinion leaders are at every social level, and in most areas of decision-making, they influence people from the same social level (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007). Building on that Lee (2010) argued that opinion leaders are across gender, all professions, all social classes, and all age groups.

Lee (2010) argued that opinion leaders are experts in their field, but this is an informal recognition by close friends, relatives, co-workers, colleagues, and acquaintances. Opinion leaders are well aware that they are sources of information and influence for others (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007). Opinion leaders share traits and behaviours that can be categorised into three dimensions (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009):

**Who one is** - this includes certain personality characteristics or values held by the opinion leader;

**What one knows** - this includes the degree of knowledge and expertise that opinion leader has about a particular issue or product;

**Whom one knows** - this includes the number of contacts opinion leader has as part of their circle of friends and acquaintances.

Nisbet and Kotcher (2009) argued further that as a combination of these traits and behaviours, opinion leaders not only help draw the attention of others to a particular issue, product, or behaviour but also, perhaps most importantly, signal how others should in turn respond or act.

Therefore, intergenerational influence would be strong when one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). This suggests that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

### **6.7.5 Perceived similarity of lifestyle**

Perceived similarity refers to the lifestyle similarity between generations. In essence, influence is strong when one generation emulates the other generation (Park & Lessig, 1977).

In the context of the study, the change in behaviour is based on on the belief that the older generation wants to identify with the young generation, because young generation possess certain unique attributes (Leonidou, 2005). Alternatively, change in behaviour may be based on respect for young generation or a simple desire to emulate young generation's lifestyle (Burns & Flurry, 2005). For example, a mother might perceive the daughter to be an expert on new fashions. But if she perceives her daughter's lifestyle to be different from hers (she considers herself to be a conservative professional, and wears formal, conservative styles while her daughter sports the "grunge look"), then she (the mother) is not going to seek or accept her daughter's influence for clothing. However if the mother wants to be as trendy as she perceives her daughter to be, she will value intergenerational influence.

The theory suggests that older generation may emulate young generation's mobile phone lifestyle and may seek intergenerational influence from them (Park & Lessig, 1977).

Therefore, it is suggested that the influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation' desire to emulate young generation on mobile internet.

### **6.7.6 Involvement in product decision making**

Intergenerational influence likely to be strong for product decision for which the young generation are the primary consumer and less influence for products that are used by the entire family (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

In support, Mittal and Royne in 2010 argued that a higher degree of young generation's influence is associated with a higher rate of product usage. Similarly, Bravo, Fraj and Montaner (2008) citing study done by Krishnamurthy in 1981, suggested that the person who is more involved with a product is likely more active in the product decision process and have a greater effect on the decision outcome.

On average, young generation spend more time online than older generation (TNS, 2011). The Google research in Africa suggest that young generation frequents mobile internet more than older generation. Furthermore, the research suggests that internet usage has grown significantly more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54.

This suggests that the influence of younger over older generation is to be strong on mobile internet as young generation are the primary consumers.

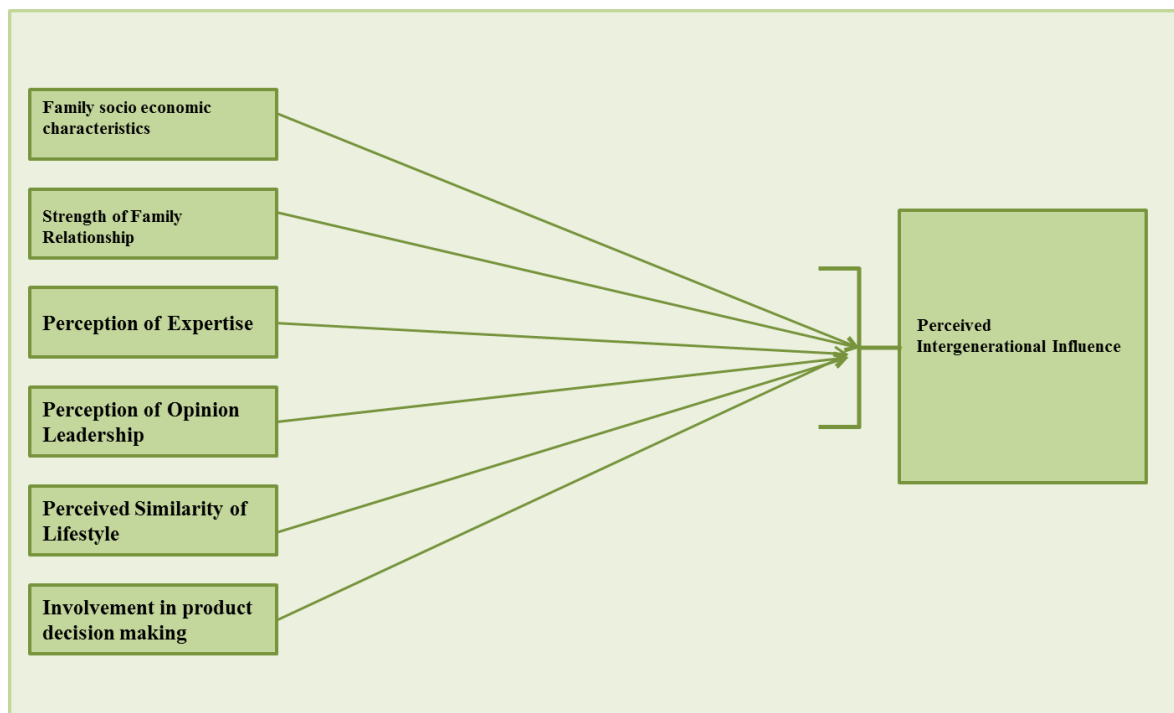
On the other hand, older generation' perceptions of product importance and product knowledge is likely to moderate young generation influence (Burns & Flurry, 2005). For example, the older generation might be less likely to accept younger generation's influence on products for older generations' personal use but more likely to accept younger generation's influence on products for younger generation's exclusive use.

In summary, the theory suggests that the influence of young generation on older generation likely to be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

## 6.8 Conceptual model for Intergenerational Influence

A conceptual model was developed based on the literature on intergenerational influence. The model shows that a young generation’s ability to exert influence on older generation regarding mobile internet usage is largely determined by family social economic characteristics, strength of family relationship, perception of expertise, perceived similarity of lifestyle and involvement in product decision making.

**Figure 6: Conceptual model for Intergenerational Influence**



Shah and Mittal (1997) proposed that the strength of family relationship is the principal determinant. Without family relationship strength, intergenerational influence will be minimal, at best. Thus, the strength of family relationship is the necessary facilitator of intergenerational influence. But intergenerational influence may not occur even in if there high strength of family relationship if one generation does not perceives the other as possessing expertise (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

## 7. Chapter 3: Research Questions

This research study investigated the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### **Proposition 1: Family socio economic characteristics**

The theory suggests that the intergenerational influence will be strong in families characterised by high socio-economic status that is high income, high social class and highly educated parents (Flurry, 2006).

The theory suggests that young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status (Flurry, 2006).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P1: Young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status.

### **Proposition 2: Strength of family relationship**

Intergenerational influence will be stronger when strength of family relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989). Without family relationship strength, intergenerational influence will be minimal at best (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P2: The greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### **Proposition 3: Perception of expertise**

Expertise represents the extent to which a person is perceived to be knowledgeable or possesses special information about a particular subject (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

The theory suggests that whichever generation perceives the other to possess expertise on the product category, a specific brand or other marketplace phenomena, that generation will seek and receive intergenerational influence from the other (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P3: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

### **Proposition 4: Perception of opinion leadership**

Opinion leaders are well aware that they are sources of information and influence for others (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007). The theory suggests that intergenerational influence is strong when one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P4: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

### **Proposition 5: Perceived similarity of lifestyle**

Influence is strong when one generation emulates the other generation (Park & Lessig, 1977). The theory suggests that older generation may emulate young generation's mobile phone lifestyle and may seek intergenerational influence from them (Park & Lessig, 1977).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P5: The influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.

### **Proposition 6: Involvement in product decision making**

Bravo, Fraj, and Montaner (2008) citing study done by Krishnamurthy in 1981, suggested that the person who is more involved with a product will be more active in the product decision process and have a greater effect on the decision outcome.

On average, young generation spend more time online than older generation (TNS, 2011). Similarly, Google research in Africa suggests that young generation frequents mobile internet more than older generation and that internet usage has grown significantly more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54 (Google, 2012).

This suggests that the influence of younger over older generation will be strong on mobile internet as young generation are the primary consumers.

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P6: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

## **8. Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

This methodology is organised into three subsections namely procedures, participants and materials.

The procedure section included descriptions of approach to data collection, overview of data analysis procedures to be used. This section addressed “how” and “when” aspects of this study.

The participants section described research participants that the researcher is collecting data from. The materials section described materials used in this study to collect data.

### **8.1 Procedures**

The procedure section included descriptions of how participants came into the study, approach to data collection and overview of data analysis procedures to be used.

#### **Research design**

The study followed a quantitative descriptive design because it was deemed an appropriate design to summarise data numerically and graphically (Janes, 1999).

#### **Sampling technique**

This study followed a non-probability sampling technique. The sample was selected based on convenience and ease of access. As a result, this study followed a convenience sampling technique. The rationale for selecting the convenience sampling technique was based on the expected good response rate, and ease of access (Blumberg & Cooper, 2008).

Initially, the goal was to target older generation across the bank. The request was sent to relevant authorities and was unfortunately the request was declined. However, the researcher got permission from Nedbank technology division.

## **A) Organizational profile**

According to Nedbank (2012), the bank is South Africa's fourth largest bank in terms of revenue, customers, and physical footprint (ATMs, branches). The 2012 interim results showed that the bank achieved headline earnings of R3.4 billion ahead of market expectation.

The bank had a staff complement of 30 000 employees who are supporting and servicing 5.5 million customers who are predominantly largely in South Africa. The Bank has entered into a strategic partnership with Ecobank in Togo. This partnership is expected to increase Nedbank geographical presence in Africa.

Nedbank technology division's vision is to leverage technology to enable Nedbank to become Africa's most admired bank. The division had about 2000 employees, of which 597 are over 44 years of age. They constituted 29% of total technology division population.

In terms of organisation's structure, the technology division is centralised, it is a single IT organization with central IT providing services to the business units.

### **Nedbank brand dynamics**

Nedbank's strategy is to drive differentiation in the market. The bank strives to project a strong customer value proposition. The bank believes there is a need to ensure strategic alignment and brand coherence across all business segments. The bank's pay off line is "Make things happen"

### **Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis was the influence of one generation on the other.

## **Survey Instrumentation**

The online questionnaire was the only survey instrument used to capture response items from respondents.

The survey was created with the assistance of the Nedbank technology communication team which manages surveys across the division. The survey questionnaire was branded green to align with the corporate colors. This is was also to solicit higher response from the targeted audience on the basis of familiarity with Nedbank branding.

## **Response structure**

The structured items were only multiple choices. In order for respondent to submit the survey, all questions had to be answered. In an event, a certain questionnaire was not answered by the respondent, Microsoft SharePoint would not let the respondent to submit the survey and would highlight questionnaire that needed to be responded to.

## **Scales of measurement**

The scales of measurement were the one-to-five ordinal scale.

## **Data collection modes**

Initially the survey was to be created on survey monkey tool, however, Nedbank IT security blocked access to survey monkey citing security concerns. The data collection mode changed to Microsoft SharePoint. This tool is internally hosted by Nedbank.

The main reasons for selecting this data collection lack of interviewer bias, low cost of administration, ease of distribution, ease of traceability and auditability (Blumberg & Cooper, 2008).

## **Questionnaire formulating process**

All the questionnaires were sourced, and referenced from past studies. The questionnaires were re-shaped for the purposes of this study.

Questions were specific and non-exhaustive response set accommodating valid choices such as "uncertain ". For complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

For proposition 1: Family socio economic characteristics, questionnaires were adapted from (Flurry, 2006). Household income was measured in seven categories. These categories are classified into three groups: low income (less than R5, 000), middle income (R5, 000 - R9, 999), and high income (R10, 000 and above). For complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

For proposition 2: Strength of Family relationship, questionnaires were adapted from several researchers such as (Lueg & Finney, 2006), (Dimitriadis, Kouremenos, & Kyrezis, 2011), (Chu, Chang, & Huang, 2012). For complete copy of the instrument, see refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

For proposition 3: Perception of Expertise, questionnaires were adapted from (Childers, 1986), (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996), and (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007). For complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

For proposition 4: Perception of Opinion leadership, questionnaires were adapted from (Childers, 1986), (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996) and (Kratzer & Lettl, 2009). For complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

For proposition 5: Perceived similarity of lifestyle, questionnaires were adapted from (Foxman & Tansuhaj, 1988), (Pierce, 2010). For complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

For proposition 6: Involvement in Product decision making, questionnaires were adapted from Wang, Holloway, Beatty, and Hill (2007). For complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13, Appendix: List of questions.

### **Filter items**

Nedbank Technology division provided a filtered list of participants over the age of 44 years.

Before the data processing, the respondents falling outside of the targeted range of 45 to 60 were removed.

### **Pretesting**

A pre-test was carried out with seven Nedbank employees and the supervisor. This was to identify weaker items, bring to light item ambiguities and sources of bias and error (Janes, 1999). The survey questionnaire went through eight iterations before it was finally distributed.

### **Survey distribution**

The survey questionnaire was published on the Nedbank intranet site. The researcher sent an email with the link to the survey to the 597 targeted recipients. The recipients were requested to complete the survey.

The emails to the recipients were sent in batches of 20. In the first batch, about 6 respondents phoned and emailed, to advice that there was a technical error when submitting survey responses. The technical error was quickly resolved by the Microsoft SharePoint team.

### **Data collection**

The survey responses were captured automatically by Microsoft SharePoint's database as the respondent completes the survey.

The researcher exported survey responses from Microsoft SharePoint to Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

## Data analysis process

The survey participants were presented with a qualifying question that was asked at the beginning of the survey. The qualifying question read

“Please select your age range”

- Greater than 44 but less than 61 years old
- 61 and above
- Other

In terms of data analysis, according to Gliem and Gliem (2003) Cronbach’s Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency (reliability) of items in a scale. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct. The value of the Cronbach’s Alpha ranges from zero to one and the closer the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is to 1 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale .

Cronbach’s Alpha values were calculated for each of the constructs that were postulated based on literature by the researcher. A Cronbach’s Alpha of at least 0.5 should be achieved for accepting the construct, if the construct has less than 15 items.

Furthermore, independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference in the intergenerational influence score between respondents with from families with high socio-economic status and those from families with low socio-economic status.

Independent sample t-test was the appropriate statistical test because according to Park (2009), it used to compare two means of two independent random samples. The samples are independent in the sense that they are drawn from different populations and each element of one sample is not matched with its corresponding element of the other sample (Park H. M., 2009).

Pearson’s correlation analysis is a measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables. According to Cohen (1988), Pearson correlation coefficients is said to be weak if between 0 and 0.29, moderate if between 0.3 and 0.49, and strong if between 0.5 and 1.

The sign of the correlation coefficient shows the direction of the relationship. A positive correlation means that as the other variables is increasing the other variable will be increasing as well and a negative correlation coefficient implies that one variable increases as the other one decreases and vice versa (Cohen, 1988).

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence and

- Strength of family relationship,
- The perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet,
- The perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet.
- The perceived similarity of lifestyle
- Involvement in product decision making

### **Limitations**

Initially, the goal was to target older generation across the bank. The request was sent to relevant authorities and was unfortunately declined. Thereafter the researcher got permission from Nedbank technology division. Therefore, the sample was drawn from Nedbank technology division. Respondents are likely to have above general knowledge about mobile internet when compared to the general population. As such, there are less likely to be influenced, because they have the technical know- how.

In addition, the sample had one respondent from household with gross monthly income of less R5 000, 5 respondents from household with gross monthly income of between R5 000 and R10 000.

The study captured education as a demographic variable, but not utilised for data analysis. Other important demographic variables such as gender, family type (single or dual parent households) and household size were not part of the demographic questionnaire.

Feedback from some respondents was that they would rather be called seniors than "older".

## **8.2 Participants**

The participants section describes individuals that the researcher is collecting data from during the investigation. It describes participants in terms of demographics such as age range, gender, and exposure to previous instruction or intervention.

### **Population**

The population of interest in this study was 45-60 age groups, of all gender, income group, race, ethnic group, educational level and geography. The population of interest may or may not have exposure to internet whether on the mobile phone or on the desktop. The researcher assumed that the population of interest would have a mobile device.

### **Sample size**

In 2012 Nedbank Group technology had a population of two thousand three hundred employees. The technology division has five hundred and ninety seven employees who are over 44 years of age, constituting 29% of technology division population. As a result, a survey questionnaire was sent to five hundred and ninety seven employees aged over 44. A total of sixty six respondents completed the survey. This represented a response rate of 11%.

## **8.3 Materials**

The materials section described materials used in this study to collect data. Materials include tests, survey, data collections sheets, scoring guides, computer programs.

### **Survey Questionnaires**

The first material used in this investigation was the instrument on socio economic status. The instrument contains four items namely age range, income range and levels of education qualifications.

The second material used in this investigation is the “agree-disagree” survey questionnaire. The “agree-disagree” survey contained 19 items across section B, C and D.

Three items B4, C6, D4 were moved to other sections to minimise response error.

All items section B, C and D contain a 5 Likert point scale from “strongly disagree”, to “disagree” to “uncertain” to “agree” to “strongly agree”.

For example one item within section C asks respondents to rate whether within the family environment, the opinions of young adults on mobile internet count with older generation.

Item C4 is “Opinions of young adults in my family on mobile internet seem to count with older generation. For a complete copy of the instrument, refer to Appendix: Survey questionnaire.

The third material used in this investigation is the “no influence-all of the influence” survey questionnaire, section E. It contains 4 items

All 4 items contain a 5 Likert point scale from “no influence”, to “small influence” to “uncertain” to “major influence” to “all of the influence”.

For example one item within section E asks respondents to rate level of influence young adults in family environment have in making the final decision to use mobile internet.

Item E5 is “What level of influence have young adults in my family had in making the final decision to use mobile internet?” “For a complete copy of the instrument, refer to Chapter 13: List of questions

## Scoring guidelines

The study employed a Likert five point rating (1-5) scale where the higher the number the stronger the agreement.

Likert is a popular rating scale designed to examine how strongly respondents agree or disagree with statements.

Blumberg and Cooper (2008) argue that Likert scale contain multiple items, each individual item must measure something that has an underlying, quantitative measurement continuum. Furthermore, they argued that there can be no right/wrong answers as opposed to multiple-choice questions and those items must be statements to which the respondent assigns a rating and cannot be used to measure knowledge or ability, but familiarity.

## Data collection sheets

In order to test each proposition, each item number was allocated a unique code. For example section B, are scale items concerning strength of family relationship are measured by unique codes B1, B2, B3, B4. These will be collected by question number 5, 6,7,18 from the survey

Question number	Unique Code	Question number	Unique Code	Question number	Unique Code	Question number	Unique Code
1	A1	7	B3	13	C5	19	E1
2	A2	8	C6	14	D4	20	E2
3	A3	9	C1	15	D1	21	E3
4	A4	10	C2	16	D2	22	E4
5	B1	11	C3	17	D3	23	E5
6	B2	12	C4	18	B4		

## **Computer programmes**

A combination of software tools were used in this study that Microsoft word for document viewing and editing, Microsoft PowerPoint for drawing graphs and diagrams, Microsoft SharePoint for capturing survey responses, Microsoft Excel for storing survey responses for data processing and PDF reader for viewing PDF documents.

The statistical analysis was carried out in SPSS (originally, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and now called referred to as ‘Statistical Product and Service Solutions’.

A number of search engine tools such as Emerald, Academic search premier, Business source premier were used to search and download research materials.

## **Assumptions**

The researcher assumed easy access to a sizeable number of 45-60 year olds. The researcher assumed that no racial, gender and ethnic bias as a result of two undergraduate students distributing survey questionnaire randomly.

The researcher assumed the concept of mobile internet is understood by all respondents.

The researcher assumed that the survey questionnaires were clear, unambiguous, and measurable.

## 9. Chapter 5: Results

### 9.1 Sample Description

In 2012 Nedbank Group technology had a population of two thousand three hundred employees. The technology division had five hundred and ninety seven employees who are over 44 years of age, constituting 29% of total technology division population.

A total of sixty six respondents completed the survey. This represented a response rate of 11%. All 23 survey questions were completed by respondents.

### 9.2 Qualifying Question

The following table presents results for a qualifying question that was asked at the beginning of the survey. The qualifying question reads

“Please select your age range”

- Greater than 44 but less than 61 years old
- 61 and above
- Other

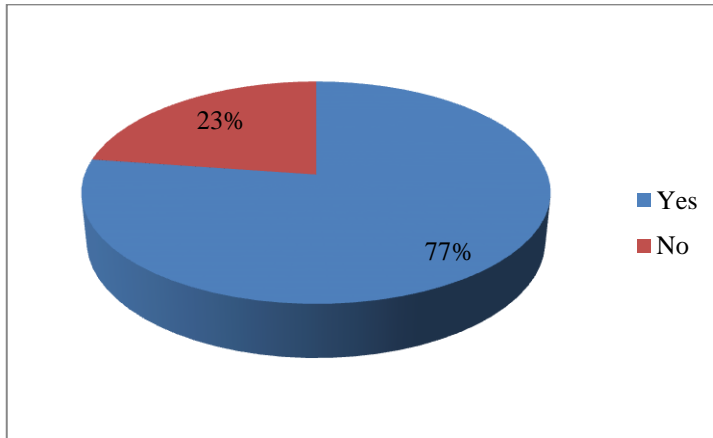
<b>Summarised results for item A1</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Greater than 44 and less than 61 years	53	80.3%
61 and above	13	19.7%
Total	66	100.0%

This study was designed to investigate the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage from the perspective of the older generation. Thus, all young respondents (44 years and younger) were excluded in the survey.

### 9.3 Presence of young adults in the family

Respondents were asked if they had at least one young adult child in their family and the results are shown in the chart below;

**At least one young adult child in the family**

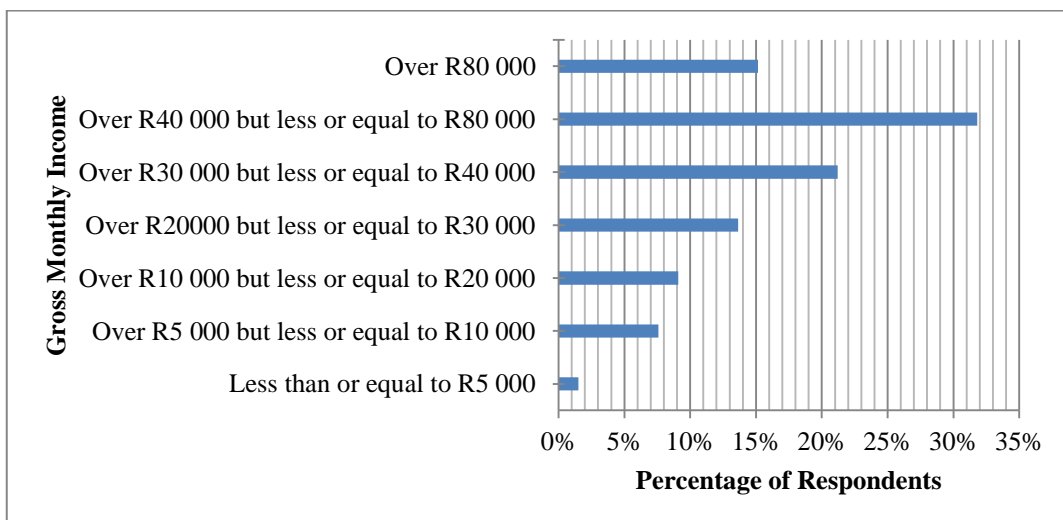


From the chart it can be seen that the sample was dominated by the group with at least one adult child in the family (77%) compared to those without young adult children in family (23%).

### 9.4 Socio Economic Status

The chart below shows the monthly household income of the respondents.

**Household Monthly Income**



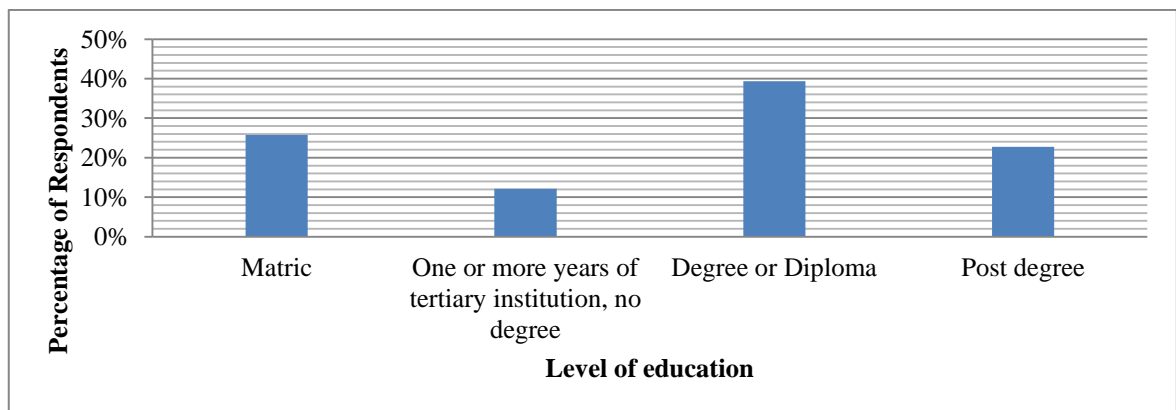
The results indicate that there was only one respondent who comes from the household with gross monthly income of less R5000. This constitutes 2% of the sample.

The results indicate that there were five respondents who come from the household with gross monthly income between R5000 and R10 000 per month. This constitutes 8% of the sample.

Consequently, the sample was dominated by respondents from high income households where 90% indicated that they are from households with a gross monthly income of over R10 000.

In terms of education, the highest education completed by the respondents is shown in the graph below;

**Highest level of education**



Majority of the respondents had either a degree, diploma or above (62%). Respondents with one or more years of tertiary institution but with no degree were (12%) and the remaining 26% had matric.

## 9.5 Instrument Reliability

According to Gliem and Gliem (2003) Cronbach's alpha is used to assess the internal consistency (reliability) of items in a scale. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct. The value of the Cronbach's Alpha ranges from zero to one and the closer the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated for each of the constructs that were postulated based on literature by the researcher. A Cronbach's Alpha of at least 0.5 should be achieved for accepting the construct, if the construct has less than 15 items. The results for the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha for the different constructs are shown in the table below;

### **Cronbach's Alpha for Intergenerational influence**

A number of items/variables in Appendix: Survey questionnaire were grouped together to form one construct intergenerational influence.

These variables were

**C4** - "Opinions of young adults in my family on mobile internet seem to count with me and my generation". This construct was adapted (Flitzmaurice & Comegys, 2006) and is used as a scale for measuring influenceability.

**C6** - "I'm more likely to accept young adults' opinions on mobile internet usage than people in my own age group". This construct was adapted from (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996) and is used as a scale for measuring influenceability.

It, therefore, follows, based on the previous studies that items C4 and C6 measure IGI composite variable.

The results for Cronbach's Alpha for intergenerational influence (IGI) was as following

Measurement Scale	Number of Items	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Inter-item Correlation	Rating
IGI	3	C4, C6	0.656	0.510	Good

The findings indicated that the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.656 which shows good level of internal consistency.

Thus a summated scale was computed by finding the average of the two items in the construct. The descriptive statistics for intergenerational influence are indicated in the table below;

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
IGI	66	1.00	5.00	3.56	.994	.989	-.947	.464

The average intergenerational influence score for all 66 respondents was 3.56 with a standard deviation of 0.994. The respondent with the lowest intergenerational influence had a score of 1 and the highest was 5.

## **Cronbach's Alpha for the other constructs**

The Cronbach's Alpha for the other constructs was conducted. The other constructs were

- Strength of family relationship;
- Perception of expertise;
- Perception of opinion leadership;
- Perceived similarity of lifestyle;
- Involvement in product decision making.

Scale items for Strength of Family relationship are B1, B2, B3 and B4 and were adapted from Dimitriadis, Kouremenos, and Kyrezis (2011) and Chu, Chang and Huang (2012). These items are used to measure strength of family relationship.

B1 - "Young adults in my family are open and honest in dealing with me." This construct was adapted from (Chu, Chang, & Huang, 2012). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of trust in young adults in the family.

B2 - "In general, the young adults in my family consider my needs and wishes as important." This construct was adapted from (Dimitriadis, Kouremenos, & Kyrezis, 2011). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of trust in young adults in the family.

B3 - "The young adults in my family would not do anything against my interests." This construct was adapted from (Dimitriadis, Kouremenos, & Kyrezis, 2011). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of trust in young adults in the family.

B4 - "Relative to other influences, I would consider using mobile internet if the young adults in my family personally recommended it." This construct was adapted from (Lueg & Finney, 2006). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of family interpersonal communication.

Scale items for Perception of Expertise are items C1, C2

C1 - “In general, young adults in my family are good source of information on mobile internet than people in my generation”. This construct was adapted from (Childers, 1986) and (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of expert influence.

C2 - “In general, young adults in my family are often step ahead of my generation in terms of using mobile internet”. This construct was adapted from (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of relative influence of an expert.

Scale items for Perception of Opinion leadership are items C3, C5

C3 - “Relative to my generation, young adults in my family often give others advice and suggestions regarding mobile internet”. This construct was adapted from (Childers, 1986) and (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of opinion leadership.

C5 - “People I know in my generation intend to use/use mobile internet based on what young adults in their families told them”. This construct was adapted from (Kratzer & Lettl, 2009). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of opinion leadership.

Scale items for Perceived similarity of lifestyle are items D1, D2, D3 and D4 were adapted from (Foxman & Tansuhaj, 1988), (Pierce, 2010).

D1 - “Similar to young adults in my family, I would not leave home without my mobile phone”. This construct was adapted from (Pierce, 2010). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of product importance.

D2 - “Relative to young adults in my family, I acknowledge that mobile internet an essential part of my lifestyle.” This construct was adapted from (Pierce, 2010). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of product importance.

D3 - “Similar to young adults in my family, I use mobile internet as the primary source of information. This construct was adapted from (Foxman & Tansuhaj, 1988). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of product importance.

D4 - “Relative to young adults in my family, I find that mobile internet increasing my working effectiveness.” This construct was adapted from (Pierce, 2010). This construct is used to measure perceived levels of product importance.

Scale items for Involvement in Product decision making are items E1, E2, E3, E4 and E5. These were adapted from (Wang, Holloway, Beatty, & Hill, 2007).

E1 - “What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me to use mobile internet more?” This construct was adapted from Wang, Holloway, Beatty, and Hill (2007) and is used to measure relative influence of young opinion leader on the product decision making process.

E2 - “What level of influence does young adults in my family have in persuading me that mobile internet is an important tool? This construct was adapted from Wang, Holloway, Beatty, and Hill (2007) and is used to measure relative influence of young opinion leader on the product decision making process.

E3 - “What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me to start thinking about mobile internet?” This construct was adapted from Wang, Holloway, Beatty, and Hill (2007) and is used to measure relative influence of young opinion leader on the product decision making process.

E4 - “What level of influence do young adults in my family have compared to other family members in evaluating a medium such as mobile internet” This construct was adapted from Wang, Holloway, Beatty, and Hill (2007) and is used to measure relative influence of young opinion leader on the product decision making process.

E5 - is “What level of influence have young adults in my family had in making the final decision to use mobile internet?” This construct was adapted from Wang, Holloway,

Beatty, and Hill (2007) and is used to measure relative influence of young opinion leader on the product decision making process.

The results are shown in the table below;

### Summary of Internal Consistency of measurement scales

Measurement Scale	Number of Items	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Inter-item Correlation	Rating
Strength of Family Relationship	4	B1, B2, B3, B4	0.743	0.422	Excellent
Perception of Expertise	2	C1, C2	0.779	0.644	Excellent
Perception of Opinion leadership	2	C3, C5	0.676	0.511	Good
Perceived Similarity of lifestyle	4	D1, D2, D3, D4	0.837	0.555	Excellent
Involvement in product decision making	5	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5	0.945	0.778	Excellent

The findings indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha for "Strength of Family relationship" was 0.743, "Perception of Expertise" (0.779), "Perceived similarity of lifestyle" (0.837), and "Involvement in Product decision making" (0.945) showing an excellent level of internal consistence in each of the four constructs. "Perception of Opinion leadership" had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.676 indicating a good level of internal consistence.

Since all the Cronbach's Alphas were greater than 0.05, items in each construct were grouped together to form a summated scale for that particular construct.

## Summated scale

Summated scales were computed for each construct by finding the average of all the items in each construct. Further analysis was carried out using the summated scales. The descriptive statistics for each of the constructs are indicated in the table below;

### Descriptive Statistics for the Summated Scales

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perception of Expertise	66	1.00	5.00	4.07	.744	.553	-1.341	3.618
Perception of Opinion Leadership	66	1.00	5.00	4.02	.665	.442	-1.666	6.076
Strength of Family Relationship	66	1.00	5.00	3.72	.725	.526	-.878	2.191
Perceived Similarity of lifestyle	66	1.00	5.00	3.71	.858	.737	-.838	.456
Involvement in Product Decision Making	66	1.00	5.00	2.83	1.260	1.587	-.009	-1.355

The means indicate that Perception of Expertise (4.07) was the highest rated by the respondents, followed by perception of Opinion leadership (4.02), strength of Family relationship (3.72), and perceived similarity of lifestyle (3.71) and finally involvement in product decision making (2.83).

## 9.6 Results of family with and without adult children

The findings indicate that respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16 - 24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16 – 24.

To assess this, an independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference in the intergenerational influence score between respondents with at least one adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family and those without.

Independent sample t-test was the appropriate statistical test because according to Park (2009), it used to compare two means of two independent random samples. The samples are independent in the sense that they are drawn from different populations and each element of one sample is not matched with its corresponding element of the other sample (Park H. M., 2009).

The null hypothesis was that the mean intergenerational influence score for respondents with at least one adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family is the same as that of those respondents without an adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family. The alternative hypothesis was that the respondents with an adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family have a higher IGI score compared to those without an adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family.

The results are shown below;

Group Statistics					t-test for Equality of Means	
	In my family there is at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P-Value
IGI	Yes	51	3.686	0.732	2.869	0.006
	No	15	3.022	0.963		

The results show that the mean intergenerational influence score for those with an adult child in their family (3.686) is higher than that of those without (3.022). The p-value of the t-test for the difference between the two means is 0.006 which is less than 0.05 (the significance level and thus the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis).

The results show that older generation respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16-24.

## 9.7 Results of Propositions

### 9.7.1 Proposition 1: Family socio economic characteristics

The theory suggests that young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status (Flurry, 2006).

The following proposition was stated:

**P1: Young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status.**

Independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference in the intergenerational influence score between respondents with from families with high socio-economic status and those from families with low socio-economic status.

Independent sample t-test was the appropriate statistical test because according to Park (2009), it used to compare two means of two independent random samples. The samples are independent in the sense that they are drawn from different populations and each element of one sample is not matched with its corresponding element of the other sample (Park H. M., 2009)

Socio-economic status was determined income, where those with a gross monthly household income less R5 000 per month were considered to be from low socio-

economic status and those who had a gross monthly household income above R10 000 were classified as from high socio-economic status.

The null hypothesis was that the mean intergenerational influence score for respondents from a high socio-economic status is the same as that of those from a low socio-economic status. The alternative hypothesis was that the respondents from a high socio-economic status have a higher intergenerational influence score compared to those from a low socio-economic status.

The results are shown below;

Group Statistics					t-test for Equality of Means	
	Socio-economic Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P-Value
IGI	Low socio-economic Status	1	3.00	-	-0.583	0.562
	High socio-economic Status	60	3.57	0.963		

There was one person within the low-socio-economic status who had an intergenerational influence score of 3. The intergenerational influence score for respondents from the high socio-economic status was 3.57, the p-value of the t-test of the difference between the two scores was 0.562 which is greater than 0.05 (significance level) and thus the null hypothesis is accepted.

The finding indicates that that there is no difference in the intergenerational influence score for respondents from a high socio-economic status and those from a low socio-economic status.

### 9.7.2 Proposition 2: Strength of family relationship

The theory suggests that intergenerational influence will be stronger when strength of family relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989). Without family relationship strength, intergenerational influence will be minimal at best (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The following proposition was stated:

**P2: The greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.**

To assess the above question, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and strength of family relationship score.

Pearson's correlation analysis is a measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables. According to Cohen (1988), Pearson correlation coefficients is said to be weak if between 0 and 0.29, moderate if between 0.3 and 0.49, and strong if between 0.5 and 1.

The sign of the correlation coefficient shows the direction of the relationship. A positive correlation means that as the other variables is increasing the other variable will be increasing as well and a negative correlation coefficient implies that one variable increases as the other one decreases and vice versa (Cohen, 1988).

The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between the intergenerational influence score and strength of family relationship score against an alternative hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the intergenerational influence score and strength of family relationship. The results are shown below;

<b>Correlations</b>		
		IGI
Strength of Family Relationship	Pearson Correlation	0.504
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	66

The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between intergenerational influence and strength of family relationship (Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.504). The p-value of the test was 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis is rejected and the greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### 9.7.3 Proposition 3: Perception of Expertise

The theory suggests that whichever generation perceives the other to possess expertise on the product category, a specific brand or other marketplace phenomena, that generation will seek and receive intergenerational influence from the other (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The following proposition was stated:

**P3: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.**

To assess the above question, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet.

Pearson's correlation analysis is a measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables. According to Cohen (1988), Pearson correlation coefficients is said to be weak if between 0 and 0.29, moderate if between 0.3 and 0.49, and strong if between 0.5 and 1.

The sign of the correlation coefficient shows the direction of the relationship. A positive correlation means that as the other variables is increasing the other variable will be increasing as well and a negative correlation coefficient implies that one variable increases as the other one decreases and vice versa. (Cohen, 1988)

Pearson correlation analysis was also conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet.

The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between the intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile against an alternative hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet. The results are shown below;

Correlations		
		IGI
Expertise	Pearson Correlation	0.613
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	66

The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between intergenerational influence the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet (Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.613). The p-value of the test was 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

It can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

#### 9.7.4 Proposition 4: Perception of Opinion leadership

The theory suggests that intergenerational influence is strong when one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

**P4: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.**

To assess the above question, Pearson correlation analysis was also conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence

score and the older generation perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet.

The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between the intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile against an alternative hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet.

The results are shown below;

Correlations		
		IGI
Opinion Leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.559
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	66

The results showed that there is a positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet (Pearson’s correlation coefficient = 0.559). The p-value of the test was 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

It can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

### 9.7.5 Proposition 5: Perceived similarity of lifestyle

The theory suggests that older generation may emulate young generation’s mobile phone lifestyle and may seek intergenerational influence from them (Park & Lessig, 1977).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

**P5: The influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.**

The question was evaluated using Pearson correlation analysis. The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between the intergenerational influence score and the older generation perceived need for mobile internet being similarity to those of young adults against an alternative hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the intergenerational influence score and the older generation perceived need for mobile internet being similarity to those of young adults. The results are shown below;

Correlations		
		IGI
Perceived Similarity	Pearson Correlation	0.512
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	66

From the table above it can be noted that there is a positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation perceived need for mobile internet being similarity to those of young adults (Pearson’s correlation coefficient = 0.512. The p-value of the test was 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

It can be concluded that the influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.

### 9.7.6 Proposition 6: Involvement in product decision making

Bravo, Fraj, and Montaner (2008) citing study done by Krishnamurthy in 1981, suggested that the person who is more involved with a product will be more active in the product decision process and have a greater effect on the decision outcome.

The following proposition was stated:

**P6: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.**

Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess whether there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and the young adults being involvement in product decision making. The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between the intergenerational influence score and involvement of young adults in product decision making against the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the intergenerational influence score and involvement of young adults in product decision making. The results are shown below;

Correlations		
		IGI
Involvement in Product Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	0.700
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	66

The results indicated that there is a very high positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the involvement of young adults in product decision making (Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.700). The p-value of the test was 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

It can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

## **9.8 Summarised Results**

### **9.8.1 Results of Instrument reliability**

The results revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha for international generational influence, and perception of opinion leadership showed a good level of internal consistency.

The results also revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha for "strength of family relationship", "perception of expertise", "perceived similarity of lifestyle", and "involvement in product decision making" showed excellent level of internal consistency.

### **9.8.2 Results of family with and without adult children**

The findings indicate that respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16 - 24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16 – 24.

To assess this, an independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference in the intergenerational influence score between respondents with at least one adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family and those without.

The results show that older generation respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16 - 24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16 - 24.

### **9.8.3 Results of Proposition 1: Family socio economic characteristics**

The following proposition was stated:

P1: Young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status.

The results revealed that there is no significant difference in the intergenerational influence score for respondents from a high socio-economic status and those from a low socio-economic status.

### **9.8.4 Results of Proposition 2: Strength of Family relationship**

The following proposition was stated:

P2: The greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between intergenerational influence and strength of family relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

### **9.8.5 Results of Proposition 3: Perception of Expertise**

The following proposition was stated:

P3: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet. Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

#### **9.8.6 Results of Proposition 4: Perception of Opinion leadership**

The following proposition was stated:

P4: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

The results showed that there is a strong positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation's perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

#### **9.8.7 Results of Proposition 5: Perceived similarity of lifestyle**

The following proposition was stated:

P5: The influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.

The results revealed that there is a very high positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation perceived need for mobile internet being similarity to those of young adults.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.

### **9.8.8 Results of Proposition 6: Involvement in Product decision making**

The following proposition was stated:

P6: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

The results indicated that there is a very high positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the involvement of young adults in product decision making.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

## **10. Chapter 6: Discussion of Results**

The section provides details of the study's findings and how it relates to the findings of other studies described in the literature review. The researcher intends to fold the findings back to the knowledge base by comparing and contrasting to the findings with previous studies.

### **10.1 Recapping the Research Objectives**

This research study investigated the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

The rationale for this study was that a large proportion of older generation do not use internet at all (Pierce, 2010), and are significantly less likely to have access to the internet (Richard, 2011), (Liu & Li, 2010). In support, research done in South Africa by TNS in 2011, which show that internet use decreases as age increases.

Furthermore, Pierce (2010) argued that lack of access to internet by older generation has become such a global concern because more of the world's important information is primarily available online. This is against the backdrop that there have been limited attempts to widen access to the internet, among older generation (Richard, 2011).

Schrodt, et al (2009) argued that consumer behaviour studies focused on young generation. In addition, marketers have been reluctant to target older generation (Niemela -Nyrhinen, 2007). In addition, the majority of the consumer behaviour studies have been conducted in developed markets such as Europe and the USA (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2009), and this may limit their applicability developing markets such as South Africa.

On the other hand, the literature suggests that the young generation are extensive users of the internet (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martin, 2011), and mobile services (Liu & Li, 2010). Mobile phone has become an essential part of a lifestyle for this generation and many would not leave home without their mobile (Pierce, 2010).

Building on that, according to TNS (2011), in Africa, mobile is the primary access point to internet. Africa is not just a mobile first continent, it is a mobile only. Elnadi (2012) reports that mobile web traffic in Africa increased by 156% since 2010.

Mobile internet is seen as offering an alternative for bridging the digital divide (Srinuan, Srinuan, & Bohlin, 2011). Access to internet is becoming increasingly important to peoples' ability to participate in the economy and society, bringing with it health, education, financial and government services that help make people more prosperous, empowered and efficient (Simpson, 2012).

Mobile internet usage is geared towards young generation (TNS, 2011), (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011). The Google research in Africa suggest that young generation frequents mobile internet more than older generation. Furthermore, the research suggests that internet usage has grown more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54.

This suggests that young generation are more experienced about mobile internet compared to older generation. Therefore, the young generation are likely to be opinion leaders on mobile internet.

On the other hand, the conventional wisdom that older generation resists adoption technology and new products such as mobile internet needed to be re-assessed. There has been a dramatic increase in the use of technology by older generation (McCloskey, 2006). For example, in study done in Finland, the most eager to begin using the mobile banking services are older people 50 years of age and above (Riquelme & Rios, 2010).

The study investigated whether young generation can positively influence older generation to increase the usage of mobile internet. The core of the conceptual model was intergenerational influence (IGI) theory. The theory originates from consumer behaviour theory.

In short, Moore and Bowman (2006) defined intergenerational influence as the transmission of information, beliefs and resources from one family generation to the next. Intergenerational influence is at work whenever older generation seek advice from younger generation, or vice versa (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

“Influencing other people is about getting them to do things that they would otherwise not do” Manning (2012, p. 26). The influence strategies considered most important in exercising influence are informational, referent, reward, legitimate, expert, coercive, bargaining, persuasion, request and assertion. Bokek-Cohen (2011) argued every person can use a variety of influence strategies, depending on his or her own characteristics, the characteristics of the individual he or she is trying to influence.

Mittal and Royne (2010) defined Reverse Intergenerational Influence as a phenomenon where the young generation acts as the influencer and the older generation as the influenced. They are two different types of reverse intergenerational influence namely reciprocal socialisation and yielding.

Reciprocal Socialisation refers to older generation learning and internalising new values, skills and roles, taught by young generation (Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, & Foxman, 1987).

Yielding refers to older generation simply complying with a young generation’s wishes or requests, without internalisation of values, skills or preferences (Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, & Foxman, 1987).

Heckler, Childers and Arunachalam (1989) reported that Intergenerational Influence is strongest and most enduring for convenience goods (for example, food items) and for "negative" goods (for example, insurance, funeral parlours). On the other hand, Moore and Bowman (2006) argued that intergenerational influence is strongest within religious and political arenas, and weakest on certain lifestyle dimensions.

However, Heckler, Childers, and Arunachalam (1989) argued that more effort is needed to clarify how Intergenerational Influences are utilised by older generation in their decision-making processes. This is partly because according to Moore, Wilkie, and Alder (2001) most researchers assumed Intergenerational Influence flows from older generation to younger generation and intergenerational influence which is investigated most often is the influence of mothers on daughters (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989).

In contrast, Wang, Holloway, Beatty and Hill (2007) set the tone and argued that there is a need to examine whether and how the role of younger generation on family decisions may have changed. This is particularly because research studies indicate that the relative influence of young generation increases as they mature (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

Research studies indicated that the influence of young generation varies based on family socio economic characteristics, strength of family relationship, perception of expertise, perception of opinion leadership, perceived similarity of lifestyle and across product.

In short, studies indicate that intergenerational influence is strongest

- In a household with higher socio-economic status that is single parent home (Mangleburg, 1990), households with higher incomes (Flurry, 2006), and or higher educational levels (Flurry, 2006);
- When the strength of the relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989);
- When one generation perceive the other to possess expertise on the product category (Shah & Mittal, 1997);
- When one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009);
- When generation emulates the other generation (Park & Lessig, 1977),
- When involved in the product making decision for which the young generation are the primary consumers (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

This study investigated factors that impact the influence of young generation over older generation. These factors were family socio economic characteristics, strength of family relationship, perception of expertise, perception of opinion leadership, perceived similarity of lifestyle and involvement in product decision making.

## **10.2 Discussion of Results**

### **10.2.1 Discussion of Results of Instrument reliability**

The results revealed that the Cronbach's alpha for "international generational influence score" and "perception of opinion leadership" showed good level of internal consistency.

Furthermore, the results also revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha for "strength of family relationship", "perception of expertise", "perceived similarity of lifestyle", and "involvement in product decision making" showed excellent level of internal consistency.

### **10.2.2 Discussion of IGI's Results of family with and without adult children**

The findings indicate that respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16-24.

To assess this, an independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference in the IGI score between respondents with at least one adult child between 16 - 24 years in their family and those without.

The results show that older generation respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16 - 24.

### **10.2.3 A Discussion of Proposition 1: Family socio economic characteristics**

Ward (1974) argued that socio economic status plays no role in family decision-making. This suggests older generation from household with lower socio-economic may be receptive to the young generation's opinions on mobile internet.

On the contrary, Flurry (2006) argued that families with higher socio-economic backgrounds might provide better opportunities for influence and be more receptive to the young generation's opinions on mobile internet.

In the context of South Africa, the socio economic challenge is a reality. 60% of households, that is 36 million South Africans, earn less than R5000 per month. The report suggests that R5000 is the tipping point as when people earn more than this their lives begin to change for the better (Eighty20, 2012).

Despite the low socio economic challenges, internet use is up 25% in 2011 following 28% in 2010, expected growth in 2012 will be 20%, taking user base past 10 million mark and 20% penetration and by 2020, it is expected that they will be 15 million internet users in South African (Doorn, 2012).

This suggests that the notion that young opinion leaders from families with low socio-economic status have less influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with higher socio economic status needs to be re-assessed.

The theory suggests that young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status (Flurry, 2006).

The following proposition was stated:

P1: Young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status.

Independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference in the intergenerational influence score between respondents with from families with high socio-economic status and those from families with low socio-economic status.

The finding indicates that there is no difference in the intergenerational influence score for respondents from a high socio-economic status and those from a low socio-economic status. There was only one respondent from household earning R5000 per month.

Blumberg (2008) defined that the margin of error is a statistic expressing the amount of random sampling error in a survey's results. The larger the margin of error, the less faith one should have that the survey reported results are close to the "true" figures; that is, the figures for the whole population. This suggests that the bigger the sample of respondents earning less than R5000 per month, the smaller the margin of error.

Based on the fact that there was only one respondent from households earning less than R5000 per month, the study's findings imply that there is less faith one should have that the survey reported results are close to the "true" figures; that is, the figures for the whole population. Therefore the results are not conclusive.

This negates what some researchers have proposed that younger generation from higher socio-economic backgrounds have more opportunity for consumption and are more aware of products available in the market (Churchill & Moschis, 1978), (Churchill & Moschis, 1978).

On the other hand, given that they were 60 respondents from households with a gross monthly income of over R10 000, the study's findings imply that there is more faith one should have that the survey reported results are close to the "true" figures; that is, the figures for the whole population.

While the results of the low socio- economic group, it should be noted that Africa which is not only just mobile first but also mobile only continent, it is likely that low economic status is likely not to slow down exponential mobile internet growth in Africa. Given that Africa is witnessing unprecedented growth in internet usage over the last decade, coming in at 2 000%, well over the global average of 480% (Zeenat, 2011), that mobile web traffic increasing by 156% since 2010 (Elnadi, 2012), mobile internet usage is doubling year on year and 150 million more mobile internet users are forecasted in the next 3 years (Scherf, 2012).

#### **10.2.4 Discussion of Proposition 2: Strength of family relationship**

Kaufman (2011) based on work done by Cialdini, identified six principles of influence namely: reciprocation, consistency, social validation, liking, authority and scarcity.

Liking refers to the fact that people respond more readily to people they like and people they feel more comfortable with because they share similar associations.

In addition, Sheth and Mittal (2004) argue that for reverse intergenerational influence to occur via cognitive learning it is important that an open family communication structure exists and therefore children can influence their parents by directly communicating to them, while informing, advising or persuading them especially in the context of technological complex and innovative products.

Family communication is expected to affect young generation's influence in family decision making. In fact Pierce, (2010) reported that internet use has a positive effect on contact with family and friends. Furthermore, Doorn (2012) reports that 69% of mobile internet users use Facebook in South Africa, this is highest in the world together with Indonesia.

Shah and Mittal (1997) considered perceived strength of the family relationship to be the main determinant of intergenerational influence. They describe this construct as the degree of trust and respect, harmony of relations and communication between young generation and older generation, (Moschis G. , 1985).

Respondents were asked if they had at least one young adult child in their family. The findings indicate that respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16-24.

The results show that older generation respondents from families with at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old are more likely to be influenced by the young generation on mobile internet usage than those from family without an adult child who is between in 16-24.

The theory suggests that intergenerational influence will be stronger when strength of family relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989). Without family relationship strength, intergenerational influence will be minimal at best (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The following proposition was stated:

P2: The greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

To assess the above question, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and strength of family relationship score.

The results revealed that there is a positive correlation between intergenerational influence and strength of family relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

This finding is consistent with past studies. The key implication is for marketers to understand this phenomenon that identify opportunities to use younger adults in the family as marketing agents to the older generation.

### 10.2.5 Discussion of Proposition 3: Perception of expertise

Older generation believe that the internet is only for young generation (Khan, 2009). Consequently, this generation is still underrepresented in the internet-using community (Liu & Li, 2010).

On the other hand, the young generation are early adopters of new technologies (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martin, 2011), extensive users of the internet (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martin, 2011), (TNS, 2011), (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011) and mobile services (Liu & Li, 2010). Similarly, Google research in Africa suggests that young generation frequents mobile internet more than older generation and that internet usage has grown significantly more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54 (Google, 2012).

This suggests that young generation are likely to be experts on mobile internet compared to older generation.

Expert influence strategy, based on the desire to seek information from credible sources, is the degree of which young generation could use their extensive experience, and expertise on mobile internet to influence older generation to use mobile internet (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009).

Kaufman (2011) based on work done by Cialdini identified consistency as one six principles of influence. Consistency refers to the phenomenon that people respond positively to those who are consistent in their messages.

In the context of the study, this means that older generation actually learn and internalise new values, skills and roles, taught by young generation (Ekstrom, Tansuhaj, & Foxman, 1987).

The theory suggests that whichever generation perceives the other to possess expertise on the product category, a specific brand or other marketplace phenomena, that generation will seek and receive IGI from the other (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

If older generation does not perceive the young to possess expertise, then intergenerational influence will not be sought, and, if given, it will not be accepted, even in the case of high strength of family relationship (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The following proposition was stated:

P3: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

To assess the above question, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet.

The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between intergenerational influence the older generation perception on the young adults possessing expertise on mobile internet.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.

This finding is consistent with past studies. Given that, analysts forecast that mobile search volume to surpass desktop by 2015 (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011), young generation are better positioned to positively influence older generation on mobile internet usage.

## 10.2.6 Discussion of Proposition 4: Perception of opinion leadership

Mobile internet usage is geared towards young generation (TNS, 2011), (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011). The Google research in Africa suggests that young generation frequents mobile internet more than older generation. In addition, the research suggests that internet usage has grown significantly more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54.

This suggests that young generation are more experienced about mobile internet compared to older generation. Therefore, the young generation are likely to be opinion leaders on mobile internet.

Wang, Holloway, Beatty and Hill (2007), Kaufman (2011) argued that influence is the capacity or power of a person to produce an effect on others by intangible or indirect means. This suggests it is the ability to move or impel a person to some action.

In general, information from the media moves in two distinct stages - from the mass media to the opinion leaders and from the opinion leaders to their followers (Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren, & Joubert, 2007). It is in this context that Weimann, Tustin, Van Vuuren and Joubert (2007) argue that opinion leaders are well aware that they are sources of information and influence for others.

Kaufman (2011) based on work done by Cialdini, identified authority as one of the six principles of influence Authority refers to the fact that people respond more positively when they respect the authority of a person providing information. It is no surprise that Nisbet and Kotcher (2009) citing study done by Katz in 1957, reported that across categories of opinion leaders, there are important shared traits and behaviours that can be divided into a few dimensions:

- Who one is - this includes certain personality characteristics or values held by the individual;
- What one knows - this includes the degree of knowledge and expertise that one has about a particular issue or product;

- Whom one knows - this includes the number of contacts one has as part of their circle of friends and acquaintances.

Given that the young generation are likely to have the ability to explicate information, provide persuasive explanations or arguments, about mobile internet (Leonidou, 2005), they are best positioned to provide opinion leadership to older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

This is particularly important because according to Doorn (2012), South Africa has one of the lowest broadband penetrations in the world, only 13.8% while significantly below the 30% world average.

The theory suggests that intergenerational influence is strong when one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P4: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

To assess the above question, Pearson correlation analysis was also conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and the older generation perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet.

The results showed that there is a positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation perception on the young adults being opinion leaders on mobile internet.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

This finding is consistent with past studies. The key implication is for marketers to understand this phenomenon that identify opportunities to leverage younger adults in the family as marketing agents to the older generation.

### **10.2.7 Discussion of Proposition 5: Perceived similarity of lifestyle**

Conventional wisdom suggests that as a person gets older, the more averse they become to new technologies. Interestingly, today's older generation is different to their predecessors. They regard themselves as being much younger than their actual age (Sudbury & Simcock, 2009), they show more willingness to try new products (Laukkanen, Sinkkonen, Kivijarvi, & Laukkanen, 2007), new media and technologies (Kumar & Lim, 2008).

There has been a dramatic increase in the use of technology by older generation (McCloskey, 2006) and according study done in Finland, the most eager to begin using the mobile banking services are older people 50 years of age and above (Riquelme & Rios, 2010).

Therefore, the notion that older generation spend little, resist technology and are slow to adopt new products needs to be re-assessed. McDonough (2010) cautioned marketers not to pigeonhole the technology as an exclusive product of the younger generation.

It is in this context that perceived similarity of lifestyle similarity between generations refers to the phenomenon that influence is strong when one generation emulates the other generation (Park & Lessig, 1977), therefore older generation wants to identify with the younger generation because it possesses some attractive characteristics (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2009). As an example, a mother might perceive the daughter to be an expert on new fashions. But if she perceives her daughter's lifestyle to be different from hers (she considers herself to be a conservative professional, and wears formal, conservative styles while her daughter sports the "grunge look"), then she (the mother) is not going to seek or accept her daughter's influence for clothing. However if the mother wants to be as trendy as she perceives her daughter to be, she will value intergenerational influence.

The theory suggests that older generation may emulate young generation's mobile phone lifestyle and may seek intergenerational influence from them (Park & Lessig, 1977).

The following proposition is therefore stated:

P5: The influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.

The question was evaluated using Pearson correlation analysis. The results revealed that there is a positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the older generation perceived need for mobile internet being similarity to those of young adults.

It can be concluded that the influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.

This finding is consistent with past studies. It is likely that older generation is more technology savvy than most people think.

#### **10.2.8 Discussion of Proposition 6: Involvement in product decision making**

Bravo, Fraj and Montaner (2008) citing study done by Krishnamurthy in 1981, suggested that the person who is more involved with a product will be more active in the product decision process and have a greater effect on the decision outcome.

Already 26% of South African smartphone users researched products on phone, and changed minds as result (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011), and 56% of South African smartphone users go online with their smartphones several times a day (Hoehler & McHenry, 2011).

Mobile phone has become an essential part of a lifestyle for young generation. Many would not leave home without their mobile (Pierce, 2010). In terms of internet usage,

search (Google), social media (Facebook, Mixit, and Twitter), news and utility (Wikipedia, dictionary.com) dominate (Hoehler & McHenry, 2011). According to Doorn (2012) reports that 69% of mobile internet users use Facebook in South Africa, this is highest in the world together with Indonesia.

On average, young generation spend more time online than older generation (TNS, 2011). The Google research suggests that internet usage has grown significantly more in the age category 16-24 compared to 45-54 (Google, 2012). This was illustrated by Figure 4.

The following proposition was stated:

P6: The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

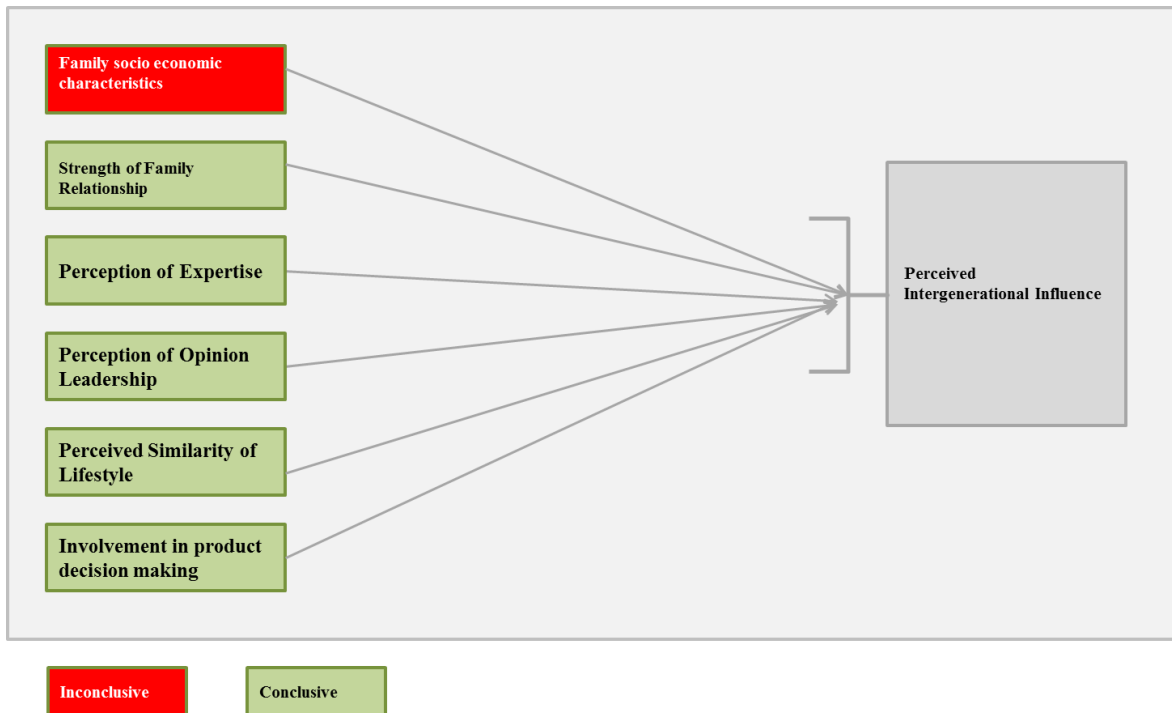
Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess whether there was a relationship between a respondent's intergenerational influence score and the young adults being involvement in product decision making.

The results indicated that there is a high positive correlation between intergenerational influence and the involvement of young adults in product decision making.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation. This finding is consistent with past studies.

### 10.3 Discussion of the conceptual model for Intergenerational influence

The findings suggest that the conceptual model for intergenerational influence need to be modified. This is because the family socio economic characteristics are found not to play a significant role in for intergenerational influence of older generation by young opinion leaders.



It, therefore, follows that young opinion leaders can positively influence older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

## **10.4 Summarised Discussions of Propositions**

### **10.4.1 Summarised discussion of Proposition 1: Family socio economic characteristics**

The results for proposition P1 that, young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status, are not conclusive.

### **10.4.2 Summarised discussion of Proposition 2: Strength of Family relationship**

The theory suggests that intergenerational influence will be stronger when strength of family relationship is high (Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalam, 1989). Without family relationship strength, intergenerational influence will be minimal at best (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The results for proposition P2, that the greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage, are consistent with previous studies.

### **10.4.3 Summarised discussion of Proposition 3: Perception of Expertise**

The theory suggests that whichever generation perceives the other to possess expertise on the product category, a specific brand or other marketplace phenomena, that generation will seek and receive intergenerational influence from the other (Shah & Mittal, 1997).

The results for the proposition P3 that, the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet ,are consistent with previous studies.

### **10.4.4 Summarised discussion of Proposition 4: Perception of Opinion leadership**

The theory suggests that intergenerational influence is strong when one generation frequently rely upon other as sources of information (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009).

The results for the proposition P4, that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet, are consistent with previous studies.

#### **10.4.5 Summarised discussion of Proposition 5: Perceived similarity of lifestyle**

The theory suggests that older generation may emulate young generation's mobile phone lifestyle and may seek intergenerational influence from them (Park & Lessig, 1977).

The results for proposition P5, that the influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation, are consistent with previous studies.

#### **10.4.6 Summarised discussion of Proposition 6: Involvement in Product decision making**

The theory suggests that the person who is more involved with a product will be more active in the product decision process and have a greater effect on the decision outcome (Bravo, Fraj, & Montaner, 2008).

The results for proposition P6, that the influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation, are consistent with previous studies.

Given that perceived strength of the family relationship to be the main determinant of intergenerational influence, it, therefore, follows that young opinion leaders can positively influence older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

## 11. Chapter 7: Conclusions

### 11.1 Main findings of the research

This study aims to make contrasts with previous research in relation to intergenerational influence studies. The study findings are limited to the specific context of the research that is the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

The results revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha for international generational influence, perception of opinion leadership showed good level of internal consistency.

The results also revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha for "strength of family relationship", "perception of expertise", "perceived similarity of lifestyle", and "involvement in product decision making" showed excellent level of internal consistency.

The research propositions are supported, except for the proposition P1 that young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status. This proposition is inconclusive.

The research propositions which are consistent with previous studies are:

- The greater the strength of family relationship, the greater the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding, mobile internet usage.
- The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as possessing expertise on mobile internet.
- The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the older generation perceives the young adult in the family as opinion leaders on mobile internet.

- The influence of young adult on older generation within the family will be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation.
- The influence of young generation on older generation will be stronger if the young opinion leaders in the family are involved in the mobile internet product decision making of the older generation.

Therefore, the key finding is that young opinion leaders are likely to positively influence older generation regarding mobile internet usage.

From an academic standpoint, this research makes an important conceptual contribution. This study extends research on intergenerational influence by investigating that intergenerational influence in South Africa, a developing country. Previously the majority of the consumer behaviour studies were conducted in developed markets such as Europe and the USA (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2009). This is likely to limit their applicability in developing markets such as South Africa.

Heckler, Childers and Arunachalam (1989) reported that intergenerational influence is strongest and most enduring for convenience goods for example, food items and for "negative" goods for example, insurance, funeral parlours. Also, Moore and Bowman (2006) argued that intergenerational influence is strongest within religious and political arenas, and weakest on certain lifestyle dimensions.

This study extends research on intergenerational influence by the extending items where intergenerational influence is likely to be strong beyond the above mentioned list. The study proposes technology services such as mobile internet as an item where intergenerational influence is likely to be strong.

This study deliberately did not focus on constructs that drive technology adoption, because the literature in this field is established. This constructs range from perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived risk, and perceived security.

Therefore, the study extends research on technology adoption models such technology acceptance models by suggesting that intergenerational influence is an important construct that is likely to positively influence technology adoption such as mobile internet usage.

This study also confirmed the previous studies. The findings confirmed that respondents from household with high economic status were amenable to influence from younger generation. However, it is not conclusive on whether young opinion leaders from families with high socio-economic status will have more influence on older generation on mobile internet usage than those from family with lower high socio economic status,

This study also confirmed the previous studies. The findings suggested that young adults in the family could play a bigger role in the decision making process of technology related services.

This study indicates implications that may be useful for business stakeholders in South Africa and probably in Africa.

## 11.2 Recommendation to Stakeholders

The study's findings suggest that it is highly likely that young generations can influence positively older generations to use mobile internet.

Mobile internet could become a game changer for Africa. For example, mobile internet can enable the recycling of innovation from Africa to the West (Simons, 2012).

The recommendation for marketers is that they should consider targeting older generations indirectly via young generation. An example similar this concept is the “call-back” service that mobile operators have implemented. In this example, the mobile operator increases the usage of mobile services of the targeted stakeholder (influenced) by enabling the influencer with the necessary tools to entice the influenced to make a call. The influenced would not have made a call without being influenced. This suggests that organisations should consider developing “call-back” like products to drive mobile internet usage.

Mobile internet usage will happen. It is likely to be all about the familiarisation. The young generation can play a role to expedite older generation's familiarisation with mobile internet. Organisation should explore opportunities to exploit young generations as brand ambassadors on products. For example, app banking is one area where the financial services sector can leverage young generations as brand ambassadors. Other opportunities could be mobile payment, mobile education and mobile health.

It is likely that a significant number of older generations could still be averse to mobile internet based on physical considerations such as eyesight. The font on the mobile phones could be too small. Therefore, design of mobile internet solutions should accommodate older generations' physical requirements.

Given that most South African web sites not optimised for mobile internet (Goldstuck, Arthur, 2011). Organisations should consider co-creating mobile internet based solutions with the young generations because they are heavy users of mobile internet.

Regarding internet, only 4% of all consumers in South Africa use the internet to research, close to 2% to purchase (TNS, 2011). On the other hand, 45% of online shoppers spent more online in 2011 than previous years (Zeenat, 2011).

Online research patterns differ massively by product categories. It, therefore, follows that organisations must understand the reach and the size of the mobile channel. Equally important, organisations must understand the role of mobile and offline channels throughout the path to purchase.

Already mentioned, social media are popular in South Africa, more so in the younger age groups. While 57% say social media are a good place to learn about brands, only 40% would make a purchase via this platform. Given that, the influence of young adult on older generation is likely be stronger if the older generation identifies mobile internet as essential part of their lifestyle like young generation, marketers need to put in efforts to ensure that their brands are a subject of online discussions.

### **11.3 Recommendation for future studies**

The findings of this research must be seen within the context of several limitations, which future research must take into consideration. A potential limitation of this study is the dominance of the high income group. The sample had one respondent from household with gross monthly income of less R5 000, and five respondents from household with gross monthly income of between R5 000 and R10 000. There 60 respondents from household with gross monthly income of over R10 000.

It is recommended that future studies should consider quota sampling preferred research design. This is to ensure equal balance across income groups. (Blumberg & Cooper, 2008).

A potential area of future study on intergenerational influence is outside of IT organisations. In the study, the sample was drawn from Nedbank technology division. The concern is that there is likely to be a bias as these respondents were likely to have above general knowledge about mobile internet when compared to the general

population. As a result, they are less likely to be influenced because they already have knowledge and experience of mobile internet.

Another potential area of future study on intergenerational influence is subsistence markets. Chikweche and Fletcher (2009) argued that the influence of young generation in consumer decision making is likely to be different in subsistence markets such as large part of South Africa.

Another possible area of future study on intergenerational influence is family type. The study can explore intergenerational influence on single parent home versus dual parent households.

Another possible area of future study on intergenerational influence is household size. Conventional wisdom suggests that a larger number of young adults in the household may mean that young adults contribute more overall to decision-making relative to the older generation, but that each individual young adult may have less influence.

## **11.4 Managerial Implications**

The ultimate goal of this study was to create a predictive model that can be used as a tool for organisation interested in reverse intergenerational influence. This study indicates implications that may be useful for key stakeholders in organisations.

From a managerial perspective, the most direct implication of this study comes from the key finding was that young opinion leaders are likely to positively influence older generation regarding mobile internet usage. The implications are substantial, particularly in the following areas online communities, mobile web advertising, buying using mobile internet, branding, access to news through the mobile internet.

### **Online communities**

Social networking sites are likely to become an effective medium to reach out to consumers. Many users have faith that the information they find on social networking sites is reliable and accurate. In fact, 57% say social media are a good place to learn about brands, only 40% would make a purchase via this platform (TNS, 2011).

Given that young opinion leaders are likely to positively influence older generation on mobile internet usage, this suggests that organisations should step up efforts to ensure that their brands are a subject of online discussions.

### **Mobile web advertising**

The influence of young opinion leaders on older generation is likely to have an impact of mobile web advertising. Organizations would need to conduct studies on purchase decisions based on responses to web advertisements targeted for older generation. Conventional wisdom suggests that users said they find Web advertising to be less informative than traditional advertising.

### **Buying using mobile internet**

Given the influence of young generation on older generation regarding mobile internet usage, organizations are advised to keep track on the following

- the profile of the online buyer;
- types of online purchases for example prepaid electricity;
- online purchasing frequency;
- privacy concerns when buying online;
- effects of buying online on traditional retail purchasing.

Prepaid electricity, lotto and prepaid airtime have emerged as major digital products. While prepaid airtime is still biggest in terms of online purchases, payments are likely to be next big feature. This implies the older generation could be persuaded by an advertising strategy that perhaps shows young adults and older generation buying prepaid electricity using mobile internet.

### **Branding**

In terms of branding, communication needed to be simple, to the point, and easy to understand, with a strong customer value proposition.

Organisation may still be able to position and promote a mobile internet using the message that “your adult child can teach you.” This positioning may be enough to convince older generation to try mobile internet.

### **Access to news through the mobile internet**

There are implications for media houses are reliability and accuracy of the news. If the young generation can positively influence older generation, it is likely that older generation would spend more time each week going online for news.

The other point for media houses to consider is impact of online content to print subscriptions by older generation. It is unclear if the percentage of older generation who stop reading a print publication because of online content would increase.

## **11.5 Conclusion**

The study investigated the influence of young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet usage. A total of 597 online questionnaires were sent to Nedbank Group Technology employees aged over 44 via email. The key finding was that young opinion leaders are likely to positively influence older generation regarding mobile internet usage. Potential area of future studies could be the role of subsistence markets, family type and household sizes on intergenerational influence. Yong

The influence young opinion leaders on older generation regarding mobile internet is likely to have implications on online communities, mobile web advertising, mobile purchasing and branding strategies.

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## 13. Appendices: List of Questions

IGI score to be measured C4 and C6

### Section A

Scale items concerning socio economic status of the family- Proposition 1

A1. Please select your age range

- Greater than 44 and less than 61 years
- 61 and above
- Other

A2. In my family, there is at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old

- Yes
- No

Proposition 1 to be measured by A3

A3. Please select your gross monthly household income

- Less than or equal to R5000
- Over R5000 but less or equal to R10 000
- Over R10 000 but less or equal to R20 000
- Over R20 000 but less or equal to R30 000
- Over R30 000 but less or equal to R40 000
- Over R40 000 but less or equal to R80 000
- Over R80 000

A4. My highest level of education completed

- Matric
- One or more years of tertiary institution, no degree
- Degree or Diploma
- Post degree

**Please read each statement carefully. For each statement, please type “X” on the number that most closely matches your view of the opinions stated.**

<b>Section B</b>  <b>Scale items concerning strength of family relationship – Proposition 2</b>  <b>Young adults are defined as aged between 16 and 24</b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
B1. Young adults in my family are open and honest in dealing with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B2. In general, the young adults in my family consider my needs and wishes as important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B3. The young adults in my family would not do anything against my interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B4. Relative to other influences, I would consider using mobile internet if the young adults in my family personally recommended it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Section C</b>						
<b>Scale items concerning strength of perception of expertise and opinion leadership- Proposition 3 and 4 and IGI</b>		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
C1.	In general, young adults in my family are a good source of information on mobile internet than people in my generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2.	In general, young adults in my family are often a step ahead of my generation in terms of using mobile internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3.	Relative to my generation, young adults in my family often give others advice and suggestions regarding mobile internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4.	Opinions of young adults in my family on mobile internet seem to count with me and my generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5.	People I know in my generation intend to use/use mobile internet based on what young adults in their families told them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6	I'm more likely to accept young adults' opinions on mobile internet usage than people in my own age group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Section D</b>						
<b>Scale items concerning perceived similarity- Proposition 5</b>		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
D1.	Similar to young adults in my family, I would not leave home without my mobile phone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D2.	Relative to young adults in my family, I acknowledge that mobile internet an essential part of my lifestyle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D3.	Similar to young adults in my family, I use mobile internet as the primary source of information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D4.	Relative to young adults in my family, I find that mobile internet increasing my working effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Section E</b>						
<b>Scale items concerning involvement in product decision making- Proposition 6</b>		No influence	Small influence	Uncertain	Major influence	All of the influence
E1.	What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me to use mobile internet more?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E2.	What level of influence does young adults in my family have in persuading me that mobile internet is an important tool?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E3.	What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me to start thinking about mobile internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E4.	What level of influence do young adults in my family have compared to other family members in evaluating a medium such as mobile internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E5.	What level of influence do young adults in my family have in making the final decision to use mobile internet??	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 14. Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

As part of a research project that I am completing, you are invited to participate and complete a survey, that will help us better understand the degree of influence in which young opinion leaders have on older people regarding mobile internet usage. Young in this study is defined as individuals aged between 16 to 24 years.

Mobile internet is defined as the use of the internet via mobile phones to conduct a wide variety of online activities such as but not limited to

- Connecting and sharing with others online;
- Browsing and searching the internet;
- Banking and paying online;
- Keep up to date with news, sports, and the weather.

This survey should not take more than 10 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data responses will be kept confidential. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher name: Sazi Gcaba  
Email: sazig@nedbank.co.za  
Phone: 011 500 4559

Supervisor Name: Michael Goldman  
Email: goldmanm@gibs.co.za  
Phone: 082 332 0577

1. Please select your age range

- Greater than 44 but less than 61 years old
- 61 and above
- Other

2. In my family, there is at least one adult child who is between in 16-24 years old

- Yes
- No

3. Please select your gross monthly household income

- Less than or equal to R5000
- Over R5000 but less than or equal to R10 000
- Over R10 000 but less than or equal to R20 000
- Over R20 000 but less than or equal to R30 000
- Over R30 000 but less than or equal to R40 000
- Over R40 000 but less than or equal to R80 000
- Over R80 000

4. My highest level of education completed

- Matric
- One or more years of tertiary institution, no degree
- Degree or diploma
- Post graduate qualification

**Please read each statement carefully and respond to all items. For each statement, please type “X” on the number that most closely matches your view of the opinions stated.**

<b>Young adults are defined as aged between 16 and 24</b>		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
5.	Young adults in my family are open and honest in dealing with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	In general, the young adults in my family consider my needs and wishes as important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The young adults in my family would not do anything against my interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I'm more likely to accept young adults' opinions on mobile internet usage than people in my own age group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
9.	In general, young adults in my family are a good source of information on mobile internet than people in my generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	In general, young adults in my family are often a step ahead of my generation in terms of using mobile internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Relative to my generation, young adults in my family often give others advice and suggestions regarding mobile internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Opinions of young adults in my family on mobile internet seem to count with me and my generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	People I know in my generation intend to use/use mobile internet based on what young adults in their families told them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Relative to young adults in my family, I agree that mobile internet increases my working effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
15. Similar to young adults in my family, I would not leave home without my mobile phone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Relative to young adults in my family, I acknowledge that mobile internet an essential part of my lifestyle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Similar to young adults in my family, I use mobile internet as the primary source of information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Relative to other influences, I would consider using mobile internet if the young adults in my family personally recommended it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	No influence	Small influence	Uncertain	Major influence	Strongest influence
19. What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me to use mobile internet more?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me that mobile internet is an important tool?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. What level of influence do young adults in my family have in persuading me to start thinking about mobile internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. What level of influence do young adults in my family have compared to other family members in evaluating a medium such as mobile internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. What level of influence do young adults in my family have in making the final decision to use mobile internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

