

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

This chapter highlights the theories and concepts used in this research and also the conceptualization of some terminologies in order to bring clarity in the context of this study.

2.1 Conceptualization

Conceptualization is the pattern of particularizing the intention of the researcher when using certain terminology or words in a given context. It means to define or specify what the researchers mean and don't mean by the terms they use in their work and may refer to a word or set of events as well as ideas denoted by the words (Sequeira 2014, 5). Conceptualization involves processes which are identifiable or describable and can be employed in the organization of thinking that can also be presented to others. Conceptualization is the transmission or encoding of conceptual information, internal depiction of linguistic knowledge which could vary according to the parameter of universality across cultures or communities (Nuyts & Pederson, 1999). In this chapter, some terminologies that may have multiple implications in various disciplines will be conceptualized in order to bring context specific clarity.

2.1.1 Zeitgeist

Zeitgeist – basically “spirit of the times” (Krause 2019, 1) – held together by the logic of a set of thoughts (ibid) as a concept was not only undefined but is relatively indefinable, it had been questioned, and in order to develop an evidently useful definition of zeitgeist various attempt had been made (Hyman and Shephard 1980, 227) as its genealogy is philosophical and literary (Reinelt 2013, 90). Derived from Latin word *genius saeculi*, *zeitgeist* a loan translation of German (*Geist der Zeit/ Geit der Zeiten*) and French (*l'esprit du siècle*) its equivalent in English is “spirit of the times” (Oergel 2019, 3). According to Boring (1955, 106) zeitgeist is a term that belongs to the language of dualism, the definition of which is formally physicalistic – an ambiguous supersoul permeating and governing the immortal body of society; the climate of opinion at a given time that affects the intellect which is yet forever being altered. Historical disciplines have inclined towards allocating any one of the specific time period to zeitgeist caused by forms of authority pressure between Historicism, Platonic and Neo-platonic, rationalized with regard to timeless truth (Krause 2019, 4). Considered by Nettle (1968) as a

conceptual variable, a hypothesis for a form that might be evident in a particular setting or not (ibid). In terms of Hegelian concepts, the notion of zeitgeist is an existence which is logical and provable through empirical observation in modern sciences that depicts a dynamic where ideas can be conveniently disseminated and as a social dynamic, it was often associated with *Volkgeist* or national spirit where the “time” is manifested by mankind and through them identity is ascribed (Oergel 2019, 3). In spite of its diverse implication, this study will consider *zeitgeist to be a dominating entity that has been enveloping the entire sphere of Mizo society yet is still likely to be ignored or unaccepted by certain portion of the population.*

2.1.2 Worldview

Introduced by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), worldview is a term translated from German *Weltanschauung*, temporarily to mean a set of beliefs underpinning all human thought and deed (Sire 2015, 23). Considerable focus is first given by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) who said that worldview is the fundamental perspective from which one addresses every issue of life (ibid). Worldview is an adherence, an essential inclination of the heart, that can be expressed as a tale or postulation (supposition which might be genuine or not) that an individual holds (knowingly as well as unknowingly, constantly or occasionally) regarding the fundamental composition of reality, and that renders the foundation where human live and move and have their being (Sire 2015, 19). A worldview can be a multidimensional intellectual set of symbols for positioning wilful behaviour that has range of standard, ingeniousness, appraisal, identity, and allegiance (Neville 2009, 242). It is not merely an accumulation of isolated, autonomous, unrelated beliefs, but system of beliefs that are intertwined or interconnected system of beliefs (Dewitt 2018, 26). Underhill (2011, 7) also stated that worldviews bear a resemblance to Heraclitus’s river where one can never bathe two times and can never be pinned down. Just like the river flows along and keeps changing so people age and change. Similarly, however permeative and all-embracing worldviews may be, believing that worldviews exist outside the unsteady minds of men and women would be a mistake. According to Nash (1992, 11) worldview is a conscious or unconscious arrangements or accommodation of everything we believe, the conceptual scheme by which we explain and evaluate reality. He also said that in order to enhance self understanding, attaining consciousness of our worldview is a crucial thing one can do and perceptiveness into the worldviews of others is important to understand of what makes them tick. Hiebert (2005, 14)

defined worldview as “vital reasonable, emotive, and analytical assumptions that people make regarding the essence of things, and the way life is ordered; how reality is perceived by individuals in a community and the direction they have about reality of their own life. He also mentioned Michael Kearney who framed worldview of individuals as “how they look at reality – consisting of basic assumptions and images that provide a more or less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world”. The belief or value system, that is to say the culture of a given context can have a significant influence on the interpretations things and events by people (Barczewska, Wileczek, and Barańska 2016, 6). Alex Honneth (1998) cited by Note et.al, (2009, 118) posited self identity as the basis of everyone’s worldview, experiences as the base of all moral struggles against all kinds of injustices. He also claimed that receiving social approval from significant others brings awareness of self-respect and integrity, so in order to maintain self-respect throughout life we must perpetually look for the assurance of that fundamental acceptance upon which our infantile survival seemed to depend. Being an inquisitive creature, man is endlessly trying to comprehend and make sense of his existence and the world he lives in, he often tries to understand and explain things around him, accordingly, the researcher considers ***worldview to be a metaphor or a reality that shapes how individuals comprehend their macrocosm from the understanding of the established set of belief while accumulating the perpetually evolving ideas and concepts which could help them create a microcosm of their own.*** This study will try to look into how the internet shapes the worldview of the people in Mizoram taken at individual level and also the way they relate to the worldviews of others.

As Honneth considers components of identity to be the main ingredient of a person’s worldview, it is also important to take identity into consideration. The concept of identity is complex and can be multiple and can be constructed as it provides existential meaning to people as Perumal (2013, Ch. 1) said “the meaning of the term is also as varied as different subjects in the social science are”. Olson (2017) wrote that it is the identity that tackles queries that arise about oneself by virtue of us being people that have the capability to try out and act on the awareness of who we are, having continuity and sameness (Levesque, 2011). Identity is flexible, changeable and men are very proficient in diversifying their self-presentation suitably (Hartley et.al., 2013) and the perception of identity differ across various disciplines that oftentimes makes the concept of identity difficult to define (Vignoles, 2017). Definition of identity originates primarily from the work of psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s (Fearon 1999, 35) who defined it as “a sense, an attitude, a resolution and so on.” Upreti (2017, 54)

also wrote that identity simply is “one’s sense of self” and that personal identity develops with the changes in the brain of an individual. Social identity also plays a crucial role in forming or shaping an individual’s identity. Tajfel defined social identity in 1978 as “an individual’s self-concept which originates from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups), collectively with the value and emotional importance attached to that membership” (Nesje 2009, 4). Personal identity consciousness according to Erikson (1994, 22) is based on two concurrent observations: “the immediate perception of one’s selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one’s sameness and continuity.” Marcia (1980, 109) proposed some other way of understanding identity: as a “self-form – an internal self-constructed, impulsive organization of drives, capabilities, beliefs, and individual history” begins at infancy with the distinction of self-object and get to its ultimate stage at old age with the unification of self-mankind. Valencia (2017, 1) also said that an individual’s personal identity is his/her view of oneself that develops over the duration of lifetime. Sedikides & Gregg (2008, 102) quoted William James who defined “self” as an object of awareness – an existential “me” consisting of ego-relevant interests with some abstract principle of identity and not only a metaphysical “I”. In online world, self-identity has become an identity proposed onto a person by popular culture and is not necessarily a reflection of who they really are, which is no longer self-identity – meaning derived from the self. Contemporary society has self-identity as a fundamental project nowadays which is a reflexive achievement and the narrative of which needs shaping, alteration and reflexive sustenance according to the social and global circumstances dynamics (Berger and Ezzy 2009, 501). Through adaptation to specific social environments, identity construction is perpetually and irresistibly shaped and reshaped (Swart, 2018). Ochs (2009, 458) believed that the way a person opts to become aware of oneself is significant to his/her existence as being serious about personal questions helps the task of declaring or communicating worldview as a person’s perception about reality helps create reality for him/her. She also talked about *creative freedom* by which she meant not only to move away from obstacles or make choice from neither the existing alternatives nor how to respond to the environment but to co-create our surroundings. According to her, reality existed before human existence, hence, people do not create reality nor discover but co-create it. Ohler (2010, 49) also wrote that emergence of cyberspace takes us to the realm of identity invention where the ability to obscure user’s presence and hide real life identities allows re-conceptualization of “the self” allowing us to try on our customized ‘new selves’.

2.1.3 Merging worldview with the internet

Structures within news articles, films and social media informations carry worldviews which can be exclusive as they tell certain stories (Jensen 2002, 12). Khudaiberganova & Abdalova (2021, 96) wrote that excessive screen engagement can lead to visual stress, even to the development of myopia and several other psychological problems. They believe that internet use often brings difficulties in physical communication, experience of dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, complexities, shyness and several other possible problems while offering a virtual life beyond a real life where an individual can become anyone they wish to be. They opined that internet obsession pervades all levels of users' reality resulting in them behaving, thinking and living differently as internet aggravates character traits they dislike while enabling them to acquire new ones that help them escape from reality by changing their identity. Shaw & Linebarger (2008, 343) also mentioned that internet opens an unusual space for cross – cultural connection that enables the accumulation of multicultural worldview as it helps users learn the dynamics of other cultures in an open ended manner. They opined that users develop a better understanding of oneself and also become more familiar with diverse cultures as they learn to live the cultural experiences of others through the internet. On the other hand, Wood & Douglas (2015, 4) wrote that online communication can possibly be helpful for acquiring insight about the worldview and assumptions of other proponents as the internet has become a reservoir of enormous amount of persuasive communications yet making people less likely to make illation regarding worldviews of others as they are more interested in projecting theirs. Therefore, cyberspace renders users the space to reconstruct their online identity as per their preferences through a conscious decision made by individuals to disclose an image for others to reflect upon (Swart, 2018). Since worldview is not a static entity, this study will also look at how it is altered by the existence of internet.

2.1.4 Communication behaviour

As an essential part of social behaviour, communication often has an effect on an individual's fitness (Naguib & Price 2013, 951). Body movement as communication has been a comprehensive and continuing interest since 'natural languages' like emotional expression and gesture provided the foundation for the more refined and superficial verbal symbolic communication (Gordon et. al. 2018, 83). According to Birdwhistell, nonverbal communicatory tools are acquired behaviours imparted to kids to show the patterned inter-reliance of human beings, hence, in order to prove that nonverbal communication is a learned

behaviour that can be recognized and predictable further examination is required (Waiflein 2013, 4). Engagement in a situation or the level of awareness of a situation and the perception of problem solution to certain situation could result in active or passive communication (Mazzei 2010, 223). Dobrikova (2019, 595) stated that communication is behaviour from psychological point of view and that “communication-behavior” connection creates a complicated and questionable model which operates within a context and is greatly depending on its constituents. Korneeva (2018, 2) wrote that cultural and national identity along with linguistic competence and the ability to understand and decode the meaning of a language characterize communication behaviour as she mentioned Sternin (2000) who stated that culture and communicative experience is reflected in an individual’s norm of communicative behaviour.

In this study, communication behaviour will be considered as *the way individuals express themselves as well as their response and reaction to any statement or argument made by others – be it verbal or non-verbal, conveyed through any kind of communication channels*. Conducting an empirical study of communication behaviour can be quite complex as Krauss et. al (1996, 44) opined that due to differences in the intentions of the participants and the perceptions of the observers, interpretations derived can be ambiguous. Hence, this study will look precisely at the “perceived” difference in communication behaviour of the digital immigrants in Mizoram.

2.1.5 Understanding the dichotomy of digital natives and digital immigrants

Since the population of this study is broadly divided into digital natives and digital immigrants, it becomes necessary to comprehend the two terminologies. Marc Prensky declared the “native speakers” of the digital language of computers, video games and the internet as digital natives. Those who have adopted new technology at later point in their life and are not born into digital world, from 1980 and onwards (Zenios & Ioannou, 2018) are digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives are expected to be inherently technology savvy while the immigrants are assumed to struggle or have difficulty in accepting new technology (Wang et.al, 2013). Growing up in an era of continuing technological progress and widely drenched in the atmosphere of media, digital natives or millennials are quite proficient at using the digital devices (Rambocas & Arjoon, 2012).

Bayne & Ross (2007) argued that this over simplistic reduction to raw binary opposition – native and immigrant requires a serious critique where the role of a teacher is marginalized; this understanding needs to be studied in diversity rather than dichotomy. In its place of a rigid dichotomy, this difference can be conceptualized as a continuum by progressing towards digital fluency (Wang et.al, 2013) as digital competency surpasses the generational gap defined by the distinction between immigrants and natives (Thomas, 2011). The original concept of digital natives and digital immigrants by Mark Prensky cannot be applied in Mizoram as he considered those who are born on or after 1980 to be digital natives. The internet entered the state only by the late 1990s where the general public started accessing it by the early 2000s. Hence, context specific modification will be made in this study as we consider people who are born on or before the year 2000 as digital immigrants and those born after 2000 as digital natives. The consideration of digital natives and digital immigrants will apply only to those born before and after the internet but will not reckon the discrimination or assumption made about them, for instance, the natives as “the know it all of digital technology” and the immigrants as “the laggards who have missed out a lot of things” only because they were born in a certain period of time. Rather, we will also acknowledge the significance of the immigrants as they witnessed the growth and development of internet and the related technological advancements, they have the privilege of being able to note the difference in the two era – before and after the existence of internet.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theories evolve and develop after going through tests conducted by researchers over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2014). They can be generated as the outcome of a study or used as lens to look into certain phenomenon. Therefore, let us look into the theories and concepts that are the building blocks of this research.

2.2.1 Media Dependency Theory

With Uses and Gratification theory as its parent, Media Dependency Theory postulated that it is worthwhile to take into account the entire social structure within which the media function and not only focus at the individual level to assess the media effects. Individuals have the tendency to depend more on mass media if it helps them fulfil their everyday goals as they get informational resources and this dependency can also give more power to mass media in

affecting the cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of the users (Kim 2020, 5). The focus of Uses and Gratifications theory lies in where media users go to satisfy their needs while Media Dependency stress on why users choose certain medium to accomplish their goal which can be determined by macro as well as social psychological factors of individuals (Sun et.al 2008, 412). A prolonged use of the media causes a close relation of dependence in the audience. The primary blueprint of this theory was put forward in an article “Information Perspective” by Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach in 1974 (Kim, 2020). Proposed by Ball-Rockeach and DeFleur in 1976, this theory is about the conditional effects of mass media on the person using it where ‘dependency’ denotes the reciprocal relationships among individuals, mass media and the social system (Kim & Jung 2017, 1460). They also believed that the concept of dependency has a meaningful application with a wide range of new and old media as individuals form dependency relationships with them where the power of mass media declines while the power of the recently emerging forms of media is increasing. Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur (1976) defined dependency as “*a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party*”. Three types of dependency were mentioned where the first one is derived from the desire to comprehend one’s social world, the second arises from the requirement to act satisfactorily and effectively in that social world and the third kind of dependency is found on the need for fantasy-escape from every day problems and tensions. Dependency should not be misconceived as a pathological condition that is connected to excessive use of media (or addiction) but must be better comprehended as the functional relationship between individuals and mass media (Kim 2020, 5).

The dependency on media is believed to be the product of the sociocultural system. When people make use of media resources, social understanding dependency is developed in order to understand and interpret people, events, culture and the environment in a better way. When individuals use media relations to enhance their capacities and construct their personal belief system, behaviour and personalities, self-understanding dependency is also generated. This theory attempts to elucidate the effects that media messages may have on individual’s beliefs and their behaviour when exposed to media content. In Media Dependency Theory, ‘attaining personal goals’ is the key to explain the time and reason for individuals’ media exposure to media that eventually have an effect on their beliefs and behaviour. Those who are intensely engaged in processing media information are susceptible to be affected more by their media content exposure. The dependency in this theory is a linkage of interdependence where the

social system and the media depend on each other to thrive and achieve their goals. Patwardhan & Yang (2003) believed that from the standpoint of this theory, the internet's potential to meet individuals' goals may have influenced users' online activities and media dependency intensity depends on the supposed usefulness of the media in meeting goals.

Ho, Liao & Rosenthal (2015, 83) stated that this theory has multiple levels of analysis where the macro level refers to structural dependency relations between the mass media, audiences and other social systems and the micro level of dependency is where the achievement of the goals and needs of individuals depends on the information resources dominated by the social and media institutions hence, media dependency has an asymmetrical effect. Various factors can increase individuals' dependence on the media, nevertheless, only few studies at the individual level of media dependency have pondered on the increasing effects on individuals's attitudes and behaviour. Sun et.al (2008) opined that analyzing individuals' internet use augmented the understanding of user-internet relationship. Ognyanova (2015, 5) asserted that Media Dependency Theory seems to side with social constructivism more than technological determinism with respect to online media where dependency relations become more diverse as individuals become both producer and consumer of information. During the 1960s, the emphasis of media effect theories leaned towards a more moderate ones where media studies focused more on micro level psychological processes than on the macro level (Kim 2020, 2). He added that the most important concept in this theory is individual's media dependency relationship. Sun et.al (2008, 412) also contended that it is sensible to define internet dependency as a reflection of individuals' reliance on the internet to achieve their goals. Therefore, this research will also emphasize more on the micro level as it looks at the level of internet dependency among Mizo internet users as Riffe, Lacy & Varouhakis (2008) also considered the key to fully grasp the Media Dependency Theory in digital media aspect is to look at the variations on people's dependency on the internet and the way they evaluate both conventional and new media for obtaining various types of information. This theory is used to look at the level of internet dependency in among the respondents.

2.2.2 Social Learning Theory

Based on the proposition that learning happens through interactions with others in a social context, Social Learning Theory (SLT) argued that people develop behaviours by observing the behaviour of others – individuals tend to assimilate and imitate behaviour, especially when the experience is positive or rewarding (Nabavi 2012, 5). SLT is a family of learning theories

and not just a solo theory that tries to elucidate behaviour in terms of the behaviourist credo (Wren 1982, 410). Bandura (1977) noted that behaviour is the outcome of interaction of individuals and situations and not only a single factor can be the determinant of variations in behaviour. Media is considered to facilitate the construct of modelling as it captures people's attention in order to inculcate the modeled behaviours in their lives to make it a part of them as people can see and acquire multiple styles of conduct from their homes. To describe the interactive associations among individuals and their environment influencing behaviour, Bandura used the term reciprocal determinism (Wei & Zhang, 2008).

Grusec (1992) wrote that Bandura's theory is primarily concerned with the way individuals function cognitively on their social experiences and how these functions influence their development and behaviour where 'personality' is the outcome of learning experience but on the other hand, individuals' personality also determines their experiences. She also mentioned that through various social experiences, human beings are considered to abstract and integrate informations through which they mentally represent themselves and their environment. The early work of Bandura opined a mere observation of model to be sufficient for the occurrence of an imitative behaviour but he further added that internal factor such as attention and retention entailing verbal or non-verbal cues are also important (Wren 1982, 414). In Social Learning Theory, the characteristics of an environment to which an individual is exposed can be determined by his/her behaviour and this behaviour can in turn be altered by that environment as well. The fundamental supposition is that behaviour is an outcome of individual and environmental factors where human behaviour is acquired in a social context through interaction as well as observation of others (Wei & Zhang, 2008). This theory has made an important contribution to a micro understanding of pro-social and eccentric behaviour (Kytte, 1978) and also laid a foundation for better understanding of individuals' technology acceptance behaviour.

Behaviours are shaped through amalgamation of numerous activities of varying origins and are not formed by unitary patterns (Bandura, 1977) and can also be learned by having direct experience as well as observation of others. Liu and San (2006) believed that in exhibiting the information technology diffusion's speed, factors affecting social learning play a very crucial role as social learning is of pragmatic use. Social Learning Theory posits that learning takes place through observation, imitation and modelling where learning may not necessarily result in behaviour modification (Nabavi 2012, 6). He also noted that the process of learning is

termed as modelling and the people who are observed are called models. Modelling is a vital aspect of learning as most behaviours are learned intentionally or unknowingly through the influence of examples and some complex (or novel) behaviours can be acquired only through model's influence (Bandura & Walters 1977, 6). SLT argues that there is no guarantee in reproducing an observed act but it depends on the dedication of individuals towards learning new skills and knowledge (Wei & Zhang, 2008). Internet knowledge and internet experience are also believed to be the element within the scope of social learning theory. So, this study will look at whether a new behaviour is acquired or perceived to be acquired by the internet users of Mizoram as they incorporate the internet into their daily lives.

2.2.3 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

First published in 1962, Everett Rogers's Diffusion of Innovation theory classifies people depending on their possibility to adopt technology and identified various stages of adoption. This theory tries to define how the public adopt innovations in a given time and place where this innovation according to Rogers can be an idea, behaviour, knowledge or any physical object that is new to its users or receivers (Robinson, 2009). Rogers (1983) who popularised this theory synonymously used innovations and technology. The internet – a technology or innovation, reaching Mizoram in the early 2000s is yet a new phenomenon in the field of research, this study will also look at the stages of adoption among the people. Valente & Davis (1999) mentioned that adoption behaviour is greatly influenced by interpersonal contacts along with many other factors. As long as it is adopted by individuals, this theory can also be applied to a wide range of innovations such as commercial products, ideologies, culture attributes and so on (Brown, 1969). This adoption activity cannot be understood completely without taking into account the social system at a given point (Min et.al, 2021). A 'social system' in this theory is a set of interconnected components involved in a joint problem solving to fulfill a common goal (Zhang et.al., 2015). Diffusion is the process of communicating an innovation among the members of a social system through certain channels over a period of time (Rambocas & Arjoon, 2012). Five attributes of innovation – compatibility, complexity, observability, relative advantages and trialability are the defining factors of adoption of which Davis (1989) stated that ease of use of the new invention would necessitate less physical and mental effort (ibid).

Nor, Pearson & Ahmad (2010) found in their study that these attributes significantly affect users' attitude toward internet banking. Sahin (2006, 14) also believed this theory to be most

applicable for investigating technology adoption in higher education and educational environments. Rogers classified adopters into five categories: *innovators* – those who initiate a technology or innovation, *early adopters* – the first ones adopt them, *early majority* – large number of people who utilise an innovation soon after it is available, *late majority* – who adopt only after seeing the verdict of others’ experiences and *laggards* – who are skeptical to try out new things (García-Avilés, 2020). Each group varies as per the rate of adopting the new technology (Rambocas & Arjoon, 2012). As average people are reluctant to take risk, the uncertainty about usage of some inventions can result in delay of the decision to test which is greatly shaped by the characteristics of a person and promoting diffusion of innovation is a difficult business in homophilous systems (Orr, 2003). Uncertainty is a big hindrance to the adoption of innovations. If there is an option of partial trial for an innovation, the adoption process is quicker and personal innovation decision can also be transformed by group influence when it comes to adoption of an innovation (Sahin, 2016). The rate of adoption is often affected by the receiver’s perceptions of the attributes and not the change agents or experts’ classification of the attributes (Rogers et.al 2008, 209).

Galagedarage & Salman (2015) found a strong negative relationship between internet adoption and infrastructural facilities, computer skills and affordability and adopter characteristics while there is a positive relationship between technology characteristics and internet adoption. Some critics argued that this theory does not show the relationship between the attitude of users and their acceptance/rejection of an innovation and there is no clearcut association between decision process and the characteristics of innovation Kiwanuka (2015, 41). Therefore, this study will employ this theory to look precisely at the stages of adoption of internet technology by various users in Mizoram. Since personal or self evaluation will be the determining factor for identifying such stages, the stages considered may also be slightly different if evaluation is done by an external observer. It will also be interesting to see the self-categorization of the participants into one of the five categories of adopters.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Technological Determinism vs. Social Determinism

The dichotomy of these concepts will be used to look at the participants’ perspective on whether technology or society is dominating their course of life. Technological or socio-

cultural are the two factors on which the argument over technology and society typically emphasize (Chandler, 2012) and according to technological determinism, technology determines the entire form of society. Explanations of technological determinism, for various reasons, lay emphasis on the significance of technology to social change, but also differ in the matter of why and how technology is very powerful; apparatus and associated subhuman powers by some means function as the autonomous 'agencies of history' (Bimber, 1990). Technology is followed by cultural and social change. The acknowledgement of apprehending very little about the cultural factors that bring about technology does not belittle its role yet brings attention to the past when technology is undoubtedly a major historical force (Smith & Marx, 1994). Even though the term technological determinism, a 'doctrine of historical or causal primacy (Chandler, 2012)' was coined by American sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen, Karl Marx is considered by many as a proponent of technological determinism because of his famous line, '*The handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist*' in his work *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) which for MacKenzie & Wajcman (1999) is quite memorable and apt yet probably historically inaccurate while some apologists denied Marx as a technological determinist as Bimber (1990) wrote, "For Marx, technology is in the definitive service of humanity" while Yoo (2014) also wrote that the initial observers debated that technology is a force of nature that cannot be controlled or stopped.

On the other hand Kline & Pinch (1999) posited the importance of laying emphasis not only on how technology is shaped by social groups but also the way the identities of social groups are created in the procedure (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999). Social Shaping of Technology (SST) studies argued that technology is a social product, formed by the conditions of its construction and practice and is not developed according to an internal technical logic but a series of 'social' factors affect which selections are made regarding content and social implications of technology (Williams & Edge, 1996.) MacKenzie & Wajcman (1999), advocates of Social Shaping of Technology opined that it is difficult to fully comprehend technology in isolation, but solely in their context, specifically their systemic context while technological determinism viewed technology as an isolated sphere, emerging and evolving independently of society, having its autonomous logic and have an impact on society. These two arguments will be used to see the participants' view on whether society or technology is the dominant force among Mizo internet users. In this study, Social Shaping of Technology

will be considered as a connotation of Social Determinism. The concept of Cultural Lag by William Fielding Ogburn (1922) can also be relevant with these two contrasting ideas where technological changes (material culture) develop faster than society (immaterial) can process such changes.

2.3.2 Convergence Culture

Put forward by Henry Jenkins (2006), Convergence Culture depicts a change in how people consider their relations to media, a shift in the way people relate with the popular culture, how they learn things, work, take part in political process and connect with each other across the globe. He opined that convergence is the movement of information over multiple media platforms where media industries and the translocating behaviour of their audiences cooperates. By convergence, he does not mean absolute stability or amalgamation but a steadfast force for integration which is ever vigorous tension with change. Jenkins (2006) also noted that convergence is a process and not a final goal and is not something that will take place someday when there are enough bandwidth as each medium, old and new, would be forced to co-exist with each other. Since media convergence is more than a mere technological shift, it also reshapes the association between technologies and audiences as well. The possibility of participation is increased by media convergence allowing greater access to the production as well as circulation of culture as the competency of the broadcast networks can now join forces with the social networks' power (Navarro, 2010). According to Jenkins, convergence happens inside the brains of the consumers by means of their social interactions with others, he did not intend to imply displacement of traditional literacy with new media literacies but to embrace the significant ones from the new media while retaining what is successful and effective from the old media (ibid). Kocher (2008) wrote that Jenkins mentioned three key concepts – Convergence Culture, Participatory Culture and Collective Intelligence where convergence is the diverse methods used for developing and delivering media content, including collaboration among the varying media organizations. Participatory culture refers to a culture in which everyone considers their involvement in something to be significant and there is some kind of social connection among the members (Wang 2018, 69) while collective intelligence is the way of exchanging resources, knowledge and skills among the consumers.

Jenkins expressed the increasing impracticality of desiring a 'single task only' device when every gadget is equipped with better and multifunction features. The term convergence has

been positioned as an elucidation of new synergy, also a horizontal realignment where technological hybridity has amalgamated multiple media into one bringing a new media aesthetic (Hay & Couldry 2011, 473). The traditional media producers no longer have the upper hand when it comes to content creation as the consumers enjoy the same privilege of being the producers or content creators. The crux of convergence culture is that since consumers have already engaged with the existing technologies to disperse and redevelop media text as per their own reasons, 'participation' becomes a phenomenon the media industries should undertake (Driscoll & Gregg 2011, 574). The trailblazing interactivity and convergence of all the preceding analogue media in the digital world with the capability of linking multiple contents and individuals may answer why internet users are susceptible to dependency (teWildt, 2011). Convergence culture is tossing media into fluidity as it expands opportunities for the common people to react to the mass media (Jenkins, 2014). The concept of Convergence Culture not only plays a significant role in this study but is also describing the nature of the society that Mizo internet users are plunging into. With media in the hands of the people, this study will look at the relevance of convergence culture and its impact on Mizo culture as well.

2.3.3 Media as 'an extension of self' induces hyperreality

All media are the extensions of the human senses as they fasten charges on an individuals' energies and no society is immune to the influence of new technologies or extensions – such immunity can perhaps be provided by art (McLuhan, 1964). Fen (1969, 166) wrote that even as the performance of a computer CPU is expressed through its monitor, electric media externalize our central nervous system as well as extend our thought process and consciousness is no more a private affair once it is externalised. Rogers (2000) retrieved the old letters exchanged between Marshall McLuhan and Edward T. Hall where he noted through their communication that Hall had influenced McLuhan in conceiving the idea of extensions of man. He further mentioned that a better way to say the medium is the message is to tell that technology as an extension of man creates a new environment in which repetition is considered to be a kind of sensory deprivation beyond an individual's level of consciousness. Television reduced the world into what Marshall McLuhan called 'global village' (Naughton, 2000) determining the form of life, yet, digital devices and smartphones are becoming the "extensions of man" more in the 21st Century than in the 1960s when McLuhan coined the term as these technologies have great impact on human behaviour, thinking and way of living

(Kuss, 2017). From a mere instrument of communication, mobile devices have transformed to being an extension of the users themselves (Le, 2020). Just as the real is dead for Baudrillard and never existed but is only a staging simulation (Introna, 1997), the notion of reality among the internet users is greatly impacted by their technological reliance where reality is disintegrated into hyperrealism, the fastidious reproduction of the real.

Patra (2018, 183) argued reality to be as real as an individual's own experience which could also be as neutral as somebody's interpretation of others' experience even as society is governed by mediated technologies. He also wondered whether the known reality is only a constructed reality that has multiple meanings; with the coming of new media, signs, images and symbols become the reality in themselves becoming more real than the real and no less authentic than the original. Hyperreality, a hypothetical concept, is something that doesn't literally exist but may seem quite intense and realistic even to the point of confusing someone to not be able to discern what is real and what is not (Barroso, 2019). In hyperreal world, everything is therefore a simulation, a reproduction already – where virtual conduct can be used for personal as well as social transformation without physical reality but based on intangible (virtual) experience (Swart, 2018). Walter Benjamin and Marshall McLuhan perceived the real message (ultimatum) to be ascribed to reproduction itself where the social conclusiveness is submerged in seriality – as simulacra outdo history (McMurray, 2016). Lambert et. al. (2023) asserted that what used to be considered as an extension of self at one point is now consuming us as we have become slaves to a dopamine hit with a temporary dissociation from reality. Hence, this study also tries to look at how 'reality' or the understanding of reality is being distorted, represented or constructed among Mizo internet users with smartphones as an extension of themselves.

2.3.4 Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT/UTAUT2)

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) was put forward by Venkatesh et.al (2003) (Ramirez-Correa et al., 2019) by revising, mapping and integrating constructs (Tamilmani, 2017) which comprises of eight models: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the combined TAM and TPB Model, The Motivational Model, The Theory of Reasoned Action, The Model of PC utilization, the Innovation Diffusion Theory, and the Social Cognitive Theory (Martinez & McAndrews, 2022). The primary authors of this theory mathematically demonstrated their results in order to validate them empirically but researchers have also employed this theory qualitatively through

the years for a deeper understanding of the factors affecting users' technology acceptance (Kiwauka 2015, 42). This accumulation of several research efforts described in different models and theories of Technology Acceptance is considered as an attempt to unify terminology of variables of different models and theories in Technology Acceptance (Ahmad, 2014). Built as a framework to study the method of understanding and accepting new technologies by users, how users can use, and what effect could continuing use have, it also tries to define that certain factors such as usefulness, ease of use, complexity, and social influence can affect the users' choice and use of technology (Momani, 2020). The modification of UTAUT modification (i.e, UTAUT2) added the three additional constructs, namely – hedonic motive, cost/perceived value and habit which are moderated by age, gender and experience and emphasize more on the private user segment, the behaviour along with consumer's technology acceptance to attain broader generalizability while, UTAUT was originally designed to study technology in organizational settings (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2021). The three added variables: hedonic motivation, price/value and habit play an important role in the use of new technologies by consumers (Arenas et.al, 2015). There has been an enormous increase during the last few years in the number of studies that use UTAUT2 in various context of technology adoption (Tamilmani et.al, 2017). UTAUT2 is an essential framework which plays an important role for the improvement and understanding of the adoption process of various technological phenomena such as mobile banking (Farzin, et.al, 2021). Even though UTAUT has the highest clarifying capabilities for user intentions and usage behaviours among the existing models the ability of UTAUT2 is better than UTAUT to interpret users' adoption behaviour (Wu, et.al, 2022). This concept will help this study in understanding the factors affecting technology adoption among Mizo internet users.