

Digital Inclusion: The Challenges

**A thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements of the
University of Greenwich for the Degree of Doctorate in Education**

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DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of Doctorate of Education being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my known investigation, except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another's work.

Signed by Student

Signed by Supervisor

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In memory of

Herbert Emelonye

without whom I would not have started on this journey

Herbert Emelonye was a colleague and a friend. With his encouragement we commenced the EdD programme together in 2001 and it was his support and belief in me in the early days that persuaded me to continue. Unfortunately, half way through our first year Herbert died suddenly of a heart attack and it is his memory that has given me the determination to complete this for both of us.

EPIGRAPH

... life can only be known by a living being, by inner experience. No matter how exact measurement may be, it can never give us an experience of life, for life cannot be weighed and measured on a physical scale.

Nesfield-Cookson, B., (1987) William Blake: Prophet of Universal Brotherhood. London: Crucible

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated attitudes and behaviours of socially excluded individuals as they engage with further learning through digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The study specifically explored the impact of socio-personal attitudinal and behavioural factors that may impede participation.

The research was concentrated in a South East London borough and based within a successful joint initiative between a local authority and third sector organisations. This unique partnership, of over 25 centres, provided access to the hardest to reach groups in the deprived communities of the borough. A number of case studies have been included that give a flavour of the poignant journeys of socially excluded individuals.

Past research in this area has been mainly limited to the investigation of economic barriers. The principal focus of this study is Ajzen's social psychological Theory of Planned Behaviour (TpB) which was concerned with localised social determinants of the individual. Research data was collected through questionnaires based on TpB and the raw data derived from these were statistically analysed using inferential statistics, chi-square (χ^2) on SPSS. In addition, a number of interviews were also carried out to gain further insight into the broad perceptions of the individuals. Interview transcripts were analysed and two emergent themes identified: attitude and behaviour.

The statistical analysis revealed that latent experiences and perception played a vital role in individuals' life choices. These provide the foundation of the socio-personal factors that impact on socially excluded adults and influence their attitudes, behaviour and decision making process. In this study these have been shown to have an impact on attitudes towards any sort of learning/training including IT skills. The combination of poor experiences of school, no/low academic achievement, low self-esteem and confidence, along with a fear of failure has led to lives of worklessness or a continuous cycle of low skilled, low-waged employment, vulnerable to economic change.

In addition, a minor analysis contributed through Bourdieu's concepts established that the individual's social class/group produced inherent issues of almost unconsciously accepted differentiation between the dominated and dominant classes.

CHAPTER 1

PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

1.1 Rationale

This study is the product of my work with local deprived communities¹ in South East London and in Further Education (FE), developing and delivering learning to socially excluded adults. As an educator specialising in Computing and Information Technology (IT)² for more than 18 years, my teaching experience is broad and spans across a wide range of IT activities and courses including first step activities enticing people back into learning, specialist skills training in software applications and hardware maintenance and networking. I have also taught on formal courses, for example, GCSE/AS/A2 and vocational NVQ/GNVQ/AVCE/HND through to Foundation Degree and BA/BSc levels. I have worked with a wide diversity

¹ The term “deprived communities” broadly refers to inequalities people experience in the areas they live in, with regard to access to social areas, for example, unemployment, low income, poor housing and inferior education.

² Throughout this paper Information Technology (IT) refers to and is used interchangeably with all forms of digital technologies, including for example, personal computer, software applications, internet, world-wide web, email, scanner and telecommunications.

of learners, for example, young adults who left secondary education with few or no qualifications looking for another chance, women returners looking for a fresh start after bringing up a family, those wishing to re-skill to better employment prospects, and the older non-employed persons interested in keeping abreast of new technologies. These learners have come from diverse backgrounds, including young underachievers, the unemployed, those on low income, lone parents, black and Asian minority ethnics (BAME), those with learning and/or physical disabilities, and the elderly. The common theme is that each person or each group is labelled as not belonging to, or not able to participate in, the broader skilled, employed and engaged society. Notwithstanding the number and diversity of learners coming into post-compulsory education, there continue to be large numbers of economically and socially excluded people that do not interact with any form of formal or informal learning, even when the provision is free.

Definition

The term “socially excluded” refers to those who do not participate in society and emphasises the multi-dimensional, multi-layered, and dynamic nature of the problem. Definitions of the concept originate from diverse ideological perspectives, but most share the following features:

- *Lack of participation.* Agencies differ over which aspects of society are important and where responsibility for non-participation resides. Most agree that exclusion is a matter of

degree, since individuals may be participating to a greater or lesser extent, and that it is relative to the society in question.

- *Multi-dimensional.* Social exclusion embraces income-poverty but is broader: other kinds of disadvantage which may or may not be connected to low income, such as unemployment and poor self-esteem, fall within its scope.
- *Dynamic.* The advent of dynamic analysis and a demand from policy makers to investigate cause as well as effect has generated an interest in the processes which led to exclusion and routes back into mainstream society.
- *Multi-layered.* Although it is individuals who suffer exclusion, the causes are recognised as operating at many levels: individual, household, community and institutional. (Political Dictionary: accessed 26/5/2009)³

This study is based within a Government initiative located in a South East London borough which provides socially excluded people with free opportunities to return to learning and gain new skills with and through digital technologies. The following provides information about the initiative.

1.2 Background: Greenwich UKonline Learning Partnership

The Greenwich UKonline Learning Partnership (GULP) was established at the beginning of 2003 as part of a Government initiative to provide free IT

³ This definition is consistent with both terminology used by central government and its application in professional practice

access and basic IT skills training in deprived areas near where people lived.⁴

In the preceding year, voluntary and community organisations⁵ in the borough had drafted 20 separate funding bids assisted by senior council officers which were delivered to the Government Office for London (GOL). The 20 bids were declined by the GOL and one collaborative joint bid was requested to include all the organisations. The one bid was accepted and the partnership between the local authority and the 19 voluntary and community organisations was formed. The local authority had responsibility to oversee the £2.5 million capital and revenue spend with audit trails and the required target outcomes: negotiating and agreeing accommodation, renovations, redecoration along with procurement of furniture, fixtures and fittings, hardware, software and connectivity across all local centres. In addition to these centres, the bid provided funding for a fully equipped computer bus with satellite broadband connectivity that would travel to areas in the borough that did not have a partnership centre nearby to act as a local centre. The bus was also to be used for outreach purposes to engage with the hardest to reach groups⁶ in the different communities and to attend local events to promote learning and skills opportunities through IT.

⁴ As referenced by Government policy and terminology

⁵ Voluntary and community organisations (VCO) also known as the 'third sector' are organisations that are non-profit making and are usually registered charities. These organisations are based in or near deprived communities and provide a range of facilities and functions to local socially excluded people/groups.

⁶ Hardest to reach groups refer to groups who do not or will not engage in initiatives that could change for life chances.

1.3 Learners

The people that use the service live in a South East London borough that has 10 of its 17 wards in the 10% most deprived areas in England (Greenwich Learning Provision 2008). The borough has the highest economic inactivity rate and highest level of claimants across London and across Britain as a whole (LSC 2006). The people that attend the centres experience a range of disadvantages that are social and economic, for example, no/low academic achievement, unemployed or in low paid employment, single parents, those with care responsibilities, BAME⁷ with language difficulties, the elderly, those that experience mental health issues, poor literacy skills and/or learning/physical disabilities, family difficulties and housing issues (this is not an exhaustive list). These people are reluctant to take part in learning mainly because of poor experiences of school and learning, and have not participated in any form of education and/or learning since leaving school.

The following Case Studies illustrate the background and progression of learners who have attended Greenwich Online (GO) centres. These show the impact that learning new IT skills has on those individuals who are seriously marginalised, both economically and socially, by improving both 'soft and hard outcomes'⁸. The true identities of the case study learners have not been disclosed.

⁷ BAME is abbreviation for Black and Asian Minority Ethnic

⁸ Soft outcomes refer to, for example, increased confidence, social participation and improved quality of life: these are difficult to quantify and involve long-term investment and personal attention. Hard outcomes refer to the measurable, for example, gaining qualifications and skills acquisition.

Case Study 1 describes the experience of a long-term unemployed white male who was on benefits.

Case Study 1 - Steve

Steve is a 47 year old man with a wife and three daughters. Steve said he had had bad experiences at school and gained no qualifications. He had been unemployed and on benefits for approximately 20 years and prior to that had had very low paid unskilled work. Steve has lived in one of the borough's most deprived communities all his life. He became an active community volunteer and became involved with one of our centres, he attended a number of informal IT activities where he discovered a way to begin to overcome his fear of learning. Steve has always had major problems with dyslexia, but he found that the computer actually helped him. He became proficient in the use of a variety of technologies. He progressed onto courses that helped with his volunteering in the community, although his fear of entering a formal classroom environment almost got the better of him, but with support he overcame his fears and anxieties.

Steve became very interested in digital photography and assisted with a parent and child project with the local primary school and GO whereby children took photographs of their community with their parents. The parents then developed their IT skills through the manipulation of the photographs to create Photo Story Presentations. These activities developed Steve's confidence and self-esteem; after a period of time he was encouraged to prepare his CV and applied for a number of jobs. He gained part-time employment at the local hospital and within the month was offered full-time employment - in his 3rd month he was offered promotion and now supervises other employees.

Case Study 2 gives a summary of a male immigrant and his experience of participating in learning new skills.

Case Study 2 – Ahmet

Ahmet, a learner in his late 40s, started the GO Introductory IT course with no previous experience at all of using computers. He was a recent immigrant who had not completed formal education in his own country and had not participated in any learning since around the age of 13. He was very nervous about learning and believed he would be impossible to teach. Ahmet also had language needs as English was not his first language. With extra help with his literacy he was able to cope with using the computer for everyday tasks fairly comfortably.

Ahmet attended GO at the Horn Park Community Centre regularly, which gave him the chance to practice more of what he had learned. This had, in turn, helped him gain confidence which led to him purchasing a computer to use at home on his own. He also managed, with some help and advice from the tutor, to add a printer and get connected to the Internet.

Ahmet was a very eager learner and enjoyed learning new topics as they related to problems he came across when using the computer on his own. He also used the Internet to search different things, for example, council service, job search and investigating new interests. Ahmet indicated that having the skills to access the internet and email has alleviated his isolation as he can communicate and gain information from his native country.

Case Study 3 describes the progress of a female learner who was new to this country who had not been in learning since a very young age in her own country.

Case Study 3 – Mary

Mary is 41 years old and came to the UK from Kenya in 2002. She had been attending the GO Open Space Centre since 2005 and now attends the GO Clockhouse Community Centre. Mary needed plenty of support and guidance over the years as she was not comfortable being around lots of people, but she slowly gained ability and confidence. During this time she achieved competent computer skills, as well as the Level 1 and 2 Certificates in Adult Literacy. Mary said:

“My computer skills are much better than when I began using the centre. My English skills have also improved a great deal such as my grammar and spellings and I intend to use these to help my children with their school work. I now intend to go onto college to learn skills in sales and marketing.”

Mary’s outlook on life has changed since she has become confident with IT and it has given her the self-belief she did not have before. She can see a new future for herself and her family.

Case Study 4 portrays a young woman who struggled in compulsory education and was reluctant to return to replicate the poor experiences.

Case Study 4 - Angel

Angel is in her late 20s and has learning difficulties which made her reluctant to participate in any kind of learning since leaving school. Angel warily joined GO and attended sessions at various GO centres for a number of years. She did not know how to use a computer before joining the classes and now knows how to use Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Internet and email proficiently, she has also achieved a level 2 qualification in Word Processing. Following a long period of time, Angel agreed to do an initial assessment for literacy and participated in a basic literacy course. She recently achieved the Level 1 Certificate in Adult Literacy. Angel said:

“It’s really great, I’ve done much better than when I was at school. I did not pass my GCSE English at school, or know how to use a computer and now it’s all changed. I am more confident and comfortable trying new things.”

Angel now volunteers as a receptionist for the Clockhouse Community Centre and has volunteered at a GO centre helping new learners. She recently plucked the courage up to apply for a job as a receptionist after many years of being unemployed and was shortlisted for interview.

These Case Studies describe some of the issues experienced by hard to reach groups and how digital inclusion can provide the potential to transform the way they live, learn and how it widens participation. IT has managed to empower and engage the people by providing an alternative platform to gain new skills that has the ability to change and enhance their personal, social and economic status.

1.4 Example Learning Provision at Centres

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG):	Initial Interview Diagnostics Individual Learning Plan Initial Assessments Courses/career information Progression opportunities
Courses:	Basic introduction to computing Word Processing Spreadsheets Databases Presentational Graphics Publisher Digital photography Email/Internet
Workshops:	Digital Photography Workshops Using Scanners Personalised T-Shirt transfers Personalised Greeting Cards Calendar Virtual Makeover Animation Video Workshops Online Shopping
E-Government/Council Services:	Council Housing List Driving Test Applications Find your local school Property prices Benefit information/entitlements Tax Returns Citizenship Vehicle Licensing
Accredited courses:	Literacy and Numeracy IT Level 1 (CLAIT and various) IT Level 2 (ECDL and various) ITQs
Employability:	CV Workshops Online Job Search Job Applications Personal Statements Interview Techniques Work Skills
Technical Support Information:	Computer Hardware Issues Software Issues Mobile Phones

The above table provides an example range of provision delivered through local centres. The offer is flexible according to the individual needs or wants of the learner. Some learners will be encouraged to engage for a specific course, others will start and progress through a number of different courses, then move onto further education, training and/or employment.

1.5 Centres

1.5.1 Static Centres

As indicated GO⁹ does not own any of the premises they deliver out of, but work in partnership with local organisations to offer access, learning and skills with and through digital technology. The static GO centres are based geographically within or close to the deprived communities across the borough. They are located in voluntary and community organisations that the local residents use for a variety of purposes and, as a result, they can engage in a place they know and feel comfortable in. The centres are diverse and the set up of the GO facilities vary from those with dedicated rooms to those with space within a communal area. At all centres, GO learning facilities have full broadband connectivity with high specification digital technologies. The number of PCs at centres range from 3-12, dependent on the accommodation provided and needs of the community.

⁹ GO is the abbreviation for Greenwich Online

1.5.2 Mobile Centre

The mobile centre is a vehicle that houses a full IT facility. The vehicle is a custom-built state of the art training/learning mobile classroom housing ten PCs, printer, scanner, smartboard, full satellite connectivity and is disability accessible.

The mobile centre serves as a facility that fills the gaps in learning/training provision in certain parts of the Borough, where they are without a local IT centre. The bus is able to visit these areas on a regular basis over a period of time. The area is researched and a suitable location is found, and liaison with appropriate authorities and agencies is carried out to ensure necessary permissions are granted. Information is also garnered on local community projects and agencies in order to inform them of our presence and to signpost their users. The bus operates an 'open door' policy where we try to accommodate anybody's needs there and then. Therefore, one may find a wide range of activities taking place concurrently. As well as visiting certain areas to provide a flexible IT service provision, there is also a requirement for structured activities to particular client groups. At the end of a course learners are consulted as to their desired next step and appropriate IAG is given.

The mobile centre is highly visible and very distinctive; it provides a strong marketing tool in its own right. The service capitalises on this distinctiveness by taking the vehicle to the many community events around the Borough, for example, the Asian Mela, Anti-racist Festival and Disability

Jobs Fair. At these events many people come on board to sample what we can offer and staff members are on hand to give out information about the fixed centres and our offer.

In addition, the service has a programme of Roadshows that take place during school breaks. The Roadshows involve taking the mobile centre to popular, central locations where the public gather. As with events, the staff are tasked with giving information about the service as a whole, often taking names and addresses for later follow up.

1.6 Outreach

The GO service functions within deprived communities across the borough working with socially excluded individuals. Generally, people from socially excluded groups do not naturally engage in learning, gaining new skills or using new digital technologies. much of this resistance can be related to multi-faceted barriers. These are, for example, personal barriers: poor literacy/numeracy, low/no academic achievement, poor experiences of education, low self-esteem and confidence levels and lack of awareness/interest. The barriers can also be social or economic such as: no/low income, unemployment, lone parenthood and/or poor housing. These barriers make the outreach function one of the most important parts of the work the service carries out in the community and, at the same time, one of the most difficult. The difficulties lie in the diverse nature of the groups with regard to, for instance, cultures, micro-cultures, attitudes, behaviours, deprivation, lack of trust, low awareness levels, social

exclusion, low levels of self-sufficiency, as well as disengagement with civic participation. As a result, different strategies regarding outreach are paramount in order to connect with different groups, individuals, agencies and communities.

Outreach strategies used take the form of, for example, face-to-face interaction with disadvantage individuals on estates, in shopping centres and in the local communities, leaflet drops, attending borough and/or agency events, meetings with various community and voluntary organisations, central and local government agencies, through children's centres and local schools, as well as internal and external open days and concentrated road shows with the mobile computer bus. Outreach is an integral aspect of the team's role and these activities are carried out on a regular basis, establishing and maintaining links with appropriate groups/organisations in the communities the centres are based in. Building relationships with community groups/organisations, as referred to above, provides additional outreach that supports the work that is done in the community, as these agents are trusted brokers.

The tutor-individual face-to-face interaction is the strongest form of outreach. This direct engagement forces dialogue and allows the nurturing of a rapport to be formed through encouragement and coaxing which begins to break down some of the barriers that hinder participation in learning and new skills. The staff are friendly, approachable tutors who in general rapidly gain the trust of the learners as they build confidence with

the various technologies and they begin to realise that they can re-engage with learning via an alternative route and gain new skills. The learners realise that these skills have the potential to provide both direct and indirect benefits, that may include enhance their life chances, increased motivation, education and attainment, and decrease social exclusion (DCLG 2008a). This, in turn, promotes outreach through word of mouth, as learners tell their friends and family about their new experiences and the new skills they have gained. Many of our learners go on to become centre volunteers and learning champions who promote our service, digital technologies and the access to learning, skills and self-sufficiency that it offers as an alternative route to re-engaging individuals into society personally, socially and, ultimately economically.

Face-to-face interactions in deprived communities and word of mouth have been the two strongest forms of outreach for our service: this direct engagement with tutor or learner is a powerful driver to engage other hard to reach individuals.

1.7 The Partnership Model

The GULP working model was a fortunate accident enforced by GOL which enabled these centres to maintain their integrity whilst expanding the breadth and depth of provision, and remain sustainable.

The model was consolidated through the development of a partnership agreement whereby each party agreed the framework and roles. The

partnership model has evolved into a strong collaboration where the service benefits from the strengths of all parties. The partners bring the knowledge of their communities and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) provide accommodation, utilities and support staff to promote the provision of IT course and access to the Internet. The local authority, through Greenwich Online (GO) provides procurement benefits through economies of scale, experienced expert staff including both managers and teachers, technical support, quality assurance systems and procedures, a coherent, flexible and innovative curriculum offer, marketing and outreach, high specification hardware, software and broadband connectivity. This model overcomes the weaknesses suffered from the inexperience of many VCS organisations in target delivery, bid writing, budgets and audit procedures, along with project reporting. The service is delivered across 35 diverse centres which include most of the original partners and other voluntary and community organisations, including the local Islamic Centre, EMMAUS, Libraries and periodically, in primary and secondary schools, and children's centres.

The GULP partnership and its Strategic Management Group (SMG) meet bi-monthly. The partnership meetings are to inform and update members of progress with, for example, targets, funding bids, curriculum developments, networking and sharing of ideas and the SMG consult on the strategic direction of the partnership and put forward the views of other partners. The partnership holds an Annual Conference each year to celebrate the growth and successes of the service through an award

ceremony to recognise achievements of learners, promote case studies of successes, along with workshops of creative, innovative ways of learning and skills acquisition through the use of digital technologies. The conference also includes a day where the partners work together to plan, develop and set targets for the coming year which include progress reports, budgets, bids and provision. They also elect the Chair, Vice Chair and members of the SMG for the coming year. The partners share the same mission and vision, along with an ethos to engage, develop and inspire local socially excluded people in their communities through the use of digital technologies.

1.8 Service: aims and objectives

The aims and objectives have broadened since the outset. The original UKonline Government initiative was developed as a way to offer free access to IT and a basic introduction to IT skills to socially excluded people in an informal accessible way, near where they live, to bridge the digital divide working towards digital inclusion. The service has always included first steps back into learning, education or training using technology to reflect an alternative, less intrusive way to engage. As the original funding for UKonline centres depleted, it became a necessity to attract funding from other sources. A major source has been the links with the local authority which has led to the service adopting council priorities in addition to its original criteria that have natural synergies. The local priorities have included the original central Government incentive to bridging the digital divide, but have also made these centres a catalyst for the use of online

government services in its e-government agenda towards medium to long term efficiency savings (DBIS 2009a; HMG 2010). In addition, the service has had to respond to the worklessness agenda and Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities. The local authority's priorities for its residents have been more demanding and have become a part of the GULP service business plan. As these centres are essential to the communities that use them, they have been targeted as prime locations to engage with local socially excluded people. The borough recognises the issues surrounding high levels of worklessness amongst adults, large number of 16-19 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETs), many of who do not have the appropriate qualifications levels to take advantage of employment opportunities offered through the area's regeneration. As a consequence, the profile of the service has been raised as a partnership that can make inroads into changing attitudes and behaviours of members of the community where many have not interacted with learning since leaving compulsory education. The priorities of the service are to raise educational aspirations and achievements, enhance employability skills, engaging deprived communities to tackling the skills gap that local people suffer. Research (Opsos MORI 2008) has shown that 75% of people considered socially excluded were also digitally excluded.

The service is promoted across the borough through marketing and outreach on a regular basis. The short, flexible and accessible first step courses are intended to make a major impact with socially excluded individuals in the community. The first step provision offers the hardest to

reach groups an easy way to get back into learning, in some cases almost unconsciously. The informal learning route provides a non-intrusive way through non-qualification activities that are creative and innovative. This informal offer ranges from activities through IT with their children to digital photography, greetings cards to graphic presentations and social networking too. Individuals progress at their own pace, but all get involved with further learning, employability skills and qualification courses in IT and basic skills. In turn, this has led to skills development, capacity building, increased confidence and self-esteem, along with raising people's aspirations to achieve better social and economic growth for themselves, their families and community. This was echoed by the Minister for Digital Inclusion who claimed that digital technologies can

... improve how we work, how we are entertained, how we communicate with each other, the healthcare available to us, and how information and knowledge can be brought together and used for our benefit. (DCLG 2008c:4)

Year on year GULP statistics (Appendix 1) have consistently shown that there has been an increase in people engaging with technology; and our provision has evolved from basic introduction to IT and digital technology to include basic skills, ESOL and more advanced IT skills. The service also offers qualification courses (CLAIT, ECDL and C&G Basic Skills Literacy and Numeracy) through the main awarding bodies, for example, the British

Computer Society, City and Guilds and OCR. There is also a Learndirect provision.

In addition, the service has also been involved in a number of employability projects, for example, ICT Work at Greenwich, Step-Up, Skill-Up and ICT Pathways to Employment. These projects have supported local people into work, providing communication and interpersonal skills, an understanding of work ethos, capacity/confidence building, IT skills and qualifications. GULP works with local employers to arrange long term work placements for participants, along with the chance for them to gain relevant qualifications, both skills for life and vocational. The participants were mentored on an ongoing basis and employers/supervisors were fully briefed and supported. These employability projects have been successful in providing participants with full-time employment, qualifications and the self-confidence necessary to change their lives.

1.9 Staff

Initially, a small team of teaching and management staff were employed by the local authority to establish and develop the GULP partnership. Over time the teaching team has grown to accommodate the expansion of the Greenwich Online service. The team members are not dedicated to any particular centre but form part of a pool of staff that can be called upon to work at any centre, with any learner group and on any course or project. All staff are employed with the skills to be interchangeable between centres, curriculum and learners.

The team has an extensive range of expertise that equips them to work with learners from diverse and challenging backgrounds and to help meet their needs in order to empower and inspire them through changes in attitudes and behaviours. The staff are empathetic with the difficulties faced by individual learners and participate in engaging the hardest to reach in the community.

The teaching team is a highly skilled group who have qualified teacher status with many years experience of developing and teaching people from socially excluded backgrounds. However, they have a very diverse and challenging role to play within the service both internally and externally. Their role encompasses full involvement in curriculum development, implementation and achievement, along with the Quality Assurance required by stakeholders and funders. The curriculum must recognise every aspect of engaging adults who have not participated in education since leaving school. The staff work in groups to develop innovative and creative ways of inspiring people to come and have a go, and to raise awareness of the potential and how accessible learning can be through a new medium. The staff deliver a range of courses from innovative/creative workshops and basic IT to basic skills literacy and numeracy to more advanced vocational IT courses, both skills based and technical. The staff are also fully involved in the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) process both at the beginning of the learners' involvement and at the end, in order to progress them and develop lifelong learners. Each learner has

an informal meeting with a staff member where an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is developed with achievable short and medium term target – the plan is reviewed on an ongoing basis and progress noted.

Individual staff are responsible for maintaining their statistics and entering them onto the Management Information System. Each member of staff has a minimum target number of learners to achieve over the course of a year.

1.10 Personal Statement

This study is important to me partly because my background is very similar to many of the individuals in this study. My parents were immigrants to this country in the 1950s: my mother came from Italy and my father, a Turkish Cypriot, both from fairly poor families. We lived in social housing and I went to a local state school. Neither of my parents had the opportunity to complete full time education in their countries and they were not in a position to help me academically. However, my mother was very keen for me to realise the importance of education, but my peers at school were not academic or ambitious and as a result I did not aspire to achieve high academic grades.

I got my first job as a clerical assistant in the West End of London when I left school and I began to absorb a new way of life, one of economic benefit, progression and social transformation. The inspiration to change my life came a few years later through association with different peer groups. This led to my determination to prove to myself and to gain

academic qualifications that I did not have and was not allowed to study for as young adult.

From a professional perspective this investigation is of importance to my work. It will inform planning, development and implementation of engaging the hardest to reach socially excluded groups/individuals through the insights highlighted in the findings. The research's main focus is based in social psychology and, more specifically, investigates attitudes and behaviours that influence the decision-making processes which impact on learning, gaining skills using digital technologies, digital inclusion and life choices – it is not specifically about e-learning per se.

The attitudes and behaviours that individuals have impact on their life choices. People who suffer from one or more disadvantage tend to have more negative views on different aspects of their lives, lack confidence and self esteem, which stunt their self-perceptions regarding their own ability, knowledge and skills. This study will investigate how digital technologies can help to empower socially excluded people and bridge the digital divide through digital inclusion. If attitude and behaviours are not modified, many of the hardest-to-reach people will not engage with digital technologies, which will create a new underclass¹⁰ of those who are digitally excluded and that will further disadvantage the already deprived.

¹⁰ The lowest social stratum in a country or community, consisting of, for example, the poor and unemployed who do not have the skills to use digital technologies

CHAPTER 2

LOCAL CONTEXT AND POLITICAL INITIATIVES

2.1 Overview

This research investigated attitudes and behaviours of socially excluded individuals in deprived areas as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The study specifically explored the impact of socio-personal attitudinal and behavioural factors that may impede participation.

2.2 Political and Economic Initiatives

Digital technologies encompass every aspect of today's world, but not everyone enjoys the potential benefits. For example, there are 17 million UK residents who do not use computers and the internet, and research shows there is a strong correlation between digital exclusion and social exclusion (HMSO 2008). Over the years there have been a number of Government initiatives to raise awareness of IT and improve people's skills in the use of digital technology, including *Webwise*, *People's Network*, and

Wired Up. Webwise offered people the opportunity to learn how to use the web through interactive software packages, the People's Network initiative offered IT through local libraries, and Wired Up used a different approach of offering selected local communities digital technology within their own homes. Despite these and other similar initiatives there continues to be a deepening '*digital divide*' between those with IT skills and those without (Freshminds 2007). Constraints of people taking up learning/training opportunities, especially in areas of high deprivation and social exclusion, include those on low income, unemployment, lone parents, ethnic minorities, the elderly and those with disabilities. DfES reports (2002b, 2002c) indicated that people do not learn to use digital technology as it has no relevance to them. This continues to be the case, with senior Government ministers raising the same issues at the 2009 Annual Digital Inclusion Conference. In the early part of 2000 the Government and New Opportunities Fund (NOF) sponsored a national initiative called '*UKonline*'. The work of UKonline was to raise awareness, change people's perception of IT and its relevance to them. The initiative brought free IT access and training to deprived communities to promote inclusion and opportunities. Acquiring IT skills through this initiative was not only about gaining skills for employment but also financial and social benefits for those who need it most. A recent HM Government paper (HMSO 2008:8) states that

... social and economic benefits of digital technology can be profoundly empowering. Increasingly, technology supports every aspect of our lives - at home, at work, in the

community, in how we communicate and in the way services are used. There is growing evidence that digital technology can greatly enhance individual's quality of life – particularly for the most disadvantaged citizens and communities.

Consequently, in recent years we have seen the impetus for digital inclusion forge forward politically: in 2008 a new role of Minister for Digital Inclusion was identified and awarded to Paul Murphy; in 2009 Martha Lane-Fox was given the job of Digital Inclusion Champion; and 2009 also saw the creation of a Digital Participation Taskforce.

The current study is focused on the UKonline community initiative based in a South East London borough which engages with a large proportion of socially excluded groups. According to the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, the borough as a whole is the 8th most deprived of the 33 London boroughs, 2 places higher than in 2004 and 24th most deprived Local Authority in England, an increase of 17 places from 2004 ranking (41st), its highest deprived areas fall within the top 5% nationally.

This unique local initiative under investigation is the largest of its kind nationally. It initially brought together a learning partnership of 19 community and voluntary centres which has now grown to over 30 centres. It also includes a custom built state of the art mobile computer bus, housing 10 PCs, with full satellite broadband connectivity, which travels to housing estates around the borough. The voluntary and community

centres that make up the partnership are identified through their geographical location, diversity of BAMEs and specialist centres: for the elderly, and those with physical and/or learning disabilities. The emphasis of the initiative is to involve as many diverse community groups as possible so as to promote digital inclusion of socially excluded groups. In a LSC publication (2008b), the LSC expressed strong recognition of the importance of the work delivered in deprived communities by voluntary and community organisations, and their work looks to strengthen their relationships with them.

2.3 Regional Context

The Learning Skills Council London East region¹¹ which encompasses the South East borough under investigation has diverse and vibrant communities. It also has a powerful economy in neighbouring boroughs with a wide range of highly skilled well-paid jobs. However, there are large pockets of unemployed, low-skilled or low-waged people. London East is an important area for regeneration, but many people living in the area do not possess the necessary training or qualifications to benefit from the opportunities that regeneration and the 2012 Olympics may offer (LSC 2007). The Learning and Skills Council London East Annual Plan 2004/05 (2004) indicated that:

¹¹ Learning and Skills Council is divided into regions nationally. This study is based within the London East region, which include the boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Havering, City, Hackney, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley

Poor attainment is a long established pattern in much of London East and, in part, account for the fact that 43% of London East's 1.14 million adult population have not attained a Level 3 qualification. Within that group, 21% lack any formal qualification... One in four adults say they have no/little basic numeracy skills and one in seven have no/little basic literacy skills (LSCLE 2004:13).

The earlier LSCLE Strategic Plan (2002) highlighted this low level of basic skills amongst adults in the borough and set targets to raise these levels. The introduction of the National Skills Strategy (DfES 2003c) '*Realising Our Potential*' emphasises the importance of raising skills to enable future economic growth by enabling local adults to achieve their first Level 2 and Level 3 qualification, a necessity if they are to be employed in higher paid jobs post-regeneration. The LSCLE Annual Plan 2007-08 (2007) indicated that, although there have been improvements, there continued to be problems with less than 55% of 19 year olds having achieved level 2 qualifications. The LSCLE Annual Plan 2004/05 also highlighted skills shortages across the different sectors of industry; these include IT related jobs and the acknowledgement that all sectors required people to be confident in the use of digital technologies, which strongly confirmed the importance for the local population to be IT literate for employability. The LSCLE Annual Plan 2007/08 (2007) focused on the need for London East adult population to acquire the right skills levels to enable them to compete for jobs emerging from the 2012 Olympic Games and its legacy.

This is reinforced in the recent *Digital Britain* publication (DBIS 2009a) which stressed that:

we need more systematically to address Britain's comparative weakness in low and intermediate skills and in the specific Digital Skills for a modern economy (DBIS 2009a:21).

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair, speaking at an eSummit Conference (2002) stated that the opening of over 6000 UKonline centres was significant in enabling 'access for everyone who wants it by 2005' and beyond, as the 'digital transformation cannot be restricted to the few, our success depends on extending it to the many'. *Digital Britain* (DBIS 2009a) stressed the important role that UKonline centres continue to have in the communities they serve. UKonline centres have a dual role, firstly, the vehicle for providing socially excluded groups access to expensive technology and learning near where they live, and secondly, to drive the 'Implementing e-Government'¹² (IEG) agenda forward. Consequently, there were two primary goals: the first, to empower people to exploit technology for social and economic use; and second to guarantee everyone has the skills to access online Government services through the use of technology. Technology can provide improved, more effective public services and enable efficiency savings that it can generate. As central and local

¹² The term e-government is an abbreviation for electronic-government which has more recently been renamed t-government, an abbreviation for transformational-government

Government services go online it is important for people with multi-faceted social needs who have more interaction with public services to be digitally included, otherwise they are likely to become more socially excluded and isolated.

There has always been a strong emphasis placed on the social benefits of being IT literate, although of paramount importance is the underlying political and economic focus. The intention is to grow an IT skilled population which will fill the skills gaps identified in the National Training Organisation's Strategic Plan for e-skills (NTO 2000), the HMSO Leitch Report (2006) and the *Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity* publication (BIS 2010) by increasing the employability of individuals and fuelling the economic requirements of accelerated globalisation. The BERR (2009) paper stressed that "innovative businesses need educated, entrepreneurial and skilled people. Investment in education and skills is an important part of the Government's economic and industrial policy" (BERR 2009:14). However, these policies could be flawed by the continued lack of participation amongst a large proportion of the population. A Government paper *New Industry, New Jobs* (BERR 2009) highlighted the issues again and discussed the need for Government to do more to help equip the workforce with the skills people need to adapt to the "specialist demands of modern economy" (BERR 2009:4). The paper also states that

new technologies will drive both consumer and business demand ... [and] have the potential radically to change

business and leisure activities and the way we provide public services (BERR 2009:8).

It is evident that the gap in the take-up of digital technologies has resulted in a digital divide and is a major problem, if it cannot be resolved, which will have a huge impact on the UK economy both nationally and globally in the coming years.

2.4 Digital Divide towards Digital Inclusion

The term “digital divide” was first discussed in the USA in the mid-1990s to capture the concerns of the uneven adoption of technologies across social groups both within and across national boundaries, inequalities based on income, gender, ethnicity, urban/rural location, and age (Booz, Allen & Hamilton 2000). The OECD Report (2001) *Understanding the Digital Divide* provides a useful definition of the term:

the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access information and communication technologies and to their use of the Internet for a variety of activities (OECD 2001:5).

The swift development of IT has caused a progressively widening and deepening digital divide, which has a disproportionately high impact on socially excluded groups (Freshminds 2007). Members of these groups

typically face multi-faceted social and economic problems of low income, lone parents, low self esteem, poor housing, low academic achievement and poor experiences of formal education.

The issues surrounding low rates of involvement in learning and the constraints experienced by people from socially excluded backgrounds, is not a new problem. A major barrier for many people involves deep-rooted negative attitudes to learning resulting from poor experiences at school. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (2000) indicated that large numbers of adults have had a poor experience of compulsory education. They commented that negative experiences of school often leave people disinclined ever to learn again. Consequently, tackling attitudes to learning will be a long term commitment, requiring learning opportunities to be available to all adults who want them and that barriers to participation are eliminated. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) National Corporate Plan (2001:5) stressed that the “greatest challenge is to convince ... large groups of adults who have barely participated in learning since leaving school” that they should continually take advantage of learning opportunities and be encouraged to invest in their own skills development through lifelong learning. Lifelong learning has ‘public value’ it brings benefits for both the learners themselves and to wider society as it enhances life opportunities (IFLL 2008).

The Learning and Skills Council London East (LSCLE) Strategic Plan (2002) specifically identified the importance for individuals to have IT skills and

access to technology. The 2009 *London Learning and Skills Plan* stated that “London has more hard-to-fill vacancies because of skill shortages than any other region” (LSC 2009:5). The last two decades has seen the percentage of people using IT in their job nearly double reaching 77%; if the UK is to remain competitive in the global markets the workforce, at all levels, need appropriate and increasing skills to use current and emerging digital technologies (e-Skills UK 2008).

2.5 IT in an Educational Context

The major advancements of IT and related technologies has bought with it a great potential to offer new dimensions in communication, education and training through the world-wide-web, internet, intranet and interactive software packages (Woolgar 2002). Many educational institutions and organisations have realised the potential for learning and staff development through the use of IT, for example, universities and other educational institutions (Mason 1998; Becta 2009). These establishments offer online diplomas and degrees through e-learning¹³. Other commercial organisations, for example, McGraw Hill and Netg, provide corporate training through interactive packages, general applications, management and computer network management (Mason 1998). The Government has

¹³ e-learning is a wide ranging concept meaning learning with the use of a PC or other computerised IT device, that can range from simple carrying written instructions and completing tasks on the PC or using a CDROM with computerised visuals and questions to computer based interactive packages through to courses which are delivered completely online along with real time examination. However, more recently educationalists have begun to use the term to be all encompassing to signify all levels of usage of any technologies for learning, but this is not what this introduction to e-learning includes.

also promoted its own funded e-learning brand "*Learndirect*" which offers courses ranging from Skills for Life to business management. Learndirect was initiated as the Government vision for flexible lifelong learning through the use of online learning, which could be used to enhance literacy, numeracy and IT skill levels and potentially meet the LSCLE (2002a) Local Strategic Plan 2002-2005 targets for raising overall academic achievement levels. The LSCLE Strategic Plan (2002a) stressed that they:

will, in partnership, educate, market, promote and roll-out e-learning to all providers of post-16 education to enable learners to access a range of traditional and non-traditional learning environments locally (LSCLE 2002a:13).

The technologies make the implicit promise of flexibility and non-judgemental choices for what, when, where and with whom one can learn, train and communicate. Notwithstanding its huge potential, e-learning has been very slow to revolutionise the masses. Low basic skills (literacy/numeracy) and IT skills, along with low confidence levels due to poor experiences of compulsory education and lack of academic achievements, have had huge implications for the success of such e-learning initiatives that promote independent learning. Even those using IT in the workplace have not shown the confidence or desire to use this route for staff development. There has been an immense amount of hype over e-learning that would suggest that speed should be the operative word, but an article in the Guardian (02.04.02) stated that e-learning could be

described as growing at “snail’s pace”, and also indicated that “trainers are sticking to traditional methods”. Regardless of the slow adoption the LSCLE (2003a) stated that it:

intend[s] to ensure that e-learning is introduced at every level and is viewed as an enabling tool that makes learning more inclusive. ... [They] will map the current provision of e-learning for adults and work to overcome barriers that may prevent adults from using this form of learning (LSCLE 2003a:22).

Learning through and with IT is considered to be the way forward, especially for people who do not wish to learn formally in colleges or other formal educational institutions, but the added issues around non-participation and people’s perceived barriers to the use of IT are proving problematic. As a result e-learning *per se* cannot be used as the sole mode of learning, as learners from deprived backgrounds need more support and guidance than those that are more academically able. In practice, a blended approach is more appropriate to develop independent lifelong learners. A recent Ofsted inspection report (2009) commended the use of digital technologies in a blended approach to teaching and learning which helped to maintain interest and motivation.

2.6 Barriers to Participation

There continue to be large numbers of people who have not used or do not use IT in their day-to-day lives – this problem has been the main topic at the 2008 National Digital Inclusion (NDI) Conference: Reaching the Final Third, 2009 NDI Conference: Empowerment through Technology and the 2010 NDI Conference: Digital Participation – Passing IT on. These conferences looked at the adverse impact that the digital divide and digital exclusion has on the most deprived citizens who have not used IT. Research by the DTI entitled *IT for All* (1999) cited a range of significant factors that non-users highlighted, including that IT was not seen as relevant or necessary in their lives and that such non-users found IT difficult to understand, factors which have contributed to widening the digital divide. The Oxford Internet Institute survey (2007) found that the remaining non-internet users have become less likely to get connected, which has formed a hard core of non-users. When provided with a list of reasons for non-participation, the non-users indicated they did not know how to use the Internet (81%) or they did not know how to use a computer (77%).

The extent of the digital divide is highlighted in a number of different publications: a Department of Education and Skills survey (2002) indicated that only 16% of socially excluded groups living on council estates with high unemployment used IT; a report commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Development Agency (LDA) and LondonConnects entitled *The digital divide in a world city* (Foley, Alfonso, Ghani and Fisher

2002) indicated that 49% of adults who had not used a computer or the Internet stated that they were not interested in these technologies, with 39% saying that nothing would persuade them to use them. Furthermore, according to the National Statistics Office report (2001), only 24% of non-computer users stated that lack of access to computers or the Internet was the reason for not participating. This would indicate that 76% had access to computer technology. This suggests that the socio-economic barriers of not having access to computer technology are not as great as they had been in the past and that more complex socio-personal factors are influencing attitudes and behaviours of socially excluded groups to participant in learning and to acquiring e-skills. Freshminds report (2009) indicated that a third of the UK population (approximately 17 million people over the age of 15) are considered digitally excluded and that there is a strong correlation between digital and social exclusion. Foley et al (2002) strongly acknowledged that socio-personal barriers were important and indicated that there was no research in this area and therefore the extent and significance was unknown.

The contribution of this study is to address this under-researched area by investigating the barriers experienced by socially excluded groups that influence attitudinal and behavioural action and potentially influence low participation in IT training and learning.

CHAPTER 3

BROADER CONTEXTS

3.1 Rationale

In this Chapter, literature will be explored in relation to the rapid growth of new digital information and communication technologies and the impact of the digital divide. Investigations carried out for this study have highlighted the digital divide as a major area for concern and has also considered statistical data on adoption levels. In order to gain a broader understanding, consideration will be given to the political, economic and social issues of the digital divide, the lifelong learning agenda, along with the impact of low basic skills levels amongst adults and how that has affected employability and the e-Government agenda. It will also consider the barriers to the adoption of new technologies, in particular, socio-personal barriers, for example, people's attitudes and intentions, and the ways in which these influence behaviour. This chapter will include a discussion of investigated research and policies which have a direct impact

on the specific group referenced in this study, thus providing a context which will frame the research carried out.

3.2 Information Technologies and the Digital Divide

3.2.1 Development and Penetration

The continuous burgeoning of information technologies (IT) globally has driven the development of both hardware and software. These evolving technologies have progressively etched their mark into all facets of society, with the most crucial being the convergence of telephone, computer and television technologies. Separately, each of these technologies function independently and are major developments in their own right, although the research and development that made the convergence of these technologies possible brought about the unprecedented ability to share information across continents in real time. This led to the birth of the 'information age', with talk of people living in an 'information society' or 'e-society' and using the 'information superhighway', comparisons can be made with the industrial revolution (Woolgar 2002). More recently, *Digital Britain* (BIS 2009a) made similar comparisons.

There is much controversy and little consensus regarding the realistic value of the deluge of information accessible on the Internet; Webster (2002:2) notes that:

to some it constitutes the beginning of a truly professionalized and caring society while to others it

represents a tightening of control over the citizenry; to some it heralds the emergence of a highly educated public which has ready access to knowledge while to others it means a deluge of trivia, sensationalism and misleading propaganda. Among political economists talk is of a novel 'e-economy' in which the quick-thinking knowledge entrepreneur has the advantage; among the more culturally sensitive reference is to 'cyberspace', a 'virtual reality' no-place which welcomes the imaginative and inventive.

The lack of consensus is evident, as it suggests that IT provides individuals with the freedom of giving and receiving information provided through a professional and protected environment. However on the other hand, it could be seen from the position that government and/or other agencies monitor and control the information provided and our individual usage. Supporters claim that individuals are provided with the opportunity to access huge amounts of information at any time, anywhere, although the reality is more complex, as some of the information may not be authentic, which leads to misrepresentation and misinterpretation. Despite this lack of agreement and the suspicions, there is unanimous acceptance that "information' has a special pertinence in the contemporary world" (Webster 2002:2). Communication technologies, ranging from broadcasting to telecommunications and the Internet are playing effective roles in the acquisition and sharing of information. There have also been major software developments providing user friendly interfaces to make it easier

for the lay person to use computers, not just the expert computer programmer; business applications, for example, spreadsheet, database and word processing; interactive and multimedia communications; the Internet and world-wide web; video conferencing; and computer-aided design/manufacturing are technologies that are commonplace, both in the workplace and socially. These developments have brought with them an increasing economic and social demand for people to be confident and competent in the use of these new digital technologies (Webster 2002; BIS 2009a, 2009b). A recent publication (BERR 2008:7) highlighted the economic pressure that:

IT is not just an important industry in its own right; it underpins and enables the growth of the wider knowledge economy and sectors such as financial services and the creative industries depend on the IT workforce for their continued competitiveness.

Consequently, the impact of IT is seen as generating and driving the impetus for radical transformation in all facets of social, cultural, economic and political life. Paradoxically, the overall adoption of these technologies has not been reflected globally and there continues to be significant and persistent inequalities in the uneven pattern of integration across social groups, which has created a digital divide. The term captures disquiet, in particular in the political arena, where it has become an area of concern and constant discussion as it has the threatening potential to create a new

information underclass, especially amongst the most socially excluded and hardest to reach groups (Freshminds 2007).

There is a tendency for some elements of society to misconstrue social change as being embedded in the adoption of technological determinism. However it is not the intention of this study to intimate this, but to highlight the further exclusion of socially deprived groups if the digital divide continues to widen.

3.2.2 Digital Divide

The term “digital divide” emerged to describe the IT skills or e-skills gap between people who have the ability to use digital technologies and those who do not. However, there is also an extra dimension to the digital divide definition which indicates the focus on effective use of IT for social and economic development and not simply access and use (Booz et al 2000). Interestingly, the Office of National Statistics (2008) revealed that educated people were more likely to have Internet access at home than those with no/low educational levels; this adds further substance to the issues around the widening and deepening divide.

The digital divide is still an issue even though the National Statistics Office (2008) statistics revealed that in 2008 65% of household in Britain (16 million) had Internet access, as opposed to 52% (12.6 million) in 2004 and only 9% (2.2 million) in 1998, as there was still a way to go towards 100% usage. The ONS *Internet Access* (2008b) revealed that of those households

that did not have internet connection 34%, indicated that they 'don't need Internet' with 24% who stated they 'don't want Internet', followed by 15% who indicated that equipment costs were too high, 15% who stated they lacked the skills and 11% who indicated that access costs were too high. It is evident that there has been a gradual rise in the penetration of Internet access. Nonetheless, NSO statistics on Internet access are generally based on households with connectivity as the most common measure used in many reports. However, these may not be a true indication as it both overstates penetration, by implying that all household members choose to use digital technologies equally and could be an underestimate, as many users may have use elsewhere outside the home. In Finland, for example, three out of four households are connected to the internet but only one person in three used the Internet. These statistics also understate penetration, by ignoring the commonplace phenomenon of access from school, university or workplace (Booz et al 2000). The penetration and use of IT and the Internet is supported by the DTI survey (1999) which reported that 12 per cent of the population surveyed said they had a PC in their home that they had never used. The survey also suggested that ownership of technology may not be one of the key barriers to use of technologies as it had in the past. A number of reports (Foley, et al. 2003; GLA 2003; Foley, et al. 2002; DTI 1999; *Which?* 1998) highlighted barriers to participation, these reports suggested that the economic barrier of the cost of PC equipment and connection had for many years been most prominent in people's responses. However, over recent years, this has not been as high a percentage. These findings were supported by statistics provided

by ONS (2008b). What has become more of an issue are the socio-personal barriers and, in particular, the reluctance to use digital technology and the Internet. A 2003 survey of household internet access entitled *Londoner's online* (2003) revealed that 45% have the Internet, with only 15% who state they could not afford it and 40% who said they did not want it. A lack of interest in IT amongst non-users remains persistently high and is probably the most significant problem facing policymakers.

Research (Foley, et al. 2002, 2003; Cullen 2001; Revenaugh 2000;) highlights the lack of awareness of digital technologies as one of the key barriers, especially amongst socially excluded groups. A report from the Office of the e-Envoy (2001) and more recently the Government's publication *Putting the Frontline First: Smart Government* (HMG 2009) stressed the need to put increasing focus on raising awareness of the benefits of the Internet and IT amongst socially excluded groups.

Foley, et al. (2002, 2003) presented an *ICT Adoption and Policy Intervention Framework*, Figure 3.1 which depicted awareness as the most important initial stage to adoption and also highlighted the progressionary cycle a typical individual would travel through to becoming an active user and lifelong learner, continually becoming aware of new opportunities and perpetuating the cycle.

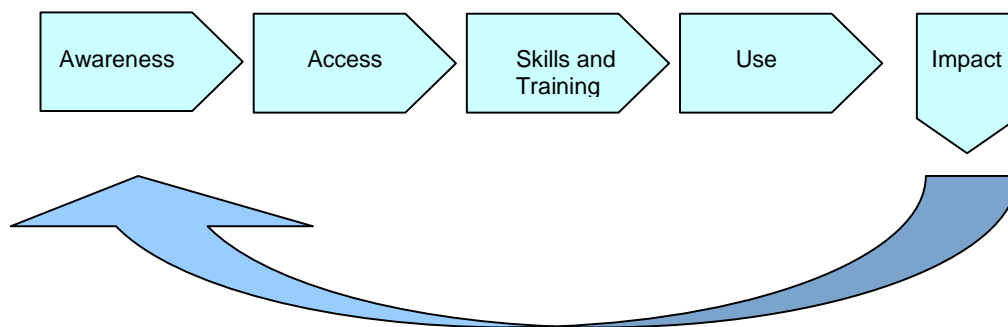


Figure 3.1 ICT Adoption and Policy Intervention Framework (Foley et al, 2002, 2003)

Figure 3.1 identified the five distinct stages towards adoption of IT, firstly and importantly, raising IT awareness across socially excluded groups. NSO Internet access and connectivity reports (2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2003; ONS 2008b) consistently identify a lack of interest as the main reason why non-users do not use IT; however this could also be an indication of the lack of awareness of the potential of IT. Foley et al (2002, 2003) found very little evidence that lack of interest was the main reason for non-use, as his research indicated that prior to use, most socially excluded groups were very curious about the Internet. Stage two of the framework is access to IT; essentially once awareness had been raised, it was important that individuals had access to the technology. Foley et al (2002, 2003) stressed the importance of widening access to technology, although there was recognition that socially excluded groups tended to use public access points, as they had limited access to IT at work and the connectivity costs deterred home usage. The third stage consisted of skills and training which emphasise the need for support and guidance for excluded individuals to assist with IT issues, problem solving and

information, advice and guidance with regard to appropriate IT courses on offer. Foley et al (2002, 2003) indicated that these were the first steps toward stimulating a desire to learn. Stage four identified the use of IT, this element highlighted continued use of technology once individuals had become users and the added capacity building assisted with the further investigation of the technology. The final stage considered impact. Foley et al (2002, 2003:75) stated that their evidence revealed that access to the Internet “enhanced participation, reduced isolation and access to information can provide an entrée to wider opportunities”. The Freshmind report (2009) indicated that the benefits of using technology can help to overcome various elements of social exclusion.

Foley et al (2002, 2003) highlighted the need for policymakers to recognise the importance of raising awareness of IT and the stimulus to encourage individuals or groups to access technologies, gain skills and training, and use it appropriately to change their lives in both economic and social terms.

3.3 Political, Social and Economic Context

3.3.1 Political and Social Context

The Government is concerned that continued inequality¹⁴ of access to digital technologies in the short to medium term could further widen long-term economic and social divisions among individuals, social groups, geographical locations and even between nations. Large national and

¹⁴ unequal opportunity or treatment based on social, ethnic, racial, or economic disparity

multi-national organisations, along with the dot.com¹⁵ entrepreneurs, have managed to revolutionise their organisations, through the utilisation of evolving digital technologies to enable efficiency gains, in terms of speed, physical and human resources, and time. The UK Government also has an imperative to exploit online technology to lower costs and improve the quality of the services it delivers. For example, in the borough of Greenwich access to the social housing list can only be gained via online registration; registration for children to attend the local authority organised Summer University Programme is restricted to online application; and there are local council initiatives to encouraged people to report housing issues online as there are now fewer housing offices. If a significant number of the population remain offline, government will have to continue to run parallel structures, adding to cost and complexity, and also more critically for councils, reducing the potential savings of 'e-government' (Booz et al 2002; DBIS 2009b). Taking a lead role, the government has made attempts to '*bridge the digital divide*' through initiatives and incentives for both businesses and citizens, for example, offering cash reductions for online tax return submissions and free local Internet access in deprived areas. The UK is Europe's leading e-commerce market, along with its knowledge economy, so the government is very aware that in order for them to maintain a competitive edge, government has an imperative to drive forward education and the e-skills agenda (DBIS 2009).

¹⁵ dot.com is the name given to organisations that established their business (for example, buying and selling) specifically online

Strategic policies have been implemented to tackle various social issues surrounding education, e-skills and employability that have the potential to impact on the future economic prosperity of the UK, for example, NTO (2000); LSC (2002a); DfES (2003); and The Egan Report (2004) along with IT initiatives such as UKonline centres which have been recognised for their strong position to engaged with the hardest to reach groups (DBIS 2009). The common thread running through all these and other similar strategies is education and lifelong learning. The emphasis is on the importance of raising achievement levels for economic prosperity and improved quality of life (BERR 2009). Also embedded within these strategies is the acquisition of IT skills. IT skills are considered the third essential basic skill (LSCLE 2002a) and in many cases, could provide an alternative way back into learning and/or employment and at the same time bridge the digital divide.

The LSCLE Business Plan (2002b) stressed the need to raise skills, knowledge and understanding of all adults and young people in the area. The plan was to involve significantly more adults in some form of learning and to demonstrate the benefits of lifelong learning, the “aim to create an education and training system that is genuinely inclusive and raises aspirations” (LSCLE 2002b:1). In spite of the emphasis of these policies, the significant message is that a large proportion of the population lack essential basic literacy and numeracy skills, which has an impact on people taking up new learning and ultimately employability. A BBC News report (22/03/05) stated that only 50% of adults have ‘A’ Levels, despite 2 out of 3 jobs require them and that ‘the skills deficit has held this country back

for generations'. LSCLE (2002b; 2004; 2007) highlighted that the London East region had high concentrations of socially excluded groups that suffer a combination of socio-personal and socio-economic barriers, for example, low self-esteem, low/no academic achievement, low skills and low income. An ODPM report (2004b:25) confirmed the problems faced by socially excluded groups and that they are more prone to be in a state of "worklessness"¹⁶. It revealed

evidence of the barriers that people living in concentrations of worklessness are likely to experience, such as:

- Poor health
- Lack of qualifications and skills
- Dependent children
- Caring responsibilities; and
- Poor transport (ODPM 2004b:25)

Successive governmental policies and interventions nationally and across Europe have sought to engage socially excluded groups in learning, but a combination of multi-faceted social and economic issues apparently burden potential participants. The barriers to participation are both social and economic, as indicated above. However, one of the major social barriers for many people involves deep-rooted negative attitudes to learning

¹⁶ Worklessness refers to people who are unemployed or economically inactive, and who are in receipt of certain working-age benefits

resulting from poor experiences at school. The document '*Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal*' (1999) confirmed that:

too many adults have had a poor experience of compulsory education. A negative experience of school often leaves people disinclined ever to learn again (SEU 1999:12).

Later research carried out by the Youth and Justice Board (2006) had similar findings. Consequently, work towards tackling attitudes to learning will be a long term commitment. It is essential to ensure that learning opportunities are available to all adults who want them and that any barriers to participation are eliminated. The Government paper *Successful Participation for All: Widening Adult Participation Strategy* (LSC 2003a) confirmed similar attitudinal barriers, for example, lack of confidence relating to poor self-esteem, negative attitude to learning and perceptions of irrelevance, negative peer pressure, and lack of motivation. Choli (2003) identified a number of socio-personal attitudinal barriers which confirmed the above acknowledging that these barriers have been ingrained over many years and are the most difficult to overcome. The repercussions of this antipathy to learning and lack of basic skills have led to a reluctance to experience and adopt new digital technologies.

The following section provides an economic overview of the people who live in the London East region.

3.3.2 Economic Overview

The London East region incorporates a number of boroughs with high deprivation and high proportions of excluded social groups. London East also has the largest regeneration programme in Europe: Thames Gateway and the Olympics 2012 (LSCLE 2004a, 2007). This area is also home to a powerful economy with well-paid, highly skilled jobs, although the many socially excluded people living in the area continue to be in low-skilled, low-waged jobs and are vulnerable to a downturn in the economy. Additionally, the borough under consideration in this study has the highest economic inactivity rate in comparison with the whole of Britain, and London overall; furthermore, the levels of claimants is higher, at 4.5% of the total population of the borough, than across London at 3.5% and Britain at 2.5% (LSC 2006). If local people are to secure better paid, skilled jobs post-regeneration, they will need to gain the appropriate skills and qualifications to have a chance in a competitive market (LSCLE 2004a, 2007). The LSCLE Annual Plan (2004a:12) “aims to better equip local communities to take advantage of existing opportunities and as well as the 300,000 new jobs that are forecast by 2016”. The LSC (2002a) highlights the academic and skills deficiencies experienced by local people, divided into young adults (16-19) and adult learners.

Young Adults - 16-19

In London East there is a culturally diverse population of approximately 110,000 young residents aged 16-19, 43% of whom live in wards that are

among the 10% most deprived in the country and 36% of whom are from black and minority ethnic groups (BMEs). A four year (1997-2000) analysis (LSC 2002a) of school leavers showed that 50,000 (around 47%) left school without achieving a Level 2¹⁷ qualification. This South East London borough within the LSC East region has the second largest number of low achievers, with around 2,000 (15%) not making positive post-16 transitions into employment or further education. Poor learning performance and disaffection of these young people is linked to non-achievement; on reaching the 16-19 stage only 43% in London East have reached National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 – the national target is 85%, hence the deficit for this area is quoted as 53% (LSC Strategic Plan 2002a). The LSCLE Annual Strategy Plan 2007-2009 (2007) continues to highlight similar issues.

Adult Learners – Post-19

There is a long established pattern of poor attainment in London East, which could account for the fact that 43% of the 1.4 million (490,000) adult population are without a Level 3¹⁸ qualification and 21% are lacking any formal qualifications. In this context, one in four adults (290,000) have no or only basic numeracy skills and one in seven (160,000) have basic or no literacy skills, although Basic Skills Agency assessment testing suggest higher rates of 27% and 26% respectively. London East enrolment levels in Adult and Community Learning (ACL) are below regional and national

¹⁷ A full Level 2 qualification is equivalent in standard and breadth to 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2.

¹⁸ A full Level 3 qualification is equivalent in standard and breadth to A Level or NVQ 3 (See Appendix 4 for fully table of qualification equivalence)

averages; earlier LSC (2001) research highlighted the challenge of encouraging large groups of adults who had barely participated in learning since leaving school to return. The LSCLE stressed that local people's attitudes to post-16 education need to be transformed and that lifelong learning should be considered the norm to encourage and build a learning culture (LSC 2001, 2002a, 2003a). The LSC London Learning & Skills Plan (2009) revealed that even through there had been improvements, 870,000 residents in London were still below the level 2 threshold, with numeracy skills being the biggest challenge with 48% below level 1.

3.3.3 The Role of New Digital Technologies

The development and rapid adoption of new digital technologies have globalised market economies, businesses and information, but this has not been mirrored at grass roots level with the mass population. Consequently, the technological skills gaps have been extensive, causing concern regarding future economic competitiveness. In response to these early concerns, an e-skills strategy (NTO 2000) was presented and implemented to attempt to alleviate the ongoing demand for technologically skilled people. Unfortunately, the impact of the strategy did not materialise to the extent envisaged. This resulted in further policies and strategies (Becta 2008a; DBIS 2009a; DTI 2005; DfES 2004c; HMG 2010; LSCLE 2002a; LSC 2001) aiming to raise achievement and bridge the digital divide, particularly with socially excluded groups who make up a large proportion of the population. The problem of digital exclusion has not been alleviated due to people's reluctance to participate

in learning. The TES (3/10/03) reported that the technology skills gap is increasing amongst adults and poses a greater problem than basic literacy and numeracy – it is estimated that 24 million people, many from socially and economically excluded backgrounds, cannot use the internet, in comparison to approximately 5 million who have poor reading/writing skills. As the computer age continues to evolve and grow, IT skills are fundamental to every aspect of people’s lives (DBIS 2009c). However, as indicated above, there continues to be a large proportion of society, who do not regard IT as relevant in their lives. The *Digital Britain* report (DBIS 2009a) presents the Government’s stance and their commitment to support initiatives and incentives to ensure that the UK can meet the technological challenges as they arise in the coming years.

However, these stark realities regarding this perpetual problem (especially amongst the hardest to reach groups) indicate that there is an imperative to find alternative ways of encouraging people into learning, either formally or informally, through more innovative and creative methods; these have been sought through the use of IT (DBIS 2009c; Becta 2008a, 2008b). Political recognition of resistance to traditional, formal learning in educational institutions has driven a move to promote learning using computer technologies, for example, CDROM, interactive packages and online learning, otherwise called e-learning, with the promise of flexible learning: whatever topic, any time, any place and at your own pace. The emergence of the alternative e-learning option had already been realised by corporate organisations and its potential harnessed for delivery of a range

of training options ranging from software applications to business administration (Becta 2008a, 2008b). However, its huge potential and hype has been very slow to materialise; even those using technology in the workplace have not shown the confidence or desire to use this route for continuous professional development.

Nonetheless, the government embraced the concept's potential and invested in two significant initiatives; the first was the establishment of the University for Industry (Ufi) in 1998 with its:

mission to enhance learners' employability, as well as organisations' productivity and competitiveness, by:

- inspiring existing learners to develop their skills further;
- winning over new and excluded learners;
- transforming the accessibility of learning in everyday life and work (DfES 2004a:8)

Learndirect was created in 2000 with the promise to deliver online courses and information, through a national network of learning centres to promoting e-learning. The second initiative, at the end of 2000 was UKonline. The intention was to open 6,000 new IT centres in deprived communities. These would aim to bridge the digital divide offering those with little or no access to new technologies or few/no skills in using them the opportunity to develop and gain IT skills and accessibility. By 2003,

the government had exceeded its target through the use of: community and voluntary centres with convenient opening hours based in or close to deprived neighbourhoods, libraries and FE colleges. UKonline centres are still seen by Government as the vehicle to promote digital inclusion (DBIS 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

The key success criteria were to raise IT awareness and increase participation through access and skills training, to promote inclusion and increase confidence in learning (DTI 2005; DfES 2002a). The PAT 15 report (2000) found that people living in deprived neighbourhoods faced significant barriers, which included poor skills, low confidence, unattractive content and costs that inhibit their ability to access these new technologies and that such people were oblivious to the benefits they can bring. This was further emphasised in a report entitled *Digital Quality of Life* (ITIF 2008) that indicated:

If only a portion of society has access to information tools such as online learning, electronic health records, and e-government services, then society will move in the direction of greater inequality.

As government move away from face-to-face services and call centres, online communication will become the main medium for contact with the public. 90% of government services are available electronically, but as two thirds of the population do not use online services they presently run in

parallel with other communication channels (Ufi 2007b). Running these parallel services impinges on financial efficiency gains that are necessary for both central and local government (BIS 2009a, 2009b).

An evaluation (DfES 2002b) of UKonline centres revealed that the various initiatives have made significant inroads towards attracting socially excluded groups and providing them with new skills and confidence. A follow-up survey (DfES 2004b:10) stated that

new computer users commonly said that they started to use the computer for leisure purposes ... [and] because their children did.

The DfES (2004a) indicated, however, that socially excluded groups were not taking advantage of what was being offered and that high proportions in the study were well qualified. The lack of participation of under-qualified groups could be indicative of a more crucial underlying problem that these groups face – it has been claimed that hidden basic skills deficiencies hinder proactive participation and is a major barrier (DTI 2005; LSCLE 2002a; LSC 2001). Research (DfES 2002b) has shown that those people who take part in an IT activity at a local UKonline centre become regular users and progress to other learning, for example, other accredited IT courses, basic skills courses or other further education. Little research has been found that examines whether IT helps to overcome social exclusion, although in combination with other initiatives, it could be

beneficial in addressing the problems of social exclusion (Freshminds 2009). A SOCTIM survey (2001) found that 47% of local government IT professionals indicated that IT could address problems of social exclusion by making services easier to use and access.

The government has continued to invest in a range of initiatives aimed at boosting people's employability and to bridge the digital divide by providing them with access to IT. However, it must be recognised that access is not enough to fully capture the benefits of the 'Knowledge Economy' or 'e-economy'. Users need more than mere availability, and must move beyond passive browsing, to become active, confident users – participating in discussions, educating themselves, making transactions and engaging in commerce. These broader IT skills requirements has been captured in *'New Industry, New Jobs'* (HMSO 2009), which stressed the need for people having high level skills that can adapt to new emerging technologies.

At the next level, the Internet offers unprecedented opportunity for people to become entrepreneurs themselves; setting up websites, and ultimately even businesses. The Government is providing the opportunities for people not simply get online, but to create conditions and incentives for them to evolve into active users and lifelong learners. However, this is a long term process that will require continual investment in skills that will ensure people gain and maintain well paid employment and improve their quality of life (DBIS 2008b).

Fundamental to the realisation of the overall Government vision to bridge the digital divide and fill the skills gaps, is the issue of addressing the socio-personal barriers that impact the decision-making and behaviour of socially excluded groups, many of whom have ingrained negative attitudes toward learning. Investigation into attitudes and the identification of methods to implement change in attitudes is a necessity in overcoming perpetuating barriers. Research by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980), Fishbein (1997) and Ajzen (2002) and others, for example Armitage & Conner (2001) has revealed evidence which highlighted links between attitude and behaviour. These studies showed that individuals who behaved favourably with respect to some object or group also held favourable attitudes towards that object or group. There is an impetus to know more about attitude: this derives from the need to be able to modify and/or influence individuals' behaviour.

The next chapter will explore the theoretical perspective of the Theory of Planned Behaviour that will be used in this study to consider the social psychological impact on attitudes and its affect on behaviour when considering participation in learning or the accumulation of new skills.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL CONTEXTS

4.1 Rationale

This chapter explores the theoretical model that proposes links between past experience, attitudes and behaviours. This will specifically investigate, predict and explain attitudes toward learning, new skills and technology; it will also investigate the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The central theoretical underpinning of this research is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1988, 1991, 2002b). The Theory of Planned Behaviour is based within social psychology and focuses on local social determinants to behaviour, the psychology of the individual(s) and the way they come to interpret their world. This perspective emphasises the importance of latent residues of past experience as a factor which influence attitudes, intention and behaviour.

To give some background to the theoretical perspective a short discussion of the historical developments into attitude and behaviours follows.

4.2 Social Psychology Perspective

4.2.1 Historical Background and Attitude Definition

Psychologists are concerned with the scientific study of human behaviour; to explain and predict individuals' behavioural choices. This is of considerable importance in attempting to change people's behaviour toward, for instance, voting patterns, use of condoms and health and exercise. Allport (1935:798; 1968:59) an early influential author in this area, pointed out that in social psychology the concept of attitude is probably "the most distinctive and indispensable", indicating that no other term is used more often in experimental and theoretical literature, increasing in importance but continuing to remain unchallenged. Olson & Zanna (1993:118) observed that "attitude and attitude change remain among the most extensively researched topics by social psychologists".

Literature shows that from as early as 1935 there has been an emphasis on the significance of attitude, with many social psychologists attempting to offer a definitive definition. However, the literature reveals the lack of consensus, for example, Allport's (1935:799) description stated that:

an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or

dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related.

Rokeach (1968:10) indicated that it was:

a learned orientation, or disposition, toward an object or situation, which provides a tendency to respond favourably or unfavourably to the object or situation.

Whilst Fazio (1986:207) stated that:

attitudes are summary judgements of an object or event which aid individuals in structuring their complex social environments.

Eagly & Chaiken (1993:1) described:

attitude [as]... a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour;

and Ajzen (2008:530) indicated that:

attitude is the tendency to respond to an object with some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness. It is the

evaluative reaction to the attitude object that is considered to be at the core of a person's attitude.

These statements help to highlight that the complexities and nature of attitude cannot easily be explained and have led to some controversy as to whether attitude can be relied upon as a measure when explaining and predicting behaviour. Regardless of the lack of agreement on a single definitive definition of attitude, there are some similarities between existing definitions. One such similarity is attitude intimates the implicit and explicit reference to individuals' prior experience or knowledge of an object or event which influences their attitude to be favourable or not towards it.

Fishbein (1997) raised concerns over the obsession social psychologists have with the definition of attitude. He stressed that the more fundamental question is 'why individuals choose to behave the way they do'. He emphasises the need for more research to concentrate on behaviour, real-world issues and factors that underlie the decision making process rather than spending so much time exploring cognition and judgemental processes.

Early research by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) explored attitudes and human behaviour in an attempt to establish a definition and principles for the concept of attitude. They acknowledged three basic principles of various definitions, examples identified above: that attitude is learned, it influences

actions, and these actions toward an object are consistently favourable or unfavourable. However, one of the major problems to emerge was that the three principles identified provided social psychologists with the opportunity to include multiple interpretations of the term attitude. It is the failure to distinguish attitude from other concepts such as morals, opinions, beliefs, attributes, personality traits, dispositions and values which causes confusion and ambiguity. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) highlighted that the three principles of consistency, predispositions and learned, embedded and distinguished between the attitude and the multitude of other concepts.

Earlier, Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) proposed that attitude consistency comprised of three main types: stimulus-response consistency, response-response consistency and evaluative (or affective) consistency. They defined these in the following ways. Stimulus-response consistency: when observation of an individual performance consistently records the same response(s) to a given stimulus object. Response-response consistency: is the degree of consistency between different responses toward an object: these may appear inconsistent, but the response may be directed at different dimensions which would result in consistency to one dimension and not another. Both the above consistency types do not distinguish other concepts, for example, habit, trait, drive or motive. The third, evaluative consistency: comprises multiple behaviours in different contexts, which indicates that an individual may perform a different behaviour towards an object on different occasions. It is considered that

all the consistency types are measured using the evaluative or affective dimension and it is the evaluative (affective) consistency which has been regarded by social psychologists (Fishbein 1967b; Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1957; Thurstone 1931) as the most distinctive. The different types of consistency imply different means of measuring and assessing attitude, but it is the evaluative consistency which is predominantly relied on for attitude measurement.

The following explores attitude as a predisposition - attitudes are considered to be latent variables which influence behaviour. This view has implications that attitudes are not identical and cannot be observed directly, but inferred through observed behaviour consistency. As indicated above, there are three response consistencies which can lead to various interpretations. The issues over the nature of disposition leads to the third area, which indicated that attitudes are learned; Fishbein & Ajzen (1975:9) argued that:

the social scientist confronts the formidable task of trying to explain the behaviour of organisms with complex and unique past experiences [and also that it is] widely accepted that residues of this experience influence or modify behaviour of the organism.

Generally, it is considered that attitudes are derived from residues of past experiences and that variables are frequently used to reflect them. In

conclusion, investigations have not progressed much further toward a single definition of attitude, as the identified three principles raised more unanswered questions. Definitions cannot evolve in isolation: they are derived from research using conceptual frameworks; the next section will consider two of these in connection to exploring attitudes.

4.2.2 Conceptual Frameworks

A number of conceptual frameworks have been developed through theoretical and empirical study; however, there are two models which have received the most attention. These are: the multidimensional construct (a three construct model: affective, cognitive and conative/behavioural) which concentrates on the definition of attitude as evaluation of an entity with some degree of favour or disfavour; and the unidimensional construct (concentrating on a one construct model: affective) which explores the attitude-behaviour concept.

Each construct has its supporters. Allport (1935) argued strongly that a single evaluation dimension could not fully encompass the complexity of the concept of attitude; his views led the way to the development of the multidimensional construct of attitude. By the late 1950s, the multidimensional model of attitude was adopted almost universally. The framework focused on the notion that attitudes were complex systems which inclusively involved a combination of three reactions to an object or situation: affective (emotions, such as, love and hate, like and dislike), cognitive (belief, with regard to opinions/ideas about an attitude

object/situation), and behavioural/conative (behavioural intentions/action tendencies).

Allport's (1935) framework proved to be an inclusive view of attitude which embraced all the experiences of the individual toward a given object, although as a result the only conclusion that could be assumed was the strong link between attitude and behaviour.

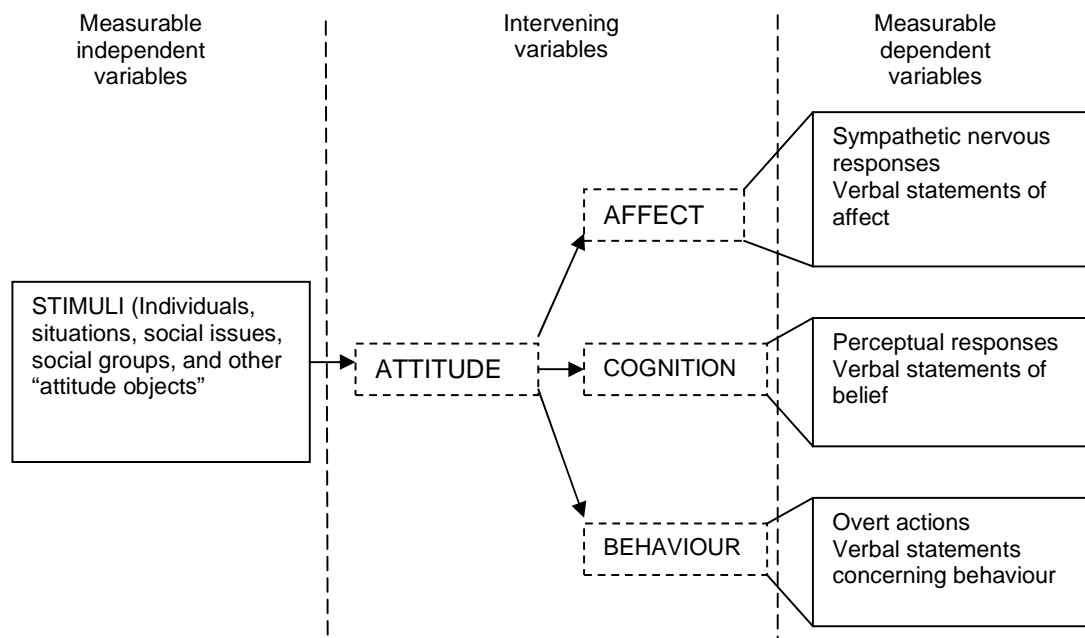


Figure 4.1 Three-construct view of attitude (Rosenberg and Hovland 1960)

Figure 4.1 shows a schematic diagram that represents the three constructs of the multidimensional framework. The responses to all stimuli are intervened by the individual's attitude toward them, then dependent on response, are categorised into either: cognitive, affective or

behavioural/conative. Fundamental to this model was that all three categories had to be assessed through the measurement of responses in order to gain a full understanding of attitude. The model rejects the measure where only one or two data categories were gathered, as this would deem the research incomplete and not a true test of relations between attitude and behaviour.

Research using this framework found only low links between attitude and behaviour. The explanation argued that when measuring attitude the most common assessment was the affective category, but this did not provide all the constructs for a true test (Cartwright 1949; Eagly & Chaiken 1993; Katz & Stotland 1959; Rosenberg & Hovland 1960; Smith 1947). Research using the multidimensional construct revealed a lack of consistency between the three reactions: affective, cognitive and behavioural, as individuals think or act differently from the way they feel. As a result, the unidimensional model emerged as a more workable framework (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Petty & Cacioppo 1981), although some felt definitive judgement was a little premature (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

The unidimensional construct considered the concepts with regard to “the affective construct of attitudes as the only relevant indicator of their evaluative nature”; affect and evaluation are used interchangeably, focusing on this single construct of attitude (Stahlberg & Frey 1997:208). The unidimensional construct developed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), namely the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and its successor, the Theory of

Planned Behaviour (TpB) (Ajzen 1985; 1988; 1991; Ajzen & Madden 1986) are arguably the most researched and influential (Ajzen 2001; 2000; Armitage & Conner 2001) and will be explored in the course of this study. The next section provides a more in-depth explanation of the development of this conceptual framework.

4.2.3 The Theories of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, which derived from work that initially started in the late 1950s. The theory was “born largely out of frustration with traditional attitude-behavior research, much of which found weak correlations between attitude measures and performance of volitional behaviors” (Hale, Householder & Greene 2003:259). The early work concentrated predominantly on issues surrounding attitude theory and measurement (Fishbein 1963), with work over the last few decades specifically focusing on predicting and understanding behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein 1970; Ajzen & Fishbein 1977; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Fishbein 1967a; Fishbein 1973). The original Theory of Reasoned Action was introduced in 1967 (Fishbein 1967a) and since then has continued to be developed, refined and tested. However it remains the foundation of subsequent research using this conceptual framework.

According to Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), individuals are rational beings who methodically use and process available information. The Theory of Planned

Behaviour indicates a 'casual chain' that brings together beliefs, which are generated from available information about:

the person's attitudes, beliefs, and attitudes to intentions, and intentions to behaviour. Since the performance of behaviour may provide the person with new information that again influences his or her beliefs, the causal chain starts all over again (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975:iv).

The Theory of Reasoned Action described the association between beliefs, attitudes, intention and behaviour, and it is these concepts that can be used to predict, explain and influence human behaviour. Often the four terms: beliefs, attitudes, intention and behaviour are used interchangeably, although Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) emphasises the necessity to distinguish between the four variables and stress it is this distinction which highlight the relationship among them. The distinction reverts back to the trilogy of affect, cognition and behaviour/conation; where affect is associated with an individual's feelings toward and evaluation of something, for example, object, person, issue or event; cognition recognises the individual's awareness of something, for example, knowledge, opinions, beliefs and thoughts; and behaviour/conation links behavioural intention and actions with regard to something. The importance of predispositions to behave in a certain way rather than the behaviour itself when considering attitudes leads to the need to distinguish between behavioural intention and actual behaviour. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) summarised the four broad categories:

affect (feelings, evaluations), cognition (opinions, beliefs), conation (behavioural intentions) and behaviour (observed overt acts). In accordance with these distinctions, the term “attitude” refers to affect, whereby an individual’s evaluation of an object is favourable or unfavourable; the term “belief” refers to cognition, it is the individual’s beliefs that provides an ‘informational base’ or foundation of this conceptual structure; and the term “intention” refers to conation/behaviour, the intention to perform certain actions or behaviour toward an object.

The Theory of Reasoned Action does not constrain itself to a single behavioural domain. It attempts to pull together diverse theories and approaches of attitude research – it can be used to explain almost any behaviour. Figure 4.2 shows a schematic representation of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, 1980) which depicts the sequential relationship among beliefs, attitude, subjective norm, intention and behaviour.

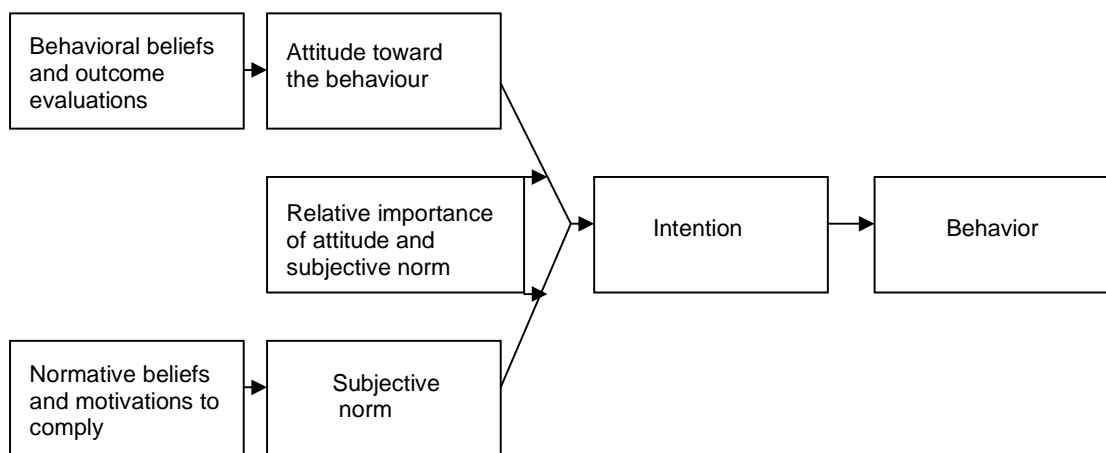


Figure 4.2 Schematic diagram of Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action indicates that intention has two main determinants, one personal in nature and the second which reflects social influence (Ajzen 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). The first, *Attitude toward the Behaviour* is the personal element, where an individual has a positive or negative evaluation of achieving the behaviour. The second, *subjective norm* is the social influence, which considers a person's perception of social pressures that impact on whether or not to perform certain behaviours. In short, someone will have the intention to perform a given behaviour if it is evaluated positively and if it is considered that important others think they should do it (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). In addition, attitudes are the function of beliefs, if a person believes certain behaviours result in positive outcomes then that person will have a favourable attitude toward performing the behaviour and vice versa. A person's attitudes are underlined by their beliefs toward the behaviour, these are termed *Behavioural Beliefs*. Subjective Norms are also beliefs: these are linked to the individual's belief regarding what specific persons or groups think about whether or not the individual performs the behaviour - the underlying beliefs of Subjective Norms are a person's *normative beliefs* and motivation to comply. Subjective Norms could put pressure on an individual to perform a certain behaviour or not, regardless of the individual's actual Attitude toward the Behaviour. The theory makes the assumption that Attitude toward Behaviour and Subjective Norms rely, to some extent, on the intention being considered (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980).

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the characteristics of the Theory of Reasoned Action locate the cause of a person's behaviour through their prominent beliefs via a number of steps. At each stage through the framework from behaviour to beliefs more information is derived that in turn informs the behaviour. Initially, behaviour is considered to derive from intention, although subsequently intentions are defined through Attitudes toward the Behaviour and Subjective Norms to beliefs regarding the outcome of a behaviour being performed and what relevant others' expectations may be. Ultimately an individual's behaviour can be explained by their beliefs. These beliefs contain the individual's information (accurate or not) regarding themselves and the world around them and the behaviour is directed by the information. The above considered other variables, for example, demographic characteristics and personality to have an impact only if they have influenced beliefs that underlie the attitudinal or normative determinants of the behaviour. The Theory of Reasoned Action was recognised to have limitation when considering intention and behaviour; it lacked recognition of volitional control (people's actual control or lack of it) (Ajzen 1988).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, as with the original the core focus is a person's intention to perform a given behaviour. However, in addition, this conceptual framework proposes three independent determinants rather than two. The three are namely the original two determinants: Attitude toward the Behaviour and Subjective Norms, plus an additional one: Perceived

Behavioural Control (which refers to the individual perception of ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and assumes to reflect past experiences, and potential outcomes accordingly).

According to Ajzen's (1988) publication *Attitudes, Personality and Behaviors* he stated:

as a general rule, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm with respect to a behaviour, and the greater the Perceived Behavioural Control, the stronger should be the individual's intention to perform the behaviour under consideration (Ajzen 1988:132).

The theory focuses on the potential effects of Perceived Behavioural Control on completion of behavioural goals, but is not interested in the amount of control an individual may have in a given situation. However intentions first highlight a person's willingness to perform a certain behaviour, perceived control will generally take account of actual constraints at that moment, which should offer more useful information than just intentions alone.

Figure 4.3 (below) depicts an early schematic diagram of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1988) which includes the additional determinant of Perceived Behavioural Control.

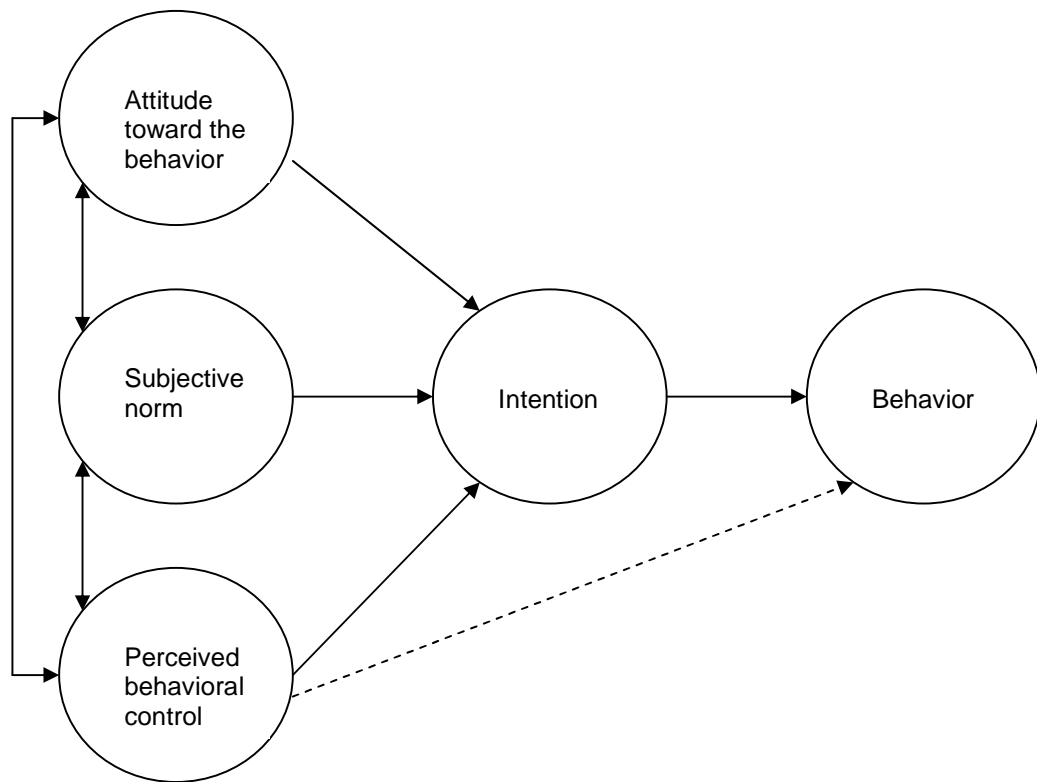


Figure 4.3 Schematic of Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1988)

The schematic diagram shows that the third determinant has two major characteristics; firstly that Perceived Behavioural Control comprises the motivational implications for intention and that motivation toward behavioural intention is only present if all external variables are satisfied to provide the favourable outcome sought. The second is the potential direct connection between Perceived Behavioural Control and Behaviour, if, as above, the external variables are favourable (Ajzen 1988; Ajzen & Madden 1986).

Perceived Behavioural Control is likened to Bandura's (1986, 1997) self-efficacy theory, that a person must believe that they possess the necessary skills and abilities to perform a given behaviour successfully under a variety of circumstances. Nevertheless some researchers (Fishbein 1997) have not been convinced that the third determinant can be classified as an independent determinant of behaviour. This is due to the way Ajzen (1991) has operationalised this additional determinant, portraying it as an attitude measure of whether a behaviour would be 'easy or difficult' rather than whether the individual 'could if they wanted' perform the behaviour.

Fishbein (1997) argued that Perceived Behavioural Control and self-efficacy have similar limitations as currently operationalised because it appears to have a strong resemblance to attitude measure and does not, at the respondent level, show any marked distinction between the two. However, Fishbein (1997) does not completely disregard the possible inclusion of Perceived Behavioural Control or self-efficacy, but not as currently differentiated. Notwithstanding the above concerns, the Theory of Planned Behaviour has grown in popularity to become one of the most widely researched attitude models (Armitage & Conner 2001).

In 2002 Ajzen (2002b) presented his enhanced schematic diagram of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which is shown below as Figure 4.4. This is a more detailed and inclusive model which depicts the different belief foundations for each determinant and actual behavioural control construct.

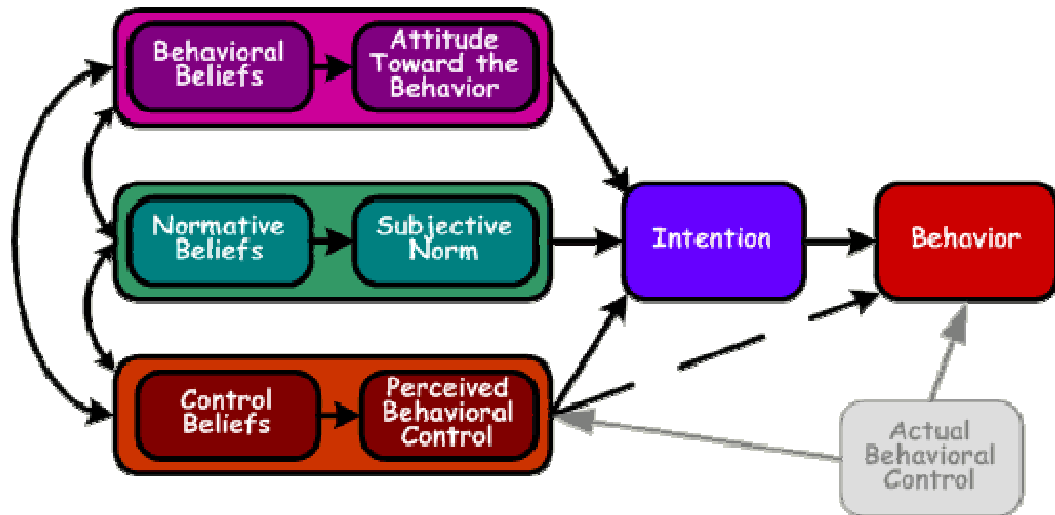


Figure 4.4 Revised Schematic Diagram of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 2002b)

Ajzen (2002b:2) provides a brief summary which indicates that:

according to the ‘Theory of Planned Behaviour’, human action is guided by three kinds of considerations: beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of outcomes (Behavioural Beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations (Normative Beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs).

Ajzen's empirical model investigated localised social determinants of the individual whereby they themselves provide a measure of their own beliefs towards certain stimuli, offering an insight into factors that influence attitude, behaviour and intentions. The Theory of Planned Behaviour offers a framework for developing theory-based interventions that aim to change behaviour (Rutter & Quine 2002).

Fundamental to the theory is the recognition that all people are individuals who carry with them the accumulation of multiple generations of experience passed down through genetic endowment, in addition to outcomes of unique personal life residues. These differences ensure each individual is unique and full of complexities, which have been shaped by historical processes and events which continuously challenge attempts to understand human behaviour (Ajzen 1988). Researchers (Ajzen 1988, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fishbein 2000; Fishbein, Triandis et al 2001) have stressed repeatedly that the relative importance of attitudes, Subjective Norms, and perceptions of Behavioural Control for the prediction of intentions is expected to differ depending on behaviour and/or population in question.

A pilot study by Choli (2003) revealed that participants seemed to place greater emphasis on socio-personal barriers, for example, poor experiences of education, lack of interest in learning or computers/ICT,

fear of failure, lack of awareness of ICT and its potential for improving quality of life than on economic/financial barriers. The study highlighted a strong relationship between the individuals' past experiences and their current attitude and behaviour when responding to certain stimuli relating to learning, new skills and technology. Ajzen and Fishbein (2004) stated that people's behaviour follows reasonably from their beliefs, attitudes and intentions and that past behaviour is a good predictor of future actions (Ajzen 2002a).

The following page acknowledges the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a research model that can be adopted to investigate attitudes, behaviour and intentions of people in a diverse range of areas. It identifies a number of research papers that have used the theory to explore and analyse the relationship between an individual's behavioural intention and his/her actual behaviour.

Theory of Planned Behaviour and its Application

The Theory of Planned Behaviour is a legitimate established theory which is widely used in educational research to investigate areas of primary and secondary education as well as further and higher education. The Theory has also been used in wider areas of research outside education to investigate areas such as: healthcare, public relations advertising and campaigns.

Fishbein M and Coombs F S., (1974) Basic for decision: An attitudinal analysis of voting behaviour. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 4. 95-124

Fiske S T., (1998) Stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. In D T Gilbert, S T Fiske & L Gardner (Eds), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 2, 357-411) Boston M S: McGraw-Hill

Schifter D B and Ajzen I., (1985) Intention, perceived control, and weight loss: An application of the theory of planned behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 49. 843-851

Albarracin D, Johnson B T, Fishbein M, and Muellerleile P A., (2001) Theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour as models of condom use: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*. 127. 142-161

Van Hooft E A J., (2005) Moderating Effect of Gender and Family Situation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 67. 2. 133-152

Shevlin M and Millar R., (2006) Career Education: An Application of Latent Growth Curve Modelling to Career Information-Seeking Behaviour of School Pupils. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. 76. 1. 141-153

Chen C H and Zimitat C., (2006) Understanding Taiwanese Students' Decision-Making Factors regarding Australian International Higher Education. *International Journal of Education Management*. 20. 2. 91-100

Elliott M A, Armitage C J and Baughan C J., (2007) Using the theory of planned behaviour to predict observed driving behaviour. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. 46. 69-90

Everson E S, Daley A J and Ussher M., (2007) Brief Report: The Theory of Planned Behaviour Applied to Physical Activity in Young People who Smoke. *Journal of Adolescence*. 30. 2. 347-351

Myklestad I and Rise J., (2008) Predicting Intentions to Perform Protective Sexual Behaviours among Norwegian Adolescents. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*. 8. 1. 107-124

The preceding chapters have explored and discussed the background information and issues that impact on this study. The chapters were broken down into the Local Context and Political Initiatives: Political and Economic initiatives, Regional Context, Digital Divide toward Digital Inclusion, IT in an Educational Context, and Barriers to participation; Broader Context: IT and the Digital Divide, Development and Penetration, Digital Divide, Political and Social Context, Economic Context, and Role of New Digital Technologies; and Theoretical Context: Social Psychological Perspectives, Historical Background and Attitude Definition, Conceptual Frameworks, and Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour. The chapters that follow examine the Methodology: the methodological approach using the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Analysis and Discussion to address the following research questions.

Major Research Question

To investigate the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

Minor Research Questions

To investigate the impact that individuals' gender has on attitudes and behaviours as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

To investigate the impact individuals' age has on attitudes and behaviour as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

To investigate the impact the level of educational qualifications has on individuals' attitudes and behaviours as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

To investigate the impact that responsibility for children has on individuals' attitudes and behaviours as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

To investigate the impact that an individual's ethnicity has on attitudes and behaviours as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

5.1 Summary

Investigations into the challenges of the digital divide have revealed a necessity for more of the population to be IT literate. People need to gain the digital technological skills to meet both the social and economic demands of a rapidly evolving world. Research (Freshminds 2009) has indicated that the greatest challenge for digital inclusion is posed by those groups who are not only digitally excluded but also socially excluded and that the task of engaging these groups will only get tougher. These deprived groups are hard to reach and have shown little interest in or confidence to learn new IT skills.

Central Government has published a number of initiatives with regard to the digital divide and digital inclusion in deprived communities, for example, *A world of opportunity: Strategic Plan for e-skills 2001-2004* (NTO 2000); *Closing the Digital Divide: Information and Communication*

Technology in Deprived Areas (DTI 2000); *The Digital Divide in a World City* (Foley et al 2002); *National Skills Strategy '21st Century Skills Realising our Potential'* (DfES 2003c); *ICT and Employability: A Case Study of Clients using UKonline Centres* (DfES 2004a); *Leitch Review of Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills* (2006); *Digital Inclusion – A discussion of the Evidence Base* (Freshminds 2007); and *Digital Britain* (DBIS 2009a, 2009c). These revealed the continued problem with digital inclusion.

This research study has used the Theory of Planned Behaviour to explore the attitudes, behaviours and intentions of socially excluded groups as they engage in learning with digital technologies. The research questions that will be examined in relation to the Theory of Planned Behaviour are listed on pages 82 and 83.

5.2 Introduction

This study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The main instrument for data collection was a questionnaire using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The study focused on deprived areas of a borough in a South East London and the questionnaire was distributed amongst people living in these areas. In addition, a number of semi-structured interviews were carried out with individuals from client groups referenced above who voluntarily agreed to take part in this aspect of the study.

5.3 Context

This study investigated attitudes and behaviours of socially excluded individuals in deprived areas as they engage with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The study focused on socially excluded groups in an inner London borough using GO UKonline centres located in local voluntary and community centres. It specifically investigated how socio-personal factors influence attitudinal and behavioural barriers experienced by these socially deprived groups. It also reflected on the impact of these factors on their decision making, in order to begin to understand the individuals' interpretation of the world around them, focusing on their attitudes, behaviours and intentions.

Empirical data were collated through a substantial data collection process based on self-reporting, along with rich descriptions of social and human phenomena building complex layers of what occurs within the research setting, for example, interpretation, experiences, values and attitudes which provides a holistic snapshot through the analysis of words, self-reporting of respondents' views and through conducting the study in a natural setting (Creswell 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2008a, 2008b). This was carried out through a questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and a number of semi-structured interviews. The outcomes from this research will inform practice and local government decision making with regard to the provision of lifelong learning and access to IT in the community.

5.4 Methodological Approach

The methodological approach used for this investigation is post-positivist: rooted within social psychology. The study combined both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative data derived from the questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and qualitative data enriched the analysis and discussion. This combined approach provided opportunity for triangulation which enabled an alternative dimension to study the same social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln 2008a; Jink 1979). This has added breadth, depth and scope to the study. The quantitative aspect was the collection of data gathered through the dissemination of questionnaires and the qualitative aspect through the interpretative nature of the analysis of the questionnaire and the interviews. The qualitative focus aimed to capture the meanings and interpretation of individuals' experience, events and actions; and to understand the individuals' perceptions of the world: the personal, subjective and unique.

5.5 Population and Sample

The population that participated in this study were individuals living in local deprived areas of the borough that used their local community centre for various reasons. The criteria for participation were: that individuals had not achieved in formal education, were from a recognised socially excluded group and were about to or had recently engaged in learning with their local GO UKonline centres.

The population sample was not a random selection; this was a purposive sample as the participants fitted the required criteria for the enquiry. The questionnaires were distributed to 270 adult participants aged 16+, representative of gender, age, ethnic background, employment status and academic achievements. There were 174 respondent volunteers who completed the questionnaire from centres across the borough. The quantitative data from the questionnaires allowed inferential chi-square analysis. There was no attempt to gain a representative sample of these groups based on national statistics, although an unintentional local representation sample of participants was achieved which naturally occurred over the distribution period (Local Statistics Appendix 1).

In addition, six participants agreed to take part in an in-depth one-to-one semi-structured interview; the interviewees were selected from a wider number of volunteers. This was a convenience sample selected to reflect the community. The interview questions were informed by the analysed questionnaire data. The interview process was to gain first-hand interviewees' view of the world, their perceptions and experiences which would add rich qualitative data. The data provided ample opportunity to explore participants' evaluative perceptions and reflective comments into attitudes and behaviours of socially excluded individuals in socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

5.6 Data Gathering Techniques

The data gathering techniques used within the study comprised questionnaires and individual semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was developed using the Theory of Planned Behaviour and was the primary data gathering method. At the questionnaire development stage examples of questionnaires using the Theory of Planned Behaviour were investigated. The example questionnaires specifically measured attitudes, behaviours and intention which enhanced an earlier pilot study questionnaire by Choli (2003); the original questionnaire had some shortcomings and did not produce the extent or quality of quantitative data required. The improved questionnaire was constructed adopting the Ajzen (2004) Theory of Planned Behaviour model. The outcomes of the questionnaire informed the development of interview questions for the latter stage of the research process and proved to be very useful in gathering rich qualitative data.

The use of mixed-method approach offered the opportunity for triangulation, which added validity and reliability to the data collected as it provided corroborating evidence which sheds light on the themes and perspectives (Creswell 2007; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Patton 1980, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998). Table 5.1 below provides a summary of the research methods, the distribution and type of analysis used.

Method of Data Collection	Participants/Distribution	Type of Analysis
Questionnaire based on Theory of Planned Behaviour	270 Distributed 174 Returned 174/270 = 60%	Inferential statistics: chi-square (χ^2)
Semi-Structure Interviews 1:1	6	Emergent themes

Table 5.1: Summary of Research Methods

5.6.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour was distributed to approximately 270 volunteers with a return of 174. The questionnaire was devised to gather data on the various constructs integral to the Theory of Planned Behaviour model (see Figure 5.1 below): Behavioural Beliefs leading to Attitudes towards the Behaviour, Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms, Control Beliefs along with Perceived Behavioural Control, all of which are inter-linked and lead to Intention and Behaviour and thus Actual Behavioural Control (Ajzen 2002b).

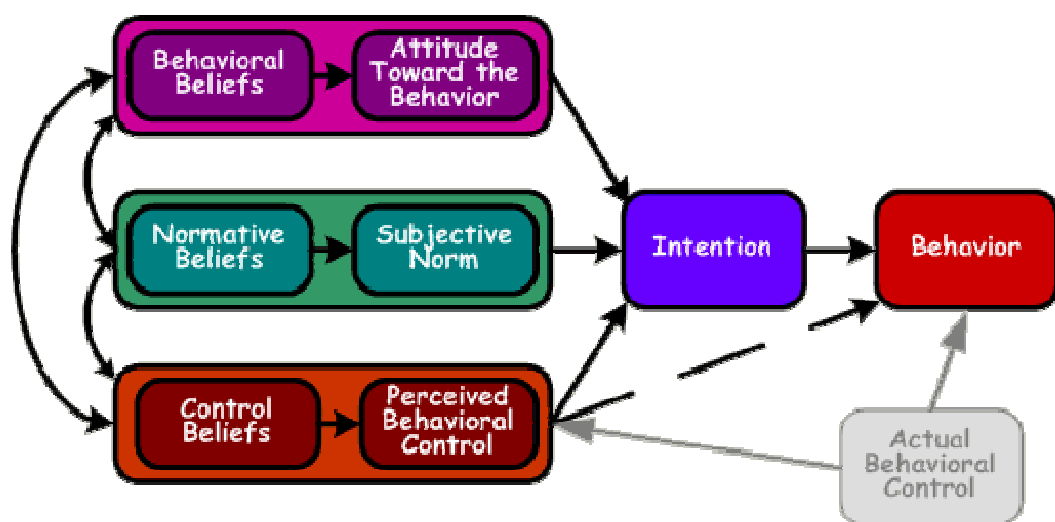
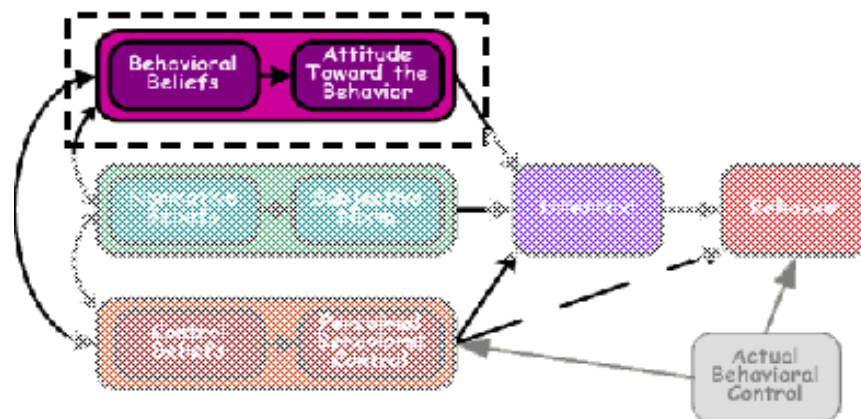


Figure 5.1 Construct parts of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

The following below shows schematic diagrams of the Theory of Planned Behaviour which highlights each construct part, referenced with an example question taken from the questionnaire.

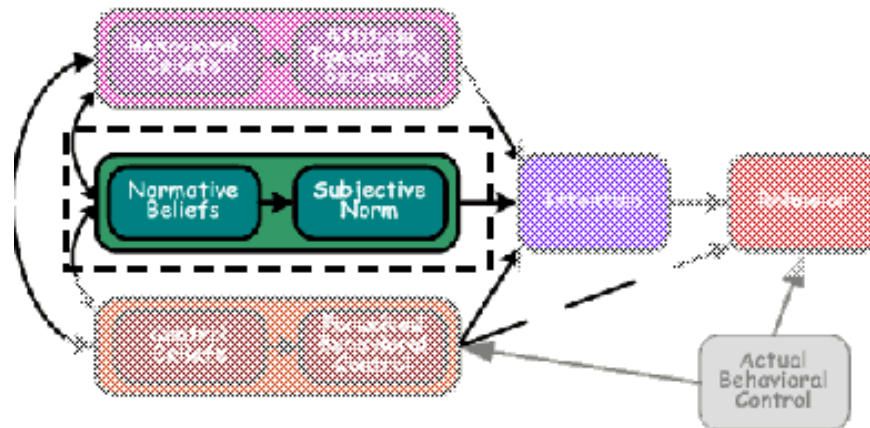
a) Behavioural Beliefs and Attitude toward the Behaviour



Behavioural Beliefs connect the behaviour of interest to expected outcomes. A behavioural belief is the subjective probability that the behaviour will generate a given outcome. *Attitude toward a Behaviour* is the extent to which performance of the behaviour is positively or negatively valued (Ajzen 2002b:1).

Constructs	Question No
Behavioural Beliefs (BB)	36/37/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50
<hr/> <p>36. For me learning new computer skills and gaining qualifications will help me find employment</p> <p>Extremely true : <u> 1 </u> : <u> 2 </u> : <u> 3 </u> : <u> 4 </u> : <u> 5 </u> : <u> 6 </u> : <u> 7 </u> : Extremely false</p> <hr/>	
Attitude to Behaviour (A2B)	11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/ 19/20/21/22/25/30/33
<hr/> <p>11. For me to attend a computer skills learning activity is</p> <p>Extremely good : <u> 1 </u> : <u> 2 </u> : <u> 3 </u> : <u> 4 </u> : <u> 5 </u> : <u> 6 </u> : <u> 7 </u> : Extremely bad</p> <hr/>	

b) Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norm

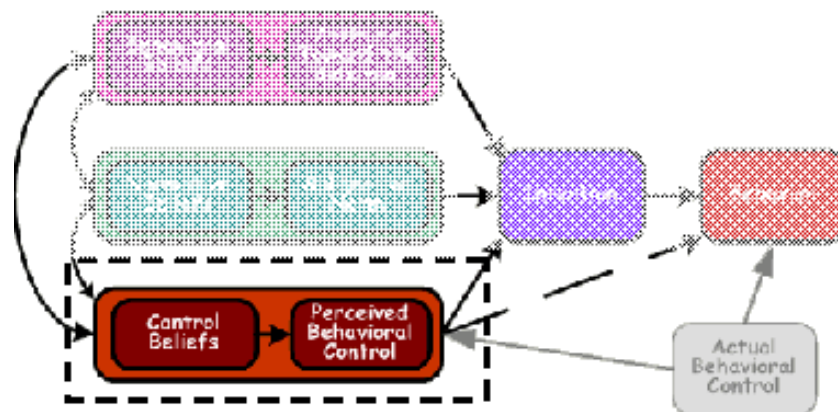


Normative Beliefs refer to the perceived behavioural expectations of such important referent individuals or groups as an individual's spouse, family,

friends or other significant others. *Subjective norm* is the perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a behaviour (Ajzen 2002b:1).

Constructs	Question No
Normative Beliefs (NB)	38/39/40/41/42/57/58/59/60
38. Generally speaking, how much do you care what the tutor of a course thinks you should do? Very much : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : Not at all	
Subjective Norm (SN)	24/28/34
24. Most people that are important to me think that I should : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : I should not attend a computer class on a regular basis	

c) Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control

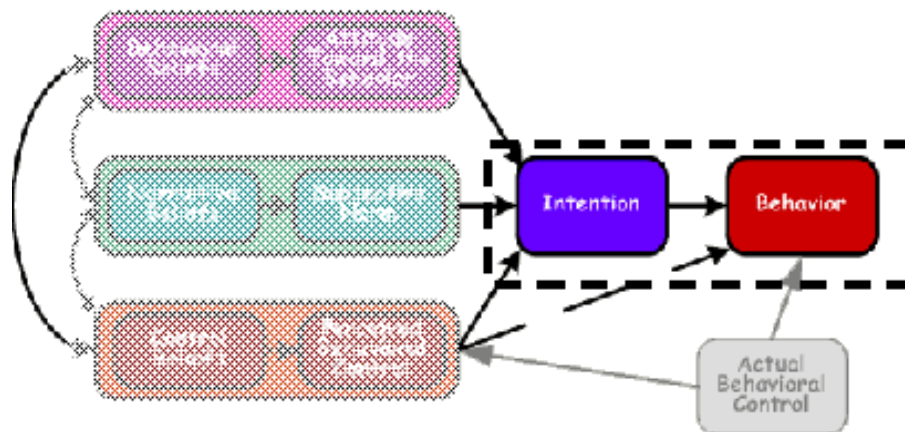


Control Beliefs represents the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour. *Perceived Behavioural*

Control refers a person's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen 2002b:1).

Constructs	Question No
Control Beliefs (CB)	51/52/53/ 54/55/56
51. How often do you encounter unexpected events that place demands on your time? Very rarely : <u> 1 </u> : <u> 2 </u> : <u> 3 </u> : <u> 4 </u> : <u> 5 </u> : <u> 6 </u> : <u> 7 </u> : Very frequently	
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	23/27/29/31/32
23. For me to attend a computer class on a regular basis is Extremely easy : <u> 1 </u> : <u> 2 </u> : <u> 3 </u> : <u> 4 </u> : <u> 5 </u> : <u> 6 </u> : <u> 7 </u> : Extremely difficult	

d) Intention and Behaviour (Past Behaviour Self-Reporting)



Intention is an indication of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of

behaviour. *Behaviour* is the manifest, observable response in a given situation with respect to a given target (Ajzen 2002b:1).

Constructs	Question No
Intention (I)	26/35
<hr/> <p>26. My planning to attend a beginners computer class on a regular basis is</p> <p>Extremely likely : <u> 1 </u> : <u> 2 </u> : <u> 3 </u> : <u> 4 </u> : <u> 5 </u> : <u> 6 </u> : <u> 7 </u> : Extremely unlikely</p>	
Past Behaviour Self-Reporting (PBSR)	61/62/63
<hr/> <p>61. My past experiences of learning and school were</p> <p>Extremely good : <u> 1 </u> : <u> 2 </u> : <u> 3 </u> : <u> 4 </u> : <u> 5 </u> : <u> 6 </u> : <u> 7 </u> : Extremely bad</p>	

Attitudinal questions are more sensitive than factual questions to changes in, for example, wording, context and emphasis. Reliability is impossible if questions are re-phrased as it changes the context and emphasis. The questionnaire comprised a number of 'evaluation' statements which are closely linked to the constructs of beliefs and intention in the Theory of Planned Behaviour and intuitively relevant to the attitude object of non-participation in free learning/IT activities.

Extracts of an example Theory of Planned Behaviour questionnaire (Ajzen 2004) were adapted to generate questions related to the attitude characteristics towards learning and use of IT for this study. Sets of questions with attitude scales are more reliable than single opinion items,

as they provide more consistent results. This is due to vagaries of question wording probably applying only to particular items, which will cancel out any bias, “whereas underlying attitude will be common to all the items in a set or scale” (Oppenheim 1992:147). In order to reduce the effects of bias, negatively worded items were also included – the scores were then reversed prior to analysis. The questionnaire was developed using the Likert scale method. This method is consistent with many other theorists (Eagly & Chaiken 1993; Fazio 1986; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Giner-Sorolla 1999; Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1957), who have come to consider this type of ‘evaluation’ format as the primary construct of attitudinal responses. The standard Likert scale generally use a five-point scale, whereas the questionnaire developed for this study consists of a seven-point scale, in line with the Ajzen (2004) example. The respondents indicated their degree of agreement with each statement along the seven-point continuum (e.g. strongly agree strongly disagree; extremely good extremely bad; very rarely very frequently). A full version of the questionnaire used in this study can be found at Appendix 2.

The newly devised questionnaire was piloted with a small sample of people from the chosen target group, at each stage during the development, in addition to the final modified questionnaire on which feedback was sought. As a result of the pilot, changes were made to the questionnaire. These included the re-wording of some questions as they were considered ambiguous, the removal of some questions that were thought to be

duplicates and also reduced the number of questions overall as feedback indicated the questionnaire was too long.

The final questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was disseminated to the Learning Co-ordinators (acting as research assistants) to self-administer to users across GO UKonline centres in the borough. A full briefing of the study and process was given to all research assistants. The benefits of self-administered questionnaires were that these ensured high response rates. This also provided an opportunity for accurate sampling with minimum interviewer bias and, further lent itself to a degree of personal contact. Volunteer participants were sought from individuals who used the voluntary and community centres. All participants received a full explanation of the study and were given the opportunity to take part. The participant respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire while attending the centre and did not take it away; the questionnaire took between 10-20 minutes to complete, and the research assistant was on hand to explain again where necessary how to complete it (but not to interpret questions). The Learning Co-ordinators monitored completion, collection and checking of the returns to ensure procedures were carried out in accordance with guidelines. The completion of questionnaires was completely voluntary and volunteers had the option to withdraw at anytime.

The data derived from the questionnaires were used to construct the semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews provided depth and richness from individuals' experiences.

5.6.2 Interviews

The data from the questionnaire analysis informed the interview stage of this study. Robson (1993) indicated that the interview approach allowed individual's views and feelings to emerge, whilst providing the interviewer some control. This method is used where a particular phenomenon is investigated and the people interviewed are involved in the situation.

In considering the limitation in relation to time and appropriateness, the option chosen was the semi-structured interview. This allowed enough freedom to delve into areas of concern further, but did not allow the conversation/discussion to ramble into unrelated directions. The interview consisted of a core schedule that assisted with the direction and facilitation of the process and the subtle development of themes and patterns. The interview schedule was piloted with two volunteers from the questionnaire sample to provide feedback, with modifications made wherever necessary. The interview stage consisted of six participants who were self selected, drawn from the earlier sample of participants and this did not include those who participated in the pilot. The volunteers were interviewed individually using the interview schedule. Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes and was held at a location chosen by the interviewee. All interviews were audio-taped with the permission of the

participants and then transcribed to avoid details being forgotten or missed out. Full explanation of the study was provided to all those volunteering, it was also indicated that all information provided would be completely anonymous in accordance with BERA (2004) guidance. Participation by volunteers was optional and they were also given the option to withdraw at anytime.

The interviews further informed the study by providing rich qualitative data, through the investigation of the wider social determinants of participants' actual experiences, their society and the culture that impacts on and mould them. This allowed both the interviewee and interviewer to share understanding through re-living the "complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who lived it" (Denzin & Lincoln 2008a:96).

This study recognised and encouraged the relationship between the researcher and the researched. The relationship should not be ignored as it must be nurtured to gain the full extent of the participants' interpretation of their knowledge of the worlds they live in. The relationship is considered an advantage, which is consistent with Lincoln & Guba (1985:76) who state that "interaction between investigator and respondents cannot be eliminated from the research equation ... one can regard their presence ... as an opportunity to be exploited". Accordingly, it is recognised that each participant in the interview process adds value to the process and provides a unique vantage point, which gives the

opportunity for direct discussion and develop areas of concern, adding to the rich content of their perceptions. It is recognised that the interviewer cannot view the experiences and interpretation of the interviewee subjectively and can only reliably convey it from an objective viewpoint, but as Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) emphasises it is imperative that the interviewer is reflexive and does not apply their own values in interpretation.

5.7 Data Analysis

5.7.1 Questionnaires

The raw data from the questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS statistical software application and used chi-square descriptive statistics and inferential testing (see Appendix 3). The chi-square test is a non-parametric test and suitable when subjects are assigned to one or more categories. As each subject is assigned to only one category, the chi-square test is only suitable for making predictions on how many of the individual subjects fall into each category.

The first section of the questionnaire comprised a number of questions which provided background information for participants that formed the variables for analysis. The questions that followed concentrated on the eight constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour: outcome evaluation; direct measure of perceived control, subjective norm, attitude and intention; motivation to comply; Behavioural Beliefs; Control Beliefs; power

of control factors; Normative Beliefs; past behaviour and self-reporting. The questions were presented in a non-systematic manner.

The chi-square analysis detected whether there was a significant association between constructs and variables, for example, gender and control beliefs and highlights patterns in the data, although it does not distinguish the strength of association. If the significance value is small enough (*Sig.* must be less than 0.05) then the hypothesis can be rejected as the variables are independent and accept the hypothesis that they are in some way related (see Appendix 3). These data were used for the discussion and analysis process of the study (Field 2002; Greene & D'Oliveira 1999).

5.7.2 Interviews

The interviews were transcribed and analysed with the intention of reconstructing the world view of the participants. The interviews and dialogue notes were used to investigate the socio-personal issues (perceptions, values and attitudes) which affects individual's attitudes and behaviours of the participation in free learning and IT access/skills training. The participants' interpretations and constructs of past experiences are re-lived and shared, rich with feelings and emotions. It is believed that the individuals' personal perceptions, interpretations, values and attitudes play an important role in shaping and guiding the individual through their worlds and that they construct meanings of the unknown in

relation to their understanding and perceptions of similarity, importance and implications.

Researchers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2002; Powney & Watts 1987) raise issues surrounding transcription of interviews with regard to misinterpretation of the respondents' answer, paralinguistic features, underlying meaning which could lead to queries around reliability and validity; these issues are acknowledged, although it should be recognised that the researcher is seeking responses which support themes and perceptions. No matter how much control the interviewee has during the interview, there inevitably could be a reversal in the latter stages during interpretation, as the interviewer "constructs the agenda which ... will be used to direct the analysis, the interpretation ... and reporting" of data (Powney & Watts 1987:78).

5.8 Validity and Reliability

The research methods used for this study have validity, as the questionnaire was based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and developed from an existing questionnaire; it was tested through a small pilot and amended where necessary prior to main distribution. The questionnaire can be replicated for similar studies to investigate attitudes and behaviour using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The questionnaire is a reliable instrument that can be replicated or reproduced by other researchers investigating aspects of the Theory of Behaviour. The semi-structured interviews were valid and reliable as the schedule was informed

by the questionnaire analysis, the self-selecting volunteer participants were fully briefed and interviews were confidential and anonymous, which can be replicated.

5.9 Ethics

Ethical issues were taken into consideration in the development of the questionnaire and the interview schedule; both confidentiality and anonymity of participants' personal details were assured and are non-traceable in the research. Full explanation of the research was provided to those involved, from research assistants to respondent participants. The research questions were not considered contentious or sensitive and, as a result, it was acknowledged that the volunteers' agreement to participate following explanation was acceptance of informed consent (BERA 2004).

All respondent participants were notified of their rights to withdraw at any stage or not to complete particular items in the questionnaire if inappropriate or not applicable. Respondents' reactions to individual questions were noted and non-completions were also noted and taken into consideration. It was felt that the degree of threat and/or sensitivity of the questions included in the questionnaire were fully taken into account during development and pilot stages and were not considered an issue.

The methods devised for this study were developed with rigor and fairness in mind. The development and implementation of procedures, guidelines and schedules assisted with consistency and effectiveness which avoided

bias and enabled the assurance of validity and reliability through systematic collection of evidence and data. All data were held securely and will be kept for five years.

5.10 Limitations

The limitations of the study were that individuals who were totally excluded could not easily be reached and were not willing to participate. The individuals who participated were those who had shown initial interest in IT training or were using the community centre's other facilities and willing to participate in the research, and fulfilled the required criteria. The participating individuals were underachievers from socially deprived backgrounds living locally and had not been involved in formal learning or skills training since leaving compulsory education. These individuals had only just started GO¹⁹ informal learning/skills training or were at the centre for another facility and were negative about engaging in learning as past poor experiences were still prominent in their minds. This study did not lend itself to the use of control groups or comparative study as this is the first one to use the Theory of Planned Behaviour in this context, this group and in this region. There was also an absence of an obvious control group.

¹⁹ GO is the abbreviation of the Case Study organisation Greenwich Online

5.11 Data Presentation

The questionnaires were analysed using chi-square (χ^2) inferential statistics on SPSS software. In Chapter 6 Analysis and Discussion the item number, question and the chi-square results were presented in the following tabular format:

Item No.	Question	Chi-test results
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Each set of results presented shows a question(s) that was linked to a construct of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and analysed against one of the five factual variables: gender, age, children, qualifications or ethnicity (see Table 6.1 for full breakdown). The results were then discussed and related to relevant literature. In addition, interview discussions and transcripts were also included in the analysis.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the data results in relation to attitudes and behaviours of socially excluded individuals in deprived areas as they engage with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The study specifically explored the impact of socio-personal attitudinal and behavioural factors that may impede participation, from a psychological perspective.

The analysis and discussion is based on chi-square data derived from the questionnaires based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The constructs of the theory were represented in the questionnaire: Behavioural Beliefs, Attitude toward the Behaviour, Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms, Control Beliefs, Perceived Behavioural Control, Intention and Actual Behavioural Control, which lead to a given behaviour. Statistical analysis

was carried out on the data from 174 questionnaires completed by 105 females and 69 males. Chi-square analysis allowed each of the 10 factual variables (gender, age, children, qualifications, ethnicity, use of PC, IT skills, length of time of PC use, PC owner and further learning) to be tested against the responses to the 53 questions of the questionnaires based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

In considering the 10 variables identified above, only gender, age, children, qualifications and ethnicity would be used for this current study. These variables were the most commonly used variables for research carried out by local and central Government as these provide more concrete measures. In addition, these variables were the ones specifically requested by my employer to inform business planning. The outcomes of the research would be used to target the hardest to reach individuals in local community through the identification of the impact that attitude and behaviour can have on influencing participation.

Table 6.1 shows the questionnaire items that proved to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) following chi-square tests for each of the variables in relation to the different constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualification	Ethnicity
BB	43/48	36/37/44/ 46/47/48/ 49/50	36/37/44/ 47/48	37/43/44/45/ 46/48/49/50	36/37/50
A2B	11/12/13/ 17/19	14/15/16/ 17/18/ 30/ 33	11/13/17/1 9/20/33	11/14/15/16/ 17/21/25/30	17/19/22/ 33
NB	40/41/57/ 58/60	38/40/58/ 59/60	38/41/42/ 59/60	38/40/41/42/ 58/60	38/39/40/ 41/42/57/ 59
SN	34	34	34	28/34	24/28/34
CB	51/52/ 53/ 56	51/52/53/ 56	51/54/55/ 53	51/52/53/54/	51/52/53/ 54/55
PBC	29	23/31/32	32	23/29/31	23/31
I	35	26	26	26	
PBSR	61/63	61/63	61/62	61/62	61/62/63

BB	Behavioural Beliefs	A2B	Attitude to Behaviour
NB	Normative Beliefs	SB	Subjective Norms
CB	Control Beliefs	PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
I	Intention	PBSR	Past Behaviour Self Reporting

Table 6.1: Theory of Planned Behaviour Significant Responses

Only a selection of the statistically significant results would be analysed with the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and discussed in relation to the literature. The constructs were selected to ensure a balanced spread across the variables, constructs and questions in relation to those areas that showed the highest levels of statistical significance. More importantly, through discussions with senior managers at the local authority, these were the areas that were considered to be of most use to advance the service provision.

Table 6.2 below shows the selected variables and the selected constructs used for analysis.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

Table 6.2: Analysis Grid of Selected Variables and Theory of Planned Behaviour constructs

As indicated above only a selection of the chi-squared data gathered would be analysed and discussed.

6.2 Questionnaires: Theory of Planned Behaviour

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour people usually behave in a sensible manner. They take account of information, both implicit and explicit, and consider the implications of any actions they may take. The Theory focuses on three basic determinants: the first is personal, which incorporates the individual's positive or negative evaluation of engaging in certain behaviour; the second reflects social influence, which is the individual's perception of social pressure to engage or not in a certain behaviour; and third antecedent of intention considers the ease or difficulty

an individual perceives a certain behaviour to be and is believed to reflect past experience and also possible eventualities, for example, barriers and problems (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Ajzen 1988). As indicated, each of the chosen variables was analysed against selected constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The first variable to be discussed is gender in relation to *Behavioural Beliefs, Attitude toward a Behaviour, Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms*.

6.2.1 Gender

Gender has consistently been used as one of the predominate variables to compare and measure IT participation in respect of learning, inclusion and the digital divide. Research by the Department of Trade and Industry (1999a, 2000, 2002c) has highlighted imbalances between women and men's access to and participation in IT. It has also revealed major differences in the adoption of new technologies between the genders, with a large proportion of women not taking advantage of the opportunities to gain IT skills. *The Internet in Britain* Report (OxIS 2007) confirmed the disparities between the genders. The adversity to digital technologies that women have raised was confirmed by one of the interviewees who said

... I don't do computers they're for young people, not for me I don't know anything about them - no no I don't want to, I'm not good at learning and it's really difficult and confusing. Hardly any of my girl friends use the computer, so I don't see the need, nor do they. My boyfriend talks about the Internet, but I don't know what all the fuss is about ...

However, research by Oll (2004) reported, that in the USA, gender difference in adoption had diminished, although this is contested by other studies (DTI 2002c; Foley et al 2002; UNDP/UNIFEM 2004) which indicated that in the UK and other countries, for example, Canada, India and Africa, there has been some increase in female take-up of new technologies, but strong gender disparities continued in paid and unpaid work and in leisure, study and employment.

From both the broad literature and the more anecdotal evidence we can see that gender is an important variable in relation to the current study:

Research Question

To investigate the impact an individual's gender has on attitudes and behaviours as they engage with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

The analysis of the data in this section is concerned with gender differences. Chi-square tests contrasting questionnaire items 11-63 with gender revealed 21 of the 53 items had a statistically significant difference between the responses of men and women ($p < 0.05$). The constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour selected for discussion in the context of gender are *Behavioural Beliefs* and *Attitude toward the Behaviour*, *Normative Beliefs* and *Subjective Norms*. These constructs were selected as they revealed the most statistical significance.

6.2.1.1 Behavioural Beliefs and Attitudes toward the Behaviour

Seven of the 21 items that proved to be statistically significant related to *Behavioural Beliefs* and *Attitudes towards the Behaviour* where the responses of women and men were significantly different.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

The analysis of Items 43 and 48 considered the differences between gender and *Behavioural Beliefs* in relation to attending classes and learning with the use of technology. The chi-test results revealed there was a statistical significance between women and men's Behavioural Beliefs.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
43	Attending a computer skills learning activity will help me gain a better understanding of how to use a computer? ²⁰	$\chi^2=13.878$, df 6, $p=0.031$
48	Attending a class regularly will help me develop good learning habits, self-discipline, and a feeling of self-satisfaction?	$\chi^2=12.851$, df 5, $p=0.025$

²⁰ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely"

These data suggested that the majority of women believe the above statements more strongly than men. In addition, the data indicated that their attitude towards this behaviour was positive, which suggested that their most recent interaction with learning or gaining skills, directly or indirectly, had proved to be a good experience and in turn had strengthened their salient beliefs towards this object²¹. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour individuals may hold a large number of beliefs about an object, but can only consider a small number (5-9) at any one time and that these salient beliefs are the immediate determinants of the person's attitude (Ajzen 2002; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Ajzen & Gilbert Cote 2008).

Regardless of the Behavioural Beliefs expressed above, studies (DfES 2002c; Foley 2002; PAT15 1999; OxIS 2007) have indicated that there continues to be a higher proportion of women who believe digital technology is irrelevant and has no use for them in their lives, which will further exclude these vulnerable groups if this practice continues. However, there are indications of a changing trend as revealed in a recent Intel survey (2004) which stated that women were catching up with men and were using computing technology in their daily lives more than ever. Intel (2004) further stressed that they see women as the driving force in technology adoption and stated that:

²¹ Ajzen's use of the term 'object' could be interpreted as: object, action, experience, function, practice or person.

Throughout the world, women are embracing technology as part of their family and work lives as well as social, spiritual and romantic occasions (Intel 2004).

Consequently, there are strong indicators that women are nurturing affirmative beliefs which will in turn lead to a positive attitude toward adoption of new technologies as proposed in the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

Items 11 and 17 refer to the respondent's *Attitude toward a Behaviour* with regard to attending a computer learning activity and having the opportunity to socialise with the tutor and other people.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
11	For me to attend a computer skills learning activity is? ²²	$\chi^2=14.555$, df 6, $p=0.024$
17	For me to have the opportunity to interact with a friendly tutor and other people in the learning session is?	$\chi^2=17.147$, df 5, $p=0.004$

²² Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely good" to "extremely bad"

These data revealed that a far larger proportion of women were in agreement with the statements. The statistical significance confirmed that women had a more positive attitude to attending a taught computer skills learning activity than their male counterparts.

In the context of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this suggests that the women's evaluation of the behaviour (identified in Items 11 and 17) had led to the belief that the subjective probabilities of attending a computer skills learning activity with a tutor and other people would produce a positive outcome. As a result, this has instilled a positive attitude toward the given behaviour and has resulted in a larger proportion of women being more secure about learning new computer skills by attending supported taught sessions.

Other research (DfES 2002b; DTI 1999) confirmed that women were more attracted to structured courses as they tended to lack confidence with new technologies – they perceived IT as very complex and technical, with jargon they could not understand. They were also less likely than men to attempt to investigate and learn how to use the PC on their own (DfES 2002c; DTI 1999b; PAT 15 1999). Case Study 5 describes the experience and journey that Eliza experienced as she took her first steps back to learning using computers.

Case Study 5 - Eliza

Eliza, aged 34, joined the GO Glyndon Community Centre, after many months of making excuses to herself about why she should not join. Eliza was very wary on her first visit because her past experiences of learning had not been good ones: she had left school with no qualifications, but realised that she could only learn if she attended a taught class. Eliza said:

“I was terrified of computers and I had not done any classes since I left school. I didn’t want to look like an idiot or be a failure – what would I tell everyone?”

Eliza wanted to better her job prospects and felt IT skills would help her reach her goal. She completed an introductory IT course which focussed on basic computer skills and she then progressed so well that she pursued a range of additional courses in PowerPoint, Excel and Word.

As a result of her new skills, she managed to secure a place as a volunteer working in the Glyndon Community Centre office helping with all things administrative and is seeking permanent employment.

Other reports (DfES 2002c; DTI 1999a; OxIS 2009) revealed that consistently lower numbers of women participated in acquiring new IT skills and using different aspects of technology. Some reasons provided by these reports were that women have a lower level of interest in new gadgets and technology; they did not feel that IT was useful to them in their daily lives, and they were concerned about making fools of themselves when trying to learn about new technology. Nonetheless, the

same research does show that there has been a steady rise in the number of women who are now participating, although this remains fewer than their male counterparts. Oll (2004) and Wellman and Haythornthwaite (2002) provided data that demonstrated that men overwhelmingly exhibit greater confidence about their knowledge of IT, even though some actually did not have the level of skills they thought they had and that generally it was men who were the early adopters of new digital technologies.

Items 12, 13 and 14 consider the respondents' answers to gaining skills and learning. The analysis revealed statistically significant differences based on gender, and indicated that a larger proportion of women agreed more strongly about the need to work hard to learn and gain computer skills than men.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
12	For me to gain computer skills is? ²³	$\chi^2=13.089$, df 5, $p=0.023$
13	For me to have the opportunity to learn is?	$\chi^2=11.829$, df 5, $p=0.039$
19	For me to work hard to learn new skills is?	$\chi^2=12.211$, df 5, $p=0.032$

These data suggested that women were more aware of the benefits of new digital technologies; although it was important to recognise that other research (DTI 1999a; 1999b) revealed that a majority of women were worried that technology was leaving them behind, especially as it became a more integral part of everyday life. These kinds of feelings are demonstrated by one of the female interviewees who said:

²³ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely good" to "extremely bad"

... I feel like ... everyone knows about computers and I don't ... my husband, the children and other people – if I don't try and learn how to use computers then I won't understand what they're talking about. People using the Internet and stuff like that ... but I'm really scared – I don't know anything and I was never very good at learning. What if I can't do it ... I really don't want to be the only person that doesn't know it ...

National Government initiatives and associated campaigns, for example, UKonline and Learndirect have played a major part in raising awareness of the need for e-skills²⁴ and the ease with which people can gain new skills and qualifications, free of charge and close to their homes. This has been reinforced by local authority agencies and the third sector²⁵ who promote the use of digital technologies (HMSO 2008).

However, more work still needs to be done to raise awareness of e-skills (Foley et al 2002, 2003). Recent research (DCLG 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) highlighted the growing inequalities surrounding socially excluded groups that do not engage or have access to digital technologies. Other research carried out by Freshminds (2007) and Ufi (2007) for UKonline centres stressed that there continued to be around a third of the UK

²⁴ The term e-skills describes skills that allow the use of a range of digital technologies

²⁵ The third sector is the term now used to describe the voluntary and community organisations that play a large part in promoting community cohesion

population, predominantly the most socially excluded from deprived areas, that do not use digital technologies.

The current study revealed a strong inclination that women who do take the first steps to learn new e-skills develop positive attitudes and gain confidence to continue with learning and gain qualifications. These findings were consistent with that of the DfES (2002a; 2002b). Conversely, the Pathways Adult Learning Survey (DfES 2004b) revealed that almost two thirds (65%) of non-learners were women and that an even higher proportion of women were lapsed learners. It also indicated that disengaged non-learners and lapsed learners were far less likely to be computer users than those who were regular learners (DfES 2004b). This could be an indication that the lack of or low levels of social pressures experienced by women to participate influenced their Normative Beliefs.

In relation to the research question (page 111), the data in the present study demonstrate that, with regard to gender, as analysed against Behavioural Beliefs and Attitude toward a Behaviour, reveal the following:

- Women have stronger positive Behavioural Beliefs towards the benefits/gains from learning and the use of new technology than men.
- There continued to be lower numbers of women participating in learning to use IT, although this is slowly increasing.

- Women were less confident than men with digital technology and often found it complex and too technical, which affected participation.
- Women had a more positive attitude toward regular attendance at structured classes than men.
- Women were more aware than men of the benefits of having digital skills and were worried that technology was leaving them behind.

The next section will discuss the variable gender against Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norm constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

6.2.1.2 Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norm

There were six items in the questionnaire that were statistically significant with regard to gender in relation to *Normative Beliefs* and *Subjective Norms*.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

Items 40 and 41 refer to the differences between the genders in relation to *Normative Beliefs*: what individuals believe other expect of them.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
40	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your close friends think you should do? ²⁶	$\chi^2=15.457$, df 6, $p=0.017$
41	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your children/dependents think you should do?	$\chi^2=14.145$, df 6, $p=0.028$

These data from the two items indicated that the women cared more than men about what their close friends and children thought they should do; the data also suggested that they participated in activities that others would approve of.

The Normative Beliefs construct of Theory of Planned Behaviour refers to individuals' perceived behavioural expectations of important referent persons, such as partners, family, friends, and children, but may also include teachers, co-workers and family doctors. The assumption is that these Normative Beliefs, in combination with an individual's motivation to comply with the different referents, will determine their Subjective Norm. The Subjective Norm is the perceived social pressure to engage or not in a behaviour (Ajzen 2002b; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). Research by the OxIS (2007), DfES (2002c), Foley (2002, 2003) and PAT 15 (1999) confirmed that higher proportions of people, and more especially women, from socially excluded groups were less likely to interact with digital technology.

²⁶ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "very much" to "Not at all"

Consequently, there could be adverse beliefs amongst important others surrounding the need to learn/gain e-skills: that is, the individual's Subjective Norm perceives that learning and gaining e-skills will not be supported by their important others. This can have adverse consequences for individuals who wish to participate, yet have someone close to them who does not condone what they are doing or is perceived not to approve. One of the interviewees, a female in her late twenties, indicated that she had registered on an IT course, but did not start because she said:

... my partner didn't want me to keep coming to the classes, he said I didn't need to know how to use computers, so I didn't want to do it any more ' cause it might annoy him. I did try to persuade him but he kept saying "no, you don't need that - but if you want to well you can ... you'll only find it hard and come home moaning" he had no faith in me. I was already nervous and he just made me worse ...

This low level of participation impacts on the local culture: if people are not aware of others close to them taking part in using IT, there is no motivation for them to do so either. Women tend to participate when others they know or their social groups also attend; they are more comfortable in their surroundings and are secure that it is acceptable to their close friends and family. In practice, the local GO service liaises with cultural groups and community organisations to encourage group participation. The groups learn together and as a result the participants

are with their friends and relatives, and they have fewer/no reservations. Research has shown that there are fewer females in formal education studying IT as a subject, even though those that do are stronger in the subject than their male counterparts; because so few women take the option to study computing or IT or are encouraged to so, the pattern of women with low confidence with technology continues (BERR 2008). The data from this study confirmed that women were more likely to participate if their important others approved.

Items 57, 58 and 60 considered further *Normative Beliefs*. The chi-squared analysis indicated statistical differences between men and women with regard to the motivation to comply.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
57	The tutor of the computer skills learning activity would think I should attend class on a regular basis? ²⁷	$(\chi^2=27.995, df 6, p<0.001$
58	My partner/spouse would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis?	$^2=22.780, df 6, p=0.001$
60	Other people I know would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis?	$\chi^2=22,208, df 6, p<0.001$

These data suggest that the motivation to comply with important referents' perceived expectations are higher in women than men. This suggested that their subjective norm is positive; this could also imply that their important referents were in approval of gaining computer skills: that they

²⁷ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely"

may already participate in the use of IT or other learning. Consequently, these women possess positive attitudes towards attending class regularly and learning computer skills; they were probably also motivated to succeed in order to meet the approval of their important others.

However, positive attitude does not always lead to the actual behaviour of attending regularly and learning (Ajzen 2002; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). Studies (DfES 2002b; DTI 2000; PAT15 1999) have highlighted major barriers that women experience to regular participation, for example, they tend to be the main carer for either children or other dependents in the household. These responsibilities lead to downward spiral of isolation and exclusion, and progressively to lack of confidence and low self-esteem. Nonetheless, many women appear to be looking at computers and related technologies as an avenue to improve their employability and/or ease their isolation. In a study by the DfES (2002b) women indicated they preferred the following topics: studying computer skills, learning computers to keep up, finding out what computers can do, learning computers to improve job prospects, learning to type letters, learning to make posters and meeting other people. These topics were usually delivered through structured activities which were referenced as the preferred mode of learning for the majority of women. In contrast, this study claimed that men preferred the drop-in mode of access for internet-based activities, such as, surfing the net for information, email, pursuing hobbies and research projects (DfES 2002b). In addition, men used online communication more frequently than women, although the gap was closing (OxIS 2009).

Item 34 referred to an individual's *Subjective Norm* and investigated perceived social pressure between men and women. The data indicated that perceived social pressure to engage applies at a statistically higher level to women than men.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
34	Most people whose opinions I value would approve of my attending a computer class on a regular basis? ²⁸	$\chi^2=17.644$, df 6, $p=0.007$

Social pressure is expressed by 'most people whose opinion I value would approve' which could include husband, son/daughter, mother/father and/or close friends and it is the motivation to comply to gain their approval that will assist the individual in coming to a decision, thus:

her subjective norm may exert pressure to perform or to not perform a given behaviour, independent of the person's own Attitude toward the Behaviour in question (Ajzen 1980:7).

Not all referents will be important and it is only salient referents who will influence the person's subjective norm. In this research, women agreed strongly that their close relatives and friends would approve of them attending a computer skills class, which has led to them participating on a regular basis. Other research by DfES (2002b, 2004d) and PAT15 (1999)

²⁸ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"

highlighted the view that women lack confidence and self-esteem, and that participation is made easier if they have the support and approval of their important referents.

A number of studies (DfES 2002b, 2004d; PAT15 1999) also indicated that women would more readily ask for help and advice from other family members and close friends, rather than investigate the computer on their own. It is problematic if women only use family members and close friends for help and advice when using new technology, as they may not optimise the full potential of the different technologies. They will also have major gaps in their learning which will affect the way they use the technology. These gaps in IT skills were recognised in research (DfES 2005b) which highlighted the 'spikey' profile²⁹ of most learners' IT skills levels. More explicitly it showed that formal diagnostics of skills across a range of applications resulted in word processing applications at level 2 (see Appendix 4), but with others, for example, spreadsheets at no level and others at entry level and level 1 (see Appendix 4). Moreover, many people may consider they are computer literate when they have only minimal IT skills that, though functional for social life, may have consequences for the workplace, and more importantly, for economic growth in the longer term (Leitch Reviews, HMSO 2006, 2005d).

²⁹ A 'spikey profile' is a pictorial assessment of a person's uneven skill levels for different software applications and/or knowledge of various technologies.

In relation to the research questions (page 111), the main findings in relation to gender and Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norm are as follows:

- Women's Normative Beliefs about what their close friends and children thought they should do were much stronger than their male counterparts.
- Women indicated that they were more likely to attend computer classes if they believed that their important referents would approve and if they believed they would not approve they would not participate.
- Women possessed stronger motivation than men to comply with what they perceived those who were important to them thought they should do, although this did not always lead to compliance because of other barriers, for example, care responsibilities.
- Women were more susceptible than men to social pressure and perceived that their close friends and relatives would approve of them attending computer classes regularly.

This section has focussed on gender, but age can distinctly be linked to gender with regard to using digital technologies and taking advantage of learning opportunities too. Research by the DfES (2002c) indicated that a larger percentage of males and younger people are more likely to use digital technologies and are more comfortable with new gadgets than females or older people. Age Concern (2001) indicated that there were far larger proportions of older women, in fact twice as many as older men,

who wanted to access the Internet and learn more about computers. The next section will investigate further the age variable in relation to the number of individuals taking advantage of free access to IT and skills training.

6.2.2 Age

Policies and research studies from the Becta (2008b), DfES (2002c), DTI (1999a) and NSO (2003, 2005) have highlighted digital inequalities³⁰ with regard to different age groups and the various levels of participation in the learning of new digital technologies. The usage pattern of new technologies is higher amongst the younger age group 16-25, slowly reducing in each group with the lowest proportion of IT adoption and use being amongst the 65+ age group (NSO 2003, 2005; Selwyn 2002). The broad literature shows age to be an important variable in relation to the current study with regard to the following

Research Question

To investigate the impact individuals' age has on attitudes and behaviour as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

Chi-square tests comparing questionnaire items 11-63 with age revealed that, inclusive of all the age ranges, 33 of the 53 items were statistically

³⁰The term 'digital inequalities' refers to the variation in peoples levels of awareness, skills, use and access to digital technologies

significant. This indicated that individuals from the different age ranges do experience factors that would facilitate or impede performance of attending IT skills training activities; these data were investigated more fully below. The analysis of the age variable will concentrate on *Control Beliefs*, *Perceived Behavioural Control*, *Intention* and *Past Behaviour Self Reporting* constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

6.2.2.1 Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control

Seven of the 33 items were statistically significant with regard to *Control Beliefs* and *Perceived Behavioural Control*. Briefly, Control Beliefs are the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour, for example, participating in the learning of new e-skills. It assumes that these Control Beliefs, in addition to the perceived power of each control factor, determine the prevailing Perceived Behavioural Control. Perceived Behavioural Control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour. It is assumed that Perceived Behavioural Control is determined by the total set of accessible Control Beliefs. More specifically, the strength of each Control Belief is weighted by the perceived power of control factors, and then the products are aggregated (Ajzen 2002a).

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

Item 51 proved there were statistically significant differences between the different age ranges in relation to unexpected demands on time.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
51	How often do you encounter unexpected events that place demands on your time? ³¹	$\chi^2=45.753$, df 30, $p=0.033$

The data suggested that there were differences with regard to the age ranges and factors that would impede on a behaviour, for example, an individual's participation on an IT course on a regular basis. Item 51 revealed a higher number of 36-45 year olds frequently encountered unexpected events, followed by respondents aged 46-55 and 56-65. Local statistics (Appendix 1) showed evidence that access to GO services by these age groups were lower in number which had implications for inclusion and raising aspirations. There is evidence (ODPM 2004b, 2005b) that adults, especially those from the above age ranges that live in

³¹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "very rarely" to "very frequently"

deprived areas, often experience multiple disadvantages some of which are serious and impact on their time to dedicate to taking up free IT learning opportunities or work. A recent study from ODPM (2004b:71) identified the multiple disadvantages including

- Low skill levels
- Cultural barriers
- Lengthy spells without work

It is difficult to quantify the number of adults who have multiple disadvantages due to the lack of joined-up support services which does not lend itself to tracking people and their data. However, research carried out by Berthoud (2003) stated that in 2001 there were approximately one million workless people with three disadvantages linked to employment.

The borough investigated in this study has a higher economic inactivity³² rate than the whole of Britain with 40,000 people not in work. Of those 9,000 indicated that they 'want a job', although the majority, over 30,000 stated that they 'did not want a job' (LSC 2004b). However, many adults (approximately 12,000 in the case of the study borough) were burdened with caring responsibilities, whether those were for young children/teenagers/grandchildren or other dependents, which had an impact on their participation/learning patterns. In addition, there are socio-economic problems such as housing, benefits and worklessness

³² Economic inactivity refers to individuals not in work

(Census 2001). This is confirmed by a male interviewee, aged 42, who encountered unexpected situations that placed demands on his time, he said

... I do try and come every week but you know things get in the way, one week I had to go and sort out my housing then the job centre keeps hassling me to look for a job ... I don't want one of them jobs that pays you next to nothing for my time. I know about computers ... I only need to come for you to show me the bits I don't know - you know what I mean. I want to get a good job and if I can use the computer properly that will help me and maybe I can get more money.

Recent reports by Aldridge and Tuckett (2005) and HMSO (2005d) have stressed that the UK workforce will be reliant on older skilled workers over the next decade and beyond. The impact of unexpected disruptions that affect digital inclusion and skills acquisition will have consequences for the future workforce and not alleviate the issues of long term worklessness (BIS 2009a). The Leitch report's (HMSO 2005d) forecast to 2020 which projected figures of demographic change to the workforce indicated

by 2020, there will be about 3.5 million more people in the working age population and the population will have aged significantly. Adults aged 50-65 years will account for 60% of the growth in the working age population. The contribution

of older people to the labour market will become increasingly important. By 2020, 30% of the working age population will be over 50, compared with 25% today (HMSO 2005d:8).

In the light of these projections, it is essential to improve people’s skills and imperative to increase the number of individuals especially from the 36-45 age range who show the highest majority that frequently experience unexpected events that impede on their attendance.

Items 53 and 56 proved to be statistically significant which indicated that the different age ranges experienced issues of family obligations which would impede on the performance of attending a learning activity on a regular basis.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
53	How often do family obligations place unexpected demands on your time? ³³	$\chi^2=78.393$, df 30, $p<0.001$
56	If I had family obligations that placed unexpected demands on my time, it would make it more difficult for me to attend a learning activity on a regular basis? ³⁴	$\chi^2=52.687$, df 30, $p=0.006$

These data suggest that those frequently experiencing family obligations were highest amongst those aged 16-25, closely followed by the 26-35 age range, then the 36-45 age groups. The DfES (2004b) recognised numerous barriers to learning, however the three most important specifically mentioned were commitment to family, children and care of adults,

³³ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “very rarely” to “very frequently”

³⁴ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”

especially amongst the above age groups. The geographical area of this current study has experienced high level concern over the rise in teenage pregnancies, which will have major implications for the development of the future workforce and their skills; these young people are least likely to have achieved at school.

The LSCLE (2002, 2004) recognised the barriers faced by different groups and indicated that initiatives would be put in place to alleviate the problem by removing these barriers. Unfortunately, these initiatives have shown limited benefits for the above age groups which in turn will have an adverse impact on the skills needs for the future economy as indicated in the Leitch Reports (HMSO 2005d, 2006).

These outcomes draw attention to the strength of an individual's perceived Control Beliefs, which is how these factors impede on their time and subsequently any learning activity and/or other behaviour. It is recognised that a major problem with adult learners is the interruption to learning due to life circumstances. This is especially true for people from socially excluded backgrounds that experience multi-faceted social and economic problems.

LSC (2002) research claimed that those individuals from deprived backgrounds who were also workless often experienced a sense of apathy and were more likely to have health issues; this was more prevalent in some age ranges. Item 52 considered whether individuals of different ages

often feel ill, tired or listless in ways that would hinder their participation in courses or learning activities.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
52	How often do you feel ill, tired or listless/cannot be bothered?) ³⁵	$\chi^2=49,680$, df 30, $p=0.013$

The age range 46-55 years indicated that they were more like to frequently feel ill/tired or could not be bothered. The result of this item was aimed at assessing the commitment of individuals to learning and acquiring IT skills. Overall this age group had the lowest participation level in any recorded learning. The analysis of data from the LSCLE (2006) and LSC (2006) on the volume of learners in both FE³⁶ and ACL³⁷, confirmed that the lowest participating group are those aged over 40 years old. In addition, local Greenwich Online data (Appendix 1), concurred that the 46-55 year old age range was the lowest participating group (local statistics do not contribute to the LSCLE figures). Consequently, the results of this study and the other data suggested that those that do participate also tend to exhibit less commitment, which affects regular attendance and ultimately skills and/or qualification attainment.

However, even though the 46-55s were amongst those who were more likely to perceive problems, this was not exclusive to them, as the 36-45 year olds followed closely behind. Other research by LSCLE (2006) indicated that the latter age group were amongst the highest participating

³⁵ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “very rarely” to “very frequently”

³⁶ FE is the abbreviation for Further Education

³⁷ ACL is the abbreviation for Adult and Community Learning

in learning, in predominantly qualification courses through FE and ACL. In addition, findings provided by the Big Lottery (2005) revealed that people studying for qualifications showed a progressive increase up to 35-44 years of age, but that post-44 there was a rapid decline. A joint Age Concern/NIACE study indicated that the decline was due to lack of confidence and low or out of date skills (Age Concern 2008).

A theoretical interpretation of the outcome offered through the Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests that individuals consider all the factors and their salient beliefs prior to decision-making, so when they considered Item 52 they realised they had the power of control when assessing this item, because the causes only involved themselves. A similar study by Ajzen & Madden (1986) on commitment to study (although not exclusive to the specified age group mentioned above, but nonetheless poignant) elicited salient beliefs about factors that might help or interfere with the performance of regular attendance of classes. The following ten factors were mentioned with greatest frequency by respondents: conflicting events, sickness, family obligations, employment, being tired or listless, transportation problems, upsetting personal problems, oversleeping or forgetting, heavy workload and failure to prepare. A DfES (2004b) research survey revealed that the top barrier to learning by a large proportion of individuals was that they preferred to spend time doing other things, which suggested that non-attendance or non-participation is often due to personal choice rather than health. It appears that people from socially excluded groups are less likely to interact with learning or IT and, if they

did, their attendance was often intermittent, with some individuals lapsing completely.

This raises issues for commitment, the implications to the individual's learning and notion of lifelong learning because it has far-reaching effects of continued no/low achievement which can lead to consolidating feelings of failure. Government initiatives that exploit the use of IT can provide people with the opportunity to learn and gain information with minimal formal attendance, although it does, in the first instance, require individuals to see the relevance and come forward (Becta 2008a). The DfES (2004a, 2004b) surveys indicated that those who took computer courses were more likely to continue with learning than those who did not. Consequently, this is confirmed by the Theory of Planned Behaviour which predicts that voluntary behaviours or behaviour over which the individual has a good deal of control is more likely to be performed. However, a person may strongly intend to perform a behaviour, but may refrain from actual performance because of personal inadequacies, such as that s/he does not possess the requisite ability, resources or opportunity (Ajzen 2002b).

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Perceived Behavioural Control construct is the person's perception of the extent to which performing a behaviour is under his/her control and typically is measured by ratings of the ease versus difficulty of performing the behaviour (Ajzen 1985, 1987, 1991; Ajzen & Madden 1986).

In terms of *Perceived Behavioural Control* Items 23, 31 and 32 draw out results of the individuals' perceptions of their control which proved that there are statistically significant differences between the age groups.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
23	For me to attend a computer class on a regular basis is? ³⁸	$\chi^2=65.620$, df 30, $p<0.001$
31	For me learning new computer skills would be easy? ³⁹	$\chi^2=95.743$, df 30, $p<0.001$
32	I am confident that I could commit myself to learning on a regular basis?	$\chi^2=57.603$, df 30, $p=0.002$

In general terms, the overall outcomes revealed that the participants' perceived control relative to the specified age groups were positive, with regard to commitment to learn new computer skills on a regular basis once they had participated, and some in their anticipation to start (although it is recognised that this did not always lead to actual participation). This is consistent with DfES (2004a, 2004b) research which indicated that a high proportion of those learners who completed some form of learning tended to continue with learning in some form or another and those that were perpetual non-learners or lapsed learners did not.

In more specific terms, Perceived Behavioural Control of Item 23 revealed that the over 55s were far more positive than the other age groups that they could attend a computer class on a regular basis. This suggested that as older people felt they had a good level of Perceived Behavioural Control,

³⁸ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely easy" to "extremely difficult"

³⁹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "definitely true" to "definitely false"

this could be because they have more time due to retirement or part-time work and therefore are more likely to be able to commit to a regular class. This was confirmed by a statement made by one mature learner interviewee, aged 72, who stated:

... I think it's great - I had a lot of time on my hands and wanted to do something that would take me out of the house. When my friend told me about this centre I thought I'd give it a go and you know what, I've learnt so much. Because I was so keen and learnt so much the tutor asked me to be a volunteer and support others in the class. I look forward to coming to the sessions, I have learnt so much and now help others in the class.

The over 55s is one of the age groups that has consistently been identified as being victims of the digital divide and the slowest growing in terms of adoption and participation (OxIS 2009; Foley 2002, 2003). However, this age group has shown a slow increase in adoption and have become commonly known as 'Silver Surfers'.

The DIUS report (2008) claimed an astonishing figure that 1 in 2 learners over 60 is studying IT. The reasons cited by the elderly (55+) for participating in learning was to keep their minds active and for socialising (DfES 2004d). The Case Study below is an example of one participant's experience.

Case Study 6 – Ola

In December 2007 Ola aged 66 registered with GO Greenlawns Centre, a centre for the over 50s, to learn how to use the computer. As a reluctant mature learner Ola was quite nervous, as prior to starting with GO, her IT skills were limited to sending and receiving basic e-mails which her son had shown her how to do. Ola attended the Introductory Course and developed a keen interest in gaining detailed knowledge of the various IT applications. Ola also strove to and succeeded in, bringing more people over 50 into the centre to share her enthusiasm for digital technologies and to raise their awareness of the opportunities computer skills could provide for them.

Ola's enthusiasm and motivation was immense and she was asked to become a volunteer at the centre – she welcomed the opportunity. Ola said:

“I knew that I would learn a lot more assisting the tutor by putting the ‘students’ through their paces. I am now confident in using: Microsoft Office Word 2007, Internet: including surfing, browsing, e-mails and attachments, Microsoft Office Excel 2007 and scanning. Not only do I feel confident using these applications, I also feel at ease helping other people of my age. Attending these sessions has given me a new lease of life and when using the computer at home I never feel lonely.”

Ola is now keen to learn about web design, social networking and blogging.

Age Concern (2000, 2001) and NIACE (2008) research revealed that a large percentage (63%) of respondents raised concerns about getting older and expressed their fear of isolation. The Age Concern research also revealed that IT users felt that using digital technology had made a major difference to their lives, allowing them to keep in contact with family and friends via the Internet, making new friends online as well as being able to find out information on health, pensions, travel, news, hobby/games sites and online shopping. One of our mature learners, aged 63, attended a discussion with a Chinese delegation recently and, in her words, she said:

... I never thought I could do it ... learn the computer, but my son went to Thailand and I couldn't get in touch with him, so someone told me about this centre where I could learn for free. I went along and it was great - I've been coming ever since. I email my friends, my son ... during the Tsunami I couldn't ring my son, so I just used the internet - it was great, I knew he was safe. Me and my friends, I sit in my house on the computer and she sits in hers and we talk over the internet or if we have problems with the computer we telephone each other - and I talk her through what she should be doing. I never feel lonely; it's a new start for me.

A DTI (2005) and Ufi (2007) reports confirmed the social benefits of IT, stating that it can repair facets of social despair that can blight old age and can also be a life-line to those suffering debilitating conditions, depression

and insomnia. However, it should be recognised that although there has been a slow increase in participation in this age group, there is still some way to go in terms of convincing large numbers of non-participating mature people from socially excluded groups to interact and adopt new technologies.

Conversely, Item 31 revealed that a higher proportion of 16-25 year olds consider it easy to learn new computer skills, which indicated that these individuals possess strong Perceived Behavioural Control. This could be linked to higher exposure to digital technology. This age group are known as 'IT natives', as they have been through an education system in which technology has played a significant role. This was the result of political drivers to ensure educational establishments adopted new digital technologies, which has led to prolific access and use of IT (Becta 2008a, 2008b; DfES 2006). The high exposure to IT through education has subsequently led to immense social pressure to conform in order to communicate socially with peers both online and offline. DfES research (2002c) showed that this age group were more likely to want IT for a range of activities including study/learning, to play or download games and music, and/or using chat rooms (Becta 2008a). Their awareness levels of new technologies far outweighed the other age groups and they are also far more conscious of the need for computer skills for work now and for future progression in employment (DfES 2006, 2002c).

The 26-35 year olds followed closely behind the 16-25s, indicating the ease with which they could learn new computer skills; this reflected their perceived control over the use and learning of e-skills, although on occasion this over-confidence was not the reality for all aspects of new technology. The individuals tended to measure their control against their current knowledge of learnt basic technologies rather than in-depth specialist aspects which may be required in employment, as reflected in the government papers and policies which highlight skills shortages (DBIS 2009a; BBC 2005; DfES 2003c; Booz et al 2000; NTO 2000).

The age groups aged 36 upwards acknowledged their inadequacy regarding learning new computer skills. Responses showed that the older the respondent the less they considered it would be easy. These age groups were less likely to have encountered computers in their formal education and, as they come from socially excluded backgrounds they were less likely to interact with computers in their daily lives because of, for example, unemployment or being in low/un-skilled jobs. This lack of exposure to digital technology leads to low perceived control in their ability to acquire new skills and could lead to a fear of failure (Choli 2003).

More importantly the lack of exposure experienced by socially excluded groups tends to lead to low awareness levels and interest, which is reflected in a person's attitude toward IT. There is significant evidence (BIS 2009c; Davis 1989; Davis et al 1989; Mathieson 1991; Taylor & Todd 1995) that suggests that the most fundamental beliefs underlying a person's

attitude toward adopting new technologies is his/her perceptions about the usefulness of the technology. The challenge is the importance of promoting the usefulness of the various technologies in different life situations and environments, in order to raise awareness of its potential and motivate non-users/learners to engage.

Item 32 revealed that unfortunately the 16-25 year olds were less likely to commit to learning on a regular basis. This could be the result of poor experience of formal education as indicated in the LSCLE report (2002) which they perceived as being difficult or not productive. London East has a population of approximately 110,000 young people aged 16-19 with 43% living in wards that are among the 10% most deprived in the country (LSCLE 2002). The LSCLE analysis for the period 1997-2000 also indicated that 50,000 school leavers left school without achieving a Level 2 qualification and the LSCLE Strategic Plan (2007) identified similar problems. An ODPM report (2005b:20) considered some major problems that impacted on the lives of the 16-25 years olds. It stated that:

... different experiences of transitions have increased polarisation among young people - with some staying longer in education and experiencing a slower but more successful transition. [Whilst other] Young people who maintain a 'fast-track' to adulthood, with fewer qualifications, are increasingly disadvantaged.

It is those individuals with fewer or no qualifications who have the most difficulty in securing employment as they lack not only formal accreditation, but also work experiences and skills. Unfortunately, these deficiencies also lead to unrealistic expectations about what employment should offer them. Adults from socially excluded backgrounds tend to have little understanding of the world of work and are less likely to be acquainted with people in better paid employment who could assist or educate them in the ethics and culture of work. This lack of exposure to the real world of work accentuates their expectations, especially in relation to their earning potential. These expectations were confirmed in an ODPM report (2004b) where individuals indicated the levels of earnings that would make it worth their while to come off benefits. Without the relevant qualifications, skills and/or experience, the salary figures quoted by the individuals were totally unrealistic in terms of what they could actually offer an employer at their stage of employability.

Unfortunately, their reluctance to re-engage with learning to obtain relevant skills and qualifications is a hindrance, as with many socially excluded individuals and especially young adults, there is the prospect of a perpetual downward spiral of low paid employment, or welfare benefits and exclusion. However, there are opportunities open to those willing to participate and devote the time, concentration and perseverance required to achieve, in order to enable them to change their future (DCLG 2008a).

Awareness of and ease with using IT can provide an alternative way back into learning for many young underachievers; this can make it possible to gain skills and qualifications without them entering a formal education institution when they were reluctant to do so because of a residue of negative feelings. Consequently, their prior experience with digital technologies instils confidence and perceived control which in turn gives them an advantage when continuing with the acquisition of new IT skills that could assist with employability (BIS 2009c). Unfortunately, other DfES research (2002c) stated that those from socially excluded backgrounds were less inclined to consider IT and new technology as important for work and gaining employment, leading to further exclusion.

On the other hand, the analysed data showed that the age group 46-55 were more open to the possibility of committing to attend learning on a regular basis. This result could be interpreted as a sign of a positive attitude toward learning and committing time regularly to this activity, although in reality this is not the pattern for this age range. Both local statistics in Appendix 1 and other research (Big Lottery 2005) does not concur with the responses, as this age group has the lowest participation levels. This is also confirmed by the LSCLE (2002, 2007) which highlighted explicitly the issues of low attainment levels of adults across the London East region and the low levels of adults participating in learning overall. Ajzen & Madden (1986) indicated that the individual's Perceived Behavioural Control is not the determinant of behaviour, it is actual control which leads to a behaviour.

In relation to the research question (page 128), people in the age ranges specified had different Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control as follows:

- Higher levels of individuals in the 36-45 age range believed they had little control when encountering unexpected events that would place demands on their time and thus would interfere with regular attendance on course. The 46-55 year old was the next age group that experienced similar issues.
- People in the age range 16-25 indicated that they would more frequently experience unexpected family obligations and were aware of the implications in terms of Control Beliefs. The 26-35 and 36-45 year olds followed close behind when they considered the level of control they believed they had when family obligations unexpectedly arose.
- When considering Control Beliefs when feeling ill, tired or not bothered it was the 45-55 year olds who indicated that they believed this would impede more frequently on their time and this affected their participation in learning activities.
- Groups over 55 years of age had more positive Perceived Behavioural Control to attend computer classes regularly, which suggested that they felt comfortable that they had the necessary requirements.
- A higher proportion of 16-25 years perceived strong beliefs that they would find it easy to learn to IT skills – this group had had

greater exposure to digital technologies. It was the 36 year olds and above that expressed their negative Perceived Behavioural Control over the ease of learning IT skills.

- The 16-25 year old group had negative Perceived Behavioural Control when considering learning on a regular basis which would indicate that perceived they would have difficulties that would impede any success.

Adults have numerous commitments, responsibilities and demands on their time and thus this has implications for Control Beliefs. With the appropriate Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control can lead to intention to perform a behaviour, although this does not necessarily lead to actual behaviour itself.

6.2.2.2 Intention

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour and its predecessor, the Theory of Reasoned Action

Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behavior, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behavior. The intention is based on Attitude toward the Behaviour, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioural Control, with each predictor weighted for its importance in relation to the behavior and population of interest (Ajzen 2002b:1).

In effect, given a sufficient level of actual control over the behaviour, individuals are expected to execute their intention when the opportunities arise.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

Item 26 explores age in relation to intention. Responses to this item revealed a statistically significant difference, indicating that there is differentiation between the age ranges, where individuals have expressed their likely intention to commit to regularly attendance of a computer class.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
26	My planning to attend a beginner's computer class on a regular basis is? ⁴⁰	$\chi^2=79.895$, df 30, $p<0.001$

⁴⁰ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely"

The 16-25 year olds revealed the lowest levels of intention which reaffirms the earlier discussion of Perceived Behavioural Control amongst the same age group. The historical legacy of failure with young people leaving formal education with low/no achievement levels continues to the present with around 7.8 million people of working age in this situation (HMSO 2004). Poor experience in formal education has led to reluctance amongst the various age groups especially the younger group which is reflected in the

low proportions of young people in the UK choosing to stay in education after the age of 16, combined with limited skills progression and training to higher levels once in work (HMSO 2004:3).

The low levels of participation and commitment/intention to participate amongst young people and adults is recognised by central government policies as a challenge (BIS 2010; HMSO 2004; LSCLE 2002, 2006). Ajzen (2002) highlighted that behaviour is the antecedent of intention and only if the three determinants (Attitude toward the Behaviour, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioural Control) are positively biased does the behaviour occur. One interviewee stated

... I've only just finished school and had enough of that ... I don't want to go back - its too much like school, it was bad enough when I had to go and now, well, I don't need it, its not

got me a job yet - waste of time ... yer ... if they can guarantee me a job then maybe.

In contrast, this study has indicated that, the older the age range the greater the degree of intention to attend a beginners computer class on a regular basis. However, research has indicated that intention does not necessarily lead to behaviour if the opportunities are not present or are impeded (Ajzen 2002b, 2003; Ajzen & Madden 1986).

Research (Becta 2008a; DfES 2002a, 2002b; DTI 2004a; DTI PAT 15 1999) has shown how government initiatives, for example, UKonline have encouraged an increasing proportion of socially excluded groups back into learning through the innovative use IT.

Experience with socially excluded groups has revealed that some individuals do indicate the intention to participate with the learning of e-skills, but commitments and barriers often interfere with the actual realisation of the intention. This is supported by DfES (2004b). Financial incentives have been offered by central and local government, along with some organisations, to use online services which have played a part in increasing people's intention to learn how to use digital technologies (Booz et al 2000; DCLG 2008a). However, research (Booz et al 2000; DCLG 2008a; DTI 2005; DTI PAT 15 1999; Foley et al 2003; GLA 2004; OxIS 2009) has strongly confirmed that socially excluded groups are less likely

to have these digital technologies in their home and are therefore less likely to use IT generally.

The above studies also indicated that the use of digital technologies has become more prevalent as large proportions of local services are now more readily available via the Internet. The chances are, therefore, is that socially excluded groups will become further excluded if they do not engage (DBIS 2009a). Reports (DTI 2005; Freshminds 2009, 2007; Ufi 2007) highlighted the continued reluctance of some adults to use PCs and the Internet; the proportions, for various reasons, continue to be substantial, which strongly suggests that there is still work to be done.

In relation to the research question (page 128) the impact of age ranges revealed different levels of Intention:

- The 16-25 year old participants had the lowest levels of intention to take part in a learning activity. This reaffirms the findings above under Perceived Behavioural Control which indicates they would be unlikely to participate.
- Those of older age groups had a greater degree of Intention to attend a computer class on a regular basis which show a higher level of readiness toward actual behaviour, given appropriate attitudes derived from Past Behaviour.
- Through all the age ranges, Intention does not necessarily result in actual behaviour which would lead to further exclusion of those with the most need.

Ajzen (2003) suggested the possibility of using interventions designed to change behaviour which could be focused on one or more of the determinants: Attitudes, Subjective Norms or Perceptions of Behavioural Control. He stressed that changes in these factors should give adequate control over the behaviour, produce changes in behavioural intentions and, in the right circumstances, the intention would be carried out. However, individuals are also absorbed with past experiences of behaviours that may be positive or negative, which would also have an influence on the intention to repeat the behaviour.

6.2.2.3 Past Behaviour Self Reporting

Past experience cannot be observed directly, and so in this situation researchers depend on participants to self-report. Past behaviour is considered to be a good measure of whether an individual performs or does not perform a behaviour, as people tend to consider past experiences of a specific behaviour when considering their intention to carry out the behaviour or not. Ajzen (1988:99) indicated that:

... the best predictor of future behaviour is performance and non-performance of the same behaviour in the past ... if a person is known to have exhibited a tendency to perform a given behaviour, we can assume that, barring unforeseen events, the tendency will continue.

These statements add credence to the current stalemate that is rampant amongst excluded groups that have not participated in learning since leaving school and have a reluctance to repeat the experience.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

In the context of this study, respondents self-reported on their past behaviour and experiences of learning and education. Item 61 revealed a statistical significance amongst age ranges.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
61	My past experiences of learning and school were? ⁴¹	$\chi^2=74.157$, df 30, $p<0.001$

The data overwhelmingly indicated that the 46-55 age range gave negative responses in regard to their experiences of learning and school. This could account for the low numbers of participants within this age range (Appendix 1; Big Lottery 2005). The 36-45 and 16-25 year olds followed

⁴¹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely good” to “extremely bad”

close behind in recollecting their negative experiences of learning and school. The LSCLE (2002, 2004, 2007) confirmed that many adults and young people in the borough continued to have poor experiences of formal education, with very low attainment and reluctant to remain at school in the post-compulsory phase. These poor experiences remain with people into adulthood and continue to impact on their decision to continue or return to formal learning.

Other research and policies (DfEE 1999; LSC 2003a; LSCLE 2002, 2004, 2007) have continuously highlighted barriers experienced by socially and economically excluded people related to poor experiences of formal education. Consistent with this is their achievement levels which revealed that almost two thirds of them did not achieve any qualifications, which has driven the Government agenda to increase adult attainment to a minimum of level 2.

Experience of working with underachievers has revealed tendencies to be very sensitive when reporting on their formal educational background with a level of reluctance to admit failure. Consequently, a high proportion of the participants in this study possessed no formal qualifications and possibly exaggerated or disguised their real experiences or behaviours.

This is supported by Ajzen (1988:102) who indicated the possible reason, he stated:

... it is well known that self-reports may be biased by tendencies to report socially desirable behaviours and to deny performing socially undesirable behaviours ... such tendencies are especially likely in the case of 'sensitive' behaviours, that is, behaviours that involve social stigmas.

Studies (Ajzen 1988; Bauman & Dent 1982; Lamb & Stem 1978) have shown evidence that people are inclined to under-report performance of socially unacceptable behaviours and over-report those that are socially acceptable.

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, new information can play a role in changing cognitive foundations of intentions and behaviour. Even when behaviour has become regular practice, there is an element of expectation that some level of awareness of newly acquired information will be taken into account and result in past experience/behaviour losing some of its predictive validity and could lead to a change of Attitude towards a Behaviour (Bamberg et al 2003). Consequently, people who have certain beliefs, for example, about formal education can begin to acquire new information and perform behaviours that they would not have done previously. New ways of learning through new technologies can provide people with new experience of informal learning that could gradually change salient beliefs and lead to a culture that supports lifelong learning.

Case Study 7 describes how past experiences created barriers and the way in which new positive experiences helped to change attitudes towards learning and education.

Case Study 7 – Sara

Sara is 21 and has suffered from mental health issues; with the help of a care support worker she reluctantly joined a basic IT introductory course at the GO Open Space Centre in 2006. Sara has gained not only very good IT skills, but has also recently accomplished the Level 1 Certificate in Adult Literacy. Sara said:

“I’ve come a long way since being bullied at school and leaving school with no formal qualifications. I’ve achieved a lot since being with GO, such as learning more about computers, reading, writing, spelling and grammar.”

Through the use of digital technologies, Sara now has gained confidence in herself and has registered to be a volunteer working in hospitals with children and the elderly. Her long term goal is to go into the care industry.

The emphasis on lifelong learning has generated numerous educational opportunities to raise adults’ achievement levels, especially those from socially excluded backgrounds who do not have qualifications to GCSE equivalence. These opportunities range from general interest activities that initiate engagement through to qualification courses as individuals become more confident. However, past statistics (DfES 2004d; LSCLE

2005b) have shown high numbers of adult non-completers on activities and courses, although this has reduced, there continues to be an issue.

Item 63 drew attention to the impact of non-completion on individuals and it revealed a statistical significance between the different age groups.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
63	I have not completed other learning activities I have committed myself to, and it makes starting another more difficult? ⁴²	$\chi^2=45.977$, df 30, $p=0.031$

The data revealed that the majority of participants disagreed that they would find it difficult to start another learning activity if they had not completed a former one. However, a higher proportion of 16-25 year olds indicated they neither agreed or disagreed with the statement, this suggests, that given the right circumstances and subject, these individuals would take up a learning opportunity as they had no real adversity to it. Unfortunately, the LSCLE (2005c) highlighted that not only were achievement rates in London East the lowest in London, but also that it had the highest drop out rates amongst graduates in the country. This is problematic for a region that is in the throws of regeneration, because, as a consequence, many of these individuals will not have the necessary appropriate skills and/or level of academic achievement required to gain many of the new jobs created by the Olympics legacies and post-regeneration in the Thames Gateway area (LSCLE 2007).

⁴² Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely agree” to “extremely disagree”

The majority of individuals of the age range 36-45 and 46-55 disagreed that they would find it difficult to start another course because they had not completed a previous one. On the one hand, this is positive as they do not feel a sense of failure, but on the other, they are more likely to repeat this behaviour. Research (DfES 2004b) confirmed that lapsed learners were less prone to take further courses, although if they were to re-enrol it would be likely that they would repeat past practice. This repeated behaviour perpetuates the issues around low achievement, social separation and polarisation. According to research in line with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1988; Ajzen & Madden 1986), findings revealed there was a “significant correlation between prior and later behaviour”. It is recognised that certain circumstances or factors that persist over time will influence and produce the same behaviour later on. However, there could be an option for behaviour modification. If circumstances change, it is likely that behaviour will change too, which will ultimately lead to an overall behavioural change.

In the context of results derived from this study as provided in Item 63, a far higher proportion of people over 55 years of age disagreed with the above statement than the other age groups. Research (DfES 2004d:17) indicated that this

... age group are more likely to say that they achieved what they wanted to on leaving full time education, which for the

majority was to find a job in a particular field, having left full time education at 15.

Consequently, they do not experience lack of confidence or adversity to gaining new skills. The DfES (2004d) research also indicated that those aged 65+ were on average less likely to have any qualifications above level 1 when leaving compulsory education. Low attainment was less of a problem in their youth, as there were more manual jobs available. As a result these individuals did not consider they had not achieved. This age group would have started manual work as apprentices or young trainees, who would have learnt on the job, so are more inclined to be willing to gain new skills – the only issue would be the use of new technologies that they had had no exposure to.

This age group have far more time to dedicate to learning activities as many are retired and are motivated by the notion of well-being, along with the opportunity to keep their mind active and to socialise with other people. Nonetheless, research (DfES 2002c:53) indicated that a large majority of people aged 55+ are more likely to state that “‘nothing’ would encourage them to use a computer ...”. In a GLA strategy (2005), the Mayor of London indicated his support to implement measures that will enable older people to take advantage of new technologies as more information and services go online. Local statistics for UKonline centres at Appendix 1 revealed a slow increase in the numbers of individuals over 55

years who were participating in learning and of those there are a larger number were women.

Discussions with many elderly people indicated that they tended to continue to participate in computer learning activities as the knowledge gained helped to provide them with the opportunity to engage with their children and grandchildren (Age Concern 2001; The Big Lottery 2005). Children play a significant role in motivating and encouraging their parents to gain skills in the use digital technologies (Becta 2008a; DCLG 2008a).

In relation to the research question (page 128), the impact of age linked to Past Behaviour Self-reporting has revealed that:

- More 46-55 year olds than those in other age groups indicated that they had had poor experiences of learning and school. This was closely followed by the 36-45s and then the 16-25 year olds. These poor experiences have an impact on current attitudes to returning to learning.
- The majority from all the age groups disagreed that they would find it difficult to start another learning activity if they had not completed an earlier one taken. This has its advantages, as people do not consider this to be a failure, but a major disadvantage is that they are more likely to repeat the same behaviour.

- The 16-25 year old group were less positive about whether they agreed or disagreed, which indicated that, given positive circumstances they could participate.
- Those aged above 55 were the highest age group that disagreed with the statement, although these learners continued to be the slowest to participate in learning activities particularly those that involved digital technologies. For this age group, communication with their children/grandchildren was a major motivator.

6.2.3 Children

Children are considered an important variable in respect of this research because it is considered that there are differences in attitudes, behaviour and intention between those adults with children and those without. Accordingly, the variable has been used to test against the responses to the questionnaire, of which 25 of the 53 items were statistically significant and overall the responses revealed a greater difference for those adults with children. Four determinants of the Theory of Planned Behaviour were chosen for further discussion in relation to the research question and the children criterion: *Normative Beliefs* and *Subjective Norms*; *Control Beliefs* and *Perceived Behavioural Control*, and *Intention*.

Research Question

To investigate the impact that responsibility for children has on an individual's attitudes and behaviour as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

The implementation of digital technologies and infrastructures in educational institutions has been high on the government agenda and since 1999 they have invested at least £10 billion (Becta 2008a). Government policies (Becta 2008a, 2008b; DfES 2003c, 2005a) have highlighted the importance of digital technologies in education, which can be seen as a driver to alleviate the digital divide and fill any future skills gap. The repercussions of this are that children play a major role in the decisions socially excluded families make on whether to purchase IT technologies for the home. Research (DCLG 2008a; DfES 2002c) indicated that children are a determining factor in IT use and demonstrates that households with children under 16 are more likely to use all forms of digital technology from mobile telephones to broadband technology.

6.2.3.1 Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms

The analysis revealed seven items from the questionnaire to be statistically significant when assessing those adults with or without children against *Normative Beliefs* and *Subjective Norms*. This discussion considers whether socially excluded groups are more likely to participate with new technologies if they have children and especially takes into account the perceived behavioural expectations of important others, individuals or groups, for example, friends, family and/or teachers and the motivation to comply. It also considers Subjective Norms in investigating perceived social pressure in relation to those considered to be important referents, as presented by Ajzen (2002b).

6.2.3.1.1 Normative Beliefs

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

The Items 41 and 42 below considered Normative Beliefs of respondents with or without children. Both these items showed a statistical significance between respondents.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
41	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your children/dependents think you should do? ⁴³	$\chi^2=12.816$, df 6, $p=0.046$
42	Generally speaking, how much do you care what others think you should do?	$\chi^2=13.216$, df 6, $p=0.040$

Overwhelmingly, a far greater proportion of respondents with children revealed that they were concerned about what their children/dependents and others think of what they should do. The Theory of Planned Behaviour implies that, in developing subjective norms a person considers the normative expectation of various others in their environment. A normative belief is derived from the individual's belief of what specific people and groups think about whether they should or should not

⁴³ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "very much" to "not at all"

participate in a behaviour, in this case participating in an IT learning activity (Ajzen 2002b). In the context of the current research, the implications are that people with children have developed stronger beliefs of normative expectation of the referents within their environment in regard to a given behaviour.

The presence of children in a household makes a significant difference to whether a person engages in an activity. This is also true of those groups who are closely linked within the same environment, which in turn generates social pressure to engage in the activity, in the context of this study, to participate in the learning and use of new technologies. A parent learner (interviewee) stated

... yer we had to get a computer at home because Jason and Jade, my kids, wanted it because their friends had one ... they are on it all the time. They are really good, they know what they are doing ... playing games, listening to music and now they are pressuring me to get the Internet because everyone else has got it. The only problem is that when they want help I don't know what to do ... I think I should try and find out so that I can help them and I will be able to understand what they're doing.

As all primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities are equipped with a range of digital technologies, including broadband

connectivity, this has led to digital technology becoming an integral part of children's and young people's learning in all subjects and has subconsciously become absorbed into their everyday life (Becta 2008a, 2008b; DfES 2005a); subsequently there has been a direct and/or indirect expectation for a parent/carer to have the IT skills that their children are acquiring.

There is also the added pressure that central and local government simultaneously with the media have reinforced the idea that findings computers, along with other technologies, is the way to provide a better education for child and the requirement for parents/carers to be able to support their children's learning and development. There is a strong inference that children's academic progression and their social life have become more reliant on technology, and that parents should have at least a minimal working knowledge of computer technology (Becta 2008c). In addition, progressively more emphasis is being placed on parents/carers to be able to use IT technology to support their broader parenting role (Becta 2008a, 2008b). Research (Becta 2008b; DfES 2002c) confirmed that more households with children have computers and internet connectivity as opposed to those without, independent of social groups. The home computers, in many cases, have been purchased specifically for the children and it is recognised that many adults in these households are unlikely to use the home computer (Booz et al 2000; Choli 2003). However, as other parents/carers, family members, friends and important others become more proficient in the use of the various technologies, the

excluded individuals will wish to conform and be motivated to gain their approval.

In contrast, the situation could have an adverse effect, where children, partners and other family members have the skills to use IT, which could lead to the unskilled adults feeling inadequate about their lack of knowledge and skills. This would in turn increase individual's lack of confidence and self-esteem and could be detrimental, leading to the situation where individuals state they are 'not interested and have no use for it' which continues to be around 34% nationally (Freshminds 2009, 2008; NSO 2005). This can be witnessed when talking to the general public at local events, one interviewee stated:

... when people asked me I always said I was not interested in computers ... it wasn't for me. That's because my sons and my husband could use the computer, the Internet, email and lots of other things ... they made it look so easy and I felt I was not clever enough and it was easier to say I didn't want to use it. And none of the other mums that I knew used it ...

It is recognised (Choli 2003; DfEE 1999; LSC 2003a) that socially excluded adults have low-self esteem and lack confidence generally, but this is more pronounced in individuals with children as they become immersed in their micro-cultures. These micro-cultures are geographically localised, with groups of individuals who are characteristically similar, for example, have

socio-personal and economic disadvantages, have children and come from the same sort of family and educational background (DCLG 2008a).

In the light of these circumstances, when these individuals are engaged on a course and learning they require a large amount of support and reassurance to stay motivated and positive. The participants develop Normative Beliefs about their important referent and what they perceived their expectations to be, in this case the tutor, which is confirmed by the data analysis below.

Item 38 below revealed that there was statistical significance in the findings about those participants with children in regard to their *Normative Beliefs* related to the tutor.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
38	Generally speaking, how much do you care what the tutor of a course thinks you should do? ⁴⁴	$\chi^2=21.203$, df 5, $p=0.001$

The data suggested that those individuals with children were more concerned with what the tutor thought they should do than those with no children. This is not surprising as the individual was under more social pressure from family and close friends to achieve.

A study (Big Lottery 2005) stated that the staff at the GO UKonline Centres were key in the progress of learning with these ‘hard to reach’ groups.

⁴⁴ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “very much” to “Not at all”

Centre staff created an atmosphere of support, patience, encouragement and helped learners realise their potential and provided “a very different experience from what many users had at school” (Big Lottery 2005:8). A DfES study (2004a:55) highlighted the necessary demands

in the case of people with a poor learning record, the process of building confidence and preparing them for employment is a lengthy one, and one which is facilitated by the integration of ICT training and basic skills training ... The presence of a locally based, well-qualified and easily accessible tutor, who they could identify with and trust, was an important factor in maintaining motivation and increasing confidence.

The above research confirmed the importance the tutor plays in the success of their learners and is also recognised by the learners themselves. Many parent learners find the return to education very difficult, as they have the added pressure to prove themselves to their children.

Case Study 8 gives a learner’s view of her experience and stresses the important role the tutor had in her increased self-confidence, achievement and progression.

Case Study 8 – Anita

Anita is a 32 year old housewife who married very young and who had never worked since leaving school. She was very fearful of participating in learning because of her poor experiences of school. She first came into the GO Coldharbour Community Centre because her children had badgered her for quite a while to learn how to use the computer and even walked round with her on her first visit. When Anita started she was very anxious and timid, lacking self-esteem and confidence – she also thought she would never begin to master the PC.

Over a period of time, with a patient, friendly knowledgeable tutor, Anita began to gain confidence in the use of different applications. With her growing confidence and her enthusiasm for the new technology, Anita was encouraged by her tutor to take an IT qualification. Again she was very apprehensive about the possibility of failure and how she would face her family – however, through her sheer determination and commitment, she attended regular classes, received tuition, support and guidance with online courses and passed her very first qualification.

With continued tutor encouragement, Anita then went on to achieved level 2 qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Anita was nominated for and received an award in Adult Learner’s Week. Anita said:

“Learning to use the computer has changed my life – I didn’t think I would ever do anything with my life, but have now enrolled at college to do a course in web design. I want to start my own online business. I can’t believe how far I have come. I now have qualifications and I am not scared to try new things. My own family are really proud of me – I am really grateful to my children for making me join and the great deal of support the tutor gave me. I have never achieved anything in my life – now I have qualifications and an award. I now feel very differently about learning because I know I can do it.”

In Case Study 8, Anita stressed the important part that the tutor played in her learning journey from exclusion, through different stages of engagement to digital, social and economic inclusion. Ajzen (1991, 2002a) stressed that individuals are more likely to engage in a behaviour if they believe they have the support of their important others. People tend not to want to be isolated or different.

In relation to the research question (page 162), the impact children have on an individual's Normative Beliefs revealed that:

- People with children were overwhelmingly concerned with what they believed their children/dependents and others thought they should do.
- They were more likely to attend a learning activity and gain new skills with digital technologies if they believe they had the support of their important others, as there was motivation to comply.
- Individuals with children were more likely to be influenced by their peers and their children's school as the perception is that they were required to help their children.
- They were also influenced by their children, who were exposed to computers and digital technology. The perceived expectation to meet the demands of their children and be able to support them.

6.2.3.1.2 Subjective Norms

Normative Beliefs, which are influenced by a person's perceived behavioural expectations and motivation to comply, are integral to a person's *Subjective Norms*, the perceived social pressure to engage or not.

Items 34, 59 and 60 revealed statistical significance between the replies of respondents with children and than those without children specifically related to an individual's *Subjective Norms*.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
34	Most people whose opinions I value would approve of my attending a computer class on a regular basis? ⁴⁵	$\chi^2=13,731$, df 6, $p=0.033$
59	My close friends would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis? ⁴⁶	$\chi^2=14.527$, df 6, $p=0.023$
60	Other people I know would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis?)	$\chi^2=15,932$, df 6, $p=0.014$

These data results revealed that a larger proportion of respondents with children were influenced by their perceptions of what their important others may think about what they were doing. In context of this study they considered that their important referents would think they should or would approve of them attending a computer skills class on a regular basis.

The more a person perceives that other individuals who are important to them think they should perform a behaviour, the stronger the intention to

⁴⁵ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"

⁴⁶ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely likley" to "extremely unlikely"

do so because of social pressure to engage. In other words, depending on circumstances, people are seen as intending to perform those behaviours they believe important others think they should, or conversely not, if their important others think they should not (Ajzen 1988, 1991, 2002; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980).

The individual's perception is driven by the huge amount of social pressure for people to use computers and digital technologies as a whole and more so for parents/carers to be able to use IT to support their children's learning and development. It is suggested that "education can help to reverse ... the intergenerational cycle of under-achievement and deprivation giving every child the opportunity to fulfil his or her talents" (HMSO 2004:12).

Government policies (Becta 2008a; LSCLE 2004; LSC 2001; DTI 1999a) and initiatives, for example, UKonline and Learndirect, along with the media, for example, television advertisements, have played a pivotal role in raising awareness of digital technology in everyday life both in the workplace and socially. Consequently, the pressure has become immense to bridge the digital divide. Social pressure has been found to be one of the most instrumentally effective ways of engaging people with technology, as people generally want to 'keep up with the Jones's', especially those who have children who require it for educational and social purposes. Unfortunately, research (Booz et al 2000) has shown that this does not necessarily mean that all members of a household use the technology, with

national statistics revealing that there continues to be a large proportion of adults who have not taken part in learning to use new technology (NSO 2005). Research (DBIS 2009c; Big Lottery 2005; DfES 2004d) has reinforced the benefits and identified a number of positive effects that taking part in learning through the use of IT has, for example, increased confidence, wellbeing and alleviated isolation.

The HMSO (2004:11) report emphasised that

Improving parents' skills and therefore employability, along with helping parents to provide best support for their children, were ... key elements in improving poor children's life chances.

Another consideration highlighted by research (DfES 2004d) are issues around adverse family relationships, where some learners have stated that engagement in using computers has detracted from the time they spend with their children and that they spend less time with partners, which has had a divisive effect. Consequently, the likelihood could be that it will lead to the individual's important other(s) to be less supportive of their actions, which in turn would lead to the individual rethinking their participation. Adults tend to experience, actual and/or perceived, social pressure or guilt when they participate in an activity that is away from the home and they are also concerned that their important others would consider them less dedicated to family members or as unacceptable. This can be particularly

difficult for women and especially, but not exclusively black minority ethnic groups (DTI 1999b, 2000; PAT 1999). However, the creation of Family Centres, another recent government initiative that is currently being developed in deprived areas on school grounds, could alleviate some of the problems (Becta 2008a). The participating schools house all services necessary for improving the life chances of children and their families, for example, crèche, clinic, sports facilities and learning facilities (IT, literacy, numeracy and parenting), including access to family learning which will be more accessible and could overcome some of the issues around social pressure and/or guilt associated with learning alone. An ALI article (2005b) confirmed the benefits, indicating:

family centres have clearly had a huge impact in unlocking the potential within disadvantaged communities and empowering families to move from dependency to active citizenship. The family is the cell of society and if we can create a learning culture within the family, we will create a learning society (ALI 2005b:18).

It could also provide parents with an informal way back to learning through the children, which may not have occurred without this opportunity (Becta 2008a, 2008b).

In relation to the research question (page 162), the impact children have on individual's Subjective Norms revealed that:

- A high proportion of those individuals with children rather than those without acknowledged their perception that those people around them that were important would approve of them attending computer skills classes.
- The individuals had assumed and were driven by social pressure to use computers and digital technologies, for example, by their family, close friends and schools.
- There was also implicit social pressure to learn to use computers to help their children educationally for homework/research, but also for their children to use computers socially.
- Social pressure to learn e-skills through family could facilitate informal access to learning and empower/improve families both socially and economically.

Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms can only come to fruition if the individuals believe they can control circumstances that may occur and that they perceive themselves to have the necessary skills and resources to succeed.

6.2.3.2 Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control

Control Beliefs and *Perceived Behavioural Control* are based in part on first hand personal past experiences, as well as being influenced by secondary information about the behaviour by observing the experience of friends and colleagues, and by other factors that provide insight into the activity in question (Ajzen 1980). These prominent beliefs are derived from

recognised experiences that influence the individual's understanding when assessing decision making.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

A number of Items in the questionnaire were linked to *Control Beliefs* regarding barriers and time constraints in relation to adults with and without children. Items 51, 53, 54 and 32 were been found to be statistical significant for those respondents with children.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
51	How often do you encounter unexpected events that place demands on your time? ⁴⁷	$\chi^2=17,803$, df 6, $p=0.007$
53	How often do family obligations place unexpected demands on your time?	$\chi^2=25,605$, df 6, $p<0.001$
54	If I encountered unexpected events that placed demands on my time, it would make it difficult for me to attend a learning activity on a regular basis? ⁴⁸	$\chi^2=13,751$, df 6, $p=0.017$
55	If I felt ill, tired or listless, it would make it more difficult for me to attend a learning activity on a regular basis	$\chi^2=17,338$, df 6, $p=0.008$

⁴⁷ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "very rarely" to "very frequently"

⁴⁸ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"

These data confirmed that those adults with children believed that they would experience unexpected demands, due to possible constraints of commitments. Constraints included: time, finances, resources, health and care. These made it difficult to commit to attend regular learning activities which adhered to the control beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control concepts of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Research (Ajzen 2001; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980) confirmed that respondents' Control Beliefs perceived the presence of unexpected factors that could impede their ability to perform the behaviour in question (identified in the items above), which is determined through past experiences.

Other policies and research (DBIS 2009c; DfES 2004b; LSC 2002, 2004) have also indicated that adults' experience a range of barriers, both present and past, that interfere with time to commit to learning. A major barrier highlighted was childcare or other care commitments where parents/carers found it more difficult to dedicate time away from the home on a regular basis. These low income and vulnerable families also experience problems with complexities of income support, unstable work patterns, mental health issues, social isolation and low/no academic achievement. These all have an impact on an individual's Control Beliefs and the decisions they make toward digital inclusion and learning (DCLG 2008b). Consequently, this could lead to parents/carers becoming isolated and unlikely to become engaged with digital technologies, but this can be overcome through individuals taking advantage of new learning opportunities with the use of computers which is peripatetic.

Individual participants believed that there would be unexpected demands that would make it more difficult to attend learning activities regularly, although the results of this study strongly confirm that they perceived that they could commit to a learning activity on a regular basis.

Item 32 revealed that more people with children than without perceived they could control whether they could commit to learning on a regular basis.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
32	I am confident that I could commit myself to learning on a regular basis? ⁴⁹	$\chi^2=12,991$, df 6, $p=0.043$

This perception of control was a strong indicator that individuals perceived that they could achieve. Also once people were engaged, they became more confident with learning: they then believed they would commit to attend, although in reality concerns over their child or other care responsibility tended to take precedence. In practice, these responsibilities can have a detrimental effect on a learner's progress. Adults from deprived backgrounds tend to dip in and out of learning, fitting it around other commitments; unfortunately this practice is not the best condition or the most conducive for progressive learning, as a whole, but especially for disadvantaged individuals. A lapse in learning over two

⁴⁹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "definitely true" to "definitely untrue"

to three weeks often results in individuals starting from the beginning again, which in turn leads to de-motivation and non-return (DfES 2004b).

The longer term benefits, for adults, of using digital technologies for learning can result in the individual's ability to continue their learning through a more flexible mode, any place, any time (Becta 2009a; DfES 2006). Ultimately, even those with childcare or other care commitments can engage with a wide range of activities, including learning, from the comfort of their own home and without interfering with other responsibilities (DCLG 2008b). However, research (DfES 2004d) has also strongly indicated that it can detract from time spent with children and interfere with family relationships which could have a detrimental effect, although with appropriate time management and a supportive environment, this can be alleviated.

As highlighted above, children are often identified as a credible barrier, although they are also used as a good excuse, especially if parents/carers do not wish to commit to something, in particular where adults have had poor experiences, in this instance, with learning. Research (LSCLE 2002, 2004; Choli 2003) indicates there is a fear of failure and people tend to be reluctant to participate in the unknown. One way forward would be to raise awareness (BIS 2009c; Foley 2002, 2003). IT is seen as an alternative skill which does not appear to be a formal form of learning, but can lead to it in a non-intrusive way. Research (DfES 2004a, 2004b; Freshminds 2009) reinforces that IT is a strong motivator that encourages continued learning

as it helps with capacity building which generates confidence and self-esteem. Once the individuals feel they have more control, their behaviour will begin to adapt to recognise newly acquired salient beliefs and thus increase their Perceived Behavioural Control.

In relation to the research question (page 162), the impact children have on an individual's Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control reveal that:

- The people with children believed they would experience unexpected demands that would impede on regular attendance.
- The individual with children from deprived communities had these beliefs because past experience of problems with time, finances, health issues, resources and care commitments had impeded on activities outside the home.
- Notwithstanding these problems, individuals with children were more positive than those without that they could commit time to regular attendance for a learning activity, although actual reality was not so positive.

Given the development of positive Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control this should lead to Intention.

6.2.3.3 Intention

The following examines the difference between people with children and those without in relation to *Intention*. Within the context of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Intention is seen as the precursor to actual behaviour which is the culmination of an individual's Attitude toward the Behaviour, Subjective Norm and Perceived Behavioural Control. On this basis, under appropriate circumstances, a person will perform the given behaviour.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

Item 26 revealed a statistical difference between those people with children and those without when planning to attend a course on a regular basis.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
26	My planning to attend a beginner's computer class on a regular basis is? ⁵⁰	$\chi^2=24.334$, df 5, $p<0.001$

⁵⁰ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely"

The data revealed that a significantly higher number of individuals with children stated it was extremely likely that they would attend a computer class on a regular basis. This would suggest that the incentive for them is far greater. One of the main reasons is that it will enable them to help their children with homework (Becta 2008a; DfES 2004d). People with children are convinced that computer skills are becoming more essential, especially to their children's education and future careers (DfES 2004d). Conversely, socially excluded households without children are less likely to have engaged with IT technologies or have the inclination to engage, whereas, overwhelmingly, households with children under 16 are more prone to using most forms of IT technologies (OxIS 2009; DfES 2002c). Research (Becta 2008a; HMSO 2004) reinforces the benefits of parents'/carers' ability to use computers and digital technologies to support their children's learning and development. The overall pressure for parents to be proficient in the use of technologies has transferred itself into people's intention to attend and learn how to use computers. Unfortunately, intention does not always lead to actual behaviour as, reported by Ajzen et al (2004:1108) who stated that:

it is a common observation that people often fail to act in accordance with their stated intentions. ... [There is a] discrepancy between expressed willingness to perform a behavior and its actual performance.

An explanation provided by Ajzen & Driver (1992) indicated that an expression of willingness to perform a behaviour in a hypothetical situation is similar to behavioural intention with hypothetical bias being the discrepancy between intention and behaviour. There are various interpretations for the discrepancy; one can be linked to a person's moderate dispositions that react favourably in the hypothetical context although unfavourably in the more demanding real context. Another interpretation considers the way individuals construe the situation and the variation between the symbolic representations from the real-life situations (Campbell 1963; Blumer 1955).

In the context of this research, the majority of people with children have indicated in response to the questionnaire that they plan to take a beginners computer class on a regular basis, but in the real-situation this has proven the contrary. Some of our local provision has been established in schools as part of the extended schools initiative and although parents/carers had stated that they would to take part in learning to use computers, ultimately when this provision was put in place, it was not taken up.

In relation to the research question (page 162), the impact children have on an individual's Intention reveals the following:

- There was a higher number of individuals with children (in comparison to those without) who stated that it was extremely likely that they would attend a computer class regularly.

- The intention was greater so they could help their children with homework and it was believed that computer skills were more essential to their children's education and future career.
- Individuals without children revealed that they were less likely (than those with children) to attend computer classes on a regular basis as there was less social pressure and exposure to digital technology.
- Sometimes there are discrepancies between intention and behaviour. Intention or willingness to perform a behaviour is sometime marred by doubt and perceived issues which hinders actual behaviour.

More work is required to transform behavioural intention to actual behaviour, since without the actual behaviour there will be no change of attitude. This has implications for both their children and the individuals themselves, in terms of accumulating skills and qualifications to become 'employable for life' and for social inclusion.

6.2.4 Qualifications

Respondents to the questionnaire selected their qualification level and chi-square tests were performed against the 53 items. Of the 53 items, 34 were statistically significant, indicating that different levels of academic achievement affects individuals' attitudes and behavioural choices which in turn influences their participation in general learning and the acquiring of new IT skills. The areas of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to be

investigated with regard to the qualification variable are *Behavioural Beliefs, Attitude to Behaviour* and *Past Behaviour Self-Reporting*.

Research Question

To investigate the impact the level of educational qualifications has on an individual's attitudes and behaviour as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

It is well documented that almost half the working population have no qualifications (ODPM 2004b). Consequently, obtaining qualifications is considered paramount to assist socially excluded groups towards employability and away from unemployment and/or the perpetuating cycle of low paid unskilled jobs (DCLG 2008a; LSCLE 2007). Qualifications are also an important driver that can sculpture individuals' attitudes which can lead to changes in behaviour. This emotive variable has been used for the purpose of understanding whether different levels of achievement have a bearing on whether individuals are more likely to interact with learning and the use of IT.

6.2.4.1 Behavioural Beliefs and Attitude toward a Behaviour

The analysis of the chi-square results indicated that 16 items were statistically significant in relation to *Behavioural Beliefs* and *Attitude*

toward Behaviour. Of the 16 items nine were specifically linked to Behavioural Beliefs.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

Items 37, 44 and 48 below revealed that more highly qualified participants had more positive *Behavioural Beliefs* towards learning and new technologies than those possessing lower or no qualifications.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
37	Being able to confidently use new technology e.g. computers, internet and email is? ⁵¹	$\chi^2=42.252$, df 25, $p=0.017$
44	Attending a computer skills learning activity on a regular basis will help me gain confidence to do well? ⁵²	$\chi^2=190.721$, df 25, $p<0.001$
48	Attending a computer class regularly will help me develop good learning habits, self-discipline, and a feeling of self-satisfaction?	$\chi^2=114.563$, df 25, $p<0.001$

⁵¹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely good” to “extremely bad”

⁵² Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”

The Theory of Planned Behaviour specifies that Attitude toward a Behaviour is determined by salient beliefs about that behaviour, which is termed Behavioural Beliefs. The individual's Behaviour Beliefs link the behaviour to a specific outcome, or alternative result incurred by initiating the behaviour. However, it should be emphasised that it is unlikely that any two people would have the same beliefs about a certain behaviour or object, as their life experiences have been very different (Ajzen 1988).

The data results of Item 37 highlighted that those individuals with higher academic qualifications have significantly stronger salient beliefs that being able to confidently use new technologies is extremely good. This suggested that these individuals associate favourable consequences or outcomes with being able to use computers and new technologies, and thus hold positive attitudes towards the use of digital technologies.

Research (DfES 2002c; ONS 2008) confirms that individuals with higher academic achievement generally have access and use of digital technologies more frequently both in the workplace and socially. They are also more likely to have access to on-job skills training and in turn are more advantaged overall when it comes to the ability to use technologies more proficiently. At the other end of spectrum, it is not surprising that people with no or low academic achievements hold different, more negative salient beliefs, as the subjective probability will not produce a favourable outcome and, as a result, they decide that being able to use

computers is not considered to be essential in their daily lives. They are less likely to use digital technologies in their work, as many are manual workers, while others are unemployed and socially their micro-cultures and low economic status makes the purchase of IT equipment for home use potentially impossible. As a consequence they lack opportunity, awareness and ability (DCLG 2008a. Research (DTI 2005; DfES 2002c, 2004a, 2005; Foley et al 2002, 2003; Freshminds 2008) stressed the low levels of awareness, ability and lack of opportunity for these socially excluded groups to engage with new technologies and the adverse consequences. However, the optimistic focus highlights the fact that once people's awareness is raised and they are engaged in learning through the use of IT, they tend to continue their learning, which includes more IT and also other areas of study (Freshminds 2009).

Government policies (DBIS 2009c; DfEE 1999, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; e-Summit 2002; LSC 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004; DTI 2005) have long been directed at the more socially excluded individuals, predominately those with no or low academic achievements, as these individuals are less likely to use new technology either through lack of opportunities or life choices. These groups face multiple barriers and are generally unemployed, in unskilled low paid work or in worklessness⁵³ (DBIS 2009c; DCLG 2008a). Consequently they are unlikely to interact with computers or other technologies in their day to day lives. In the context of this study, the salient beliefs of people with low or no qualifications revealed less

⁵³ Worklessness refers to people who are unemployed or economically inactive, and who are in receipt of certain working-age benefits

favourable attitudes toward the use of new technology. The outcome of the current study concurs with the plethora of research (OxIS 2007; DfES 2002c, 2004b; Foley 2002) that reinforces the lack of interest socially excluded individuals have towards digital technologies. There has been a slow increase in IT use, but low levels of use continue to be rife especially amongst underachievers from socially excluded backgrounds and the more serious concerns are that these groups will become more isolated through exclusion (BIS 2009c; DCLG 2008s; Freshmind 2008). Government recognition (HMSO 2005a) of the issues and the importance of confident and proficient use of IT, stressed:

... the need for better Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills will be a common thread at all levels. The pervasiveness of ICT, both at work and for leisure purposes, means that functional competence in using ICT needs to be counted as an essential skill for the modern world. ... For adults, we have put in place a range of occupational standards, curricula and assessment materials in ICT as part of the Skills for Life programme (HMSO 2005a:19).

It is imperative to develop positive salient Behavioural Beliefs among underachievers, as IT is a fundamental part of every day life, especially as qualifications and resources have been developed to support and capacity-build using different forms of technology. The 2003 White Paper *21st Century Skills – Realising our Potential* (DfES 2003c) made a commitment

to recognise IT within the Skills for Life Strategy, alongside literacy, language and numeracy. The ALI report (2005a) reinforced that good IT skills are seen as vital as good levels of literacy and numeracy skills. The Estelle Morris *Independent Review of ICT User Skills* (DBIS 2009c) stressed the necessity for everyone to have a basic ICT Skills for Life entitlement. The ALI report (2005a:8) emphasised that “in all kinds of occupations, information technology (IT) skills are an integral part of most people’s working lives”.

Positive results of responses from Items 44 and 48 revealed the most salient beliefs of those with no or low level qualifications were far more favourable than those with higher academic qualifications. This indicated that their subjective probability is high in regard to ‘attending a computer skills learning activity helping them gain confidence to do well and develop good learning habits, self-discipline and self-satisfaction’. The results present a positive picture that these underachievers believe there are considerable benefits to be gained from the use of IT and learning through technology as a whole. This suggests that Government policies and strategies are beginning to have a level of impact with the people who take advantage of free learning opportunities, although there is still some way to go (DCLG 2008a; DBIS 2009c). The DfES report (2004a) indicated that IT has provided underachievers and slow learners with an alternative route to learning in a non-traditional environment and at their own pace. The report also found that learners were highly motivated and enthusiastic, with good levels of achievement of those obtaining IT qualifications.

Nevertheless, a further report (DfES 2004b) stressed that non-learners or lapsed learners were less likely to re-engage with learning and that “the level of qualifications achieved before leaving continuous full-time education also played a role in the subsequent learning paths” (DfES 2004b:34) . In addition, it also indicated that those people who attained level 3 prior to leaving compulsory education were more likely to re-engage with learning. However, a proportion of adults from all academic levels do return to learning to gain additional skills and qualifications towards better employment opportunities, although, as indicated, this is more readily accessible amongst those who had had better experiences of education and achievement (DfES 2004b).

Item 43 below highlights a statistically significant difference across qualification levels.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
43	Attending a computer skills learning activity will help me gain a better understanding of how to use a PC? ⁵⁴	$\chi^2=60.451$, df 30, $p=0.001$

The data result demonstrated that participants across all qualification levels considered it extremely likely that attendance on learning activity would lead to a better understanding of the use of a PC. This suggested that their most prominent behavioural experiences have promoted beliefs of beneficial outcomes which led to the positive responses. The

⁵⁴ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”

respondents were participants at local community GO Centres⁵⁵ who may have considered participation in an IT learning activity and maybe were beginning to change their views. However, there has been increasing awareness of the importance of gaining skills to use a PC and other digital technologies which has led to the increase number of people using these technologies (DfES 2002c, NOS 2006). The main reason people attend UKonline Centres is to gain IT skills and a better understanding of different aspects of digital technology. For many of these learners, their predominant aim is to gain a qualification to further their employment prospects or for progression (DfES 2002b, 2002c, 2004d; Freshminds 2007). Evidence shows a high proportion of individuals that do engage in learning through IT tend to continue with learning, both in IT and other areas of academic and/or vocational study. Consequently, the learning has had advantageous results of an upward spiral which enhances their lives through, for example, increased confidence, improved economic status and gaining qualifications (Becta 2008a, 2008b; Big Lottery 2005; DfES 2002b).

Items 45 and 49 showed statistical differences between those with no/low prior academic achievement and those at the other end of the spectrum of qualifications in relation to *Behavioural Beliefs*.

⁵⁵ Local UKonline Centres and Greenwich Online (GO) Centres are one and the same and are partner of the Greenwich UKoline Learning Partnership (GULP)

Item	Question	Chi-test results
45	Attending class regularly will give me an opportunity to gain support/guidance that I need ⁵⁶	$\chi^2=156.159$, df 30, $p=0.001$
49	Attending a learning activity will open up more opportunities for me	$\chi^2=87.989$, df 30, $p<0.001$

The results revealed that a higher proportion of individuals that had no or low qualifications possessed stronger Behavioural Beliefs that they would gain support/guidance and that more opportunities would be open to them if they attend a learning activity. The local GO UKonline centres have provided a friendly, informal educational environment that is more accessible than other educational environments to ‘non-traditional learners’⁵⁷, many of whom are socially excluded both economically and socially. From a positive perspective, these environments have friendly, experienced staff that provide support/guidance that have begun to engage the ‘out of reach’⁵⁸ groups. These groups have the most desperate needs in relation to reversing the digital divide, achieving recognised qualifications and employability skills, which addresses some of the Government’s targets (DfES 2002b; LSCLE 2007).

Government strategies (LSELC 2004, 2007; DfES 2003a, 2003b, 2003c) stress the importance of qualifications as formal recognition of skills. The strategies recognise that investment in skills increases individuals’

⁵⁶ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”

⁵⁷ The term “non-traditional learners” is used to distinguish those learners who would not participate in learning in a formal educational environment, for example, Further Education Colleges or Schools

⁵⁸ The LSC are now referring the “hardest to reach” groups as “out of reach” because of the difficulty of actually getting them to engage in learning

earnings and that there was an earning differential for people with qualifications which remained high. The demand for skills and qualifications will increase over time, resulting in the risk of exclusion for those with no or low qualifications worsening (DBIS 2009a). Consequently, the Government agenda for raising achievement levels has become an urgent task, with the prime focus of obtaining qualifications, especially skills for life in literacy and numeracy to a minimum of level 2 (GCSE equivalent), the level that is seen as the platform for employability (LSCLE 2002, 2007). Local GO UKonline centres offer people from socially excluded backgrounds an alternative way of gaining qualifications through the use of digital technology (DBIS 2009a). Individuals who initially make the effort to engage in learning activities are more willing to admit to not being able to use a PC than having a basic literacy/numeracy need, although experience has shown that, once individuals are participating, they are more likely to recognise their own inadequacies and voluntarily enrol when they gain confidence through the use of new technologies. Government policy has been expanded to recognise IT as the third skill for life: it is considered to be a cross cutting skill and an essential requirement not only to enhance employability, but also to halt further isolation resulting from the digital divide (BIS 2010; Becta 2008a; HMSO 2005b).

The Government agenda can only be delivered if those who are being targeted wish to participate and possess positive Behavioural Beliefs in relation to participation. National statistics (BIS 2010; HMSO 2006; ODPM 2004b) continue to reveal large numbers of the population who have no

qualifications and who do not engage in learning to gain accreditation, which is a strong indicator of people’s negative beliefs.

The results of Items 46 and 50 below revealed that those with higher qualifications were more likely to agree with the following statements in relation to Behavioural Beliefs.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
46	Attending a learning activity regularly will get in the way of other things I have to do ⁵⁹	$\chi^2=68.425$, df 30, $p<0.001$
50	Attending a computer skills learning activity will be boring and of no use to me	$\chi^2=94.763$, df 30, $p<0.001$

These data results could be an indication that they consider the computer skills they already possess are sufficient. Research (DfES 2004b) confirmed that those with higher qualifications tend to be in or have been in employment and have had more access to digital technologies, thus as a result, tend to be computer literate. In contrast, those with no qualification were adamant that they did not agree with the statements, which suggested that the respondents believed that participating had favourable outcomes for them.

The respondents attended local UKonline centres – these centres have generally been successful at overcoming barriers to learning and have benefited users, in terms of improved skills for employment, social and personal purposes (DfES 2002b). Unfortunately, there is still some way to

⁵⁹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”

go, as these learners tend to be fairly fragile and erratic. They are fragile, as they bring with them a host of socio-personal problems, for example, low self-esteem, lack of confidence and poor experiences of learning. They are also erratic, as they cannot or do not commit fully, which results in lapsed learning which is not conducive for progression. A survey (DfES 2004b) reported that lapsed learners were less likely to re-engage with learning and it also indicated that lapsed learners were more likely to be underachievers.

Nevertheless, the LSC (2003b; LSCLE 2004; 2007) stressed the importance of Adult and Community Learning as it provides invaluable opportunities for people to learn in their local community and to engage in a varied range of subjects. It is an accessible way to return to education for those that are unsure or shy away from formal learning. Research (DfES 2004b, 2004d) identified reasons given by respondents as to why they did not do any job or non-job related training. In the main, the reason given was linked to lack of time; although when asked what potential area they would be interested in, the majority indicated IT and digital technologies. This is a positive sign in attempting to bridge the digital divide, as *Harnessing Technology* (DfES 2005a:6) recognised and stressed that:

At any stage of learning, ICT could re-engage the unmotivated learner, and bring an authentic and challenging task within their grasp. Or ICT could make the difference between the

boredom of the learner who is always left behind, and the discovery that they can find their own ways to make progress.

Local UKonline statistics in Appendix 1 revealed that many people from socially excluded backgrounds have re-engaged with learning through the use of new technology. IT has motivated these 'hard to reach' or 'out of reach' groups using innovative and creative methods that formal classroom delivery could not have achieved. Digital technology has empowered individuals to gain new e-skills along with increased confidence, employability skills, more involvement in their community and a route to further education (Becta 2008b; Big Lottery 2005).

In considering qualification level, Item 30 below highlights a significant difference of confidence between those with higher level qualifications and those with low or no qualifications.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
30	I consider myself to be a confident, independent learner? ⁶⁰	$\chi^2=48.175$, df 30, $p=0.019$

The majority of respondents who did not consider that they were 'confident, independent learners' were from the category with no qualifications. Lack of confidence and low self-esteem plague socially excluded people from deprived areas of the borough and nationally, due to a combination of current circumstances, past experiences and under-achievements. The LSC (2003) highlighted many attitudinal barriers, for

⁶⁰ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "definitely true" to "definitely untrue"

example, lack of confidence relating to poor self-esteem, negative attitude to learning, perceptions of irrelevance, negative peer pressure, and lack of motivation that can be experienced. Other research (Choli 2003) reaffirmed these barriers, and indicated that these had become ingrained over many years and were difficult to overcome.

Consequently, there are a multitude of local initiatives that have been deployed, along with national initiatives, to capacity-build in deprived communities, for example, through employability skills, supporting business enterprises⁶¹, marketplace⁶², volunteering and UKonline. All the initiatives have recognised the need for IT skills and promoted this avenue for personal development (DBIS 2009b, 2009c; DfES 2005a; HMSO 2005a; LSC 2005b).

In relation to the research question (page 186), the impact that qualification levels have on an individual in relation to Behavioural Beliefs are as follows:

- Individuals with higher academic achievement have significantly stronger salient beliefs that being able to confidently use new technologies is extremely good. They associate favourable consequences with the practice which

⁶¹ Develop socially excluded people skills to set up and run their own commercial businesses.

⁶² The marketplace in an initiative that bring services, for example, housing, Citizen's Advice, fruit and vegetable co-operatives to deprived areas that cannot access them locally.

leads to positive attitudes towards the use of digital technology.

- Positive salient beliefs of those with higher academic qualifications lead to more exposure to computers and digital technologies.
- People with no/low academic achievement tend to hold more negative prominent beliefs which results in the subjective probabilities of the individuals envisaging less favourable outcomes.
- Individuals who lack experience and exposure to digital technologies heighten their belief that they will not be able learn these skills easily, which is a non-favourable outcome.
- Those with no/low level qualifications were more favourable than higher achievers with regard to the benefits of increased confidence to achieve and the development of learning habits that it is believed they would gain when using IT.
- Across all qualification levels, people believed that attendance in learning activities would lead to better understanding of how to use a PC. Their most salient behavioural experiences of using digital technology have begun to change earlier beliefs, leading toward a more favourable outlook.
- Higher proportions of individuals who had no/low qualifications possessed stronger Behavioural Beliefs that they would gain support/guidance and open opportunities that would produce positive outcomes.

- Those individuals who had higher level qualifications believed that attending a learning activity would get in the way of doing other things and would be boring and of no use. In comparison, those without qualification believed the contrary and thus consider the behaviour would have favourable outcomes.
- People with no qualifications had stronger Behavioural Beliefs that they were not confident, independent learners: the beliefs stems from current circumstances, past experiences and under-achievement.

IT has offered an alternative route to learning and could potentially change people's Behavioural Belief and then Attitude toward a Behaviour, in respect of this study, to the advantages of free IT learning activities. This is considered to be positive reinforcement for government agencies, such as the LSC, who see IT as a cross cutting skill required across all industries, which emphasises the ubiquitous nature of digital technologies (BIS 2009a; DfES 2005a; HMSO 2005a; LSC 2005b).

The chi-square test results of responses that compared the *Attitudes toward a Behaviour* element of the Theory of Planned Behaviour against respondents' qualification levels revealed that there were seven questions that were statistically significant.

Items 11 and 16 revealed statistically significant differences of attitude across qualification levels.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
11	For me to attend a computer skills learning activity is? ⁶³	$\chi^2=85.764$, df 30, $p<0.001$
16	For me to attend regularly to gain new computer skills is?	$\chi^2=69.472$, df 20, $p<0.001$

These data indicated that those with no or low qualifications were extremely positive with regard to attending learning regularly to gain computer skills which implies that this behaviour is positively valued. Local UKonline Partnership statistics (see Appendix 1) support the above statement. According to local data, the partnership's centres have seen a year on year increase in the numbers of people from socially excluded backgrounds who have taken advantage of learning through IT. There has also been a surprising surge of local people who wish to gain their first Skills for Life qualifications, many of whom had never achieved prior accreditation. This is confirmed by the LSC (2005a) which highlighted the increased successes of adults who achieved in 2004-2005 of 333,000 who gained basic skills and 146,000 who attained Level 2 qualifications. The achievement levels in these areas have continued to rise (LSCLE 2007). In addition, the 2005 NIACE survey⁶⁴ of adult participation in learning is encouraging, as it shows a marked increase in the proportion of adults reporting current and recent participation in learning, reversing the decline reported in the last four years.

⁶³ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely good" to "extremely bad"

⁶⁴ Aldridge, F., & Tuckett, A., (2005) *Better News this time?* London: NIACE

This is a reflection of changes in Attitude toward Behaviour which could indicate that people's salient beliefs have been modified. The pace of attitude transformation is slow, but there is clear evidence that an impact on attitudes towards IT and learning was steadily taking place, predominantly amongst those individuals who have taken advantage of new opportunities and persevered to attainment. The LSCLE Strategy (2005c:10) has stressed the need to "work with Ufi to ensure a coherent offer between Learndirect, FE⁶⁵ and the ACL⁶⁶ in terms of IT provision and pathways", which will potentially assist those learners/users who wish to continue with their new found abilities and skills.

In reviewing the LSC documentation (LSC 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005c), there is unfortunately a potential drawback. The emphasis has been on low/non achievers to attain Skills for Life and NVQ 2 equivalent qualifications. This aspect of the provision is considered a necessity, as London East continues to have a large number of young people leaving compulsory education with no qualifications, along with 40% of adults with no level 2 qualifications that are offered free of charge to these socially excluded groups. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE level which is considered to be a minimum basic requirement, but collaboration with employers has revealed the need for employees with at least level 3 qualifications (A level equivalent) to continue to be able to compete in global markets (BIS 2009a;

⁶⁵ FE is the abbreviation for Further Education, which provides education to adults 16+

⁶⁶ ACL is the abbreviation for Adult and Community Learning

HMSO 2004). Socially excluded individuals have a long journey to travel both academically and in the workplace to gain better paid employment. Those learners who wish to continue with their learning beyond level 2 could incur a financial cost, as the current Government agenda concentrates on the level 2 benchmark figures and these are the predominantly Skills for Life courses. The introduction of charges will be a major barrier for these socio-economically excluded groups which would lead to further exclusion. However, work related NVQs are being funded, but these would require major time commitment on the part of the learner.

The continued concerns are with the large proportion of socially excluded individuals who are considered to be 'out of reach' who do not wish to engage in any type of learning and especially any that may involve a formal examination in a traditional educational establishment (BIS 2009c; LSCLE 2001, 2002). Aldridge & Tuckett (2005) stressed apprehension over the 2005 NIACE survey, given the demographic context facing the UK; it highlights the diminishing cohorts of young people that can only fill one in three of the vacancies for new and replacement jobs of the next decade. As a consequence, this will require the vacancies to be filled by people currently outside the labour force, and by older people taking on new roles. This is confirmed by the Leitch Report (HMSO 2006). Another potential problem the survey revealed was that these groups were least likely to participate in adult learning, and more particularly, learning how to use new technology (NIACE 2005; DfES 2002c). The data results of Item 25 below highlights the problem.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
25	For me to attend a computer class on a regular basis is? ⁶⁷	$\chi^2=50.808$, df 25, $p=0.002$

In contrast to earlier responses to Item 11 and 16 above the results of Item 25 revealed that a high proportion of respondents with no or low academic attainment indicated that it was bad to attend a computer class on a regular basis. This suggests the problem lies with attendance on a regular basis rather than the learning activities itself, which is confirmed by research (DfES 2002c; DfES 2004b) that refers to one of the main barriers of commitment to learning being due to peoples perceived lack of time. Non-learners were more likely to lack the desire to get involved with learning, as they preferred to do other things with their 'free time' and other time was committed to work and family, although this was also relevant to new learners and lapsed learners.

The attitude toward attending regularly is probably valued negatively as individuals can foresee potential difficulties. According to Ajzen (1988) Attitude toward a Behaviour is a strong predictor of corresponding behaviour, as it can be assessed ahead of time. The respondents' negative value regarding regularly committing time to learning and/or gaining IT skills could have a detrimental effect on the individual's quality of life, leading to isolation and exclusion. There is evidence that lifelong learning not only helps improves people's capacity and confidence, but also it is

⁶⁷ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely good" to "extremely bad"

recognised to improve employment opportunities for themselves and their families. An HMSO report (2004:12) stressed that:

while the gap in educational attainment by socio-economic group has narrowed in recent years, it remains large. Furthermore, analysis shows that parental income and participation in education are strongly correlated and have become more strongly correlated over time. This suggests that social mobility has not risen in recent years. Education can help to reverse this trend and break the intergenerational cycle of under-achievement and deprivation to give every child the opportunity to fulfil his or her talents.

It is evident that attitudes need to be developed towards positive evaluation of time for further education and personal development at all academic levels, but especially for those with no or low qualifications who have so much more to gain both socially and economically. Recent statistics derived from a Labour Force Survey (2004:14) emphasises that:

having no or low qualifications is detrimental to ... employment chances later in life. ... only half of adults with no qualifications are employed compared to about 80% of those with a level 2 qualification ... and near 90% for those with a university level qualification.

These statistics reveal the extent of the problem, which is an economic liability in terms of the UK's global economic status and future competitiveness. The adverse effects have already been felt, which has led to Government strategies (BIS 2009a; Booz et al 2000; NTO 2000) to increase e-skills and achievement levels as a whole in comparison with other G8⁶⁸ countries. The BERR (2009) and LSC (2003) reiterated that up-skilling the workforce was vital if the country is to increase productivity to the required world class standards which will secure future UK prosperity.

Items 15 and 21 below showed a positive statistical significance of those with higher qualification levels in comparison to those with no/low qualifications in terms of Attitude towards Behaviour.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
15	For me to commit time to learning new skills is? ⁶⁹	$\chi^2=40.559$, df 25, $p=0.026$
21	For me to put the learning of new skills first is? ⁷⁰	$\chi^2=41.193$, df 25, $p=0.022$

These data results revealed that respondents with level 3 qualifications and above indicated that it would be of value to them to commit time to learning new skills and that it would be easy to put it first. These individuals are high achievers who are more likely to be confident with good experiences of learning and have a positive attitude toward learning.

⁶⁸ G8 is the Group of Eight consists of [Canada](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Japan](#), the [United Kingdom](#), the [United States of America](#), and the [Russian Federation](#).

Altogether, those countries represent 66.5% of the world economy

⁶⁹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely valuable" to "extremely worthless"

⁷⁰ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely easy" to "extremely difficult"

Other research (DfES 2004b) indicated that those learners who achieved in formal compulsory education were more likely to participate and succeed in subsequent learning. This group are also more likely to be employed and generally envisage new skills and additional qualifications as a catalyst to continued professional development and the prospect of better employment opportunities. However, the greater challenge is with those individuals with no/low qualifications levels as they perceive less value in committing time to learning new skills and indicate it would not be easy for them to put learning new skills first. Their attitude towards learning new IT skills does not have the imperative of a skill that is seen as a necessity for inclusion and employability. The DfES report (2004b) highlighted crucial evidence that those individuals who are less qualified (no/low qualifications) were more likely to keep their job as a result of them learning new skills. However, it is recognised that the UK has successfully lowered the number of workers without basic skills over the last few years. Over the last ten years, there has been a 1% increase per annum, but unfortunately those individuals without level 2 qualifications remains high. However, more worrying is the fact that progression from level 2 to 3 among adults has remained consistently low (BERR 2009; HMSO 2004). It is essential to develop positive attitudes towards gaining new skills, especially relevant IT skills, and to raise qualification levels which can be reinforced through the right support and guidance.

The key issues for interacting with people from socially excluded backgrounds and communities is to communicate, inform and support,

often a difficult process because of their lack of engagement. Local community centres and voluntary organisations play a major role in engaging and raising awareness (CLG 2008). These local agencies/bodies have played a crucial part in promoting many Government initiatives, for example, UKonline Centres and Learndirect (DCLG 2008c); they have raised awareness of the importance of IT and new technologies along with encouraging and enabling people from deprived areas with multiple disadvantages to become engaged in learning in an environment that they feel comfortable in (e-Summit 2002).

Items 14 and 17 revealed statistically significant differences between different qualification levels in relation to the need for relevant support at the appropriate time.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
14	For me to get information and explanations about new technology is? ⁷¹	$\chi^2=45.141$, df 30, $p=0.037$
17	For me to have the opportunity to interact with a friendly tutor and other people in the learning session is?	$\chi^2=42.448$, df 25, $p=0.016$

Unsurprisingly the groups showing highest levels of significance were the underachievers with low and no qualifications who indicated that it was good to get information and explanations about new technology, along with opportunities to interact with friendly tutors and peers. These individuals are more likely to have had poor experiences in formal education and many left school without completing traditional pre-16

⁷¹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely good” to “extremely bad”

schooling. The consequences of these poor experiences, along with other disadvantages, have resulted in: low self-esteem, lack of confidence and the constructive dismissal of the unknown or areas of recognised possible difficulty – along with negative salient beliefs which impact on their attitude toward learning. It is imperative for formal and informal support structures to understand the nature of these complex socio-personal multi-dimensional issues and to address them in ways that the specific individuals can accept and relate to.

Voluntary and community organisations have been successful in addressing some of the complex issues; the work that these organisations in the community do has begun to be recognised by central Government in the White Paper *Communities in Control: real power, real people* (CLG 2008). Local Adult and Community Learning Strategies (LSC 2003b; LSCLE 2007) have included third sector⁷² organisations in various ways too. Third sector organisations tend to attract the hardest to reach groups for a variety of purposes and have worked exceptionally well to promote alternatives ways of developing new skills with this clients group (DIUS 2009). There have been a number of research documents (DCLG 2008a, 2008b; DfES 2002a, 2002b; Foley et al 2002; DfES 2002a) that have stressed the significance of these organisations in promoting digital inclusion, through accessible, informal environments and appropriate, supportive staffing. IT has been a strong motivator for socially excluded individuals and the acquisition of IT skills stimulates the willingness for

⁷² The third sector is a term used by central Government for voluntary, community and charitable organisation that work in the hardest to reach communities.

more learning. The results indicate the importance of this kind of support for socially excluded adults not to feel intimidated to ask questions and get explanations. If they are made to feel stupid or inadequate, this would stunt their progress and even their participation. The implications of their low self-esteem, lack of confidence and fear of failure means they need to be heavily supported both emotionally and academically. Appropriate, friendly staff are a crucial aspect of people's progression. They are key players in promoting self-esteem and capacity-building (DfES 2002b; Big Lottery 2005; DfES 2005b). Other research (DfES 2004a:57) revealed that

The presence of a locally based, well-qualified and easily accessible tutor, who they could identify with and trust, was an important factor in maintaining motivation and increasing self-confidence. It was partly the lack of such a figure in more formal educational settings that makes them inappropriate environments for learners of this type.

Supportive environments have nurtured individuals' self-esteem and confidence, which has resulted in increased numbers of adult underachievers taking advantage of learning, gaining IT skills and successfully achieving level 2 qualifications and above in some cases (HMSO 2005c). Notwithstanding these successes, there continues to be a large proportion of adults without qualifications and employability skills (HMSO 2004, 2005d).

Nonetheless, for those that do participate, there is the opportunity for progression and achievement, which slowly leads to changes in an individual's perceptions and beliefs of a behaviour (in the context of this study the 'behaviour' is learning and IT). This will in turn begin to influence and transform future behaviour as the positive experience will become the most salient past behaviour.

In relation to the research question (page 186), the impact qualification levels have on an individual's Attitude to a Behaviour are as follows:

- Those individuals who have no or low qualifications possessed positive attitudes towards attending computer skills learning activities and gaining new computer skills, which is an indication that this behaviour is positively valued.
- A high proportion of people with no/low academic attainment revealed negative attitudes towards attending a computer class on a regular basis. This would indicate that their accessible Behavioural Beliefs associated with regular attendance supported possible adverse issues to hinder a favourable outcome.
- People with level 3 qualifications and above possessed a more positive attitude than people with lower or no qualifications towards committing time to learning new skills and to put it first, which suggested that their accessible beliefs and evaluation of them would determine favourable outcomes.
- Under-achievers with no/low qualifications indicated that their attitude was positive towards getting information and

explanations about new technology and the opportunities to interact with peers and tutors. Their salient beliefs may combine both negative earlier experiences with positive current practice, but the realisation of possible favourable outcomes enhances attitudes.

6.2.4.2 Past Behaviour Self-Reporting

In the present study, investigation into past behaviour is important, as it is considered to have a bearing on an individual's current and future behaviour. In accordance with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1988:99), it indicated "that the best predictor of future behaviour is performance or non-performance of the same behaviour in the past ... barring unforeseen events".

As part of the questionnaire there were questions directly linked to self-reporting of past behaviour. This was considered to be a productive way to gather the required information directly from respondents' own reiteration and is "usually quite accurate ... [although] accuracy cannot be taken for granted" (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980:38). Nonetheless, although this cannot be observed directly, it is regarded as acceptable in the context of this study.

Adults who have underachieved academically are more reluctant to participate in formal or informal learning, which indicates that they are likely to have beliefs that are firmly rooted in the past. Whether these are

an accurate reflection of reality or a biased recollection of the past, these beliefs form the basis of a person's world and influence responses to aspects of their life (Ajzen & Gilbert Cote 2008).

The table below shows the selection of qualifications against the Past Behavioural Self-Reporting construct of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

The results of Items 61 and 62 revealed statistical differences in relation to level of qualifications and Past Behaviour Self-reporting.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
61	My past experiences of learning and school were? ⁷³	$\chi^2=46.094$, df 30, $p=0.030$
62	How often have you not completed a learning activity you have committed yourself to? ⁷⁴	$\chi^2=49.336$, df 30, $p=0.015$

⁷³ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "extremely good" to "extremely bad"

⁷⁴ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "very rarely" to "very frequently"

These data exposed that those individuals with no or low academic attainment declared their poor experiences of learning and school, and they also highlighted that underachievers were more frequently non-completers on learning activities they had committed to. A DfES report (2004b) confirmed that those with no or low qualification were more likely to be non-learners and were less likely to indicate that they would participate in future learning. By contrast, those who started learning or were lapsed learners were less opposed to participating in learning, although they remained unsure.

The result of Item 61 confirmed the underlying issues of poor past experiences of formal compulsory education that continued to have an impact and influence on the individuals, which is reflected in their low attainment levels. It is well documented that children from socially excluded backgrounds living in deprived areas tend to do less well in formal education (Beeta 2009a; DfES 2004c, 2004c, 2005a; ODPM 2004b, 2005a, 2005b; DfEE 1999). The DfEE report (1999) stressed that

people living in deprived areas are much more likely to lack formal qualifications ... in part this is a legacy of past failure of the education system (DfEE 1999:30).

A Youth and Justice Board report (2006) and Social Exclusion Unit report (1999) reiterated that too many adults have had a poor experience of compulsory education. A negative experience of school often leaves people disinclined ever to learn again. A DfES report *Developing a National Skills Strategy and Delivery Plan* (2003b:29) emphasised that

encouraging adults who have no or low qualifications to gain the motivation and confidence to develop their skills is critical in addressing the legacy of past under-achievement.

Consequently, Government policies and plans (LSC 2001, 2002, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006) have integrated initiatives to remove barriers, with an emphasis on no/low attainment of socially excluded adults and young people, and the need to raise qualifications levels, especially Skills for Life⁷⁵ to meet future productivity. However, these policies have been slow to implement and have had limited success with the hardest to reach groups or as some consider them, 'out of reach' because of their abstinence from re-engaging in learning. A recent HMSO document (2004) highlighted that:

individuals and communities denied the opportunity to gain skills may be unable to take advantage of future opportunities and risk becoming locked in a cycle of worklessness (HMSO 2004:2).

⁷⁵ DfES (2001) *Skills for Life* - the National Strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills

It should be clarified that the opportunities that are denied may be the fault of local agencies, but more often it is individuals and communities themselves that are reluctant to participate, in many cases, for fear of failure and repetition of their schooldays. It is important to find alternative methods to motivate individuals and communities. Other research (DfES 2004b) highlighted that levels of involvement in community activities had a bearing on participation in learning. This research found that those individuals who were actively involved in their communities were also found to be more involved with adult learning. Capacity-building in deprived communities is an important feature of community and voluntary organisations and much of the work of these agencies rely on volunteers from the local vicinity. As a consequence, the volunteers become more aware of their capabilities and employability, leading them seriously to consider future opportunities, and with encouragement, support and guidance, to continue learning and life-changing experiences (CLG 2008).

Case Study 9 described a learner's journey from non-engagement to being a confident lifelong learner.

Case Study 9 - Mona

Mona is a woman of 26 years of age, who had poor experience of formal education and at the age of 15 dropped out and never attend again. As a result she did not gain any qualifications. Since school, Mona has spent a lot of time at home, although she had been employed on and off in her late teens, these jobs were short lived. From her early 20s Mona has suffered from health issues; with the help of a care worker, she reluctantly joined a basic IT introductory course at the GO Charlton Triangle Centre in 2006. Mona took a long time to settle, but eventually began to participate and has gained not only very good IT skills, but also confidence and greater self-esteem. In addition, Mona accomplished a Level 1 Certificate in Adult Literacy through the use of interactive technology. Mona said

“I didn’t get on at school, the teachers’ didn’t like me. I never took any qualifications or got any certificates. I was really scared about anything to do with learning – my care worker kept telling me to try the computer and eventually I did. It wasn’t easy, but the tutor was friendly and never said I was doing anything wrong ... slowly, I began to get good at it. It wasn’t like school when I couldn’t do things ... she would always spend time to help me until I got it. My life is different now, I volunteer at the centre, I can help other people learn – I have got my first qualification and now have a real certificate with my name on it. I feel I can do something with my life now – my life has started and I can do more qualifications.”

Community and voluntary organisations are well placed in deprived areas to provide Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provision, along with other learning initiatives to some of the 'hardest to reach' groups, but they do need the support of experts to deliver the provision (BIS 2009c). The former Prime Minister, Tony Blair (e-Summit 2002) fully exploited the potential of these organisations to 'bridge the digital divide' by establishing in excess of 6,000 UKonline Centres across a high proportion of Britain's deprived communities. The local UKonline centres used as part of this study have experienced a fundamental change in people's attitudes towards learning because the revenue received was used to employ professionals to manage and teach the provision. The promotion of new technologies and e-learning has been a way to engage people in informal activities whereby the individuals have acquired new skills and learning as a hidden by-product (HMSO 2008).

A Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills paper entitled *The Learning Revolution* (DIUS 2009) encapsulates the value of informal adult learning. It stated, "Informal learning is learning for intrinsic value", although it goes on to emphasise that "for the low-skilled and under-confident, informal learning can be an important stepping stone to further learning and a more skilled future" (DIUS 2009:17). An ODPM report (2005) highlighted the successes of community based IT initiatives that have effectively engaged a broad range of socially excluded groups. These successes have been twofold, by enabling digital inclusion and reintroducing the capacity to learn. A Cabinet Report (2005:9) stressed

that “community-based learning opportunities have been shown to promote digital take-up for groups of people who are not currently digitally engaged”. People who have had poor experiences of formal education, with no or low qualifications, are more difficult to engage, but digital technologies and computers have inspired many individuals to get involved, as they are not perceived as formal academic learning. The portrayal of IT and its usage can have an impact on people’s participation. Research by the DfES (2004b) indicated that new computer users more commonly started using the technology for leisure purposes. The *Digital Strategy* (DTI 2005) and other government documents (DBIS 2009a, 2009b, 2009c) praise the work of UKonline centres across England and stressed the importance of building on these access points to reach the ‘hardest to reach’ groups.

Many individuals with no or low qualifications have found IT to be an accessible way to engage in learning, often commencing general interest IT, for example, digital photography, hobbies, online shopping and emails and moving on to employability skills (DBIS 2009a, 2009c; Freshminds 2007, 2008). It is recognised (DTI 2005) that many non-IT users do not perceive a need, although their perception changes once they have been introduced to the Internet. There is also strong evidence (DfES 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b) that indicates that those individuals with no and low qualifications who engage with IT and digital technologies tend to continue with learning, generally continuing with more general interest IT, but others gain the confidence and self-esteem to complete Skills for Life

qualifications and accredited qualifications in IT. This was confirmed in an interview with a learner who stated:

... I never had any qualifications and it never interested me to go back to college or anything ... but when I went to take my son to the crèche, someone came up to me and told me about how I could take pictures of my son and send them by email to family in other countries. First I thought I can't do that, but went along to the taster session and enjoyed it so much even though I couldn't do it all, but with time I got good. I then did an introduction course to learn how to use word processing - I gave up once and came back a few months later. It was then that my tutor said you might need to do some work on your English, I didn't want to, but slowly I was convinced and took my very first literacy qualification. Computers make learning things different to what I did before.

The advantages of e-learning⁷⁶ are that people can work at their own pace and at a time that is convenient to them, although it must be stressed that the presence of an expert tutor is a necessity for this client group. In the early stages of engagement, this client group are fragile and require expert tuition, and support and guidance, if they are to become proficient users of IT.

⁷⁶ Learning with use of computers or other electronic media

The data analysis of Item 62 revealed that people with no and low qualifications more frequently did not complete learning activities. Individuals tend to give a multitude of reasons for non-completion, many of which have already been raised in this research: for example, lack of time, family commitments and no interest. However, in many cases they do not have the necessary basic skills required to support themselves in even the lowest level activities. London East has the poorest levels of numeracy at 27% and literacy at 26%, amongst the 16-60 year old population in London, and in addition, has the lowest achievement rates (LSC 2005c). These deficiencies in a person's ability have debilitating consequences. Lack of confidence, self-esteem, skills and ability are influencing factors in whether people complete learning activities. People who have had poor experiences of formal education tend to dip in and out of activities, 'cherry picking' the elements they find most accessible and omitting the others that they believe will be difficult. This type of learning tends to leave major gaps, but does have the advantage of confidence building, which could lead the individual onto further learning.

The DfES report (2004b) highlighted the numbers of lapsed learners that commenced courses, do not complete, but indicate that, although they dropped out, they were not wholly opposed to future learning. The study (DfES 2004b) also stressed that those learners who had achieved in compulsory education and remained beyond 16 years of age tended also to complete and achieve when returning to education.

IT enables individuals, especially those with no or low qualifications, to learn through more creative avenues and to progress at their own pace. A DIUS report (2008:26) indicates that “more than ever, new technologies are opening up the world of knowledge and offering new and flexible ways to learn”. Technology is seen as a powerful catalyst to encourage and motivate people who would otherwise have been digitally disengaged to learn the skills to use different technologies, for example, internet-enabled PCs, digital television (iDTV) and mobile telephones. Despite the clear success of many IT initiatives, however, a significant number of UK citizens remain digitally disengaged, around 39% (Freshminds 2007; Ufi 2007). Foley et al (2002) stressed the importance of raising awareness of IT and how it can improve quality of life amongst socially excluded groups, although it was highlighted that high IT awareness did not always translate into high IT usage, as levels of awareness were not differentiated. Government strategies and policies (DBERR 2009; Cabinet Office 2005; DfES 2005a; DTI 2005; HMSO 2005d GLA 2003) have been drafted to create a country at ease with the digital work, with a population that is confident to access new and innovative services, for example, e-government, leisure, hobbies, skills learning and communication. IT has the ability to cross cultural boundaries, enhance individuals’ socio-economic and socio-personal outlook, and potentially increase aspirations of socially excluded populations, especially those with no/low qualifications.

In relation to the research question (page 186), the impact that qualification levels have on an individual's Past Behavioural Beliefs are as follows:

- Individuals who had poor past experiences of formal compulsory education continued to be influenced by their past experiences and their past Behavioural Beliefs developed many years before played a major part in their current actions/decisions making.
- Individuals who had poor experiences of compulsory education indicated that when they have started a learning activity they frequently did not complete the activity.
- These poor experiences are durable, as the individuals have continued to live with underachievement, for example, no/low basic skills. Many reasons may be given for non-participation: the main hindrance would be lack of the rudimentary skills of reading, writing and numeracy which impinge on any learning activities.
- Informal learning with and through IT has helped to overcome some of the influences of negative past experiences of formal education. Digital technologies offer an alternative to traditional learning. Even though individuals may not complete new learning activities that they start, these new experiences will begin to modify Behavioural Beliefs and often lead to full involvement in education, training and employment.

There are different patterns of adoption and achievement in relation to qualification levels. Another criterion that also has major implications is ethnicity which will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.5 Ethnicity

The questionnaire provided participants with 12 different ethnic origins plus an 'Other' option⁷⁷. Chi-square analysis was performed on the 53 questions of the questionnaire against the ethnicity criteria, of which 28 of the responses were presented as statistically significant. The most significant results will be analysed using the Theory of Planned Behaviour elements: *Normative Beliefs* and *Subjective Norms* in relation to the following:

Research Question

To investigate the impact that an individual's ethnicity has on attitudes and behaviour as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

Ethnicity is the nationality classification of users/learners' country of origin, usually derived from parental origins and in many reports can also be referred to as Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) groups. A BBC web report (2006) indicated that "ethnic minorities represent 7.9% of the UK population [and it is] a growing population with the majority living in

⁷⁷ The ethnic origins were selected in accordance with those used by the local authority the study was based in.

London". Table 1 shows an ethnic profile for the London East borough investigated in this study.

Inner London Borough - Five Largest Ethnic Groups		
Ethnic Group	No. of Residents	% of Residents
White: British	151,291	71%
Black or Black British: Black African	15,301	7%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	9,407	4%
White Other: White	9,183	4%
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	6,757	3%
(Source 2001 Census)		

Table 6.3: Study Borough Ethnic Profile

There are two Black groups which are explicitly identified as Black Caribbean and Black African, although implicitly these include people from different locations in the Caribbean and Africa. Black Caribbean include populates from the Caribbean islands of: Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Windward Islands, Barbados and Trinidad. Black Africans currently in the UK are largely from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana and Somalia.

A seminal report *'Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal'* (SEU 1998) highlighted problems faced by people living in the poorest neighbourhoods and indicated that deprived areas had four times the UK standard proportion of ethnic residents. It also highlighted the lack of learning, IT access and skills, along with low employment opportunities for black and ethnic minorities. Accordingly, ethnicity is considered an important criterion, as many BME groups tend to be concentrated in deprived areas (SEU 1998, 1999) and is used in this study to consider the issue of the adoption of digital technologies and

involvement in learning activities in particular IT, in order to gauge differentiation between the ethnic groups.

A Cabinet Office report (2005) highlighted the lack of digital engagement specifically amongst BME groups and emphasised the need to empower individuals to participate.

6.2.5.1 Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms

The largest proportions who have stronger *Normative Beliefs* than other ethnic respondent populations⁷⁸ are from three specific BME groups: Black Caribbean, Black African and Indian. Normative Beliefs refer to the individual's perceived behavioural expectations of important referent individuals or groups, for example, a spouse, member of the family, friends and possibly others, such as, peers, managers/supervisors, doctor and/or teacher. The assumption is that those Normative Beliefs, along with a person's motivation to comply with their important other(s), will determine the prevailing *Subjective Norm* (Ajzen 2002b).

The chi-square data of the responses to the questionnaire items relating to Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms against the ethnicity variable revealed that 10 of the 53 items were statistically significant. Seven items were specifically related to Normative Beliefs and three items to Subjective Norms. The table below highlights the variable against the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

⁷⁸ It should be noted that there were only small numbers of respondents from other ethnic minorities.

	Gender	Age	Children	Qualifications	Ethnicity
Behavioural Beliefs	✓			✓	
Attitude toward the Behaviour	✓			✓	
Normative Belief	✓		✓		✓
Subjective Norm	✓		✓		✓
Control Beliefs		✓	✓		
Perceived Behavioural Control		✓	✓		
Intention		✓	✓		
Past Behavioural Self-Reporting		✓		✓	

This study investigated whether the Normative Beliefs of socially excluded individuals from the various BME groups are more likely to be influenced by their important referents regarding whether to participate in IT learning and adopt new technologies or not.

Items 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42 considered Normative Beliefs in relation to ethnicity and were found to be statistically significant.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
38	Generally speaking, how much do you care what the tutor of a course thinks you should do? ⁷⁹	$\chi^2=72.933$, df 30, $p>0.001$
39	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your partner/spouse think you should do?	$\chi^2=81.183$, df 36, $p>0.001$
40	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your close friends think you should do?	$\chi^2=60.385$, df 36, $p=0.007$
41	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your children/dependents think you should do?	$\chi^2=74.263$, df 36, $p>0.001$
42	Generally speaking, how much do you care what others think you should do?	$\chi^2=75.847$, df 36, $p>0.001$

⁷⁹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “very much” to “not at all”

These data revealed that there are differences between the different ethnic populations with regard to the perceived behavioural expectations of their important others. The Black Caribbean, Black African and Indian participant populations were more concerned about the perceived expectations of the people around them that they cared about.

A DfES report (2003d) indicated that research had revealed that Black Caribbean, Black African and Indian sub-continent ethnic minorities from disadvantaged backgrounds were the lowest users of PC technologies. This could suggest that many of the individuals from these BME groups do not perceive that they have the support of their important referents and, as a result, did not engage with digital technologies. There is evidence (DfES 2003d) that confirmed “that middle-aged and older females from some South Asian groups were particularly likely to lack ... experience of using ICT” due to the lack of support from their male counterparts because it may “lead to disruption in families” (DfES 2003d:27). Ofcom research (2008a) confirmed that usage amongst people over 45 and especially females in these ethnic groups indicated that they tended not to engage with digital technologies to a great degree.

Ethnic groups tend to be part of close knit community populations and many tend only to integrate with what they consider are their ‘own kind’, following similar cultural patterns and practices. Individuals from these cultural communities have a perceived understanding of expected behaviour and within normal practice would not do anything that would

alienate themselves from their family and friends. Acceptance within these micro-cultures is very important to individuals' sense of tradition and belonging. At recent outreach visit to a local Ramgarhia⁸⁰ there was an opportunity to provide scope for interaction with two elderly groups:

elders both female and male sitting in separate rooms chatting. When asked whether they were interested in learning how to use the computer and the Internet there was silence and they just looked at each other, then one said "no" and they all agreed. There were statements like "... oh no, that is for the young ones ... what we need it for?" ... "we don't want to use – very difficult ... not like TV".

The strong cohesion of people within the cultural communities ensures those individuals conform to the traditional behavioural expectations and acceptable behaviours that can be more readily performed, whereas other behaviours/decisions may be discussed and approval sought prior to participation.

Alienation from friends and family can cause immense distress and untold upheaval; as a consequence, various ethnic community-based IT initiatives have been initiated and promoted in deprived inner city areas to engage with the hardest to reach BME groups. The IT initiatives have been developed with the specific ethnic groups at the heart of them by agencies

⁸⁰ Ramgarhia a local Sikh temple

and workers from the BME groups who have extensive experience of the culture (DBIS 2009c). A DfES report (2003e) highlighted successful BME IT projects across the country in deprived areas that had been developed to raise awareness, increased availability and take-up of IT for ethnic minorities living in poor neighbourhoods. A DfES research paper (DfES 2003e) emphasised the approaches to good practice developed and promoted in these projects, for example, those based in the appropriate community area, located in buildings that the targeted audience already visit and in relevant activities to engage them, along with gender specific sessions. Another report (DfES 2002c) claimed that

ethnic minority groups are likely to use ICT nowadays – 61% of Asians and 54% of Black respondents use the Internet nowadays, compared to 47% of White respondents (DfES 2002c:19).

The same report (DfES 2002c) indicated that BME groups placed greater importance on computer skills, both for the present and in the future, with 56% of Asians and 49% of Black respondents indicating that IT skills play an important part of their jobs now in comparison to 36% of White respondents. The more people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who become involved and engage with digital technologies and learning, the more this will increase awareness and become perceived as acceptable behavioural practice which will be supported by important referents. The

Ofcom research (2008b) revealed that the take up and use of Internet services was showing an increased acceptance in these groups.

A DfES report (2003d) highlighted the disapproval by some family members of their women engaging in IT and learning, but provided a strong indication that increased awareness of grown up children can be persuasive in allowing reluctant family members to modify their behavioural practices. Close friends of individuals and families can also alleviate disapproval when learning activities are delivered in the confines of their cultural groups (2003e). The Ofcom research (2008b) highlighted that male BMEs were more likely to use digital technologies than females.

Ethnic minority groups tend to have a high regard for people in professions, such as teachers or doctors and once they have the approval of their family and friends, they are keen to gain the approval of those authoritative figures that are there to assist them (DfES 2002e).

Item 59 shows a statistical difference with regard to ethnicity and Normative Beliefs of what important others think they should do.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
59	My close friends would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis? ⁸¹	$\chi^2=54.223$, df 36, $p>0.026$

⁸¹ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”

The data reveals that *Normative Beliefs* were stronger amongst Black African and Asian respondents in relation to the perceived behavioural expectations of their close friends. If individuals perceived that their close friends would approve of their participation in attending a computer class on a regular basis, it would reinforce the commitment to complete. A more forceful motivator would be joint participation of the individual with their close friend(s), especially when returning to learning for the first time. DfES reports (2003d, 2003e) confirmed the success of delivering IT access, skills training and learning with ethnic minority groups in places where they congregate, for example, Pakistani women's groups in community centres and local schools, Bangladeshi youth organisation and faith-based organisations. Fortunately, common practice reveals that once a person has gained confidence they become more self-motivated and increasingly encourage their friends and family. In addition, their raised awareness leads to the purchase of PC equipment, in particular for educational purposes and especially for children and other family members (DFES 2003d).

There is evidence (DfES 2003b, 2004a, 2005b; Big Lottery 2005) that appropriate tutors are an important factor in the engagement of diverse communities. Item 57 below highlights a statistically significant difference between different ethnic groups.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
57	The tutor of a computer skills learning activity would think I should attend class on a regular basis? ⁸²	$\chi^2=75.781$, df 36, $p>0.001$

The Black African communities were the highest proportion of positive responses to the question that indicated the tutor would think they should attend class on a regular basis, with Black Caribbean close behind. Individuals from Black African and Caribbean groups have emphasised the importance of computer skills and education for themselves, and more especially, their children (DfES 2003d). The results suggested that not all ethnic minorities consider the tutor to be important in terms of their perceived behavioural expectation, although experience has shown that many socially excluded adults need the regular support of an empathetic tutor to aid progression. Research (DfES 2003d) highlighted discussions from Black Caribbean learners who emphasised the importance of having a black tutor who understands their needs and cultures. A DfES report (2003e) on approaches to good practice also indicated the importance of having experienced IT tutors who know the community populations well and have extensive knowledge of specific languages, backgrounds and expectations. In addition, gender is often important to some BME groups. The individuals who are motivated to comply with the tutor tend to achieve and progress well through the initial activities, then go on to further IT courses and/or other topics.

⁸² Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”

Normative Beliefs in combination with an individual’s motivation to comply with diverse referents determine their Subjective Norms. Ajzen (2002b:2) stated that:

Subjective Norm is the perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage ... it is assumed that subjective norm is determined by the total set of accessible Normative Beliefs concerning the expectations of important referents.

Social pressure and motivation to comply are strong drivers for individuals from ethnic minority populations, as they reside in close proximity to family and friends who often influence their life choices. This is highlighted in Item 24 below which indicated a statistical difference with regard to ethnicity and *Subjective Norms*.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
24	Most people that are important to me think that [I should/should not] attend a computer class on a regular basis? ⁸³	$\chi^2=56.439$, df 30, $p>0.002$

The data revealed overwhelmingly that the Asian populations considered that most of the people important to them thought they should attend a computer class on a regular basis. The results of this research suggested that people within the Asian communities consider computer skills to be important and the respondents were aware of social pressure to gain IT proficiency and have a wish to comply with their important others. A DfES (2002c) research report indicated that Asian respondents were more likely

⁸³ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of “I should” to “I should not”

than other ethnic backgrounds to own the most ICT media, revealing that 64% of Asians own a PC compared to 51% of Black and 51% of White respondents. The Ofcom research (2008b) confirmed that the Asian groups were in the forefront of digital adoption and use. Other research (DfES 2003d) stated that the Asian populations tend to own more IT equipment in their homes than other ethnic minority groups; although it also stressed that not all the adults in these households used the technology, especially PC technologies. Consequently, the motivation to comply is strong, especially for the younger Asian population and those of working age. Parents and working adults considered IT to be essential for educational purposes with an overwhelming 80% who indicated that computer skills were a necessity for children (DfES 2003d).

In accordance with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, individuals are strongly influenced by social pressure to comply with referents who are close to them. Consequently, if close friends and/or family participate in certain behaviour, for example, attending IT classes or learning activities, then it would be more appealing and acceptable.

Item 28 revealed a statistical significance in relation to the various BME groups and attendance of friends and family in learning when considering Subjective Norms.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
28	Most of my friends and family attend some form of learning on a regular basis? ⁸⁴	$\chi^2=57,912$, df 36, $p>0.012$

The data indicated that Black Caribbean and Black African were more likely to have friends and family who attend some form of learning on a regular basis.

The LSC (2006) indicated that the Black or Black-British African and Black or Black-British Caribbean ethnic populations totalled 16% of all FE learners and had the highest numbers amongst BME groups. Statistics from local UKonline centres (Appendix 1) revealed similar figures for Black African and Black Caribbean learners/users, as do the national statistics. Culturally, Black African and Black Caribbean adults tend to value education and are aware of the necessity for academic credentials because of the economic power that these qualifications can provide (DfES 2003d; BBC 2006). In addition, Black African and Black Caribbean, along with other ethnic minorities recognised the need for IT skills, especially for employment purposes and a necessity for educational purposes for themselves and their children (DfES 2003d; LSC 2008). In terms of IT, the DfES report (2003d; LSC 2006) indicated that Black ethnic minorities were amongst the highest group that had attended learning and IT training over recent years, although it also indicated that Black groups are less likely to use the Internet. Case Study 10 provides a learner's description of his perceptions of family expectations.

⁸⁴ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "definitely true" to "definitely untrue"

Case Study 10 – Des

Des, aged 45, of Black Caribbean origins, who attended the GO Hamara Assra Centre, stated that he had left school early, not having taken any exams. Des had suffered from depression over the last few years, but was keen to get into work.

Des indicated that he had messed around a lot at school with his peers and got himself in trouble, then got expelled and by that time it was too late to take exams. He stressed that he came from a family who were always strong on education and qualifications they saw it as a way of bettering yourself. Des emphasised how disappointed his family were about his failures. He said that his sisters all had very good jobs and that they would be proud that he was back learning and gaining skills, as would his parents, if they were still alive. Des spoke of his daughter and how she was at University – he emphasised how clever she was and he wanted to make her proud of him. Des said:

“I always felt scared and embarrassed about learning again – I didn’t feel comfortable about going to college or anything ‘cause I would be with loads of people I didn’t know. But doing it here at the community centre I feel happier – it was hard at first to face up to it, but the computers helped me. I could do it when I wanted and Janet [tutor] is great – she helps me when I need it. I have done some computing courses ... I know how to use Word and the Internet. Now I want to do numeracy so that I can know more about sorting my money out and what the banks are doing ... after I want to do English that will help me too. I think it’s great doing it here – don’t know if I would have done it otherwise.”

The importance of family to BME groups has encouraged a body of literature on transnationalism⁸⁵ that stressed that new digital technologies have made it possible for migrants to preserve close, continuing ties with their homelands as they could not do before (Cohen 1997; Kivisto 2003; Portes 1999a; Smith 2002; Smith & Guarnizo 2002). This was reinforced in a study by Burrell & Anderson (2008) of Ghanaians living abroad, which stated that new technologies are an important aspect of maintaining links with their homeland. Black minorities' participation levels in learning and IT skills training is a very positive signal of raised awareness and in the advanced stages of acceptance, which in future will consolidate a change in attitude, leading to a continued culture of lifelong learning amongst these BME groups.

However, there is some way to go, as recent National Statistics (2006) highlighted that Black Caribbean, Black African and Other Black pupils have the lowest levels of GCSE achievement compared to White and other ethnic minority groups and it was also indicated that they were also more likely to be permanently excluded from school. Conversely, the BBC report (2006) highlighted that Black and Asian minority groups were very ambitious, and as a result, are more likely to return to learning in later years. Returning to learning or other behaviour is always easier and most likely with support of

⁸⁵ Transnationalism is a social movement grown out of the heightened interconnectivity between people all around the world and the loosening of boundaries between countries. The term was coined in the early 20th century by writer Randolph Bourne to describe a new way of thinking about relationships between cultures.

family and friends; otherwise this additional barrier may be obstructive and a deterrent.

In further consideration of Subjective Norms, Item 34 revealed statistical significances between the different ethnic groups and approval regarding attending computer classes.

Item	Question	Chi-test results
34	Most people whose opinions I value would approve of my attending a computer class on a regular basis? ⁸⁶	$\chi^2=85.812$, df 36, $p>0.001$

The data showed that, of the BME respondents participating in the current study, the Black African populations felt more strongly with regard to the above question, which suggests that they are secure in their perception of the approval of their important others. This group was also the largest group that knows family or friends that were currently participating in a learning activity (Item 28 above).

Daley (1996) highlighted that it was colonisation that fuelled the aspiration for many Africans to explore the source of colonial power, which led to migration post-1960's independence for educational purposes due to political instability and reduced state expenditure on education in their own countries. Consequently, the influx of African migrants to Britain was predominately for the purpose of higher education or technical training.

⁸⁶ Respondents chose from a seven point scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"

Black Africans have a history of studying in Britain, particularly those that were descendants of those working as sea men from Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast and later from Ghana and other West African States (Elam & Chinouya 2000). British education has always been held in high esteem by West Africans, especially amongst middle-class African parents who also have a strong belief that education and qualifications brings with it wealth and prestige (Goody & Groothues 1977). Descendants of migrant Africans recognise the expectations of their family and friends, and as a result, possess the assurance that they will be supported if they participate in any form of learning.

Unfortunately, National Statistics (NSO 2006) reveal that young Black Africans may have begun to become disengaged with the values of their parents as their GCSE attainment levels are one of the lowest nationally. In addition, Black Africans also leave University education as one of the lowest achieving groups (IES 2004). This is a vast contrast to findings revealed in a journal article entitled *Black Africans in Great Britain: Spatial Concentrations and Segregation* by Daley (1998:1708) who indicates that in 1991 the Black Africans “were the most qualified ethnic group in Britain with 26% of the population over 18 years possessing higher qualifications.” Notwithstanding this downward trend the results of the 2001 Census state that higher proportions of BMEs indicated that they would return to education as opposed to white groups, which was a positive sign that family influence overcomes poor attainment.

In relation to the research question (page 225), the impact ethnicity has on an individual's Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms are as follows:

- The Black Caribbean, Black African and Indian participant populations were more concerned about the perceived expectations of the people around them that they cared about.
- Individuals from different cultural communities have a perceived understanding of expected behaviour and within normal practice would not do anything that would alienate themselves from their family and friends.
- Black African and Asian respondents had stronger Normative Beliefs in relation to the perceived behavioural expectations of their close friends. If individuals perceived that their close friends would approve of their participation in regular computer classes it would reinforce the commitment to complete.
- Asian populations considered that most of the people important to them thought they should attend a computer class on a regular basis.
- Black Caribbean and Black African participants were more likely to have friends and family who attend some form of learning on a regular basis.
- Black African populations felt more strongly that most whose opinion they value would approve of them attending computer classes on a regular basis, which suggests that they

are secure in their perception of the approval of their important others.

The analysis of findings using The Theory of Planned Behaviour demonstrates clearly that localised social determinants do have an impact on individuals' attitudes towards certain behaviours. Their knowledge and understanding of different situations has been gained through past experiences, beliefs and values ingrained through family and friends and whether they believe there are factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour.

7. GOVERNMENT AGENDA

The findings of this research into digital inclusion revealed implications for Government both for policy and economic/social well being of the UK population. The range of issues and problems identified continue to affect people's attitudes and behaviours towards learning and the use of IT. Central and local government view lifelong learning and IT as a catalyst for their improvement agenda. However, there are implications if large groups of people have poor attitudes towards learning and IT.

The research has been used to effect modification and/or change attitudes and behaviours amongst excluded groups by introducing alternative ways of learning or gaining skills with digital technologies. The findings highlighted direct and indirect implications for cultural and social well-being and economic competitiveness through: Transformational Government, Skills Shortages/Gaps and Social Exclusion if excluded groups do not engage with lifelong learning and digital inclusion.

Transformational Government (e-Government or t-Government) agenda could be more fully implemented if large proportions of the population are able to access the information and/or services involved (DBIS 2009a, 2009b; Ufi 2007b).

- Online Public Services - approximately 90% of public services are online and currently only approximately 30% of the UK population access the websites which currently equates to a most costly service.
- Online Information - limited numbers of users will have an impact on efficiency gains as there will be no reduction in traditional face-to-face and telephone contact, and manual form/information processing.
- Cost Savings - there could be opportunities to save money as parallel services can be removed when people are using online services and other facilities.
- Increased Efficiency and Productivity - could be achieved as with increased through-put, there are fewer data entry errors via automated facilities and real-time processes.

Skills Shortages/Gaps in both IT and basic skills have been highlighted in government strategies and policies which lead to initiatives to overcome these.

- Lack of Intermediate Skills - it has been recognised that large numbers of people lack intermediary skills, for example, literacy, numeracy and specifically IT at level 2. This will have an impact on

current and future economic development, national productive and global competitiveness.

- Unskilled/under-skilled workforce - workers with limited or no skills are the most vulnerable in an economic downturn, if these people are not provided with opportunities to gain skills or re-skill especially to provide them with necessary IT skills which would increase their employability.
- Worklessness - is prevalent in the London East Region and has a direct effect on the economy. Many of these unemployed people have low/no qualifications and limited job-ready skills.

Social Exclusion needs to be decreased as people are likely to become further removed from digital technologies and the skills required to use them.

- Digital equality matters - as it can help to alleviate some deep social inequalities brought about by low incomes, poor health, limited skills or disabilities.
- Reduced welfare costs - could be achieved if people return to learning and gain new skills which have the ability to improve their quality of life.
- Socially vulnerable individuals - could acquire the skills to use digital technologies which could increase self-sufficiency through capacity building, increased confidence and self-esteem. In addition, IT offers opportunities for increased civic participation.

This research used the Theory of Planned Behaviour which highlighted the strength of beliefs that influenced attitudes and behaviours, along with decisions people make. It revealed findings that have informed practice locally and also gone a substantial way to persuade central and local government thinking on social and digital exclusion in communities through funding good quality initiatives, such as GO UKonline.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary

This research investigated the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The social psychological theoretical perspective used for this study was The Theory of Planned Behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour has been used to study attitude and behaviour in a range of situations, but this study is unique as it is concentrated on under-performing individuals who live in deprived areas. The questionnaire was designed specifically to extract answers that would highlight specific problems that impinge on individuals engaging with learning and IT across the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The results of the current research confirmed that the respondents experienced strong socio-personal factors that stem from adverse latent experiences gained early in the individual's life and it is these experiences that have shaped attitudinal

and behavioural barriers which hindered their participation in learning and the use of IT.

The data derived from the questionnaires explicitly confirmed that the individual's Behavioural Beliefs were linked to what they perceived to be the expected outcomes of the behaviour in question, in this case, participating in learning and skills acquisition through the use of new technologies. The Behavioural Beliefs and expected outcomes are surmised from past experiences, usually their own, but could also include those of close family and friends. It is clear that people hold many Behavioural Beliefs with respect to any behaviour, but only a relatively small number of these are readily accessible at a given moment and that no two individuals will have exactly the same beliefs about a given behaviour. On the basis of these beliefs and participants understanding of the expected outcomes that shape their Attitude toward a Behaviour, they then consider the degree to which performance of the behaviour is positively or negatively valued and this is determined by a total set of accessible Behavioural Beliefs linking the behaviour to various outcomes and other attributes. Consequently, the respondents' Behavioural Beliefs towards participation in learning are the result of poor experiences of formal education which have led to reluctance to re-live their failures. In terms of gender results it revealed that more women than men were open to attending taught IT sessions, which reinforced that women's attitude towards learning was more positive. Men were more prone to attending drop-in sessions and having a play with the technology and felt they were more proficient than they actually were. On

the whole women were less confident than men when it came to using any new technology, although they had more awareness of the benefits of digital technologies. Nevertheless, there continued to be low numbers of socially excluded adults learning/accessing new technologies and fewer men than women, but generally women had more positive values towards learning new skills.

Normative Beliefs were another important aspect for respondents. Normative Beliefs referred to the perceived behavioural expectations of important referent individuals or groups, for example, spouse, partners, children and close friends. Responses showed that individuals and especially women were more likely to participate in a behaviour if they believed their important others would approve. Children acted as a major driver in respondents' decisions to participate in IT learning/training activities. It was apparent that Normative Beliefs, in combination with the person's motivation to comply with the different referents, determined their subjective norm. A person's Subjective Norms comprise the perceived social pressure to engage or not in a behaviour. The social pressure to engage was evident in the coast of many of the respondents in their indication that they should know how to use computers and different technologies to help their children. However, also highlighted was that many of the respondents with children stated their intention to participate in a beginner's computer class on a regular basis, but in reality the intention did not materialise into practice. There were also strong cultural pressures that BMEs' families imposed on their children and other family

members towards educational achievement, as education is seen as enhancing social mobility and economic well-being. Unfortunately, many children from BME backgrounds were struggling to reach family expectations in terms of achievement and were becoming disengaged, although these groups were more likely to return to education later in their lives.

The third main construct of the Theory of Planned Behaviour that had implications for the respondents is Control Beliefs. These involve the perceived presence of factors that may impede or facilitate performance of a behaviour. Respondents revealed that they were aware of what would have an impact on attendance and commitment. The control beliefs were linked to their knowledge of factors that would either enable or restrict them from taking part in a regular learning activity. Many factors were linked to their personal life circumstances especially those in the age ranges 16-25, 26-35 and 36-45 respectively, for example, family obligations, apathy due to long term worklessness, multi-faceted social and economic problems and/or lack of basic skills. The individuals' Perceived Behavioural Control had a major impact on the perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour and, dependent on the behaviour, they made assumptions about their Perceived Behavioural Control which were determined by the total set of accessible control beliefs which assisted them to make their decision regarding their intention and ultimately the behaviour itself.

8.2 Implications and Recommendations

8.2.1 Professional Practice

The study considered a topical aspect of societal circumstance and highlighted issues faced by people who have negative attitudes and behaviours towards learning which impinge on their exposure to and acquisition of IT skills.

This research has implications for professional practice in a number of ways, both strategic and operational:

Strategic Implications from the findings have proved invaluable. The research has provided evidence of the attitudes and behaviours that influence disadvantaged individuals. It has allowed serious contribution to work carried out locally, nationally and internationally.

- Dissemination – the findings of this study have been adopted by: the local authority through their Local Area Agreements; at a national level through consultations and action plans of major Government papers, for example, Informal Adult Learning White Paper – *The Learning Revolution*; *Delivering Digital Britain: An Action Plan for Consultation*; *Digital Britain: Interim Report*; *Digital Britain* and the *Independent Review of ICT User Skills*. At an international level, a research paper incorporating the findings from this research was presented to an international audience in Turkey, May 2010.

- Planning – the findings have been used for planning purposes for collaborative and partnership working with those best placed to support and promote provision to appropriate client groups.
- Provision – the findings of this research have provided some understanding of attitudes and behaviours which have been used to develop an innovative and creative programme for excluded individuals to become involved with learning and digital technologies. Also to use technologies to target and engage diverse social and cultural groups through collaborative work with local agencies and partners.
- IT Provision – the findings have informed the procurement of new software and hardware. It has also lead to discussions with the local authority regarding borough-wide connectivity accessible to all residents which has resulted in a pilot study in one of the most deprived communities in the borough.
- Collaborative and Partnership Working – findings from this study has informed work with organisations that work with our partners, parents, carers and guardians to promote an ethos of lifelong learning for themselves and their children through strong local role models and support systems.

Operational Implications of the research have provided a greater insight than previously into how to work with individuals from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

- Staff – as a result of this research, a series of training programmes have been devised for the GO staff to improve their understanding of the client groups, share good practice and course development.
- Hard to Reach Groups – the findings have been used to identify and manage negative attitudes and behaviours, and work with the individuals to slowly modify and change these over time for the benefit of the individual, their family, their communities and the economy. It is recognised that these hard to reach individuals will progress at different stages and some will take far longer than others.
- Places to Learn – the findings have contributed to existing knowledge about learners’ needs to have a range of diverse places where people can take their first steps to learning through the use of IT. These have been established as flexible spaces in places where people go regularly, for example, baby clinics, churches, sports centres and lunch clubs. This has alleviated the fear of formal learning and school-like environments.
- Programme Offer – as a result of the findings, there are now a range of flexible alternative routes to learning using digital technologies. Individual programmes are recorded online, registers, learning modules, tracking, progress and feedback. There is a choice of location. that learners can go to get support or just have a chat. Each learner is assigned a dedicated tutor who supports them. The offer is flexible enough to accommodate possible erratic attendance working towards building positive attitudes to continuous learning.

- Individual Learning Plans - the findings of the study have been used to provide each learner with an in-depth learning plan which ensures the learning provision is accessible and at an appropriate level for the individuals' needs.
- Goal Setting - the findings have highlighted the fact that the hardest to reach groups are difficult to engage, but once engaged they are desperate for continuity of staff, environment and provision. Any diversification must be gradual and developmental.
- Support Systems - the findings evidence the need for strong support systems and these are now shared through collaborative working with partners and local agencies.

8.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has made a contribution to knowledge in a number of ways:

8.3.1 Use of Theory of Planned Behaviour

There are a number of studies that have used the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Chen et al 2010; Hsieh et al 2008; Ho et al 2008; Kerschbaum et al 2007; Quick et al 2010) with different groups including socially excluded groups to investigate different aspects of digital adoption. However, this research used the Theory of Planned Behaviour to investigate a specific London region and population (those that were hardest to reach, living in deprived communities and had few or no qualifications). The research investigated socially excluded individuals and the impact their attitudes and behaviours had in relation to engaging in further learning

with digital technologies. It examined the challenges faced by central and local government, along with other stakeholders, if digital exclusion continued amongst this fairly large proportion of the population. It also explored the impact to social and economic well-being, in terms of community cohesion and national prosperity.

8.3.2 Unique Data Gathering Instrument: Questionnaire

The instrument was designed from the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. This unique questionnaire was developed specifically for this study, to investigate the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies. The questionnaire is valid and reliable and can be used by other researchers studying this area of work.

8.3.3 Unique Data

The questionnaire allowed the collection of data linked both to the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and to a range of variables: gender, age, children, qualifications and ethnicity. This provided the opportunity for analysis and unique set of data through chi-squared tests.

8.3.4 Extended Area of Research

This research has extended knowledge about our understanding of areas of attitude and behaviours towards learning and digital exclusion amongst socially excluded groups, an area that is currently under-researched.

8.4 Further Research

Further research into learning and digital exclusion in deprived communities will be done using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Future research will encompass:

- Individual Variables: study one of the five variables at a time (for example, gender) against each of the constructs (Behavioural Beliefs/Attitude toward Behaviour, Normative Beliefs/Subjective Norms and Control Beliefs/Perceived Behavioural Control). This will focus on each variable more fully in order to provide a more in depth insight and understanding of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours – it will help explain social behaviour in relation to the variable and aid the design of behaviour change interventions. The theory will allow respondents to report directly on their own attitude and Behavioural Beliefs to provide a focus to identify and influence primary beliefs which will go some way to enable changes behaviour and may assist in cultivating revised beliefs.
- Compare and Contrast Variables: to compare and contrast two or more of the variables against each of the constructs. This approach would provide a further concentration of evidence and possibly offer alternative scope for consideration when working with socially excluded individuals.
- Longitudinal Study: using the devised questionnaire at different stages of a person's learner journey over a period of time to implement and monitor intervention and to assess changes attitude

and behaviour. This would be combined with interviews at the various stages.

- Control Group: this kind of study is used in purely scientific research where an experiment can be replicated with constant results that can be compared. Control studies are sometimes not appropriate for psychological or sociological research, as the study of people is not constant and varies between individuals, times, situations, experiences, attitudes and behaviours.

CHAPTER 9

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: BOURDIEU⁸⁷

9.1 Rationale: Synergies

This Chapter identifies and discusses the impact of broader social determinants through Bourdieu's concepts: culture, field and habitus, and the synergies between these concepts and the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. These two theories share strong synergies, which provided the opportunity to explore and extrapolate issues of the disadvantaged⁸⁸ more widely, expanding on the psychologically based theory through a sociological perspective. Bourdieu's framework argued that people were influenced by the impact of the social environment they were born into, their family status and their understanding of behaviour and practises inculcated through family and friends.

⁸⁷ **Note to Reader:** this chapter is a minor component of this thesis and has considered only a small part of Bourdieu's writings and ideas with particular reference to an individual's social background: field, habitus and culture. This is by no means a full Bourdieuan study.

⁸⁸ In this chapter the term 'disadvantaged' is used as opposed to 'socially excluded' in line with Bourdieu use of terminology.

Individuals living in deprived communities with low levels of educational achievement and high unemployment adopt inherent Behavioural Beliefs and normative practices from their family and others close to them. Progressively, they consolidate Behavioural and Normative Beliefs, and internalise acceptable practices from those around them who they respect. The people around them are generally underachievers who gained very little in formal education and generally have low skilled mundane jobs, with periods of unemployment. The Theory of Planned Behaviour explains this through modelling normative behaviour. However Bourdieu argued that the explanation stems from low levels of cultural capital⁸⁹ possessed by those from deprived communities as a result of inherited low or lack of status. Consequently, their children do not achieve as much from the school system, network contacts and other support systems, as those who possess higher levels of cultural capital derived from more their affluent backgrounds. As a result, they tend not aspire to further education following the end of formal schooling and do not seek occupations that require formal qualifications. So groups with low cultural capital inculcate their children into their habitus⁹⁰ and field⁹¹: through family, friends and local cultures. They do not benefit from schooling and from wider society as much as those groups with higher levels of cultural capital.

⁸⁹ Cultural capital: a system of accumulated cultural knowledge that bestowed power and status) *Further explanation of these*

⁹⁰ Habitus: the lineage of social genesis) *concepts can be found at*

⁹¹ Field: the agent's social space) *Appendix 5*

This research study investigated attitudes and behaviours of disadvantaged individuals in socially deprived areas as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. The wider sociological determinants were investigated to stress the huge impact that external forces have on the individual that sculpts and consolidates attitudes and behaviours. The two diverse perspectives complement each other and this Chapter draws out the synergies between Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, habitus and field and the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The Table 9.1 below provides a simple overview of aspects of the two theoretical perspectives⁹² and the broad synergies. However, although the constructs and concepts of the two perspectives have been displayed in discrete boxes, in practice, these are more integral as they interlink with one another within their frameworks.

⁹² More in depth description and discussion of the two theoretical perspectives can be found in Chapter 4.2 (pages 62-80) and in Sub-chapter 9.2.1 (pages 349-368) at Appendix 5.

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR	BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTS	
<p>Behavioural Beliefs (linked to Attitude toward Behaviour) An individual's Behavioural Beliefs link the behaviour of interest to expected outcomes. The beliefs are the product of experience (their own or someone close to them). They are derived from an understanding of the world they live in with knowledge of the environment, practices, processes and/or procedures and expected outcomes if the behaviour occurs.</p>	<p>Field A Field is a setting in which an individual and their social position are located. Their position is linked to results of interaction between specific rules, practices, environments (family/social /other). This is where individuals gain their experiences and understanding of their world around them and can participate accordingly and knowingly.</p>	C U L T U
<p>Normative Beliefs (linked to Subjective Norms) An individual's Normative Beliefs relate to their perception of what is expected of them by their important referents. The individuals' understanding of their place in the world and what is expected of them and is influenced by the judgement of significant people in their lives. Their perceptions are derived from knowledge and experience of the people and world they live in.</p>	<p>Habitus Habitus is what makes the person, the way they become themselves is derived from socialising or learning processes which start in early life. It is where they develop attitudes, disposition and how they engage in practices. Habitus is how an individual acquires their class or disposition within the world. Their understanding of what is acceptable by their environment and those around them.</p>	R E C A P
<p>Control Beliefs (linked to Perceived Behavioural Control) An individual's Control Beliefs link to their perceived ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour. They consider the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of the behaviour, for example, the necessary qualifications, skills, abilities and/or know the right people.</p>	<p>Cultural/Social Capital An individual is recognised as having Cultural Capital if they have knowledge, skills, education or other advantages that give them a higher status they associate with in their field and others. Cultural capital brings with it social capital which provides connections, for example, through family, education and/or business.</p>	I T A L
Ajzen (2002b)	Bourdieu (1973, 1990a)	

Table 9.1 Broad Synergies between Theory of Planned Behaviour and Bourdieu's Conceptual framework

Combining the theoretical perspectives of sociology and psychology for research purposes has been practised successfully in the past. An example is evidenced in the 1960s work of Lev Vygotsky where he used some of Bourdieu's sociological concepts to support his psychological investigation and analysis of classroom discourse (Greenfell 2003).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour provides insight into an individual's attitudes and behaviours that are influenced by local determinants: favourable or unfavourable behavioural experiences of situations or practices they have encountered or those of close friends and relatives; adherence to normative practises of those around them; and/or belief in their ability that may assist or hinder them in successfully completing an activity. Bourdieu's concepts provided an alternative view related more to global social determinants: the impact of the world around the individual(s), the impact of ingrained norms and their interpretation of these. Both these perspectives emphasise the importance of latent residues of past experience as a factor which influence attitudes, intention and behaviour.

The next sub-chapter provides a brief overview of Bourdieu's conceptual framework. The extended explanation of Bourdieu's concepts can be found in Sub-chapter 9.2.1 at Appendix 5 which highlights fundamental limitations for those born into socially disadvantaged families from deprived communities.

9.2 Bourdieu Fundamentals Overview

Bourdieu fundamentals are concepts that he developed and expanded on over his lifetime. The three main Bourdieuan concepts are *Cultural Capital* from which his study of education and symbolic violence⁹³ grew, along with the role of social and economic culture; *Field* and *Habitus*. Bourdieu's eclectic theories on habitus, field and capital are "significant and successful" in their endeavour to interpret the connections between "objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies)" and subjective "everyday practice (what people do, and why they do it)" and the influence on attitudes and behaviours (Webb et al 2002:1). These concepts used for this extended analysis, added a different and socially relevant dimension to the primary research study through the synergies between the theories and the significance of wider factors that influence an individual.

Broadly speaking, and accepting that the two views are not identical, it could be argued that the Theory of Planned Behaviour explains an individual's attitudes and behaviours through influences that are essentially local to them. By contrast, Bourdieu's ideas suggest that an individual's attitudes and behaviours are influenced by a broader society, both through the mores of different groups and through being complicit in accepting controls and practices of the powerful groups in society. The major

⁹³ Symbolic violence: the denial or limitation of resources, being treated as inferior or limiting aspirations which is implemented in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate

concepts associated with Bourdieu's works are summarised below and their Theory of Planned Behaviour equivalent is discussed in each case.

Cultural capital: a system of accumulated cultural knowledge that bestows power and status. More specifically, cultural capital is linked to forms of knowledge, skills, education and any other advantages an individual has which lead to them having greater expectations and a higher status in society. People from more advantageous backgrounds can provide their children with appropriate cultural capital, for example, the attitude and knowledge that make the traditional educational system a comfortable, familiar place in which they can succeed in more easily (Reay 2007) and are better placed economically and socially for upward mobility and maintained status. In terms of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this is explained through the Control Beliefs construct: where an individual is either hindered or empowered by their self-belief of their ability, skills, knowledge or educational credentials to successfully participate in a process or not. For example, there is an acknowledgement to what is referred to as the 'old school tie' which is an informal network of individuals who attended the same elitist educational establishments and those that are party to this network are recognised as possessing the necessary attributes in terms of academic success, family background, linguistic capability, self-confidence and status. This provides its members with privileged advantage to jobs and other prestigious positions or openings through network referrals. Individuals that possess the

appropriate cultural capital also have strong Control Beliefs and are empowered by their own self-belief. Those without the necessary cultural capital struggle with lack of confidence and doubt their attributes.

The concepts: *field* and *habitus*⁹⁴ were given the analogy of a “*feel for the game*” whereby the ‘*feel*’ related to an individual’s habitus and the ‘*game*’ was the field they live in (Bourdieu 1990b:63). Bourdieu (1977, 1990a) coined the term ‘*habitus*’ to encapsulate aspects of social understanding; it represented the site of cultural practice, both in terms of the individual ‘becoming themselves’, for example, the development of attitudes or dispositions, together with the ways in which the individual engaged in practice (Webb et al 2002). In Theory of Planned Behaviour terms, it would be associated with the *Normative Beliefs* construct: an individual’s beliefs and perceptions are linked to what is expected of them by those important to them which has derived from knowledge, understand and experience of their place in the world and what they believe is expected of them; they are influenced by the judgement of significant people in their lives. For example, in the Asian culture, the first born male has the care responsibility for the parents and must remain with the parents in their home. The eldest son is aware of his responsibilities from an early age through his habitus and both he and his bride-to-be would also be aware of what the normative expectations were from the family and their cultural community.

⁹⁴ Bourdieu uses field and habitus as other researchers (Williams 1977) use the term cultures and sub/micro cultures to define the different structures of social and economic groups within a nation or nations. Culture in the Bourdieuan sense is defined in the context of the arts, artist tastes, appreciation of literature and theatre as referenced in *Distinction* (1984)

A *field* is a place of practise or social arena which has a structured system of social positions and consequently produces and authorises practice (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989). However, field can also be composed out of conflict which determines practice and distribution of capital⁹⁵. In terms of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the concept of field can be linked to the *Behavioural Beliefs* construct: an individual considers the behaviour of interest to expected outcomes. This is done in relation to experience (their own or someone else's who is close to them) which is derived from an understanding of the world they live in, knowledge of the environment, their status, the practices, processes and/or procedures and perceived expected outcomes or consequence if the behaviour occurs. For example, the field that Muslims are born into incorporates religious preachings, traditional practices in the community and within the family, status and cultural inheritance. These produce Behavioural Beliefs through unconscious attitudes and perceptions of practices, activities and events outside their immediate environment.

9.3 Methodology

The main methodology section is at Chapter 5 commencing on page 84 and provides a full methodology background for all aspects of this study. Briefly, each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes; and all interviews were audio-taped with the permission of the participants and

⁹⁵ When Bourdieu talks of capital he considers it in its widest sense. Capital can be economic, for example, financial (cash or assets); social in terms of durable networks or mutual acquaintance and recognition; or cultural in the form of knowledge, qualifications, status and prestige

transcribed. Each volunteer was given an explanation of the study and it was also indicated that all information provided would be completely anonymous in accordance with BERA (2004) guidance.

This section re-focuses the methodology employed to analyse and interpret the interview transcripts and data from the questionnaires using Bourdieuan concepts.

The interviewees' discourse provided rich descriptions of social experiences, values and attitudes: a holistic snapshot of respondents' views, which Creswell (2007) and Denzin & Lincoln (2008a, 2008b) confirm to be a valuable approach. Throughout this extended analysis every effort was made to adopt Bourdieu's reflexivity technique to gain the benefits of the interviewees' subjective values and experiences which informed this study.

The analysis focused on identifying instances of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and cultural capital to identify emergent themes in relation to the research question and synergies with the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

Research Question

To investigate the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

The interview and dialogue notes were used to investigate the socio-personal issues that affect an individual as they engaged with further learning through and with digital technologies. The individuals' interpretations of past experiences were re-lived and shared, rich with feelings and emotions. The individuals' personal perceptions, interpretations, values and attitudes played an important role in shaping and guiding them through their everyday lives. They constructed meaning of the unknown in relation to their understanding and perceptions of similarities with their overall experiences, then associated the potential importance and/or implications of the event and/or situation (Denzin & Lincoln 2008a).

9.4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This analysis explored some wider social issues experienced by participants in relation to Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and cultural capital which offered a theoretical perspective that supported elements of practice and realised synergies linked to the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Specifically, those related to the research question regarding the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engaged with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

The interview data revealed a range of social issues that influenced the way the participants interacted with constraints: social and economic

deprivation, social and ethnic cultures, and the local and extended environments they lived in. In Bourdieuan terminology: their field, habitus and capital.

Reay (2004:435) claimed that “habitus can be viewed as a complex internalised core from which everyday experiences emanate” with individuals making choices in relation to what they already understand. This is evident when *Interviewee Ben* highlighted elements of his perceptions and practices of family life and social environment:

I've lived round here all my life ... you know ... on this estate. It's always been a working class⁹⁶ area. We had a big family - my mum bought five of us up by herself ... sort of thing ... you know. I think it doesn't help coming from certain backgrounds - as a youngster I came from a pretty poor background, you know what I mean ... and it was as soon as you left school, go and get a job and start earning money. There was no support whatsoever ... regarding school work or what career I wanted to do and things like that ... that's how it was - we were all in the same boat.

Ben is an example of how individual agents come to understand the patterns of appropriate action - an action which is recognised as conforming to a sense of what is accepted and right within their habitus

⁹⁶ Class distinctions such as 'working class or middle class' are terms not generally used currently in political writings - the term used is 'disadvantaged'. But in the context of this part of the study both terms are recognised and interchangeable,

(Bourdieu 1991). *Ben* understood the common practises of people living on his estate, how he fitted into his field and what was expected of him as he grew up. This showed that people are responsive to a sense of what is right, although norms tend to be less formulated and fragmented. Hillier & Rooksby (2005:21) refer to this "... as sense of one's (and other's) place and role in the world of one's lived environment". Nevertheless, an individual's role and understanding are learnt and constructed through the business of growing up and everyday life. *Ben's* discourse displayed his understanding of appropriate action within the field. He understood that: "... you left school ... and get a job ..." this is an example of a "structured system of social positions" that he as an individual agent was positioned in and which specified his situation. However, it also highlighted internal power forces that determined dominance, subordination or equivalence (Jenkins 2002:85). In relation to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, these practices are interpreted as Behavioural Beliefs, Attitude toward Behaviour and Normative Beliefs. Bourdieu (1990b) argued that there exists a blend of freedom and constraints that exemplifies all social interaction which was emphasised in *Ben's* exposition. In *Ben's* case the freedom was his interaction and acceptance of his community and family, and the constraints were reflected in his "... poor [or disadvantaged] background ..." that did not lend itself to use education to change the status quo. *Ben's* recollection can be encapsulated within the viewpoint of Bourdieu, who stressed that:

social reality exists ... twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents ... the world encompasses me ... I comprehend it ... [and] it comprehends me ... (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:127).

Ben's exposition demonstrated synergies between the Behavioural Beliefs and Normative Beliefs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Bourdieu's concepts of Field and Habitus (see Table 9.1). This is evidenced through his interpretation of his localised family experiences, their expectations and his understanding of the broader impact of his enforced surroundings and status. It reveals that the individual is totally immersed in their surroundings, circumstances and involvement within their world.

This is also apparent in *Interviewee Annie's* memory of family life

I came from a real working class family ... both my mum and dad worked for as long as I could remember. Sometimes they worked more than one job to make ends meet: the docks, rag and bone, my mum did odd cleaning jobs. I never remember a time when they didn't do something - my dad used to work in the docks, then when that went he did whatever he could find.

Interviewees: Ben and Annie demonstrated a clear indication that they were engaged in a world they knew very well and took for granted because they

were completely bound by it and caught up in its practices. Both talked about the kind of life they lived, for example, family, status, area and work. This is demonstrated in Ben's statement that "... *I've lived round here all my life ... on this estate ... it's always been a working class area ...*" and where Annie said "... *both my mum and dad worked for as long as I could remember ... they worked more than one job to make ends meet ...*". Bourdieu (2000:3) interpreted this kind of situation as "... [s/]he inhabits it like a garment ... [s/]he feels at home in the world because the world is also in him, in the form of the habitus." It was evident that, at a young age the *interviewees* were exposed only to the field and habitus directed linked to their families and local environment. This lends credence to Bourdieu's (1992:13) suggestion that "social divisions and mental schemata are structurally homologous because they are genetically linked". As a consequence, contact with specific social conditions instilled in people a range of long-lasting dispositions: attitudes and behaviours that are internalised to the social environment, within the constraints of external reality. For example, those people who live on housing estates in deprived communities accept their environment and those around them and they tend to continue to live similar life styles to one they were brought up in. *Ben*, now a man in his late 40s, has continued to live on the same estate that he grew up on as a child. Even as a long term unemployed person he has attained a fairly high status within this deprived community, not through economic wealth but through local respect.

Synergies can be drawn between Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and how the individual develops within their field(s), as indicated above in *Ben* and *Annie's* discussion, and Ajzen's concepts of Behavioural Beliefs and Attitude towards Behaviour (Table 9.1). This is evidenced in the case of *Ben* when he claimed, "...as a youngster I came from a pretty poor background ... there was no support whatsoever ... regarding school work or what career I wanted ... that's how it was ...". Beliefs and attitudes are acquired from an individual's inherent salient understanding, perception and experience of structures and practices surrounding their lives and how they have interacted with these whether favourable or unfavourable (Ajzen 1988). The *Interviewees'* field and habitus impacted on their personal attitudes and behaviours as they deliberated their re-engagement with learning. Their recollection of formal learning was negative and, as a result, there was reluctance to repeat the experience.

Ben and *Annie's* interpretation can also be explained using Bourdieu's (1984) analysis that social space is an abstract representation and intentionally constructed, which stems from the way 'ordinary people' see the social world. Reay (2004:435) argued that:

... habitus [is] a deep, interior, epicentre containing many matrices. These matrices demarcate the extent of choices available to any one individual. Choices are bounded by the framework of opportunities and constraints the person finds himself/herself in, her external circumstances.

So *Ben* and *Annie* expressed the range of circumstances that built the fabric of their lives – they both lived on housing estates and had a feel for their environment; they knew what choices they had to make. Each individual possessed their own view point of their objective space: reliant on their place in the community and how they retained or changed their actions. Links between economic and social conditions and the distinguishing elements that correspond to the position of an individual's way of life, becomes valid when the constructed habitus is generative and takes into account both recognisable practices and products, along with judgements that enable the systems to thrive and develop as necessary. So when *Annie* talks of a “*real working class family*” and *Ben* of a “*working class area*” the emphasis related to their social status in the community which was made up of manual workers, labourers or unemployed manual workers doing work that did not require qualifications. So even as children the *Interviewees* revealed subconscious acknowledgement of the wider determinants of habitus: the “structuring structure” that classifies practices and the awareness of practices, and the “structured structure” which imposed the rule of separation into coherent classes that categorise their perception of the social world and is the creation of internalisation of the split into social class⁹⁷. It is intrinsic and relational properties that define the conditions of each class and these are derived from its status in the system of class conditions or differences (Bourdieu 1984). In terms of the

⁹⁷ Swartz (1997) stresses that Bourdieu does not restrict the concept of class to position in social relations of production; he considers class in more general terms of conditions of existence that can include education, gender, age and status as well as property.

Theory of Planned Behaviour, the individual's background and environment has direct influence on an individual's Behavioural Control and Attitude toward Behaviour: living in disadvantaged areas and having learned the demands of their environment, an individual can evaluate behaviours and formulate attitudes that are favourable or not dependent on behaviour and situation (Table 9.1). For example, when making friends at school, children tend to be drawn to others who they know from the same housing estate and those who share similar practices – their attitudes towards other children they consider different from themselves is less favourable.

Bourdieu (1984) surmised that differences in social classes are what distinguish a class grouping from what it is not and specially what it is opposed to, and that it is defined and emphasised through difference. The notion of difference is the foundation of space, “social space is constructed” it allows the distribution of agents or groups in relation to social position – the distributions are based on the principles of economic capital and cultural capital⁹⁸; the closer the agents are in relation to economic and cultural capital the more they have in common and further apart the less they have (Bourdieu 1997:6).

Ben and Annie's exposition confirmed Bourdieu's (1990a) continual emphasis that the power of field and habitus consists of social space and structures that an individual is born into and where their experiences

⁹⁸ Cultural capital consists of capital which can be in the form of knowledge, qualifications, status and prestige

emanate from. He emphasised the role of subconscious conditioning within families and argued that

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them (Bourdieu 1990a:53).

Consequently, an individual is conditioned both socially and mentally to interact within their own social environment; the latter is the product of history that perpetuates itself and produces practise that consequently creates more history according to their particular class. *Ben* said “... *I’ve lived around here all my life ... I know it like the back of my hand ...*”.

People from deprived communities who are socially and economically disadvantaged tend to have parents and grandparents who were in the same position. Their attitudes and practices are ingrained in their upbringing. This assures the continuous existence of past experiences which ingrains collective perceptions, thought and action that is practised and consistent, according to their understanding without strict rules. The

Interviewees revealed that these dispositions of a 'present past' had the inclination to perpetuate themselves in similar situations and/or practices; however there is scope for transformation which is inevitable either as a result of external or internal factors (Bourdieu 1990a). Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour interprets the situation to Behaviour Beliefs and Attitude toward Behaviour (Table 9.1) and is evidenced by *Interviewee Erez* who described the time he had been encouraged to go back into education as an adult. He said "... I didn't think men like me ... of my age ... could learn ... I was self-conscious and a bit embarrassed ... it wasn't what we did ...". *Erez's* more recent experiences of education had begun a transformation in his beliefs and actions. It is evident that his pre-disposition and attitude had an impact on his feelings about learning again, although the new experience was not negative and as a result had begun to initiate a change in perception. Bourdieu (1990a) claimed that when new or modified practice/knowledge is positively experienced this begins to action some change. Robbins (1991) emphasised Bourdieu's resolution that any knowledge conveyed

has an intellectual autonomy as a 'field' possessing its own rules and language which, however, can only be transmitted at all if it suspends its autonomy in order to be actualized within a habitus (Robbins 1991:56).

Therefore knowledge only becomes of value when it is accepted or realised within the person's field: additional knowledge to existing practices or new

knowledge is only adopted due to extrinsic changes which are assumed within the individuals' habitus. In addition, "cultural fields ... are not autonomous or uninfluenced by other fields" they are not static, but fluid and dynamic, reacting to changes in local practices, politics and integration with other fields (Webb et al 2002:28). New and/or adapted knowledge becomes part of field and habitus, and then perpetuates itself as with other more historical practices. For example, it is expected that today every child should know how to read and write to a certain level by the time they leave formal schooling, irrelevant of their social group. This is a change to practices of the dominated classes who historically were denied the opportunities to gain these skills and were accepting of the situation.

The interview with *Annie* reinforced the inclination to perpetuate situations and practices. *Annie* said

My mum and dad left school as soon as they could 'cause that's what they did in those days - they left school with no qualifications, they weren't stupid or anything - they just didn't take exams. They left school and went to work in the docks or whatever the family was into - it's what was done then. We lived in an area where all the people did the same things, we were all the same, we kept to our own. In my family there was no pressure on us kids to get educated because there was always jobs - if we had any homework there was no pressure to do it or help if we needed.

Annie exhibited total acceptance of her social space and genesis; she was aware of expectations, both her own and those of others close to her. *Annie's* recollection confirmed Bourdieu's (1984) statement that:

realism ... inclines working people to reduce practices to the reality of their function, to do what they do, and be what they are ('That's the way I am') without 'kidding themselves' ('That's the way it is'), and the practical materialism which inclines them to censor the expression of feelings or to divert emotion into violence or oaths, are near perfect antithesis of the aesthetic disavowed which, by a sort of essential hypocrisy, masks the interest in function by the primacy given to form, so that what people do, they do as if they were not doing it (Bourdieu 1984:200).

This can be directly linked to the Theory of Planned Behaviour's concepts of Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms (Table 9.1). *Annie* said "...we lived in an area where all the people did the same things, we were all the same, we kept to our own ..." which reflected the knowledge and understanding of what was expected of them by those important to them and in turn what norms they followed in their every day lives. For example, when an individual experiences peer pressure to conform, whether actual or subconscious, *Annie* confessed "... I was more interested in meeting up with my mates ... there was a group of us - that's what we did, it was

better than school ...”, this behaviour was perceived by *Annie* as the appropriate action amongst her circle of friends.

The working classes tend to absorb their social reality, as reiterated by *Annie*, with an almost unconscious realisation; they also accept their circumstances and behave according to cultural practice which could be in relation to, for example, status, gender, linguistics and/or education. Unfortunately, this often leads to elements of the dominant classes to view “... ‘working class culture’ [as] a vacuous concept devoid of positive significance, creative capacity or distinct identity” (Livingstone 1997: 285) because of their acceptance. It could be said that people create their own history, although it should be recognised that they do not always do so in conditions of their own choosing. For example, an individual cannot help that they were born into a disadvantaged family. Individuals are not separate from their circumstances, but an integral part of them – the *Interviewees* revealed that they had grown up, learning and acquiring the practical cultural competences, along with their social identity which Bourdieu (1991:235) referred to as “the sense of position one occupies in social space”. For example in *Ben’s* statement: “... *I’ve lived ... all my life ... on this estate ... it has always been working class ... it doesn’t help coming from a poor background ... that’s how it was ...*” which depicts his position in his environment.

Unfortunately this makes individuals unable to distinguish social reality and its unpredictability by only recognising it as *‘that is the way things*

are', which is essential to their existence in terms of who they are. This sense of the unthinkable is what Bourdieu calls doxa⁹⁹ whereby social agents adjust themselves to ideological rules, even if it does not benefit them to do so. Consequently, much of the time, agents tend to take themselves and their world for granted without thinking about it; it is perceived as unnecessary because of the immediate illusion of recognition and understanding. For example, *Interviewee Carl* had been unemployed for over 15 years and was on welfare, but was well respected by others around him. Due to poor experience of formal education, he was fearful of any form of learning. He was happy living in social housing as he had done whilst growing up and was accepting of his life on welfare. This situation has synergy with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, more specifically the constructs of Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control (Table 9.1). *Carl's* acceptance is consciously or sub-consciously linked to a fear of failure, he is unemployed and acknowledges his educational and skills limitations, so sees no alternative to the life he has.

According to Bourdieu (1999, 2001), people conform to a given vision of the world which is generated by the dominant group because to them there does not appear to be any alternative – not necessarily because they are in agreement with it or is in their interest or that they are even conscious of complying. An example of compliant behaviour is given by *Annie*: “... my mum and dad left school as soon as they could ... they [had] ... no

⁹⁹ Doxa are the fundamental, deep-founded unthought beliefs, taken as self-evident universals, which inform an agent's actions and thoughts within a particular field; doxa articulate a certain social arrangement of the field which privileges the dominant.

qualifications ... they ... went to work in the docks [with family]". Bourdieu (1999; 2001) goes on to report that people from certain dominated groups, for example, the working classes or those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often accept the way things are because they are as they should be or have always been, as indicated by many of the *interviewees*. Alternatives were not an option as it was not the done thing amongst their own kind.

The above discussions can also be linked to results from the questionnaire which associates an individual's action to Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Table 9.1). *Annie* clearly depicted in the statement "...we kept to our own ... there was no pressure to get educated ... there was always jobs ... that's what we did", her beliefs about the normative expectations of others especially those close her, for example, family and close friends. Her statement also revealed the motivation to comply with these expectations or her perception of what was expected through her subjective understanding/knowledge. People do not, as a general rule, go against their Normative Beliefs.

The preceding pages have lent credence to the part that field, habitus and cultural capital play in the development of the holistic individual, along with the Theory of Planned Behaviour's explanations about the effect on the person. One of the objectives of the interviews and the study as a whole was to explore the overall *Research Question*:

Investigate the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

More directly, the following expositions and discussions revealed the extent to which the individuals' adverse experiences affected them. The *Interviewees* were asked about their recollections of school and learning. *Carl* reiterated his memories of school, education and social structures in play:

I always went to school, I didn't actually truant you know what I mean. I liked my days at school ... I liked them ... but I was average, an average person who, you know what I mean, but I never got any qualifications. I was more interested in socialising, yer, that was it. I got in a bit of problems in school and so I had to go to another school and when I got to the other school I never had enough time to pass exams.

A similar statement came from *Erica* who stated

I remember we all got ready for school everyday ... whether we wanted to or not we were sent out ... sometimes one of us would get out of it for some reason or other, but on the whole we were made to go to school. Apart from that we weren't

really pressured to do anything at home ... I don't remember getting homework, even if we did, we didn't have to do it.

These statements reflect evidence that the *Interviewees'* parents observed the externally enforced practice of school attendance by sending their children to school each day. This practice showed that the schooling system had been absorbed into their habitus as legitimate behaviour. An individual's habitus is nurtured by means of family education and is the foundation for the assimilation of classroom education which is the basis for much cultural and intellectual learning that follows. Consequently, the internal dynamics of differentiated social groups and their subordinate status result in their children starting school without the necessary cultural capital easily to succeed. Both *Carl* and *Erica* provide statements that revealed their lack of appropriate cultural capital: *Carl* said "... *I was more interested in socialising [with my friends] ...*" and *Erica* said "... *we weren't really pressured to do anything at home ... I don't remember getting homework ...*". Bourdieu (1977) claimed those children who lack the appropriate cultural capital find it difficult to conform to the unaccustomed and enforced social reality of an undifferentiated educational institution. These children are placed in an unfamiliar environment and introduced very quickly to new regimes and activities. In *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu 1999) Bourdieu identified the issues and emphasised that:

The elite students who have received a well-defined sense of place, good role models and encouragement from their

families are in a position to apply themselves at the right moment in the right place: in the good tracks, in the good schools, in the good sections, etc. On the contrary, students who have come from the most disadvantaged families ... often left to fend for themselves, from primary school on, are obliged to rely either on the dictates of school or chance to find their own way in an increasingly complex universe (Bourdieu 1999:424).

Research by Grenfell (2003), Livingstone (1997) and Reay (2007, 2006, 2004) confirmed that the role of cultural capital is as prevalent as ever in education, even though institutional structures and policies may deny the importance of certain types of capital that are subconsciously expected. Bourdieu (1979) argued that the system sanctifies privilege by disregarding it, and then insists on equality for everyone even when individuals do not begin education at the same level, based on cultural endowment. New Labour in 1997 spread the notion that cultural capital might help to achieve more inclusive forms of cultural citizenship, with their emphasis on 'education, education, education' as a means of combating social exclusion (Bennett & Savage 2004). However, there is limited evidence to support any advancement outside the usual more affluent population.

Cultural capital instilled in children of dominant groups enabled them to apply themselves to the school structures more easily: structures that are

alien to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Annie's account reinforced her lack of cultural capital:

My earliest memories of secondary school was the social side of it the rest of it did not interest me at all. I didn't go to school much - I met up with my mates and did other things ... I got out of school as soon as I could, I never did any exams or got any qualifications - I got a job as soon as I could. I was the youngest and my dad's favourite he would sometimes encourage me not to go to school and go with him - I loved those days with my dad. ... I never excelled in anything in school at all - maths was another thing - I hated that subject, I had a real fear of it and the teacher there didn't help with that fear. I just remember it [school] as ... just being boring, the teachers were uninspiring - looking back they were uninspiring then I felt bored - I thought they were all horrible and I hated them all.

Annie lacked the type and amount of cultural capital required to benefit from the school system and suffered inherent inequalities. She revealed tension with the schooling system both with the teaching and the learning; she rapidly disengaged and, like her parents, did not gain any qualifications. The dominated classes historically have not recognised the extrinsic value of cultural capital offered by school and education; in the past their children left school and were absorbed into the social practices

and employment inherent to their family status. *Annie* said “... *they left school with no qualifications ... and went to work in the docks or whatever the family was into ...*” the reflective statement confirmed social practice and acceptance that they did not need the cultural capital offered through qualifications. Reay (2006:295) confirmed that “... until recently education for a majority of the working classes remained something to be got through rather than got into”. Therefore, many children from disadvantaged groups find themselves in an educational structure they do not understand and they cannot cope with the struggle, other than to self-exclude. This, then, has an impact on them at a personal level which is explained through the Theory of Planned Behaviour constructs: Behavioural Control and Attitude towards Behaviour which reinforces negative attitudes, dispositions and beliefs.

The educational system has a major pedagogic focus; however Bourdieu (1977) argued that the function of pedagogic work is to maintain order through the practice of self-limitation and self-censorship, and through self-exclusion, which is more powerful than other extrinsic exclusion processes. *Ben's* recollection is poignant and adds confirmation to Bourdieu's claim, *Ben* said “... *I was told to stand-up and read, I couldn't read properly, I just struggled ... there wasn't anybody I could talk to ... secondary school was very frightening to the point that I actually stopped going ...*”. Research by Munn et al (2000) confirmed that working class children were more likely to be excluded or to self-exclude. A statement made by Bourdieu (1979) claimed that:

the school system can multiply social inequalities because the most disadvantaged classes, too conscious of their destiny and too unconscious of the ways in which it is brought about, thereby help to bring it upon themselves (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979:72).

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979) claimed that exclusion is incorporated in pedagogic action and is a most effective method to assist in the 'elimination process' for some school children. Pedagogic action is not neutral or culturally free, it allows the dominant groups the legitimacy to reaffirm their status. In addition, fundamental to pedagogic action is pedagogic authority, whether that is implicit or explicit, for example, the parent and child relationship whereby the parents unwittingly collude with the system to belittle or berate their son/daughter about their academic ability or technical competence for educational legitimacy as they put trust in the school. The child is then convinced by these actions that they are incapable, which adds to their frustrations and can lead to self-exclusion. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this begins to have an adverse impact on the child at a personal level through their Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control, as they will only recognise their inabilities rather than the possibilities. This is what Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) identified as symbolic violence through symbolic power.

Erez's recollection touches on Bourdieu's findings through his experiences of the school system:

My mum made me go to school everyday – it was alright with my mates and thing. But, I didn't like the teachers much they never really listened to me and made me feel stupid when I couldn't do things. When I did do them they would keep making me redo them 'cause they said it was messy and I got bored and would start having some fun with my mates. I didn't see why I had to do half the things ... I didn't see the need for most of it. Whenever something happened in class I was always the one they blamed – so I just stopped trying ... nothing I did was good enough for them.

Annie described a distressing memory that she experienced:

... I hated maths ... I hated the teacher, he always made me feel stupid ... I remember one day I was in class and the teacher asked me a maths question ... when I tried to answer he shouted and called me stupid and made me stand in the bin because he said I was useless ... that was in front of the whole class ... I didn't go back to that class

Erez and Annie were exposed to a form of symbolic violence in which pedagogic action by those in authority (the teacher) limited their aspirations and they were denied resources (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). The state education systems appear to have the open access of being free for all as it is not directly paid for, so on reflection, the teachers appear to

be motivated solely by principles of education and learning. However, the true picture reveals that teachers are the arbiters of social structures of the dominant and, as a result, the symbolic violence is misrecognised as legitimate, reinforcing social structures that support cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Jenkins 1992). Dunne & Gazeley (2008:461) highlighted the issues of social class in the classroom, indicating that "... it was evident that social class identities of pupils informed teachers' judgements" and their approach to them. This is demonstrated by the long history of working-class educational underachievement which reveals the failure of government and educational professionals (Reay 2006). The DfES (2006a) also confirmed that working class children continued to leave compulsory education with fewer and poorer academic qualifications than their middle-class counterparts.

Similar to *Erez* and *Annie*, *Ben* also had a poor experience of education:

getting into secondary school, it was just the thing that if I had a problem, it was felt that you were not allowed to say anything and there wasn't anybody there to listen, so you got in class, once I did get in classes it was basically trying to bluff my way through class. Quite often when I was told to stand up and read, I couldn't read properly, I just struggled and struggled - you got kids there laughing at me and things like that, so what I had to do was counteract that and turn it into a laugh or have a go at the teacher so he'd kick me out,

so I wouldn't embarrass myself - you know. From the early years of my secondary school, I think for me, it was very frightening, because there wasn't anybody there that I could talk to - you know, that's how I felt at the time ... it was very frightening for me, especially for the first two years of secondary school .. was very frightening to the point that I actually stopped going and I actually got put into care for not going to school.

The three *Interviewees'* transcripts highlighted the issues that children from disadvantaged backgrounds experience. Bourdieu (1973) claimed the educational system requires a familiarity with the dominant culture. In fact, the educational system demands linguistic and cultural competence, along with cultural knowledge that can only be provided through family rearing when it conveys the dominant culture. As a result, there is:

greater acceptance of [the fact that] working-class underachievement contributed to differences in levels of attainment. Teachers also tended to locate the causes of working-class underachievement beyond their sphere of influence, in the pupils or their homes (Dunne & Gazeley 2008:461).

Through the teachers' acceptance of underachievement as a known phenomenon and their disassociation from the fact that they have an

influence on the situation, they can convince themselves they are not at fault and have little concern to re-address the problem.

In *Distinction* Bourdieu (1984) further emphasised that

academic capital is in fact the guaranteed product of the combined effects of cultural transmission by the family and cultural transmission by the school (the efficiency of which depends on the amount of cultural capital directly inherited from the family) (Bourdieu 1984:23).

It was evident from the transcripts that the *Interviewees'* stories about their experiences of their lives, their communities and formal education confirmed that they had not been endowed with the required cultural capital in their formative years. Those from deprived communities tend to suffer various disadvantages and possess limited relevant cultural capital, which has had an impact on them. This can be related to elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour: Behavioural Beliefs are developed through growing up within their local environment and school, which in turn impacts on beliefs and attitudes as they were influenced through family socialisation (Table 9.1). In addition, the Normative Beliefs of their family and friends were indoctrinated through everyday interaction which also stunted any behaviours that the individual perceived as unacceptable which in turn affected their beliefs about what they could achieve because of lack

of confidence or resources. All the *Interviewees* revealed that they lacked confidence in themselves, their ability and in the learning of new skills.

Consequently, those pupils whose family socialisation gives them an appropriate level of cultural capital have more confidence and achieve more academically in comparison to those with less cultural capital (Bourdieu 1973; Reay 2008, 2007). People from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to live in deprived areas, which are made up of fragmented communities holding people together with significantly varying social, racial, linguistic, ethnic and class identities. Bourdieu (2000) claimed that:

those who talk of equality of opportunity forget that social games ... are not 'fair games'. Without being, strictly speaking, rigged, the competition resembles a handicap race that has lasted for generations (Bourdieu 2000:214-15).

Jenkins (2002) emphasised Bourdieu's deliberations regarding symbolic violence. He claimed that the different levels of success of pedagogic action for various groups is related to the ethos of a specific group; their stance on pedagogy is a consequence of family learning, as is their acknowledgment of the value of education to individuals within the group. In other words, and more specifically, the legitimacy of education is dependent on the possible trade-in value of formal qualifications in the workplace. If disadvantaged individuals and those close to them

experience qualifications as irrelevant because they still cannot get jobs, then the need for qualifications is not acknowledged and perpetuates negative attitudes.

Schools and other pedagogic agencies are long-standing institutions with a heavy cloak of assumed legitimacy which perpetuates their power relations. Bourdieu (1993a) conceded that educational institutions do progress the competence of schoolchildren, but they can only do this from the disposition of the dominant body and through their cultural codes. They are not concerned with improving competences that may be transferable between codes, but only to maintain the hierarchy of codes. Consequently, Bourdieu (1993a) came to regard less and less that the educational system was itself an agent for change. For example, the home-school initiative places more onus on remedial or catch-up work to be sent home. This causes problems when the parents do not have the appropriate level of education themselves to support their children. The parents are then labelled by the school as unwilling, not supportive or bad parents, to the detriment of the child (Reay 2004b). Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 2000) confirmed that disadvantaged families do not possess the necessary academic background to support or develop their children in preparation for school. As a consequence, this leads them to feel perpetually inadequate (Reay 2004).

Bourdieu (1993a) stressed the dichotomy that schools are best placed to develop the individual to a greater or lesser extent (dependent on

circumstance), but can only do so in accordance with the cultural systems in place to maintain the status quo. As a result, the school systems perpetuate inequalities so that disadvantaged groups have come to undervalue secondary education: they may not succeed, and if they do there is still an uncertain future. Social factors underlining educational success or failure have helped to alter the perception of education among parents and children who have personal experiences of its effects (Reay 2006). However the models of success are rare in disadvantaged groups. Poor experiences of education and the school system remain with the individuals into adulthood and manifest themselves into emotional inadequacies, for example, lack of confidence and fear of failure. The Theory of Planned Behaviour explains the lack of confidence and fear of failure through an individual's lack of Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control (Table 9.1). As those individuals who have not achieved at school tend to believe they do not have skills or ability to do certain activities because they have never gained any formal recognition of success. This then has an impact on their attitudes and behaviour as to whether they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings. As an adult, the residual poor experiences persistently hinder participation in learning.

The *Interviewees* discussed their past residual experiences and indicated the impact this has had on them participating in learning for the first time since their schooldays. *Ben* said:

go[ing] back to learning my confidence was non-existent, I ... I wasn't confident in anything I done. It was frightening, very frightening and ashamed ... embarrassing, I found it extremely embarrassing ... I couldn't even make it to the second lesson. The embarrassment stems from again my childhood - it took me back to the situation where I felt bad ... they made me feel bad. "Oh you can't spell that..." I couldn't spell properly ... you know what I mean ... in class where I couldn't spell properly ... I was basically kicked out of the classroom - I was told to stand outside because they thought that I was mucking about, sort of thing, you know. Teachers treated me like I was a no hoper basically - it did my confidence in. Failure in my early years ... it slowed me down - it threw me back, big time. It took a lot for me to go back ... the other people there - at the time I couldn't see that they had the same problems - it was my confidence more than anything.

Annie's memories revealed similar experiences as an adult returner to education:

Yes, I felt inadequate and lacked confidence - it was like going back in time ... all those memories of being the stupid one in the class. I felt I don't want to be here with people thinking I'm stupid ... I didn't have the confidence enough to question

things. My stubbornness kept me there ... I went through different levels of anxieties and had to relive many of my bad experiences from my schooldays ... but, but I got through it and gained more confidence. I used to feel slightly inadequate because my husband had an academic background and [I] felt less confident – I wanted something in writing behind me, you know ... you can do it with help and support, but you can do it. That made me more confident.

Dena referred to her experiences with continued low self esteem and confidence, she stated:

I never went to school after the age of around 14 ... I didn't like school, I had really bad experiences ... I was bullied every time I went into school ... the teachers didn't help – so I just didn't go. I didn't take any exams because I was never there ... as soon as I walked in the gate the bullies would start on me ... so I didn't go at all ... I got no qualifications. I have got on with my life ... have a husband and three children, but ... I ... I always had a real fear of doing anything to do with education and school ... I didn't want to do it, ... I have this real lack of confidence.

The evidence provided by *Interviewees'* statements confirmed that these individuals continue to harbour strong feelings of failure and fear of

repeating experiences of humiliation/disappointment that they experienced in their youth at school. Carrying the baggage of the past has proved to be debilitating for a large number of adults who continue to live in disadvantaged communities and are unemployed or in low-paid unskilled jobs. The *Interviewees'* poor past experiences and their references to their feelings stem from the lack of capital culture inherent within their class in their formative years. This has synergy with what Ajzen (2002a) referred to as an individual's Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control which interfered with choices made later in life (Table 9.1). Individuals consider whether they believe they have the skills or ability to successfully achieve an activities/function before they will take part. If they believe that they do not possess the appropriate requirements, they will not attempt to participate. For example, a person who has been unemployed for many years and is told by their Job Centre Advisor that they have to attend an IT course to gain up-to-date skills will argue that they cannot do it. This may be linked to their own acknowledgement that their literacy skills are not adequate and as a result they can only foresee failure. However, when the person has attended a literacy course with successful results they are only too willing to attend an IT course, but this progress takes time. However research (Reay 2004b) has revealed that educational success is translated into self-confidence and a greater level of self-esteem.

It was evident that residual experiences continued to impact on the *Interviewees'* perception of what the potential outcomes would be if they participated in a learning activity. Both *Annie* and *Dena* reiterated the

difficulty they perceived. *Annie* states '*... I always had a real fear of doing anything to do with education and school*', and *Dena* explains '*...Yes, I felt inadequate and lacked confidence – it was like going back in time ... all those memories of being the stupid one in the class ...*' these adverse perceptions of control are complex and ingrained, and as such, cannot be easily overcome. Bourdieu (1977) emphasises that inequalities between the classes continue to exist irrelevant of performance – even with equal previous performance, those from the working classes tend to eliminate themselves before commencement so as not to experience examination failure. Without the sanctions of success or achievement, adults from disadvantaged backgrounds persist in self-elimination through negative reinforcement and denial. Synergies can be drawn with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour whereby an individual's Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control are influenced by their known past failures in similar situations.

Unfortunately, these attitudes and perspectives have been reinforced almost unconsciously by dominant groups through the schooling system, economic and political collectives. Political collectives tend to review social reality in the light of required adjustment, for example, the government drive to address the problem of young people leaving formal education with no or low level literacy and numeracy skills.

Bourdieu (1987) argued that political power drives strategies which aim to impose new constructions of social reality by rejecting the old constructs.

More frequently, these strategies are put forward to reconstruct retrospectively a past adapted to the needs of the present. This reference can be applied to the political strategies that have been implemented to up-skill the large percentage of adults with no/low academic achievement (HMSO 2005, 2006). This is the result of economic developments nationally: historically Britain was a major industrial/manufacturing economy that employed large numbers of low paid unqualified manual workers. Today, it is a global financial economy at the cutting edge of the finance world, requiring a highly skilled workforce with very different skills - from a manual production intensive economy to an office-based commercial global economy driven by technology.

The Leitch Review (HMSO 2006) and more recently *Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity* (BIS 2010) focused on the country's future requirements in terms of numbers of people in work and confirmed the need to up-skill/re-skill adults who do not have the appropriate levels of competence to secure and maintain the country's competitive edge in the world markets. Consequently, political pressure has driven the initiatives to grow a workforce who can meet the future challenges of global competition. It could be reinterpreted as: the dominant classes have reassessed what is required from the dominated classes and are reconstructing retrospectively, the drive for those with no/low qualification to achieve qualifications to minimum of NVQ Level 2 equivalent (Appendix 4) to meet present and future needs. This is legitimised through symbolic violence and is embedded in the persistent drive to steer people towards specific

types of qualifications by excluding others. However, Bourdieu (1979) claimed that the 'schooling boom' and changes to the system have impacted on different groups.

The educational system, along with its related modification of the social structure is the result of connections between qualification and jobs, leading to increased competition for academic qualifications. In turn, this has led to the devaluation of academic qualifications as more people from the dominated groups have more opportunities to attain similar qualifications to the dominant classes. An example is the government drive to urge universities to recruit more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to promote equality of opportunity. Consequently, the dominant classes have increased their investments so as to maintain the relative scarcity of their qualifications and their position in the social class structure, which has led to a constant escalation "in the demand for education and an inflation of academic qualifications" (Bourdieu 1979:133). Growth in the number of university graduates each year has led to a stringent selection process in the workplace. The application selection process sifts the top percentile and interviews will reject those from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have other cultural capital, for example, linguistic prowess, self-confidence and breeding. Synergies of Bourdieu's cultural capital can be linked to Ajzen's Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control (Table 9.1) as these beliefs and controls are integral to the possession of skills, credentials and the confidence to be empowered to communicate them appropriately in the right situations.

The *Interviewees* demonstrated that those from disadvantaged backgrounds are challenged by the limitations of their achievements.

In order for any changes or adaptations to social reality to be successfully absorbed, there must be experience of positive outcomes or benefit to the social group's habitus. The broad constraints and boundaries of what is possible or unlikely for particular groups will be developed through socialisation. On the one hand, habitus sets structural limits for action and on the other habitus produces perceptions, aspirations and practices that relate to the structuring properties of earlier socialisation (Bourdieu 1977). Therefore, it is habitus that continues to shape a person's actions and how the existing opportunity structures are perpetuated. Swartz (1997:103) summarises Bourdieu's (1977) observations:

Chances for success and failure are internalised and then transformed into an agent's aspirations or expectations; these are in turn externalised in action that tends to reproduce the objective structure of life chances.

... Bourdieu observes that aspirations and practices of individuals and groups are inclined to relate to the formative conditions of their respective habitus. What agents judge to be "reasonable" or "unreasonable" for people of their position in the social world stems from habitus. Habitus tends to reproduce those actions, perceptions, and attitudes

consistent with the conditions under which it was produced (Swartz 1997:103).

Ultimately, people make decisions towards certain actions or practice in accordance with their past experiences determined by their habitus, which has an impact on life chances. The *Interviewees* confirmed that past experiences had been absorbed into their habitus with people from their social class and status groups who had similar experiences, which had cemented adverse actions, perceptions and attitudes towards learning and education. It would seem that disadvantaged individuals tend to continue to consider learning of any kind to be an unreasonable option for people in their social position and find it hard to participate in the event that could again lead to failure.

However, the *interviewees* revealed interesting circumstances surrounding their reasons for taking their first steps towards learning. *Dena* said:

It was my children – they badgered me to come to take computers. It wasn't in school – I made myself come in and ask ... when I started I didn't think I could do it, but once I got started it was like a new beginning ... there was nothing to remind me of school – here's something I could do, in my own time and my own pace. I didn't believe I could do it – but I did. The children made me come, but I made me do it ... and now ... and now I do it for me. I can't believe it ... it has given

me so much. I have now moved on ... the tutor told me about other things I could do on the computer and I didn't have to go to a school. I have got my very first certificates ... I've never had any qualifications ... I never thought I could. Computers are so different - a different way of learning, I can do it in my time and I'm good at it.

Ben's experience was similar, he said

if it wasn't for the support I've had today I would have walked away from it [learning] ages ago. There is no doubt about that, because little be known to be me, it is quite a common thing for guys of my age to leave school with absolutely nothing and in their 40s early 50s to go back to education - to me a couple of years ago I thought, I still thought then you just didn't do them sort of things and its only now I'm hearing that there are hundreds and thousands of people going back to college in the same state as I was in. In a way that makes me feel a bit better - it makes me feel more confident in going back and I think it's not just me. I absolutely, wasn't confident at all in doing it. I think I was doing it for other people, and not for me. I think that sometimes that's important, you have got to do it for yourself, not for other people. But the wife and kids did support me coming back to learning that really helped. I started first with computers ... it was absolutely great ... it wasn't like learning I

remembered ... it made me feel great. It took over everything - I couldn't stop myself, it was new to me and I loved it. It was like letting go of my reins - new technology, I loved it. It helps me ... you know ... with spelling and that - it knocks you back, it does me.

In these interviews *Dena* and *Ben* indicated that a strong influence on their decision-making, on whether to take their first steps back into learning, was pressure and support provided by family and friend. *Dena* said *"it was my children - they badgered me to come to take computers. I made myself come in and ask about learning the computer. If it hadn't been for the kids - I wouldn't have done it."* *Ben* said *"the wife and kids did support me coming back to learning - that really helped. I started first with computers ... it was absolutely great ... it wasn't like learning I remembered."* This is consistent with Bourdieu's concept of habitus and Ajzen's Normative Beliefs and Subjective Norms construct where the individual only accept the change of practice when it is acknowledged favourably by close family and friends.

However, a parallel dilemma for the disadvantaged who consider a return to education is that they do not possess the appropriate levels of academic ability required. Their poor experiences of formal education and the lack of necessity within their habitus have not provided the impetus to return to formal education. This was evident in their lack of confidence, ability and skills which was reflected in the doubt in themselves linked to their Control

Beliefs in terms of fear of failure. However learning successes soon translated into confidence: *Ben* said “*I absolutely, wasn’t confident at all in doing it ... its only now I’m hearing that there are hundreds and thousands of people going back to college in the same state as I was in. In a way that makes me feel a bit better – it makes me feel more confident in going back and I think it’s not just me*” and *Dena* said “*when I started I didn’t think I could do it, I was very nervous and almost afraid ... but once I got started it was like a new beginning ... there was nothing to remind me of school – here’s something I could do. I didn’t believe I could do it – but I did.*”

The *interviewees* demonstrated that, with pressure from people important to them, disadvantaged groups are gradually changing their perceptions and attitudes to learning and the place new skills and qualifications have in their habitus and within their field (Bourdieu 1984). Computers, technology and an informal environment have played a major part in re-engaging the *interviewees* in learning – developing IT skills has given them overall confidence which is a result of quick gain skills and the potential of qualifications. Webb et al (2002:110) indicates that “qualifications and ‘knowledge machines’ such as computers are laden with cultural capital.” Therefore, the political pressure for digital inclusion through initiatives such as ‘UK Online’ has driven the momentum of the social advantages of using computers, although the ulterior motive is an economical one: t-government¹⁰⁰ must thrive if central and local government efficiency gains are to be realised. This can be seen in the various strategies and policy

¹⁰⁰ The term t-government (replaces e-government) describes the electronic use of IT/computers to access government or local council services

papers that continue to be published: *Government ICT Strategy* (HMG 2010), *Putting the Frontline First: Smarter Government* (HMG 2009), *Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity* (BIS 2010).

Nonetheless, the ability and knowledge to use computers proficiently does provide cultural capital and qualifications in this area do create advantages, in terms of employment opportunities and self-confidence. Bourdieu (1977) pointed out that the capital that is accumulated from education only has a worth in fields that recognise and share this worth. Twenty-five years ago computers were not considered to be a necessity and only a few people in business were using them as part of their jobs, but today people are almost expected to have at least one in their homes and to be confident users. As a result computers and the ability to use them proficiently have had their status raised in terms of cultural capital.

Computers and education have become very closely linked with huge government investment that has enabled technology to be integral to schools and learning. In recent years, there has been a tendency for western governments to promote education as the predominant means for alleviating social disadvantage and enabling social mobility. This has led to formal educational qualifications being valued more and more highly in these societies. The Labour Government's former Prime Minister Tony Blair's 'education, education, education' speech in 1996 set the stage for the political reinforcement that education is the key to people attaining a better way of life for themselves and their families (Webb et al 2002) and

more recently the LSC (2010) have published the Government priorities for 14-19 provision for 2010/2011. As a result, more families from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially migrant families, recognise the value of education and qualifications for their children in order to enhance social mobility (Jenkins 2002; Bourdieu 1984).

The *Interviewees* expressed higher educational expectations and aspirations for their children than they had for themselves. *Annie* stated:

Well with my kids I'm adamant that they will have the chances I didn't get. I want them to achieve academically and want them to go to University ... it's made me really hard with them - making sure that they are supported and do their homework. John [husband] helps the kids, he's got a degree.

Ben also had strong feelings with regards to his children's education:

There is so much support for my three girls as far as education is concerned. One we support them 100% in anything they do and one example is we got one child whose not very academic but she's great with computers and things like that. So we try not to be negative with her, we try and keep a positive side of things and we push her and steer her that way and I think the education today compared to when I was a kid, oh is changed completely I feel - changed

completely. My expectations for my girls are leaving school with some or quite a few good exam results. I would be very very disappointed if that didn't happen ... very disappointed. I would feel that we, me and my wife, had let them down as far as supporting wise, but it goes back to when I was a kid and not having that support myself and knowing full well that one of my kids leaving school with no exam results that would be really bad. And I think for meself, a bit of a knock back, if you like, you know.

These statements expressed a clear indication that the *Interviewees'* expectations for their children have become very different from that of their own parents. It also confirms that disadvantaged/dominated groups are coming to accept educational aspirations within their habitus and are considering class mobility as a real option for their children. However, they continue to have reservations about themselves and the extent of their options as *Erica* said “... *it's not for me, but I want my kid to do well ...*”. Nevertheless the parents' own beliefs and feelings stays firmly placed within their habitus and as such will continue to adversely affect their children's experiences because of the constraints based on them by their habitus (Mills 2008). Bourdieu argued that:

Academic capital is in fact the guaranteed product of the combined effects of cultural transmission by the family and cultural transmission by the school (the efficiency of which

depends on the amount of cultural capital directly inherited from the family). Through its value-inculcating and value-imposing operations, the school also helps (to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the initial disposition i.e. class origin) to form a general, transposable disposition towards legitimate culture ... with respect to scholastically recognised knowledge and practices (Bourdieu 1984:23).

The interpretation is that children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not commence school with the early educational dispositions that children from the dominant classes have and as a result academic capital cannot be guaranteed in the same way as those who have inherited the full extent of cultural capital directly from their family in advance (Dunne & Gazeley 2008). The *Interviewees'* lack of academic qualifications and any cultural capital associated with them determines their children's disadvantaged disposition when they commence school and consequently throughout their formal education to adolescence. For that reason, irrespective of the *Interviewees'* stance in terms of their aspirations, expectations and/or determination for their children's academic achievements, they are not in a position either academically or economically to be able to offer them the appropriate start in their early formative years that is required for elitist conformity or achievements. These children tend to suffer similar experiences to their parents to a lesser or greater extent dependent on the individual child. This results in a perpetuation of failure within the school system. Therefore to achieve any changes in attitude towards education

and the school system is a very gradual process through future generations dependent on their social and educational experiences (Bourdieu 1977; 1984). Research by Reay (2004b, 2006, 2007) revealed that parents' aspirations were not realised because the children were limited by the parents' educational inadequacies to provide support and their lack of confidence to tackle school issues.

Nevertheless, there has been a slow increase in the numbers of people from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving academic qualifications: the result of the 'schooling boom' and the constant drive to maintain Britain's position in the globally economic markets (Bourdieu 1984; HMSO 2005b, 2006; BIS 2010). Bourdieu (1984) warned that when people from groups who previously did not take advantage of education and the school system start to compete for academic qualifications, it leads to the other groups, whose reproduction is dependent on education, to increase their investments and to maintain the higher standards of qualification, along with their status in the class structure (Reay 2007; Riddell 2007). This has led to increased competition for qualifications and for jobs; the increased number of individuals with academic qualifications has played a significant role in devaluing some qualifications. Unfortunately, the main victims of devaluation are those individuals who enter the workforce without academic qualifications and the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage continues. Bourdieu (1984) argued:

academic qualifications never achieve total, exclusive acceptance. Outside the specifically scholastic market, a diploma is worth what its holder is worth, economically and socially; the rate of return on educational capital is a function of the economic and social capital that can be devoted to exploiting it (Bourdieu 1984:134).

So, even when individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds attain the necessary qualifications, the discrimination continues, as they are less well endowed with other inherited capital that empowers them to exploit their qualifications appropriately and are, again, victims of inequalities. For example, if two or more candidates apply for the same position, then qualification would only be one of the criteria for selection. The prospective employer may also consider the university the candidate attended and, as a result, those from more prestigious universities will have more of an advantage, whether through family connections or better entry qualifications. It will also consider the calibre of application content. Applicants from a more advantaged background are likely to express themselves more eloquently and have had access to experience in the field. In these situations, an individual's background becomes a strong enabler – as their field, habitus and cultural capital ultimately support their more dominant status. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour would explain this through Behaviour Beliefs and Attitude toward Behaviour, which would relate to their Control Beliefs and Perceived Behavioural Control. These theoretical constructs explain the personal turmoil and barriers the

disadvantaged individual would have experienced, which would hinder the application process. They are less likely to know anyone who has been in the same situation as themselves and be able to benefit from career networks or work experience. They may also be influenced by the negative experiences of others around them which would affect their attitude and, in turn, confidence in their skills and ability. Therefore, additional poor experiences would perpetuate and grow the fear of failure (Table 9.1).

Bourdieu (1984) discussed qualification devaluation at length, especially how it affected the dominated classes with academic qualifications. He argued that the labour market saturation of people with academic qualifications has led to many positions that were previously open to the academically unqualified now being retained for the qualified. On the surface, it gives the appearance that the job market for those with qualifications has had continuous growth, but in reality this has been at the expense of those jobs that in the past had not required formal qualifications, for example, postman or clerical/administration roles. Some individuals become disillusioned victims who believe they have been fobbed off with worthless paper. A recent report in *The Guardian* (22/01/10) entitled “‘Worthless qualifications’ give false hope to state pupils” raised the issue that “pupils from deprived backgrounds [were] being conned into thinking they can advance in life by a system that hands out “worthless” qualifications” it argued that “bright children from poor backgrounds [were] ... led ... to believe that “high grades in soft subjects” ... [from] any old university [was] the route to prosperity”. It is evident that

children from disadvantaged families are attempting to meet the demand of their brave new world, but the limitations of their background hinder their life chances. Their parents rely on schools to assist in the education process, but in many cases because of league tables they direct children to easy options that ultimately have less value in the workplace. In turn, these individuals accept jobs that in the past would have been given to the unqualified and attempt to magnify their own worth through their academic qualification (Bourdieu 1984). An example is a media graduate who was successful in a job application as an administrative assistant: the role involved general office duties and room bookings. The person continually boasted about being a graduate to those around and felt a sense of superiority to others in the same office doing the similar work who did not have a degree.

The Interviews revealed that, on the whole, dominated groups who become involved in adult learning and/or who attain formal academic qualifications, in turn, have higher expectations and aspirations for their children and their own social mobility. Many of these people have used computers in local centres as an alternative re-engagement route as there is less comparison to the school environment they remember. This has had implications for their family and future generations as there will have to be greater investment to maintain and progress their social mobility, but as the goal posts continue to move the dominant classes will continue to maintain their status (Bourdieu 1984; 1977).

9.5 Conclusion

The inclusion of this Chapter expanded the investigation and analysis of the research data which emphasised the wider societal factors that impinged on an individual, other than those that are personal to the person. Wider social determinants influence an individual. These either facilitate or hinder their decision-making process, so the analysis of the data using Bourdieu's theoretical concepts offered the opportunity to confirm and provide further evidence from a different perspective. The further analysis allowed the sociological argument to be presented and discussed which highlighted the fundamental limitations and constraints inherent in the origins of an individual's field, habitus and cultural capital. It also exploited the synergies between the Bourdieuan concepts and the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.¹⁰¹

The wider social factors that impacted on the individual included: their environment, their understanding and compliance of it and their status, attitude, behaviour and social development. However, this chapter seeks to emphasise the necessity to regard both local personal determinants of attitude and behaviour, and also take into account the broader societal determinants that impact on disadvantaged individuals.

The importance emphasised by the synergies of the two theories was that an individual does not flourish in a vacuum. They are influenced and

¹⁰¹ The principle research carried out in the earlier Chapters.

impacted by their family background, inherent persona, cultural practices, friends and family, environment, social status, experiences (their own and those close to them) and ingrained beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours which impact on life chances, opportunities and choices.

Interviewees' discourse confirmed their ingrained understanding of their social environment; they understood acceptable patterns of behaviour and of conforming to what was conventional and right within their habitus. The *Interviewees* explicitly reiterated that they were part of a world they knew well and took for granted – they recognised and adhered to the rules of the field that made their world. Although not explicitly mentioned in depth, social class was acknowledged through the *Interviewees'* open discussions, where they made reference to their backgrounds as '*working class*'. Individuals are conditioned both socially and mentally to interact within their own social environment or habitus, it is the product of history that perpetuates itself and produces practice: '*that's the way things are*'. Knowledge, additional practices or modifications have to be absorbed into a field and are then actualised within a habitus; this is evident through the *Interviewees'* discussions with comments like '*... that's what they did in those days ...*' about their parents and '*... my kids ... I'm adamant ... I want them to achieve academically*' with regards to their expectation for their own children.

In terms of education and the educational system, there is a problem that individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds do not have the necessary

foundation to assimilate classroom education. The habitus of these social groups is very different from those with cultural capital. Habitus is about nurturing the child from an early age and preparing them for adulthood within the context of the field that the family live within. As a result, children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not enter the educational system with the right kind and/or amount of cultural capital that would assist them in that environment. Consequently, educational institutions have to deal with children from a range of differentiated societies and expect them to fit into a very different field to the one they know – an undifferentiated educational system geared to children from dominant groups. This produces inequalities from a very early age, with the child trying to play catch-up and never quite getting there. Families who have more cultural capital and of the appropriate kind ensure their children have been inculcated through family nurturing and education, which in turn instils in them practices that allow them to assimilate classroom education with ease. The *Interviewees* reiterated their poor experiences of school and education which led them to self-exclude or under-achieve in their teenage years. Subsequently, their inadequacies have manifested, leading to poor attitudes towards learning, teachers and educational establishments. In addition, their low attainment levels, low/no aspirations, low self-esteem/confidence and fear of failure have burdened them throughout their adult years. However, the *Interviewees* revealed evidence that they possessed far higher expectations for their children, but in reality their children may already have been tainted with their inadequacies and negative attitudes.

9.5.1 Implications and Recommendations

Government policymakers must acknowledge that the barriers that hinder or impinge on disadvantaged groups go beyond the individual as they consider re-engagement with learning and IT skills training. The use of Bourdieu's concepts provide a useful tool to base an understanding of the role cultural capital, field and habitus play in the scope of dominated groups. Together with the research findings derived from The Theory of Planned Behaviour, this analysis can, arguably, be used to modify and/or change attitudes and behaviour. The findings have provided strong evidence that has informed and changed professional practice and have been disseminated to a variety of audiences: central government policymakers, local government initiatives, educational practitioners and others supporting these groups.

9.5.2 Professional Practice

The combination of the two theoretical perspectives have highlighted some valuable insights into the impact of attitudes and behaviours of individuals from socially deprived areas as they engage with further learning with digital technologies in individually orientated and free informal learning settings.

As disadvantaged individuals continue to lack the necessary cultural capital derived through their field and habitus to fully value any type of learning,

strategic planning is important. In terms of our strategic planning at a regional level, the project has ensured that all relevant agencies and organisations that have contact with the target audience are involved and can contribute to the effectiveness of the service provision.

Locations have been identified and selected so that we have a geographical cover, as well as meeting the demand for specialist centres, for example, for the elderly, those with mental health issues, physical and/or learning difficulties and BAME¹⁰² groups. In addition, these centres are in deprived communities close to where the disadvantaged live and socialise.

The staff team are empathetic, qualified and experienced in working with disadvantaged communities and have a programme of CPD¹⁰³ to ensure that their skills are updated and relevant. The staff are trained in operational strategies to recognise lack of confidence and educational inadequacies so as to empower new learners from the outset. The individual learning plans are made as non-intrusive as possible; the process is non-judgemental in terms of past educational experience. The staff assess needs and ensure differentiation is recognised. Each learner is provided with a real personalised learning programme that meets their needs, in terms of commitments, time, location and level of programme. The service provision is planned and implemented using methods that are best suited to the disadvantaged that we serve.

¹⁰² Black and Asian Minority Ethnic

¹⁰³ Continuous Professional Development

The service recruits and trains successful learners as volunteers/facilitators locally to encourage others like themselves to re-engage with learning. The route enhances local capacity building, builds community cohesion and leads to volunteers gaining employment, some for the very first time in their lives.

This research has reinforced that there are no short term fixes to issues faced by disadvantaged people and the service is working hard with the local authority to provide individuals with the time they need to adjust and modify attitudes and behaviours towards lifelong learning, and create scope for raising prosperity amongst these groups.

9.5.3 Government Policy

The combined analysis revealed the necessity for central/local government and those agencies that hold the purse-strings to understand the perpetuating latent residuals of wider determinants that impact on and influence disadvantaged individuals, their attitudes and behaviours that are ingrained over time. The issues linked to field, habitus and cultural/social capital are not a minor problem. These have adversely impacted on individuals through their personal Behavioural, Normative and Control Beliefs. This is a national problem that hinders a majority of the population, so in order to begin to address these issues, there needs to be more than lip service paid to it. There are funds earmarked for various initiatives, but the pots of money when shared nationally result in minuscule amounts that only scratch the surface.

If the government insists on competitive bidding by different organisations they must recognise the expense that each of these organisations waste on administration and in duplicating something another organisation is already doing locally. Government has used a different approach recently where they call on providers to use existing money flexibly. Unfortunately no account is taken that some of these providers lack the money in the first place and, as such, these approaches are not long term solutions for the inherent problems.

The Government has encouraged the use of third sector organisations. These partnerships have worked well with our provision for many years, as these community organisations have a good rapport with their disadvantaged clients. However, funding to these organisations has also been cut and the goodwill is wearing thin. If the Government is serious about tackling exclusion and want to promote digital inclusion as a route, then more strategic investment is needed. There is an urgent need for digital inclusion to bring the efficiency gains that central and local government have forecast. There is evidence to show that digital technology can enhance people lives economically and socially. However, this cannot happen without acknowledgment of the deficiencies in deprived communities and the financial resources to enable this change.

9.5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This research has introduced, through a research investigation, the combination of two theoretical perspectives from different schools of thought: Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviours and Bourdieu's concepts of Field, Habitus and Cultural Capital. It has generated evidence that the two perspectives have valid synergies that together contribute to findings that are valuable to a variety of audiences. The findings have been disseminated to central and local government, who can begin to think about differentiation more fully, and plan strategically to begin to address some of the issues that impact and influence the disadvantaged. In addition, agencies, organisations, managers and practitioners who work in deprived communities can gain a more in-depth understanding. The research can also be used to begin to modify attitudes and behaviours towards learning and digital inclusion.

9.5.5 Further Research

Further research into learning and digital exclusion in deprived communities will be done using the combined Ajzen-Bourdieu theoretical perspectives. Future research will:

- (a) Investigate each independent variable (i.e. gender) and focus on a more in-depth combined theoretical analysis.
- (b) Investigate more specifically the issues related to digital exclusion of disadvantaged individuals as a result of habitus, field and cultural capital, and how these influence individuals'

beliefs, dispositions, attitudes and behaviours linked to elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

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Greenwich Online – Statistics Summary

2003			2004			2005			2006		
	New	Repeat		New	Repeat		New	Repeat		New	Repeat
Q1 (Jan-Mar)	146	175	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	863	1036	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	1048	1258	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	1280	1920
Q2 (Apr-Jun)	653	784	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	886	1063	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	1040	1248	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	850	1275
Q3 (Jul-Sep)	901	1081	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	889	1067	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	717	860	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	800	1200
Q4 (Oct-Dec)	800	960	Q4 (Oct-Dec)	842	1010	Q4 (Oct-Dec)	695	834	Q4 (Oct-Dec)	770	1155
	2500	3000		3480	4176		3500	4200		3700	5550

2007			2008		
	New	Repeat		New	Repeat
Q1 (Jan-Mar)	1340	2123	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	1440	2201
Q2 (Apr-Jun)	930	1322	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	980	1522
Q3 (Jul-Sep)	750	1246	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	823	1357
Q4 (Oct-Dec)	830	1264	Q4 (Oct-Dec)	840	1292
	3850	5955		4083	6372

NB. Footfall global conservative estimate 180,000 per annum

Breakdowns							
Total	100%	Ethnicity details					
White	34%	Asian	Car.	Afr.	Chin.	Other	
Non White	52%	7%	7%	27%	1%	11%	
Disabled	8%						
Male	46%						
Female	54%						
Below 25	27%	Age details					
25 < 55	47%	<16	<25	<35	<45	<55	65+
55+	15%	3%	24%	23%	16%	8%	9%
Work	35%						
Not working	47%						
ESOL	12%						

APPENDIX 2



Dear Participant

I would be grateful if you could spare some time in completing the attached questionnaire. Your answers to this questionnaire will help me with my research on the impact of computer technologies.

There are no right or wrong answers. Just circle the one you consider best describes your opinion.

All questionnaires are totally confidential and the information will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you very much for your help.

Hatice Choli
EdD Researcher

Please note: All your answers will be kept PRIVATE

General Information

Please tick appropriate box

1. **Female** **Male**

2. **Age range**

16-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65+

3. **Dependents**

Children **No** **Yes** Ages

4. Highest Qualification (if any)

5. **Ethnic Origin**

a	White	b	Black - Caribbean	c	Black – African
d	Indian	e	Pakistani	f	Bangladesh
g	Chinese	h	Vietnamese	i	Somali
j	Turkish	k	Greek	l	Kurdish
m	Other:				

6. Have you used a computer/PC? **Yes** **No**

7. How long have you used a computer/PC?

Never	Less than 6 months	6-12 months	1-2 years	Over 2 years
-------	--------------------	-------------	-----------	--------------

8. How would you describe your ICT skills?

Proficient in the use of a wide range of software for work	Can use general software well not just games	Can get by	Have had no taught classes
--	--	------------	----------------------------

9. Do you own a computer/PC? **Yes** **No**

10. Would you like to learn or learn more about computers/PCs? **Yes** **No**

Instructions

All the questions in this questionnaire make use of rating scales with 7 places. You are to circle the number that best describes your opinion. For example, if you were asked to rate "The weather in England" on such a scale, the 7 places should be interpreted as follows:

The weather in England is

Good : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : Bad

 extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

If you think the weather in England is extremely good, then you would circle the *number 1*, as follows:

The weather in England is

Good : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : Bad

If you think the weather in England is quite bad, then you would circle the *number 6*, as follows:

The weather in England is

Good : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : Bad

If you think the weather in England is slightly good, then you would circle the *number 3*, as follows:

The weather in England is

Good : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : Bad

If you think the weather in England is neither good nor bad, then you would circle the *number 4*, as follows:

The weather in England is

Good : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : Bad

In making your ratings, please remember the following points:

- **Be sure to answer all the questions – do not leave any out**
- **Do not circle more than one number on a single scale**

Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number that best describes your opinion. Some of the questions may appear to be similar, but they do address somewhat different issues. Please read each question carefully.

-
11. For me to attend a computer skills learning activity is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
12. For me to gain computer skills is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
13. For me to have the opportunity to learn is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
14. For me to get information and explanations about new technology is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
15. For me to commit time to learning new skills is
- Extremely valuable** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely worthless**
-
16. For me to attend regularly to gain new computer skills is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
17. For me to have the opportunity to interact with a friendly tutor and other people in the learning session is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
18. For me to have access to computers/PCs is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
19. For me to have to work hard to learn new skills is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
20. For me to develop learning skills, self-discipline, and a feeling of self-satisfaction is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-

-
21. For me to put the learning of new skills first is
- Extremely easy** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely difficult**
-
22. For me to be able to use new technology confidently is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
23. For me to attend a computer class on a regular basis is
- Extremely easy** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely difficult**
-
24. Most people that are important to me think that
- I should** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **I should not**
attend a computer class on a regular basis
-
25. For me to attend a computer class on a regular basis is
- Extremely good** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely bad**
-
26. My planning to attend a beginners computer class on a regular basis is
- Extremely likely** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely unlikely**
-
27. Whether or not I attend a computer class or take part in a learning activity on a regular basis is completely up to me
- Extremely agree** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely disagree**
-
28. Most of my friends and family attend some form of learning on a regular basis
- Definitely true** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Definitely false**
-
29. For me learning new skills on a regular basis is
- Extremely valuable** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Extremely worthless**
-
30. I consider myself to be a confident, independent learner
- Definitely true** : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : **Definitely false**
-

31.	For me learning new computer skills would be easy	Definitely true	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Definitely false
32.	I am confident that I could commit myself to learning on a regular basis	Definitely true	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Definitely false
33.	I would be disadvantaged if I do not have computer skills	Definitely true	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Definitely false
34.	Most people whose opinions I value would approve of my attending a computer class on a regular basis	Strongly agree	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Strongly disagree
35.	I believe life-long learning is an important part of everyone's life	Strongly agree	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Strongly disagree
36.	For me learning new computer skills and gaining qualifications will help me find employment	Extremely true	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely false
37.	Being able to confidently use new technology e.g. computers, the Internet and email is	Extremely good	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely bad
38.	Generally speaking, how much do you care what the tutor of a course thinks you should do?	Very much	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Not at all
39.	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your partner/spouse think you should do?	Very much	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Not at all
40.	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your close friends think you should do?	Very much	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Not at all

41.	Generally speaking, how much do you care what your children/dependents think you should do?	Very much	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Not at all
42.	Generally speaking, how much do you care what others think you should do?	Very much	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Not at all
43.	Attending a computer skills learning activity will help me gain a better understanding of how to use a computer	Extremely likely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely unlikely
44.	Attending a computer skills learning activity on a regular basis will help be gain confidence to do well	Extremely likely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely unlikely
45.	Attending class regularly will give me an opportunity to gain support/guidance that I need	Extremely likely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely unlikely
46.	Attending a learning activity regularly will get in the way of other things I have to do	Extremely unlikely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely likely
47.	Attending a computer class regularly will help me gain new skills and possibly qualifications	Extremely likely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely unlikely
48.	Attending a computer class regularly will help me develop good learning habits, self-discipline, and a feeling of self-satisfaction	Extremely likely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely unlikely
49.	Attending a learning activity will open up more opportunities for me	Extremely likely	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: Extremely unlikely

50.	Attending a computer skills learning activity will be boring and of no use to me	Extremely unlikely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely likely
51.	How often do you encounter unexpected events that place demands on your time?	Very rarely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Very frequently
52.	How often do you feel ill, tired or listless/cannot be bothered?	Very rarely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Very frequently
53.	How often do family obligations place unexpected demands on your time?	Very rarely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Very frequently
54.	If I encountered unexpected events that placed demands on my time, it would make it more difficult for me to attend a learning activity on a regular basis	Strongly agree	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Strongly disagree
55.	If I felt ill, tired or listless, it would make it more difficult for me to attend a learning activity on a regular basis	Strongly agree	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Strongly disagree
56.	If I had family obligations that placed unexpected demands on my time, it would make it more difficult for me to attend a learning activity on a regular basis	Strongly agree	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Strongly disagree
57.	The tutor of a computer skills learning activity would think I should attend class on a regular basis	Extremely likely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely unlikely
58.	My partner/spouse would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis	Extremely likely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely unlikely

59.	My close friends would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis	Extremely likely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely unlikely
60.	Other people I know would think I should attend a computer skills class on a regular basis	Extremely likely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely unlikely
61.	My past experiences of learning and school were	Extremely good	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Extremely bad
62.	How often have you not completed a learning activity you have committed yourself to?	Very rarely	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Very frequently
63.	I have not completed other learning activities I have committed myself to, and it makes starting another more difficult	Strongly agree	: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 :	Strongly disagree

Thank you for your assistance.

If you would like to be involved further by joining a small informal group to discuss learning and the use of new technologies, please fill in details below.

Name:

Contact No.:

APPENDIX 3

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR: CHI TEST RESULTS

GENDER		
Q	χ^2	P
11	14.555	0.024
12	13.089	0.023
13	11.829	0.039
14	7.186	0.304
15	6.337	0.275
16	6.612	0.158
17	17.147	0.004
18	6.717	0.243
19	12.211	0.032
20	3.219	0.359
21	1.890	0.864
22	6.020	0.304
23	12.420	0.053
24	4.018	0.540
25	7.986	0.157
26	9.304	0.157
27	9.999	0.125
28	5.719	0.431
29	15.163	0.019
30	6.447	0.375
31	10.492	0.105
32	5.516	0.480
33	1.922	0.927
34	17.644	0.007
35	15.508	0.004
36	2.726	0.842
37	9.068	0.106
38	6.733	0.241
39	9.080	0.169
40	15.457	0.017
41	14.145	0.028
42	9.735	0.136
43	13.878	0.031
44	9.267	0.099
45	10.046	0.123
46	8.748	0.188
47	11.245	0.081
48	12.851	0.025
49	9.273	0.159
50	12.328	0.055
51	19.365	0.004
52	13.574	0.035
53	12.609	0.050
54	5.701	0.336
55	9.784	0.134
56	13.124	0.041
57	27.995	0.001
58	22.780	0.001
59	9.806	0.133
60	22.208	0.001
61	14.933	0.021
62	11.814	0.066
63	31.427	0.001

AGE RANGE		
Q	χ^2	P
11	37.498	0.163
12	31.927	0.160
13	36.826	0.060
14	72.025	0.001
15	42.296	0.005
16	37.067	0.011
17	42.402	0.016
18	42.677	0.015
19	33.975	0.108
20	22.553	0.094
21	29.063	0.261
22	36.427	0.065
23	65.620	0.001
24	23.149	0.569
25	32.778	0.137
26	79.895	0.001
27	40.815	0.090
28	35.483	0.225
29	43.050	0.058
30	55.693	0.003
31	95.743	0.000
32	57.603	0.002
33	60.420	0.001
34	69.380	0.001
35	27.926	0.111
36	70.363	0.001
37	39.744	0.031
38	39.526	0.033
39	41.995	0.072
40	59.746	0.001
41	43.213	0.056
42	37.093	0.174
43	34.689	0.254
44	47.383	0.004
45	41.587	0.078
46	62.113	0.001
47	69.819	0.001
48	47.346	0.004
49	54.760	0.004
50	57.083	0.002
51	45.753	0.033
52	49.680	0.013
53	78.393	0.001
54	48.898	0.003
55	34.109	0.276
56	52.687	0.006
57	36.030	0.207
58	49.495	0.014
59	58.793	0.001
60	56.199	0.003
61	74.157	0.001
62	78.024	0.001
63	45.977	0.031

CHILDREN		
Q	χ^2	P
11	14.429	0.025
12	7.521	0.185
13	11.939	0.036
14	9.993	0.125
15	7.108	0.213
16	6.195	0.185
17	15.150	0.010
18	5.843	0.322
19	13.110	0.022
20	9.809	0.020
21	5.562	0.351
22	10.170	0.071
23	10.934	0.090
24	3.728	0.589
25	6.126	0.294
26	24.334	0.001
27	12.005	0.061
28	4.212	0.648
29	7.141	0.308
30	7.846	0.250
31	6.179	0.403
32	12.991	0.043
33	19.318	0.004
34	13.731	0.033
35	6.941	0.139
36	21.874	0.001
37	14.462	0.013
38	21.203	0.001
39	9.507	0.147
40	10.051	0.123
41	12.816	0.046
42	13.216	0.040
43	11.414	0.076
44	12.693	0.026
45	7.910	0.245
46	12.247	0.057
47	22.520	0.001
48	13.212	0.021
49	11.774	0.067
50	11.684	0.069
51	17.803	0.007
52	7.167	0.306
53	25.605	0.001
54	13.751	0.017
55	17.338	0.008
56	10.767	0.960
57	7.532	0.274
58	7.544	0.273
59	14.627	0.023
60	15.932	0.014
61	13.417	0.037
62	13.545	0.035
63	5.822	0.443

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION		
Q	χ^2	P
11	85.764	0.001
12	25.746	0.421
13	36.303	0.067
14	45.161	0.037
15	40.559	0.026
16	69.472	0.001
17	42.448	0.016
18	25.773	0.420
19	26.037	0.406
20	36.006	0.062
21	41.193	0.022
22	29.789	0.232
23	60.622	0.001
24	30.773	0.197
25	50.808	0.002
26	66.570	0.001
27	28.400	0.549
28	62.042	0.001
29	56.738	0.002
30	48.175	0.019
31	57.288	0.002
32	31.485	0.392
33	37.874	0.153
34	214.486	0.001
35	30.775	0.058
36	37.871	0.153
37	42.252	0.017
38	155.317	0.001
39	35.436	0.227
40	58.150	0.002
41	74.979	0.001
42	47.476	0.022
43	60.451	0.001
44	190.721	0.001
45	156.159	0.001
46	68.425	0.001
47	36.332	0.197
48	114.563	0.001
49	87.989	0.001
50	94.763	0.001
51	58.388	0.001
52	55.788	0.003
53	57.339	0.002
54	41.356	0.021
55	32.594	0.340
56	40.788	0.090
57	38.640	0.134
58	77.546	0.001
59	37.731	0.157
60	54.551	0.004
61	46.094	0.030
62	49.336	0.015
63	27.851	0.578

ETHNICITY		
Q	χ^2	P
11	41.876	0.231
12	27.181	0.614
13	35.399	0.228
14	28.600	0.805
15	46.481	0.650
16	31.166	0.149
17	194.592	0.001
18	36.156	0.203
19	54.611	0.004
20	17.812	0.468
21	29.687	0.482
22	83.172	0.001
23	58.596	0.010
24	56.749	0.002
25	43.542	0.052
26	65.446	0.002
27	47.465	0.096
28	57.912	0.012
29	53.594	0.030
30	45.705	0.129
31	81.296	0.001
32	36.805	0.431
33	55.142	0.022
34	85.812	0.001
35	15.977	0.889
36	74.322	0.001
37	68.555	0.001
38	72.933	0.001
39	81.138	0.001
40	60.385	0.007
41	74.263	0.001
42	75.847	0.001
43	37.813	0.386
44	38.963	0.127
45	35.189	0.507
46	47.483	0.095
47	41.341	0.249
48	30.725	0.429
49	47.117	0.102
50	95.221	0.001
51	54.151	0.027
52	80.087	0.001
53	91.743	0.001
54	48.625	0.017
55	54.044	0.027
56	48.877	0.074
57	75.781	0.001
58	45.881	0.125
59	54.224	0.026
60	46.516	0.066
61	61.514	0.005
62	63.021	0.004
63	53.842	0.028

Qualification Equivalence Table

Level of qualification	Equivalent to	Do specified qualifications ¹ at this level count towards the Skills for Life target?
4	Degree	
3	A Level	
2	GCSE grades A*-C	Yes
1	GCSE grades D-G/11 years	Yes
Entry level 3	9 to 11 years	Yes
Entry level 2	7 to 9 years	No
Entry level 1	5 to 7 years	No
<p>Note 1: Specified qualifications are national tests of literacy and numeracy developed for Skills for Life, approved qualifications in English for Speakers of Other Languages, Key Skills qualifications in communication and application of number, and GCSEs in English and mathematics.</p> <p>Source: C&AG's Report</p>		

9.2.1 Bourdieu and his Conceptual Frameworks

Bourdieu's conceptual frameworks spanned more than 40 years and were the result of life experiences. Swartz (1997) stated Bourdieu

... emerge[d] from an unusual experience of upward social mobility and from a broader range of intellectual influences and career experiences than usually is found amongst sociologists. He [was] a cultural and social "outsider" to the French intellectual elite, who trained in philosophy, began his career as an anthropologist, and draws on Anglo-American and German as well as French intellectual traditions (Swartz 1997:13).

Bourdieu's sociological research employed theories from a wide range of disciplines: philosophy, literary theory to sociology and anthropology. From the outset, Bourdieu's research was intended to explain the workings of social power and to provide a critical understanding of social life. Much of Bourdieu's early work was based on French social and economic structures and culture, however his concepts have proved transferable across other Western cultures (Grenfell 2003; Robbins 2000, 2004; Swartz 1997).

Bourdieu (1982) acknowledged the work of Durkheim, Marx and Weber and their differing theories of the social world, whilst sharing similar

“epistemological and logical principles of the social knowledge” (Bourdieu 1982:682). Bourdieu claimed that their theories of sociological knowledge converged and he hypothesised that the scientific explanation of social life did not diminish to common day by day perceptions, individual ideas or intentions (Swartz 1997).

Bourdieu developed a theoretical model of social practice in which he argued that every society, culture and group had theories about the world and their position in it. Central to his sociological work is what Bourdieu refers to as ‘a logic of practice’ which stressed the significance of the body and practices within the social world (Bourdieu 1990a). More specifically, he emphasised the mechanisms of social domination and reproduction that focused on bodily know-how and competent practices. He consistently stressed in his theory that social agents¹⁰⁴ did not continually analyse according to explicit rational and economic criteria. Conversely, they function in relation to bodily know-how and practical dispositions – or as Bourdieu (1990b:63) poignantly phrased in his publication *In Other Words*, their “feel for the game”. Loosely translated the ‘feel’ is the habitus and the ‘game’ is the field (Jenkins 2002).

There are three main concepts that Bourdieu developed and expanded on throughout his work. The first of these concepts was “cultural capital”

¹⁰⁴ Bourdieu often uses the term agent(s) when describing an individual or individuals.

from which his study of education and symbolic violence¹⁰⁵ grew, and the other two were field and habitus. Webb et al (2002:1) emphasised that Bourdieu's eclectic theories on habitus, field and capital are "significant and successful" in their endeavour to interpret the connections between "objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies)" and subjective "everyday practice (what people do, and why they do it)" and the influence on attitudes and behaviours.

9.2.1.1 Cultural Capital

The term cultural capital has gained extensive recognition since it was first introduced by Bourdieu and used in his 1973 publication *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction*. Bourdieu later developed and extended the concept of capital to describe other types of capital in his paper entitled *The Forms of Capital* (1986 English version). Bourdieu's opening statement demonstrated the grounding of the concept of capital:

The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation of all its effects (Bourdieu 1986:241).

¹⁰⁵ Symbolic violence: the denial or limitation of resources, being treated as inferior or limiting aspirations which is implemented in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate

An interpretation of the statement is that Bourdieu emphasised capital as accrued labour, gathered by individuals or groups, which provides them with social power and a strengthened existence or position. Harker (1990) reaffirmed that Bourdieu's capital operated as a social relation within a process of exchange with the term extended

to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation (Harker 1990:13).

Bourdieu (1986) emphasised three types of capital and distinguished them as: economic, social and cultural. Economic capital related to the physical wealth of an individual or groups and the command over economic resources, such as money and assets which provided them with the physical ability to purchase possessions and status. Social capital related to access to resources linked to group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support, which Bourdieu (1986) described as

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu 1986:248).

Cultural capital was seen as a system of accumulated cultural knowledge that bestowed power and status. More specifically, cultural capital

referred to forms of knowledge, skills, education and any other advantages an individual had which led to them having greater expectations and a higher status in society. Parents from more advantageous backgrounds can provide their children with cultural capital, for example, the attitude and knowledge that make the traditional educational system a comfortable familiar place in which they can succeed more easily (Reay 2007). Consequently, cultural capital is a social relation internal to a system of exchange that consists of accumulated cultural knowledge and provides power and status (Bourdieu 1986). Swartz (1997) confirmed that

... cultural capital covers a wide variety of resources, such as verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, scientific knowledge, and educational credentials. His point is to suggest that culture (in the broadest sense of the term) can become a power resource (Swartz 1997:43).

Bourdieu (1986) identified three sub-groups of cultural capital: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. The *embodied* state of cultural capital refers to those aspects of culture inherited and acquired through “cultivation, inculcation and assimilation” and is usually provided through family socialisation (Bourdieu 1986:244). Bourdieu stated that embodied wealth cannot be passed on by “gift or bequest, purchase or exchange” as it is an embodiment of the individual and inherent (Bourdieu 1986:245). Bourdieu (1990a) defined linguistic capital as a form of embodied cultural

capital in connection with mastery of and relation to language, as well as ways of speaking.

The *objectified* state of “cultural capital [refers to] material objects, [for example], writings, paintings, monuments and instruments” (Bourdieu 1986:246). These objects represent economic capital which can be sold, however they also represent aspects of symbolic cultural capital. It only requires economic capital to purchase a painting, however to appreciate it requires cultural capital. Paintings by Constable provide an image of romantic rural England and are fairly accessible to the viewer, but how does an individual come to know and understand the more abstract work of Mark Rothko or Jackson Pollock?

The *institutionalised* state is cultural capital that is institutionally recognised, for example, academic credentials, professional qualifications or membership of professional institutions. These have monetary value in the labour market which allows the conversion of cultural capital to economic capital (Bourdieu 1986). Moore (2004:446) suggested that “the economic sphere is also that of *class relations* ... exchange is intrinsically connected with social inequality and relations of powers”. The ‘old school tie’ is an informal network of individuals who attended the same elitist educational establishments and provide members with a privileged advantage to jobs and other prestigious positions or openings through network referrals.

9.2.1.2 Education

Education and educational institutions occupy an important position in Bourdieu's work that is intrinsically linked to cultural capital. Researchers and writers (Jenkins 2002; Robbins 2004; Webb et al 2002) have highlighted the transcultural aspects of Bourdieu's sociology of education. Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) drew attention to the reproduction of society and how education is used as a means to maintain the dominant classes. Bourdieu (1993b) argued that the work of schools was to initiate pupils/students into the artificially constructed cultural systems in play in that society. Robbins (2000:62) indicated that Bourdieu saw the "school system ... as a catalyst in the process of social reproduction ... [and] a functional substitute for the family unit of undifferentiated societies". In other words, the school system takes children from a range of different fields and then creates a field that plays an active role in shaping and being shaped by practices, normally those of dominant groups. Bourdieu (1967) argued that the educational system is the key institution that commands the distribution of status and privilege in today's world; it offers a prime opportunity for the production, transmission and accumulation of different forms of cultural capital, and stressed that this allows symbolic power¹⁰⁶ to be communicated through the inculcation of the classifications of dominant systems (Bourdieu 1967; Swartz 1997).

¹⁰⁶ Symbolic power is a legitimating power that elicits the consent of both the dominant and dominated.

Bourdieu (1987:13) considered symbolic power to be “*workmaking* power” as it had the ability to inflict the “legitimate vision of the social world and of its divisions”; it legitimised the existing relationships both economic and political, which aid intergenerational reproduction. Consider the example of school league tables which provide an overview of performance of all state schools; it benefits high performing schools over under-performing ones. Government promote the tables as a useful resource for parents to make an informed decision on the best school for their child. Once a school has a reputation for under-performing, it will not attract high-achieving pupils from more advantaged backgrounds and will continue on a downward spiral – leading to a division of schools. Those more affluent parents will be better placed intellectually to choose the best school options, leading to a high demand for the high performing schools which will in turn lead to a selection process.

Grenfell & James (2004) argued that large proportion of current educational research is funded by government for government policymakers and, as such, cannot be impartial. In order to maintain their authority and the dominance of their policies government practices

- Ignore, criticise, demean and misinterpret the findings of investigations which criticise their educational policies
- Only fund those research projects that will inform government policies as they want
- Ignore other potentially valuable research because the findings may not be in-line with existing educational policy.

Government funded research into government led educational policies, institutions and practices may not raise the same ethical issues and broad condemnation, as for example, cigarette manufacturers funding health research, but there is, nonetheless, a bias. A recent example showed how government can manipulate research findings: the Government's Chief Drugs Adviser, Professor Nutt, was sacked by the Home Secretary, Alan Johnson, after criticising government policies. Professor Nutt claimed that ministers were devaluing and distorting evidence. He argued that drugs classification was being politicised. Professor Nutt said he was not prepared to "mislead" the public about the effects of drugs in order to convey a moral "message" on the government's behalf. On a previous occasion Professor Nutt used a lecture in London to attack the "artificial" separation of alcohol and tobacco from illegal drugs (BBC News online 30/10/2009).

This use of symbolic power legitimises the government vision of education through the use of symbolic violence and the implementation of policies derived from Government funded research (Grenfell & James 2004).

9.2.1.3 Symbolic Violence

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) developed the theory of *symbolic violence*¹⁰⁷ through his empirical research based on the French educational

¹⁰⁷ According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is the imposition of structures of symbolism and meaning, for example, culture, on groups or social classes in a way that they are experienced as legitimate and natural.

system and through his early work in Algeria. He constructed the theory to show how all societies create order and social restraint through indirect cultural mechanisms as opposed to direct coercive social control. The legality of symbolic violence blinds the power relations and allows these mechanisms to flourish (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Grenfell & James 2004). An example is the monarchy and the support they appear to have from the working classes as evidenced on occasions such as royal weddings and walkabouts. The monarchy is at the peak of a pyramid: for example, the monarchy, landed wealthy and industrial wealthy, where the working class sits at the bottom. Working class people who admire the monarchy are complicit in their lack of economic and cultural capital.

Symbolic violence can take different forms, for example, the denial or limitation of resources, being treated as inferior or limiting aspirations and is implemented in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. Once it has been accepted as legitimate, culture absorbs its own power relations which contributes their systematic reproduction; this Bourdieu classified as misrecognition¹⁰⁸ and the key to how symbolic violence functions. This, he stressed, is “the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 167). Bourdieu (1977) expanded the explanation that symbolic violence is exercised upon agents, groups or classes in a symbolic way, rather than physically and goes unnoticed.

¹⁰⁸ Misrecognition: “the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder”. (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977:xiii)

Symbolic violence is presented through pedagogic action: Jenkins (2002:105) suggested three forms:

- a) Diffuse education: this occurs through interaction with knowledgeable people within a social formation, for example, an informal peer group;
- b) Family education: this happens through indoctrination within the family and is instilled from a very early age;
- c) Institutionalised education: this happens through school in most countries, but could also be age-set initiation rituals.

Pedagogic action replicates both culture and power relations which guarantees and supports its own operations. Bourdieu & Passeron (1977:10) stated that this is “the social reproduction function of cultural reproduction”, whereby the dominant groups or classes are replicated through pedagogic action and have a tendency to reproduce irregular share of cultural capital which perpetuates the social structure. In addition, the misrecognition of pedagogic action is classified as legitimate, which consequently leads people to experience these as real, valid and right, and therefore conform and comply. The symbolic strength of pedagogic agencies comes from their capacity successfully to inculcate meaning (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Recent educational examples of symbolic violence include the emphasis on drill and practice to learn arithmetic skills at key stage 2 when earlier curricula were broader and better reflected in

the range of mathematical knowledge. Another example is an educational system that encourages school leavers to undertake foundation degrees, so that the government can claim 50% of a cohort has a degree, when an emphasis on modern apprenticeships would provide better job opportunities, lifetime careers and much needed trades people for the economy.

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) argued that cultural capital has direct links with education and symbolic violence, which in turn has a strong relationship with Bourdieu's other concepts of fields and habitus. The concepts of field and habitus are closely entwined: field is the agent's social space and habitus is the lineage of social genesis.

9.2.1.4 Field and Habitus

The concepts: *field* and *habitus*¹⁰⁹ were given the analogy of a "*feel for the game*" whereby the '*feel*' related to an individual's habitus and the '*game*' was the field they live in (Bourdieu 1990b:63). Bourdieu (1977; 1990a) coined the term 'habitus' to encapsulate aspects of social understanding; it represented the site of cultural practice, both in terms of the individual 'becoming themselves', for example, the development of attitudes or dispositions, together with the ways in which the individual engaged in practice (Webb et al 2002). Whereas a field is a place of practice or social

¹⁰⁹ Bourdieu uses field and habitus as other researchers (Williams, R., (1977)) use the term cultures and sub/micro cultures to define the different structures of social and economic groups within a nation or nations. Culture in the Bourdieuan sense is defined in the context of the arts, artist tastes, appreciation of literature and theatre as referenced in *Distinction* (1984)

arena which have a structured system of social positions and, consequently, produce and authorise practice (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989). However, field can also be composed out of conflict which determines practice and distribution of capital¹¹⁰. Field is recognised in connection with individuals' or groups' social class, although Bourdieu (1998) insisted that:

social science should not construct classes, but rather the social spaces in which classes can be demarcated, but which only exist on paper (Bourdieu 1998:32).

A recent article by Harriet Sergeant (The Mail 19/09/2009) demonstrates how a field can gain recognition. The article entitled "*Feral Youths*" described an investigation into a generation of young men across Britain, from socially deprived communities, whose educational failure have led to a growing population of barely literate youths who survive through a life of crime and violence. They have got to know the cultural practices of their habitus and they have developed attitudes and dispositions required for them to survive in their field of gangs and drugs. This, extreme example, shows how a person's habitus and field is modified to gain status, respect and capital, even though it is not recognised or accepted in society.

¹¹⁰ When Bourdieu talks of capital he considers it in its widest sense. Capital can be economic, for example, financial (cash or assets); social in terms of durable networks or mutual acquaintance and recognition; or cultural in the form of knowledge, qualifications, status and prestige

Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989:37) expanded on the explanation of field, he stated that, according to Bourdieu, it is a social arena where struggles or operations occur “over resources or stakes and access to them”. A field is distinguished by the “stakes and what is at stake” these include: “goods [which refer to life-style], housing, intellectual distinction or education, social class and prestige” (Jenkins 2002:84). King (2005:255) reiterated that “a field can be any structure of social relations” – it is a location of struggle for positions within that field and is comprised of the conflict created when individuals or groups attempt to create what consists of valuable and legitimate capital within that space. As a consequence, one type of cultural capital can, at the same time, be both legitimate and acceptable, and illegitimate and unacceptable, depending on the field it is located within, take for example, gambling. It is acceptable when it has been legalised by law through correct licences, for example, casinos or betting shops and yet it is unacceptable and illegal when, for example, a group of people convene to play card games for monetary gain without the appropriate licences.

Jenkins (2002) explained that:

each field, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken for granted structure of necessity and relevance which is both the product and producer of the habitus which is specific and appropriate to the field (Jenkins 2002:84).

This would suggest that field and habitus are integral to each other and, as a result, sociologists have attempted to understand how rules, conventions, beliefs and values gain their place in human life. Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:12) argued that the science of human practice cannot simply be overlaid by “a phenomenology on a social topology”, it must include the insight and evaluative schemata that people recognise each day of their life. In other words, practices/events are not autonomous of social reality; it must be perceived and understood in human consciousness and not of anything independent of consciousness. However, Bourdieu has questioned these schemata – their practices, their origins and their relationships with external structures of the real world. He suggested links between ‘social structures’ and ‘mental structures’ and/or ‘objective divisions’ and the ‘social world’ with particular attention to the dominant and dominated in their various fields and how individuals relate and apply them to their habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992).

For example, Muslims have a set of dispositions that they are born into, which incorporate religious preachings, traditional practices in the community and within the family, and cultural inheritance. These produce unconscious attitudes and perceptions of practices, activities and events outside their immediate environment. However, the way they live is adapted to enable them to advance in a multi-faith country.

The word *habitus* is an old term of Aristotelian and academic origins (it is used to describe the notion of *hexis* or 'state'). *Habitus* was later re-elaborated by Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1991) explained the term in *Language and Symbolic Power* where he claimed

... *habitus* is a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any 'rule'. The dispositions which constitute the *habitus* are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable (Bourdieu 1991:12).

Bourdieu (1991) argued that dispositions are attained through a slow process of enforcement through important early childhood experiences onwards. These are developed through a range of everyday processes of training and learning; these dispositions are acquired and become second nature. The dispositions are structured and mirror the social conditions they were learnt in. People from a working-class backgrounds and those from a middle-class or upper-class backgrounds acquire a different set of dispositions which characterise the social conditions of their way of life and is reflected in their *habitus*. For example, table manners: upper/middle class families acquire appropriate table etiquette as dictated by British culture, multiple sets of cutlery and position of glasses, crockery and the order to use them. At the other extreme many children from

disadvantaged backgrounds start school unaware how to use a knife and fork together.

The structured dispositions are described as durable as they become ingrained in the body and cannot easily be modified. Bourdieu also acknowledged that these dispositions are generative and transposable – they are able to generate a multiplicity of practices and perceptions in a field other than the one they were obtained in. Habitus gives individuals a sense of how to behave and react to different situations in their daily lives (Bourdieu 1991).

Cultural capital is often derived from an individual's habitus, evidence (Gorder 1980; Harker 1990; King 2005; Webb et al 2002) claimed that habitus was important to the concept of cultural capital. As discussed, cultural capital are inherent dispositions that are inculcated in the family, but manifest themselves in different ways in each individual: through objective chances of the social class they belong to, in their everyday interactions and changes as a person's position within a field alters. For example, how an individual's habitus prepares a child for school, how they interact with their peers, teachers and others children within that environment and ability to adapt to advantage their opportunities.

Jenkins (2002) criticised Bourdieu's ideas: he argued that the relationship between habitus and field was unclear. He indicated that in some papers Bourdieu wrote in a way that stressed that each field produced its own

specific habitus and in other papers, he referred to people transporting their own pre-existing internalised habitus to other fields. However, Jenkins does concede that both can be true because as individuals mature they accumulate habitus as a process of social and personal development.

Webb et al (2002) claimed that Bourdieu used habitus to move between objectivism and subjectivism, as practices could not easily be understood through narratives, rules, values, discourses and ideologies of a field (objectivity) or through an individual's uncontextualised decision making (subjectivity). Conversely, an individual recognises a habitus that heavily controls their actions and beliefs. Habitus works via a range of operations, preferences, values and underlying principles that are indoctrinated during formative situations: family, education systems and/or class structures.

9.2.1.5 Objectivism and Subjectivism Dichotomy

Bourdieu (1990) draws attention to the dichotomy of objectivism and subjectivism which are seen as closely intertwined. Objectivism considers that an individual's actions and attitudes are determined by social structures, for example, class, ethnicity, gender and language. It indicates that an individual's beliefs and behaviour stem from whether s/he is born into a family from an upper or lower class. The social structures, in turn, produce the concept of subjectivism which identifies a perspective asserting the social reality that is the production of individual agent's thoughts, decisions and actions. For example, a working class woman and her close friends and family who had poor experiences of formal education

have negative attitudes towards learning. However, the woman who wants to improve her employability status goes against her salient beliefs and makes the decision to learn how to use the computer.

Bourdieu (1990) argued that an agent is equipped with the ability to understand and control their own behaviours, irrelevant of circumstances of their lives, but must always be understood and contextualised in relation to objective structures of a culture. In other words, a range of social structures sculpture an individual agent, their subjectivities related to their worldview or as Jenkins (2002:25) encapsulated “from the personal inside out”: how they consider the world to be and the culture/values they come subconsciously to accept and adopt. As a result Bourdieu has always been conscious that researchers also bring their own indoctrination, habitus, field and cultural capital into their interpretation of their research findings and advocates reflexivity to ensure that researchers do not contaminate findings with their own views and bias.

9.2.1.6 Reflexivity

The Bourdieuan approach stresses the importance of using reflexive sociology whereby researchers recognise their own position and impact on the research, along with their interpretation of social structures in other fields outside their own. Webb et al (2002:xiv) stressed that

Bourdieu asks researchers to adopt a reflexive attitude toward our practises, reflecting upon how forces such as

social and cultural background, our position within particular fields and intellectual bias shape the way we view the world.

Bourdieu's work was informed through the notion of reflexivity: firstly it attempted to define what he called 'science', the scientific inquiry of the idea of deep-seated uncertainty; secondly the historical framework that provided context and knowledge of the object(s); and thirdly, the need for all scientific and research activity to understand the ethical issues. Bourdieu's *Weight of the World* (1999) uses his reflexivity to present a number of case studies of experiences of lower class individuals. However this work has been criticised, Kenway & McLeod (2004), McRobbie (2002) and Fowler (1996) argued that Bourdieu had constrained and restricted the unstructured interviews as he only used limited methods of analysis which "... undermined the credibility of his earlier work which employed a range of methods ...", although it was agreed that it was a "... landmark attempt to practice Bourdieu's reflexive sociology ..." (Kenway & McLeod 2004:532).

Bourdieu continually stressed that social scientists were inherently laden with biases, and only by becoming reflexively aware of those biases could the social scientist free themselves from them and aspire to the practice of an objective science. Therefore Bourdieu considers reflexivity is part of the solution, not the problem (Webb et al 2002).