

**THE USE OF ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION & SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PROMOTION/AWARENESS OF VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING & TESTING: *An Investigation of Intersexions and its facebook page on episode 13.***



**TITLE**

**The use of Entertainment Education in the Promotion/Awareness of HIV voluntary counselling and testing: *An Investigation of Intersexions and its facebook page on episode 13.***

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**Declaration:**

I, Temitope Ogunlela (Student Number: 211523912), hereby declare that this paper contains my own original writing. I have acknowledged all known sources and declare that this paper is void of any plagiarism.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **INTRODUCTION**

South Africa has the largest responsibility of HIV/AIDS and has over the years implemented the largest Aids prevention programme in the world. It is also a major issue that needs to be addressed. (Human Sciences Research Council, 2009). According to Media Club South Africa, the South African Department of Health in a Joint programme on HIV/AIDS predicted that the HIV prevalence in South Africa may be beginning to experience some positive change in HIV related issues this was achieved through a model which showed a drop in new infection cases as a result of better HIV prevention programmes. One of such is the use of entertainment education in the communication of HIV/AIDS related messages to promote behaviour and social change. Entertainment education “is a strategic process to design and implement a communication form with both entertainment and education elements to enhance and facilitate social change” (Coleman, 1999:76).

There has been a wide spread in the use of EE in reaching out to target audience on an array of issues that relate to human health in South Africa. An example is the Intersexions drama series which used entertainment education (EE) in informing people about HIV/AIDS and also in the promotion of behaviour change in people such as voluntary counselling and testing (VCT); other examples will be presented later. VCT is about the knowledge of one’s HIV status not AIDS and this is on the basis of free will and is confidential as the volunteer has right to complete privacy.<sup>1</sup> It is when an individual voluntarily agrees to go for counselling and testing so that they can decide whether to be tested or not and this helps to ascertain one’s HIV status. In 2002, the Environment and Social Development Department informed that a lot of effort by government, Non-governmental organisation (NGO), private sector and other stakeholders has been put in to promoting VCT in South Africa. The scope of the study is restricted to the audience/participants of episode 13 that commented on the facebook page. The remarkable growth of social network

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www0.sun.ac.za/hiv/en/basics/testing>

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sites such as facebook, twitter and a host of others is one clear indication that digital technologies are rapidly changing communication in its entirety (Cranston and Davies, 2009).

**Background of the study**

This study is based on attempts by academics, government and Non-governmental organisations to establish an approach to a reduction in the HIV/AIDS endemic. The past years has ushered in the fast diffusion of communication technology and the expansion of the entertainment industry. According to Brown & Singhal (1994), cited in Brown & Meeks (1997:30), “During the last two decades, several education institutions including Harvard University’s school of public health, the John Hopkins center for communication and the Arts, have been producing entertainment media with educational themes”. Also Singhal and Rogers (2002), posit that the rate at which entertainment education interventions are increasing, it is time to explore deeper into the effects of entertainment education.

They further proposed five theoretical agenda for future research on entertainment education; the first is the investigation of entertainment education with attention to the remarkable variables among EE interventions, the second is the investigations to different and resistances to entertainment education interventions, third is investigations of rhetorical, play, & affective aspects of entertainment education, fourth is the employment of a broader approach that depicts understanding of individual , group and social level changes in researching the effects of EE and the fifth is engaging in research that allows for pluralism in methods and creative analysis. In accordance with the first theoretical agenda this research is established. Furthermore, according to Singhal & Udornpim (1997), few Television programs worldwide have been able to have an effect on audience like the Japanese soap opera oshin which was about stimulating people to be hardworking and not relent even in the face of challenges. This research similar to this seeks to investigate how EE and social can be used to promote VCT among people.

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Social Media has changed human experience, today social media is used to interact, communicate and connect with people to share and learn from their experiences. In South Africa, a lot of people are connected to Social media and the highest is through mobile phones. Social Networking is a regular part of the lives of youths and they use this on a regular basis. (Konberger, 2009). The popularity and usage of social media is also attracting a lot of adults. (Correa, Hinsley & De Zuniga, 2010). Facebook usage in on the increase in South Africa and gained acceptance and an interesting point worthy of note is that South Africa ranks as the eight on the facebook users table. (Cranston and Davies, 2009). Yet, simultaneously the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is increasing alongside the acceptance of social media. Educating people according to Du Toit (2011), has become the vital tool in the fight against the endemic and going by the extent to which messages are shared and exchanged globally via social media, it can be said to be a viable communication channel to exchange and disseminate HIV/AIDS messages. To this end, the Intersexions facebook page data set on episode 13 was used analyze how EE and social media can be used in promoting VCT which is also a HIV/AIDS prevention approach.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to collect the data set on Intersexions episode 13, clean, sort, code, create themes and analyze them in line with the research questions with the findings and make recommendations for further study.

**Objectives of the study**

The previous part of this section presented the basis upon which this study is built but this section presents the objectives of the study. The objective of the study is to examine and establish how EE and social media can be used in the promotion/Awareness of VCT. This will be analysed through the data set from the Intersexions facebook page. Furthermore, this will establish and reveal how EE and social media can be used in promoting /creating awareness for VCT and the communication of HIV/AIDS related messages. The findings will be valuable information in the field of development communication, Public health communication and also to stake holders in the prevention of HIV/AIDS in South Africa and beyond

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**Research questions**

- In what ways did social learning and fear theory influence the audience towards VCT?
- How interactive and effective is social media in the communication of HIV/AIDS related messages?
- How entertaining and educative was Intersexions?

**Significance of the study**

The study will establish how EE and social Media can be used in promoting VCT ad well as help contribute in evaluating the impact Intersexions series had on its audience.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section reviews relevant literature that gives a coherent link to the entire study.

**Theoretical framework**

The study is located within the Social learning theory and the Fear appeal. The rationale for this is that the social learning theory focuses on the observation, imitation and modeling on the part of an individual while fear appeal goes a little further than the social learning theory by presenting that fear in messages can propel an individual to imitate the observed role model this is greater when the level of fear infused in the message is high.

**Social Learning theory**

Albert Bandura's social learning theory presents that people learn from others through observation, imitation, and modeling. This means that people learn as they observe other people's actions, attitudes and behaviour. Bandura (1977:22), posits that "Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action". He further said that modelling has an effect on learning through the information

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transferred and this explains why people take after some socially accepted behaviour which in the case of this study is VCT. According to Ormrod (2009), social learning theory emphasizes learning that happens within a social context. An analogy to this can be drawn from the Intersexions episode 13. The viewers were exposed to learning through observing the consequences that Des who is one of the multiple partners' of Ruth had to face for cheating on his wife. Ruth who was an old flame of his and neither of them knew their HIV status. Des only gets to know that Ruth is HIV positive after she decides to go for VCT and breaks the news to him; this then motivated him to go for VCT. The audience can learn from this and be stimulated to go for VCT knowing the danger inherent in not going for it.

Fear leads to what Bandura calls cognition which is the reasoning and internalization of what was learnt by the viewer. This is related to the Intersexions audience in that they will go through the process of thinking through Ruth and Des's willingness to get tested and move to another aspect of social learning known as self efficacy. This is about people being likely to take up certain behaviours when they believe that they are able to imbibe and carry out overtly what they have learnt and gained confidence to execute. In relation to episode 13, after the dangers of not testing is learnt and reasoned; then comes the self efficacy where the viewer gains confidence from seeing that they can be like Ruth, face all odds and goes for VCT. This theory will help analyze if the characters (Role models) in episode 13 had an influence in determining the audience to go for VCT.

**FEAR THEORY/APPEAL**

This is the use of messages that are perceived to create fear for something in the mind of people. (Swanson, 2003). The general idea of fear appeal suggests that fear arousing messages reliably and consistently produce behaviour change. According to Green and Witte (2006), in depth investigation into the use of different strategies of fear appeals have been carried out and each arrived at the same findings that presented; the stronger the fear appeal the greater the attitude intention and behaviour change. This implies that, it has been established that the greater the fear infused in a message the higher the chances for the audience to have the intention to go for VCT

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and eventually go. They further alluded that when efficacy is taken into consideration, fear appeals have stronger effect such that the greater the fear or threat, the greater the behaviour change so long the efficacy perceived is high. This posits that when considering an individual's ability to take up a line of action (VCT), fear appeals have a stronger effect and the greater the fear appeal used, the greater the likelihood of the individual to go for VCT. In support of this, Judson (2003), says gay men after engaging in long unprotected sex and had an increase in sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS, it was shown that the gay men decided to be cautious in their sexual lifestyles; this can be as a result of fear that was aroused by the increase in the sexually transmitted diseases. The effect of different forms of communication stands to be a key point in communication research. It has been a great task to deal with the challenges of concept and methods in investigating the way in which messages influence people. (Kotler, 1976).

The rational use of fear can have positive effect on attitude (Ray & Wilkie, 1970:54). They say that research has shown that a wise use of fear can have influence on attitude change and actions and that high fear was more effective than low or no fear at all. The fear appeal to some extent was used in the *Intersexions* series; this was obvious in episode 13 where Ruth told Des that she had sad news for him which was about her HIV status and followed up by telling him to go for VCT before it's too late. More of this is seen in episode 26 which had a run through of all episodes and had a voice over that was used to depict HIV/AIDS as it went around ravaging people through different ways most especially through the sexual networks and of more importance using fear in form of sound, tone and pace to get a subtle message across promoting VCT.

The use of fear appeal was used in HIV/AIDS interventions in Uganda. The posters used in the early of AIDS used images of human skulls and coffins and radio messages that were capable of instilling fear of the scourge in the minds of the audience and motivate them to avail themselves for VCT. This was done for a while after which people (HIV/AIDS) patients were delegated and sent to conduct learning sessions in schools. It was discovered that the fear appeal strategy increased the perceptions of threat and aroused fear which motivated people to go for VCT (Green & Witte, 2006).

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According to Dante Kashangirwe (2003), seeing people with HIV/AIDS looking sick, this seems to gear people towards VCT. Another dimension is when healthy people who are HIV positive are delegated to go and conduct these sessions in schools, this gives another positive effect as people can see that one can have HIV/AIDS and live positively, this drops the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and motivates people for VCT.

According to Witte (1992), the evaluation of a threat perceived and perceived confidence (efficacy) in relation to a particular intervention determines the action process by the target audience after being exposed to a message with fear appeal. "If perceived threat elicited by the message is low, the individual is not motivated to further process the message; however, if and when perceived threat is moderate to high, the individual moves on to the second step- appraisal of the efficacy of the recommended action" (Dutta-Bergman 2005:105). This means that on one hand if the fear appeal used is low, the individual has no drive to further think of the negative effects of not going for VCT or engaging in self assessment to determine if they can go for VCT. On the other hand if the fear appeal used is high, the individual moves to the next stage of assessing their ability to go for VCT. In the case of this study, this could be as a result of fear and self efficacy which will stimulate the audience to go for VCT.

**Intersexions**

This was drama series produced by curious pictures and John Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa (JHESA). It had 26 episodes that run for 24minutes on SABC1. It was an intervention that can be said to have designed with the EE strategy to combating HIV/AIDS in South Africa with specific impact on the younger generation. The series was a creative approach to using TV as a medium to transform lives as each episode were drawn of different objectives that were interlinked from the first episode to the last. The objectives of Intersexions were to:

- Increase the uptake of HIV Counselling and Testing.
- Increase open and honest discussions within relationships.
- Reduce the number of sexual partners as a strategy for HIV prevention.
- Increase and maintain condom usage.

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- Reduce the levels of alcohol consumption.

According to Grant Monanreng (2011), Episode 13's educational objective is to establish been honest about infidelity in relationships. This episode is about a young man named Des who has a wife Virginia who is an activist; Des has lots of problems that eventually made him unhappy and he runs off to Johannesburg where he has an affair with an old flame Ruth who is single, rich and lived life that he admired compared to his. Apparently, Ruth also had another sexual partner besides Des and the affair becomes sour when Des realises the mistake he made but it was rather late as Ruth had availed herself for VCT and was told that she was HIV positive. She takes the courage to inform Des of this and further persuades him to go for VCT to ascertain his HIV status. This did not negate the initial educational objective as earlier presented but brought to the fore another area that was addressed by the episode.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The emergence of the internet has drastically changed the pattern in which people use the media and youth happen to be the fore runners of this (Montgomery, Robles and Larson 2004). They explained that about "60 million individuals born after 1979 represents the largest generation of young people in nations history and the first to grow up in a world saturated with networks of information, digital devices and the promise of perpetual connectivity"(ibid:4). This implies that youths and young adults are exposed and conversant with these technologies and devices that are often connected to the internet. The Mark Arthur foundation president cited in Glaser (2006) also supported stating that this generation is the first to exist in a digital world where the internet, video games and cell phones are everywhere and it is common place to have people express themselves through these media such as my space and facebook. According to Glaser (2006), social networking online has been in existence since late 90's and a remarkable recognition of social media use was Mac Arthur foundations decision to over a period of five years fund research and creative projects targeted at understanding the effect digital media had. "Social Media is one of the most profound products of the 21st century. It has changed the face of publishing, marketing, public relations, and yes, even media itself. Social Media is about the empowerment of you, the user. It is a paradigm shift in how the World Wide Web is structured,

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and how we publish, consume and share information today and in the years to come” (Racoma, 2007).

The foregoing presents the enormous contribution of the internet and social media to the enhancement of communication and to some degree an acceptable medium in the times we live in. In South Africa youth are connected and the highest is through mobile phones. Social networking is key and essential part of the lives of people as they connect and interact via social media on a regular basis. (Konberger, 2009). The perception of a cell phone has changed, prior to this time they were used to receive or initiate calls, send and receive messages. Cell phones are now often used in communication and entertainment and Konberger says this to a large extent shapes their decision. A support to this was lent by Mzinyathi (2011), arguing that top on the priority list of cell phone users in South Africa especially youths when purchasing a cell phone are ability for internet access and social networking before others like games and memory capacity.

This implies and establishes that in South Africa social media can be said to be an integral component of the everyday life of people and has gained acceptance among people as a means of communication and therefore can be a viable media in the exchange of VCT related messages. South Africans have become passionate about many areas of their lives, an analysis by Jobson (2001), reveals that South African youths are passionate about many spheres of their lives of which HIV is one of them. Interesting point to note is that this runs contrary to the conception people have about South African youths been non-chalant about issues boarding on HIV/AIDS. This now places social media in good stead as a medium of communicating about VCT related issues and going by the above presented, it will be accepted by all and sundry (youths and adults).

Facebook is a social networking site designed to connect people and business associates and is the largest networking site in close competition with twitter. It was founded in 2004 by Mark Zukerberg, it allows users create a profile and allows them to put up information about themselves and get in touch with millions of users all over the world. A profile consists of

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basically status, photos, notes groups and a wall where people leave comments<sup>2</sup>. Facebook has about 800million active users of which about 50 percent of them log on to facebook everyday and a user has approximately 130 friends on their list. As many as 900 million objects for interaction are available on facebook ranging from community pages, groups and events of which an average user is mostly connected to 80 of these objects<sup>3</sup>.

“South Africa boasts of almost four-million Facebook users and close to one-million twitter users”.<sup>4</sup> Facebook is the interactive and feedback media that Intersexions used in engaging in conversations and soliciting for responses from the viewers on different issues that had to do with the episodes and the series as a whole. The use of online social networks like Facebook has consistently increased among all age groups and segments of our society, ushering in fresh opportunities for the exchange of vital information Dowell et al (2011).

In as much as social media has been of immense contribution to the modern and two way flow of communication, it has some draw back that can adversely affect effective communication. The fact that the media is social, people can decide to manipulate their contributions, opinions or contents and can be cajoled by external influences that are not in support of the project or cause. (Racoma, 2007). Another disadvantage of social media is that the channel is big and large and very difficult to control by the administrator; in some instances it could lead to negative consequences that were not intended. For instance, on the Intersexions facebook page, some members of the forum end up using vulgar and swear words that actually get out of hand and it takes the intervention of some other members to resolve. Similar to this is when some members of the group expressed their anger as to why on a Monday morning an issue about lubricants is discussed and if there wasn't any better thing to discuss; this in some way could create negative publicity for Intersexions.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-facebook.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.southafrica.info/news/science-week-020811.htm#ixzz1UjnSaoFu>

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## **HEALTH COMMUNICATION**

Health communication is the process of sourcing and sending health related information to individuals, communities, institutions and groups<sup>5</sup>. It is the implementation of communication strategies to enlighten and influence people's decisions to improve or enhance health<sup>6</sup>. Another definition presented by Roxanne Parrot (2004:751), defines it as "the art and technique of informing, influencing and motivating individuals, institutional and public audiences about important health issues." He further explained that the health communication includes the prevention of diseases and the general improvement in the health and life of individuals. In taking the aforementioned definitions into consideration, it can be inferred that health communication is planned communication of health messages designed to motivate, improve the health standards and conditions of people or a target audience. The need for health communication cannot be over emphasized as it has affect on the lives and health of the entire population (Rimal & Lapinski 2009). This can make valid why health communication about VCT should be considered, sustained and embraced at all levels by all stake holders in the society. VCT constitutes an important part of HIV prevention and care (Hillman, Wood & Webb 2008).

If the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is anything to go by, there is definitely a need for health communication in the area of VCT. In 2006, World health Organisation (WHO) and UNAIDS issued a guide that aided the increase in VCT. The South African government encourages people to voluntarily avail themselves for VCT<sup>7</sup>. In accordance with this, the South African government has being involved actively in contributing towards creating awareness of VCT; Its reaction and response since 2002 has run into Billions of Rands with support for International donor. An intervention like Intersexions is an example of how health communication using EE strategy can used to promote VCT.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/health-communication/welcome!>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.opaclearinghouse.org/pdf/hp2010\\_rh.pdf](http://www.opaclearinghouse.org/pdf/hp2010_rh.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/testing.htm>

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**ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION**

EE “is a strategic process to design and implement a communication form with both entertainment and education elements to enhance and facilitate social change” (Coleman 1999:76). According to Arvind Singhal and Everett Rogers (2002: 117), it is “the intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages.” The entertainment media is a persuasive tool in educating the public about social problems (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). In support to the above definition Peter Vaughan et al (2000:181), see EE as “the process of designing and implementing an entertainment programme to increase audience member’s knowledge about a social issue, create favourable attitudes and change their overt behaviour regarding the social issue”.

Another different perspective put forward by Manoff (1985), he states that EE has a relationship with social change at both individual and community levels. EE in health communication is a strategy that has been used to increase the audience reach and effect of messages through the entertainment and education. It therefore can be a concept of using entertainment as a basis or spring board for the transfer of educational messages to promote VCT. To Linda Fuller (2003), such an approach as EE in HIV/AIDS is called “AIDS as filmic entertainment which means the use of film to educate people about AIDS and also entertain as well. A support to this is lent by David Ehrestein (2003) stating that the mid 80’s when AIDS epidemic became a key discourse, there had been a distinctive way of approaching the subject through films and TV shows. Drawing on this and owing to the fact that VCT is an aspect of HIV/AIDS communication, it can suggest that Intersexions is can be an appropriate example for how EE can be used in the promotion of VCT.

The media is saddled with agenda setting for VCT, according to Noshini Nishino (2003), it is the mass media that tells and updates us about VCT and this creates further understanding on the use of EE in promoting VCT. There are other examples of the use EE strategies in promoting VCT, examples are 4play- Sex tips for girls, Tsha Tsha, and also soul city which are similar to the EE strategy used by Intersexions in the promotion of VCT. Furthermore, scrutinize and DramAidE also belong to these categories of EE strategies that were used for promoting VCT. They all are

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strategies that engaged in using EE in addressing many HIV/AIDS related issues ranging from VCT, Multiple and concurrent partnership to, Promotion of condom usage to care (Use of Antiretroviral).

The above stated brings to the fore what EE is all about and how it is used and what it entails. In addition to this, Kincaid (2002); Singhal and Rogers (2003) cited in McKee, Bertrand and Benton (2004) say that EE has appeal and is powerful for three main reasons. First they say by nature we are story tellers and prefer narrative logic to didactic messages. Second, entertainment is pleasurable as people like the flow that entertainment takes. Third, EE appeals to the emotions of the audience and creates a frame of reference between them and the characters with which they identify with. Another position states that EE hinges of the fact that people all over the world are greatly exposed to entertainment media and with the heavy consumption of this and the messages suggest that the media will be a veritable tool to persuade people to think through, feel and behave in certain ways<sup>8</sup>. Also EE listeners have been found to be more likely to discuss HIV prevention (VCT) in personal groups especially if a member of such groups was also following (Mohammed, 2001). All of these imply that the EE strategy employed in the Intersexions series to engage in health communication about HIV/AIDS prevention is a well placed approach.

## **VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING & TESTING**

As the epidemic increases strategies to combat HIV/AIDS must be inclusive of not just the prevention but availability of a full range of HIV related services. The United Nations (UN) guidance on human rights and HIV/AIDS highlights the significance of establishing and promoting support for the effective prevention, treatment and care that is related to HIV/AIDS (United Nations 1998). A Policy on HIV Testing released by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV & AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2004 states, Without effective HIV prevention, the number of people who require HIV treatment will

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org/ipm/index.php/32-entertainment-education>

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increase and VCT is one of the interventions that play a key role in both prevention and treatment. According to Birdsall, Hajjiannis, Nkosi and parker (2004),

Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) is a central component of the South African government's strategy to prevent the spread of HIV and to provide care and support to those living with HIV/AIDS. Government commitment to expanding access to VCT for people across the country creates a policy framework for increased uptake of VCT services in South Africa. The scope of the challenge in scaling up VCT – both in terms of human resources and physical infrastructure, and in raising awareness and changing attitudes – is considerable. Understanding popular attitudes to VCT – including misconceptions and fears about the process – is important if communication and advocacy campaigns are to be effective in encouraging people to test.

According to Masuku, (2002) the deputy director of counselling programmes, “R71 million has been set aside to expand VCT services countrywide over the next three years and the training of counsellors has already started<sup>9</sup>”. The voluntary counselling and testing manual module 5 explain that VCT is made up of three key stages which are pre-test counselling, the HIV test, and post-test counselling. The pre- test counselling is a session where a counsellor assesses the risk behaviour trends of client and advice as necessary. At this point, the client is told in detail what either a positive or negative result entails and how to cope with the outcomes of the test<sup>10</sup>. It is on this basis that the client decides on whether to go for HIV testing or not, this is solely a voluntary decision. The next stage is the HIV test; this is when the client is tested to know their HIV status.

Once the results are received the client then goes into the post test counselling stage with his/her consent; if the diagnosis received shows that the patient is HIV negative, the counsellor

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hst.org.za/news/search-voluntary-hiv-testing-and-counselling>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.polity.org.za/article/the-vct-experience-the-psychology-of-hiv-testing-in-sub-saharan-africa-2011-02-28>

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will educate the client on the benefits of a healthy life style that will maintain that status. On the other hand if the diagnosis is positive, the counselling session will concentrate on ensuring that a suitable environment is established to receive the information and support systems that will help the client adapt and adjust to the diagnosis.

Communication has a key role to play in creating awareness, promoting and demand for support services like VCT and making available quality service delivery when people avail themselves or seek after these services. (McKee, Bertrand and Benton 2004).

VCT has international acceptance as a valuable and key strategy in HIV/AIDS prevention and care as well. It has been discovered to be an economical strategy for enabling behaviour change (Forsythe et al, 2002, De cock, Marum & Mbori-Ngacha 2003). VCT has been integrated into health facilities as a free service run by NGOs. By undergoing VCT people want to ascertain their HIV status and it helps individuals make a decision of whether to get tested or not. Having established these, it is needful to outline the benefits of VCT. The benefits of VCT as presented by Makwaya and Badru (2001), as cited McKee, Bertrand and Benton (2004), are divide into three groups namely benefits of VCT for individuals, for partners and for the community.

For individuals, VCT:

- Empowers uninfected people to protect themselves from HIV.
- Assists infected people to live and have a positive life as well as protect other from HIV.
- Helps a positive person to take action that will prolong the start of AIDS.

For couples and partners, VCT:

- Assists them in planning for future undertakings such as marriage, relationships, pregnancy and even the future of the children.
- Enhances fidelity among the couples of partners.
- Motivates individuals to avoid infecting partners.

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For the community, VCT:

- Helps to change the way people perceive HIV and AIDS.
- Reduces stigma and promotes the development of care and support services.
- Reduces new cases of HIV and further transmission.
- Facilitates the use of anti-retroviral drugs for those who test positive.
- Creates a link to treatment and other care and support facilities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research study adopts the Inductive paradigm in qualitative research. As explained in Bulmer and Warwick (1983:15) Ward (2003), Qualitative surveys may, in fact, be large scale as well as small scale but in general, this approach involves limited size, deliberate, selective sampling techniques. The method is thus subjective and rational in the sense of being directly focused on a specific population or issue. The research design is a reception analysis of responses to Intersexions episode 13 and how the messages influenced them to going for VCT. The rationale for this is that reception analysis helps to establish a better understanding of an audience and how they relate with broadcast messages Kristin C.Morgan (2002). It also focuses on the way audience an audience or individual make meaning of media messages. The study made use of reception-analysis which focuses on how an audience or individual make meaning of messages sent across a medium. It relates with the opinion that audiences are active participants and therefore able to make meaning of messages and texts.

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample population for the study; this was on the basis that the sample had to be specifically audience/participants on the Intersexions facebook page that commented on episode 13. The data was analysed by the use of NVivo qualitative data analyses package, the responses elicited themes for the thematic analysis by

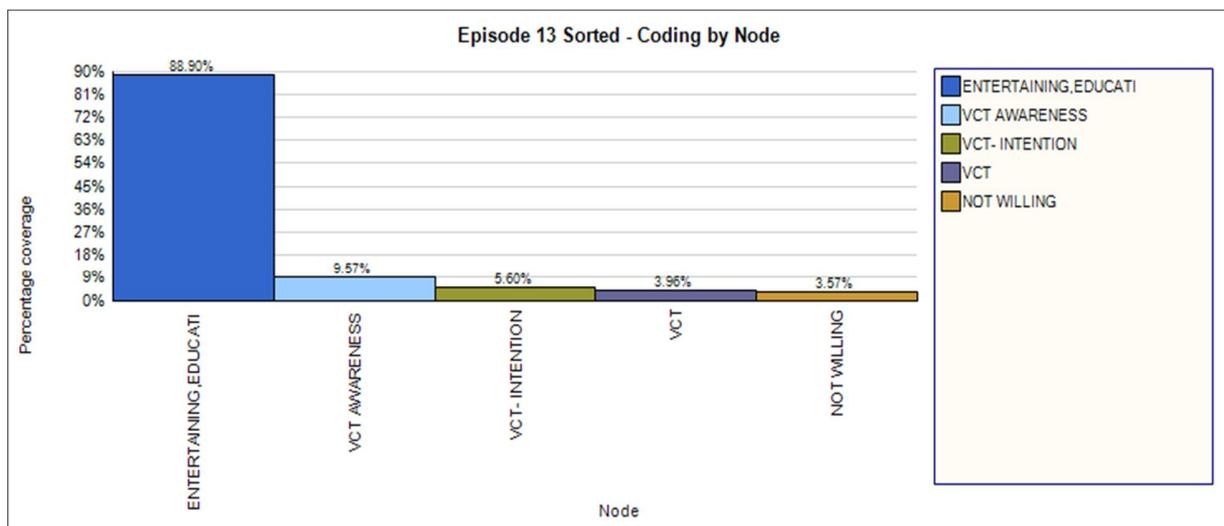
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which the data sets were classified into. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research practice which includes looking through data to identify any patterns that are recurrent. “A theme is a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings and usually emerges through the inductive analytic process which characterises the qualitative paradigm”<sup>11</sup>.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This section presents findings of the study and analyses them according to the created themes. The table below presents the themes from the data with relevant percentages which forms the basis for further discussion.

Table 1



The Five Broad themes created from the data set are namely: Entertainment, Educative and

<sup>11</sup> <http://subvista.wordpress.com/2010/03/25/new/>

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Interactive, VCT Awareness, VCT Intention, VCT and not willing.

The above data is derived from a total of 139 respondents/participants that were drawn from the Intersexions facebook page on episode 13; they data appear in descending order from the theme with the highest responses to the theme with the lowest.

**Entertaining, Educative and interactive**

This theme consists of data that relates to participants comments that has to do with the episode been entertaining and educative and the Interactive part stems from the various questions that Intersexions asked giving the platform for interaction. The graph above shows that most participants found it to be an educative, entertaining and Interactive program on the issues of VCT.

Nakai Tatenda

Great episode, i must say, very educative

05 January at 08:11

This comment establishes that it was educative as presented by this participant even though it is not stated in what aspect; it can be assumed that the episode was educative.

Siphokazi Ruth Menze

Its alwys good 2 b shwn wat da results wll be of da choices we make,gr8 episode

05 January at 10:29

This comment shows that it was educative as it presented to the audience the result or consequences of what choices they make.

Skosana Thobile Portia

Great episode true...ystrday ws an eye opener 4 us.

05 January at 15:47

This is another comment that further establishes that the episode was educative and an eye opener in the area of HIV and VCT.

Thando Makhubedu

say BIG UPS SABC1 for InterSEXions, this is trully money well spent considering the tight budget you guyz are running on... If next season you dont have enough budget i know a soapie that starts at 8pm mid week, you can go trim... Job Well Done Curious Pictures, Johns Hopkins Health & Education SA,USAID producers Karima, Mmaphuti etc. keep writin' U Guyz Rok!!!

05 January at 14:16

This comment represents how the participants viewed the efforts of the providers of Intersexion this shows that it had positive effect on the audience.

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Thandokazi Mamusa Siyepu  
Very interesting and educational  
05 January at 09:04

Tshepo Makunyane  
It seems like ur viewers like da kinky staff. The episode was not boring, but very enlightening especially 2 house wives.  
07 January at 06:34  
This comment presents that the episode was not only entertaining but enlightening as well.

**InterSEXions**

How many times have you been properly in love?  
09 January at 13:42  
This is a question put forward by Intersexions on another aspect which is the issue of Love.

Cebisa Bogale  
What does properly luv mean people?  
09 January at 14:04

Dintle Sharon Khosi  
Twice nd dis tym awnd m holdin on nd neva lettin go even if it means fytin a losin battle  
09 January at 14:00

Katlego J Kenosi  
Once with my current man,i neva knew wat love is til i found him..it is realy workn out  
09 January at 21:40

Kokky Molefe-Graham  
Once, and m nt sho it wil hapn again  
09 January at 14:40

Les Yadayada Moching  
Maybe im properly in lve wit Facebook. It gets more of my attention than anythn else....FACT  
09 January at 14:

The above show the pattern of comments on the issue of love; as earlier explained, the Interactive angle was drawn from other data that did not relate to VCT but had response patterns that were relevant because they are responses to questions that were asked by Intersexions and making it interactive. Therefore, it can be said that Intersexions was entertaining, educating, interactive , enlightening and therefore engaged in participatory communication which is one way of giving the people a voice in the decision of their own

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lives and ensuring that communication is not a one way process.

**VCT AWARENESS**

This theme forms a key part of this study as it enables us to see how awareness for VCT can be achieved through EE and Social media. Going by the ranking of the data on the graph shows the second highest is VCT awareness, this means that the entertainment, education and interaction creating awareness of VCT, owing to the fact that the data show that this theme ranks next to entertaining, educative and interactive.

The theme was created on the basis of data that related to VCT, the rationale for this is that, the mere fact that a participant discussed on VCT, whether in the positive or negative light, it can be said that the participants is aware of VCT. Also the data shows that EE if interactive can lead to awareness; this can be seen in the questions asked by Intersexions on VCT and love and the responses.

**VCT INTENTION**

This ranks third in the graph above and this theme comprises of participant who have the intention to go for VCT after been aware of it. e.g

Brian Nkatlo

Will probably go ka march and im not looking forward to it  
10 January at 15:01

Mpho Mabaso

thnkng of doing mine today.  
10 January at 12:17

Martha Masehela

Going this week  
10 January at 12:26

The above present similar comments of three participants, showing how the episode made them to make intent to go for VCT. In other words, some participants were stimulated to go for VCT and some were not excited about going.

This stage in relation to social learning theory is called cognition, the audience have been entertained and educated and made aware of VCT, they had seen role models in the actors who went for VCT and next is this stage where the individual makes a personal assessment of themselves of whether they can go for VCT and that's where the theme "Intention" can be placed. The above comments show that they participant has engaged in this process of personal assessment as to whether they can avail themselves for VCT before making such comments. The

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fear appeal in the episode comes to play here as it makes the individual think and internalize what has been learnt about not going for VCT. A look at the data shows that the number of those intending to go for VCT (5.60%) is higher than those who actually went for VCT (3.96%). This goes contrary to the aim of most interventions which will be for people to go for VCT and not just be willing or not willing to go (3.57%). This established that awareness can create consciousness amongst people but does not necessarily make for behaviour change.

### **VCT**

This theme comprises of those who actually went for VCT. This is the self efficacy process, the audience after having the intention to go for VCT will either go or not. At this point if the fear appeal in the episode is high; there is tendency that most of the audience will go for VCT. The data shows that the fear appeal in the episode was low and therefore can explain the reason or the low number in participants that went for VCT.

Bigshott Beat

I don resolute bt i did on friday. Hala

10 January at 11:53

This participant is responding to a question from Intersexions on who made resolutions to go for VCT after watching the episode. This participant does not make resolutions but went for VCT.

Manqoba Jovla Nkomo

I m proud 2 say m 4rm the last week thusday n m proudly negetive n no mre fooling arnd atleast 4 nw

10 January at 12:25

This comment shows that the participant after the episode went for VCT is proud to be negative and engage in healthy life style for now. This also presents another angle to this, this show that the effect of health communication interventions can be temporary and lose effect over time. Therefore it is imperative that producers of interventions should look into the issue of giving a longer or permanent effect to the positive results achieved. Another angle worthy of note is the area of stigma. The above participant is happy to be negative and willing to change but would that have been the same if tested positive? Therefore, some people might be afraid for the fear of stigma and this should also be considered when packaging an intervention for HIV/AIDS (VCT).

Nwabisa Vutha

I also wana knw if thz a hme Hiv test.Jst cme 4rm an Hiv test nd m clean.

10 January at 11:58

This comment shows that some participants were actually stimulated to go for VCT and are ready to keep up with this. This participant represents one of the people who after the episode decide to engage in

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behaviour change.

Tshepang Nyathela  
Gt maslf testd last friday!  
10 January at 11:53

The above comments shown that behaviour change was recorded as a result of the episode as it was able to get people to avail themselves for VCT for the first time and even agree to continue with it and lead healthy lives after been tested.

**NOT WILLING**

Gugu Mahlangu  
not me.  
10 January at 11:44  
This participant is not willing to go for VCT and blunt about it.

Lebo Romano  
ol waaaaaaaat nah hai n0t 4 dis gal, ill test at da age of 50 nt nw nje haikh0na g0t better thngs 2do y0h lol kidding i do want2get testd mara nghlala ngijika e gatini laka d0kotela lol  
10 January at 12:25  
This participant is not willing and makes a joke about it; while some take VCT serious others do not and don't see it as necessary.

Siyasanda Juju Mantshule  
My friend khanya did..and im so not going to i dnt have the heart to see my results!  
10 January at 11:52  
This participant is not willing as a result of fear of what the outcome of VCT might be.

lou Mathatho  
me 4 da 1st tym l0l kynda scrd th0. .bt i dnt rly hav 2 hav 1  
10 January at 11:4  
This participant is also afraid as the former and does not see VCT as needful and not willing to go.

Zikhona Ndzakayi  
So proud of all of u. (if yol telin da truth) Wish had da same amount of courage.  
10 January at 18:04  
This participant is also scared and wishes to have the same courage as those who went for VCT.

The above shows that fear could lead people not to engage in VCT and also militate against behaviour change. It can be said that the fear induced in the messages could be the reason why some participant fall into this group considering that this has the highest data. This also shows that awareness of VCT cannot be said to be a good reason why a person would go for VCT. This could be as a result of the low fear appeal used in the episode which made some people create reasons to console themselves after the cognitive and self efficacy processes. Also this can be

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said to be the negative effect of the fear appeal, it makes some people scared and they create some form of resistance to the anticipated change and not willing to go for VCT. Even though the fear appeal in the episode was low and could be a result for the unwillingness of people. This gives credence to Green and Witte (2006) position about fear that the stronger the fear or threat appeal the greater the behaviour change.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was able to establish that EE and social media can be used to create awareness of VCT; this is on the basis that EE education and the interactive nature of social media can create a platform for behaviour change communication. Furthermore, they are veritable tools in the area of public health communication owing to the increase in the take up and acceptance of social media globally by people of all ages. Their strength lies in their ability to entertain, educate and the latter been social media enabling an interactive platform which could enable effective communication.

The social learning theory (role modelling) which establishes the basis for EE can be of greater effect on behaviour change if used with minimal but not low fear appeal messages. The rationale for this is that high fear appeals might have the tendency to get the individual to be scared than actually engage in behaviour change but minimal use of fear appeal can actually get the individual to engage in behaviour change or a desired action which in the case of this study is VCT.

In addition to this there is no relationship between awareness and behaviour change. EE and social media are efficient approaches towards the advancement of HIV/AIDS awareness, as the latter if well designed can be used in capturing the attention of the audience as Intersexions did, educate them and use the interactive platform created by social media as a feedback tool. The findings presented that Intersexions was able to stimulate behaviour change as participants after watching the episode decided to go for VCT.

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