Social media as marketing tool for small, medium and micro enterprises in Gauteng

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PREFACE

This mini-dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the North-West University. The subject: Research project (MBAC 873). The research described herein was conducted under the supervision of Dr H.M. Lotz, Senior Lecturer, NWU Business School, Potchefstroom campus.

This dissertation contains 25713 words.

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ABSTRACT AND KEY TERMS

People use social media on the World Wide Web (WWW) to share information and to express their opinions and share their different interests. Social media has changed the world of communication and it is evident that social media differs from the printed media as it can reach more people across all spheres in the world, regardless of country of origin, race and language. Through social media, everybody can connect with each other.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises in Gauteng. There are different social media platforms that can be applied in enterprises. The field of the study is marketing and is also be linked to the field of entrepreneurship.

When social media are applied as an effective marketing tool, it helps to create/ build awareness and reach new customers. It can also increase customer satisfaction as it can launch new products, increase its profits, stimulate demands, generates sales lead and can strengthen customer relationships that is very important in any business. It can also increase overall brand reputation.

The study consists of two parts namely a literature review and an empirical research project. The research design is a quantitative design. The research instrument is an email questionnaire that was distributed to 59 SMMEs in Gauteng. The results from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of SMMEs found social media to be effective to market their business and add value to their business and increase their products, services as well as expanding their customer base. Social media is also an effective tool to combat competitiveness in the market. Some of the most important keywords are:

Keywords: SMMEs, social media, social media platforms, social networking sites, marketing, Facebook, digital, e-marketing, consumer behaviour.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SEDA:	The Small Enterprise Development Agency
SMM:	Social media marketing
SMMEs	Small, medium and micro enterprises
SNSs:	Social online networking site

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CHAPTER 1

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is the collective of effective web-based technologies that can disseminate information in such a way and at such speed that it can be of value to various customers of any business. It is a low-cost resource that can be applied by anyone, linking technology with social connections (Si, 2016:2). In this way, social media can decrease cost by decreasing staff time, while increasing the probability of revenue creation, allowing businesses to share their skills and information, and help clients (Si, 2016:2).

Small, medium and micro enterprises can range from medium-sized enterprises (established traditional family businesses) and / or informal micro-enterprises (street trading enterprises, backyard services and manufacturing or even home-based enterprises) (SEDA, 2016:3). SMMEs play an important role in the creation of jobs, the reduction of poverty and the provision of employment to stimulate the country's economic growth (Oji, Gervase & Haydam, 2017:1). SMMEs experience many challenges (problematical access to funding, lack of training or education and insufficient entrepreneurial skills) that influence their business survival negatively (Oji *et al*., 2017:1). These challenges emphasise the need for marketing strategies such as those available through social media.

Social media as a platform is one of the most effective ways to reach potential customers as it is an effective tool to interact socially. Its use has increased so fast that one cannot ignore this trend (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2018:322). Businesses are recognising that social media can be a marketing and promotion opportunity that connects the company directly with potential customers, thereby transcending the middleman (Si, 2016:1).

This computer-mediated technology is an increasing trend that challenges businesses, users, or individuals to interact socially with one another and that can be applied in the market as well, for example SMMEs in Gauteng. It differs from the printed media as it is a web-based designing tool to enhance intercommunication and distribute information in a direct way and to interact with others. There are different types of social media that will be discussed.

This introductory chapter presents the nature and the remit of the study. It specifically aims to:

- Explain the problem on which the study is based as well as provide a reason for undertaking the study;

- present the primary and secondary objectives of the study;
- describe the scope of the study;
- the research question of the study;
- provide a summary of the research methodology used in this study;
- present the limitation of the study and
- briefly the layout of the study

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The digital space of the WWW (World Wide Web) and social media has exploded leading to a change of the world of communication. This has a significant impact on the operations of small and medium sized businesses. The word 'social' usually refers to a community of individuals in a specific environment that interact with one another. The print media can no longer serve as the only dialogue method to ensure any employee engagement, whether between individuals or businesses.

In South Africa there appears to be a lack of social media strategies to support the growth of SMMEs that accentuates the need for further research. (Oji *et al*., 2017:2). In view of this problem statement, the research objectives can now be determined for this study.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following primary and secondary objectives were set for the current study.

1.3.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises in Gauteng.

1.3.2 Secondary objective

The following secondary objectives were devised to address the primary objective:

- To define small, medium and micro sized enterprises;
- to obtain insight into the use of social media as a marketing tool by means of a literature study;
- to identify the various social media platforms that are available to small, medium and micro enterprises;
- to empirically assess the use (or potential use) of social media platforms for small, medium and micro enterprises and
- to provide recommendations on how to use social media as marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of the study is "…how can social media be applied as marketing tool for small, medium and micro-enterprises in Gauteng?"

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This section describes the field of study, industry demarcation and the geographical demarcation.

1.5.1 Field of the study

The main field of this study falls within the subject of marketing. However, this study also has strong linkage with entrepreneurship since the study is conducted among small, medium and micro sized enterprises.

1.5.2 Industry demarcation

This study is not limited to a specific industry.

1.5.3 Geographical demarcation

The study was conducted within the Gauteng province.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is quantitative in nature and data collection was performed through a structured email questionnaire (Annexure A).

This study was conducted in two phases. Phase one consisted of a literature review and phase two of an empirical research project.

1.6.1 Literature review

The literature review for this study focused on the various aspects of the nature of social media as marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises in Gauteng.

The precipitous expansion of the WWW (World Wide Web) and social media has irreversibly changed the world of communication, creating a significant impact on the operations of small, medium and micro sized enterprises. The word 'social' usually refers to an interactive community of individuals in a specific environment. The print media can no longer serve as the only dialogue method or ensure any employee engagement, whether between individuals or organisations. Social media is free and is often used for socialising, for sharing information, opinions and interest, for shopping and for vacation planning (Khan, 2014:607). Social media are computer-mediated technologies via networks and virtual communities and are categorised into two types namely internet based and smartphone based (Khan, 2014:607).

One may argue that a rapid change of information technology (from e-mail to social media) emerged not only as a means of socialising, but as a marketing tool leading to growth of businesses (Asur In Narayan *et al*., 2012: 77-85; SME Goldstuck, 2015, SI, 2017:2). Looking at the figures of Statista, it stated that there were 2.46 billion social media users in 2017 and indicated that this number is ever growing. It is predicted that there will be more than three billion social media users in 2021 (Number of social media users worldwide from 2010-2021 (in billions)). In South Africa, social media accounts for around 40% of GDP (Goldstuck, 2012:46).

In 2012, The Boston Consulting Group published a report on the internet's economic impact as well as its ever-expanding growth in the G-20 countries. The developing G-20 countries had 800 million Internet users in 2012 (Boston Consulting Group, 2012:3). A Digital Participation Curve model has been developed that aims to forecast the growth of the Internet and to show how the digital world has expanded (Goldstuck, 2012:19-20). One simply cannot ignore the escalation of the effects of social media on the world and businesses. The social media collective has become a tool for businesses to target individuals as it has given businesses the opportunity to interact with customers without the need for physical meeting. They only need to network online (Hajli, 2014:387).

Studies in 2014-2015 determined that 74% of online adults used social media, especially Facebook (53.4%) (Experian: Marketing charts, 2015; Pew Research, 2014). The other social media platforms, such as Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google Plus+, MySpace, Yammer, Web 2.0 were shown to have as many as 100 million users during April 2015 (eBizMBA, 2015). People often spend nearly three hours daily on social platforms.

The literature review for the current study consisted mainly of an analysis of secondary sources (books, journal articles, unpublished theses and dissertations, papers and Internet sources such as websites). This literature review helped the researcher to acquire a thorough understanding of the question under investigation and facilitated the design of a suitable empirical research methodology that formed the basis of the questionnaire that was applied in the study.

1.6.2 Research process

For this study, the empirical research focuses on actual experience rather than from theory/ belief (Empirical research in the Social Sciences and Education). The research process involved the research design, the research instrument, method of data collection and the procedures for data analysis. Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the research process, which will only be presented briefly in this section (Chapter 1).

1.6.2.1 Research design

The study is quantitative in nature and more specifically descriptive research was used as the basis for the research design in this study. Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire via Survey Monkey. Quantitative information is gathered to collect quantifiable information that is usually analysed statistically and emphasizes numbers and figures – it is scientific in nature. (Daniel, 2016:194).

The descriptive method employed was the survey method. Descriptive research is when a researcher describes as situation, of subject/ behaviour/ phenomenon and is applied to answer questions of who, what, where and how relating to a research question or problem (Overview of descriptive research).

Three methods are usually applied in descriptive research namely observational method (reviewing and recording of the actions/ behaviours of a group in their natural environment- no interaction with the test subject); case study method (in-depth study of an individual/ small group of individuals – no interaction with test subjects). The last one is the survey method. This is applied when the researcher collects information by using surveys or interview (Overview of descriptive research). A cross-sectional representation was therefore obtained by making use of questionnaires to gather the required quantitative data.

1.6.2.2 Study population

The targeted population for this investigation included all small, medium and micro enterprises within the Gauteng province. This study focused on business owners and managers.

The population was selected by convenience sampling as an example of non-probability sampling (Mathers *et al*., 2009:6). This strategy allowed the researcher to access suitable participants (small, medium and micro enterprises in Gauteng).

1.6.2.3 Constructing the research instrument

The research instrument selected for this study was electronically distributed questionnaires emailed to SMME businesses (Annexure B). The questionnaires were divided into four sections namely:

Section A: Business information. The purpose of this section, consisting of three questions, was to determine the entrepreneurial climate within small, medium and micro enterprises (Table 1.1). Respondents were required to indicate their response on a 1-4 Likert scale (1 - almost never; 2- rarely; 3 - sometimes and 4 - almost always). These responses best described their position regarding a

specific issue (see chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).

Section B: Social media in your enterprise. The purpose of this section was to establish the nature of social media use in the enterprise and which and how social media types are applied. The Likert scale of 1-4 was also applied in this section, which consisted of 16 questions (see chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).

Section C: Social media and marketing in your enterprise. This section aimed to determine the marketing impact of social media in the business. The Likert scale of 1-4 was once more applied and this section consisted of 3 questions (see chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).
Section D: Social media and consumer behaviour. This section was concerned with how social media could influence consumer behaviour in the enterprise. Seven questions were included in this section.

1.6.2.4 Collection of data

The collection of data was conducted as follow:

The Pretoria Capital City Business Chamber agreed to assist the researcher by requesting their members, via email, to participate in the study (Annexure A). This email contained a live email link to the researcher. Those members who indicated a willingness to participate were able to click on the link to volunteer. When clicking on the link, the email opened a tick box that required the respondent to consent to take part in the study by ticking the box.

After giving consent by ticking the required box, the respondents were re-routed to the URL link to complete the informed consent form and then completed the online questionnaire via Survey Monkey (Annexure B).

After the last question in the survey was completed, the data was automatically added to the data set. It was therefore impossible to trace responses to individuals.

The Pretoria Capital City Business Chamber furthermore agreed to contact all the other City Business chambers in Gauteng to assist in the same manner to obtain as many responses as possible. The City Business Chamber sent out 1400 questionnaires, but only 59 participants completed the questionnaires. Collection of the data is presented in more detail in chapter 3, section 3.3.

1.6.2.5 Data analysis

The data that was collected was processed and statistically analysed by Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The processing of data involved coding of the information received from questionnaires followed by conversion of the data into useful

information such as frequency tables. The developed tables and trends were used to draw conclusions and put forward recommendations on the issue of social media. Mean values were used to measure the central tendency and the standard deviation to indicate the distribution of the data. The reliability of different variables was verified using Cronbach Alpha coefficients.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study attempts to contribute to the existing knowledge regarding social media marketing for entrepreneurs in the local environment. The following limitations regarding the study are acknowledged:

- The study is limited to the Gauteng province and is therefore not representative of all small, medium and micro enterprises in South Africa. As a result, it may be argued that this sample is representative of the population, however, this refers to individual users who use social media that are not SMMEs.
- The lack of response from the target population poses a real limitation to the study.
- This study may not address all aspects of social media as there are too many to discuss in detail.
- Social media is time-consuming as it might require a complete team at an enterprise to work on it daily to produce regular content and to be active in communicating with customers regarding their feedbacks as well as taking note of their complaints.
- It is difficult to measure the effects of social media in the enterprise as some social media platforms might be more effective than others.

The assumption in this study is that the sample of SMMEs that have been selected will be representative of the general population of SMMEs in Gauteng. The second assumption is that social media will continue to be of value to all users, regardless of which sector they come from. By distributing questionnaires, the researcher is assuming that the participants will answer the questions truthfully. This will be done by assuring participants of their voluntary participations, anonymity and confidentiality and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

A brief description of the main elements and focus of the study are set out below.

Chapter 1 Introduction and background to the study:

In this chapter, the topic of the study is introduced and background to the study is discussed as well as the problem statement, research objectives and the potential contribution of the study. The delimitations and assumptions of the study are addressed. The key terms are discussed to ensure an agreement in understanding in this regard.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter discusses the relevance, use and effectiveness of social media and in the market sector for SMMEs in Gauteng.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter addresses the description of the research design, population sample, data collection, data procedure, data collection instrument and data analysis. The rigour and validity of the study are discussed as well as the ethical considerations that were applied in the study.

Chapter 4: Results and findings

In this chapter, the results and findings obtained by means of the collection instrument, namely the electronic questionnaire, are interpreted. The electronic questionnaire collected the responses of the participants of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations emerging from the responses of the participants are presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

SMMES are viewed as the driving force of any economy and contribute to the creation of jobs and opportunities, increasing socio-economic status as well as reducing poverty (e.g. by counteracting lack of access to funding, poor education and little knowledge of enterprise management practices). If there are poor management practices, however, it can lead to SMMEs failing in their enterprise goals. A lack of marketing strategies and skills can also play a role in the fiasco (Oji *et al*., 2017:1-2).

In South Africa there appears to be a lack of social media strategies to support the growth of SMMEs (Oji *et al*.,2017:2). This accentuates the need for further research. On the other hand, if SMMEs can succeed in improving their marketing strategies, it can advance their potential as a small enterprise. According to SA Social Media Study 2017, users of social media were distributed as follows: Facebook (14 million), YouTube 8,75 million, Twitter 7.7 million and LinkedIn 5,5 million

(OMD, 2017:13).

The unprecedented expansion of the digital space of the WWW (World Wide Web) and social media referred to in the previous chapter has not only completely altered the world of communication but also significantly influenced the operations of small and medium sized enterprises. Social media can be employed free of cost and moreover for multiple purposes (socialising, sharing information, opinions, interest, shopping and for vacation planning) (Khan, 2014:607).

Social media may be defined as the collective of different electronic communication options including networking websites or blogs, where users can create online communities with the purpose to exchange information, messages, ideas, and other content (videos and/ or music) (Kurtz, 2015:100). It is increasingly being used for human activity in different environments in the wold and is beginning to be used for management and marketing (Tenkanen *et al.*, 2017:1). Social media can be any of the following types: online and mobile, word-of mouth forums, media- sharing sites, social bookmarking, microblogs, company sponsored discussion boards, chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer product/ service rating website, Internet discussion boards (Baruah, 2012:1-10 & Arca, 2012:12). Social media, therefore, present a virtually effortless way of promoting a brand or enterprise by means of interacting with or attracting the interest of current or prospective customers (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012:4451).

In fact, the rapid change of information technology (from e-mail to social media) may well have transpired not only by virtue of the social media collective offering a means of socialising, but also because it presented itself as a marketing tool leading to growth of enterprises (Asur In Narayan *et al*., 2012: 77-85; SME Goldstuck, 2015, SI, 2017:2).). In 2014 it was estimated that around 1.6 billion users used social media and that this would increase to 2.4 billion by 2018 (eMarketer, 2014). A more recent report by Qwerty Digital (2017:5) disclosed that out of South Africa's total population of 55,21 million people, 28,6 million (52%) people use the Internet in some format. Since 2016, the number has increased by 7%. 15 million users make use of social media platforms and 13 million users do so purely from mobile that increased from Jan 2016, with an additional 2 million (15%) new active social media users and 3 million (30%) new active social users on mobile (Qwerty Digital, 2017:5). The growing impact of social media on the world and enterprises is not to be ignored. The new trend speaks forcefully to the global tendency toward indirect personal contact.

Although there is abundant research on internet use, literature has indicated that few enterprises or entrepreneurs use social media platforms or have adopted fully integrated strategies to implement social media in order to gain visibility as well as viability and sustainability to market their products and services (Carson, 2016:1; Goldstuck, 2015:1; Kabue, 2013:2).

"Social media" is a term loosely used to describe two different phenomena namely social media networking sites or platforms and social media tools. Social media networking sites are used for users to interact and to exchange information, messages, ideas, and content such as music or videos. Social media tools enable users to communicate with one another online by using apps, blog postings, comments and video shares (Kurtz, 1015:100). Social media tools have changed the way marketers can communicate their brands – from mass messages to intimate conversations (Lamb *et al*, 2018:320).

The term "social media" typically refers, then, to the environment where social networking takes place (Paquette, 2013:3, Kuss, 2017:1). Business enterprises need to be aware of both the challenges and the opportunities presented by the social media environment. This has been a much-discussed topic for the past decade (e.g. Kaplan, 2010). Social media have been organised and classified in various ways according to the degree to which information about a business or other entity is disclosed, their ability to enable users to communicate and to change understanding ("richness"), their capacity to reduce the equivocality, or possible misinterpretations, of a message, etc. Table 2.1 provides one example.

Table 2.1: Social presence/ media richness 1

Social presence/ media richness				
		Low	Medium	High
Self-preservation/ self-closure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g. TouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft

Source: Kaplan (2010:62)

Business enterprises need to be familiar with the features, qualities and attributes of the various types of social media and be able to select one or more social media tools useful for their purposes or that suit them for their marketing purposes.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF SMMEs AND CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

SMMES are viewed as the driving force of an economy; it contributes to the creation of jobs and provide opportunities for entrepreneurs where social media can also play a role to enhance the growth of SMMEs (Oji *et al*.,2017:2). Before discussing the different social media platforms, it would be beneficial to obtain an overview of relevant social media theories.

2.2.1 Social cognitive theory

Bandura (in (Shabbir *et al*., 2016:1-2), describes social cognitive theory, which stresses the importance of observational learning, imitation and modelling. When people observe someone performing a behaviou, and the consequences of that behaviour, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide their own subsequent behaviours. If the consequences are positive, the likelihood of imitation is high - they also want to act in the same way and identify themselves with those people (Fulk, in Shabbir *et al*., 2016:1-2). The main proposal, then, is that portions of an individual's knowledge acquisition can be directly related to observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences and outside media influences. It is easy to see how this fit in with social media use.

2.2.2 Social presence theory

This theory formed the groundwork for many theories on the effects of new media. Any medium’s social effects, it posits, are principally caused by the degree of social presence (a communicator’s sense of

awareness of the presence of an interaction partner) which it affords to its users. This is important for the process by which man comes to know and think about other persons, their characteristics, qualities and inner states (Short et al., 1976). Thus, increased presence leads to a better person perception. This theory illustrates how the intimacy individuals share by applying technology can increase their own social value, because when people do not have great communication with people, their social value is diminished accordingly. The social media sites that are implicated here are email, text messages and chat groups (Shabbir *et al*., 2016:2).

2.2.3 Media richness theory

This theory, proposed by Daft and Lengel in 1986 (In Shabbir *et al*., 2016:1-2), is a framework used to describe a communication medium's ability to reproduce the information sent over it. Media richness theory or MRT states that all communication media vary in their ability to enable users to communicate and to change people's understanding of a matter. The degree of this ability is known as the medium's "richness." MRT places all communication media, including phone calls, video conferencing, and email, on a continuous scale based on their ability to adequately communicate a complex message. Media that can efficiently and economically overcome different thought structures and clarify ambiguous issues are considered to be richer whereas communications media that require more time to convey understanding are deemed less rich.

There are several social laws that play a role in social media and merit brief mention here (Shabbir *et al*., 2016:1-2). They are:

- Sarnoff's law (the more people interact on a network, the more the value of the network increases);
- Metcalf's law (when more modes are connected, it can improve the value of network);
- Reed's law (a mathematical explanation of how a network works and the power it has when people interconnect with one another.

The next section describes the different social media platforms that people use to connect with other people online.

2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND TOOLS

Social media platforms and tools are effective to enhance an enterprise's marketing strategies. There are many social media platforms and tools. Cavazza illustrated a Social Media Landscape of some of the platforms in Figure 2.2. Online social media platforms require that users become members by submitting their email address, creating a password and establishing a kind of profile (Kurtz, 2015:101). Social media tools refer to blog comments, tags, photo and video shares, apps and technology to enable people to make conversation (Kurtz, 2015:102).

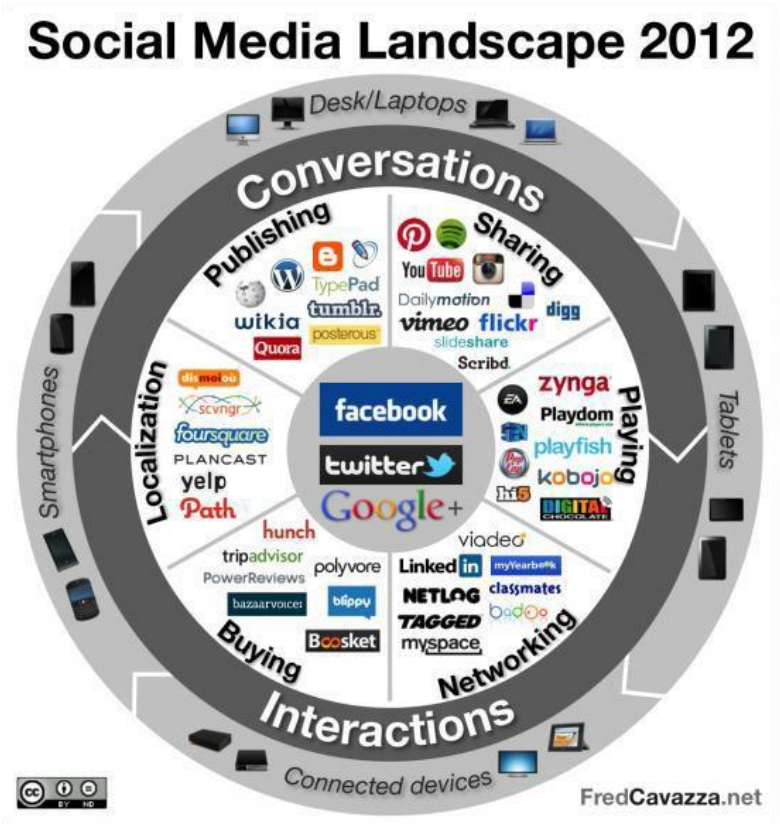


Figure 2.1: Social media landscape

2.3.1 Description and value of social media platforms for marketeers

2.3.2.1 Social networking sites

Social networking sites refer to websites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and Google+) where users can interact daily to share their ideas and post opinions on various topics, thereby expanding their circle of friends.

A total of 2.31 billion people worldwide uses social networking sites, representing 31 percent of the total global population (Kemp, 2015 in Hildebrand, 2017:5). The phenomenon originated in 1990's as the Bulletin Board System at Friendster. Several authors have emphasised that social networking is a vital tool today for enterprises to market themselves as it is a relatively cheap way of marketing the enterprise, services, or products. In South Africa, Oji *et al.* (2017:5) found that the advantages of social networking have not yet been fully applied or realised by companies, compared to other developed countries.

Currently, there appears to be an increase in research studies to determine the value of and to investigate the nature of social networking sites, but there is still a need for further research (Hildebrand, 2017:1). The next section discusses the different types of social media platforms and Table 2.2 illustrates some of the different types under social platform.

2.3.2.2 Bookmarking sites

An example of a bookmarking site is StumbleUpon. Pinterest is also a site linking bookmarking with social networking. StumbleUpon was used by over 40 million users but was shut down in 2018 and moved to Mix.com. It was an easy way to discover users' best photos, websites and videos (StumbleUpon, 2018:1).

2.3.2.3 Social news sites

Social news sites are sites where users can post items or links to outside articles and where they can vote which postings exhibit the most prominent display, such as Digg and Reddit.

2.3.2.4 Blogging sites, wikis and forums

Blogging sites, wikis and forums are the places where users post messages and share information that focus on specific favorite topics, such as travel sites and offer group support (Kurtz, 2015:102).

2.3.2.5 Microblogs

"Microblogs" is a term referring to sites where subscribers receive a continuous or steady stream of brief updates from any person (Twitter) (Kurtz, 2015:102).

2.3.2.6 Media sharing sites

Media sharing sites are websites that enable users to store and share their multimedia files (photos, videos, music) with others. The files may be selectively available via password or to the general public. A media sharing site can also be used to back up files.

2.3.2.7 Traditional marketing sites

There are several mobile sites for marketing. Social media marketing (SMM) is a form of marketing that applies various social media to market products/ services (Husain et al., 2016:1). The following methods are used:

2.3.2.8 Apps

"Apps" is the abbreviation of "applications", commodities that can either be downloaded or purchased. The concept is based on letting users (individuals as well as businesses) have access to a large variety of products/ services or sharing media/ video content. Apps are widely used to share or play games online or make appointments, make reservations e.g. at popular dining venues, or to buy online products e.g. Apple's online App store or Amazon (Kurtz, 2015:103-104).

Mobile apps (Table 2.2) are used by social media marketers such as Evernote, Hootsuite, GoToMeeting, Eventbrite, Feedly and Dropbox (Kurtz, 2015:104).

2.3.2.9 QR Codes

QR codes are two-dimensional barcodes that can be read by smartphones via their cameras. As soon as a user uses his/ her mobile phone, that code is shared, leading to a product being bought or a coupon being offered. In this way, QR Codes enable companies to connect with their customers (Kurtz, 2015:104).

2.3.2.10 Location-based social networking sites

Location-based global positioning system technology (GPS) is a local search and discovery service mobile app which provides search results for its users. The app can also provide personalised recommendations of places to go to near a user's current location, based on users' previous browsing history, purchases, or check-in history and it is a useful marketing tool for local businesses and sales promotions (Lamb *et al.*, 2018:333).

Table 2.2 illustrates social media platforms and tools.

Table 2.2: Social media platforms and tools 1

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES			
	DESCRIPTION	**VALUE FOR MARKETEERS**	**REFERENCES**
Facebook	Has more than 1.3 billion active users and became active for the public in 2009. In South Africa, 30% of the population use Facebook (14 million).	Users can communicate with other users, share pictures or news, or create pages to enhance their services or products such as enterprises, entertainment shows, or restaurants and keep customers informed. Users can 'like' a page or create 'friends'.	The history of social networking 2016. K aplan & Haenlein, 2010. Hildebrand, 2017. Oji, 2017.
Google+ (Google plus)	Google+ aims to replicate the way people interact offline with friends and office colleagues more closely than is the case with other social networking services	Is a marketing tool to enhance interactions offline with friends and office colleagues.	Rouse, Not dated.
LinkedIn	Users are encouraged to share their résumés and professional connections when they use. It is the world's largest professional networking site and had 300 million users by 2017. Professionals can *endorse* other professionals for a skill by just clicking the mouse over the profile.	LinkedIn is a useful tool that can lead users to more opportunities and jobs if the user *likes* other people's posting on LinkedIn and recommends users to look at other people's postings	Hildebrand, 2017
Twitter	Twitter (established in 2016) is an example of microblogging. In South Africa, the number of users increased from 7.7 million to 8 million in 2017	It is a marketing tool that can be applied to short-text discussion forums.	Tenkanen, 2017. Fin24tech, 2017.

BOOKMARKING SITES			
	DESCRIPTION	**VALUE FOR MARKETEERS**	**REFERENCES**
Pinterest	Pinterest is also a site linking bookmarking with social network	Is a marketing tool to enhance sharing activities, opinions and their interests	Kurtz, 2015.
StumbleUpon	StumbleUpon was used by over 40 million users but was shut down in 2018 and moved to Mix.com.	It was an easy way to discover users' best photos, websites and videos	StumbleUpon, 2018.
SOCIAL NEWS SITES			
Digg	Digg is a social networking website. To use Digg, users submit stories, and the Digg community votes on which ones they like the best. It differs from the friendship/relationship sites such as Facebook, Orkut, or LinkedIn,	Is a marketing tool of networking websites of user-submitted news stories over the Internet. as they are based on real-world acquaintances	Tang *et al.* 2011.
Reddit	Reddit is a website where users are not engaged in forming relationship with other users but where they can post news stories/ questions but that does not fulfil a socialising purpose. It is also free and does not rely on an email address or creating a profile page. The site is also anonymous, and users do not have to be concerned about their identity being known.	Marketing tool to enable users to post new stories/ questions like a forum.	Hildebrand, 2017.

BLOGGING SITES, WIKIS AND FORUMS			
	DESCRIPTION	**VALUE FOR MARKETEERS**	**REFERENCES**
Tumblr	Tumblr is a microblogging publishing platform and social network, frequently described as a 'forgotten' social network.	Is often used for marketing purposes and is begin indexed in search engines.	Anderson, 2015.
Wikipedia	Wikipedia was founded in January 2001 as a non-profit organization (Wikimedia Foundation. To increase Wikipedia's reliability, contributors are requested to add sources and references.	It is used to make contributions of objective facts but because anybody can make a contribution, it may have 'serious' errors.	Kaplan & Haenlein. 2010
Wordpress	WordPress was established in 2003 and is the largest self-hosted blogging tool in the world.	It is an open source project and is used for either homepage or a website, which requires a licensing fee. It is therefore a valuable digital marketing tool.	Fernandes & Vidyasagar, 2015.
MICROBLOGS			
	"Microblogs" is a term referring to sites where subscribers receive a continuous or steady stream of brief updates from any person (Twitter)	To provide brief updates from any person.	Kurtz, 2015.
MEDIA SHARING SITES			
Flickr	Flickr was established in 2004 and is one of the oldest social media platforms but was shut down in 2016.	Used as a marketing tool to share pictures.	Tenkanen, 2017.
Instagram	Instagram was established in 2010 and people who have smartphones with high-quality cameras make use of this social media platform. It is still widely used today.	Marketing tool to share pictures with other users.	Tenkanen, 2017.

MEDIA SHARING SITES *(cont…)*			
	DESCRIPTION	**VALUE FOR MARKETEERS**	**REFERENCES**
Pinterest	This is a very popular social networking site that provides virtual communities to communicate with one another	Is marketing tool for people to share their activities, as well as giving their opinions and sharing their interests	Kurtz, 2015.
Shutterfly	Shutterfly, Inc. is an American Internet-based company specializing in image publishing service. Shutterfly's flagship product is its photo book line. It makes use of a unique single-offer code to any users clicking on the advertisement	Provides personalised digital photography	Roberts, 2017.
Snapfish	Snapfish is a mobile and friendly website, where users can create visual material, and adding embellishments to their products and allows free form design and text overlay.	Marketing tool to import photos from almost everywhere e.g. Computer, Flickr, Instagram and Facebook	The new Snapfish is here, not dated.
TRADITIONAL MARKETING SITES			
Newspaper advertisements	Marketers who use this medium make use of the printed word distributed on paper.	Is a marketing tool to advertise products and / or services	
Pamphlets	Pamphlets make use of printed words and / or figures.	It is a marketing tool to distribute information, either by hand or by email.	
Word-of-mouth	Word-of mouth marketing relies on verbal marketing (transfer of information) from one person to another.		

MOBILE APPS			
	DESCRIPTION	**VALUE FOR MARKETEERS**	**REFERENCES**
Evernote	A virtual notepad for capturing ideas/notes at any given time or places	Keeps users up to date and is used on computers, notebooks and mobile devices	
Hootsuite	A dashboard to post, monitor and measure social media tool	To scheduling posts e.g., Twitter, Facebook and Google+ accounts.	
GoToMeeting	For letting users call in to meetings or connecting them via remotely shared presentations (audio and video on mobile phones)	When being outside an office/ home and not having wi-fi access	
Eventbrite	Used by event planners	to plan and monitor registrations and obtaining info from attendees at conferences or other events	
Feedly	A useful tool to aggregate users' blog subscriptions.	Marketing tool for users to read and share	
QR codes	QR codes are two-dimensional barcodes that can be read by smartphones via their cameras. As soon as a user uses his/ her mobile phone, that code is shared, leading to a product being bought or a coupon being offered.	In this way, QR Codes enable companies to connect with their customers	Lamb *et al* 2018.

LOCATION-BASED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES			
	DESCRIPTION	**VALUE FOR MARKETEERS**	**REFERENCES**
Location-based social networking sites (GPS)	Is a local search-and-discovery service mobile app which provides search results for its users.	The app can provide personalised recommendations of places to go to near a user's current location, based on users' previous browsing history, purchases, or check-in history. It is a useful marketing tool for local businesses and sales promotions	Lamb *et al.*, 2018.

2.4 DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM)

There is an important distinction to be made between social media marketing and traditional marketing. Traditional marketing (TV, cinema and radio) involves the controlling of content and messages that people receive whereas SMM engages the user interactively (Dibb *et al.*,2016:566; Lamb *et al.*, 2018:320). Social media plays a vital role in marketing, as it is a way for marketers to build good relationships with their customers, implement or introduce products/ services to their clients, launch products, boost sales and implement new markets. Consumers can be connected to restaurants, retailers and entertainment venues, and contact people. Social media marketing (SMM) aims to create positive awareness amongst consumers of the brands, goods and services offered (Kurtz, 2015:104).

Although the social media collective contributes significantly to integrated marketing communication, it is important to create a well-structured inclusive social media marketing plan.

2.4.1 Social media marketing plan

Social media marketing plans can differ from organisation to organisation. Every plan does, however, require certain basic elements (see Table 2.3) (Kurtz, 2015:110).

Table 2.3: Social media marketing plan 1

INFORMATION	GOAL
Executive summary	To explain the *who, what, when, where, how* and *why* of the plan.
Brief overview	Describing the overall strategy, market conditions, current position
Analysis of the competition	To investigate the competitors' presence in the social media and to establish their effectiveness
Body of the plan	Statement of the goals, strategies, budget, target audience, and expected returns. Includes methods to implement, monitor, measure, and managing the campaign

2.4.1.1 Goals of social media marketing plan

An effective social media marketing plan needs to execute the following goals:

- To create/ build brand awareness;
- to reach new customers;

- to strengthen relationships with current customers;
- to increase customer satisfaction;
- to launch new products;
- to stimulate demand;
- to generate sales lead;
- to integrate social media with other efforts e.g. public relations/ promotions;
- to acquire an existing business/ account and
- to manage a crisis (Kurtz, 2015:111-112 and Lamb *et al.,* 2018:).

2.4.1.2 Strategies

Businesses must decide which social media to use and how to connect and engage with the customer; which platforms will suit the business better, deliver the best content; who will participate on behalf of the company and how to let customers participate in conversations (Kurtz, 2015:114).

Strategies include creating the content of the plan, implementing, monitoring and managing the social media marketing plan.

2.4.2 Digital marketing

The digital era presents many challenges. Digital content marketing relies on r eal time conversations and interactions with consumers in building brand equity to drive positive, profitable customer action with a clearly defined target audience (Carpenter & Le Roux, n.d:151 and Dibb *et al.,* 2016:561; 566). Digital media come into play when information is used in the electronic media (computers, mobile devices, and other devices). Digital marketing has expanded tremendously due to the phenomenal growth of the Internet. In this way, consumers can access new markets by using inexpensive communication channels (Pride & Ferrell, 2017:214-215; Dibb *et al.*,2016:563). Digital marketing (also called e-marketing) engages certain elements.

2.4.2.1 Digital culture

Getting to know the consumers' digital culture entails the investigation of the environments where consumers are situated (Stephen, 2015:4-5). It is necessary to study consumers' identities and self- concept.

2.4.2.2 Advertising

Advertising relies on information on how consumers respond to various aspects of digital advertisements (ads) (Stephen, 2015:5-6), whether there are positive/ negative reactions.

2.4.2.3 Impact of digital marketing

There are various kinds of impact on consumer behaviour, such as environmental-integral (how marketing influences behaviour environments) and environment-incidental (how digital environments

influence people in those environment) (Stephen, 2015:7). Digital marketing provides additional methods for marketing communications, provide more channels and provides access to customers wherever they are and whenever they want to access information (Dibb *et al.*,2016:563).

2.4.2.4 Mobile settings

It is necessary to consider the impact of mobile settings as people rely on mobile technology more frequently, especially when shopping (Stephen, 2015:7).

2.4.2.5 Online Word-Of-Mouth reports and reviews

Customers rely on socially sourced online information, when it comes to perceptions of reviews and where language plays a vital role in sales (Stephen, 2015:8-10).

2.4.3 E-marketing strategy

When implementing e-marketing strategies, there are four considerations.

2.4.3.1 Product considerations

Marketers need to be aware of and anticipate consumer needs and preferences to meet the needs. They can use online advertising campaigns and contests to enhance better products (Pride & Ferrell, 2017:227).

2.4.3.2 Pricing considerations

Marketers can facilitate prices as well as nonprice competition. This is made easier by digital marketing (Internet) as prices can be quickly accessed (Pride & Ferrell, 2017-2018).

2.4.3.3 Distribution considerations

This relates to how to make products available at the right time, the right place and in the right quantities. The Internet has made the ability to process orders electronically much easier as it is so effective, thereby reducing the costs, as well as time for deliveries (e.g. Amazon) (Pride & Ferrell, 2017:228).

2.4.3.4 Promotion considerations

By applying digital marketing, consumers can approach promotions in a new way as online advertising included the use of texts, videos and photographs (Pride & Ferrell, 2017:229).

2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

When social media marketing is applied effectively, it can contribute to consumer behaviour especially if consumers use a combination of search engines and social media when making purchases of products. In this way, consumers obtain information about new goods and services, conduct research and share information and can make final decisions when making purchases (Kurtz, 2015:107-108; Dibb *et al.*,2016:564 and Lamb *et al.*, 2018:327). Social media can therefore affect consumers' behaviour in

industries. When online consumers can join groups in different segments (based on how they use digital media), it will help marketers to better understand the online market and how to proceed (Pride & Ferrell, 2017:225).

Non-profit organisations also use social media pertaining to individuals and their organisation. This is done to generate funding, to encourage action, to promote functions, to educate users about a situation of cause and to encourage partnerships with other organisations. (Kurtz, 2015:109- 110).

2.5 LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Social media marketers must consider the legal and ethical considerations of social media. Most companies follow formal policies in the workplace having the following aims:

- to be consistent with the company's organisational culture, value and ethics;
- enlightening the employees on steps to be taken and what to avoid;
- covering the main points, but it needs to be short and brief;
- be linked to other company policies and guidelines (Kurtz, 2015:120-121).

These considerations rely on honesty and respecting privacy (protecting personal information), and accountability. Online fraud as well as hacking present serious threats to customers and companies are constantly developing strategies to combat these problems (Pride & Ferrell, 2017231-232). Another legal and ethical consideration is the matter of intellectual property (copyright and illicit e-commerce) and illegal activity (Pride & Ferrell, 2017:232).

2.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 2 provided information to the study. The importance of SMMEs and challenges in South Africa were discussed and the different social media platforms and tools were described as well as digital and social media marketing, social media and online consumer behaviour. The different social media platforms indicated how it could be applied as marketing strategy to enhance an enterprise' s business in the market. The chapter concluded with a summary.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN

This section describes the overall research design, population sample, data collection and data analysis, assessing and demonstrating the rigour and quality of the research design as well as the ethical considerations that were upheld.

The researcher followed a quantitative research design, as this design allows for the investigation of human behaviour on a large-scale pattern (Bryman *et al*., 2014:51-53). The overall research design is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

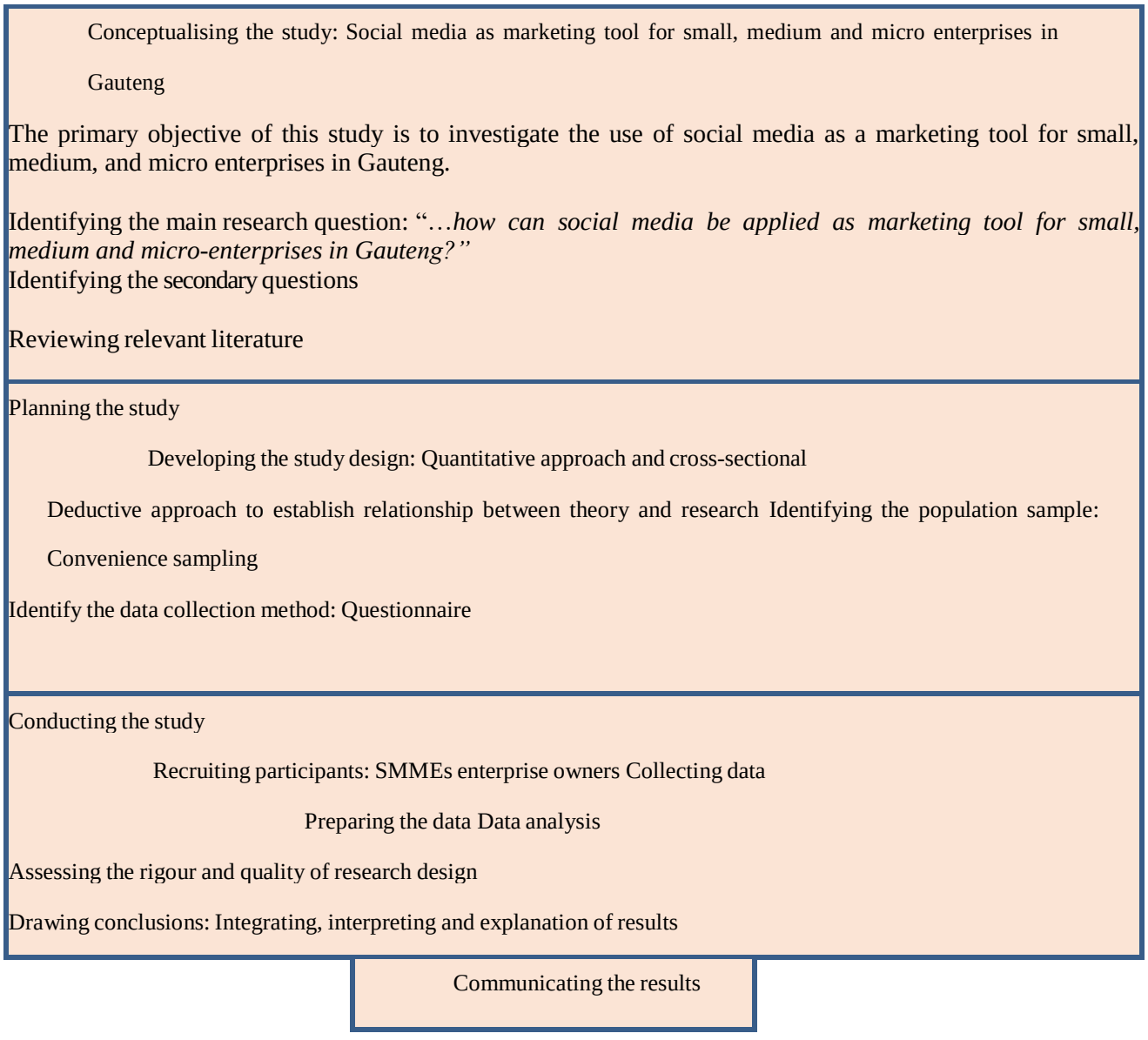


Figure 3.1: Overall research design 1

A research design refers to the steps during the process that a researcher follows to conduct a study and must indicate which worldview he/ she intends to follow. A research design is a blueprint of actions that a researcher will undertake to answer the research question, namely "*…how can social media be applied as marketing tool for small, medium and micro-enterprises in Gauteng?".* The research design includes the research method, the sampling process, data collection and data analysis methods.

The current study followed a cross-sectional design because this allowed the researcher to collect data on more than one case at a single point in time, as the aim was to collect quantifiable data about two or more variables and aim to detect patterns of association (Bryman *et al*., 2014:106- 107). In this way, the variables could not be manipulated. The cross-sectional design was executed by means of distributing questionnaires to SMMEs in Gauteng. The external validity will be strong as the researcher selected the participants randomly from a convenient total sample (Bryman *et al*., 2014:107). All the procedures that were undertaken in this cross-sectional study will be explained in detail.

Researchers have interpreted a research design as being the process where variables are selected to be measured after samples of participants are selected to reach the aim of the study and to analyse the results of a study. Researchers such as Leedy and Ormrod (2005:88) held the same opinion and viewed a research design as an overall structure that a researcher can apply to collect data and to analyse it.

By applying a quantitative research design, the researcher was able to ask predetermined questions, as features can be classified and statistical methods be applied to explain what has been investigated. The questions were contained in the instrument (questionnaires) that was used and the results have been analysed statistically to form interpretations (Neill, 2007). The quantitative method is useful to determine facts, theories and to demonstrate relationships between variables and predict certain outcomes to ensure objectivity, generalisability as well as reliability (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:94-97, Bryman *et al.*, 2011:31, De Vos *et al.*, 2011:96).

A quantitative research design emphasizes quantification in the data collection process and data analysis and adopts a deductive approach to establishing the relationship between theory and research. This was done by incorporating the positivist worldview as this approach is generally found in quantitative studies. With this approach, the researcher was able to base the study on the assumption of knowledge, causation, the observation of variables and the testing of theories (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:72, Vosloo, 2014:301). The quantitative approach views social reality as an external objective study (Bryman *et al*., 2011:31).

Following a quantitative research design allowed the researcher to explain the nature of the data derived from questionnaires (the research instrument) that were sent to randomly selected SMMEs in Gauteng. This approach is useful as a guide of good practice where the data could be collected objectively and systematically as a method to obtain structured data derived from a representative sample (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:31).

3.1 POPULATION/SAMPLING

Before discussing the unit of sampling, it is necessary to consider the purpose of sampling. The sampling process is not a simple process, as it is essential that the sample population should represent the whole population. A population is the universe of units from which the sample will be selected (Bryman *et al.*, 2011:170). It is impossible to study a whole population. A sample is the representative segment of population that is selected for the investigation and should reflect the characteristics of a target population that the researcher aims to study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007:281, Stangor, 2015:117). The target population likewise needs to be selected carefully and this can be done by specifying the characteristics to which the members should adhere. A researcher needs to decide if the sampling is conducted according to a non-probability or probability approach (Bryman 2011:170).

3.2.1 Defining the target population

The researcher applied a quantitative approach to interpret the findings in terms of general applicability to a part of the population of enterprises that possess certain characteristics, in this case randomly selected SMMEs in Gauteng, South Africa. The researcher contacted the Capital Business Chamber in Pretoria to send mailed questionnaires to 1400 participants from their database. Although this number might not be representative, only 59 emailed questionnaires were returned.

3.2.2 Characteristics of the target population

The SMMEs in Gauteng adhered to the following characteristics:

- Only enterprise owners/ managers were selected as respondents;
- participants had to be willing to participate in the study and
- the enterprise had to be situated in Gauteng.

3.2.3 Sample frame

For this study, a convenience sampling frame (an example of non-probability) was selected provided that the participants adhere to the characteristics listed above. The researcher was able to easily access the participants due to geographical proximity and willingness to participate in the study.

3.2.4 Sample method

The sample methods are the techniques that a researcher follows to draw a sample from a population

and the methods can be categorised as either probability sampling or non-probability sampling with convenience sampling as one sub-type (Mathers et al., 2009:6). The various methods are discussed below.

- Probability sampling (Sample selected using random selection). Five types of probability sampling can be identified, namely simple random sampling and random sampling (Barreiro & Albandoz, 2001:5), stratified sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007:79) systematic sampling (Barreiro & Albandoz, 2001:10) and cluster sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007:79).
- Non-probability sampling (sample selected not using random selection method). In this method, there are different types namely convenience sampling (most accessible participants can save time and costs) (Marshall, 1996:523, Quinlan, 2011:214), judgement sampling/ purposive sampling (participants may have certain reactions, express their opinions, agree/ disagree (Yang & Bananmah, 2013:5-6) and theoretical sampling (theory-driven samples) (Lynch, 2010).

Convenience sampling is discussed in detail in the ensuing section.

3.2.5 Convenience sampling

The sample strategy applied for this study was convenience sampling as an example of non-probability sampling, as it allowed the researcher to easily access the participants, namely small, medium and micro enterprises in the Gauteng area of South Africa. The questionnaires were distributed electronically and emailed back to the researcher after they had been completed. By applying the convenience sampling method, the researcher saved time and costs.

3.2.6 Selecting a sample size

The sample size relies on factors such as time and cost, the need for precision and other considerations (Bryman et al., 2011:176). As stated before, the researcher distributed 1400 questionnaires but only received 59 questionnaires that comprised 59 enterprises in the Gauteng area of South Africa. The different sectorial distribution reflected enterprises in the following areas: personal, social and community.

3.2.7 Unit of analysis

The information about the unit of analysis will be in the public domain, in this case selected SMMEs in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The randomly selected SMMEs came from manufacturing, services, community, marketing, tourism trade and BEE sectors. The ease of access to the population/ sample group depended on various factors as mentioned previously under target population (section 3.3.2):

- The participants had to be situated in Gauteng;
- the participants had to be willing to take part in the study after reading the cover letter on the email that was sent out;

- the participants had to be willing to send the questionnaires back to the researcher.

The reason for including the unit of analysis is because it enabled the researcher to answer the research question, namely "…*how can social media be applied as marketing tool for small, medium and micro-enterprises in Gauteng?"*

The researcher aimed to determine if social media is a successful tool for SMMEs to market their products/services and improve consumer awareness between the enterprise and customers as well as to improve their relationship. The primary objective of the study is to investigate the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises in Gauteng.

It was not feasible to rely on another unit of analysis because large datasets relating to social media statistics and detail on enterprises are confidential (such as those held by agencies of the state or private institutions). It was therefore not possible to obtain that information. Subscriptions are required to obtain the statistical information, and such subscriptions are very expensive.

3.3 MATERIAL AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The primary data collection instrument for this study was electronically distributed questionnaires emailed to SMME businesses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:3). The questionnaire that was distributed is included as Appendix C.

3.3.1 Format and design of the data collection instrument

Questionnaires are among the principle methods for collecting data in a survey research in order to answer the research question, namely "…how can social media be applied as marketing tool for small, medium and micro-enterprises in Gauteng?" The questionnaire was formatted and designed in such a manner that it adhered to certain principles to achieve the criteria of reliability and validity. Questionnaires involve a set of questions that the respondents are required to complete (Leedy & Ormrod, 2006:3).

3.3.2 Principles of the format and design of the data collection instrument

Before the questionnaire could be used, the researcher had to conduct a thorough literature study regarding research methodology to determine the aim and justification of the questionnaire. The researcher wanted to obtain accurate information of the participants' opinions on applying social media as marketing tool for their enterprise. A set of guidelines were established and followed.

- **Aim and justification for the use of a questionnaire**

The researcher aimed to obtain accurate information from a representative sample of the population, in this case, randomly selected enterprise owners of SMMEs in Gauteng and after selecting these participants, questionnaires were distributed to them. Questionnaires are widely used by researchers in

survey research (Leedy & Ormrod (2005:184-185).

- **Length of the questionnaire**

In compiling the questionnaire, the researcher endeavoured to keep it as short as possible because respondents are less likely to complete long surveys and might not return the questionnaires to the researcher. Therefore, a questionnaire is usually brief and contains only information that is relevant to the respondents as well as to the researcher. However, due to the complexity of social media, the researcher was not able to compile a brief questionnaire (De Vos *et al.,* 2011:193).

- **Instructions**

The written instructions on the questionnaire were clear and precise and the participants were requested to mark the appropriate boxes with a cross (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:190, De Vos *et al.,* 2011:191-192).

- **Language**

The researcher posed the questionnaire in a language that the respondents could understand, in this case, English. English is acknowledged to be the language of common understanding in the situation where there are diverse languages in enterprises (Mouton, 2001:102, Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:37-42).

- **Formulation of questions**

It is important to formulate the questions in such a manner that the goals of the study are achieved. The questions in the questionnaire consisted of 26 close-ended pre-determined questions where respondents could select one of the specific response choices. The questionnaires adhered to the following guidelines to ensure that participant could understand the questions. They are the following:

- keeping sentences specific and brief;
- avoiding negative questions;
- omitting possible leading questions enforcing a specific response;
- reflecting only one thought/ item in each question;
- presenting questions in general, non-threatening ways;
- letting the respondents understand the vocabulary, sentence order, and style;
- setting questions out in such a way as to be unambiguous and precise;
- ensuring that every question would be relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire; and
- avoiding abstract questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:54 and 110, De Vos *et al*., 2011:192):

- **Types of questions**

The questionnaire included four sections. Section A (3 questions) consisted of business information that aimed to provide background information on the SMMEs enterprises that participated in the study. Section B consisted of 13 questions pertaining to social media in the enterprise. Section C had 3

questions on social media and marketing in the enterprise. The questionnaire ended with 7 questions (Section D) on social media and consumer behaviour.

The categories applied the Likert scale, which provides an effective way to ascribe quantitative value to qualitative data so that it is useful for statistical analysis. With this method, a numerical value can be assigned to each potential choice and a mean figure for all the responses can be computed at the end of the evaluation or survey.

3.3.3 Design and administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaires were presented in the same format to all participants and had the same number of questions. Table 3.2 displays the different categories of the questionnaire.

Table 3.1: Categories of the questionnaire 1

Division of questions	Nature of category	Reasons for inclusion	Format of questionnaire
Section A: Business Information			
Question 1	What is the nature of your business?	To establish in which section of the workforce the business operates	Close-ended questions and the participants had to tick the appropriate box in the questionnaire
Question 2	How long have you been operating?	To establish the number of years the participant has been in the business	
Question 3	Do you have part-time or full-time employees?	To determine if the participant employs employees	
Section B: Social media in your enterprise			
Question 1	Do you regard social media to be valuable for your enterprise?	To enquire if social media has any value in the participant's enterprise	Close-ended questions and the participants had to tick the appropriate box in the questionnaire
Question 2	To what extent do use social media on the following social networking sites?	To establish if the participant applies social media on social networking sites	
Question 3	To what extent do use social media on the following bookmarking sites?	To establish if the participant applies social media on bookmarking sites	
Question 4	To what extent do you use the following social news sites?	To establish if the participant applies social media on social news sites	
Question 5	To what extent do you use blogging sites, wikis and forums?	To establish if the participant uses blogging sites, wikis and forums	
Question 6	To what extent do you use media sharing sites?	To establish if the participant applies media sharing sites	
Question 7	Do you blog? (your own personal blog)	To establish if the participant blogs	
Question 8	To what extent do you use a microblog like Twitter?	To establish if the participant uses a microblog	
Question 9	To what extent do you use virtual sites?	To establish if the participant uses virtual sites	
Question 10	To what extent do you use mobile usage sites?	To establish if the participant uses mobile usage sites.	
Question 11	Do you use apps (applications)?	To establish if the participant uses apps	
Question 12	Do you use QR codes (scanning barcodes)?	To establish if the participant uses barcode scanning	
Question 13	Do you use location-based social network sites like GPS	To establish if the participant uses location-based social network sites (GPS)	

Section C: Social media marketing in your enterprise			
Question 1	Do you agree that social media can play a role in marketing your product/services?	To establish the role of social media to market products/ services	Close-ended questions and the participants had to tick the appropriate box in the questionnaire
Question 2	Do you use alternative marketing strategies?	To find out if the participant uses other marketing strategies	
Question 3	Do you think social media may improve your enterprise turnover?	To determine if the participant's enterprise turnover might benefit when using social media	
Question 2	Do you consider social media to be important to enhance customer relationships?	To establish whether social media might enhance customer relationship	
Section D: Social media and consumer behavior			
Question 1	Do you agree that social media play a role in the following buying decisions? • To learn about new goods and services • To conduct research regarding services and products • To share information • To make final purchases	To establish whether social media might play a role in buying decisions	Close-ended questions and the participants had to tick the appropriate box in the questionnaire
Question2	Do you consider social media to enhance customer relationships	To determine if social media might enhance customer relationships	
Question 3:	Do you think social media can be applied to improve your products(s)/service(s)?	To establish if social media might be applied to improve products and or services	
Question4	Do you think social media is an effective way to enhance communication in your enterprise?i	To determine if social media is an effective way to improve/ enhance communication in the enterprise	
Question 5	Do you consider social media to be a tool in improving your brand reputation and image?	To establish whether social media might be a tool to improve brand reputation and image	
Question 6	Will social media help to enhance better service delivery to your clients?	To determine whether social media might enhance better service delivery to the clients	

Section D: Social media and consumer behavior *(cont…)*			
Question 7	Which internet search engines do you use to access information regarding products/ and or services?	To establish which internet search engines might be used to access information regarding products and/ or services	

3.3.4 Data collection procedure

The researcher had to follow certain steps before commencing with data collection for the study.

3.3.4.1 Preparation for the study

The preparation for the study comprised of activities relating to the sending out of the electronically mailed questionnaires. The researcher added an information letter attached to the questionnaire requesting participation in the study. The title of the study was described and the participants were informed that the questionnaire would not take much time to complete. The purpose of the study was explained and the participants were informed that the information would be confidential.

3.3.4.2 Procedure for gathering data

The procedure of gathering data consisted of questionnaires that were mailed to the participants. Participants could complete the questionnaires at a time that was convenient for them and at a location that was deemed suitable. After completing the data, they had to send the questionnaires back to the researcher.

3.3.4.3 Data recording procedures

The questionnaires consisted of questions where the respondents could tick off their responses. A pilot study was not done.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data analysis aims to bring structure to the study as well as provide meaning to the collected data (Schurink et al., 2011:397). Maree (2010:279) states that a researcher needs to identify patterns in the data relating to the topic that has been researched.

The researcher requested the NWU to help with the statistical analysis of the data by applying the IBM Statistical Package (SPPS, version 23). The data were analysed in the Excel format for Windows 10. The statistical data consisted of numerical data derived from descriptive statistics (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:251). This program (IBM Statistical Package) allows for percentages and frequencies to be determined where after the researcher had the task of organising, describing, summarising and interpreting the results in a logical way (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:252).

3.4.2 ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.2.1 Validity

The quality and rigour of the quantitative research depend on the validity and reliability of the process. The Likert scale is a useful instrument to measure responses ranging from low to high level of the variants. This method is deemed suitable as it can reduce large amounts of data in order to draw conclusions (De Vos, 2011:179). In this way, validity will be achieved and the researcher will be able to determine typical tendencies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:28; De Vos *et al*., 2011:173).

There are different forms of validity. Content validity aims to measure the extent to which the instrument is really measuring the characteristic (Bryman *et al*., 2014:107). For this purpose, the questionnaire was applied as a valid instrument to measure the use and effectiveness of social media.

The second validity criterion is face validity that is, the extent to which the research instrument measures the concept that it appears to measure. The researcher needed to obtain the cooperation of the respondents to participate and this was done by submitting the questionnaire to the participants. If a researcher can distribute the questionnaires and have them completed by the respondents, it will contribute to face validity as it will have indicated similarities/ correlation because the researcher is then able to describe the concepts and categories that are measured in the questionnaire (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2002:257).

The third type of validity is construct validity, which describes the extent to which a questionnaire measures a theoretical concept (De Vos *et al.,* 2011:174). The research sample must therefore be representative of the population for a research study.

3.4.2.2 Reliability

Reliability is achieved when the researcher determines if the results are internally consistent among subjects. This is done by posing the same questions to the participants, and by providing clear, direct, and simple instructions. User-friendly questions were asked so that respondents could find it easy to answer the questions with ease and the length of the measuring instrument (questionnaire) would be kept within reasonable limits (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:93, 190-192). The validity was measured by applying the Cronbach alpha coefficient.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical standards of academic research (NWU, 2016:5) require that ethical considerations be followed by researchers. These refer to a set of moral guidelines on correct conduct regarding participants of a study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:114):

3.5.1 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation is requested of the participants who take part in the study. The researcher informed the participants that they may withdraw from the study at any time during the research process ((De Vos et al., 2011:117).

3.5.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is very important and indicates the participants' willingness to take part in the study voluntarily. The consent letter gave information about the study project and their (owners of SMMEs) consent to take part in the study (De Vos et al., 2011:117). Due to the nature of the survey (emailed questionnaire), the consent form was in the form of an information paragraph that stated briefly the purpose of the study and requested the participants to take part in the study. By sending the questionnaires back to the researcher, the participants indicated that they agreed to take part in the study as the purpose of the study was set out in detail.

3.5.3 Anonymity

It is essential to ensure anonymity of participants. The SMMEs screened the participants and the researcher had no knowledge of which enterprise owners were targeted to complete the questionnaire. The researcher only received raw data from the SMMES that were involved in the study. There were also no identifying markers on the questionnaire or responses to identify which participants were selected for the study.

3.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 3 gave a description of the research design and methodology. The overall research design was introduced and described. It was followed by a description of the population and sample and the material and data collection instrument were described. The research ethics were addressed, and the chapter concluded with a summary.

The next section will discuss the analysis, interpretations and discussions of the empirical study.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing is at the centre of contemporary marketing approaches. In order to survive in the extremely competitive market, it is essential that South Africa's small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) adhere to the new marketing rules with the implementation of social media technologies in their marketing strategies (McDonough & Commins, 2000:8). SMMEs are perceived as key vehicles to address the country's destabilising economic factors such as unemployment, inequality and low economic growth (Mapila *et al*., 2014:118-119). Nevertheless, Bruwer and Watkins (2010: 3550-3555) point out that the failure rate of South Africa's SMMEs is as high as 70 to 80 percent and that most SMMEs fail to survive the first five years. Scheers (2010:5055-5056) also asserts that the lack of efficient and effective marketing strategies and skills in South Africa's SMMEs is a key contributing factor to the business failure of small businesses. Hence, it is critical to understand the use of social media as a marketing tool by SMMEs.

The ability for SMMEs to proactively set efficient social media marketing strategies is critical for their survival and competitiveness in the face of heightened competition from large businesses (Mapila *et al.*, 2014:119). This chapter seeks to provide a coherent picture of social media usage by SMMEs in Gauteng based on the set empirical objectives with the help of various methods of analysis encompassing the demographic description of the used sample, respective frequencies between SMMEs and social media marketing technologies and the factor analysis.

4.2 CODEBOOK

Table 4.1 below indicates the coding for Section A throughout Section A to Section D. Three questions were asked in Section A to elicit information regarding the nature of the business. Section B focused on social media and business operations. Section C focused on social media and its role in marketing. The last section, Section D, focused on social media and the impact on consumer behaviour.

Table 4.1: Codebook

Section A: Business information			
Question	**Code**	**Variable**	**Response option**
Question 1	Q1	Nature of industry	1. Agriculture 2. Mining 3. Financial
			4. Manufacturing 5. Real Estate 6. Retailers 7. Services 8. Transportation 9. Utilities
Question 2	Q2	Years in operation	1. 0-3 years 2. 4-8 years 3. 9-12 years 4. 13 years or longer
Question 3	Q3	Employees	1. Part-time employees 2. Full-time employees 3. Both
Section B: Social media and your enterprise			
Question 4	Q4	Value of social media	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 5	Q5N1 Q5N2 Q5N3 Q5N4	Use of social networking sites	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 6	Q6	Bookmarking sites	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 7	Q7N1 Q7N2	Social news sites	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 8	Q8N1 Q8N2 Q8N3	Blogging sites	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always

Section B: Social media and your enterprise *(cont…)*			
Question	**Code**	**Variable**	**Response option**
Question 9	Q9N1 Q9N2 Q9N3 Q9N4 Q9N5 Q9N6 Q9N7 Q9N8 Q9N9	Media sharing	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 10	Q10	Blog	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 11	Q11	Microblog	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 12	Q12N1 Q12N2 Q12N3 Q12N4	Virtual sites	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 13	Q13N1 Q13N2 Q13N3 Q13N4 Q13N5 Q13N6	Mobile sites	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 14	Q14N1 Q14N2 Q14N3 Q14N4	Applications	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 15	Q15	QR codes	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 16	Q16	GPD	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always

Section C: Social media and marketing *(cont…)*			
Question	**Code**	**Variable**	**Response option**
Question 17	Q17	Marketing products	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 18	Q18N1 Q18N2 Q18N3 Q18N4	Marketing strategies	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 19	Q19	Enterprise turnover	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Section D: Social media and consumer behaviour			
Item	**Code**	**Construct measured**	**Value**
Question 20	Q20	Buying decisions	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 21	Q21	Customer relationships	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 22	Q22	Product improvement	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 23	Q23	Communication	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 24	Q24	Reputation	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 25	Q25	Service delivery	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always
Question 26	Q26N1 Q26N2 Q26N3 Q26N4 Q26N5	Search engines	Almost never, Rarely, Sometimes Almost always

4.3 TABULATION OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 4.2 indicates the frequencies for all the questions along with the descriptive statistics, which included the mean and standard deviation, minimum and maximum.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics					
Questions	**Average**	**Mean deviation**	**Standard deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Q4	53	3.34	1.00	1.00	4.00
Q5N1	53	3.08	1.12	1.00	4.00
Q5N2	52	1.81	1.14	1.00	4.00
Q5N3	52	2.67	1.10	1.00	4.00
Q5N4	52	2.67	1.37	1.00	4.00
Q6	51	1.35	0.87	1.00	4.00
Q7N1	53	1.11	0.51	1.00	4.00
Q7N2	52	1.08	0.44	1.00	4.00
Q8N1	53	1.75	1.18	1.00	4.00
Q8N2	53	1.26	0.65	1.00	4.00
Q8N3	52	2.23	1.02	1.00	4.00
Q9N1	53	2.87	1.11	1.00	4.00
Q9N2	53	1.15	0.50	1.00	4.00
Q9N3	53	2.15	1.22	1.00	4.00
Q9N4	52	1.02	0.14	1.00	2.00
Q9N5	53	1.02	0.14	1.00	2.00
Q9N6	53	1.02	0.14	1.00	2.00
Q9N7	53	2.21	1.18	1.00	4.00
Q9N8	53	1.13	0.39	1.00	3.00
Q9N9	52	1.02	0.14	1.00	2.00
Q10	53	1.55	1.05	1.00	4.00
Q11	53	1.49	0.89	1.00	4.00
Q12N1	53	1.06	0.30	1.00	3.00
Q12N2	53	1.06	0.30	1.00	3.00
Q12N3	53	1.06	0.30	1.00	3.00
Q12N4	53	1.02	0.14	1.00	2.00
Q13N1	53	1.13	0.56	1.00	4.00
Q13N2	53	1.08	0.43	1.00	4.00
Q13N3	53	1.47	0.97	1.00	4.00

Descriptive statistics					
Questions	**Aver**	**Mean deviation**	**Standard deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Q13N4	53	1.08	0.38	1.00	3.00
Q13N5	53	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Q13N6	53	3.11	1.09	1.00	4.00
Q14N1	53	1.92	1.16	1.00	4.00
Q14N2	52	1.98	1.26	1.00	4.00
Q14N3	52	1.69	1.11	1.00	4.00
Q14N4	52	2.90	1.00	1.00	4.00
Q15	53	1.77	1.07	1.00	4.00
Q16	53	3.13	1.14	1.00	4.00
Q17	53	3.34	0.88	1.00	4.00
Q18N1	52	1.81	1.14	1.00	4.00
Q18N2	53	2.55	1.29	1.00	4.00
Q18N3	53	3.62	0.74	2.00	4.00
Q18N4	53	3.09	1.02	1.00	4.00
Q19	53	3.42	0.77	1.00	4.00
Q26N1	53	3.26	0.88	1.00	4.00
Q26N2	53	3.49	0.89	1.00	4.00
Q26N3	53	3.74	0.52	2.00	4.00
Q26N4	53	3.21	1.04	1.00	4.00
Q26N5	53	3.36	0.81	1.00	4.00

4.4 DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

4.4.1 Nature of industry

Participants were asked to select the nature of their industry where the industries were classified into nine sectors. Table 4.3 presents the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the sample (57.8%) was operating in the service industry. The manufacturing, retail and transportation industries accounted for 33.3 percent of the sample (11.1% for each industry respectively). No participants from the mining or utilities industries participated in this study. Only two businesses (4.4%) were recorded to be operating in the financial sector while one was found to be operating in the real estate industry (2.2%). A

total number of 53 observations were recorded for this question.

Table 4.3: Nature of the industry

Nature of industry	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	1	2.2
Mining	0	0
Financial	2	4.4
Manufacturing	5	11.1
Real Estate	1	2.2
Retailers	5	11.1
Services	26	57.8
Transportation	5	11.1
Utilities	0	0

4.4.3 Years in operation

Participants were asked to select the number of years that the business has been operating. Table 4.4 portrays the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the businesses in the sample (67.9%) have been operating for longer than 13 years. Just more than 15 percent have been operating for 9 to 12 years. Almost ten percent (9.4%) have been in business for 4 to 8 years while only a small number (3 businesses) are start-up businesses (0 to 3 years). A total number of 53 observations were recorded for this question.

Table 4.4: Years in operation

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-3 years	3	5.7
4-8 years	5	9.4
9-12 years	9	17.0
13 years or longer	36	67.9

4.3.3 Nature of employees

Participants were asked to select whether the business has part-time employees, full-time employees, or both categories. Table 4.5 depicts the frequencies and percentages of the category of employees. More than half of the businesses in the sample (54.7%) have full-time employees. Just over 15 percent (17%) has part-time employees. Almost a third of the sample

(28.3%) has both full-time and part-time employees. A total number of 53 observations were recorded for this question.

Table 4.5: Nature of employees-distribution

Nature of employees	Frequency	Percentage
Part-time employees	9	17.0
Full-time employees	29	54.7
Both	15	28.3

4.5 FREQUENCIES

The following section presents the frequencies regarding participants' responses to social media questions.

4.5.1 Social media in enterprises

The following section provides the frequencies relating to Section B of the questionnaire. This section included questions to elucidate how businesses interact with social media in their everyday use.

4.5.1.1 Perceived value of social media

Participants were asked to indicate whether social media is valuable to their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.6 shows the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the sample (62.3%) indicated that social media almost always add value to their business. Another 18.9 percent believed social media sometimes add value to the business. The remaining 10 participants indicated that social media rarely (9.4%) or almost never (9.4%) add value to the business. A total number of 53 observations were recorded for this question. Overall, most SMME respondents suggested that an effective usage of social media adds value to their businesses and this is consistent with findings by Mosweunyane (2016) and Rambe (2017). A smaller number of the SMMES did not agree with the former notion. Empirical evidence by Rambe (2017) revealed that tourism SMMEs perceived social media to be a useful marketing strategy for online marketing for attracting customers and promoting their products and services. Similarly, results by Mosweunyane (2016) suggest that about 82.2 percent of the SMME tourism respondents in Free State province tend to use social media marketing in their businesses, while only 17.1 percent did not.

The current study's results showing 10 of the participants who insisted that social medial rarely or almost never add value to their SMMEs are consistent with the findings by Lekhanya (2013:3-4) who revealed that 73 percent of the sampled rural SMMEs in KwaZulu- Natal do consider social media to be a useful marketing tool as it is expensive and requires electricity or internet connection, both of which are typicallly lacking in such areas. Lekhanya (2013:3) further explains that SMMEs in rural areas are made up of the unskilled, illiterate, and poor or lower income groups and this hinders effective usage of social media by both customers and business owners. Therefore, policy makers need to assist such groups with the provision of training and literacy skills.

Table 4.6: Value of social media to the enterprise

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	5	9.4
Rarely	5	9.4
Sometimes	10	18.9
Almost always	33	62.3

4.5.1.2 Usage of social media sites

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they use social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, and Google+) in their business. Participant responses ranged from almost never to almost always. Table 4.7 displays the frequencies and percentages. Almost half of the sample (47.2%) indicated that they almost always use Facebook as a social media resource while more than 50 percent (59.6%) indicated that they almost never use Twitter. Approximately 40 percent indicated that LinkedIn is sometimes used in their business. Almost 50 percent (46.2%) indicated that they almost always use Google+ in their business. Facebook was therefore the most used social media platform. These findings correlate with results established by Oji *et al.* (2017) and Mosweunyane (2016) who revealed that Facebook is amongst the most used social media marketing platforms, with Mosweunyane (2016) indicating that 61.8 percent of the sample collected from tourism SMMEs in Free State province used Facebook. These results are also consistent with the findings by Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) and Maha (2015). In contrast to the findings of the study, Oji *et al.* (2017) and Mosweunyane (2016) suggested that Twitter is also amongst the most used social media marketing platforms. Nevertheless, the showcased preference of

Facebook to Twitter usage by SMMEs in the current study can be attributed to the higher subscription of Facebook users than Twitter, which may imply a higher customer or market base.

Table 4.7: Social media sites usage

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Social media site	***F***	**%**	***F***	**%**	***F***	**%**	***F***	**%**
Facebook	10	18.9	1	1.9	17	32.1	25	47.2
Twitter	31	59.6	8	15.4	5	9.6	8	15.4
LinkedIn	12	23.1	6	11.5	21	40.4	13	25
Google+	18	34.6	5	9.6	5	9.6	24	46.2

4.5.1.3 Usage of bookmarking sites

Participants were asked to indicate whether they make use of bookmarking sites in their business. Participant responses ranged from almost never to almost always. Table 4.8 displays the frequencies and percentages. More than 80 percent of the businesses in the sample (84.3%) indicated that they almost never use StumbleOn in their business. Another 2 percent indicated that they rarely use StumbleOn. The remaining seven participants indicated that they sometimes (7.8%) or almost always (5.9%) make use of StumbleOn in their business. A total number of 53 observations were recorded for this question. These results are consistent with findings by Musa (2016:8) who revealed that only 2 percent of the study's SMMEs sample in Malaysia chose bookmarking sites for social media online marketing, so that, ultimately, only 4 percent of the sample chose Website marketing as their online social media marketing platform, relative to 46 percent of participants who chose Facebook. These findings suggest that online bookmarking sites are not a preferred online social media marketing platform.

Table 4.8: Usage of bookmarking sites

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Bookmarking site	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
StumbleOn	43	84.3	1	2.0	4	7.8	3	5.9

4.5.1.4 Usage of social media news sites

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they use social media news sites (Digg or Reddit) in their business. Participant responses ranged from almost never to almost always.

Table 4.9 reveals the frequencies and percentages. Almost all of the businesses in the sample (94.3%) indicated that they almost never use Digg or Reddit (96.2%). These results can be attributed to the relatively high marketing costs associated with online news sites which most SMMEs may not be able to afford considering that South Africa's SMMEs are challenged by poor funding and support (Agwa-Ejon & Mbohwa, 2015:521).

Table 4.9: Usage of social media news sites

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Social media news site	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Digg	50	94.3	1	1.9	1	1.9	1	1.9
Reddit	50	96.2	1	1.9	0	0	1	1.9

4.5.1.5 Usage of blogging sites, wikis and forums

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they use blogging sites, wikis and forums (Wordpress, Tumblr and Wikipedia) in their business. Participant responses ranged from almost never to almost always. Table 4.10 discloses the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the businesses in the sample (67.9%) indicated that they almost never use Wordpress or Tumblr (83%) as a social media resource while more than 30 percent (36.5%) indicated that they almost never use Wikipedia. A larger percentage, 48.1 percent, indicated that they sometimes use Wikipedia in their business. Although most SMMEs suggested that they sometimes use Wikipedia, these results ultimately indicate that the majority of SMMEs do not prefer to use Blogging sites, wikis and forums.

Table 4.10: Usage of blogging sites, wiks and forums

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Use of blogging sites, wikis and forums	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Wordpress	36	67.9	2	3.8	7	13.2	8	15.1
Tumblr	44	83	5	9.4	3	5.7	1	1.9
Wikipedia	19	36.5	5	9.6	25	48.1	3	5.8

4.5.1.6 Extent of media sharing site usage

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they use social media sharing sites such as Youtube, Flickr, Instagram, Picassa, Shutterfly, Snapfish, Pinterest, Vimeo and Hulu in their business. Participant responses ranged from almost never to almost always. Table

4.11 shows the frequencies and percentages. The majority of businesses almost never use media sharing sites as six of the nine media sharing sites had frequencies higher than 80 percent on the *almost never* response. On the other hand, some businesses indicated that they sometimes (39.6%) or almost always (34%) use Youtube as a media sharing site. Instagram and Pinterest were also recorded (18.9%) to be used *almost always*. YouTube was therefore the most used social media sharing platform. Similarly, results by Mosweunyane (2016) identified Youtube to be amongst the most popular social media marketing platforms for SMMEs. A report conducted by Goldstuck (2016) revealed that YouTube increased its subscribers from 7.2 million to 8.28 million users in the year 2016.

Table 4.11: Extent of media sharing sites

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Extent of media sharing site	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
YouTube	11	20.83	3	5.7	21	39.6	18	34
Flickr	47	88.7	5	9.4	0	0	1	1.9
Instagram	25	47.2	5	9.4	13	24.5	10	18.9
Picasssa	51	98.1	1	1.9	0	0	0	0
Shutterfly	52	98.1	1	1.9				
Snapfish	52	98.1	1	1.9				
Pinterest	22	41.5	8	15.1	13	24.5	10	18.9
Vimeo	47	88.7	5	9.4	1	1.9		
Hulu	51	98.1	1	1.9				

4.5.1.7 Use of personal blog site

Participants were asked to indicate whether they use personal blogs in their businesses. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.12 displays the frequencies and percentages. More than three quarters (77.4%) indicated that they almost never use a personal blog. Another 13.2 percent reported that they sometimes use a personal blog in their business operations. The remaining 5 participants indicated that they almost always (9.4%) make use of a personal blog.

Table 4.12: Use of personal blog sites

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	41	77.4
Sometimes	7	13.2
Almost always	5	9.4

4.5.1.8 Use of microblog site

Participants were asked to indicate their usage of microblog sites in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.13 presents the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the sample (71.7%) indicated that they almost never make use of microblog sites in their business. Another 13.2 percent reported rarely using microsites while 9.4 percent sometimes make use of microblog sites. Only 5.7 percent almost always use microblog sites.

Table 4.13: Use of microblog sites

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	38	71.7
Rarely	7	13.2
Sometimes	5	9.4
Almost always	3	5.7

4.5.1.9 Extent of virtual sites usage

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they make use of virtual sites such as Second Life, Everquest, Sim City and World of Warcraft in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.14 shows the frequencies and percentages. More than 90 percent of businesses indicated that they almost never use virtual sites.

Table 4.14: Extent of virtual sites usage

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Extent of virtual sites usage	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Second Life	51	96.2	1	1.9	1.9	1.9		
Everquest	51	96.2	1	1.9	1.9	1.9		
Sim City	51	96.2	1	1.9	1.9	1.9		
World of Warcraft	52	98.1	1	1.9	1.9			

4.5.1.10 Extent of mobile site usage

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they use mobile sites such as Evernote, Hootsuite, GotoMeeting, Everbrite, Feedly and Dropbox in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.15 presents the frequencies and percentages. The majority of businesses almost never use any of the mobile media sites as five of the six mobile sites had frequencies higher than 79 percent for the *almost never* response. On the other hand, some businesses indicated that they sometimes (27%) or almost always (50.9%) use Dropbox as a mobile site. Dropbox was therefore the most used mobile media site.

Table 4.15: Extent of mobile usage site

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Extent of mobile usage site	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Evernote	50	94.3			2	3.8	1	1.9
Hootsuite	51	96.2	1	1.9			1	1.9
GoToMeeting	42	79.2	1	1.9	6	11.3	4	7.5
Eventbrite	51	96.2			2	3.8		
Feedly	53	100						
Dropbox	7	13.2	7	13.2	12	22.6	27	50.9

4.5.1.11 Extent of application usage

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they use applications such as iStore, Amazon.com, eBay and Takealot in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always* and were distributed between the four responses. Table 4.16 displays the frequencies and percentages. The majority of businesses almost never use iStore (56.6%), Amazon.com (57.7%) or eBay (67.3%). On the other hand, some businesses indicated that they sometimes (42.3%) or almost always (30.8%) use Takealot. Takealot was therefore the most used application site.

Table 4.16: Application usage

	Almost never		Rarely		Sometimes		Almost always	
Application usage	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
iStore	30	56.6	4	7.5	12	22.6	7	13.2
Amazon.com	30	57.7	4	7.7	7	13.5	11	21.2
eBay	35	67.3	5	9.6	5	9.6	7	13.5
iStore	7	13.5	7	13.5	22	42.3	16	30.8

4.5.1.12 Extent of QR codes usage

Participants were asked to indicate whether they make use of QR scanning codes in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.17 shows the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the businesses in the sample (62.3%) indicated that they almost never make use of QR codes. Another 5.7 percent indicated that they rarely make use of QR scanning. On the other hand, a quarter of the sample (24.5%) indicated that they sometimes make use of a QR system. The remaining 4 participants indicated that they almost always (7.5%) use a QR system.

Table 4.17: Usage of QR codes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	33	62.3
Rarely	3	5.7
Sometimes	13	24.5
Almost always	4	7.5

4.5.1.13 Extent of GPS usage

Participants were asked to indicate the extent of GPS usage within their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.18 presents the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the businesses in the sample (54.7%) indicated that they almost always make use of a GPS system in their business. Another 20.8 percent sometimes use a GPS system while more than 15 percent almost never use a GPS system.

Table 4.18: Usage location-based social network sites

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	9	17.0
Rarely	4	7.5
Sometimes	11	20.8
Almost always	29	54.7

4.5.2 Social media and marketing

Participants were asked to indicate the role of social media in the marketing activities of their business.

4.5.2.1 The role of social media in marketing

Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agree that social media can play a role in marketing business products and services. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.19 displays the frequencies and percentages. More than three quarters of the sample (84.9%) indicated that they felt that social media can sometimes (30.2%) or almost always (54.7%) play a role in marketing products and services. Only around 15 percent felt that social media rarely (9.4%) or almost never (5.7%) play a role in marketing. These results are consistent with results by Mosweunyane (2016) who revealed that SMME owners in Gauteng considered that social media marketing significantly affects the business' competitiveness. Results by Oji (2016) and Judie (2015) also reveal that SMMEs in Cape Town perceived social media marketing as a moderately effective marketing tool which could significantly boost their business marketing capabilities and business networks. Further empirical evidence by Rambe (2017) also supports the reported findings.

Table 4.19: Role of social media in marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	3	5.7
Rarely	5	9.4
Sometimes	16	30.2
Almost always	29	54.7

4.5.2.2 The use of alternative marketing strategies

Participants were asked to indicate whether they make use of alternative marketing strategies in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.20 lists the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the businesses in the sample (61.5%) indicated that they almost never make use of newspaper advertisements as an alternative source of marketing. Participants had contrasting responses to pamphlets as marketing strategy as 38.5 percent indicated that they almost never use pamphlets while 34 percent indicated that they almost always make use of pamphlets. Almost 80 percent (77.4%) of the participants rely on word-of-mouth as a marketing strategy. Networking with other companies was also more frequently used as a marketing strategy as 47.2 percent of participants almost always use networking as a source of marketing.

Table 4.20: Use of alternative marketing strategies

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Alternative marketing strategy	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Newspaper advertisements	32	61.5	5	9.6	8	15.4	7	13.5
Pamphlets	19	35.8	4	7.5	12	22.6	18	34
Word-of mouth			8	15.1	4	7.5	41	77.4
Networking with other companies	5	9.4	10	18.9	13	24.5	25	47.2

4.5.2.3 The role of social media in enterprise turnover

Participants were asked to indicate whether they agree that social media play an important role on a business's turnover. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.21 shows the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the businesses in the sample (54.7%) indicated that social media almost always play a role in business turnover. Another 35.8 percent were of the opinion that social media sometimes play a role in business turnover. The remaining 9.5 percent indicated that social media rarely (5.7%) or almost never (3.8%) play a role in turnover. Based on these findings, social media marketing seems to play a significant role in improving business turnovers of SMMEs. These findings are consistent with the study by Lamminen (2018:16) which revealed a noticeable increase in revenue of businesses due to online social media platforms like Instagram. Cherotich *et al*.

(2016) also provide evidence of a significant increase in not just the number of customers and employees, but also in sales revenue due to social media marketing.

Table 4.21: Social media and enterprise turnover

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	2	3.8
Rarely	3	5.7
Sometimes	19	35.8
Almost always	29	54.7

4.5.3 Social media and consumer behaviour

The following section included questions that were aimed at finding a link between social media and consumer behaviour.

4.5.3.1 Social media and buying decisions

Participants were asked to indicate whether they agree that social media play a role in buying decisions. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.22 presents the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the sample (50.9%) indicated that social media almost always influence buying decisions when customers are informed about their new products and services. Participants (69.8%) were also of the opinion that social media also play an important role when conducting product research. The highest contribution of social media was noted by participants for the main purpose of sharing information (77.4%). More than 50 percent (54.7%) also indicated that social media almost always play a role when consumers make their final purchasing decision. Based on these findings, it can be accepted that social media play a vital role in influencing the consumers' purchasing decisions. Similarly, the study by Barhemmati and Ahmad (2015) postulates a positive relationship between social network marketing and customers' purchasing and engagement behaviour.

Table 4.22: Social media and buying decisions

	Almost never		**Rarely**		**Sometimes**		**Almost always**	
Social media and buying decisions	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
To learn about new goods and services	2	3.8	9	17	15	28.3	27	50.9
To conduct research services and products	3	5.7	5	9.4	8	15.1	37	69.8
To share information			2	3.8	10	18.9	41	77.4
To make final purchase decisions	6	11.3	6	11.3	12	22.6	29	54.7

4.5.3.2 Do you consider social media to be important to enhance customer relationships?

Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agree that social media can enhance their relationships with customers. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.23 presents the frequencies and percentages. More than 80 percent of the businesses in the sample indicated that social media sometimes (34%) or almost always (52.8%) enhance relationships with customers, thus adding value to their business. The remaining 7 participants indicated that they rarely (9.4%) or almost never (3.8%) regard social media as an important factor to enhance relationships with business customers. These findings are in support of the study by Jagongo (2013) in the case of Kenya which revealed that 81 percent of SMME owners agreed that they use social media marketing to extend their market share. Of this group, about 23 percent stated that they use social media to enhance customer relations. Oji *et al.* (2017:4) also report their participants' conviction that social media marketing assists with enhancing customer relations, advertising, and sales. According to findings by Laroche *et al.* (2013), customer relationships can be improved through social media through the improvement of brand trust and loyalty. These findings are also consistent with the finding of Casalo *et al.* (2010) of a positive effect of social media on loyalty as well as the assertion by Fournier and Avery (2011) that social media promote the simplification of interactions amongst users and not only for businesses purposes.

Table 4.23: Social media and customer relationships

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	2	3.8
Rarely	5	9.4
Sometimes	18	34.0
Almost always	28	52.8

4.5.3.3 Social media and product improvement

Participants were asked to indicate whether they think that social media can be applied in their business to improve their products or services. More than half of the sample (50.9%) indicated that social media can almost always be used to improve products and services within a business. Another 39.6 percent were of the opinion that social media can sometimes lead to product and service improvement. The remaining percentage indicated that social media rarely (1.9%) or almost never (7.5%) can be applied to improve products and services. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that social media marketing is perceived to enhance and improve SMMEs products and services. Only a small number of SMMEs perceive social media marketing technologies to be insignificant influencers of their products and services (see Table 4.24).

Table 4.24: Social media and product improvement

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	4	7.5
Rarely	1	1.9
Sometimes	21	39.6
Almost always	27	50.9

4.5.3.4 Social media and communication

Participants were asked to indicate whether they think social media can be an effective way to enhance communication within an enterprise. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.25 presents the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the sample (54.7%) indicated that social media can almost always be used as an effective measure to enhance communication within a business. Another 28.3 percent were of the opinion that social media can sometimes be used as an effective communication measure. The remaining 17 percent of participants indicated that social media will rarely (13.2%) or almost

never (3.8%) play a role as a measure to enhance communication within a business. In support of the above findings, respondents in studies conducted by Hsu and Ting (2013) and Malthouse *et al*. (2011) insisted that social media helped the hospitality business increase its customers and also empowered these businesses to interact and communicate with its customers at a minimal cost. Similarly, Craffert *et al.* (2014:1) postulate that social media technologies promote the interaction of existing and potential customers as well as lead to enhanced communication amongst and within businesses.

Table 4.25: Social media and communication

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	2	3.8
Rarely	7	13.2
Sometimes	15	28.3
Almost always	29	54.7

4.5.3.5 Social media and brand reputation

Participants were asked to indicate if they think social media can be used to improve their brand reputation in their business. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.26 displays the frequencies and percentages. More than half of the sample (62.3%) indicated that social media will almost always play a role to improve brand reputation. Another 32.1 percent were of the opinion that social media will sometimes play a role in improving brand reputation. The remaining 5.7 percent of participants indicated that social media can rarely (1.9%) or almost never (3.8%) be sued to improve brand reputation. The study by Kananen and Pyykkönen (2012, 81) similarly posits that digital marketing improves brand image and awareness whilst receiving and responding to customers' questions and opinions.

Table 4.26: Social media and brand reputation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	2	3.8
Rarely	1	1.9
Sometimes	17	32.1
Almost always	33	62.3

4.5.3.6 Social media and service delivery

Participants were asked to indicate whether they think social media can enhance service delivery to customers. Participant responses ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.27 presents the frequencies and percentages. Almost half of the sample (45.3%) indicated that social media can almost always be used to enhance service delivery to customers their business. Another 34 percent were of the opinion that social media can sometimes be used to enhance service delivery. A few participants indicated that social media can rarely (1.9%) or almost never (17%) be used to enhance service delivery. An empirical study by Cheek *et al*. (2013) suggests that social media marketing makes products and services easily accessible through online or digital marketing platforms and technologies. Positive information provides the business with new and repeated sales.

Table 4.27: Social media and service delivery

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost never	9	17.0
Rarely	1	1.9
Sometimes	18	34.0
Almost always	24	45.3

4.5.3.7 Usage of search engines to access information

Participants were asked to indicate which Internet search engines they use to access information regarding products and/or services. Participant responses regarding the various search engines ranged from *almost never* to *almost always*. Table 4.28 shows the frequencies and percentages. Almost 95 percent of the businesses in the sample use Google (94.3%) as a search engine regarding information about products and services. Yahoo is used by 14.6 percent of participants while only 4 percent use Bing as a search engine.

Table 4.28: Search engines

	Almost never		Rarely		Sometimes		Almost always	
Search engine	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Google	3	5.7	0	0	0	0	50	94.3
Yahoo	31	64.6	1	2.1	9	18.8	7	14.6
Bing	45	90	0	0	3	6.0	2	4.0
Ask	43	89.6	2	4.2	3	6.3	0	0
Aol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

4.6 FACTOR ANALYSIS

Table 4.29 describes the factor analysis for question 20 to question 25.

Table 4.29: Kaiser measure of sampling adequacy

Kaiser measure of sampling adequacy	
Q20N1	Q20N1
Q20N2	Q20N2
Q20N3	Q20N3
Q20N4	Q20N4

The Kaiser measure of sampling adequacy was run to find out if the data was suitable for factor analysis. The test generates results between one and zero where higher values (0.5 to 1) indicate that the sample is adequate for factor analysis and lower values (0 to 0.4) imply inadequacy for factor analysis (Malhotra *et al*., 2012:776) (Table 4.30).

Table 4.30: Total variance

Items	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	% variance	Cumulative %	Cronbach alpha
Q20N1	0.85	0.51	2.76	69.01	0.845
Q20N2	0.85	0.51			
Q20N3	0.70	0.42			
Q20N4	0.90	0.54			

Values <0.3 were suppressed

The desired results were obtained as all four items came out as a single factor. Each factor explains 2.46 percent of the variance and a cumulative 69.1 percent of the variable. Furthermore, internal reliability of the scale was tested. Cronbach (1951:297) indicates that a scale is reliable where values greater than 0.7 are achieved. A high Cronbach alpha value of 0.845 was achieved indicating good internal reliability consistency. A further test

for multicollinearity between the factors was conducted by means of correlation analysis. Variables are assumed to be very highly correlated when r>0.9, which can present challenges to a dependent variable. None of the factors had correlation values higher than 0.9, hence there was no multicollinearity between the variables (Table 4.31).

Table 4.31: Multicollinearity

Factors	Q20N1	Q20N2	Q20N3	Q20N4
Q20N1	1.00			
Q20N2	0.66	1.00		
Q20N3	0.44	0.40	1.00	
Q20N4	0.69	0.71	0.56	1.00

The following section presents the factor analysis for question 21 to question 25 (Table 4.32).

Table 4.32: Kaiser measure of sampling adequacy

Kaiser measure of sampling adequacy	
Q21	0.86
Q22	0.86
Q23	0.84
Q24	0.82
Q25	0.92

The Kaiser measure of sampling adequacy was run to find out if the data was suitable for factor analysis. The test generates results between one and zero where higher values (0.5 to 1) indicate that the sample is adequate for factor analysis and lower values (0 to 0.4) imply inadequacy for factor analysis (Malhotra et al., 2012:776) (Table 4.33).

Table 4.33: Total

Items	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %	Cronbach alpha
Q21	0.90	0.47	3.80	86%	0.91
Q22	0.87	0.45			
Q23	0.89	0.46			
Q24	0.90	0.46			
Q25	0.79	0.40			

Values <0.3 were suppressed

The desired results were obtained as all four items came out as a single factor. Each factor explains 3.80 percent of the variance and a cumulative 69.1 percent of the variable. Furthermore, internal reliability of the scale was tested. Cronbach (1951:297) indicates that a scale is reliable where values greater than 0.7 are achieved. A high Cronbach alpha value of 0.91 was achieved indicating good internal reliability consistency. A further test for multicollinearity between the factors was conducted by means of correlation analysis. Variables are assumed to be very highly correlated if r>0.9, which can present challenges to a dependent variable. None of the factors had correlation values higher than 0.9, hence there was no multicollinearity between the variables (Table 4.34).

Table 4.34: Multicollinearity

Factors	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
Q21	1.00				
Q22	0.73	1.00			
Q23	0.79	0.68	1.00		
Q24	0.75	0.79	0.79	1.00	
Q25	0.70	0.60	0.60	0.58	1.00

4.7 CONCLUSION

The current study sought to investigate the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises in Gauteng. The study examined the degree and extent to which SMMEs adopt social media marketing technologies as well as the retrospective incorporation of social media within their marketing strategies. It is important to note that social media usage has become a widespread movement in which businesses and their customers are striving to get and stay connected for convenience, quick accessibility to information and enhanced communication and awareness.

Based on the findings of the current study, it can be deduced that most SMMEs in Gauteng have welcomed the emergence of social media technologies and have adopted the usage of social media marketing. Results also indicated that social media marketing seems to mostly add value to the majority of the SMMEs. Meanwhile, empirical literature and findings suggest that the smaller portion of the sample that may not have incorporated social media

marketing into their businesses or indicated that it does not add value to their businesses can be attributed to the lack of literacy or digital skills amongst these businesses and their customers. This can also be explained by the country's under-resourced or under-financed SMMEs and the low-income groups of its customer base. Particularly, this includes the lack of social media technological resources and the lack of internet connection and accessibility to social media.

Findings also revealed that in the usage of social media and digital platforms most of the participants preferred to use Facebook, YouTube, Dropbox, Google+ and the location-based social network sites such as GPS. Moderate usage of platforms such as LinkedIn, Takealot and Amazon.com was also identified. Regarding usage, most participants indicated that social media played a significant role in marketing the participants' business products and services as well as increasing their business turnover, enhancing their products and their relations with customers, and improving communication, service delivery and overall brand reputation.

On the other hand, a high number of participants (77.4%) also stated that they tend to use word-of mouth as an alternative means of strategic marketing. It was also identified that most participants tend to use social media marketing to learn about new goods and services, to conduct research on services and products, to share information, and to make final purchasing decisions. The findings of the study were consistent with empirical results established by other studies and proved to be robust and sound. Further in-depth research may be required to establish the nature of marketing issues experienced by SMMEs in terms of the internal and external factors impeding social media marketing usage. In order to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of SMMEs, efforts to promote increased managerial support, levels of education, and technical knowledge would be recommended to promote online entrepreneurship of South Africa's SMMEs.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study investigated the actual and potential use of social media platforms by small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMES) in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises in Gauteng. It also aimed to establish which forms of social media platforms are mostly preferred and used by SMMEs in Gauteng. In addition, the study wanted to assess alternative uses of strategic marketing by these SMMEs.

The study has practical implications for the use of social media as a marketing tool for SMMEs to enhance their business in the market sector. There is a need in South Africa for research that aims to specifically determine the value of social media that can be applicable to the SMMEs industry.

This chapter contains the findings in summary, the conclusions and recommendations for the study. A critical evaluation of the study is provided, and appropriate recommendations are made regarding future research in the field related to this study. The aim of the final chapter is to study all the conclusions that were drawn from the theoretical as well as the empirical research study described in the previous chapters.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium, and micro enterprises. This was achieved by applying a questionnaire that was distributed to SMMEs in Gauteng.

The Codebook indicated the coding for the four sections of the questionnaire. Section A described information regarding the nature of the business; Section B focused on social media and the enterprise; Section C focused on social media and marketing and Section D focused on social media and consumer behaviour. Descriptive statistics were applied to indicate the frequencies of all the responses in the questionnaire.

5.2.1 Demographic descriptions

The demographic description of the sample for this research project focused on the nature of the industry, years of operation, and nature of employees. More than half of the sample

(57.8%) is operating in the service industry and has been working in the industry for longer than 13 years (67.9%). It also appears that more than half of the employees are full-time employees. From details obtained from the questionnaire it can be concluded that more than half of the businesses have Been operating more than 13 years. It also became apparent that most businesses have full-time employees. This information helped the researcher to understand the nature and the requirements of the SMMEs.

In the same way, social media could provide SMMEs with demographics of their customers that can be very beneficial to the enterprise. Social media helps SMMEs understand their customers and provides insight into which products / services may benefit the customers. Social media use is therefore an effective marketing tool for the enterprise. Apart from understanding the customers, social media will also help SMMEs to understand the needs of their customers, as well as their expectations.

The next section focuses on the findings derived from participants' responses to social media questions.

5.4.2 Social media in enterprises

Social media sites (especially Facebook) play a role in and add value to the business. From the results, it appears that 62.3% of participants agreed that social media plays a role in their business. SMMEs seem to attach no value, though, to social media news sites since they play no role in their marketing.

It was also clear that blogging sites, wikis and forums are seldom used in these enterprises. Regarding media sharing site usage, participants indicated that YouTube was used more frequently than other sites (e.g. Flickr, Instagram, Picassa and others). Personal blog sites were also not used frequently. Only 9.4% indicated they use a personal blog site. Seventy two percent indicated they almost never use microblog sites. The same applies for virtual sites, mobile sites, QR codes and GPS usage. In conclusion, participants mainly found Facebook to be effective in their marketing efforts. Facebook seems to be very helpful for SMMES to find new customers and to build online community of sharing, expand their knowledge and communication channels, and increase customer interaction.

5.4.3 Social media and marketing

Regarding social media and marketing, it became obvious that social media significantly affects the business' competitiveness. Participants indicated that social media do play a

significant role on their enterprise turnover. From the results obtained, participants seldom make use of alternative marketing strategies (e.g. newspaper advertisements, pamphlets, word-of mouth and networking with other companies). This finding emphasizes the need for research to provide pointers for SMMEs to optimize the use of social media.

5.4.4 Social media and consumer behaviour

Participants indicated that social media use has a significant effect on consumer behaviour as it affects their purchase decisions. Participants were clear that social media do enhance customer relationships, leading to product improvement. It can be concluded that social media use enhances communication within their enterprise and improves their brand reputation. Participants believe search engines on the web helped to improve information about products and services and that social media enhanced their service delivery to customers.

By applying various social media platforms, it has become increasingly easier for businesses to communicate with customers and to learn about them. Since social media influence consumer behaviour such as awareness, information gathering, attitudes, purchasing decisions, and consideration of options, there is a broad area of potential research.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the use of social media is increasingly proving to be an effective way to market a business, while learning at the same time about customers' needs and how to improve the brand, enhance customer relationships and increase profit.

Businesses need to apply social media strategies to obtain the desired outcomes, but also need to be aware of threats posed by certain social media sites that might spread negative information about companies posted by customers on social media.

On the positive side, social media offer unique opportunities for businesses to improve their communication with their customers as well as within the business itself. It is widely accepted within the business environment that developing effective communication skills will help business leaders and their teams in every facet of business operation. Good interaction among team members has been reported to result in significant return on investment through both productivity gains and increased sales. The perceived importance of this aspect is evident from the following excerpt from a well-known online business newsletter: "Increasing the efficiency and impact of both internal and external

communication can improve team morale while elevating a firm's standing in the eyes of its customers" (Taylor, n.d.).

While it is unavoidable that every business should have its own preferred social media usage (in the most cases Facebook features prominently), it is important that businesses be aware of other social media types that might influence their enterprises. New social media sites are constantly appearing on the scene, and business owners are advised by numerous online consultants to know and use a variety of social platforms to stay relevant, not to mention take advantage of emerging opportunities.

As reported in the preceding chapters, several authors have discussed the value of social media strategies and this is a strong indication that the use of social media is increasingly being regarded as an effective marketing strategy. The main benefit of social media lies in its brand exposure and awareness. The advantage for small businesses lies therein that they can increase their targeted traffic (marketing their business or products or services) which encourages people to visit the business' media site, increases their customer base and enhances profitability.

Social media can provide market insight while at the same time offering insight into competitors' businesses and their brand. The astute business owner will constantly be aware of other companies' use of social media sites.

In summary, appropriate social media utilization enhances customer interaction, satisfaction, service and feedback, while at the same time (possibly consequentially) improving profitability.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations are immediately evident. Businesses need to investigate the application of social media in their enterprise and offer their employees adequate training on the use and advantages of social media. As it is difficult to measure the value of social media for a business, it is necessary to collect the performance data in terms of sales figures as well as brand equity over a long time period. Businesses need to determine objectively whether social media use is more effective than traditional advertising channels (e.g. radio and printed media). They also need to do more research on social media to determine how social media use can be applied to the business to be of more advantage and to improve their productivity and generate more income.

Business owners need to carefully assess the type of social media activities that are applicable to their specific business. They need to identify which key players might play a role to develop, execute and monitor the use of the social media strategy in the company. A business must also develop a social media policy / set of guidelines on social media that should be followed, and employees need to be made aware of possible risks and threats that social media might present to the company. A clear, well-defined strategy is important in any business.

5.5 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

A critical evaluation is necessary to justify the conclusions as well as to gain perspective regarding social media as marketing tool for small, medium and micro enterprises in Gauteng. This critical evaluation should reflect both the positive and negative aspects of the study.

The main criticism of the study is that only SMMEs in Gauteng were contacted for the study and not in the other provinces in South Africa. Another criticism is that there was a lack of response from the target population, which limited the study. A wider representation of SMMEs would have enhanced the outcomes of the study.

From a methodological perspective, this study emphasizes the importance of applying a questionnaire on social media to obtain strong evidence-based data about social media as a marketing tool for SMMEs.

The significance of this study is that it provides challenges and insight to SMMEs in order to ensure successful implementation of different social media platforms that could benefit their enterprise. Based on this study, the researcher could propose a number of recommendations for SMMEs.

5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study provided in-depth background for this study. This was done by means of conducting a literature research on national and international databases (Whitley, 2011: 92). Various authors present a significant body of knowledge about the knowledge of social media, its implementation, commitment, risk factors as well as initiatives of the private sector.

The study contributes to the field of marketing for entrepreneurs as it will help SMMEs to understand their business better and to appreciate how social media can help them realise

its potential to generate more income as well as to improve relationship with customers. Social media use represents a cost-effective marketing solution as it is free and can be applied very easily in order to achieve success in a very short period. Social media provides enterprises the opportunity to present products/ services to customers, but it is also an effective way to listen to customers' grievances and suggestions. Secondly it allows enterprises to recognise professional categories that can lead to the development of more products or services.

Technologies develop so fast that it has far exceeded the traditional approaches. An understanding of the management of effects of social media will help SMMEs to incorporate the different strategies thereby increasing their competitiveness.

This study can provide insight to SMMEs on a national and international level as the study highlights the value and application of various social media platforms. The study describes the importance of social media and the role that SMMEs can play to implement and maintain social media use for their marketing purposes.

Higher institutions of learning as well as various local and national investors will be able to understand social media and how it impacts the performance and growth of enterprises.

This study will therefore contribute to awareness of the importance of social media. It is anticipated that the study will lead to further research regarding social media as marketing tool for SMMEs.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although a fair amount of research has been conducted in the field of social networking sites and social media platforms, more research will be required as there is a constant increase of traffic on the Internet (World Wide Web) and an expansion of information as most people use the Web.

Research is also necessary in order to determine ways in which social media can be promoted and how employees in an enterprise can be trained in different methods to use social media use as a marketing tool. Further research should take more steps to examine the role of social media of SMMEs in other provinces in South Africa, of their perceived use for marketing.

It is recommended that enterprises assess general social media activities; identify key players that will work with social media to develop, execute and monitor the strategy to be followed; and develop a social media policy and set of guidelines

5.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 5

The goal of this chapter was to give a brief summary of the findings that were presented in Chapter 4 (Findings and discussion), and to draw relevant conclusions. A critical evaluation of the study was presented as well as the contribution of the study. Recommendations for further research were also presented. overall, this research project was an invigorating undertaking in the stimulating environment of current marketing practice for SMMEs in South Africa.

To summarise, this study successfully investigated the use of social media as a marketing tool for small, medium and micro enterprises. The researcher concluded that different social media platforms do play a role in SMMES in Gauteng to generate more customers and profit, enhance communication with their customers, increase their brand reputation and add value to the business.

It can also be concluded that there are several limitations in the study such as questionnaires that have only been distributed to SMMEs in Gauteng and no other provinces in South Africa. It was also not possible to discuss all the different social platforms on the Web as there are too many types of social media. Facebook seemed to be the most prominent type of social media that SMMEs in Gauteng use, due to its wide target group that could be reached and due to its cost, being free of cost. It is therefore a cost-effective marketing solution to improve sharing of information, opinions, interest and promoting products and / or services to customers. From the results obtained, it is an effective way to interact with potential customers.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Participant information leaflet



Dear Business Owner/MD/CEO

Participant information leaflet

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of an MBA study. The study will adhere to ethical guidelines and principles of the NWU School of Business and Governance at the North-West University. Participation is voluntary, and you are not pressurised to take part in the study.

Title of the research project: Social media as marketing tool for small, medium and micro enterprises in Gauteng.

Principal investigator: Mrs Chantel Prince
Promotor: Prof Henry Lotz

What is the research about?
Social media is an effective way for SMME's to be pro-active in the market sector in Gauteng, where they:

- can reach and interact immediately with potential customers,
- can keep marketing costs low,
- are assisted to increase revenue streams faster, and
- can easily share skills and information with customers/clients.

Why have you been invited to participate?
You have been invited to participate because your company/ enterprise represents the sample population under study. The questionnaire should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Who will have access to the data and what will happen to the data?

In no way will the results be linked to your company/enterprise as anonymity will be ensured. Confidentiality will be ensured by the way that the data will be captured, and no mention of the company will be included in the study. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

The data from this study will be reported in an academic study and research articles. You will not be personally identified. Only researchers affiliated with the NWU will have access to the data.

Will you be compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No

Should you have any queries, please contact **Mrs Chantel Prince at 082 578 6759 or chantelvisser91@gmail.com**

ANNEXURE B: Questionnaire

We thank you in advance for assisting us by answering the following 23 questions.

PLEASE NOTE: This information will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used on a collective basis to emphasize the magnitude of the economic activity within the area.

SECTION A: BUSINESS INFORMATION

Please indicate your answer by **X** in the appropriate box

Question 1: What is the nature of your industry?

1.	Agriculture	
2.	Mining	
3.	Financial	
4.	Manufacturing	
5.	Real Estate	
6.	Retailers	
7.	Services	
8.	Transportation	
9.	Utilities	

Question 2: How long have you been operating?

1.	0-3 years	
2.	4-8 years	
3.	9-12 years	
4.	13 years or longer	

Question 3: Do you have part-time or full-time employees?

1.	Part-time employees	
2.	Full-time employees	
3.	Both	

B. SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUR ENTERPRISE

Please indicate your answer by **X** in the appropriate box

Question 1: Do you regard social media to be valuable for your enterprise?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Sometimes	
3.	Rarely	
4.	Almost always	

Question 2: To which extent do you use the following social networking sites?

		1. Almost never	2. Rarely	3. Sometimes	4. Almost always
1.	Facebook				
2.	Twitter				
3.	LinkedIn				
4.	Google+				

Question 3: To what extent do you use the following bookmarking sites?

		1 Almost never	2. Rarely	3. Sometimes	4. Almost always
1.	StumbleOn				

Question 4: To what extent do you use the following social news sites?

		1. Almost never	2. Rarely	3. Sometimes	4. Almost always
1.	Digg				
2.	Reddit				

Question 5: To what extent do you use blogging sites, wikis and forums?

		1. Almost never	2. Rarely	3. Sometimes	4.Almost always
1.	Wordpress				
2.	Tumblr				
3.	Wikipedia				

Question 6: To what extent do you use media sharing sites?

		1. Almost never	2. Rarely	3.Sometimes	4.Almost always
1.	YouTube				
2.	Flickr				
3.	Instagram				
4.	Picasssa				
5.	Shutterfly				
6.	Snapfish				
7.	Pinterest				
8.	Vimeo				
9.	Hulu				

Question 7: Do you blog? (Your own personal blog)?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Sometimes	
3.	Rarely	
4.	Almost always	

Question 8: To what extent do you use a microblog such as Twitter?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Sometimes	
3.	Rarely	
4.	Almost always	

Question 9: To what extent do you use virtual sites

		1.Almost never	2.Sometimes	3.Rarely	4.Almost always
1.	Second Life				
2.	Everquest				
3.	Sim City				
4.	World of Warcraft				

Question 10: To what extent do you use the following popular mobile sites?

		1.Almost never	2.Sometimes	3.Rarely	4.Almost always
1.	Evernote				
2.	Hootsuite				
3.	GoToMeeting				
4.	Eventbrite				
5.	Feedly				
6.	Dropbox				

Question 11: Do you use apps (applications)?

		1.Almost never	2.Sometimes	3.Rarely	4.Almost always
1..	iStore				
2.	Amazon.com				
3.	eBay				
4.	Takealot				

Question 12: Do you use QR codes (scanning barcodes)?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Sometimes	
3.	Rarely	
4.	Almost always	

Question 13: Do you use location-based social network sites like a GPS?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Sometimes	
3.	Rarely	
4.	Almost always	

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING IN YOUR ENTERPRISE

Please indicate your answer by **X** in the appropriate empty box

Question 1: Do you agree that social media can play a role in marketing your products/ and or services?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Sometimes	
3.	Rarely	
4.	Almost always	

Question 2: Do you use alternative marketing strategies?

		1.Almost never	2.Sometimes	3.Rarely	4.Almost always
1.	Newspaper advertisements				
2.	Pamphlets				
3.	Word-of mouth				
4.	Networking with other companies				

Question 3: Do you think social media may improve your enterprise turnover?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Rarely	
3.	Sometimes	
4.	Almost always	

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING IN YOUR ENTERPRISE

Please indicate your answer by **X** in the appropriate empty box

Question 1: Do you agree that social media play a role in the following buying decisions?

		1.Almost never	2.Sometimes	3.Rarely	4.Almost always
1..	To learn about new goods and services				
.	To conduct research re services and products				
3.	To share information				
4.	To make final purchase decisions				

Question 2: Do you consider social media to be important to enhance customer relationships?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Rarely	
3.	Sometimes	
4.	Almost always	

Question 3: Do you think social media can be applied to improve your product(s)/ service(s)?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Rarely	
3.	Sometimes	
4.	Almost always	

Question 4: Do you think social media is an effective way to enhance communication in your enterprise?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Rarely	
3.	Sometimes	
4.	Almost always	

Question 5: Do you consider social media to be a tool in improving your brand reputation and image?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Rarely	
3.	Sometimes	
4.	Almost always	

Question 6: Will social media help to enhance better service delivery to your clients?

1.	Almost never	
2.	Rarely	
3.	Sometimes	
4.	Almost always	

Question 7: Which Internet search engines to you use to access information regarding products and or services?

		1.Almost never	2.Sometimes	3.Rarely	4.Almost always
1.	Google				
2.	Yahoo				
3.	Bing				
4.	Ask				
5.	Aol				

ANNEXURE C: Application for research

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8 October 2018

Dr H Lotz

Per e-mail

Dear Dr Lotz,

FEEDBACK – ETHICS APPLICATION: C PRINCE (22386858) – MBA

Your application for ethical clearance – *Social media as marketing tool for small, medium and micro- enterprises in Gauteng* – has been evaluated on the 28th of September 2018.

Outcome

The application is approved as low risk study. Ethics nr: NWU-00689-18-S4

Yours sincerely,



Prof B Linde

Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

ANNEXURE D: Thesis editor

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2018- 11-13

This is to affirm that the document

SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING TOOL FOR SMALL, MEDIUM, AND MICRO ENTERPRISES IN GAUTENG

Chantel Prince

was edited by me with regard to language and style.



Elsie Naudé