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Brand Engagement Patterns of South African Facebook Users

By

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Signature:

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the beautiful memory of my mum
Priscilla Shanmugam.
Whose warm caring smile will forever spur me on
to always be and do my best.

*There is no other love like a mother's love for a child
A love so complete,
Someday must leave
Must say goodbye
Goodbye's the saddest word I'll ever hear
Goodbye's the last time I will hold you near....*

(Dion, 2002)

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Abstract

The evolution of the internet from Web1.0 to Web2.0 ushered in social sharing, and led to the advent of hundreds of social networking tools being used by millions of individuals online. This is the technology on which social networking sites like YouTube, LinkedIn and Facebook are based, and is one of the fastest growing segments of the web. These platforms enable both businesses and individuals to connect with each other with the most popular platform being, Facebook; but is this an effective platform to create brand equity? The focus of this study was to examine the behaviour of South African Facebook users, in order to better understand their interactions with brands and companies on this platform. At the time of this study the only research available was the TNS Digital Life Study which was expensive. No other freely available research regarding how South African Facebook users engaged on this platform was available; this presented a gap in the market which heightened the need for the study. Flowing from the aim, the study objectives and research instrument was constructed.

The sample comprised 532 respondents of which 408 were valid responses; all respondents were South African Facebook users. An electronic questionnaire was created and hosted online at QuestionPro.com and data analysis was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The preferred sampling technique utilised was non-probability convenience sampling. The study researched, amongst other objectives, Facebook user interaction across traditional media platforms. It also investigated television advertisement viewing behaviour the findings of which revealed that only 7 percent of respondents 'Always' watched television advertisements. The objectives of the study were all met and investigated South African users in terms of their frequency of Facebook access, the duration of time spent on this platform, the technology used to access Facebook, whether users would 'Like' a brand and the extent of engagement with brands. Based on the findings it is recommended that Facebook is an effective platform for brands and individuals to interact, and this interaction has an impact on the return on investment for business, and this platform would not replace but enhance traditional marketing tools.

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CHAPTER ONE

Overview of the study

1.1 Introduction

Social media refers to the behaviour and practices of online communities that gather to share opinions, knowledge and information. This is termed as conversational media (Safko and Brake, 2009). Conversational media allows for the ease of creation and transfer of user generated content, in the form of pictures, videos, audio and words. Therefore in its basic sense social media is an enabler of conversation, and is one of the fastest growing segments on the web (Vasaloua, Joinsona and Courvoisier, 2010). Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlighted that social media has ushered in the ability for one person to communicate with “hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them.” One of the “trickiest” things to get right is a Facebook brand page (Handley, 2010). Social media is becoming a board-level issue, as it is being viewed as an opportunity for growth (Nutley, 2010). This chapter will describe the rationale for this study as well as the research problem, the aim and objectives of the study, the limitations of this study and the content of the other chapters in this study.

1.2 Motivation for the study

Information sharing on Facebook is not well understood and investigations of this platform have had a predominant focus on social networking connections (Vasaloua, Joinsona and Courvoisier, 2010). On researching the topic of social networking, it is very easy to get overwhelmed by the statistics regarding the number of users on social platforms. However, for companies to successfully engage on these platforms requires a definite business strategy, but this is not a one size fits all strategy, so what may work for one company may not necessarily work for another company. Hosea (2011) stated that there are boundless opportunities to engage in social media. However, the enduring question is; “what do we use it for?” Is the brand trying to communicate messages or is it trying to listen to customers, or for measuring and driving advocacy or customer service. It leaves one with more questions than answers (Hosea, 2011).

Social media as a marketing platform is relatively new, in South Africa. Some of the international companies that effectively use these channels are Starbucks, Pringles, Blackberry, iPhone, GAP to name a few (Li, 2009). Social media creates dialogue with consumers, so for the first time a company will be given a voice via an identity that will be created on these platforms. Therefore there is a paradigm shift, from consumers entering the retail environment, to one where the retailers are entering the consumer environment (Shankar, Venkatesh, Hofacker and Naik, 2010). According to Porter (2004) more online groups are being formed by the fans of brands, these communities are established and maintained by members.

As will be discussed there are a host of social media tools, therefore investigation will be undertaken based on Facebook in South Africa. Facebook has close to 400 million users, and has claimed that 50 percent of active users log into the site daily (Stross, 2010). Interesting to note that by mid 2011 the number of Facebook users world-wide stood at over 700 million (SocialBakers.com, 2011). Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 will make evident that any previous research which has been conducted is based on the United States and the United Kingdom, this represented a gap in Africa and particularly South Africa. Therefore this study will research Facebook user behaviour, in South Africa, with particular interest in the area of user interaction or engagement with brands. This research will provide valuable insights for business, and will make available the demographics of the South African Facebook consumer. This will allow for business to develop a more focused approach to engaging with Facebook users.

1.3 Focus of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the behaviour of South African Facebook users, in order to better understand user interactions with brands or companies on this platform. Emphasis was placed on the frequency of Facebook access, as well as engagement across traditional advertising platforms such as television advertisements, newspapers and magazines. The reason for only considering South African users was to keep in line with the study aim.

1.4 Problem statement

This research is explorative in nature as there is no freely available research regarding South African Facebook user behaviour; other than total number of users, their gender and age groupings. Research that was available could only be accessed at a cost, and due to budget constraints this could not be purchased. Integration of social media as part of the marketing mix has not developed very much, as not enough research had been conducted into how much time is spent by consumers across media such as television, newspaper, magazines and social media (Nutley, 2010). This study will aim to satisfy the lack of research across these areas and with the literature review and recommendations will make a case for whether Facebook should indeed be integrated into the marketing mix.

1.5 Objectives

This study was designed to obtain an understanding of South African Facebook user behaviour and to determine if users would interact with brands or company's on this platform. In order to achieve this aim, the following study objectives were developed:

- To determine the frequency of usage of Facebook in South Africa.
- To determine the time spent on Facebook.
- To establish what technology is used to access Facebook.
- To determine if Facebook users would 'LIKE' a brand.
- To determine the categories of companies or brands that users engage with on Facebook.
- To establish whether Facebook fans of a brand would recommend the brand to their Facebook friends.
- To investigate reasons why users would 'UNLIKE' a brand.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions channelled the research process, and are the result of the research objectives that were presented in the prior section:

- How often do you access your Facebook profile?

- Each time you log into your Facebook profile, approximately how many minutes do you spend online?
- How do you mainly access your Facebook profile?
- Have you ever included a company or brand to the interest section of your profile page on Facebook (or have you 'Liked' or 'Fanned' a brand on Facebook)?
- Which of the following categories of companies have you 'Liked' on Facebook?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend a company /brand that you 'Like' to your friends?

1.7 Limitations of the study

A possible strength and weakness of circulating the link to the questionnaire on Facebook is the viral nature of this platform which is far reaching, and allowed for a more than adequate sample of respondents to be reached. However, due to the viral nature there was no control as to where respondents were located, or to ensure whether rural users formed part of the sample. Chapter Six will list and discuss the limitations of this study in greater detail.

1.8 Chapter outline

This study will be presented in six chapters. This chapter will set the scene for the research; and present an overview of key areas that relate to obtaining an understanding of South African Facebook user behaviour, and their engagement with brands. The motivation for this study delivered direction in terms of the research gap regarding Facebook users in South Africa, which was the basis of the study aim, which then channelled the study objectives and development of research questions. The details of the five other chapters are as follows:

Chapter Two: will present the evolution of the Internet to Web2.0, which made social sharing possible. Social media platforms and their uses will be discussed and attention will be placed on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. The growing strategic role that Facebook is playing in business with the view of integration into marketing will be debated.

Chapter Three: discusses the aim and objectives of this study with attention to the methodology that will be applied. Non-probability convenience sampling was utilised and an in-depth discussion of this method and other techniques will be presented. The research instrument in terms of development, hosting and analysis will be discussed.

Chapter Four: will present the findings of this study with general analysis of Facebook users' demographics and culminate in a comprehensive analysis per study objective. The statistical analysis will present both descriptive as well as inferential statistics. An in-depth analysis of all the objectives will be presented; and important factors that shed insight into why and how users interact with brands will be discussed.

Chapter Five: will discuss and bring to culmination the empirical findings as presented in Chapter Four with linkages to the literature review from Chapter Two. Key findings revealed will provide an understanding of Facebook user behaviour in South Africa and whether Facebook is an effective branding tool.

Chapter Six: will present the key findings of this study, along with future research opportunities as well as the limitations of this study. Even though it is beyond the scope of this study, guidelines for the integration of social media into business will be presented.

1.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the rationale and aim for the study, which guided the study objectives as well as the questions in the research instrument, all of which defined the area of focus for this study. The limitations of the study were briefly discussed and an overview of the content for each of the subsequent chapters was introduced. Chapter two will present the literature reviewed for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Facebook and Brand Engagement

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin with broad definitions of social networks, and will serve to expand on how the Internet has evolved to the stage where social sharing is possible. The chapter will introduce social media, provide information that will facilitate the understanding of social networking and then present the platform of Facebook. An in-depth discussion of the integration of Facebook into business strategy will be developed linking this platform as a marketing tool. The debate of Facebook's effectiveness as a branding tool will cover areas of barriers of integration of Facebook into marketing and will culminate in a presentation of brand successes and mishaps on this platform.

2.2 Evolution of the Internet

Social networks are seen as spaces where people with mutual interests come to meet people with similar interests, this is done so that they can "vent" or express themselves (Weber, 2009). There are online tools that companies can use to communicate with people, and present the company or brand with an online brand presence that will ensure that the company is heard (Weber, 2009). Before the tools that a company can use to build their brand presence online can be discussed, one needs to draw attention to the evolution of the Internet.

In the early days of the Internet no one knew how popular the Internet would become, it was even thought that it would remain as a tool for the US Department of Defence and academia. The primary use of the Internet between 1960 and 1980 was by the US Department of Defence in order to transfer files and email (Baltzan and Philips; 2009). The use of the Internet was limited to government employees, researchers, university professors as well as students (Baltzan and Philips; 2009). The World Wide Web (WWW) is a global hypertext system that uses the Internet as its transport mechanism. Whilst HTTP (Hypertext transfer protocol) "is the Internet standard that supports the exchange of information on the

WWW.” (Baltzan and Philips, 2009:91). The introduction of the World Wide Web changed the purpose and use of the Internet.

Until 1991 the WWW remained text based; but in 1991 the first website using HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) was built by Tim Berners-Lee. A new computer programme developed by Marc Andreessen, called the NCSA Mosaic, was a browser that made it easier to access the websites that started appearing. Websites soon contained video clips and sound files other than just text (Baltzan and Philips, 2009:91). These pages were written in HTML which had links that allowed the user to move between documents, even if these documents were saved on different computers. The HTML text was read by Web browsers and converted into a web page (Internet Pioneers, 2005). The Internet had grown from a few users to 1 billion by 2005 (Baltzan and Philips, 2009). According to Internetworldstats.com (2010), there were approximately 2 billion users world-wide. This has nearly doubled in a space of 5 years. Figure 2.1 illustrates the distribution of Internet users globally with the percentage per continent, from Asia through to Oceania / Australia.

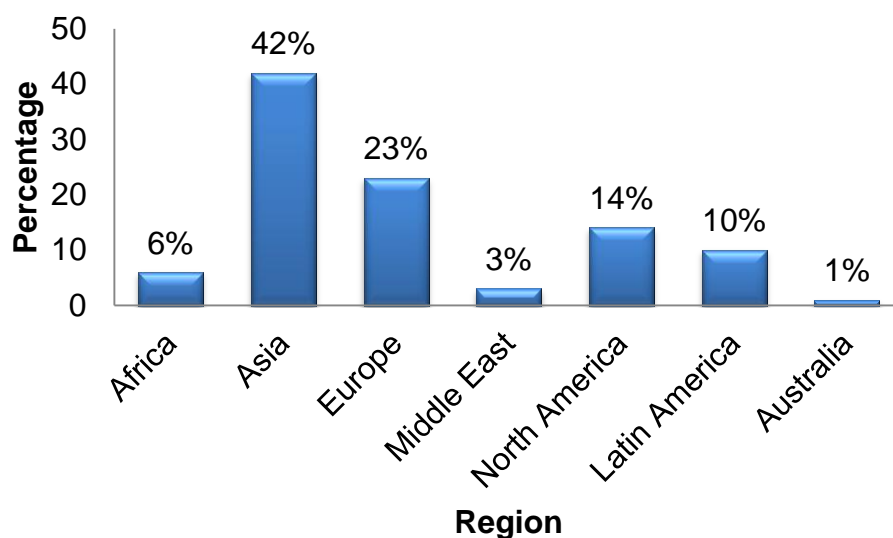


Figure 2.1: World Internet User Distribution by Region for 2009

Adapted from www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

Static websites are identified as Web 1.0, where the user could view and obtain information from the website, but could not interact with the developer, information or the website itself (Click and Petit, 2010). According to Click and Petit (2010) the phrase Web 1.0 was not established as there was nothing to compare it too, therefore prior to 2004 the “web was just the web”. Web 1.0 was represented by “Internet-enabled delivered content” and the transition to Web 2.0 is characteristic of “participation based Internet communities” (Adebanjo and Michaelides; 2010). The next section will detail Web 2.0 and the functionality that this has heralded.

2.3 Web 2.0

Click and Petit (2010) noted that Web 2.0 is “commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web”. This allows for interaction amongst users; as well as for editing or adding content to the website. Web 2.0 is the foundation for the “next generation of the Internet” (Musser and O’Reilly, 2006; Baltzan and Philips, 2009). Web 2.0 is distinguished by “user participation, openness and network effects” – a more mature and distinctive medium according to Musser and O’Reilly (2006). The main aim of Web 2.0 and social media is to enable online communities to talk to one another, and that the two terms were closely associated (Safko and Brake, 2009). Click and Petit (2010), quoted the example that Wikipedia and Encyclopaedia Britannica are representative of Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 respectively. Thereby facilitating the editing of the Wikipedia articles, but the Encyclopaedia Britannica articles are static. Therefore the user can only consume the information, but not respond to or change it in any way.

Web 2.0 has enhanced the sharing of information and collaboration amongst users and is flourishing with the development of social networking sites (Adebanjo and Michaelides, 2010). The sharing of links and videos, comments on each other’s photos, the finding and maintaining contact with friends and much more has been made possible with Web 2.0 applications (Click and Petit, 2010). Several social media sites are founded on Web 2.0, example Facebook, You Tube, LinkedIn, MySpace, Wikipedia, iTunes, Twitter, Survey Monkey to name a few (Chaffy and

Smith, 2008; Safko and Brake, 2009). Web 2.0 is characterised on the basis that many of the applications; support the participation of communities, allows for user generated content, such as blogs or Wikipedia, which is a collaborative encyclopedia, and You Tube. Web 2.0 also allowed for the rating of content, which is indicative of the quality and relevance of the content (Chaffy and Smith, 2008).

Time Magazine (2007) substantiated the importance of Web 2.0 in 2007 with its 50 Best Websites article; where the highest ranking website, StumbleUpon.com, was in this position based on the criteria that it enabled users to share and tag websites that may be of interest to their friends. The results of a 2007 McKinsey Quarterly (2007) survey, regarding Web 2.0 Technologies found that 2847 executives responses was indicative of extensive interest but appeared quite guarded in Web 2.0 technologies. Adebajo and Michaelides (2010) highlighted that the defining features of Web 2.0 is that it facilitates an participation that allows end users to actively create and share knowledge with the use of connectivity tools. Web 2.0 was the beginning of “social software”, which allows for virtual communities to be built and maintained and allows users to express themselves and participate in dialogue through weblogs, wikis and other participatory forums, (Wilson, 2006).

Web 2.0 is characterised by an “open, trusting, service-based online society”, which provides a unique platform for collaborating (Adebajo and Michaelides, 2010). The defining features of Web 2.0 was that the technology is open, interactive, collaborative and participatory (Xu, Fenfei, and Heting, 2009). Whilst Click and Petit (2010) highlighted that the important aspects of Web 2.0 is photo as well as video sharing especially with sites like Flickr and YouTube. The web is still evolving with Web 3.0 and Web 4.0, nearing release (Chaffy and Smith, 2008; Safko and Brake 2009).

Equipped with a brief history of the evolution of the Internet, that allows for social sharing, the next section will allow for a broad understanding of social media.

2.4 Overview of Social Media

Social media refers to the behaviour and practices among online communities. These communities gather to share opinions, knowledge and information using what is termed as conversational media (Safko and Brake, 2009). Conversational media is defined as web based applications that allow for the ease of creation and transfer of content, in the form of words, picture, videos or audio (Safko and Brake, 2009). Social media tools enable interaction from emailing to instant messaging to photo tagging, and the more popular sites allow connection with friends through multiple interaction methods (Click and Petit, 2010). In the most basic sense social media enables conversation (Safko and Brake, 2009:4).

According to Vasaloua, Joinsona and Courvoisier (2010) platforms of social media are one of the fastest growing segment of the Web and hold the potential as valuable sources of information. Social sharing is the result of social media, which the broadcasting of our activities and thoughts; it's a "sociological phenomenon, accelerating at light speed" (Cook, Jansen and Sobel, 2010:2). Safko and Brake (2010) propound that social media is also about how conversation can be "prompted, promoted and monetised", and that it has changed the way people live and conduct business.

In order for a company or brand to maximise impact with customers and potential customers, the brand will need to know how to utilise specific social media strategies, so as to stimulate conversation about the brand (Safko and Brake, 2009). There are thousands of social media tools that will allow users to share their feelings, beliefs or attitudes and some of the social media tools compete with each other. Safko and Brake (2009), have classified social media into fifteen categories based on their primary function. The emphasis of this dissertation will be placed on the social networking, in particular that of Facebook. An overview of social networking will be undertaken in the following section.

2.4.1 What is Social Networking

Chaffey and Smith (2008) stated that an online social network is a site that enables communication between different consumers. Typically this means that

comments are posted and replied to, it also allows for the sending of messages as well as the rating and tagging of content. In the most general sense, social networking is the formation and building of online communities (Click and Petit, 2010; Safko and Brake, 2009). Bragg (2006) defined social networks as a variety of tools that allows groups to interact and collaborate, enhancing social connections, as well as the exchange of information, all in a web-based environment. The users of social networks are both authors as well as readers of content; whilst the social aspects of these tools are collaboration and sharing of information (Bragg, 2006).

Social networking tools allow for the sharing of information about ones self, interests, with friends and others (Safko and Brake, 2009). Most of the social networking tools, allow for a user to create a profile then post content for example; text, video, audio, photos or to link to things that correspond to their areas of interest (Safko and Brake, 2009; Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Social networking applications and websites allow for personal relationships to be supported and maintained (van Zyl, 2009). Shu and Chuang (2011) identified 12 features of social network sites as “meeting new friends, entertainment, maintaining relationships, understanding and learning, searching for friends, social involvement, trust in websites, trust in other members, information searching, costs, quality of friends, and attitudes.”

Currently there are several social networking tools which service a vast array of interests, in support of pre-existing social relations. Many social networking tools help strangers to connect to other users with shared needs, interests or even political views as an example (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). A social network where the exchange of information functions as social interaction is termed virtual communities (Andersen, 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002). Hagel and Armstrong (1997) said that virtual communities are computer-mediated spaces where emphasis is on communication and content generated by members.

Safko and Brake (2009) listed the more popular social networking tools as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, Friendster and Orkut. Twitter has 106 million registered users with approximately 15 million active users on Twitter on a regular basis (Miller, 2010). LinkedIn has in excess of 50 million members

worldwide (eConsultancy, 2010). These platforms allow for users to create profiles and to network with each other across 150 industries, with the purpose to provide an online database of professionals (Safko and Brake, 2009). Flickr hosts more than 4 billion images, and Wikipedia has in excess of 14 million articles (eConsultancy, 2010). MySpace had 122 million unique visitors, as well as 67 percent of the social networking market space in the United States. An explanation as to why social networks such as YouTube, Facebook, MySpace and Flickr are rapidly adopted and accepted is due to being user-friendly (Safko and Brake, 2009). According to Nielsen research findings (*cited by Tan, 2010*); social networks grew by nearly 30 percent from 2008 to 2009 (from 244.4 to 314.5 million users). The report also found that in the month of February 2010 users spent 5.5 hours on social networks, this is indicative of a 2 hour increase in time versus February 2009.

Therefore companies, need to understand and be part of the social networking phenomenon, because these social tools have millions of people in one place, at one time, with common interests (Safko and Brake, 2009). This is basically a captive audience, which is free from all the clutter that sometimes surrounds traditional media. They further posit that the best way to understand social networks is to first participate in one. Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlighted that social media has ushered in the ability for one person to communicate with “hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them.” This has resulted in the magnification of consumer-to-consumer communications in the marketplace. An overview of Facebook will serve to provide information about this social media platform.

2.4.2 An Overview of Facebook

Facebook is “a social utility that helps people share information and communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and co-workers” (Facebook.com, 2010). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) the start of social networks was with Six.Degrees in 1997, followed by Livejournal, Friendster, LinkedIn, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube and Facebook in 2007. Within a short time span Facebook

attracted a large number of registered users. Before preceding it is essential to provide a list of Facebook terminology; reflected in Table 2.2.

Facebook Terminology	
Term	Description
Like	This is a social plug-in feature that shows as a link next to something you see on Facebook. Its purpose is to let others know that the user appreciates that something; whether it is a comment, video etc.
Profile	A profile is different from a page, and has different capabilities and features. It is used by individuals and displays their personal information, and their interaction with their friends.
Friend	An individual that has joined a profile, generally by invitation.
Status Update	Allows users to create a micro-blog informing their friends about their current activities.
Wall	This is an area in a Facebook profile, where friends post comments, links, photos and more. This area is where most of the conversations take place.
Page	A page is different from a profile. Instead of being created by an individual, it is created and intended for business and is used by companies, brands, artists etc. Facebook 'Likes' are basically fans ways of saying they approve of your brand, product or what has been posted.
Fan	Is an individual that has joined a 'Page', because they 'Like' what is represented by the 'page'.

Table 2.1: Facebook Terminology and Definitions

Mac, A., 2010. Power Friending, Demystifying Social Media to Grow your Buisness. Penguin Books, United Sates of America.

Facebook began as a social networking site for Harvard students; it then expanded to high school pupils, corporate professionals and eventually anyone with online access globally (Cassidy, 2006). Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) and Lockyer and Patterson (2008) listed the applications available on Facebook which allows for communication, the sharing of information, creation of a friend list,

photo albums, online games and the formation of social interest groups. Basically photos can be shared and friends tagged on photos, messages sent, chat, writing on friends walls, etc. Stutzman (2006) proposed that Facebook is used to waste time, learn about other users, maintenance of social communication and follow friends updates. Ellison et al. (2007) stated that Facebook can be used for business purposes, to form new business relationships and maintain relationships already in existence. In so doing users with a shared interest, in the company or brand are connected. Table 2.3 illustrates Facebook statistics, as presented by eConsultancy (2010).

Facebook Statistics
Growth from 250 million to 350 million within a 6 month period.
More than 35 million Facebook users update their status each day.
Photo uploads to Facebook have increased by more than 100%. There are approximately 2.5 billion uploads to the site each month.
In 2009 the average Facebook user had 120 friends; in 2010 this had increased to 130.
More than 65 million Facebook users access the site through cell phones.
Each week on Facebook, more than 3.5 billion pieces of content are shared via (web links, news stories, blog posts, etc.)
There are over 1 000 000 combined users monthly across the more than 250 Facebook applications.
Facebook Connect has been implemented in more than 80 000 websites since 2008 (Dec.). And across these external sites there are more than 60 million Facebook users that engage with it on a monthly basis.

Table 2.2: Facebook Statistics

Adapted from eConsultancy (2010), <http://trak.in/tags/business/2010/02/01/social-media-statistics-facebook-twitter-flickr-linkedin/>

According to Krynauw (2010); the statistics of Facebook in South Africa is that there are 2.8 million monthly users, with a 50 percent daily return. The current average age of Facebook users, in the USA, is over the age of 35, originally it was mainly popular with young adults (Stross, 2010). According to McEleny (2010b),

Facebook stated that the fastest growing demographic, in the UK, was the over 35 year olds, this is an important age group on whom to secure advertising spend.

According to Nielsen Online statistics (*cited* in McEleny, 2009a), 75.4 percent of time spent on social networks, in the UK, is accounted for by Facebook. This was a 63 percent increase in 2009 versus 2008, and Facebook had the largest audience of the top 75 social media sites. Nielsen Online (*cited* in McEleny, 2009a) further estimated that the average heavy user spent over 125 hours on Facebook for a 12 month period. Findings from Nielsen UK (*cited* in McEleny, 2010a) revealed that for most age groups, Facebook is the web in the UK. The results identified that Facebook is the most visited site in the social media category, followed by YouTube and then Wikipedia. The 18 to 34 year age category made up 35% of Facebook's audience, whilst the 35 to 49 year olds made up 29%, the over 50 year olds 24% and users under the age of 18 years accounted for 12% of the market (McEleny, 2010b).

The statistics of users of social media is overwhelming therefore it is vital that brands are able to effectively engage with users via social media platforms. According to Williamson (2010) companies need to change their point of view that social network users will not notice marketers as they are too busy engaging with friends. She further claims that brand interactions are real, valuable and growing. On Facebook users create profiles that detail their personal information, from relationship status, members of their family, birthdays, to religion. In order to grow their social network, Facebook users 'friend' other users.

According to Fowler and Iwatani (2011) approximately two million websites have integrated with Facebook. Companies like Sony and Polaroid are integrating devices to Facebook, Sony's Handycam and Bloggie Camera and a future digital camera for Polaroid will include the ability to upload photos and videos directly to Facebook. It should be noted that the devices are not connected to the Internet, therefore users will have to tag selected photos or videos so that once connected to a computer these will be uploaded. The new Kinect, which is an Xbox gaming accessory; allows for the player to post their photos on Facebook. Facebook's 2010 revenue was estimated at \$2 billion; mostly from advertising but also from

social games, for which Facebook sells virtual currency to users, to pay for game elements (Fowler and Iwatani,2011).

Facebook statistics are overwhelming; therefore the next section will discuss integration of Facebook within the business environment.

2.5 Business usage of Facebook

According to Hosea (2011) social media as an opportunity, is difficult to define, but it is becoming a strategic platform that can change business. Click and Petit (2010) propound that organisations have become a massive force in Facebook as well. The functionality of Facebook is such that users can 'like' their favourite, television programmes, authors, supermarkets and more, provided these companies have created a Facebook profile. Once the user 'likes' a brand it is updated to the users' wall, under 'Likes'. Therefore when these brands promote their products / services via their Facebook page, updates appear on the fans wall. The Wall is then viewed by the users' friends, and the friends can choose to 'Like' the brand as well. This is termed viral (Click and Petit, 2010).

Primary or first connections are people the user knows directly and to whom they are immediately linked. Second degree connections are the contacts that people you know know, and third degree connections are the contacts that they know and so on. This continuous linking allows the member to see connections and be part of a trusted network that may have been impossible to establish (Safko and Brake, 2009). Safko and Brake (2009:44) are proponents of brands becoming "viral, innovative, non-traditional and aggressive in how they seek new business".

Foux (*cited* in Mangold and Faulds, 2009) said that a brand advertisement, via traditional promotion elements, is perceived to be trusted less than information from peers on social media platforms. This notion was quantified by Qualman (2011) who stated that peer recommendations are trusted by 90 percent of consumers, and brand advertisements are only trusted by 14 percent of consumers. Similarly Safko and Brake (2009) and Weber (2009) claimed that

social networks develop the trust that can build influence among customers. Safko and Brake (2009) are of the opinion that by developing and cultivating networks a company or brand could create the opportunity to develop the trust that could result in more sales (Safko and Brake, 2009). Safko and Brake (2009) list the three rules of social media for business as; social media is about enabling conversations, the conversations cannot be controlled, but one can influence them and influence is the foundation on which viably economical relationships are built.

Social media has heralded a new way of thinking, for businesses, where customers, and potential customers, could be converted into “collaborators” or brand ambassadors, which can result in the creation of an optimal environment for a business to increase profits (Safko and Brake, 2009). Brand ambassadors are users that will willingly promote a company or brand to friends (Macias and Vasquez, 2010). Whilst Hosea (2011) uses the term “superusers”; there are many “superusers” in the United Kingdom that work with different brands. This is seen as a “nice” way to develop a story with a brand (Hosea, 2011).

Handley (2010) said that social media is not only about watching amusing videos or chatting to friends; but rather it is a serious marketing tool for companies. The findings of research conducted by interviewing 11000 British consumers, aged 15 to 75 years of age, in order to determine their value to marketers revealed the following; close to half (48%) of the respondents had a Facebook account, demonstrating that a significant audience could be reached by this platform, more than 50 percent of users on Twitter and Facebook had ‘liked’ or ‘friended’ brands. This interaction included visiting the brands profile page. These users were identified as brand engagers. The brand engagers claimed to be more passionate about social networking versus activities such as shopping, clubbing or meeting friends at the pub (Handley, 2010).

Even though this is good news for brands, one of the “trickiest” things to get right is a Facebook page (Handley, 2010). There is a level of “intrusion” from brands on these platforms. In addition it is difficult as brands do not compete with each other, but compete with people that are enjoying each other’s company, by sharing photos and having conversations. It has been found that 20 percent of brand

engagers are receptive to advertising; they are receptive to online adverts that are based on their social media profiles. Even though 20 percent may seem “underwhelming” research is indicative that brand engagers are receptive to the right messages by two and a half times more than their counterparts. The most valuable insight from this research is that nearly 90 percent of brand engagers spent money online (Handley, 2010).

According to content distributor GoViral (in the UK), the sharing of content on Facebook is “significantly more effective than other social networks, as a platform” This is based on the number of shares and comments on Facebook which is almost five times higher than on Twitter. In the third quarter of 2010, the interactions of video content distributed, on Facebook was 5.64 percent per 1000 views, whilst Twitter resulted in 0.75 percent, (McEleny, 2010a).

According to New Media Age (2011), 2010 was the year that social media was taken seriously with the view that it affects business on every level, rather than just customer service, public relations or marketing. Several London based companies had some success experimenting with social media. This is predominantly in service-based sectors, and those that benefited from high level of online sales. However, sectors such as FMCG (Fast moving consumable goods), need to understand the power of social media as a branding tool and its place in the branding mix. Examples of UK brands, John Lewis and Sky, have implemented social media with buy-in at board level or weekly meetings with managing directors, representing each part of the business, are scheduled especially for social media. New Media Age (2011) further argues that this will be the key trend for 2011, as well. Nutley (2010) stated that social media is becoming a board-level issue, as it is being viewed as an opportunity for growth.

According to Tan (2010), every company should have some sort of social media policy and strategy. Should a company not have a social media strategy, which in itself is a strategy; consumers are going to speak about the brand online, whether or not the company is involved. Social media is useful as a marketing tool, because if a brand connects with users that show interest in the company or

products, then the brand will have a greater probability of attaining loyal customers, who will recommend the brand to their friends (Malczyk, 2011).

The following 4 areas will further discuss the broad role of Facebook in marketing and the difficulty to integrate this tool in companies. Thereafter Facebook integration into the marketing mix as well as brand successes and mishaps on this platform will be discussed.

2.5.1 The Role of Facebook in Marketing

The primary purpose of marketing is to build and influence relationships between a company and its stakeholders, that is current and prospective consumers, employees, shareholders, the government etc. (Weber, 2009). Marketing is less about marketing to someone, but to be effective, marketing is about building relationships and getting consumers involved (Macias and Vasquez, 2010). Safko and Brake (2009) noted that once the needs, wants and desires of the target market is understood, then the company needs to deliver products or services that meet that need. Traditional techniques to reach the target market will be less effective in the future, according to Weber (2009). According to Hosea (2011), Royal Mail of London said that their usage of social media is in a tactical sense and that it would grow and get better. However, trying to monetise in isolation is incorrect; rather the whole engagement with the consumer is important. Spanning not only the job of just marketing but extends from the salesperson through to content creator.

According to Weber (2009), 90 percent of people who can avoid television adverts will do so, and he further posited that there was only an 18 percent positive return on investment of television advertisement campaigns. Therefore people are doing their best to avoid television advertisements; as they “do not want to be sold to”. Whilst Safko and Brake (2009) were of the opinion that adverts via Internet and social media platforms allowed the user to be connected with information that avoided traditional marketing communication. They further posited that traditional advertising is not setting a company apart, but rather is being ignored and is

becoming irrelevant. However, these findings and opinions of authors are based on the US market.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the South African media spend for the period 2008 to 2010, across the major advertising media (newspaper, television, radio, Internet). Analysis of traditional media tools reflected that there was a decline in spend, across magazines, newspapers and radio between 2008 and 2009 however, growth in all 3 media for 2010 was mostly attributed to the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Newspaper circulation figures in South Africa in 2009; experienced a decline of 2.57% of daily newspapers, weekly newspapers declined by 8.92% and the weekend newspapers declined by 2.55% (Benjamin, 2009). Television spend in South Africa has reflected growth, as well as Internet spend.

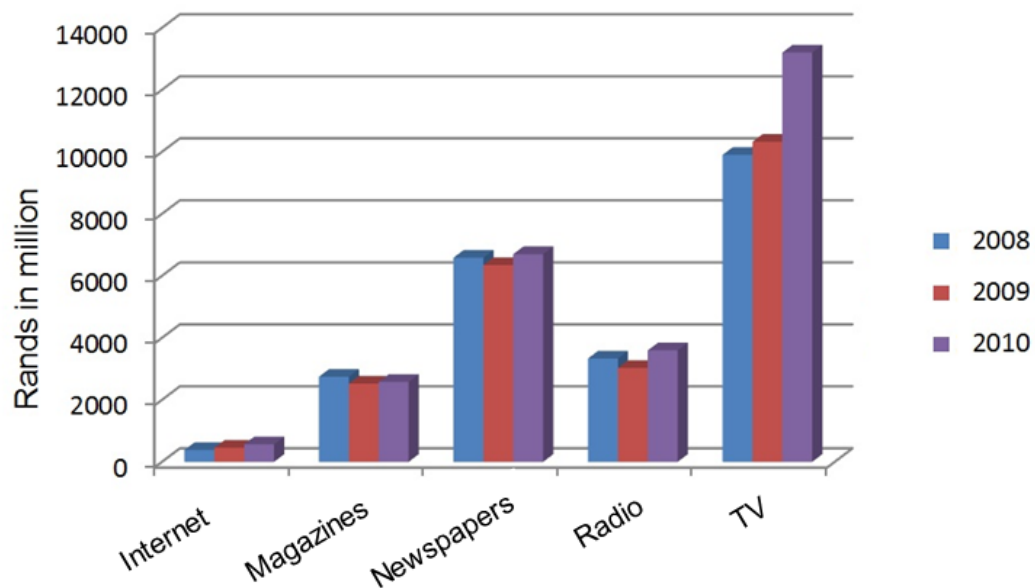


Figure 2.2: South African Media Spend 2008 - 2010

Adapted from Neilsens SA; Carol (2011). Share of Voice power point presentation, Durban, March 2011.

Vel and Sharma (2010) said there has been rapid change in communications tools. No longer can an assumption be made that the traditional promotional tools are the most effective form of communication. The digital environment has showed high growth, and exposed new opportunities and challenges to marketers.

In South Africa there are 8.5 million online browsers, and currently 4.1 million Facebook users. At the same time there are 34 million unique active mobile SIM connections, with 9 million browsers using the mobile Internet (Rhoda, 2010). There is evidence that this medium is cost effective, versus that of traditional advertising media. Nike's chief marketing officer, is of the belief that Facebook "is the equivalent for us to what TV was for marketers back in the 1960s. It's an integral part of what we do now" (Rifkin, 2010).

Current media used in marketing is categorised as broadcast (television and radio), outdoor, print, digital, in-store and others like cinemas, exhibitions, and product placement (Vel and Sharma, 2010). They further posit that social marketing media is revolutionising communication and presents marketers with the decision to either use these tools or perish. Vel and Sharma (2010) further noted that effective use of these platforms, by marketers, can be used as a catalyst for new product introduction, viral marketing, obtaining feedback from the market and varied other marketing objectives. Weber (2009:36) noted that; "marketing on the social web is not about you getting your story out; it's about your customers". Basically one needs to earn trust, credibility, and be more transparent. He further posited that building brand equity is moving away from brand essence and brand recall to the brand being a "living, changing thing", especially where the brand is based on the dialogue that you have with your customers and prospective customers; the stronger the dialogue the stronger the brand. Weber (2009) highlighted the importance of the social web as it allows for dialogue to be more efficient and less expensive.

Time Magazine (2007) remarked that social networking sites are next generation sites that offer fresh, dynamic ways to entertain and inform using cutting edge applications that allow for the creation, consumption, sharing or discussing all forms of media spanning video clips to blogs. The BBC (2006) noted that 100 million videos are viewed daily on You Tube. Cook et al. (2010) quoted the example of a platform called Blippy that will allow a user to connect to their social system and share what they purchased and how much it costs at retailers. Therefore knowing what people are buying when, and how much they are willing to spend is of valuable information to marketers. Insights of online user behaviour

and dynamics has enabled the revelation of clear patterns and regularities with respect to the popularity and activity within social networks, all of which is made possible by the large scale electronic data bases on the web (Hu, Han and Wang 2009).

In order to effectively communicate with the digital audience, marketers need to learn to market to the social web in a new way (Weber 2009:3). Therefore, rather than talking at customers in a monologue via traditional media (such as magazines, newspapers, TV adverts, and radio) where the communication is to a large extent one way; social media allows for dialogue but on a large scale (Weber, 2009:pp.4-5). According to Hosea (2011) this would require a completely different mind-set from brands, which is out-side-in, entails being driven by customers and involves giving up control. The power of “words, pictures, video and audio can inform and inspire; just as they can influence and incite” (Safko and Brake, 2009). Therefore, Web 2.0 could be considered “a social phenomenon characterised by decentralisation of authority” (Adebanjo and Michaelides, 2010). Whilst TNS (2010) are proponents of “Digital is big news with untold riches on offer for the victors”.

However, the challenges faced are complex and unique to each company. A few of the challenges is that consumers on these platforms take brand control from the company, it is human nature that people talk, gossip and complain; and in the new world of social media, brands have virtually no control (Safko and Brake, 2009). Mangold, Faulds (2009) said that traditional marketing communication tools allowed for brands to have a high degree of control, but social media stands in contrast to this. The power that medium puts in the hands of users is that bloggers have no editorial constraints and with access to the entire web; their posts can build up or tear down the reputation of companies, their products or services (Safko and Blake, 2009:127).

Businesses have created Facebook pages to get closer to their target market (Safko and Brake, 2009). In a business context, the basic goal of social media is to engage with people. Engagement, according to Safko and Brake (2009) leads to a desired outcome; these could be a strong recommendation from a customer

to a friend, or an additional purchase. They noted that the four ways to engage people with social media is through communication, collaboration, education and entertainment. Handley (2010) suggested that as users spend more time on social networks, so too will this space become more important to brands.

Since emphasis is placed on dialogue instead of monologue and marketers are engaging on social media platforms on users' territory, a hard sell is not needed and may also be seen as clutter (Malczyk, 2011). Companies or brands will have to learn a new way of speaking to customers, in order to differentiate themselves so as to be fresh and exciting (Safko and Brake, 2010). Therefore, companies will have to integrate themselves into the very fabric of what customers do daily. Companies should embrace social media networks in order to build a company that embraces conversation and transparency. Writing for social media is different from traditional media; it is much more of an iterative process. A final product is not reached, but rather something is developed over time. Questions are posed in order to start conversation within that online community, the length of what is being written is also different (Tan, 2010).

According to Handley (2010) directing users to branded social pages needs to be carried out with care. The recommended method is competitions or click through virals, which will channel brand engagers towards the brands social media in a relevant manner. Simply uploading a television advertisement may not be enough, as one can only anticipate the viral uptake, which may not necessarily materialise. A further suggestion to get the attention of brand engagers is to ask the user to 'Like' a brand on Facebook and then enter a competition to win cash. And then these brand engagers are rewarded with further prize draw entries for getting their friends to sign up as well (Handley, 2010).

Research found that just over a third of brand engagers also look to their social circle for affirmation and inspiration. Those that the brand engagers look up to should also be a target for marketers, they are termed advocates or influencers (Handley, 2010). Handley (2010) recommends that if a brand can get these advocates to promote the brand, then this is a far more effective medium than advertising to someone. This was reinforced by Tan (2010) where social media is

a vital way for users to make a decision before purchase; as they will search and often end up on blogs or forums. And according to Qualman (2011) 34 percent of bloggers post opinions about products and brands

2.5.2 Barriers to Facebook integration in Marketing

Marketers cited the most significant barrier to social media adoption was the inability to measure return on investment (ROI). Social media marketing requires qualitative measurement rather than quantitative metrics, to which marketers are more familiar (Fisher, 2009). The metrics provided judge where advertising should be placed when planning a campaign and they do not only measure engagement but also how users are engaging. This will allow brands to mention the number of people talking about their brand, their level of passion as well monitoring the discussion around the brand and will outline areas around which the brand can engage (Fisher, 2009).

Web analytics are inadequate as users are talking to each other, and much of it is not on the company site. Therefore companies need to analyse the experiences and opinions that people are sharing about a brand (Fisher, 2009). However Falls (*cited* in Fisher, 2009) was of the opinion that Return On Investment (ROI) should not be a measure of social media. He is of the belief that the core reason for success in social media is because this platform is not about money, but rather about people. Therefore according to TNS (2010), one has to have insight and be very intuitive to what it is that online communities want. However, this could lead to analysis paralysis, due to the large databases of insights one can extrapolate, along with the sheer volume of information that digital channels emit (TNS, 2010). According to Hosea (2011) social media is about the integration of opportunity in a measurable, efficient manner and the data will play a major part in this.

There has been phenomenal growth of social media monitoring. However, for brands what to measure and how to use that information, is not fully understood (New Media Age, 2011b). Baker (2009) propounded that insights from the decoding of data can be profitable, as digital friendships speak volumes about consumers. However, calculating the value of these relationships has become a

challenge for businesses. It has been found that if our friends purchase a product or service there is more than an average chance that their friends will purchase the same. This could lead to targeted messaging, in an era of where media clutter is growing (Baker, 2009).

Just as companies monitor what is said about their brands in traditional media, it will be quite natural to monitor communications within social media (O' Mitchell, 2010). Brands can engage users by commenting, responding or participating in conversation, about the brand. The brand can be strengthened and protected by identification and reaction to negative comments or sentiment. The monitoring of a competitors brand could provide competitor information of strengths and weaknesses in the market place. O' Mitchell (2010) therefore deduced that in addition to marketing, social media monitoring could provide market research that is valuable to companies.

Developments in monitoring accomplishments on social media platforms are important, as this information will form the basis of justification of social media spend. In order to measure return on conversation the following proxies listed in table 2.3 can be utilised. According to Snow (2011) these proxies will monitor how well brand resonance and brand trust is being built as eventually trust leads to loyalty, advocacy and continued conversion.

Proxies		
Facebook 'Like'	Retweets	LinkedIn and other shares
Reblogs	Links back	Comments
Time spent on page	Followers	Average page views per visitor
@mentions		

Table 2.3 Proxies that can be used to measure Return on Conversation
Adapted from Snow (2011). HOW TO: Measure the ROI of a Content Marketing Strategy

<http://mashable.com/2011/07/04/how-to-measure-roi-content-marketing-strategy/>

2.5.3 Integration of Social Media into the Marketing Mix

Social media is seen as a hybrid element of the promotion mix; as in a traditional sense it allows for brands or companies to talk to their customers, but in a non-traditional sense it facilitates for customers to talk directly with each other (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Social media based conversations are outside companies direct control; therefore the frequency, timing and content of the conversations take place by users that have very few or no constraints. Therefore marketers need to learn how to shape and guide online conversations which align to the company's mission and goals. Keller (2008) also stated that online brands must have the best possible integrated marketing communication programme which consists of television, radio, print, sponsorship and public relations.

Nutley (2010) said that the growth of social media and online video requires a shift in mind set for marketers, when building a brand online. These two media need to be integrated into the marketing mix of companies. People are starting to realise that online is a platform to effectively build brands. Therefore marketers need to re-evaluate strategy, with less emphasis placed on adjustment of thinking. However, the advent of social media has led to the discovery that online brand building is more difficult than imagined (Nutley, 2010). As such social media could be seen as having the most alarming effect on traditional brand communication. It took the growth of social media to bring the idea to the fore, that markets are conversations (Nutley, 2010).

In order to build an online presence for a brand, a company needs to establish and maintain an online social community. A brand community is where members share a similar interest or loyalty in services or products that the company offers; the community is termed to be brand-centered or brand relevant (Schau, Muniz and Arnould, 2009). Muniz and O' Guinn (2001) stated that a brand community, due its focus on a product or brand, is specialised. Wua and Fang (2010) listed the characteristics of on-line brand communities as a non-geographically bound and specialised community, with a structured set of social relationships amongst the admirers of a company or brand. They further argued that these online communities facilitate consumer access to product information as well as to

exchange their experiences of use of the products. Online communities turn to each other for solutions, due to their knowledge of the brand, and ease of interactions and exchange of information.

Ultimately companies need to build relationships not just transactions, social networking should not be about the number of your contacts, but rather the value that each one brings (Marsden, 2010 and Nour, 2008). Therefore companies need to look beyond how many users have 'friended' their brand, as these relationships need to be profitable, so users "buy more, for more, more often – for longer" (Marsden, 2010). Fisher (2009) and Marsden (2010) also noted that the value of a consumer is not based on what they have spent with a company, but rather is based on the value that they will spend with a company over the lifespan of the relationship. Therefore, one can add that social media boosts referral value, which can be seen as the value of bringing new customers by "word of mouse". Consequently, Facebook may present opportunities to marketers, which could result in challenges for companies. New Media Age (2011) predicted that, in 2011, social media will need to clearly identify its role in marketing and to prove return on investment.

This is similar to Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) notion of co-creation, which involves both the company and customers creating value. The joint value creation does not lie with the brand or company trying to please customers, but rather that the customers choose the company, to co-create value. Based on this co-creation experience, consumer communities, can also start dialogue amongst themselves. A study of brand communities, of Saab, Ford Broncho, Macintosh, where focus was on the social nature of brands revealed that there is an acknowledgement of the essence of the brands within consumer communities (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Their research was to direct thinking to consumer-brand-consumer triad, versus the traditional consumer-brand dyad; emphasising that brands are social objects and are socially constructed. Therefore, customer to customer relationships are also existent in brand communities and will continue to play an increasingly significant role.

Creating a strong online brand community, can help achieve brand resonance. Brand resonance is a description of the identification level that a customer has with a brand (Keller, 2008). Keller (2008) characterised resonance, in terms of intensity and the extent to which users seek out brand information. The brand may also convey a sense of community to the customer, where customers feel kinship with other customers that are associated with the brand. A stronger sense of community among users can result in favourable brand attitudes which result in intention to purchase. According to Keller (2008) the strongest confirmation of brand loyalty occurs when consumers engage with brands. They are willing to invest their time, money and energy or other resources in the company or brand. These customers are brand evangelists or ambassadors who help to communicate about the brand and strengthen the brand ties of others.

In order for active engagement with a brand to occur, either “strong attitudinal attachment, social identity or both” need to occur (Nutley, 2010). The result is that brands like Accenture are moving to who owns the brand from who owns the customer, with communication from company to customer with a shift from customer to customer conversation (Nutley, 2010). This transformation is due to companies being unable to control the brand as in the past; this is mainly due to the evolution of social networks. This has resulted in the growth of consumer power, to drive the definition of the brand. The belief is that consumers “have always had a view about how brands should behave, and the values they should espouse”. Conversations occurred in the past, but without the amplification effect of social media, were not “newsworthy”. This has resulted in companies’ reconsidering their decisions, for example Gap rebranded, and its online community did not react positively to the rebranding, which resulted in reverting to the previous logo. This is occurring more often (Nutley, 2010).

According to EA Sports in the UK their best campaigns were integrated with digital at the core. Their findings were that a traditional television campaign could be run in conjunction with outdoor advertising, but with the absence of digital, the campaign did not work; in the same vein using only online will not deliver the required exposure. Therefore companies need to stop thinking separately about online and offline, campaigns need to be integrated (Nutley, 2010). This is the

view shared by Coca-Cola, where integrated brand messages are planned across advertising channels. This will ensure consistency of the core creative idea (Nutley, 2010). Figure 2.3 illustrates how advertising relates to needs and emotions, where Coca-Cola Open happiness™ is conveying a message of freedom, fun, joy, nostalgia.



Figure 2.3: Coca-Cola Advertisement appealing to fun, free, forever young

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10150094510903306&set=a.10150094510713306.281963.40796308305#!/cocacola?sk=wall>, accessed 25 February 2011.

2.5.4 Brand Successes on Facebook

New Media Age (2011) stated that there were 500 million Facebook profiles, and to be reflective of this, brands will need to ensure that people are the central element in their marketing. Brands need to take cognisance of the fact that when people interact with a brand on Facebook, they are sharing that interaction with approximately 130 of their online friends, this excludes their offline peers. Therefore the role of personalised marketing on a large scale will revolutionise how users share and communicate (Nutley, 2010). This strategy was adopted by Nike, for their 'Write the Future' campaign where people were placed at the centre of their campaign, not Nike products. This resulted in millions of people sharing every action with their friends. This indicates the impact brands can obtain by placing people at the centre of their campaign (New Media Age, 2011).

Neff (2011) presented the Mentos case study where the brand built a Facebook page at the beginning of 2010, by the end of 2010 the brand had 500 000 fans.

The Mentos fan base growth is attributed to Facebook display advertising and social media, whilst there was minimal advertising spend through traditional media. The Mentos brand has an active following with most of the wall posts, and content on Facebook coming from fans, versus the brand. The result is that sales of the brand appear to have grown by 6 percent to \$72.8 million, for the year ended 28 November 2010 (according to SymphonyIRI data). Brands such as Max Factor and Best Buy are already using Facebook “as store fronts”, as direct sales channels (New Media Age, 2011).

Accenture London (*cited* in Nutley, 2010) noted that in the future, corporate culture will become crucial in branding, where many companies will have placed emphasis on the brand promise rather than the outcomes. This would mean that a brand must be represented in a very deep and authentic manner, and messages must be delivered in the right tone (Nutley, 2010). Tan (2010) advocates that it is vital for brands to develop an authentic tone of voice on social media platforms, should this be faked then people are being misled, and this will be exposed. Therefore an authentic presentation of what the company is, and who it is will need to be amplified in conversation (Tan, 2010). According to McEleny (2009b) Facebook users are not interested in being sold to, however, content that is valuable will allow for a brand to be commercial. To ensure conversations are true to the brand, it is recommended that someone in-house, that knows the business well, should manage the content and conversations. In order for social media to be successful one needs to know the impact it has on other channels of the business, and how it is related to the bottom line.

Keller (2008) stated that customers may form judgements about the brand or the company promoting the brand. He defined brand credibility as the extent to which customers view a brand as credible. Three dimensions to brand credibility are:

- Perceived expertise; where the brand is evaluated in terms of competency, innovative and a brand leader (ie. expertise)
- Trustworthiness; is the brand dependable and keeps the customer interests in mind.
- Likability; is the brand fun, interesting, and worth spending time with.

Basically brand credibility is a measurement of whether the company behind the brand is good at what it does, is the brand concerned about consumers and is it likable.

Table 2.4 illustrates examples that Qualman (2011b) presented; these findings are important as they are reflective of return on investment across social media platforms.

Return on Investment : Case Studies
Vaynerchuk showed business growth to \$50m from \$4m; using social media tools. The findings reveal that 200 new customers were gained from a \$15000 spend on direct mail, 300 customers from \$7500 spend on billboards; but \$0 on Twitter brought in 1800 new customers.
Those companies that are highly engaged in social media on average showed a sales growth of +18%, while companies with the least amount of social media engagement had a sales decline of -6% (Wetpaint/Alitmeter study <i>cited</i> in Qualman, 2011b)
A 20% reduction in call centre activity, at Lenovo, was achieved as customers were using the community website for answers.
Burger Kings Whopper Facebook campaign cost \$50000 but the 32 million impressions received was estimated at a greater return of \$400000 in press, or traditional media value.
The “Will it Blend” videos on You Tube resulted in BlendTec increasing sales five fold.
\$3 000 000 worth of sales revenue was achieved by Dell, advertising on Twitter.
Genius.com (a software company) reported that 24 percent of their social media leads are converted to sales opportunities.
54 percent more money is spent by participants in online communities, according to eBay.

Table 2.4 Return on Investment Case Studies

Adapted from Qualman (2011b). Social Media Revolution: Is social media a fad?

<http://tiny.cc/p34x5>

Even though the social statistics are overwhelming, mishaps by brands on these platforms do occur, and because of the viral nature of this platform the effects are far reaching. These cases will be presented in the next section.

2.5.5 Brand Mishaps or concerns on Facebook

There are also cons to these platforms as the following great brands that lost their communication with their customers at a point; example Coke, Disney, McDonalds and SONY to name a few (Weber, 2009:17). Safko and Brake (2009:10) quoted the example of how Heinz Ketchup (tomato sauce in South Africa) and Pepto Bismal where both brands sponsored video contests that would allow for amateurs to send in adverts for both brands, but according to both companies some of the videos were good whilst others ridiculed the brands. Even though the Heinz video that was rejected did not get posted to the Heinz page, it was posted to You Tube where it lived on. This is indicative of how this medium can very quickly work against the brand. But as Safko and Brake (2009), said companies need to implement a strategy where the culture is to communicate, create engagement and accept either positive or negative feedback, in order to become a better company.

A concern for most companies is that social networking platforms will adversely affect the productivity of staff; because too much time is spent on these tools (Van Zyl, 2009). The result could be a congestion of bandwidth with multimedia content that is often not work related, thereby impacting on the capacity servers (ClearSwift, 2007; MessageLabs, 2007; *cited* in van Zyl, 2009). Whilst McEleny (2009a) stated that in the UK, an average of forty minutes a week is wasted on social networks, by office staff with an estimated cost to the British economy of 1.38 billion Pounds.

Hosea (2011) stated that Facebook was a more complex platform than Twitter when building a business case for “interaction and customer service”. Twitter is easier to measure as there is a very short message sent to several followers whereas Facebook is a more complex platform. Also users may not forward content unless they receive something in return, such as loyalty points. In order to

find the brand advocates or influencers can involve the building of complex algorithms that can map the market place. And even if influencers are found they could only be used for certain campaigns, and cannot be used often. Even though influencers are invited to events, the true value of this is unknown. Brands need to recognise that it is not just about Twitter and Facebook and just “staying there”; but actually working out where customers are and constantly adapting (Hosea, 2011).

People are relying more on peers to shape their perceptions of corporate brands. And negative news is spreading faster than ever, due to Facebook functionality and the ‘Like’ button (New Media Age, 2011b). Even though marketers are looking for ways to effectively engage and build relationships with consumers, on Facebook; there is a resistance. Results of the Edelman Trust Barometer, in London, revealed that the two highest ranked factors that respondents used to determine corporate reputation was transparent, honest practices and whether a company can be trusted. The two factors are co-dependent with social media in general, and Facebook particularly. These two factors out-ranked quality of products and services. Therefore reputational issues should get attention and resources as brand marketing in the communication mix (New Media Age, 2011b).

Even though social networking platforms such as Facebook and MySpace offer value to users, new features and changes in content management, by the host company, may result in users becoming displeased. This can result in migration of users to new sites; as trended with movements from Friendster to Live Journal to MySpace and to Facebook (Labrecque, Markos and Milne; 2010). Sutter (2009) stated that users show no reserve migrating from a site should the site not suit their needs any longer. Should members migrate to a new platform, brands that have invested in the platform and created profiles, stand to suffer large losses. According to McEleny (2010a), brands need to allow for integration with Tweet buttons or the ‘Like’ button allowing for engagement across social media platforms.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the evolution of the Internet that facilitated the social sharing, and now allows for user generated content. Several social media platforms and their uses or benefits were presented. This chapter highlighted the growing strategic role that Facebook is playing in business, and presented a case for its integration into marketing. Previous brand successes and mishaps on Facebook were briefly discussed. This research aims to fill the gap in South Africa where no specific Facebook user engagement patterns on Facebook is freely available. Chapter Three will present the methodology that will be used in this study, to gauge the effectiveness of this platform.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed social networking, with particular attention to Facebook integration as a tool to creating brand equity. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research design and methodology that will be applicable to this study. In its simplest form research is “the process of finding solutions to a problem after thorough study and analysis of the situational factors” (Sekaran and Bougie; 2010:3). Business research provides managers with necessary information that is needed to make better informed decisions in order to deal with problems successfully (Sekaran and Bougie; 2010).

This chapter will describe the research design, participants and study location, the data collection strategy, design, and ultimately the analysis of the data. The purpose of which is to obtain an understanding of the behaviour of South African Facebook users; and to determine user engagement with companies or brands that make use of Facebook pages. Prior to discussing the research methodology, the aim and objectives of this study will first be discussed.

3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

3.2.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to examine the behaviour of South African Facebook users, in order to better understand user engagement with brands or companies on this platform. In order to ensure that the aim of the study is achieved the following objectives were created.

3.2.2 Objectives

An investigation of the following objectives will be undertaken in order to obtain an understanding of typical South African Facebook user behaviour.

- determine the frequency of usage of Facebook in South Africa.

- determine the time spent on Facebook.
- establish what technology is used to access Facebook.
- determine if Facebook users would 'LIKE' a brand.
- determine the categories of companies or brands that users engage with on Facebook.
- establish whether Facebook fans of a brand would recommend the brand to their Facebook friends.
- investigate reasons why users would 'UNLIKE' a brand.

The purpose of this study is to add to the relatively small body of research, pertaining to Facebook in South Africa, and its use as an effective branding tool. Current, freely available research is based on studies conducted in the United Kingdom as well as the United States, highlighting the gap of research in South Africa.

3.3 Participants and Location of the Study

The participants of this study will be random Facebook users in South Africa. Facebook users were selected in order to answer the main aim of the study, which deals with this very specific segment of online users in South Africa. The only exclusion criterion is that the respondents will have to be South African. All ages and genders, all provinces and all Facebook users who live in South Africa will therefore meet the criteria for participation in this study.

3.4 Data Collection Strategies

3.4.1 The Sampling Process

A sample is a selection of a population that enables a researcher to draw conclusions that can be generalised about the population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). According to Lind, Marchal and Wathen (2010) studying a sample is sometimes more feasible than an entire population for the following reasons:

- contact with the population would be time consuming;

- the cost to study the entire population could be exorbitant;
- it could be physically impossible to reach all elements in a population; and
- the results from the sample are adequate.

Precisely defining the target population is the foundation of sampling. The aim and objectives of the study are pivotal in defining the target population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). For the purpose of this study the sample consisted of Facebook users in South Africa.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) stress the significance of sampling in survey research and further stated that unless the sample is representative of the study population from which inferences are to be drawn, these findings are meaningless. Critical factors such as population parameters and sampling procedures are vital to the success of the research study.

3.4.2 Sampling Frame

“A physical representation of all the elements in the population from which the sample is drawn” is defined as the sampling frame (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The sampling frame is vital in evaluation of the representativeness of a sample (Welman and Kruger, 1999). Even though a sampling frame may be available, it may not always be complete. Should the sampling frame not be representative of the population, coverage error will occur. The researcher may ignore this, as the difference between the sample and the population may be small. The researcher may, if necessary, redefine the population according to the sample (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

3.4.3 Sampling Approach and Technique

The two major types of sampling design are probability and non-probability sampling (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). In probability sampling the probability that any member of the population would be included in the sample could be determined. However in non-probability sampling this probability cannot be specified, as some members have no possibility of inclusion in non-probability

samples (Welman and Kruger, 1999; Sekaran and Bougie; 2010). The distinction between probability and non-probability sampling is that in probability sampling the researcher, in advance can specify, that the sample is representative of each segment of the population (Leedy and Ormond, 2005).

Table 3.1 is illustrative of probability and non-probability sampling techniques which have been identified in literature (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Leedy and Ormond, 2005 and Welman and Kruger,1999).

Probability	Non-Probability
Simple random samples	Convenience sampling
Stratified random samples	Quota sampling
Systematic samples	Purposive or judgemental sampling
Cluster samples	Snowball Sampling

Table 3.1: Probability and Non-Probability Sampling Techniques

For the purpose of this study the non-probability convenience sampling technique has been selected. The reason for selection of non-probability sampling is due to the large sampling frame of Facebook users in South Africa. The basis for selection of the convenience sampling technique is that sample subjects do not have any probability of being chosen as sample subjects (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Additionally the characteristics of the South African Facebook population is relatively unknown or not freely available, other than gender and the total number of users. Therefore trying to obtain elements of the population that are representative for quota sampling is nearly impossible. As such confident generalisations about the SA Facebook population cannot be made from the findings of the study.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) convenience sampling is a good manner to obtain information in an efficient and timely manner. The fundamentals for probability sampling could not be met; given the nature of this study type, which is entirely dependent on Facebook users agreeing to fill in the questionnaire voluntarily. Therefore the response rate would be complicated to obtain using

probability sampling. The drawback of non-probability convenience sampling is that it is generally perceived as a biased technique, since only a specific segment of the market is sampled (Keller, 2009), in this case, only those with Facebook profiles. However, this becomes less of an issue as this is exactly the element that needs to be researched.

3.4.4 Sample Size

Sekaran and Bougie (2010), note that the decision regarding sample size can be intricate. They list the factors that affect sample size decisions as:

- the research objectives;
- the extent to which precision is desired, or the confidence interval;
- the acceptable risk that occurs in predicting that level of precision; or confidence level;
- the amount of variability within the population itself;
- constraints of time and cost; and
- in certain instances, the magnitude of the population itself. In this case the estimated Facebook population in South African is 4.1 million users (Social.Bakers, 2011).

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) stated that the “increasing demand for research” evidenced a need for an efficient method to determine sample size which is representative of a population. As such they designed a table, based on this formula; $s = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2 (N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}$, for determining sample size. Usage of the table eliminates the need to perform calculations.

Due to the viral nature of Facebook, one cannot determine how many users will receive the questionnaire. In this study, the sample size decided upon was extremely difficult to calculate using traditional formulas, because very little is known about the demographics of Facebook users in South Africa. Thus estimating sample size, to ensure representativeness of the Facebook population in South Africa becomes nearly impossible. Since the nature of this survey is descriptive, cautious generalisations can be made to the Facebook population.

Welman and Kurger (1999:64) highlighted that the “smaller the total population, the relatively larger the sample should be to ensure satisfactory results”. Basically a proportionate increase in sample size to that of the population would result in the standard error being decreased. It is not necessary to draw a sample size that exceeds 500, since the effect of decreasing standard error is small (Welman and Kruger, 1999). Whilst Leedy and Ormrod (2005) stated that a sample size of 400 would be adequate, should the population be in excess of 5000. For practical reasons, due to budgetary, time and other resource constraints, a minimum sample size of 384 will be projected for this study, based on Krejcie and Morgan’s Table (1970). This will allow for certain statistical tests to be performed whilst, still remaining robust. However, since there is no census type data available to adjust age groups to; it is assumed that a larger sample of younger age groups and a smaller sample of older respondents will make up the sample. The required sample size is now made available, therefore the discussion will entail the comparison of qualitative and quantitative techniques.

3.5 Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

Several researchers have a tendency to categorise research studies into the broad categories of qualitative or quantitative research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). The use of quantitative research is to obtain answers to questions about relationships amongst variables that are measured; the purpose of which is to explain, predict or control events. In distinction, qualitative research provides answers to questions regarding the complex nature of events, with the purpose of a description and understanding of the event from the participants view point (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:94).

According to Keller (2008), qualitative research is typical of a more verbal response from respondents. It is useful to identify brand associations and characteristics in terms of strength, uniqueness and favourability. However, marketers most often prefer a more definitive representation of the brand as this allows for more confident recommendations in terms of strategy and tactics for the brand. This can be achieved through quantitative research, which utilises different types of scale questions from which numerical representation and summaries can

be drawn by the researcher. Quantitative research can measure brand knowledge, it can better assess the depth of brand awareness, the extent and nature of brand relationships and brand associations (Keller, 2008).

The discussion of differences regarding qualitative and quantitative research, has allowed for the researcher to make an informed decision that a quantitative approach would best suit this research project.

3.5.1 Descriptive Research Design

This section will describe the types of quantitative research, which fall under the banner of descriptive quantitative research. Descriptive research is an examination of a situation as it is (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Leedy and Ormrod (2005; pp179 - 185) discuss the various descriptive research designs as;

- observation studies: focus on a particular human behaviour. The study can deliver data that “portray much of the richness and complexity of human behaviour”
- correlational research: is the examination of the extent to which “differences in one characteristic or variable is related to differences in one or more characteristics other characteristics or variables”. A correlation is said to exist if is when one variable either increases or decreases, another variable either ‘increases or decreases in a somewhat predictable fashion’.
- developmental designs: consist of cross-sectional and longitudinal designs and is utilised across disciplines, but mostly in development research for example child development studies.
- survey research: necessitates the gathering of information, from one or several groups of people, by asking them questions and then tabling their responses.

The research design of this study is that of survey research, which is descriptive in nature, the goal of which is to learn about the large Facebook population, by surveying a sample of this population. Survey research is “simple” in design, where a researcher will pose a series of questions to willing respondents, and their responses are summarised with frequency counts, percentages and then

inferences about the population can be drawn from the sample. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) a descriptive study is undertaken when characteristics are known to exist, and the researcher wants to better describe them by presenting a “profile of the factors”. This presents the ideal setting for the aim of this study. Data in a descriptive study is quantitative in nature in terms of frequencies, mean or standard deviation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:179) “descriptive research examines a situation as it is”. As modification of the situation being investigated is not required, nor will the cause and effect relationships have to be determined. Rather the researcher questions willing participants and then their responses are summarised with percentages, frequency counts or “more sophisticated indexes” and then inferences are drawn about the population from the sample drawn (Leedy and Ormrod; 2005:184).

This survey is representative of a snapshot at a point in time, as conclusions will be drawn from one “transitory collection of data” (Leedy and Ormrod; 2005:184). Survey research can employ either of the following methods; questionnaires, telephone or face-to face interviews (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The following sub-section will describe the selected research instrument applicable to this study.

3.6 Research Design and Methods

This section will describe the research design applicable to this study, with specificity to the selected data collection instrument, recruitment of the study participants, pretesting and validation of the research instrument and conclude with the administration of the instrument. Research design is defined as the planned manner in which research participants are obtained including how information will be collected from the participants (Welman and Kruger, 1999).

3.6.1 Description and Purpose of the Study

A work plan, flows from a study's research design, and details phases which must be followed to complete the study. The purpose of a research design is that findings evidenced make it possible for the researcher to answer the objectives as unambiguously as possible (NYU.com; 2011). The researcher has to determine decisions to be made in the study. These are based on the objectives of the research, the extent of desired rigor and cost (Sekaran and Bougie; 2010). Whilst Babbie and Mouton (2001) listed that the most common and useful purposes of research are explanation, description and exploration. The purpose of this study falls into the area of exploration. This approach lends itself to the examining of a new interest; that of Facebook user engagement with brands, inclusive of the fact that study of South African Facebook user behaviour is relatively new. One of the reasons cited for undertaking exploratory studies is to satisfy researcher curiosity to gain a better understanding of the topic (Babbie and Moulton; 2001).

3.6.1.1 Data Collection Approach

In selecting the research instrument for this study, the research needs, type of population and the researcher's resources were taken into account (Babbie and Moulton, 2001). The selected research instrument used in this study, was an electronic questionnaire (refer Appendix 1 for copy of questionnaire), which is the most common instrument used to collect primary data (Kotler and Keller, 2009). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) a questionnaire is the most efficient mechanism for data collection, once the researcher is aware of exact requirements and how the variables of interest can be measured. An advantage of questionnaires is that data can be obtained in an efficient manner with consideration of research time, costs and energy (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

The questionnaire was designed and hosted online in Question Pro. Question Pro requires no software or hardware, and can be accessed via a web browser. The programme guides one in how to build the questionnaire and the data is also hosted online (www.questionpro.com, 2011). Since this research consisted of Facebook users that are already located online the fit of an online questionnaire

was suitable, as users access online, and an objective of this study is to gauge whether access is from personal computers, cellular telephones or both. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) stated that some evidence indicated that data from online research studies is comparable to that of which can be obtained in a laboratory. The coding of responses was determined in advance, and a code book was kept. The code book will allow for the recoding of participants responses into numerical data, in order to allow for statistical analysis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). According to Babbie and Moulton (2001) when using a descriptive study, one must use coding after the data has been collected.

A disadvantage of electronic questionnaires is that not all people may have access to a computer or the internet, but this would not be applicable in this study as all participants have existing Facebook profiles.

3.6.1.2 Construction of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was carefully developed to obtain information relevant to the objectives of this study. The questionnaire consisted of the following four sections: Section 1: consisted of an introductory letter which introduced the researcher, the relevant objectives of the study and how to complete the survey (Appendix 1).

Section 2: contained general demographic particulars of the respondents, such as age, gender and race. These are contained in questions one to six.

Section 3: focused on establishing respondent's frequency of interaction with other forms of media, for example newspapers, magazines and television, found in questions seven through to fourteen.

Section 4: probed user behaviour on Facebook in terms of frequency, time spent on Facebook, whether users engaged with brands on Facebook, whether the user would 'like' a brand and why, would the user recommend that a brand be 'liked' by their Facebook friends, would a user 'unlike' a brand and why. Questions fifteen through to thirty one investigate these areas.

The questionnaire for this study was built using concise and unambiguous questions. Shorter questions allowed for the respondents to complete the survey quicker and also prevented any double barrelled questions. The researcher's aim

in constructing the questionnaire was to remain neutral; this prevented any leading or loaded questions from being developed (Welman and Kruger, 1999). The respondents will remain anonymous and no confidential social or demographic data, other than race, gender and age were requested of the respondents.

The types of questions in the questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) closed-ended questions require the respondent to choose from a set of alternatives that have been specified by the researcher. The popularity of closed-ended questions is high as a greater uniformity of responses is provided and processing is easier (Babbie and Moulton, 2001). The advantage of close-ended questions is that respondents are able to make quick decisions, by selecting from “the alternatives before them”. An additional advantage is that close-ended questions allow for easier coding of information for subsequent analysis by the researcher whilst open-ended questions allow for respondents to answer this question type in any manner they prefer (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Since this study was conducted on-line the convenience of closed ended questions greatly reduced the time that would be needed to answer the questionnaire.

The following types of closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire (Kotler and Keller; 2009):

- dichotomous questions which has two possible answers.
- multiple choice questions that has three or more answers.
- Likert scale, which is a statement to which the respondent either selects the amount of agreement or disagreement;
- Importance scale, where some attribute is rated in terms of importance; and
- Net Promoter Score question, involves respondents answering a 0 to 10 point rating scale question. Example from the questionnaire; “On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely is it that you would recommend a company or brand that you ‘Like’ to your friends? The scale is then divided into 3 sections:
 - Promoters; where answers range between 9 and 10
 - Passive; answers in the range of 7 to 8
 - Detractors; answers that range from 0 to 6

Once the questions are answered the aggregate will have to be calculated. This can be done by subtracting the detractors from the promoters, in order to obtain the net promoter score (Safko and Brake, 2009).

Building the questionnaire in Question Pro also allowed for certain questions to be validated, this meant that a respondent could only move to the next question only after answering the preceding question, in this way questions that were relevant to the objectives of this survey were answered and it also prevented instances where the respondent could simply have missed a question. The set-up in Question Pro also allowed for the survey to be adapted so it could be administered and answered via cellular phones, as well as computers.

Contingency questions also formed part of the questionnaire. Babbie and Moulton (2001:240) define contingency questions as whether those questions “are to be asked and answered is contingent to the first question in the series”. The advantage of contingent questions is that it is easier for the respondents to complete the questionnaire, as they are not asked to answer questions that are not relevant to them. Refer to Figure 3.1, which illustrates an example of complex contingency questions use in the questionnaire from this study.

Q25. Have you ever included a company or a brand to the interest section of your profile page (or have you 'LIKED' or 'FRIENDED' a brand on Facebook)?

- Yes
- No

*Q26. If you answered "no", you have not 'Liked' a brand or company, then state why. You may select more than one reason

*Q27. If you answered "yes", you have 'liked' a brand, then state why. You may select more than one reason

Q26 then proceeded to automatically take the respondent to Q31.

Q27 directed the respondents through to questions 28 followed by 29, 30 (which were relevant only to those respondents that 'Liked' a brand), and question 31 was answered by all respondents

** (NB for illustrative purposes only the question and not the options in the answer are represented, to view the complete questionnaire, refer to Appendix 1)*

Figure 3.1: Example of Complex Contingency / Branching Questions found in the questionnaire of this study

3.6.1.3 Recruitment of Study Participants

All respondents were located online, with Facebook profiles in existence. This study will aim to recruit respondents virally, that is first degree Facebook friends of the researcher will be sent the link to the online questionnaire on Facebook. At the first degree level the questionnaire link will be sent to approximately 120 friends, and these friends will be requested to forward the questionnaire onto their friends, which form second degree connections, and so on as illustrated in Figure 3.2. Some of the first degree friends have between 80 to 600 friends. This

research therefore, is reliant on the power of the viral nature of Facebook and is reliant on the exponential recruitment of respondents.



Figure 3.2 Depiction of Viral Answering of the Questionnaire, on Facebook.

Adapted from Google Images, <http://tiny.cc/q7c1w>

3.6.2 Determining the Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity in social research is described as “an indicator of a concept” (Babbie, Halley and Zaino, 2000:15). In order for the indicator to be valid, it has to really measure what it was intended to measure, should it not measure what it was set out to measure it is then invalid (Babbie, Halley and Zaino, 2000; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). In order to protect against errors in the questionnaire, pretesting the questionnaire is advised (Babbie and Moulton, 2001). Pretesting will decrease errors and root out ambiguous questions or other violation rules. The draft questionnaire was pre-checked with the researcher’s supervisor and fellow MBA colleagues, as well as a statistician. This pre-check was undertaken to gauge the validity, ease of understanding and logical flow.

Based on feedback from this pre-check the instrument was modified. The modified questionnaire was then pilot-tested. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) a pilot study is an excellent manner in which to determine the feasibility of a study and also to determine which approaches will or will not be effective in solving the overall research problem. This pilot questionnaire was administered by

sending the Question Pro link to 35 respondents, with Facebook profiles. The respondents were fellow UKZN MBA students, and the researcher's Facebook friends as well as a Statistician. The completion rate achieved was 75.8%, which was indicative of 27 respondents completing the survey. The diversity of the respondents in the test phase trialed the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

3.6.3 Determining the Reliability of the Research Instrument

The extent to which a measurement instrument, will produce consistent results when attribute being measured remains unchanged is referred to as reliability (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Whilst Babbie et al. (2000) stated that reliability in research refers to whether one can trust the answers that respondents supply even when their misstatements are honest ones. The test for reliability of items and variables of the questionnaire was Cronbach's Alpha Value. The alpha coefficient for the groups of questions, illustrated in Table 3.3 below, range from 0.714 to 0.860, suggestive of a high internal consistency. It is noted by Sekaran and Bougie (2010), that in social research "a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable" and the questionnaire is highly consistent.

Questions	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Networking Tools	5	0.714
Brand Engagement ('LIKE or UNLIKE')	4	0.860
Reasons why Brands are 'LIKED'	6	0.756
Categories that are engaged with	6	0.850
Reasons why brands are 'UNLIKED'	7	0.744
Frequency of Interaction on Facebook Due to 3 questions being branched; the respondents would not have answered all 3 variables, which resulted in an alpha of nearly zero, as reflected. Therefore these questions will not be omitted, as they are vital to this research.	6	0.003

Table 3.2: Reliability of Research Instrument

3.6.4 Administration of the Questionnaire

Technology is shaping the data collection methods which assist with developing and administering questionnaires electronically (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Due to the nature of this study, a synergistic fit was to develop and host the questionnaire online. As discussed in Chapter Two, due to the evolution of internet to Web 2.0, the platform of Question Pro allows for users to take the questionnaire online. Question Pro is online software that allows for the creation and distribution of surveys via email, websites, Twitter or Facebook and smartphones as well as iPads. The link to this study is www.Facebookandbrands@questionpro.com. Once the questionnaire has been filled in by respondents, their responses are recorded and updated in real time. This is advantageous in gauging whether the sample size will be reached. Question Pro also has tools that enable analysis and viewing of results (Questionpro.com, 2011).

The following are advantages and disadvantages of conducting market research online (Keller, 2008;pp 376/7):

Advantages of online research:

- collection of data online can be less expensive and easier to administer than off-line data collection methods.
- there are no geographic restrictions, therefore multi province or even country research can be conducted from one location.
- online research also avoids interviewer bias and ensures that data is uniformly analysed, rather than sourced to different researchers.
- online surveys are convenient and far less intrusive than a telephonic survey, or pavement interview.
- instead of waiting for weeks for paper surveys to be returned, the results of online surveys are returned quickly and analysis can be viewed in real time.

Disadvantages of online research:

- in some instances online research is less effective than face-to-face interviews and focus groups because;

respondents may rush through the survey, due to the absence of an interviewer; or

the absence of an interviewer, makes it harder to ascertain the honesty of a respondent; especially if “online junkies” take the questionnaire several times.

- if online questionnaires are too long, respondents can easily opt not to finish.
- a concern is that online users differ from the general population, as online surveys omit non-internet users; whose perspective may differ. As mentioned in this study this is not a shortfall, as the respondents need to be respondents with a Facebook profile.

3.7 Analysis of the Data

This research is descriptive in nature and as such generalisations to Facebook usership cannot be inferred. However, certain statistical tests will be employed to show differences or make a case to support or disprove a study objective (Keller, 2008, pp 376/7).

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 18.0) will be used as the statistical software for this research project as well as Microsoft charts and STATA 10.1. SPSS is one of the most widely utilised statistical packages for social sciences; it contains the statistics needed for most research studies, and is available for a vast array of computers (Babbie et al., 2000).

The research instrument will be administered to respondents, over a four week period. The following sub-section will discuss data collection instruments, and the recruitment of study participants.

3.7.1 Regression Analysis and other Statistical Tests:

The main tests used in this study will be

- Students T-test which is used to test for significant differences between different kinds of means.

- Chi Squared tests utilised to test statistical significance appropriate for two nominal values
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) where there is a need to test the difference in more than 2 groups. ANOVA needs to be based on an equal and normal distribution of variables in each hypothesis by conducting homogeneity tests on each group sample.
- Logistic regression is where the dependant variable is dichotomous and is regressed on other relevant independent variables like age etc - this is used to show if a variable is associated with the outcome (in this case liking a brand versus not liking a brand) while controlling for other variables. It is similar to linear regression but has the advantage of allowing for dichotomous outcomes (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

Frequencies and percentages will be used to present the demographic variables. Means, variances and confidence intervals will also be provided with descriptive statistics.

3.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the aim and objectives of this study as well as set out the research methodology that will be employed. The research design for the study explained the phases that will be followed. The non-probability convenience sampling technique was the preferred sampling method. The research instrument was a questionnaire that will be hosted online on QuestionPro, and the link distributed to South African Facebook users only. Analysis of data will be undertaken using SPSS and charts will be designed in Microsoft Word. The regression and statistical tests that will be utilised were also considered. The questionnaire was effectively designed, pre-tested and piloted to ensure that the objectives of this study will be met. Chapter four will present the results of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of Results

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three discussed, in detail, the research design and methodology that will be used in this study. Data was gathered, codified and separated into groups that correspond to the objectives that were discussed in previous chapters. This chapter will present the study objectives, the connected data associated with each objective will then be analysed and interpreted. In order to obtain a resolution to the study objective inquiry into the intrinsic meaning of the data was necessary (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

The presentation of the findings will focus on areas of demographics of respondents, descriptions of the respondents in terms of their interaction with media such as television, newspapers and magazines, analysis of online purchase behaviour and will conclude with actual Facebook engagement analysis. The analysis of data collected in this study will be presented as descriptive statistics, tables with percentages and either pie or bar charts. An in-depth analysis of the study objectives with inferential statistics will be presented. The reliability and relevance of the questionnaire was tested and presented in Chapter Three, by using Cronbach's Alpha. Chi Square and a Bonferroni test (which is a multiple comparison test) was conducted to test statistical significance.

4.2 Description of Sample

This study relied on the viral nature of Facebook. The advantage of hosting the questionnaire on Question.Pro.com was the ability to view the number of respondents that viewed the questionnaire, the number that started the questionnaire and the number that completed the questionnaire, whilst still allowing for anonymity of the respondents. The questionnaire was viewed 972 times, whilst 532 respondents started the survey and 408 respondents completed the survey. Therefore there was a 77 percent completion rate, and the average

time taken to complete the survey was 6 minutes. The following section will include the demographics of respondents.

4.3 Frequency Analysis

4.3.1 Presentation of Demographics

Demographic Table	
Gender	Percentage
Male	39
Female	61
Age	
18 – 24	10
25 – 34	47
35 – 44	27
45 – 54	12
55 – 64	3
65 and over	1
Race	
Black	11
Coloured	5
Indian	33
White	50

Table 4.1 Demographic Representation of Respondents

Table 4.1 is representative of the demographics of the respondents which was vital information required in order to understand Facebook users. The sample consisted of 61 percent female and 39 percent male respondents, whilst 74 percent (25 to 34 years, 47% and 35 to 44 years 27%) of the sample was classed within the 25 to 44 year old age groups, and the lowest participation from the older age groups (55 and older at 3 percent) which was the expected norm. Findings

also revealed that 50 percent of the sample consisted of White respondents, followed by Indians at 33 percent, Blacks at 11 percent and Coloureds at 5 percent.

4.3.2 Employment Status of Respondents

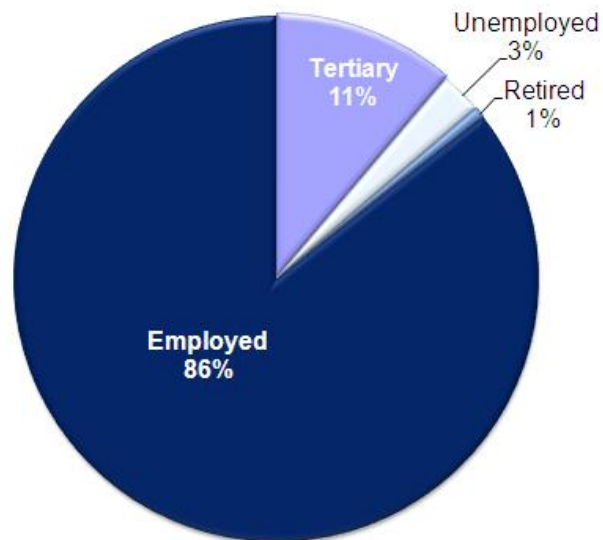


Figure 4.1 Status of Respondents

The status of respondents in terms of whether they were employed, retired, unemployed or at tertiary institutions was considered, as these factors are key in understanding broadly the interaction or lack thereof with brand pages. Figure 4.1 shows that 86 percent of the respondents were employed, 11 percent were in tertiary institutions, followed by 3 percent unemployed and finally 1 percent was retired.

4.3.2.1 Employment Type of Respondents

Employment Type	Percentage
Part-time	4
Full-time	86
Self Employed	10
Total	100

Table 4.2 Employment Type of Respondents

Further analysis into the status of the employed sample was conducted, as illustrated in Table 4.2; where 86 percent of respondents were employed full time. This factor was deemed necessary in order to gauge the purchasing power of respondents.

4.3.3 Media Consumption

This area will expound on the various forms of media that the respondents engage with; and in particular will probe television viewing, magazine and newspaper interaction. Analysis of this segment was seen as important; in order to obtain an understanding as well as a comparison of time spent online and across these mediums.

4.3.3.1 Analysis of Television Viewing Behaviour

Frequency of Television watching	Percentage
Never	1
Daily	75
Weekly	20
Monthly	4
Total	100

Table 4.3 Frequency of Television Viewing

Table 4.3 highlights that 75 percent of respondents watch television on a daily basis however, 24 percent (weekly 20%, monthly 4%) watched television on a non-daily basis (either weekly or monthly), and 1 percent did not watch television at all.

4.3.3.2 Duration of Time Spent Viewing Television

Duration spent viewing television	Percentage
< 1 hr	9
1 - 2 hr	44
3 - 4 hr	20
> 5 hr	2
Non-daily watchers	25
Total	100

Table 4.4 Distribution of responses by Time Spent viewing Television Daily

The 305 respondents that watched television on a daily basis were further analysed to understand the period of time spent viewing television; the results of which are presented in Table 4.4. Interestingly the majority of respondents (44%) watched television for between 1 to 2 hours daily, this could result in limited exposure to brand advertisements and this will be further discussed in Figure 4.2.

4.3.3.3 Television Advertisement Viewing Behaviour

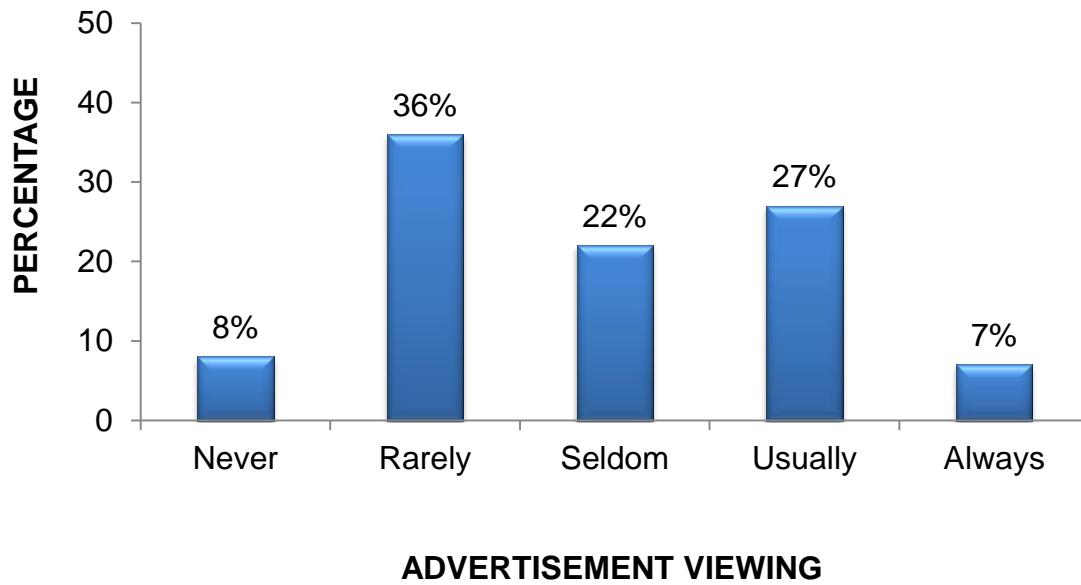


Figure 4.2 Television Advertisement Viewing Behaviour

Data was obtained in order to understand the viewing behaviour of television advertisements from those respondents who watched television. Figure 4.2 illustrates these results, where only 7 percent of respondents 'Always' watched television adverts, whilst 8 percent 'Never' watched television adverts, followed by 36 percent that 'Rarely' viewed television advertisements. Revealing that nearly half the sample (44%) 'Never to Rarely', view television adverts, thus limiting their exposure to brands.

4.3.3.4 Frequency of Television Viewing Against Viewing of Television Advertisements

TV Advert Viewing	TV Viewing			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Never	6%	2%	0.5%	8.5%
Rarely	25%	8%	1%	34%
Seldom	16%	6%	1%	23%
Usually	22%	5%	0.5%	27.5%
Always	6%	0.5%	0.5%	7%
Total	75%	21.5%	3.5%	100%

Table 4.5 Cross Tabulation of Television viewing by Television Advertisements

Nearly 43 percent of the sample 'Rarely to Never' watch television advertisements, whilst only 7 percent of respondents 'Always' watched television adverts; as indicated in Table 4.5. Table 4.3 showed that 75 percent of the sample, watched television on a daily basis however, Table 4.5 reveals a large portion of the sample (31%) that does watch television on a daily basis 'Never to Rarely' watch television adverts, of the respondents that do watch television on a Weekly basis, 10 percent 'Rarely to Never' watch television adverts. These findings reveal limited exposure to brands via the medium of television, in the form of television adverts.

The preceding section will present analysis of respondents with regards to their reading behaviour in terms of magazines and newspapers.

4.3.3.5 Analysis of Newspaper and Magazine interaction

Newspaper	Percentage
Never	12
Daily	32
Weekly	43
Monthly	11
Yearly	2
Total	100
Magazine	Percentage
Never	8
Daily	7
Weekly	35
Monthly	45
Yearly	5
Total	100

Table 4.6 Newspaper and Magazine reading behaviour

Table 4.6 illustrates data regarding user interaction with newspapers and magazines. Only 32 percent of respondents read the newspaper daily, whilst 12 percent did not read the newspaper at all. With regards to magazines only 7 percent of the sample read a magazine daily, 35 percent on a weekly basis and nearly half the sample (45%) read magazines on a monthly basis, whilst 8 percent never read magazines at all.

4.3.4 Online Purchase Behaviour

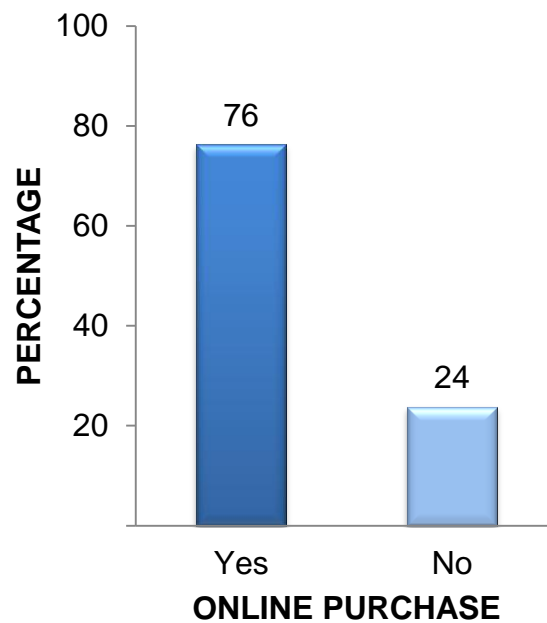


Figure 4.3 Representation of Online Purchase Behaviour

Online purchase information was asked in order to establish whether Facebook users had made online purchases. When asked if respondents had purchased anything online, a massive 76 percent replied yes, and only 24 percent had never made a purchase online; as indicated in Figure 4.3. Further cross tabulation of online purchase by technology used to access Facebook is presented in Table 4.13.

4.3.5 Duration of Facebook Profiles

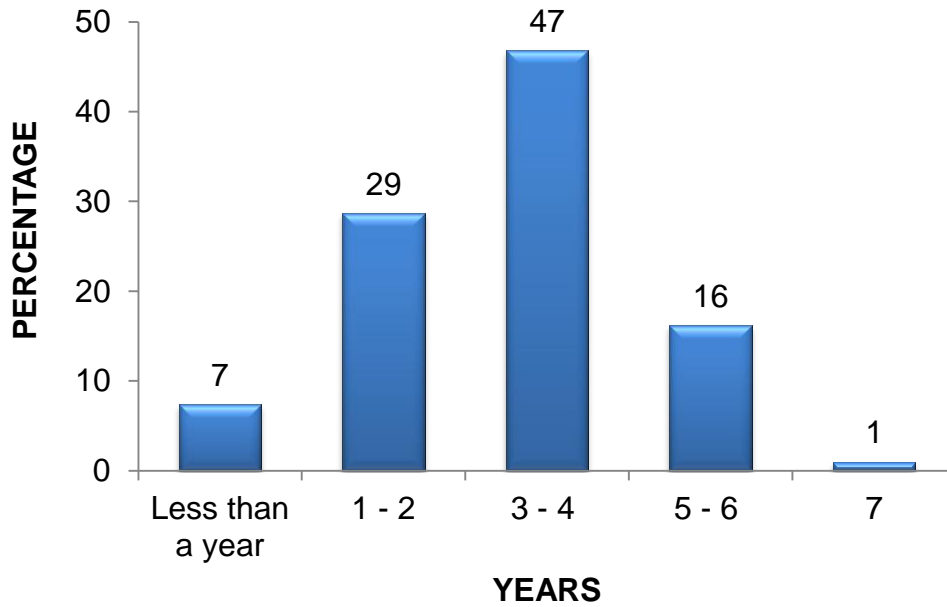


Figure 4.4 Years respondents have had a Facebook Profile

A large percentage (63%) of the sample consisted of users that have had a Facebook profile for a moderately long time, between 3 to 6 years. New users represented 7 percent of the sample with a Facebook profile for less than a year, whilst 29 percent of respondents had profiles for between 1 and 2 years, as presented in Figure 4.4.

4.3.6 Facebook Friend Analysis

n	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. error
408	4497	3	4500	227	16.42

Table 4.7 Analysis of the number of Facebook friends

Table 4.7 illustrates that the number of 'friends' respondents had, ranged between 3 and 4500, with the average number of friends being 227. Table 4.8 reveals that Black respondents on average have the most number of friends (298), this is followed very closely by Coloureds at 285 friends, then Whites at 230 friends and Indians at 189 friends.

Race	Mean	n
Black	298	46
Coloured	285	20
Indian	190	136
White	230	206

Table 4.8 Average Number of Friends by Race

An in-depth analysis of number of friends by those that chose to 'Like' a brand is presented in the sections to follow.

4.3.7 Other forms of Social Media Engagement

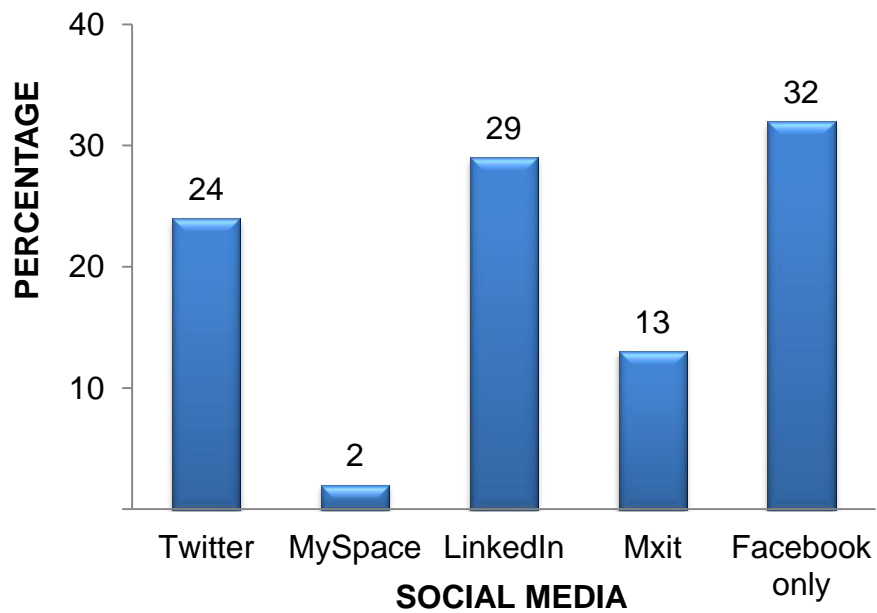


Figure 4.5 Facebook along with other Social Media Engagement

This area investigated whether users engaged on other social media platforms along with Facebook, the findings of which are vital to establish which social media platform is popular. Figure 4.5 shows that 32 percent of respondents have a Facebook profile alone, meaning that they do not engage on any other social networking platform. Whilst the following had both Facebook as well as other social media platforms: these are represented by 29 percent on LinkedIn, 24 percent on Twitter, 13 percent on Mxit and 2 percent on MySpace.

4.4 Analysis of Results Obtained to Meet the Objectives of the Study

Section 4.4 will present the findings in order that the study aim and objectives were satisfied. The presentation of the findings will be discussed per objective, immediately under each objective the question in the research instrument that probed this objective will be displayed.

4.4.1 Objective 1: Determine the Frequency of Facebook Usage in South Africa

4.4.1.1 How often do you access your Facebook profile? (Question 18)

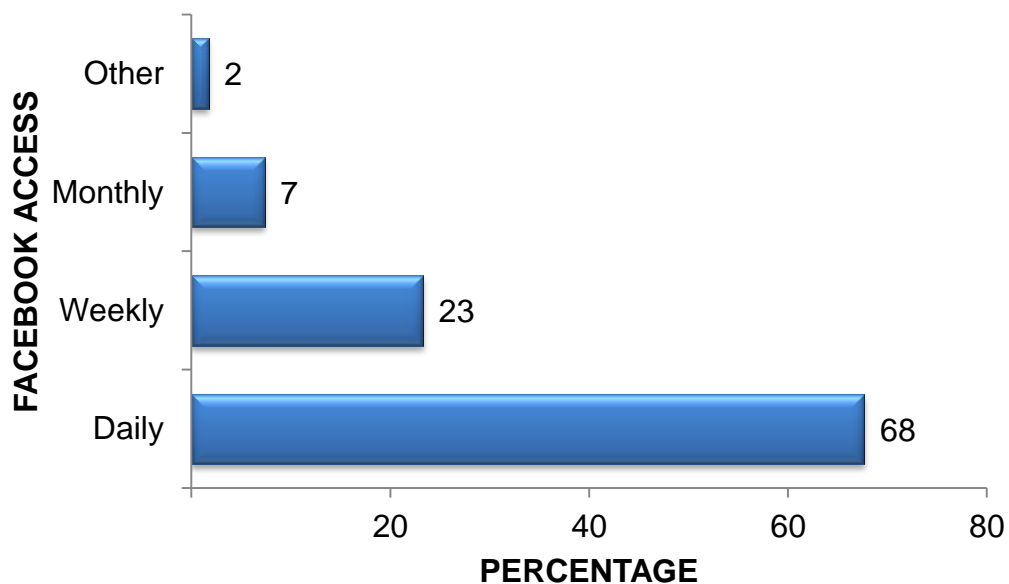


Figure 4.6 Frequency of Facebook access

The findings, in Figure 4.6 reveal that a large percent (68%) of respondents accessed Facebook daily, followed by weekly access of 23 percent of respondents and 7 percent accessed Facebook monthly. It is evident that majority are regular users of Facebook. Daily Facebook usage is fast catching up with Daily television viewing (68% versus 75% - refer Figure 4.6 and Table 4.3 respectively). Additionally Facebook usage has overtaken television viewing on a Weekly basis (23% versus 20%), the same is true for monthly users. Important to note was that

1 percent of the respondents 'Never' watch television at all however, they do interact on Facebook. This makes Facebook a viable platform for brands, as it is a captive audience, where majority of users log on daily. As stated in Chapter Two this platform allows for users to engage with brands, and thus enable dialogue with consumers, this directly affects brand health, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

4.4.1.2 Average Number of Friends By Frequency of Facebook Access

	Frequency of Access				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Other	Total
n	276	95	30	7	408
Mean	268	166	86	21	227
Std. Dev.	379	178	130	14	332
Minimum	5	8	3	4	3
Maximum	4500	900	626	40	4500

Table 4.9 Average Number of friends by Frequency of Facebook Access

Table 4.9 illustrates that the average number of friends (268) that daily Facebook users have is far higher than the average number of friends that weekly (166) or monthly (86) users have. There is a significant difference among the group means. The Bonferoni tests determined the difference lay between the average number of friends that daily users have versus the average number of friends monthly users have (daily friends being significantly higher, 95% significance). At 90% significance the average number of friends daily users have differs from weekly and monthly users; these results are from the ANOVA and Bonferoni multiple comparison tests.

Further analysis of daily access by 'brand like' will be presented with Objective 5.

4.4.2 Objective 2: Determine the Time Spent on Facebook

4.4.2.1 Each time you log into your Facebook profile, approximately how many minutes do you spend online? (Question 23)

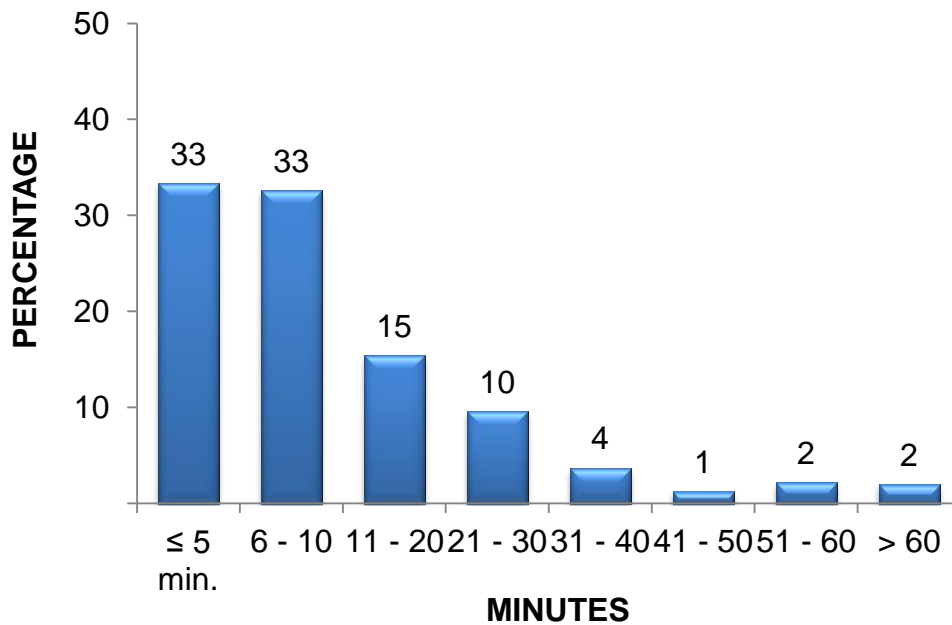


Figure 4.7 Time that users spent on Facebook

Respondents were grouped into eight categories according to the duration in minutes that they spend each time they log into their Facebook profiles. The data illustrated in Figure 4.7 revealed that 66 percent of respondents spent anywhere between 1 and 10 minutes on Facebook each time they logged on, 15 percent logged on within the 11 to 20 minute duration and 10 percent revealed that each time they log on they spend 21 to 30 minutes on Facebook; whilst 9 percent of the sample log onto Facebook for 31 minutes and longer. This is applicable to all respondents, irrespective of whether they log on daily, weekly or monthly.

4.4.2.2 Frequency of Facebook Access against the average number of times users log in

Figure 4.7 presented the minutes that were spent online each time the respondents logged on to Facebook, whilst questions 20 to 22 of the questionnaire, investigated how many times a day, a week or a month users accessed their profiles. The findings of which are presented in Table 4.10.

Frequency		Mean Facebook Access			
Period	n	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Daily	276	49	1	50	5.44
Weekly	94	14	1	15	3.01
Monthly	30	4	1	5	2.50

Table 4.10 Means Analysis of Time Spent on Facebook

Table 4.10 illustrates that those who logged on to Facebook daily did so at an average of 5 times per day, those users who accessed Facebook on a weekly basis logged on at least 3 times, similarly for those who accessed Facebook on a monthly basis. Whilst the maximum times logged on per day is 50 the mean is only 5 times daily which is indicative that only a few respondents skew the data.

4.4.2.3 Analysis of Minutes Spent on Facebook by Demographics

		Minutes								
		≤ 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	>60	Total
Demographics	Gender									
	Male	14%	13%	6%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	39%
	Female	20%	20%	9%	7%	2%		2%	1%	61%
	Total	34%	33%	15%	9%	3%	1%	3%	2%	100%
	Age									
	18 – 24	4%	4%	1%					1%	10%
	25 – 34	17%	15%	6%	5%	2%	1%		1%	47%
	35 – 44	8%	8%	5%	2%	2%		1%	1%	27%
	45 – 54	3%	4%	2%	1%			1%		11%
	55 – 64	1%	1%	1%	1%					4%
	>65	1%								1%
Total	34%	32%	15%	9%	4%	1%	2%	3%	100%	

Table 4.11 Cross Tabulation of Minutes Spent on Facebook by Gender and Age

Table 4.11 is a cross tabulation of minutes spent on Facebook, each time a user logged on, by gender and age. This table shows that 27 percent of Males spend between 1 and 10 minutes on Facebook, this is lower than Females at 40 percent for the same duration. Across all age groups the heaviest weighing (66%) of time spent on Facebook was within the 1 to 10 minute time frame each time a user logged on. Analysis by race will be presented in Table 4.12.

		Race				
		Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
Minutes	≤ 5	2%	1%	12%	18%	33%
	6 to 10	3%	2%	11%	17%	33%
	11 to 20	2%	1%	4%	8%	15%
	21 to 30	2%	1%	3%	4%	10%
	31 to 40	1%		1%	1%	3%
	41 to 50	1%			1%	2%
	51 to 60			1%	1%	2%
	> 60	1%			1%	2%
	Total	12%	5%	32%	51%	100%

Table 4.12 Cross Tabulation of Minutes Spent on Facebook by Race

Table 4.12 shows that 18 percent of White respondents spend between 5 minutes or less on Facebook each time they log on, followed by Indians at 12 percent, Blacks 1 percent and Coloureds at 1 percent. Interestingly, in the 11 to 30 minute category, both White and Indian usage drops drastically however the Black and Coloured log in duration remains stable. The longer duration may be due to the fact that the Black and Coloured respondent groups, on average, have more friends (298 and 285 friends respectively) than the Indian and White respondents (190 and 230 friends respectively) refer Table 4.8.

4.4.3 Objective 3: Establish what Technology is Used To Access Facebook

4.4.3.1 How do you mainly access your Facebook profile? (Question 18)

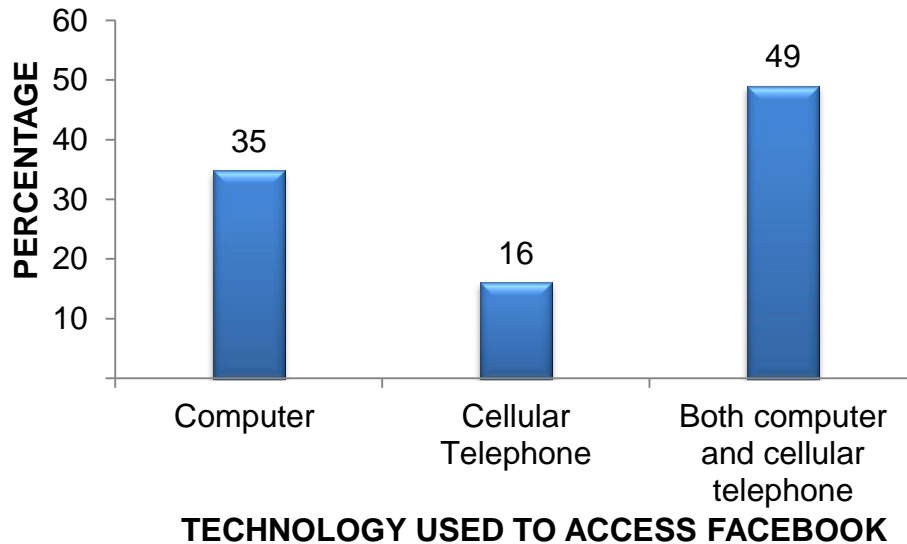


Figure 4.8 Representation of technology used to access Facebook

This study found that nearly half (49 percent) of respondents accessed Facebook via a combination of computers and cellular telephones, as presented in Figure 4.8. Thirty five percent accessed their Facebook profile from computer and 16 percent from cellular telephone alone. This objective was probed in order to draw attention to the fact that more South Africans have access to cell phones versus personal computers this makes evident that access to Facebook is not limited only to those with personal computers

4.4.3.2 Technology that is used to access Facebook by Online Purchase

Technology	Online Purchase		
	Yes	No	Total
Computer	26%	9%	35%
Cellular Telephone	13%	3%	16%
Combination of both	37%	12%	49%
Total	76%	24%	100%

Table 4.13 Technology used to Access Facebook by Online purchase

Table 4.3 revealed that 76 percent of respondents made online purchases. Whilst Table 4.13 shows of those that have made online purchases, 37 percent access Facebook by using a combination of both 'cell phone and computer', 26 percent from a 'computer only' and 13 percent from a 'cell phone'. This means the potential to turn Facebook 'fans of a brand' into online purchasers of that brand is high, as a large portion of the sample are familiar with online purchasing. This presents an opportunity to use Facebook a brand building tool, in line with traditional marketing media.

4.4.3.3 Technology that is used to access Facebook by Demographics

		Technology			
		Computer	Cellular Telephone	Combination of both	Total
Demographics	Gender				
	Male	14%	6%	18%	38%
	Female	21%	11%	30%	62%
	Total	35%	17%	48%	100%
	Age				
	18 – 24	2%	2%	6%	10%
	25 – 34	12%	9%	25%	46%
	35 – 44	11%	4%	13%	28%
	45 – 54	8%	1%	3%	12%
	55 – 64	2%		1%	3%
>65	1%			1%	
Total	36%	16%	48%	100%	

Table 4.14 Cross Tabulation of Technology used to Access Facebook by Demographics

A cross tabulation of technology used to access Facebook and the age and gender of respondents illustrated that of all the respondents that access Facebook via ‘Cell phone only’, over half (9% of the 16%) fell into the 25 to 34 age group and consisted of 11 percent females, according to Table 4.14. Of the respondents that accessed Facebook by ‘Computer only’ 21 percent were female and 31 percent fell into the 25 to 54 year ages groups, whilst access by a ‘Combination of both cell phone and computer’, revealed 30 percent were female 41 percent were classed in the 25 to 54 age groups.

4.4.4 Objective 4: Determine if Facebook Users would 'Like' A Brand

4.4.4.1 Have you ever included a company or brand to the interest section of your profile page on Facebook (or have you 'Liked' or 'Friended' a brand on Facebook)? (Question 25)

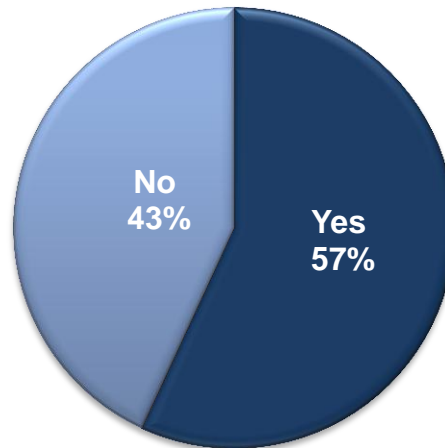


Figure 4.9 Respondents that 'Liked' a brand on Facebook

Figure 4.9 shows that 57 percent of the sample has chosen to 'Like' a brand on Facebook, whilst 43 percent preferred not to 'fan' a brand on Facebook. This objective will be discussed further in terms of reasons why brands are 'Liked'; and cross tabulations of this variable by demographics, daily Facebook access, average number of friends and online purchases will be presented below.

4.4.4.2 Reasons why respondents chose to 'Like' a Brand

Reasons why Brands are 'Liked'	Percentage
I like the brands I fan on Facebook	31
I purchase the brands	22
The brand is cool or iconic	12
To get more information about the brand	26
Only 'Liked' the brand to get a one-time offer	6
I 'liked' the brand because my friends did	3

Table 4.15 Reasons why brands are 'Liked' on Facebook

Table 4.15, provides reasons as to why 57 percent of respondents chose to 'Like' a brand. The top reason was that they liked the brands (31%), the second reason for liking a brand was to get more information about the brand (26%), the third reason was that users actually purchase these brands (22%), followed by the brand is iconic or cool (12%) and interestingly only 6 percent chose to 'like' a brand based on getting a one-time offer from the brand and finally only 3 percent 'friended' the brand because their friends did. It can therefore be interpreted that nearly 91 percent (31%, 22%, 12% and 26%) of respondents 'Liked' a brand to increase engagement with the brand. Highlighting that those brands present on Facebook are being 'Liked' and that positive relationships are being built with these brands.

4.4.4.3 Reasons why Respondents Choose Not to 'Fan' a Brand

Reasons why Brands aren't 'fanned'	Percentage
I use Facebook to interact with friends, family and colleagues	54
I consider posts from brands as spam	5
I do not have the time to interact with companies	16
Combination of no time and spam options	7
Combination of no time and only for friends options	10
Combination of all 3 options	7

Table 4.16 Reasons why brands are not 'Fanned' on Facebook

Even though 57 percent of users chose to 'Like' brands on Facebook, 43 percent of users prefer to not interact with brands on this platform. Therefore it was only fitting to investigate the reasons why users preferred not to 'Fan' brands. The leading reason (at 54%) was that respondents use Facebook to interact with friends, family and colleagues, and 16 percent do not have time to interact with brands, whilst 5 percent felt that posts from brands was considered spam. The remaining 24 percent selected a combination of these three reasons, percentage breakdown per combination is reflected in Table 4.16.

4.4.4.4 Cross Tabulation of Brand Like by Demographics

		Brand Like		
		Yes	No	Total
Demographics	Gender			
	Male	19%	19%	38%
	Female	38%	24%	62%
	Total	57%	43%	100%
	Race			
	Black	7%	4%	11%
	Coloured	2%	3%	5%
	Indian	19%	15%	34%
	White	29%	21%	50%
	Total	57%	43%	100%
	Age			
	18 – 24	7%	3%	10%
	25 – 34	29%	18%	47%
	35 – 44	15%	12%	27%
	45 – 54	5%	7%	12%
	55 – 64	1%	2%	3%
	>65	1%		1%
Total	58%	42%	100%	

Table 4.17 Cross Tabulation of Brand Like and Demographics

A cross tabulation of the users that chose to 'Like' a brand by gender, race and age was investigated; the findings of which appear in Table 4.17. Of all the respondents that chose to 'like' a brand females were one and a half times more likely to 'Fan' a brand than male respondents, as 62 percent were female and 38 percent were male. Amongst the different race groups 29 percent of White users, 19 percent of Indian users, 7 percent of Black users and 2 percent of Coloured users chose to 'Like' a brand. Table 4.17 also revealed that only 7 percent of

respondents in the 45 to 65 category chose to 'like' a brand whilst 51 percent were from the 18 to 44 age group, with the largest concentration at 29 percent from the 25 to 34 age group. This affirms that younger age groups are early adopters, and that the ethos of 'liking' or 'friending' brands will probably be carried with them as they age, resulting in larger percentages of the 'Like' population among older age groups in the future.

4.4.4.5 Average Daily Access By Brand "Like"

Daily Access		
Brand Like	Mean	N
Yes	6.1	179
No	4.3	97

Table 4.18 Daily Access by Brand "Like"

Table 4.18 describes users that chose to 'Like' a brand and their daily average access of Facebook. Findings show that the average number of times logged on daily by those that chose to 'Like' a brand was 6 times versus 4 times for those that preferred not to 'like' a brand.

4.4.4.6 Analysis of 'Brand Like' and Number of Facebook Friends

Brand Like		
	Yes	No
n	232	176
%	57	43
Mean	273*	165*
Min	3	4
Max	4500	1400
Std.dev	396	205

*Mean scores between average number of Friends who 'Like' and chose not to 'like' a brand were significantly different (t-test; p-value: 0.00107).

Table 4.19 Brand "Likes" and the Average number of Facebook Friends

According to Table 4.19; 57 percent of users that 'Like' a brand on average, had more friends than users who chose not to 'Like' a brand (272 friends and 165 friends respectively), and a t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the average number of friends between the two groups. This could mean increased exposure to messages from these 'Liked' brands. Hence a dialogue between brands and Facebook users, this dialogue is rarely achieved using traditional media.

4.4.4.7 Analysis of Brand 'Like' and Online Purchase behaviour

Brand Like	Online Purchase		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	44%	13%	57%
No	32%	11%	43%
Total	76%	24%	100%

The Chi Square implies that there is no significant association between these 2 variables

Table 4.20: Cross Tabulation of Brand "Like" and Online Purchase

Further analysis was undertaken to understand online purchase behaviour and users that 'Liked' a brand, the findings are presented in Table 4.20. This revealed that a large percent (78%) of respondents that chose to 'Like' a brand also purchase online, whilst only 22 percent that 'Like' a brand have not purchased online. This, over time could result in fans of a brand, purchasing products or services from the brands they 'Like' therefore increasing engagement and may result in the relationship that will have a positive effect on return on investment.

4.4.5 Objective 5: Determine the Categories of Companies or Brands that Users Would Engage with on Facebook

4.4.5.1 Which of the following categories of companies have you 'Liked' on Facebook. You may select more than one, but these will have to be ranked, starting with number 1 being the favourite. (Question 28)

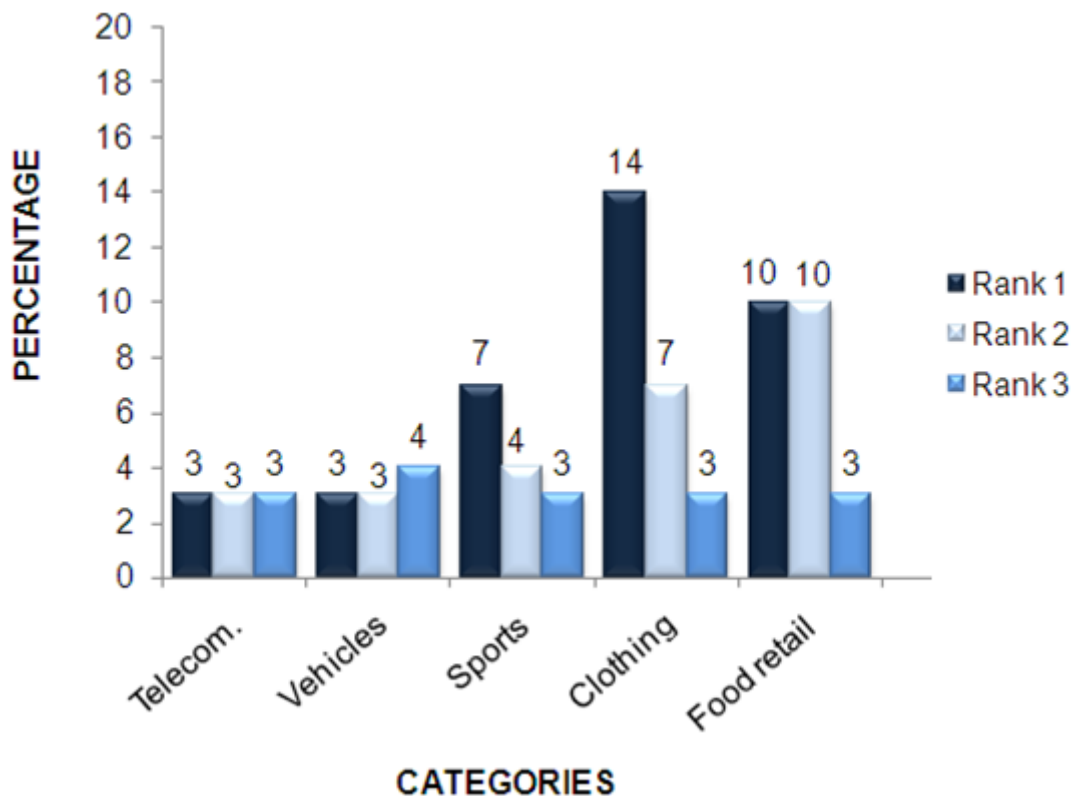


Figure 4.10: Ranking of Company Categories “Liked” by respondents

All respondents that had ‘Liked’ a brand were asked to rank their favourite brands across the 5 categories listed in Figure 4.10. The data revealed that the number one ranked category was Clothing at 14 percent, followed by the number two favourite category being food retail at 10 percent and the third ranked category was vehicles at 4 percent.

4.4.5.2 Top 5 Brands 'Liked'

Category	Brand Name	Frequency
Telecommunication / Technology	Apple	10
	Blackberry	9
	Nikon	2
	Vodacom	4
	MTN	3
Vehicles	Audi	8
	BMW	5
	Toyota	3
	Volkswagen	2
	Aston Martin, Jeep, Hyundai, Mazda	1
Sport	Sharks Rugby	5
	Springboks	5
	Liverpool Football Club	3
	Manchester United	3
	Chelsea	2
Clothing	Guess	12
	Nike	9
	Levis	8
	Adidas	8
	Edgars	7
Food Retail	SPAR	25
	Woolworths	15
	Pick n Pay	3
	Coca-Cola	2
	Castle Lager	1

Table 4.21: List of favourite brand names mentioned

Table 4.21 lists the Top 5 brand names and the number of mentions according to the categories presented in Figure 4.10. The following brands were ranked first within the following categories; Apple in the Technology or Telecommunication category, Audi in the Vehicle category, Sharks and Springbok Rugby in the Sport category, Guess and SPAR in the Clothing and Food Retail category.

4.4.6 Objective 6: Establish Whether Facebook ‘Fans’ of a Brand Would Recommend the Brand to their Friends

4.4.6.1 On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend a company / brand that you “Like” to your friends? (Question 30)

N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. dev.
232	10	1	10	6.9*	3.0

*Mean was significantly different from the neutral score of 5

Table 4.22: Average Likelihood whether fans would promote the brand/s they like

The findings illustrated in Table 4.22 show that on average respondents scored 6.9 out of ten, which shows a significant affinity towards recommending brands to friends.

Further means analysis, using t-tests on brand recommendations by demographics showed no significant differences.

4.4.7 Objective 7: Investigate Reasons Why Users Would ‘Unlike’ a Brand

Unlike Reasons	Percentage
My wall became too crowded with posts from the brand	30
Too frequent posts from the brand	29
The content became repetitive and boring	20
The content posted was not relevant for me	10
I prefer to seek information, not have companies pushing it on to me	7
The company did not offer enough deals	4

Table 4.23: Reasons why a brand could be ‘Unliked’

Vital to understanding how consumers engage with brands is knowing reasons why users that once fanned a brand would choose to later Unlike a brand or even just ignore messages from the brand. Findings revealed that of the 232 respondents that chose to ‘Like’ a brand, 84 respondents had also answered that at some point they chose to ‘Unlike’ a brand, this represents 21 percent of the sample.

The top reason cited for ‘Unliking’ a brand was that the users ‘wall’ became too crowded with posts from the brand (30%), followed very closely by too frequent posts from the brand (29%), repetitive and boring content (20%), irrelevant content (10%); as illustrated in Table 4.23. It is extremely interesting and powerful for brands on Facebook that a mere 4 percent stated that they would ‘Unlike’ a brand because the brand offered few deals. This reiterates that over 90 percent (refer Table 4.15) of users ‘Like’ a brand to create positive engagement with the brand, not just to receive freebies and discounts.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this study from a general analysis of Facebook users by demographics, followed through with an in-depth analysis per study objective. The analysis of the study objectives included descriptive as well as inferential statistics. Some of the key findings of this study, especially demographics and associated to user behaviour, was new, as this type of information about the South African Facebook user is not freely available. Interesting is that respondents of this study interact more often with Facebook, on a daily basis than with other forms of media. A comprehensive analysis of all the objectives were presented; and important factors that shed insight into why and how users interact with brands was discussed. Chapter Five will contain a summary of this study in comparison to any freely available studies on Facebook as a branding tool.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion of Results

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five will discuss the findings presented in chapter four, the results of which were obtained from random South African Facebook users who responded to the questionnaire. The aim of this study (as presented in Chapter One), was to examine the behaviour of Facebook users in South Africa, with the intention to understand user engagement with brands or companies on this platform. Therefore chapter five will form an association of the empirical work of this chapter with the literature review, from chapter two.

The discussion will include a presentation of the demographics of respondents, will show how respondents engage with traditional media and thereafter the objectives of this study will be discussed. Where possible, discussion will be compared to other findings. Findings of which are either based on the United States of America and the United Kingdom; as there was no freely available South African information that could be used.

5.2 Demographics of the Sample

5.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The demographics of the respondents in this survey, as presented in section 4.3.1 indicated that 61 percent were female and the remaining 39 percent were male. In 2010 it was reported that the female, male ratio of SA Facebook users was 52 and 48 percent respectively (Krynauw, 2010). Whilst SocialBakers.com (2011) reflects the current gender split as 51 and 49 percent female and male respectively.

This points out the gender weighting of this survey and findings may be slightly skewed towards females, and also lends itself to a possible limitation of this study. This can be attributed to the fact that the survey spread virally from the

researcher’s personal Facebook profile which consists of 80 percent female friends and once spread virally there was no method to ensure which gender received the survey or which gender would respond.

5.2.2 Age of Respondents

Seventy four percent of the sample was classed within the 25 to 44 year old age groups (25 to 34 years, 47%; 35 to 44 years 27%); and the lowest participation from the older age groups (55 and older, 3%). Table 5.1 reflects the percentage represented from each age group of this study with that of SocialBakers.com (2011b). This study had a heavier weighting in the 25 to 54 age groups and a lower weighting in the 18 to 24 age category as well as the 55 and older age groups.

Age	Study Respondents %	South Africa %
18 – 24	10	31
25 – 34	47	30
35 – 44	27	14
45 - 54	12	8
55 – 64	3	4
65 and over	1	4

Table 5.1: Age of study respondents compared to South African Statistics of Facebook users

Adapted from SocialBakers.com (2011b) <http://www.socialbakers.com/blog/14-facebook-released-new-site-stats/>

5.2.3 Race of Respondents

The race of respondents as presented in Table 4.1 revealed that 50% percent of the sample consisted of Whites, Indians 33 percent, followed by Blacks 11 percent and Coloureds 5 percent. This cannot be verified with actual South African

Facebook users by race, as official statistics of this nature is not available. This would require Facebook users to fill race on their profile pages, and this is not a field on Facebook.

Malczyk (2011) highlighted that the online population of SA consists of 6 million of the wealthiest in the country, and that over 50 percent of them use Facebook. Therefore it is vital to understand that conversations about brands and companies are happening regardless, so brands should get in on this conversation, as this will allow them to direct and then use the conversation (Cowan, 2011; *cited* by Fourie, 2011).

5.3 Media Interaction of The Sample

5.3.1 Television Viewing Behaviour of Respondents

Qualman (2011b) presented the following data revealing Facebook penetration; it took 38 years for radio to reach 50 million listeners, television 13 years, Internet 4 years, iPod 3 years to reach the same target, but Facebook hit 200 million users in less than 1 year. Fundamental to this study was to develop an understanding of Facebook user engagement across traditional media platforms. Therefore respondent viewing behaviour of television in terms of time spent watching television as well as a television advertisement viewing behaviour was analysed. The analysis also took into account the respondents engagement across newspapers and magazine reading behaviour. It is important to reiterate that all respondents in this survey were Facebook users.

The findings presented in Table 4.3 revealed that on a daily basis television was viewed by 75 percent of respondents, whilst 24 percent of the sample watched television on a weekly or monthly basis and 1 percent did not watch television at all. Even though an overwhelming number of respondents (75 %) watched television daily, 44 percent of the daily watchers only watched television for between 1 to 2 hours (refer Table 4.4). This could result in limited brand advertisement exposure. Therefore analysis of television advertisement viewing behaviour was undertaken, the findings of which are presented in section 4.3.3.3,

and reveal that only 7 percent of respondents 'Always' watched television adverts, whilst 8 percent 'Never' watched television adverts (refer Figure 4.2), revealing that 66 percent of the sample 'Never to Rarely and Seldom' viewed television adverts (Never 8%, Rarely 36% and Seldom 22%) and confirming that there is a limited exposure to brand advertisements on television. Further analysis and findings of a cross tabulation of television viewing behaviour by the viewing of television adverts was presented in Table 4.5, this too revealed that of those respondents that did watch television on a weekly basis 31 percent 'Rarely or Never' watched television adverts (Rarely 25%, Never 6%).

According to Weber (2009), 90 percent of people that can avoid television adverts will do so. Whilst Qualman (2011) stated that only 14 percent trust adverts, whilst only 18 percent of traditional television campaigns generated a positive return on investment, and 90 percent of people that can Tivo television adverts will do so, this is also made possible in SA with the PVR decoder. The following section will discuss the respondents reading behaviour in terms of magazines and newspapers.

5.3.2 Newspaper and Magazine Reading Behaviour of Respondents

The results show that only 32 percent of respondents read the newspaper daily, whilst 12 percent did not read the newspaper at all (43% Weekly and 11% monthly). According to Benjamin (2009) in 2009 there was a decline in daily, weekly and weekend newspaper circulation in South Africa the reported decline was 2.57%, 8.92% and 2.55% respectively. Whilst Da Silva (2010) reported that total newspaper circulation declined by 146 000 copies in the third quarter of 2010. This could be the beginning of what has occurred in the US and other countries, where there is a decline in print in favour of free online options (Da Silva, 2010). It could be said that "we no longer look for the news, the news finds us" (Hoogendoorn, 2009).

Magazine readership was 35 percent on a weekly basis and nearly half the sample (45%) read magazines on a monthly basis, 8 percent never read magazines. It is important to note that those who "Never" read the newspapers (12%) or

magazines (8%) were active users of Facebook. According to Speckman (2011), the SA Audit Bureau of circulation revealed that magazine subscriptions were under pressure, however digital editions showed growth opportunities. It was further posited that this trend would grow as broadband penetration and affordability increased (Speckman, 2011).

5.4 Findings of the Study

The findings of this study will be presented by the seven objectives and will include information as to whether each objective has been met.

5.4.1 **Objective One:** Determine the Frequency of Usage of Facebook in South Africa

The first objective of this study was to gain insight into how often respondents accessed their Facebook profiles, the findings as presented in Figure 4.6 revealed that a large portion (68%) of respondents accessed their profiles on a daily basis, weekly access was 23 percent and monthly access 7 percent. Daily Facebook usage is fast catching up with Daily television viewing (68% versus 75% - refer Figure 4.6 and Table 4.3 respectively). Additionally Facebook (23%) usage has overtaken television viewing (20%) on a Weekly basis, the same is true for monthly users. It is important to note that 1 percent of the respondents “Never” watched television at all, however they interacted on Facebook.

A cross tabulation of frequency of Facebook access by average number of Facebook friends (refer Table 4.9) revealed that users who accessed their Facebook profile on a Daily basis had on average more Facebook friends than weekly and monthly users (268 friends, 166 friends and 86 friends; respectively). This could mean that should Daily users ‘Like’ brands they could be exposed to brand messages on a daily basis, and these respondents also have a larger average number of Facebook friends, and could be used as ‘influencers’ by marketers.

5.4.2 **Objective Two:** Determine the Time Spent on Facebook

All respondents, whether they logged on daily, weekly or monthly provided information about the time (in minutes) that they spent on Facebook each time they logged in. The findings revealed that 66 percent of respondents spent anywhere from 1 to 10 minutes on Facebook each time they logged on, 15 percent spent between 11 to 20 minutes and 10 percent between 21 to 30 minutes. Statistical results of this variable by demographics as well as frequency of access was further analysed and presented in sections 4.4.2.2 and 4.4.2.3.

Ostrow (2009) quoted Nielsen Online stating that Facebook users spent an average of 346 minutes on Facebook, during the month of August 2009, a comparison of this study in total monthly minutes was not possible as time spent online was a bracketed option (example 1 to 10 minutes etc) and not exact timings. This could be seen as a further research opportunity, and this variable will have to be an open ended question, so respondents can fill in the exact number of minutes spent on Facebook each time they log on. However for this study objective two has been met.

5.4.3 **Objective Three:** Establish What Technology is Used to Access Facebook

The researcher found that this was an important variable to research as online reach in South Africa is 8.5 million browsers with an additional 9.5 million of the population that can browse the internet by cellular telephone (World Wide Worx, 2010). According to SocialBakers.com (2011b) users that access Facebook by cell phone were almost 50 percent more active on Facebook than non-cell phone users.

The findings of this study showed that nearly half (49 %) of respondents accessed their Facebook profile by a combination of computers and cellular telephones (refer Figure 4.8). Thirty five percent accessed their Facebook profile from computer and 16 percent from cellular telephone alone. A parallel with World Wide Worx figures revealed that 39% of urban South Africans, and 27% of rural users are browsing the internet on their cell phone (Manson, 2011).

A cross tabulation of the technology and online purchase behaviour of Facebook users was undertaken, the findings of which reveal that 76 percent of this sample had made a purchase online (refer Table 4.13). Whilst 13 percent of users that access Facebook with their 'cell phone mainly' have also conducted an online purchase via their cell phone, this area was analysed because results of the World Wide Worx study revealed that 11 percent of South Africans made online purchases via their cellphones (Manson, 2011). Implying that Facebook fans of a brand could with ease become online purchasers of the brand. This also affirms the feasibility of using Facebook along with traditional media to convey brand messages to consumers.

Further cross tabulations of this variable by demographics revealed that users who accessed Facebook by 'cell phone' consisted of 9 percent of 25 to 34 age groups and was made up of 11 percent females (refer Table 4.14), highlighting for brands the importance of this age group on whom to secure advertising spend, as this would secure future market, and the disposable income of this group will be secured as they age, since they may have an affinity for the brands they 'Like' on Facebook, therefore confirming that this objective has been met.

5.4.4 **Objective Four:** Determine if Facebook Users would "LIKE" a Brand

Findings of this study showed that 57 percent of the sample had chosen to 'Like' a brand, this is slightly higher than a study conducted by Handley (2010), in Britain where 50 percent of users on Twitter and Facebook had 'Liked' a brand whilst Edison Research reflected that 16 percent of social network users had 'Liked' a brand in the U.S. (eMarketer, 2010). Handley (2010) termed these fans as engagers and further provided insights that 90 percent of brand engagers spent money online. Interestingly Webtrends Survey Results, as presented by McEleny (2009b) revealed that 19 percent of users would have a higher regard for a brand if the brand interacted with them. And of those that had already interacted with a brand, on these platforms 74 percent said that this resulted in an increase in approval of the brand.

This variable was further analysed in terms of reasons why brands are 'Liked' and cross tabulations of this variable by demographics, daily Facebook access, average number of friends and online purchases was discussed in chapter four. Assertions from these areas will be briefly discussed.

5.4.4.1 Reasons For Brand 'Like'

Based on Table 4:15 cumulatively 91 percent of respondents 'Liked' a brand to increase engagement with the brand. Highlighting that those brands present on Facebook are being 'Liked', and that positive relationships are being built with these brands.

5.4.4.2 Brand 'Like' Analysis by Demographics

Table 4.16 revealed that 51 percent of respondents that chose to 'Like' a brand were from the 25 to 34 age group. This is in agreement with the British study where 50 percent of the respondents with a social networking account made connections with an online brand. This figure increases to 55 percent in the 'under 35 year' age category, affirming that younger age groups are early adopters (Handley, 2010).

5.4.4.3 Brand 'Like' Key Findings

Users that chose to 'Like' a brand on average accessed their profiles 6 times on a daily basis versus those users that chose not to 'Like' a brand (refer Table 4.18). On average users that chose to 'Like' a brand had 273 friends whereas users that preferred not to 'Like' a brand had an average of 165 friends (refer Table 4.19), this is far higher than the average number of friends at 130 that is presented by SocialBakers (2011). A cross tabulation of Brand 'Like' and online purchase behaviour (refer Table 4.20) revealed that of those that chose to 'Like' a brand 44 percent had made online purchases. Analysis of this variable shows that this objective has been met.

5.4.5 **Objective Five:** Determine The Categories of Companies or Brands That Users Engage with on Facebook

This objective was met by ranking the industries that were 'Liked', and then finding out the brands that fell into each area. The data revealed that the number one ranked category was Clothing at 14%, followed by the number 2 favourite category being food retail at 10% and the third ranked category was vehicles at 4 % (refer Figure 4.10). Table 4.21 presented the top 5 brands per sector. Of the Top brands mentioned by users Apple, Nike and Adidas were common with the British study (Handley, 2010).

There is a more positive feeling from consumers towards brands that make use of social media. Any reply from a brand, seemed to add strength to the bond between the consumer and company. Even if a comment or experience was negative, a dialogue had begun and it brought brands and consumers closer (Hosea, 2011). Nineteen percent of users would have a higher regard for a brand if the brand interacted with them, and of those that had already interacted with a brand, on these platforms 74 percent said that this resulted in an increase in approval of the brand (McEleny, 2009b).

5.4.6 **Objective Six:** Establish Whether Facebook Fans of a Brand Would Recommend the Brand To Their Facebook Friends

Objective six was met by findings which revealed that on average respondents scored a 6.9 out of 10 for recommending a brand they 'Like' to their Facebook friends (refer Table 4.22). This is reflective of a substantial affinity towards recommending brands to friends. Further means analysis, using t-tests, on brand recommendations by demographics showed no significant differences. Qualman (2011b) stated that 78 percent of customers trust peer recommendations whilst only 14 percent believe television advertisements, and according to Keller (2008) a stronger sense of community among users can result in favourable brand attitudes which result in an intention to purchase.

5.4.7 **Objective Seven:** Investigate Reasons Why Users Would ‘UNLIKE’ a Brand

This objective provides insight into why users that once chose to ‘Like’ a brand had at some stage decided to ‘Unlike’ the brand. Table 4.23 presented the findings which revealed that the number one reason for ‘Unliking’ a brand was because the user’s wall became too crowded with posts from the brand (30%), followed very closely by too frequent posts from the brand (29%), repetitive and boring content (20%) and irrelevant content (10%). Of interest was that only 4 percent of users would ‘Unlike’ a brand due to the brand offering few deals. This reiterates that over 90 percent (refer Table 4.15) of users ‘friended’ a brand to create positive engagement with the brand, not just to receive ‘freebies’ and discounts. According to ExactTarget.com (2011), the top reason for ‘Unliking’ a brand was that the company posted too frequently at 44 percent, and 43 percent noted that their ‘Wall’ became too crowded with posts and they felt that they had to get rid of these brands. Interestingly ‘the company did not offer enough deals’ was selected by 4 percent of respondents in this study, whilst the ExactTarget study revealed this reason had a 24 percent weighting. This could be interpreted as South African fans are still in the explorative phase of interacting with brands and don’t expect a high offering of deals from brands as the foreign users do.

5.5 Summary

The study objectives along with the empirical findings of Chapter Four were discussed in this chapter. Analysis also linked to Chapter Two holistically bringing the research findings of this study with existing research and the literature review to an end. The objectives of this study were met allowing for the aim of this research project to be achieved, thus providing an understanding of Facebook user behaviour in South Africa, key findings revealed that Facebook is an effective platform to engage with fans and creates equity for brands, and should be added to traditional marketing mix elements. Chapter Six will present conclusions to the research as well as limitations and recommendations will be suggested.

CHAPTER SIX

Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Facebook launched approximately seven years ago, and has revealed overwhelming statistics of engagement by users on this platform. The literature discussed in Chapter Two drew attention to several brands that are successfully engaging on this platform. However, brand engagement on Facebook is relatively new to South Africa, and any freely available research is based on the US and the UK. This limited research about South African Facebook user behaviour spurred the interest of the research direction that was pursued in this study, with the purpose to add to the very limited body of research that is currently available. In order to ensure that the study aim, of examining the behaviour of South African Facebook users was achieved, the objectives mentioned in Chapter 3 (3.2.2) were undertaken. This chapter will bring to conclusion the key findings from this study and will also suggest how to effectively engage on social networking platforms. The limitations of this study as well as suggestions for future research will be discussed.

6.2 Key Findings

The first three objectives of the study allowed for an understanding of how often users accessed Facebook, what type of technology they used. The analysis also provided the duration users spent on this platform each time they logged on, this information is useful and relevant for brands that would like to engage on this platform. Objectives four to six, investigated whether users would engage with brands; and those that chose to engage with brands were further analysed. Their behaviour provides brands with valuable insights proving that Facebook is a platform that enhances engagement with fans, and that it is an effective branding tool. All objectives of this study were met. The next section will list the limitations of the study.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

- There was a skew of gender in this survey, as discussed in section 5.2.1. It would be interesting to analyse if the gender weightings match that of current South African Facebook user statistics and whether this would affect the findings.
- The research spread virally from the researcher's personal Facebook profile, so all first degree contacts were mainly in the 30 year and older age groups, and were mainly highly urban and degreed individuals. Therefore rural users were probably not adequately represented, even though there is no evidence as to rural users that are on Facebook. A future study including this sector would be informative.
- Due to time constraints, the researcher chose to concentrate the research to the most popular platform, being Facebook; but it is felt that platforms such as Twitter, Mxit and Linked-In need to be explored as well, especially with the advent of social integration tools.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Studies

Due to the limited scope of this study the following are areas that could be addressed in future studies:

- A qualitative study with focus groups; to understand how consumers feel about the digital environment and interaction with brands therein.
- Conduct a tracking study to gauge spend across media (such as direct mail, billboards) against that of Facebook to analyse how many new customers each platform can introduce to the business.
- Analyse the correlation of sales in companies that are highly engaged in social media versus those that are not as highly engaged in social media.
- A tracking study to measure if there is a shift in media spend from television and print (newspapers or magazines) to social media. Should there be adjustments then an analysis on the return on investment will also need to be analysed.

- Track sales of a promotion being run wholly on Facebook, versus the same promotion being run using traditional media, at different times.
- Google will soon be releasing a platform in direct competition with Facebook, it would be interesting to analyse the effect this would have on Facebook.

6.5 Recommendations

This study has found that social media users would engage with brands, the learnings of which confirm this channel as an effective platform to engage with users. As such a few suggestions were put together to allow for brands to get an understanding of what a social media strategy could entail (this area is large and beyond the scope of this study):

- In order to ensure good content strategy is in place, it is advised that social content needs to be designed around business goals, this will serve to guide a company as which sector of the market to direct their brand messages. Therefore set clear goals and objectives this will allow for a clear strategy that will be easier to measure. (Duxbury, *cited* in Fourie, 2011)
- Ensure that the social media strategy is an integrated element of the overall marketing strategy. The social media strategy should enhance and support the company's marketing and internet strategy.
- It is important to note that social media will not only involve the marketing department; but the entire organisation. Therefore list the departments in the company and how each of these departments could apply social media to their part of the business.
- If a company strategy is to become more actively engaged in social media, effective engagement would entail commitment in terms of people, time and money.
- Even though social media strategy is business centred, social media interactions are people centred therefore in order to keep the connection authentic, brands should avoid a very formal tone, but the essence of the tone, needs to be in line with business culture (Mac, 2010).

- Duxbury further cited that engaging content can drive promotions, get feet into stores, generate sales and provides learnings on which future campaigns can be based (Fourie, 2011).
- Effective engagement is based on ensuring that content is fresh, building a friend network, keeping the brand page status updated and replying to comments.
- Ensure that communication is authentic, honest and correct; this will help build rapport with customers and the brand, and may also allow for users to be a bit more forgiving to little mistakes that may occur (Mac, 2010).
- Allow users to tell their story, because stories are memorable, and form part of who we are. It will also bring authenticity to brand building campaigns, and bring realness to the brand.

6.6 Summary

Social networking as a marketing platform is relatively new in South Africa. The key findings in this chapter flow from the study aim, and the objectives which are have been met. All of which provided evidence, for brands, that Facebook is an effective advertising medium. The study also revealed how users prefer to engage with brands, and was exploratory in that it provided analysis by race, which is not available about the South African Facebook users.

The literature reviewed was mainly based on the US and UK markets however, allowed for associations to be paralleled with South Africa. The data collected was sufficient to provide answers to the research questions. The limitations of this study were discussed, and recommendations for future studies were put forward. In order for effective engagement to occur across social media platforms, a selection of social media strategy hints and tips were suggested.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Masters of Business Administration Research Project

Researcher: Nelene Rampersad

(083 307 4140)

Supervisor: Prof. Anesh M. Singh

(031 260 7564)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba

031-2603587

Dear Respondent,

I, Nelene Rampersad an MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business, at UKZN, invite you to participate in my research project entitled Facebook: A Branding Tool. The aim of this study is to better understand the South African Facebook user. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact either my supervisor or myself at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you less than 10 minutes to complete. In order to begin the survey, tick 'Accept' and then the 'Continue' button, which is understood as you Agree to taking the survey. Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely

Nelene Rampersad

Date 15 April 2011

Do you have a Facebook profile

- Yes
- No

Do you live in South Africa

- Yes
- No

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 and over

Race

- Black
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Asian

Which applies to you

- I am in high school
- I am studying at a tertiary institution
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Employed

If you have answered employed in the previous question, are you

- Part-time
- Full-time
- Self Employed

How often do you watch TV

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

If you selected "daily" how long do you spend watching TV

- less than 1 hour
- 1 – 2 hours
- 3 – 4 hours
- 5 hours or more

How often do you watch TV adverts?

- Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Usually
- Always

How often do you read the newspaper

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

How often do you read magazines

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

Have you purchased anything online

- Yes
- No

Approximately how many years have you had a Facebook profile?

- Less than a year
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 4
- 5 - 6
- 7

How many Facebook friends do you have (please supply numeric answer only eg. 4)

I feel that I can better express myself on Facebook

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral / no opinion
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Do you also use any of the following (you may select more than one option)

- Twitter
- MySpace
- LinkedIn
- Mxit
- Facebook only
- Other

How do you mainly access your Facebook profile

- Computer
- Cellular Telephone
- Combination of computer and cellular telephone
- Other

How often do you access your Facebook profile

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Other

How many times a day do you access Facebook (please supply a numeric answer eg. 2)

How many times a week do you access Facebook (please supply a numeric answer eg. 2)

How many times a month do you access Facebook (please supply a numeric answer eg. 2)

Each time you log into your Facebook profile, approximately how many minutes do you spend online

- 5 min. or less
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- 51 to 60
- more than 60
- Other

Many companies or brands create Facebook pages, have you ever visited a companys Facebook page

- Yes
- No

Have you ever included a company or a brand to the interest section of your profile page on Facebook (or have you liked or friended a brand on Facebook)

- Yes
- No

If you answered no, you have not Liked a brand or company, then state why. You may select more than one reason.

- I use Facebook to interact with friends, family and colleagues
- I consider posts from companies spam
- I do not have the time to interact with companies

Which of the following categories of companies have you liked on Facebook. You may select more than one, but these will need to be ranked, starting with number 1 being the favourite

- Electronics _____
- Telecommunication _____
- Vehicles _____
- Sport _____
- Clothing _____
- Food Retail _____
- Other _____

List the top 3 companies or brands that you like. Start with your favourite brand first.

On a scale of 0-10, how likely is it that you would recommend a company / brand that you Like to your friends?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Have you ever unliked a company or brand from your Facebook profile

- Yes
- No

If you have unliked a company, please state why. You may select more than one option, but rank your selection, with 1 being the most important.

- Too frequent posts from the brand _____
- My wall became too crowded with marketing posts _____
- The content became repetitive and boring _____
- The company did not offer enough deals _____
- The content posted was not relevant for me _____
- I prefer to seek information, not have companies pushing it onto me _____
- My circumstances changed (job, marriage, location...) _____

When you make a purchase decision, do you seek advice from your Facebook Friends?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

APPENDIX 2



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mohump@ukzn.ac.za

14 March 2011

Mrs N Rampersad (209510958)
Graduate School of Business
Faculty of Management Studies
Westville Campus

Dear Mrs Rampersad

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0114/011 M
PROJECT TITLE: Facebook: A Branding Tool

In response to your application dated 11 March 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.



PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Prof AM Singh
cc. Mrs Christel Haddon

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100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville