



Usage of Twitter by State-Owned Enterprises to Communicate with Customers: A
Case of Transnet South Africa

Tsebiso Lisbeth Mello

(MLLTSE003)

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Business
Science in the subject of Marketing (BUS5000W)

School of Management Studies

Faculty of Commerce University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Ms Caitlin Ferreira

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DECLARATION

I, Tsebiso Lisbeth Mello, hereby declare that “*Usage of Twitter by State-Owned Enterprises to Communicate with Customers: A Case of Transnet South Africa*”, is my work and that all sources are acknowledged. When referencing secondary sources, I have paid close attention to context and have referenced following the Harvard Referencing Style. The data has not been used for any other academic work and has not been published in any journal or conference proceedings as yet. I was responsible for the research design, implementation, and results analysis.

Signed by candidate

Tsebiso Lisbeth Mello

(MILLTSE003)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been successful had it not been for many people who contributed and supported me during the period of the study. I am therefore indebted to my friends, relatives, colleagues, and supporters for helping me and contributing to this study. First, I am grateful to my supervisor, Ms Caitlin Ferreira, from the School of Management Studies, and staff and fellow students from the Marketing department at University of Cape Town, for their immense contribution. During the study, I received both constructive criticism and words of encouragement. I also extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Joel Chigada, who started this journey with me.

My sincere appreciation to my husband Mphiri Nape Mapheto for understanding my predicament, taking charge of household management responsibilities while I pursued this study. Thank you very much for being there for me. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my son, family, siblings, and everyone else for your support and words of encouragement. The journey was tiring and painful, but in the end, it was rewarding. You are worthy of all the credit for helping me succeed, and I acknowledge you for all that you have done. I also extend my appreciation to all participants for participating in this study. Thank you all for your time, insights, opinions, and for your willingness to make this study a success. Without your time and assistance, this research project would not have been possible. A special thank you to my editor (Let's Edit) for excellent work done in shaping up this thesis as well as to the University of Cape Town for affording me the opportunity to work on this research project. It is worth noting that all individuals and institutions that participated in this study were very professional and helpful.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved late son, my late grandmother Mmetjie, and my grandfather Serogole. You will always be in my thoughts and forever in my heart.

My loving son Dibetsa Kgothatso Mapheto and my sister Kgaugelo Grace Mello, who offered encouragement and inspiration throughout this research project. It is to my loving family that I dedicate this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Social media is proving to be a critical factor for firms moving towards digital marketing strategies. Substantial economic advantage is gained when companies make use of social media platforms such as Twitter to modernise their businesses and start interactive communication with their target market. Social media can have a great impact on the efficiency and performance of state-owned enterprises, which are often plagued by information irregularities that compromise information disclosure and lower the standards of accountability within the state-owned enterprises. Without social media, customers are often unable to evaluate the product and services that the state-owned enterprise is offering before making an offer. An interpretivist research paradigm was adopted and informed this study which applied a mono qualitative research methodology. Sample elements were selected using non-probability purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data was gathered through a pre-designed interview guide with open-ended questions from the research site. In addition, the case study research design was used in this study. All interview transcriptions were recorded with the aid of a voice recorder and exported to NVivo 11 for cleaning and coding, resulting in emerging themes. Thematic data analysis was performed on the data sets, allowing a detailed discussion of each theme in line with research objectives. The study established that adopting and using social media was the appropriate strategy for firms. Firms, especially state-owned enterprises, reached a larger audience. In addition, the study established that the quality of content uploaded and shared on social media should be of very high quality to project a positive image of the organisation. Appointing dedicated senior personnel to manage the social media strategy enhanced the effectiveness of social media. The study recommended that further research be conducted on other types of social media to allow organisations a wider selection of choices. The study indicated that employees were compelled to use Twitter; thus, a policy shift in the use of social media required managers to put in place Information Communications Technology and Privacy and Security Policies. In order to educate everyone in the organisation, management had to ensure that its policies did not infringe on human rights.

Keywords: Social Media, Internet, State-Owned Enterprises, Twitter

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B2C	Business to Consumer
DOI	Diffusion of Innovation
DM	Digital Marketing
ICT	Information Communications Technology
ISB	Information Sharing Behaviour
IT	Information Technology
MDS	Market Demand Survey
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Socio-Economic, Technological, Legal, and Ecology
SMM	Social Media Marketing
SMS	Short Message Service
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TE	Transnet Engineering
TOE	Technology-Organisation-Environment
UAE	United Arab Emirates

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Diffusion of Innovation – A theory seeking to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread. Within that rate of adoption, there is a point at which innovation reaches critical mass [diffusion] (Rogers, 1995).

Integrated marketing communication – Clow and Baack (2010:33) define integrated marketing communication as a process where marketing tools and other resources are coordinated to maximise the impact on stakeholders.

Information Sharing Behaviour – Chigada (2014) defines information sharing behaviour as the dissemination of information to other members in the organisation. . Lin, Q., Ye, D. & Lin, (2015) state that information sharing behaviour occurs during information transfer between two or more people.

Marketing communication strategy – This is the strategy used by a company or individual to reach the target market through various types of communication (Clow & Baack, 2010:234).

State-Owned Enterprise – This refers to a large firm created by the government to carry out commercial activities (Department of Trade and Industry, 2017).

Transnet Engineering – A subsidiary of Transnet, whose business is to keep South Africa's trains rolling/operational (Transnet, 2018).

Technology-Organisation-Environment Framework – A model that describes factors that influence technology adoption and its likelihood (Tornatzky & Fleisher, 1990).

Web 2.0 – These are concepts and technologies that focus on user-generated content and social networking.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing has become an essential marketing communication channel among corporate businesses because of its cost-effectiveness, capability to reach targeted audiences in a short period of time, and evidence of more sales or revenue for these businesses (Ariffin & Omar, 2018). In addition, social media marketing demonstrates a quick upsurge and rapid acceptance among consumers worldwide (Suzić, Karliček & Stříteský, 2016). According to Ariffin and Omar (2018) social networks have a number of benefits, such as creating a better understanding of customer needs and the potential for quickly establishing easy business partnerships.

Social relationships, which are interactions between two or more individuals, play dynamic roles in the internationalisation of companies, as these relationships serve as an effective means of generating knowledge about the market that the company may be interested in exploiting (Ariffin & Omar, 2018). Social media break down the barriers of the 4Ps of marketing and permit marketers to directly reach a large number of potential clients. The 4Ps being- promotion, price, place and product. The promotion element of marketing communication provides the nexus of this study. Such marketing barriers would include inability to reach, interact, and get feedback from a wider audience at the same time. Ariffin and Omar (2018) state that firms can maintain strong relationships with their customers through social networking platforms.

Despite the growing popularity of social networking sites in South Africa, there is partial research regarding their adoption in the business context, especially in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Lacka (2015) defines all forms of electronic communication as social media, Social media takes on various diverse systems including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Digital tools allow users to share different types of content, including pictures, videos, or text. This research focuses on these applications as a form of communication in a South African context. SOEs are influenced by numerous factors such as corruption and fraud; however, the inherent link between communication and company performance is one of the core issues that cannot be ignored (Batta & Iwokwagh, 2015). The focal point of the study is

how the SOE decided and arrived at selecting Twitter as the company's official communication channel.

The study attempts to explain and understand how Twitter is used and its impact in B2B relationships. In addition, the study will also highlight the maturity level of technology acceptance, readiness to use new marketing communication channels, and how social media might enhance a firm's marketing strategy. This study builds on existing literature on marketing communication as a domain of marketing by explaining different aspects and benefits derived from digital tools. Marketing communication is an element of the promotion of the 4Ps. Lessons from other countries or firms that are using these applications and marketing tools will be drawn on in this study; thus, the study might motivate other South African SOEs to consider other types of digital platforms.

Lacka (2015) states that social media platforms foster customer engagement and enhance customer relationships. However, with changing dynamics, interactive marketing communication channels are the most preferred tools by firms (Anttiroiko, 2010). Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is used in the targeted regions to achieve different marketing organisational goals and objectives (Batta & Iwokwagh, 2015). Therefore, this study attempts to explain how firms adopt and implement these digital tools as part of their marketing strategy. To understand the area under investigation, the background of the study is presented next.

1.1.1 Background of the study

There is a growing drive towards digital platforms, prompted by customers' changing preferences; thus, firms are compelled to invest in social network platforms that align with their organisational strategy (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This background information is beneficial for management to understand and assess how effective use of Twitter can create customer value. In addition, losing customers due to poor communication channels is a major challenge confronting firms in the marketplace. It is evident that the importance of a solid communication strategy that allows for customer engagement and enhancing customer relationships is vitally important for the sustained management of SOEs. SOEs as quasi-government institutions are also compelled to improve their reputation, image as well as communication with their stakeholders. The dictates of the global environment require firms to keep abreast with technological innovations as well as staying ahead of competitors through knowledge generation and information sharing. Therefore, adopting Twitter as an official communication

channel, Transnet is positively responding to the needs of their business partners (Transnet, 2018).

With reference to customers' behavioural changes, firms are expected to convert and align their traditional marketing approaches to fit the paradigm shift (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). The introduction of social networking channels allows marketers to break geographical barriers and time constraints, resulting in a more dynamic and innovative means of engaging with consumers as well as reaching target markets (Leppaniemi, 2008). Berndt and Petzer (2011). highlight that the use of digital marketing tools is becoming a topical issue in different industries globally.

Bonson and Flores (2011) state that digital platforms help firms to communicate with many customers about a product or service offering. The use of digital tools and technologies is driving down communication costs; therefore, firms can communicate with a large population of users at minimal costs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Laroche, Reza-Habibi, Richard & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). On the other hand, firms are enhancing their communication strategies by integrating digital tools into the overall marketing communication strategy (Laroche et al., 2012).

Transnet Engineering is a subsidiary of Transnet – a state-owned enterprise – whose business is to keep South Africa's trains operational (Transnet, 2018). Transnet Engineering has been chosen for the study for the following reasons: (1) the company's management recently decided to incorporate Twitter into its overall marketing strategy and (2) there is a desire to improve the firm's communication strategy by combining traditional and digital marketing communication strategies. Transnet Engineering's customers are both individuals and large enterprises. Commercial enterprises bring the bulk of the company's revenue because of the nature of cargo that is transported (Transnet, 2018) Therefore, the company is leaned more towards Business-to Business (B2B) communication. In this realm of communication, Transnet Engineering include Botswana Railways, Exxaro, Omnia, Sasol, Rio Tinto, Swaziland Railway among their corporate clients. To develop a solid communication strategy that allows for customer engagement and enhances customer relationships, Transnet management has decided to use Twitter as the company's communication channel. The intention of using Twitter is guided by the company's Annual General Board Meeting that resolved to use one of the emerging social networking platforms as part of the company's broad marketing strategies (Transnet, 2018). The use of social networking channels among businesses has also made a

positive difference in the way in which marketers engage with consumers and target markets (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). The impact of social networking channels will bring the much needed footprint and traffic to the company's website. It is thus, important to acknowledge that marketing communication is a key element in the 4Ps or service-oriented firms.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

With references to technological developments, the intensity of competition is increasing rapidly. Companies are expected to manage and sustain this change as part of the continuous process of improvement and transformation (Dahlman, 2007). With the entrance of new players and international companies into the market, a company needs to improve its marketing communication channels and not rely only on traditional communication channels to cope with multifaceted customer demands; thus, it has become apparent that the fusion of traditional and digital marketing strategies enhances a firm's competitiveness (Chigada & Hirschfelder, 2017).

With the majority of South African people accessing the Internet and more than 70 per cent using social media (StatsSA, 2018), South African firms are using digital tools and networking platforms to attract customers. Many SOEs in South Africa allocate budgets to support their activities and take advantage of technology and social media, in particular, in order to transform their services through digital engagement between the SOEs and their customers (Singh & Krishnamurthy, 2014). Every organisation has to focus on the needs of its customers' satisfaction in order to have a profitable niche in a competitive market. Despite the continued rise of Twitter marketing, which permits customers to take a more dynamic role as a market player despite geographical boundaries (Tuten & Angermeier, 2013), there is still a lack of understanding as to how SOEs can adopt these applications as part of their marketing strategy to enhance customer satisfaction. Firms can adopt social media for different reasons, such as (1) clients demanding communication through social media, (2) forced by industry trends and dictates that the use of digital tools is the way to go, or (3) the business is transitioning into a global enterprise, thus using technologies that resonate with global standards.

In 2012, as part of the implementation of a new 5-year strategic plan, the Market Demand Strategy (MDS) was established, which saw the introduction of social media as one of the communication channels (Transnet, 2018). The intention was to enhance customer relationship between Transnet Engineering and its customers. It is imperative to uncover the extent to which Twitter is utilised and how well the communication channel is received by Transnet clients.

Firms need to determine if the use of Twitter has improved or not improved return on investment (ROI) for the company. Transnet management wants to ascertain if the adoption of Twitter was the right decision to support the company's transitional journey, which will connect traditional marketing with digital marketing. The company had been using traditional marketing approaches such as emails, face-to-face, television and telephone communication, which have not been effective, and as a result, many complaints were received, indicating that customers preferred communication channels that were real time and responses that were received timeously.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to establish the extent to which Twitter is used at Transnet as a communication channel. In addition, the study aims to find ways of improving the use of Twitter as a communication channel in a B2B environment.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the research question and objectives of the study.

1.4.1 Research questions

The research question for the study is: What role does Social media (Twitter) play in the communication of a State-Owned Enterprises with its stakeholders?

The main research question was supported by the following sub research questions:

- How does Transnet Engineering use Twitter as a communication channel to communicate with its internal and external customers?
- How do consumers influence firms to adopt and implement social media?
- What factors might hinder Transnet from using Twitter as a communication channel?
- What interventions may be put in place to improve the use of Twitter as a communication channel?

1.4.2 Research objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To establish the extent to which Transnet uses Twitter as a communication channel to communicate with its customers
- To establish how customers influence firms to adopt and implement social media
- To assess factors that might hinder Transnet from using Twitter as a communication channel
- To establish interventions that may be put in place to improve the use of Twitter as a communication channel

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Various theoretical frameworks were discussed and applied to this study. Theoretical frameworks were discussed to help explain and understand the problem under investigation. In addition, the researcher used the theoretical frameworks to place this study in a specific scholarly discourse, enabling the researcher to successfully complete the study (Bryman & Bell, 2017). In order to explain and understand the problem at hand, three theoretical frameworks were used in this study. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davies, 1989) was developed to determine users' acceptance of new technology in the firm. The perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of the said technology are major determinants on how users would accept or reject the technology. The TOE framework is an integrated organisational social media adoption framework that includes the elements of the TOE framework, DOI, and Information Sharing Behaviour (ISB) (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017), which were applied in this study. A detailed discussion of theoretical frameworks is presented in Chapter Two. TOE model has been tested in European, American, and Asian contexts, as well as in both developed and developing countries (Zhu *et al.*, 2003; Zhu & Kraemer, 2005; Chu, & Kim, 2011). The Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework will guide this study in order to understand better and explain factors that can influence technology adoption in a firm. In addition, the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) model will be applied to the study to elaborate on the technology adoption innovators. With reference to the aim presented, the research questions that follow will guide the study. The TOE framework is an organisation-level theory that explains that three different elements of a firm's context influence adoption decisions. The technological context includes all of the technologies that are relevant to the firm – both technologies that are already in use at the firm as well as those that are available in the marketplace but not currently in use.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

An overview of the research design and methodology is discussed in this section.

1.6.1 Research design and method

Bajpai (2011) defines a research philosophy as “the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed”. This study adopted an interpretivism paradigm with the objective of involving participants in the whole research process (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2011). The interpretivist paradigm helped the researcher to view the world through participants’ perceptions and experiences (Creswell, 2012).

A qualitative research was used because it allowed the researcher to collect non-numerical data while seeking to interpret meaning from the information collected in order to understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places (De Vos et al., 2011:7). The study used an exploratory research design. Van Wyk (2012) points out that exploratory research designs are not as structured as explanatory, causal-correlation, or any other designs used in quantitative studies. An exploratory research design helped the researcher to explore participants’ opinions relating to the subject under investigation. In addition, the exploratory research design helped the researcher to seek insights into the problem and to look for possible alternative decisions relevant to the investigation (Creswell, 2012).

1.6.2 Target population and sampling design

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) a target population is a group of objects from which research data is collected. Glasow (2005) defines a population as a collective or totality of all the people who could be selected for inclusion in the study. Senior managers, information technology specialists, account executives, business development managers, and marketing managers from Transnet Engineering were selected for this study.

A sample is considered as a part of the population under investigation which shares the same characteristics as the population (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Sampling lowers the cost of research, as it is less costly to ask only a few individuals compared to asking everyone within a given population (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). In this study, non-probability purposive and convenience sampling were used. The motivation for using these sampling techniques was

attributable to the research participants who possessed relevant data and were readily accessible and available when the study was conducted (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). Fourteen (14) sample elements were selected for the study, as suggested by Creswell (2014) and Bryman and Bell (2017). Using purposive sampling might result in sampling bias, and the research results might be limited, as they may not be generalisable (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

The process of analysing data entails cleaning, coding, and logical reasoning on raw facts to produce meaning (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). NVivo 11 software was used because of its ability to manipulate large amounts of data (Kothari, 2004). NVivo is a qualitative data analysis program that helps code and group emerging themes, allowing the researcher to perform thematic data analysis.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study has academic and managerial implications which are discussed below.

1.7.1 Academic implications

This study will contribute to existing academic research in social media marketing. This study might be a foundation for further studies to assess other digital marketing tools and their effectiveness in a marketing strategy.

1.7.2 Managerial implications

This study highlights the importance of digital tools in firms; thus, management might be motivated to adopt and implement the tools that enable firms to have active engagements with stakeholders from an SOE perspective. In addition, Transnet Indaba designed Twitter for the company's community of customers, developers, partners, industry champions, and thought leaders to witness the transformation of the business through innovation. The outcomes could be used effectively to empower decision-makers of SOEs in technology revolution communication to their customers.

The ethical issues that were considered in this study are presented in the next section.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, the researcher assured participants that their information would not be shared with third parties and that all information would be kept locked in a safe. Participants were

politely asked to grant consent in writing or verbally before the study commenced. The researcher was in charge of the whole research process, including verifying the findings with participants before releasing the findings. This study was approved by the University of Cape Town, Commerce Faculty Research Committee on Ethics.

When conducting this study, the researcher set some criteria on issues to and not to discuss to avoid inclusion of irrelevant discussions. Scope creep occurs when activities not associated with the study are included, which consume time and can be costly (Burke, 2011). The next section focuses on the scope and limitations of the study.

1.9 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

A research study should demarcate its boundaries and make sure that they are clearly defined to prevent scope creep (Creswell, 2012).

1.9.1 Scope

The study focused on the use of Twitter at Transnet, which was used as the SOE through which to analyse this phenomenon. There are other types of digital marketing strategies that could have been considered in this study, but that would have expanded the scope of the study. The study considered and no other social media channels, which then delineated the scope.

1.9.2 Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the sample size of 14 participants; thus, a large sample size could have been considered to mitigate this limitation. Had a different research approach been used, the sample size would have been bigger, resulting in mitigating this limitation. The second limitation was that only one SOE was chosen and investigated; as such, the findings might not be generalisable to other SOEs in the country. If multiple cases had been considered, the findings might be generalisable to other SOEs. The busy schedule of some participants made it difficult to have face to face interviews which was addressed through telephone interviews instead of face to face.

Before concluding this chapter, the structure of the study is presented in Section 1.10.

1.10 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

This study comprises six chapters. Chapter One contains an introduction to the research topic of the study and the theoretical framework. The statement of the problem, purpose, research questions, objectives, and layout of the dissertation are presented in the first chapter. A detailed discussion of the theoretical framework is presented in Chapter Two. The TOE framework is discussed in detail in this chapter, showing how the study was placed in the broader domain of social media marketing discourses and a broader body of knowledge. The aim of Chapter Three is to literature review of relevant academic sources on digital marketing. This third chapter discusses appropriate and supporting literature for the study under investigation.

In this fourth chapter, attention is on the plan of action used in the study. The research onion is provided to guide the process of gathering, analysing, interpreting, and using data appropriately. In Chapter Five, the researcher presents and discusses the findings. Thematic and content data analyses are performed in this chapter, resulting in information or meaningful data for decision-making. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study are presented in Chapter Six.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This introductory chapter set the scene of the study by providing the contextual setting and background of digital marketing, highlighting the problem statement as information asymmetry, which tends to create obstacles for market development, as it leads to uneven distribution of information between a producer and a consumer. It was imperative to provide the background for the reader to have an appreciation of the problem at hand and the motivation for undertaking this study. This introductory chapter presented, outlining the significance and theoretical framework (TOE) of the study. In addition, a synopsis of the research plan was presented. The theoretical works that guided this study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the researcher outlined the research plan that was used in this study, the background, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. This chapter describes the theoretical framework that guided the study. The role of theoretical frameworks in research projects will be presented, followed by a discussion of various theoretical works that guide this study. The application and relevance of each of these theoretical works are discussed to augment the motivation for conducting this study. Literature related to social media is reviewed to establish how other scholars have arrived at their findings.

2.2 THE ROLE OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Different components of the study should work in synergy; therefore, a theoretical framework is required to hold different parts together until the study is successfully completed (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Researchers use theoretical frameworks to explain, understand, and predict challenges surrounding an area under investigation (Ngulube, Mathipa & Gumbo, 2014). Theoretical frameworks empower researchers to challenge and extend existing knowledge (Ngulube et al., 2014). One of the key roles of a theoretical framework is to expose the researcher to a broader body of literature. The appropriateness, ease of use, and explanatory power of theoretical frameworks are key determinants for selecting and applying theoretical frameworks (Babbie, 2010).

2.2.1 *Technology-Organisation-Environment Framework*

The TOE framework is attributable to Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990). There are three factors that influence adoption decisions, and these will be discussed in this section (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990). The TOE framework has been used to explain the adoption of innovations in many industries, such as manufacturing, automotive engineering and aviation (Abubakar *et al.*,

2017). In this study, the TOE framework will be utilised to explain and understand the process of accepting and using new technologies. In past studies, researchers concluded that technology, environmental, and organisational factors have played influential roles in the adoption of innovation. However, Abubaker *et al.* (2017:18) believe that information sharing behaviour is a key factor that should complement the existing three factors in the TOE framework.

2.2.1.1 Technological factor

The first variable in the TOE framework is technology. Organisations should also be ready and fully-fledged to implement new processes and technologies. Tushman and Nadler (1986) indicate that the technological context entails all technologies relevant to the firm. Baker (2011) reveals that with the advent of industrial revolutions, rapid technological developments and innovations, firms are obliged to keep abreast with innovations. Innovations outside the firm create incremental, synthetic, or discontinuous change for the firm (Oliveira & Martins, 2011). Innovations producing incremental change are designed to bring new features of existing technologies; thus, there is minimal risk for the organisation (Baker, 2011). If a firm decides to upgrade from one system to another system with better applications, then appropriate plans should be put in place to address potential risks.

Innovations that produce synthetic change should infuse existing systems with new technologies (Baker, 2011). A synthetic change could pertain to the delivery of higher education course content through an online or blended medium. Ettlie, Bridges and O'Keefe (1984) posit that innovations distant from current technologies or processes tend to produce discontinuous change. An example of radical innovation has been introduced in the grocery retail industry where barcode readers and scanners are used at till points (Oliveira & Martins, 2011). It is acknowledged that industries with technologies causing synthetic change usually allow a pace of both adoption and usage (Oliveira & Martins, 2011). On the other hand, industries characterised by discontinuous technological innovations require the firm to make adoption and usage decisions (Baker, 2011). In the event of adopting new systems or technologies, management should ensure that existing technologies are compatible or can support new technologies to minimise costs of acquisition (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017). Research and feasibility studies should be carried out to ascertain that the firm would not waste financial resources, time, and human resources on acquiring technologies that do not fit into the firm's current technology specifications (Baker, 2011).

The organisational factor is discussed next.

2.2.1.2 Organisational factor

The organisational context entails all characteristics and resources, organogram, and other processes (Baker, 2011). Abubakar et al. (2017) bring out that organisational structures are invaluable in the innovation process. Firms with organic and decentralised organograms are more open to new ideas and innovations (Mokoena, 2013). In addition, decentralisation has been designed to speed up decision-making processes in the firm. The view is that inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the public sector are caused by a number of factors such as bureaucracy, incompetency, political interference, and lack of skills (Department of Labour, 2016).

Communication processes within a firm can also promote or inhibit innovation (Oliveira & Martins, 2011). The organisation should be a conducive working environment that supports innovation. To understand how communication strategies are developed, resulting in the adoption of certain communication channels, is a key factor that helps managers understand the importance of involving everyone in the firm in the process of innovation.

2.2.1.3 Environmental factor

The next variable in the TOE framework focuses on the environmental factor. Key issues that define the environmental factor include industry structure, technology service providers, and legislation (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017). Firms operating in industries where competition is intense tend to be innovative (Dahnil, Marzuki, Langgat & Fabeil, 2014). There is rapid technological innovation in growing industries, while there is little or no innovation in firms in mature or declining industries. This is attributable to the belief that there are no further growth prospects in the decline phase. Hill (2014) states that innovation in the growth phase could change the firm's profits by attracting more sales from customer based on the improved customer satisfaction level.

Government regulation, such as new legislation, regulates activities of a firm or industry (Rogers, 1995). An example would be when a government imposes new constraints on an industry, such as safety. These stringent requirements might retard innovation and usage of new tools and technologies (Rogers, 1995). On the other hand, international pressure to meet certain regulatory and operational standards might push firms to adopt and implement

innovation. An example of such international pressure is where commercial banks are expected to install and use technologies that are in line with Basel III, a set of rules (BASA, 2016). There are specifications for the technologies that support Basel III, which is a minimum requirement for banks.

The original TOE framework comprised three constructs: technology, organisation, and environment. However, Abubaker *et al.* (2017) have improved the framework to include information sharing behaviour, which is discussed next.

2.2.1.4 Information sharing behaviour

Nonaka (1995) highlights when individuals give out their personal information to colleagues, this process is referred to as information sharing because as part of the TOE the employees need to share information among themselves as a form of showing trust and building relationships that will make the company grow. Lin *et al.* (2015) indicate that when knowledge is shared in the organisation, communication is involved in the process. Dahnil, Marzuki, Langgat and Fabeil (2014). argue that social networking sites provide platforms for users to exchange ideas, information, and videos. When people interact and share information, social interaction factors, privacy concerns play an important role in giving trustworthy information on websites (Liou *et al.*, 2015).

Ford and Staples (2006) contend that the source of information is driven by individual factors such as attitude, cost, and benefits of sharing the information. Some people are not prepared to share information because it might expose their jobs, or there is no financial or material benefit (Kubheka, 2017). Alhojailan (2012) posits that contextual factors such as the organisational climate or working conditions can drive or impede the information sources from sharing information. Management and employees have a responsibility to share information on available communication platforms. This enables both parties to access the same information in a real-time state, allowing timeous responses and decisions to be made (Kankanhali, 2005).

2.2.2 Application of Technology-Organisation-Environment Model to the study

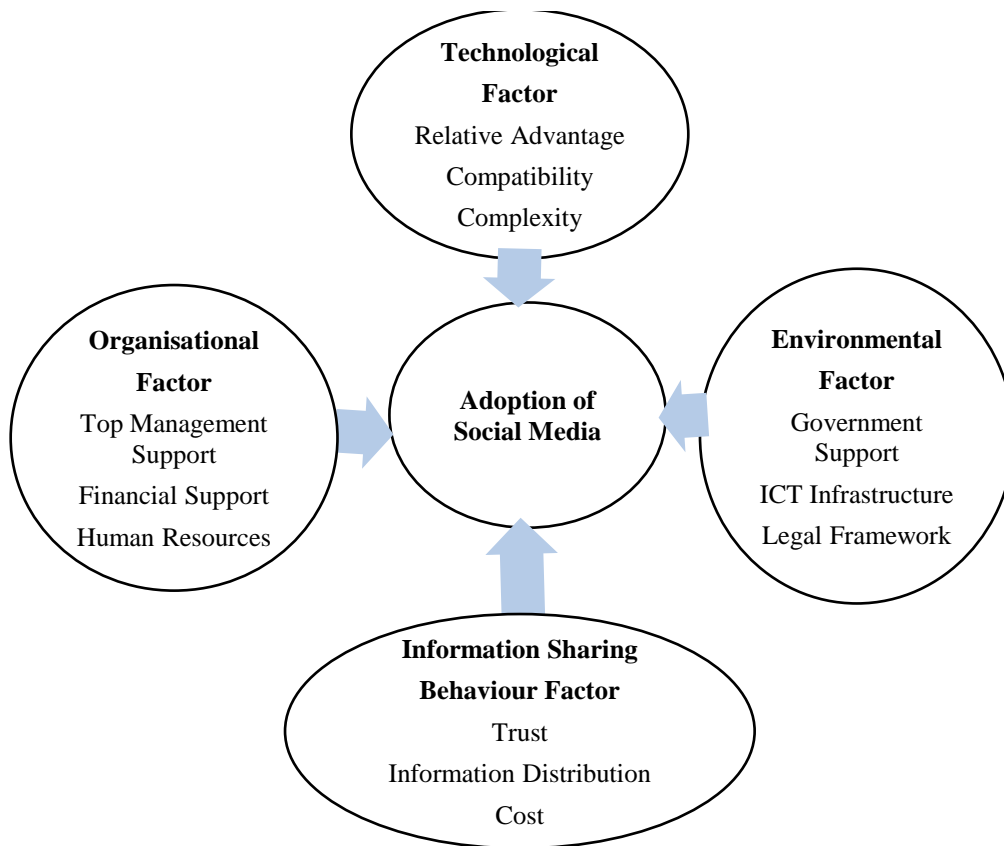


Figure 2.2: The TOE Model

Source: Abubakar et al. (2017)

The TOE model is broadly applied across a wide range of intercultural contexts (Baker, 2011). First, four factors (technological, environmental, organisational, and information sharing behaviour), as illustrated in Figure 2.2, do not work in isolation but coexist to define an organisation. Second, the discussions already presented demonstrate that firms should embrace innovation and conduct some cost-benefit analysis prior to adopting and implementing some new ideas or innovations (Baker, 2011). Organisations do not operate in silos, that is, they are not closed systems but open systems. An example might be new regulatory changes that may compel the firm's management to change how processes have been carried out in the firm. Public sector enterprises might also be compelled to adopt and implement specific types of information technologies, as recommended by their parent ministry (Baker, 2011). Therefore, the external and internal environmental factors for the organisation should be assessed and considered during the life cycle of the organisation.

Organisational factors such as commitment or mobilisation of resources are paramount to any organisation. In the event of new ideas being conceived, without resources or top management support, the ideas will die at conception (Brown, 2011). Hill (2014) states that the success of a firm's offerings is to a great extent attributed to available resources, management commitment, and conducive environment that supports the incubation. In this study, the discussion on the TOE framework demonstrated that all variables are dependent on one another. Rogers (1995) maintains that the TOE framework has a relationship with DOI because the predictors in the DOI of the organisation compare to the TOE's organisational factor. The concept of diffusion is better explained when both the TOE framework and DOI are combined (Daniasa, Tomita, Stuparu & Stanciu, 2010). On the other hand, Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990) posit that both models also focus on the impact of internal and external innovation factors of adoption. Both theories provide a comprehensive framework for innovation adoption (Piaralal *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, literature states that both DOI and the TOE framework explain better key factors that influence people or firms to adopt innovations, especially digital marketing tools (Wang, Wang & Yang, 2010). Combining more than one theoretical model in this study helped to better explain and understand complex technologies (Oliviera & Martins, 2011).

2.3 THEORETICAL WORKS GUIDING THIS STUDY

“The theoretical foundations of a discipline are the basis on which research and development of the discipline is focused for generating ideas” (Denford & Chan, 2011:23). Mitchell and Jolley (2007:434) state the benefits of using theory as:

Theory tends to be more consistent than common sense..., usually does not contradict itself..., tends to be more consistent with existing facts than common facts..., is not restricted to making common sense or intuitively obvious predictions..., summarises and organises a great deal of information..., focuses research..., is broad in scope...can be applied to a wide range of situations.

The various theoretical models explored to assess the relevance and fit for this study include Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989); Technology-Organisation-Environment Framework (Tornatzky & Fleisher, 1990), and Diffusion of Innovation Model (Rogers, 1995). The intention for exploring these theories was to identify those theoretical works that resonated and helped the researcher to address the research problem. In the following subsections, the various theories are discussed in relation to the study.

2.3.1 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The DOI theory originated from communication to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and spreads (diffuses) throughout systems (Rogers, 1995). It is through diffusion that people engage in some kind of behavioural change that differs from what they previously did. With reference to this study, people working in firms are at different levels of appreciating and adopting social media as a communication channel. Some individuals may be well-versed, and others may not be well-versed with the intricacies of social media (Siedel, 2019). It is these different behavioural stages that determine the extent to which individuals adopt innovations. Rogers (1995) states that there is a normal distribution of people who normally adopt innovation. The author also posits that when the normal distribution is broken down, five categories of individual innovativeness arise (Rogers, 1995).

The DOI is relevant to this study because an innovation (Twitter) is one of the digital communication tools that is changing the way firms communicate with their customers (Malhotra, 2012). Adoption of innovation compels firms to remain relevant to their markets (Kotler & Keller, 2012). The nature of marketing communication has drastically changed from simple information dissemination to the exchange of ideas between various stakeholders through social media (Hill, 2014). Customers' tastes and preferences are changing rapidly; therefore, innovation plays a pivotal role in addressing such tastes and preferences (Hill, 2014).

With reference to the DOI discussion, innovation should be part of an organisation's culture (Fiske, 2010). When Twitter was launched in 2006, not much information was known about it, until the communication channel was marketed, gained momentum, and diffused throughout the whole world (Fiske, 2010). The benefits accrued from using social media are motivating firms to adopt and use the communication channel in response to customer needs and preferences. It has been demonstrated that most SOEs and other firms in South Africa could be described as late majority because they require comprehensive information about how other firms have adopted and implemented innovation (Fiske, 2010). The DOI categories are as discussed in section 2.3.1.1 below.

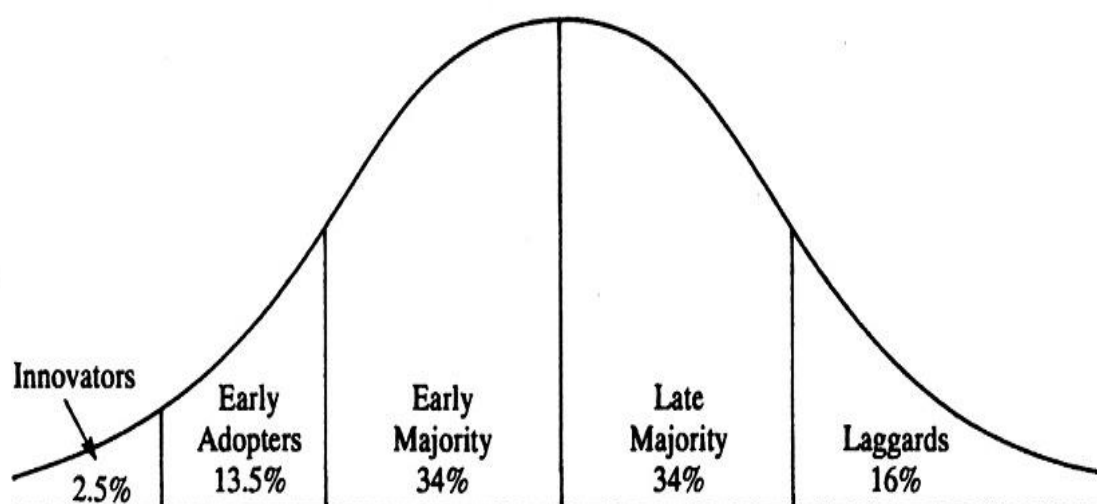


Figure 2.1: Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Source: Rogers (1995)

2.3.1.1 Adopter categories

Innovators: This category of people wants to be the first to try an innovation. Only 2.5 per cent constitute innovators, which reflects that only a few individuals take risks. Innovators like taking the lead and become venturesome, willing to take risks (Rogers, 1995). Baker (2011) emphasises that innovators are individuals who do not need any efforts to convince them to take risks because the individuals are determined to pursue their ventures without distraction.

Early adopters: These represent the second category of adopters. The majority of this group are opinion leaders. Lazarsfeld and Katz (1948) define opinion leaders as popular individuals or organisations with the ability to influence public opinions on a specific subject matter for which they are known. There are a fairly large number (13.5%) of people constituting this category of early adopters. Early adopters could involve SOEs, and private and other public organisations willing to take risks of new technologies released to the market. For example, University of Pretoria is an early adopter of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies to help students in the library. The university has installed “Libby”, a robotics system in the library to improve efficiency and effectiveness of information search (Siedel, 2019).

Early majority: Rogers (1995) indicates that early majority want proof of the effectiveness of innovation before joining the bandwagon. Twitter was launched on 21 March 2006 in the

United States of America, which is more than 13 years ago; thus, some firms, especially in developing countries, have waited for this long to gather evidence that this innovation works (Siedel, 2019). Between 2015 and 2017, many African countries experienced exponential growth of social media adoption.

Late majority: The late majority require information on how other firms or individuals have tried the innovation. When firms take their time to adopt and use new technologies, there could be a number of factors at play, thus resulting in these enterprises becoming part of the late majority cohort. These factors could be used as excuses to adopt and apply new technologies because firms might need to have assurance that the innovations would add value to the firm (Rogers, 1995). It is evident that with available information, the SOE leadership were convinced beyond reasonable doubt that the innovation will be invaluable to the company's service delivery value chain.

Laggards: The last category of adopters (16%) is very conservative, sceptical of innovation, and are the most difficult group to get buy-in from or acceptance of technologies without assurance that the technology will add value to the firm. If pressure from government, customers, or other stakeholders is exerted on this group, there is a probability that the group will adopt an innovation (Pousher et al., 2018).

The DOI is relevant to the study because Social media innovation among Transnet Engineering, customers and employees was the target to determine the magnitude of usage and approval with a view to knowing what could be done to avoid or permit the inhibition surrounding its use.

The next section unpacks the TOE framework, its application, and relationship with other theoretical works discussed in this chapter.

2.3.2 Technology Acceptance Model

TAM is discussed in this subsection with a focus on its application in the information systems discipline (Davis, 1989). TAM is used by firms and individuals to better explain and understand the process of accepting new systems in the firm. Firms and researchers have used TAM because of the weaknesses of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) premised on how firms or individuals perceive the usefulness of new technology and the ease of using the new systems. When individuals look at new technology, they develop some perception about it and are

concerned if the technology can enhance their productivity (Davis, 1989). During the data gathering phase, the study will determine if users of Twitter will get this benefit. Discussions in literature will help shed some light on how social media will enhance the sample elements' work and life performance.

The researcher posits that there are diverse people working for the firm under investigation; therefore, the two factors of TAM might not be effective on the one hand but may be effective on the other. TAM might be effective to the younger cohort/generation of employees who are technologically savvy and have used and benefited from the technology. On the other hand, older employees might not see the immediate benefits of adopting social media unless they are assured or have been exposed to the benefits. TAM will be an appropriate theory to determine the acceptance and adoption of social media through examining social, cultural, and political factors (Davis, 1989). The researcher noted that the use of the English language in the SOE is resisted by many people who feel that English is a form of mental colonialism. A simple illustration of the TAM described above is shown in Figure 2.3.

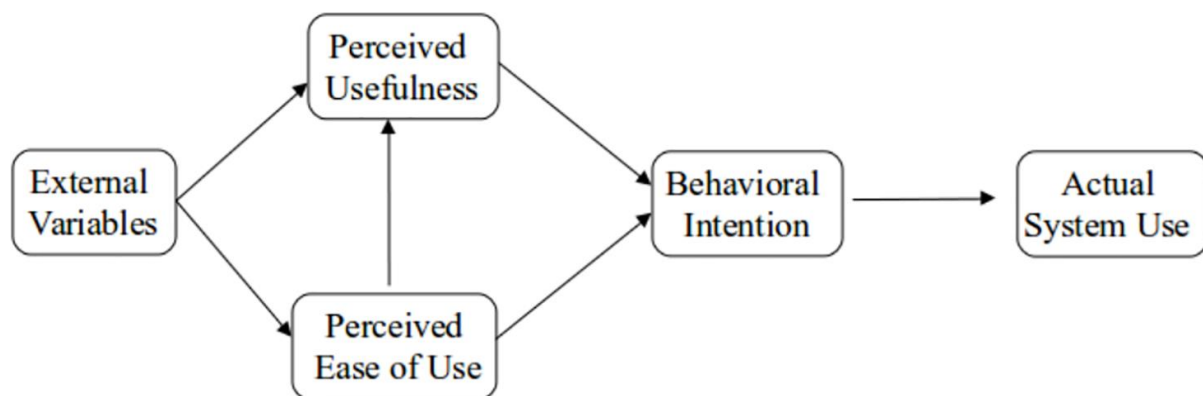


Figure 2.3: Technology Acceptance Model

Source: Davis (1989)

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the concepts of theoretical frameworks and their purposes of research. It was demonstrated that theoretical frameworks were different from conceptual frameworks; however, the two concepts were misconstrued to be the same. Theoretical frameworks provided guidelines for the research process, allowing the researcher to situate the study in a broader body of literature. The use of theories in this study, namely, DOI, TOE framework, and TAM

was clearly discussed, showing factors that might influence people to accept and use new innovations, technologies, or techniques. While discussing the models, the chapter also explained the problem at hand. It is acknowledged that this study did not test these models or any constructs from the models because the nature of the study was exploratory, with the objective of gathering qualitative data. The chapter that follows will focus on reviewing literature relating to digital marketing and the different types of digital tools.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed various theoretical works that supported this study. It was demonstrated that the TOE framework, DOI, and TAM were applicable and helped to better understand people's behaviours towards the adoption of complicated innovation technologies. Chapter Three will review literature relating to digital marketing tools and their related components such as social networking platforms. An overview of digital marketing is presented first, followed by a discussion of digital marketing channels and social networking channels.

3.2 DIGITAL MARKETING

According to Hill (2014), firms use digital technologies to market their offerings, resulting in this interaction being referred to as digital marketing. Different internet devices, such as laptops and smartphones, are enabling people and firms to interact anywhere and anytime (Smith, 2014). The objective of integrating digital technologies into the value chain is to respond to customers' preferences and wants. In addition, digital tools help the firm to keep abreast with global trends which are moving towards automation. The prevalence of digital marketing (DM) is discussed in the next subsection.

3.2.1 Prevalence of digital marketing

Businesses, big and small, have different DM goals based on their objectives (Hutchins, 2010). Firms with more than 5 000 employees are more likely to use DM to stand out from competitors (eMarketer, 2018). The pervasiveness of digital media is no longer considered unique because it is now part of human beings and firms' way of life. Many people have smartphones, and most households and individuals possess multiple smart devices such as tablets, computers, or iPads (Smith, 2014). Thus, it has become easier for people to use digital tools for communication and information sharing. Marketers can pinpoint specific audiences with advertising messages through digital tools (Smith, 2014).

When digital marketing started at the turn of the 21st century, the uptake and usage were slow because many firms and individuals were risk-averse (ITU, 2019). This is illustrated by 16.8% global usage of DM, as shown in Figure 3.1. As time passed by, there was a growing need and usage of DM. The prevalence of DM is contributing significantly to the marketing strategy of

many industries such as the media and entertainment industries, which are marketing their products and services through digital platforms (ITU, 2019). This leads to improvements in camera technologies and other areas (ITU, 2019). In the next subsection, the benefits of DM are discussed.

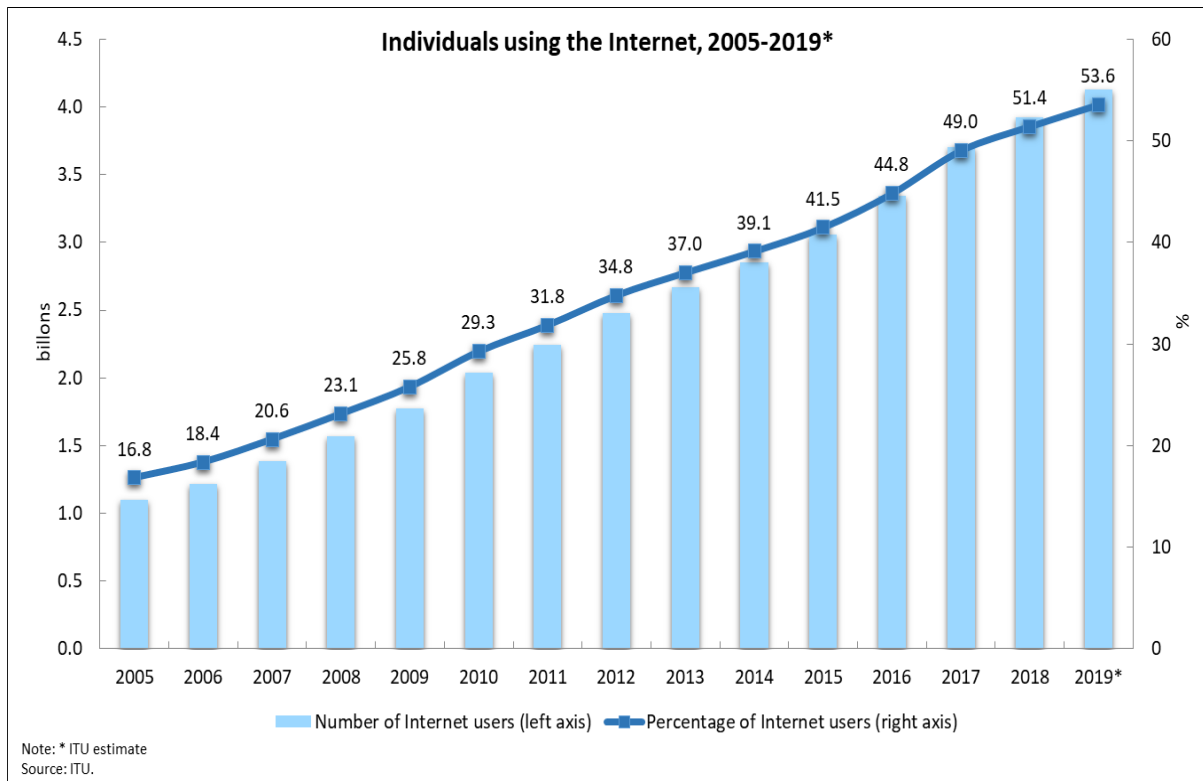


Figure 3.1: Internet usage from 2005 to 2019

Source: ITU (2019)

3.2.2 Benefits of digital marketing

By combining traditional marketing with digital marketing tools, firms are leveraging technologies to reach different market segments (Smith, 2014). It has been proven that there is intense competition in today’s business environment (Hill, 2014); thus, firms should devise strategies for sustainable competitive advantage. Smith (2014) highlighted that technological innovations bring change to any organisation. Baker (2011) highlights that the TOE framework’s environmental context focused more on trends that exert pressure on the organisation, resulting in innovation.

Sherman (2017) reveals that the marketplace has become more digital as technology continues to evolve. Therefore, the benefits of DM are becoming more prevalent every day. More consumers are buying or selling products online. DM has become one of the most powerful marketing tools because it has the potential to transform the way a company reaches out and engages customers (Sherman, 2017). It is argued that using DM tactics is the most cost-effective way for a firm to market its business (Sherman, 2017). Small firms with limited marketing resources are moving towards digital marketing to compete with large established firms. Digital marketers can see effective and non-effective tactics in real time, allowing some adjustments (Sherman, 2017). Though traditional marketing can increase a firm's chances of success, digital marketing offers better capabilities because the right consumers can view content or information relevant to them.

DM allows small businesses to compete in the same market segments as those targeted by large businesses, thus resulting in intense competition (Biswas et al., 2014). This means that small businesses which cannot compete with larger firms for advertising space, due to limited budgets and resources, can use DM to allow them to remain competitive online. Small firms can market their products and services nationally or internationally (Biswas et al., 2014). However, the researcher is cognisant that firms that want to incorporate DM into their marketing strategy should understand and develop a sound DM strategy because there are barriers that can impeded the success of a DM strategy (Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011).

3.2.3 Types of digital marketing channels

Different types of digital marketing tools such as Email Marketing (EM), Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Display Advertising (DA), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Affiliate Marketing (AM), Online Public Relations (OPR), Content Marketing (CM), and Pay-Per-Click Marketing (PPCM) are briefly discussed in this subsection. Smith (2014) submits that firms can combine two or more DM channels to enhance the effectiveness of the company's marketing strategy.

Email marketing is an electronic mail to a group of people or individuals who are viewed as potential customers, while *Search Engine Optimisation* allows marketers to increase website traffic volumes by ensuring that the firm's website is always on top of search results (Hipper, 2011). When advertisers incorporate texts, logos, and pictures or images on a website, they will

be embarking on *display advertising* (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In order to increase traffic on the firm's website, a retailer pays commission to an external website – *affiliate marketing* (Hipper, 2011). *Online public relations* occur when firms communicate using online channels and tools such as blogs and websites. The distinction between social media marketing and public relations is very slim. The two DM strategies are interdependent of each other. The absence of one can affect the other.

In this study, the researcher focuses on social media marketing because the problem under investigation concentrated on Twitter, which is a component of SMM. It would have been complex to involve many types of digital marketing channels in this study; still, the problem set forth at the beginning was in the adoption of digital platforms. In the next subsections, the focus is to define and present a historical perspective, prevalence, and different platforms for SMM.

3.2.4 Defining social media

Social media refers to “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (UGC) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). Interactions on digital networking platforms enable the exchange of information and ideas, which might influence people to act in certain ways or behaviour. The history of social media marketing is a focal point for the study; thus, the next subsection will discuss the history of these digital platforms.

3.2.5 History of social media marketing

The historical development of social media's modern perspective is paramount for any readers or scholars (Snyman & Visser, 2014). As the discussion progresses, the researcher highlights that social media are inseparable from social networking (Shirksy, 2011). At the turn of the 21st century, that is in 2000, many players entered the landscape, introducing different digital platforms to enhance communication (Snyman & Visser, 2014).

The exact dates when digital platforms came into existence are debated because people have created technologies for various purposes (Carton, 2009). As early as 1972, the telegraph was developed to transmit and receive messages over long distances and could have signalled the birth of social media (Ritholz, 2010). In the 1800s, Ferdinand Tonnies – a German sociologist – and Emile Durheim – a French sociologist – are believed to have been the pioneers of social

networks (Edosomwan et al., 2011). Thibault and Kelley (1952) believed that social groups existed because members exchanged information, knowledge, and other cultural-related norms, thus resulting in the development of the social contract theory.

In the 1970s, Multi-User Dungeon, Multi-User Dimension, or Multi-User Domain (MUD) was introduced, signalling further developments in social media (Shirksy, 2011). Users could log on to the systems and exchanged messages with others. Many digital platforms were invented in the 1990s (Ritholz, 2010). Many scholars such as Ritholz (2010), Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2011), and Shirksy (2011) all agree that in 2000, social media received a great boost because of technological innovations and advancements. Between 2004 and 2005, big names digital platforms that were launched include Wikipedia, MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook, Yahoo! 360°, and YouTube (Junco et al., 2011).

In July 2010, Facebook had more than 500 million users, and in 2019, there were 2.45 billion users on the networking website (Facebook, 2019), making it the biggest social networking site. YouTube has become the most popular online video community allowing billions of people to discover, watch, and share originally created videos (YouTube, 2019). In 2006, when Facebook was beginning to open its doors to everyone, Twitter was launched. Twitter gained popularity because it offered different options such as microblogging and many celebrities preferred Twitter to other networking sites (Jasra, 2010). Social networking platforms will be discussed next.

3.2.5.1 Social networking

Companies need special software to build social networks and highly skilled human capital to manage the networks (Dube, 2007). Social network sites enable communities to connect, build relationships, and share interests and activities of others (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Members of the Twitter site create a personal profile and sign in to connect with other members in similar or identical professions. Interactions on Twitter help people to build networks that propagate career advancements (Dube, 2007). In the next subsection, the study reviews literature pertaining to the prevalence of social media. Past studies and reports will be analysed to give detailed insights into social media marketing.

3.2.6 Prevalence of social media

Villanti (2016) brings out that in 2015, 90 per cent of USA young adults (between 18-24 years) with internet access used social media, an indication that young adults explore these platforms through digital and social media modalities. By inviting peers and friends' feedback, it was established that social media was important in shaping self-beliefs and perceived social norms (Villanti, 2016).

In 2018, it was reported that 2.65 billion people were using digital platforms globally, with projections of 3.1 billion users by 2021 (ITU, 2018) because social networking penetration is constantly increasing globally. The top five countries using digital platforms were United Arab Emirates (UAE) (99%) usage uptake, Taiwan (89%) usage rate, South Korea (79%) usage rate, and Hong Kong (78%) penetration rates (ITU, 2019). Countries with the lowest penetration rates were Nigeria (12%), Kenya (16%), Ghana (19%), India (23%), and South Africa and Egypt (40%). The social media penetration rates were attributable to the stability of the economy and the level of development. It has been demonstrated that developing countries have low social media penetration rates (ITU, 2018). On the other hand, developed countries such as the UAE and Singapore are developed economies. It is suggested that another reason determining social penetration rate is the average age of people using social media (Global Digital Report, 2019).

Figure 3.2 illustrates the popularity of these digital platforms (Global Digital Report, 2019). The figures are in millions of users. As shown, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are the most prominent and widely used media. In Figure 3.2 below, it is clear that Twitter is not a very popular communication channel. However, Transnet Engineering opted for Twitter because most senior managers believed that Twitter is ideal for B2B interactions. In addition, the company executives felt that many companies were moving towards Twitter as a preferred channel, and it would be sensible to adopt it. As would be shown by the results, Transnet management believed that Twitter was as fast and efficient as any other social media. The ITU (2018) states that businesses are moving towards the use of Twitter for increased brand awareness, it promotes blog content, videos and presentations. In this study, Transnet Management were interested in boosting website search engine optimisation, driving traffic and get instant feedback about the SOE's products and services.

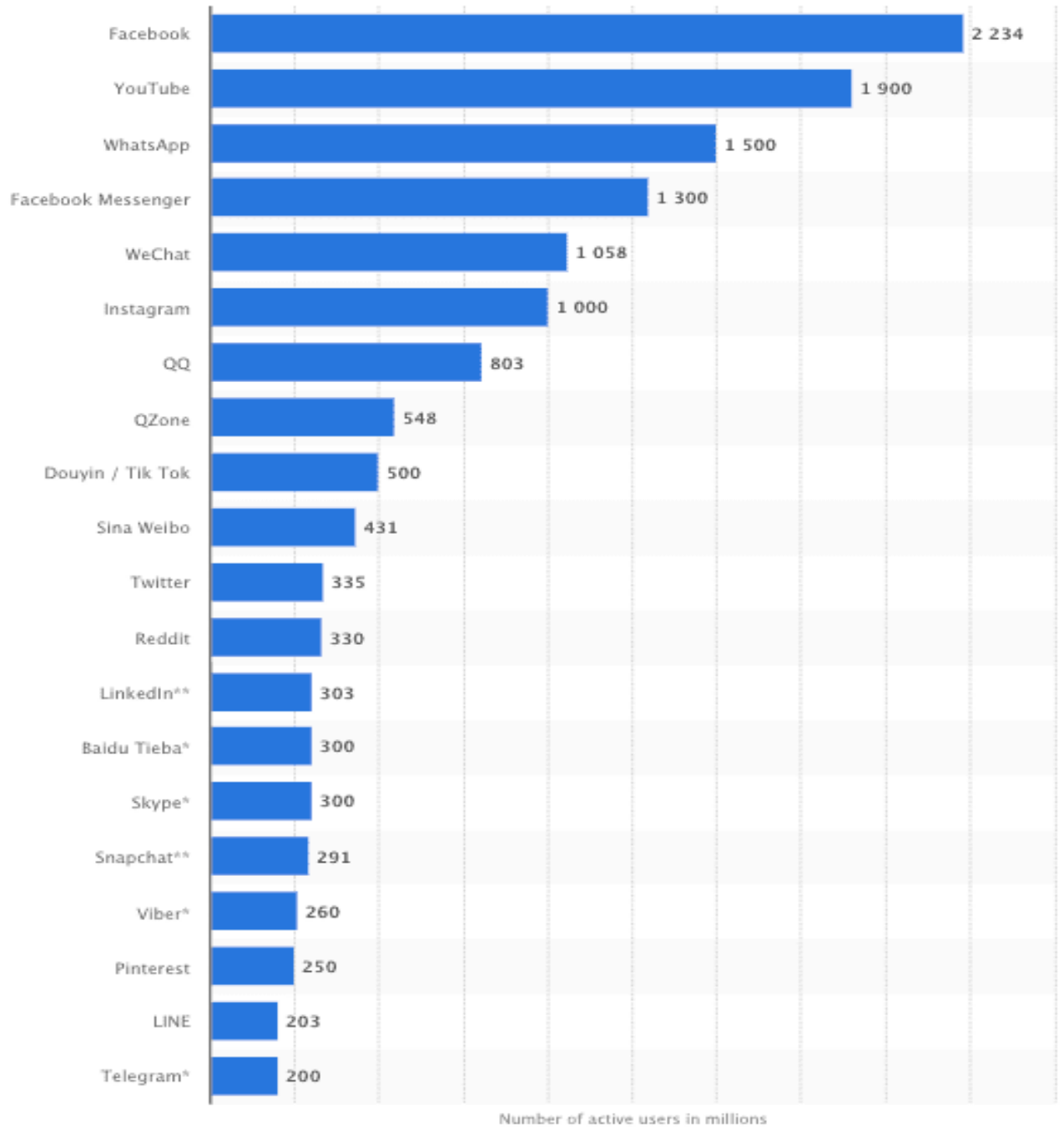


Figure 3.2: 2019 Social networking popularity
 Source: Adapted from Global Digital Report (2019)

In the next subsection, different social media platforms are discussed. Figure 3.2 summarises most of the platforms. A few platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Twitter will be discussed because Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are the most widely used globally, while Twitter is the focal point of this study.

3.2.7 Different platforms for social media marketing

The illustration in Figure 3.2 demonstrates the most popular social networking sites. At the apex is Facebook (2.234 billion) and YouTube (1.9 billion) users. Interestingly, WhatsApp, which was launched less than eight years ago, has become popular as both a business and social networking platform (Global Digital Report, 2019). Twitter (335 million users) is not doing badly, but it does not compare with the top three (Global Digital Report, 2019). However, the statistics presented help to guide firms when making decisions on which social media platforms to incorporate into their marketing strategies (ITU, 2018).

Businesses – small, medium, or large – use Twitter to build brand awareness while connecting the business with new users (ITWEB, 2018). Twitter is slowly losing appeal because tweets easily get lost, and the prevalence of large amounts of spam on the website discourages Twitter users (Global Digital Report, 2019).

Firms use Twitter and other social media channels because customers provide instant feedback about a company's products and services (Villanti, 2016). It has been highlighted that digital tools enhance visibility and accessibility of content because multiple parties communicate in a public forum (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). The above discussion has described different social media marketing platforms. Factors contributing to the adoption of technology are discussed in the next section.

3.3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY

There are both internal and external factors contributing to the adoption of technology. The success of firms is attributable to a variety of internal forces such as the calibre of management teams, strategies, technology, financial and human resources, and innovation (Brown, 2011). These factors should be coordinated and supported by management while aligned to organisational objectives. Management teams should possess relevant skills, experience, knowledge, and diverse business management experience to be able to manage or run the business in line with shareholders' expectations (Brown, 2011). The firm's leadership should clearly articulate the vision and mission, enabling everyone in the company to understand the strategic direction of the company (Brown, 2011). Management is responsible for planning; organising; leading; and controlling organisational resources, activities, and tasks to meet customers and shareholder expectations (Nel et al., 2016). Ineffective management and

leadership styles can contribute to poor performance and ultimately to loss of trust from customers, employees, and shareholders (Burke, 2011).

When considering adoption or implementation of new technologies, management should be leading the processes, mobilise resources, and ensure that correct technology specifications are purchased to support the company's strategy. In some instances, due to lack of technological know-how, junior managers are empowered to make decisions which might not be in the interest of the firm (Somerville, 2015).

Adequate financial resources are required when considering new technological innovations (Hutchins, 2011). Firms that intend on using DM should be prepared to invest extensively in their software systems because these systems are crucial business assets (Sinclair & Vogus, 2011). Implementation of new systems should be supported by upskilling of users to gain the requisite expertise and skills (Brown, 2011). It might be a futile exercise to have complex systems in the firm that lie idle because of lack of skilled labour force.

Existing technologies in the firm should be looked at carefully before discarding them, and appropriate decisions should be made to determine how new technologies can be integrated. According to Somerville (2015), firms might be forced to upgrade software in line with new technologies such as social media. Only in situations where existing technologies are not compatible with the latest versions of software will a need arise to overhaul the whole information technology infrastructure (Laudon & Laudon, 2013). The objective of combining social media communication channels with existing technologies is to support the firm's mission and vision (Tushman & Nadler, 1986).

Organisational structure, processes, and objectives are imperative when implementing or adopting new systems because everyone in the firm should be conversant with all activities. Jansen van Rensburg (2014) posits that communication between management should be clear, and there should be synergy to mitigate conflicts. Organisational structures should enable free-flow movement of information (Brown, 2011). There are some complex organisational structures that hinder communication because of bureaucratic channels (Brown, 2011).

Organisations with SMART objectives, coupled with effective strategies, tend to succeed (Nel et al., 2016). Leadership mobilises resources, provides its support, motivates employees, and incentivises innovation. Processes, plans, and evaluations are implemented while focusing on empowering employees.

With reference to the foregoing factors, a conducive and facilitating environment is created for the adoption and usage of new technologies. In addition, management should also develop an accommodating culture that includes and recognises everyone in the company (Brown, 2011). Employees develop a sense of ownership, accountability, and responsibility if their efforts are recognised and appreciated. Having reviewed the internal factors that might determine the successful adoption and use of new technology, equally important are factors that are outside the firm. Firms do not have control or influence over external forces.

It has been demonstrated that diverse internal factors can influence or hinder firms from adopting social media. The next section discusses external factors that influence the activities of any firm or industry.

External or environmental factors refer to all market and economic forces that are consequential to a company, industry, or the whole economy (Walker, Gountas, Mavondo & Mullins, 2009). Hill (2014) refers to external forces as political, economic, socio-economic, technological, legal, and ecology (PESTLE). The prevailing political situation in any economy can be detrimental to all other factors on the PESTLE, in that instability creates uncertainty and businesses might relocate or close down (Mohr, Fourie & Associates, 2011). Policies made and implemented by political leaders can affect the whole economy, let alone industries and firms' activities (Mohr et al., 2011). Industries might be forced to close down, and those firms with new technologies will have to abandon or sell off their assets.

With reference to economic forces, interest rates at which companies can borrow and repay the loans, the buying power of the Rand, customers' disposable income, and inflation should be considered before investing in expensive technology which might yield immediate returns (Mohr et al., 2011). Monetary and fiscal policies affect money supply in an economy, which ultimately influence interest and inflation rates. These rates affect business expansion and employment. Most of the software is licensed; thus, firms would be expected to pay for the licenses in foreign currency, which might be costly because of the exchange rate between the Rand/US dollar.

Socio-economic factors such as lack of education, cultural and religious discrimination, unemployment, overpopulation, and corruption have been major challenges confronting South Africa and the African continent as a whole (Mohr, Fourie & Associates, 2011). Investing in complex technologies requires firms to employ educated and highly skilled human capital.

With the scarcity of information technology (IT) skills in the country, the implementation of new technologies requires careful considerations by firms. Interventions are required to mitigate skills gaps (Nel et al., 2016). Some firms might not be keen to buy new technologies, fearing that their human resources will not cope with the complexities of multiple technology platforms.

Technological forces are key in this study because there are rapid technological developments; therefore, firms must conduct extensive research, consult, and have adequate information regarding technological specifications that can add value to their firms. Haphazard purchasing of any technologies might be disastrous for the firm because the technology might be incompatible or misaligned to organisational objectives (Somerville, 2015). Companies are compelled to comply with environmental policies, and it is therefore the company's responsibility to report or communicate compliance issues with its customers and other stakeholders. South African legislation on privacy and security issues should be complied with. Companies should ensure they implement technology such as spyware that does not violate human rights.

Various labour relations policies stipulate working hours per day, per week, leave or off days, and code of conduct. The use of technology for data processing, information storage, and retrieval should be in line with Privacy Policy Acts and Data Protection Statutes. Security of information, information systems, and digital tools should be used as guidelines when adopting new technologies. The legislation might appear restrictive, but firms are obliged to adhere to the laws (Orji, 2012)

Companies that have a negative reputation for poor health and safety standards face adverse criticism from people. To ensure that the environmental management function is performed optimally, resources should be made available, and this includes effective communication channels. Government regulations such as access to data and information play a massive role in the activities of Transnet Engineering with reference to the company's information systems policies.

The current organisational structure allows cross-functional interactions and information sharing; thus, this is a compelling tactic for the firm to use Twitter. Functional teams work on projects which require virtual communication, creating opportunities for the use of digital platforms as channels of communication. In the discussion of the TOE framework, the

researcher reiterates that in the contemporary business environment, functional teams cannot operate as silos. There is a need for collaboration and team efforts. Management expects cross-functional teams to share ideas, knowledge, and information towards a common cause-enhanced customer service delivery.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

It was stated that the purpose of this chapter was to review literature relating to social media marketing and other related concepts. It has been highlighted that digital marketing has and continues to change how people and businesses behave and operate. A historical perspective of digital marketing was discussed, demonstrating its benefits, drawbacks, and different types. Different types of social media marketing channels or networking platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook have been discussed with illustrations and how firms are using these platforms to enhance brand awareness. Statistics showing the use of social media have illustrated that more than 2.2 billion people were using Facebook, followed by about 1.9 billion people who use YouTube, then by WhatsApp with 1.5 billion users. These statistics were compiled in the Global Digital Report for 2019.

In the chapter, the researcher discussed the importance of Twitter to the business, and it has been demonstrated that Twitter helps firms to increase website traffic, brand awareness, and encourages openness and instant feedback. Factors that contributed to or impeded the adoption and implementation of social media have been discussed. In the chapter that follows, the research design and methodology are discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The foregoing chapter provided literature that supported this study. Key concepts reviewed in Chapter Three included digital marketing and the various types of social media marketing and social networking platforms. It is of paramount importance to clearly articulate the research plan so that readers can understand the processes and procedures that were used to arrive at findings (Paton, 2002). In addition, the researcher presents the research outline from the perspectives of epistemology, ontology, and methodology of the study. While presenting philosophical arguments on mono-methods approaches, the chapter discusses the units of analysis, sampling strategies, sampling frame, pilot study, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings. The researcher also clarifies the scope and limitations, and ethical issues.

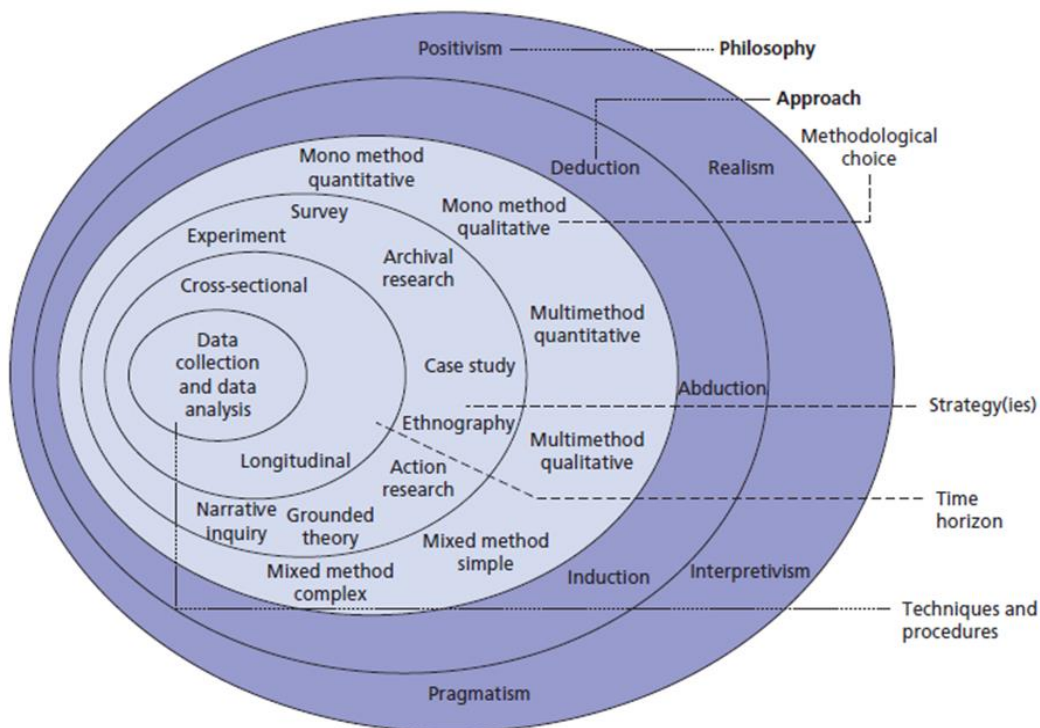


Figure 4.1: Research onion

Source: Saunders et al. (2019)

The desired outcomes of the study were achieved by carefully putting together a cogent plan, as shown in Figure 4.1. The research onion provides a holistic overview of the research

methodology/subsequent interdependent components that should be followed guiding the research process to arrive at the desired outcome of a research study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Figure 4.1 is widely used in describing the research plan or research design and methodology (Ngulube, 2010). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) postulate that over the years, researchers have adopted and employed the research onion, as it provides a clear illustration of the process of the research plan.

Figure 4.1 denotes various components in the research process, namely, the research philosophy – shown in the outer layer – followed by the research approach, research method, research design (experiments, survey, archival study, action research), and the tools and techniques. Each of the components in Figure 4.1 constitutes the research plan for this study and will be individually explored in the sections that follow.

4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy is defined as “the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1970; Bajpai, 2011). In Figure 4.1, the outer layer of the research onion depicts different philosophies/paradigms: interpretivism, pragmatism, realism, and positivism. An interpretivist paradigm was used in this study based on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives of the study.

The idea behind the adoption of interpretivism was to enable the researcher to analyse data so the subjects’ worldview, feelings, and experiences remain unchanged. The researcher pointed out that the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study were premised on the interpretivist research paradigm. Therefore, a commensurate interpretivist research approach was used in this study (Romm & Ngulube, 2014).

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The second element in the research onion, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, relates to the research approach. Common research approaches are inductive, deductive, and abduction. In this study, an inductive approach was adopted because the study employed a qualitative research method. An inductive approach is sometimes referred to as inductive reasoning (Burns & Bush, 2006). The aim of using the inductive approach was to generate meanings from the data set collected in order to build theory. In this study, inductive reasoning helped the researcher to learn from

experiences, patterns, resemblances, and regularities in order to reach conclusions (Saunders et al., 2016).

4.4 RESEARCH METHOD

Traditionally, studies use a mono-method that is either qualitative or quantitative in nature (Ngulube, 2014). Saunders et al. (2016) point out that researchers can use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method research. The choice of a research method is informed by the research philosophy, and research questions and objectives, among other elements. The qualitative research approach is discussed in the next subsection.

4.4.1 Qualitative research approach

The study was informed by an interpretivist paradigm; accordingly, it was imperative to use a qualitative research approach to complement the paradigm. To generate meanings from the data set collected, it was important to use the qualitative method (Ngulube, 2010). Babbie (2010) states that qualitative research is used to address a research problem that is exploratory in nature, as was the case with this study. Therefore, this study provided insights into the problem under investigation. The researcher relied on direct experiences and opinions of human beings in their lives. This enabled the study to gain deeper insights and understanding of events as they occurred in a natural setting. The qualitative research method was used in line with the topic and problem under investigation, which had to be interrogated through interactions with participants to gain a better understanding.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Literature discusses research designs as plans that hold together different research concepts into one single unit for the purpose of addressing research questions (Van Wyk, 2012; Grove, Burns & Gray, 2013). To improve efficiency in the research process, an exploratory research design was used (Romm & Ngulube, 2014). Grove et al. (2013) highlight that the design of a study is a result of a series of the researcher's decisions regarding the research processes. An exploratory research design helped the researcher to explain and understand the problem in detail because there was no information demonstrating that it had been studied before (Babbie, 2010). An exploratory research design offered qualitative data and provided a better idea of a problem as opposed to offering precise measurement (Ngulube, 2010).

4.5.1 Case study research design

A case study design was used in this study. Case study designs are ideal for both quantitative and qualitative studies because researchers are able to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources (Yin, 2010). Bryman and Bell (2010) bring out that case studies allow researchers to investigate the problem in a real-life context. In addition, case studies enable researchers to collect data specific to a phenomenon under investigation even if there is limited time.

The challenge of using case studies, however, is the researcher's inability to generalise findings to a wider population, and there is a possibility that the case study may be influenced by the researcher's feelings (Yin, 2012). This means that there is a high probability of researcher bias. Creswell (2014) also points out that researchers cannot replicate the studies elsewhere if case studies are used. During the interviews the research requested some of the participants to review their responses in order to ensure that the captured information is correct interpretation of the session.

The case study refers to Transnet Engineering, which is briefly discussed in the next subsection.

4.5.2 Transnet Engineering

Transnet Engineering is a subsidiary of Transnet Holdings, a state-owned enterprise, whose business is to keep South Africa's trains operational (Transnet, 2018). Transnet Engineering has been chosen for the study for a variety of reasons: (1) Transnet is one of the largest SOEs with operations across Africa, (2) it is a major player in the South African railway industry, and (3) it comprises a group of strategic business units in different spheres of industries. There are challenges confronting a number of companies in South Africa. On that account, the importance of a solid communication strategy that allows for customer engagement and enhancing customer relationships is vitally important for the sustained management of SOEs and should not be overlooked.

The discussion that follows describes the subjects that were considered for this study.

4.6 TARGET POPULATION

Lavraks (2008) defines a set of units or group of objects where researchers gather data to make inferences. A population is defined as a collective or totality of all the people or objects who

could be selected for inclusion in a study (Glasow, 2005). All categories of senior management at Transnet Engineering and customers were paramount; therefore, business development managers, marketing managers, and account executives formed the population for the study. Furthermore, senior managers were selected for being decision-makers and policymakers. These individuals could answer probing questions in instances where clarity was sought.

4.6.1 Sampling

A sample is considered as a part of the population under investigation, which shares the same characteristics as the population (Blumberg et al., 2011). The researcher uses a small portion of the population to know and draw conclusions about the general population (Blumberg et al., 2011). Sampling allows researchers to conduct research within budgetary constraints, as only a percentage of the overall target population is selected for inclusion in the study. Bryman (2017) points out that researchers can opt for probability or non-probability sampling strategies in their research. Both probability and non-probability sampling strategies apply various sampling techniques in different studies and for different reasons.

4.6.1.1 Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling strategies entail the researcher's judgement or prerogative when selecting sample elements for the study. Saunders et al. (2016) state that when non-probability sampling is used, sample elements are selected based on personal judgement. Subjective or purposive sampling was used in this study because sample elements were selected for possessing relevant data required to address the research questions. Non-probability snowball sampling is when a researcher chooses a few elements who, in turn, will recruit their own friends or relatives for the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Non-probability sampling methods are, by nature, not representative of the population of the study. This means that a researcher selects small sample sizes which result in the exclusion of generalisation (Lennox & Jurdi-Hage, 2017). Generalisation is a form of quality standard synonymous with quantitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). If the sample size is large, the researcher is likely to get more accurate results (Creswell, 2014).

4.6.1.2 Sampling techniques for the study

With reference to the foregoing discussions, it is clear that this study used non-probability sampling techniques. Babbie (2010) highlights that convenience sampling is used when the sample elements are readily available and accessible at the time of conducting the study. Purposive sampling, on the other hand, is chosen when the researcher identifies and selects participants possessing data required to address a research problem. Both convenience and purposive sampling techniques can be used in a single study. The motivations for choosing the two sampling techniques have been discussed in the above section. Some pre-set criteria were used. For example, the researcher pre-set selection criteria such as working experience and gender, which were used in the sample selection process. In addition, the participants that were readily available and accessible were key considerations in non-probability convenience sampling technique (Saunders *et al*, 2019).

4.6.2 Sample size

The principle that guides the sample size for both qualitative and quantitative studies is different. Ngulube and Ngulube (2015) propose between 4 and 20 sample elements for qualitative studies. Creswell (2014) also states that for qualitative studies, because of the nature of interviews, researchers should not include large sample sizes. Sample sizes should be manageable because conducting interviews with a large sample size is time-consuming (Ngulube, 2010). Each interview session takes approximately between 45 and 60 minutes (Romm & Ngulube, 2014). Between 6 and 15 sample elements are suggested for face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2014). Having considered the views by the aforementioned authors, a total of 14 sample elements were chosen for this study. Sample elements were chosen groups to ensure there was a fair representation from both perspectives of the company and customers. If the sample elements were chosen from one group of people, the objectivity of the study would not have been achieved (Bryman & Bell, 2017). The viewpoints would have been one-sided, resulting in bias (Bryman & Bell, 2010).

The pilot study is discussed in the next section.

4.7 PRETESTING

Ngulube and Ngulube (2015) posit that a pilot study simply means pretesting the research instrument as a quality assurance process. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) define pretesting as a

process of checking if participants understand the questions asked. Creswell (2014) contends that pretesting a research instrument helps to ascertain the plausibility, credibility, and validity of the research instrument.

The researcher pretested the interview protocol with two sample elements from the SOE under investigation and customers in order to gain both sides with respect to opinions. Ngulube (2009) points out that due to time constraints and efforts needed when conducting face-to-face interviews, two participants are adequate to extrapolate qualitative data in a pre-test. Bryman and Bell (2010) also corroborate Ngulube (2009) by stating that two participants are adequate to provide feedback when pretesting an instrument. The argument postulated by Bryman and Bell (2010) for selecting two sample elements is commensurate with recommended sample sizes for qualitative studies. It was imperative to pre-test the instrument in order to mitigate ambiguities, grammatical, spelling, and syntax errors. Pretesting the research instrument is a key process in the research because the researcher is concerned about the clarity and understandability of the research instrument. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) reveal that pretesting findings or feedback should be considered and implemented accordingly.

During the pilot phase, concerns were raised regarding the length of questions and some ambiguity. Both participants concurred that the questions were long and as such required refining and clarity. As such, the research instrument was re-evaluated, ensuring that all ambiguity was removed and that the questions were clear. Participants raised concerns regarding possible repetitive questions and as such all repetitions were removed. As shown in Appendix C, the new-look instrument comprises nine questions. It was important to conduct the pretesting because it helped fine-tune the research instrument.

The following section focuses on the data collection processes used.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected using multiple sources, namely, interviews, archival data, journals, and audio recording. These are suitable data collection techniques for obtaining fertile insights. In this study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used for data collection and archival data provided as form of secondary data.

4.8.1 Face-to-face interviews

Matthews and Ross (2010) define interviewing as a process where the interviewer/researcher meets and conducts interviews with participants in a selected venue. The interview guide comprised the nine key research questions which guided the interviews (Appendix C). All participants were made aware of the purpose of the study as well as their rights as participants before agreeing to be included in the study.

The rationale for using in-depth interviews was to gain insights and personal experiences from the participants (Creswell, 2012). The opinions of participants were detailed descriptions of activities and events as they occurred in a real-life context (Wiid & Diggins, 2013). Open-ended questions were designed to give participants an opportunity to express opinions and feelings in their own words within the confines of addressing the questions. A semi-structured interview process was adopted in this study to allow general discussions but focusing on the key tenets of the problem under investigation.

Interviews allow participants to express themselves in their own words. This means that the researcher does not guide the participants on how to answer the question or the choice of words to use in expressing their opinions. As the questions were open-ended, the researcher ensured that the questions were short and clear, providing a chance to participants to think through before giving answers haphazardly. The approach helped both parties to engage the subject matter more deeply.

When asking questions, one has to be cognisant of the tone, choice of words, meanings, and expressions of statements. In so doing, one can quickly determine if the participants are uncomfortable through body language, facial expressions, and gestures. Apart from the use of interviews, the study gathered data from company records, as discussed in the next subsection.

4.8.2 Archival data

Secondary data was collected from archival data from the SOE and industries to determine the trends in the adoption and usage of digital communication channels. Company records were accessed on the Intranet and Internet, as they are in the public domain. Reports from strategic business units of Transnet Holdings were also available on the Internet. Corporate annual reports were viewed to complement in-depth face-to-face interviews.

It was indicated in the first chapter of this study that there was a growing need for SOEs to adopt and implement digital marketing communication tools to keep abreast with consumers' changing tastes and preferences (Kotabe & Helsen, 2015). Traditional communication channels were losing their appeal to consumers (Hutchins, 2011). Therefore, reviewing archival data provided insights which might not have been provided during the interviews. This has to do with insights relating to the company's interventions or challenges confronted in the transition from traditional communication to digital communication channels. Usually, written information or explicit knowledge provides vital information which might be overlooked when people are engaging in verbal discussions (Siedel, 2015).

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

After gathering data, the next step is to add meaning to raw facts. This process is called data analysis (Creswell, 2014). The process of analysing data entails cleaning, coding, and logical reasoning on raw facts to produce meaning (Bigdon & Biklon, 2003). All interview transcriptions were exported to a qualitative data analysis program. NVivo 11 software was used to manipulate large amounts of data (Blismas & Dainty, 2003:457). NVivo is a qualitative data analysis program for coding and grouping emerging themes, allowing the researcher to perform thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ngulube and Ngulube (2017) express that research is reaching complex levels that require tools and programs such as NVivo to extract rich data sets.

When qualitative research is undertaken, the presentation of data is through expressions, and in some instances, responses are cited verbatim (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Emerging themes were presented as subsections of the research objectives.

4.10 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Polit and Beck (2008) posit that the term trustworthiness is used to evaluate qualitative data following certain evaluation criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced various criteria for developing trustworthiness. These include credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity.

4.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the truthfulness of data (Polit & Beck, 2008). The researcher takes full responsibility for the research process to ensure that all activities in the project are successfully completed. If another person were assigned to work on this project, there would have been chances of some activities being done improperly. Van Wijk and Harrison (2013) state that credibility includes building trust and honouring confidentiality. To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher conducted a pretest to determine if participants understood the questions posed. Polit and Beck (2008) bring out that pretesting the research instrument is an important process that helps researchers to establish if the research instrument will produce trustworthy findings that will be used to make informed decisions.

4.10.2 Dependability

Saunders *et al* (2016) argue that the criterion for dependability is not easy to fulfil in qualitative research. However, in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the researcher also clearly presented a detailed report in terms of how the study was conducted. In this study, the researcher implemented a logical, traceable, and well-documented research process. All records or paper trails were kept in a safe for future references.

4.10.3 Conformability

To achieve conformability, the researcher gathered data from participants, reports, and other documents, demonstrating that the data was genuine and not from the researcher's perspective (Shenton, 2004). So as to mitigate bias, the researcher did not give personal views to responses that were provided. All the results presented in the study were gathered from participants and relevant documents consulted in the study.

4.10.4 Transferability

According to Zitomer and Goodwin (2014), transferability is parallel to generalisability. In addition, in qualitative research, transferability entails the ability to use the research instrument in a different setting or context but under the same conditions. By conducting the pretesting, the results therefore showed that this study could be used in other settings under similar conditions. Participants of the study were satisfied with the results and could also apply the study in their own situations.

4.10.5 Authenticity

In this study, analysis and interpretation will include an honest and accurate representation of the participants' viewpoints in order to uphold the quality of qualitative research (Lyons *et al.*, 2013). The researcher ensured that all participants were treated fairly and with respect by providing the same interview durations. Each interview session lasted for one hour. The findings from the study were reported back to participants who confirmed that the results were a true reflection of their opinions.

4.11 ELIMINATION OF BIAS

Saunders et al. (2012) indicate that probability sampling techniques are preferred in research because these techniques help mitigate elements of bias and unfairness, which are synonymous with non-probability sampling. The researcher did not give personal views or opinions during the interviews in order to demonstrate that the findings are a true reflection from primary data (Shenton, 2004). Participants were informed that this was an academic research and as such would be beneficial to the company and customers because a synergy would be forged using digital platforms as communication channels are concerned.

4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Various ethical issues were considered in this study to ensure there were no ethical transgressions. All participants' information was not shared with third parties; thus, participants were assured that their personal or any identifiable information was only used for the study. Consent was granted through verbal and telephonic conversation (Ngulube, 2010). Participants who could sign and send informed consent did so prior to the actual interviews taking place. All results were verified with participants before they were made public. This study was approved by the University of Cape Town, Commerce Faculty Research Committee on Ethics. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities.

4.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The plan of action used in the study was clearly discussed in this chapter. The researcher used an interpretivist paradigm resulting in the use of a qualitative research method. A case study design was chosen to help interrogate a phenomenon in detail in its real and factual context. For this to be achieved, it was required that the research and story be clear and focused, yet not

'permanently fixed' and both flexible enough to be changed. Senior managers, information technology specialists, strategists, operations and marketing managers, business development managers, customers and account executives were selected.

Coding and analysis were done using the latest available software such as NVivo 11 software. Other Transnet offices were excluded from the study; thus, the findings could not be generalised to the Transnet Holdings Group. Finally, ethics in research is an invaluable process that should not be overlooked; hence, the researcher adhered to all ethical considerations. Research findings of this study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the research plan of this study. The focus of this penultimate chapter is to present and discuss the findings in relation to the research questions and research objectives of this study. The restatement of the research objectives and demographics of participants is followed by thematic data analysis which are discussed in line with the interview questions. Presentation of findings is supported by discussions, and then the chapter is concluded. Appropriate suggestions would be provided on how to improve the usage of digital tools in SOEs.

In the next section, the demographics of participants are discussed. These demographics are important in the study to demonstrate that the study provided an equal opportunity to both genders.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Stangor (2011) states that involving diversity in a study should be considered with the view of mitigating bias, which is often associated with qualitative research. Bias can arise if the researcher does not use restraint in influencing who should and who should not be selected in the study. In this study, the researcher selected sample elements from both female and male in different positions from the organization that have high influence in decision-making and were either customers or senior management at the SOE. Furthermore, the researcher focused the racial demographics of participants to ensure inclusivity was achieved. Participants' positions in their organisations was paramount factor. The seniority of the position was associated with certain type of information which would not ordinarily reside in junior employees. With reference to the aforementioned extract, the demographics were as presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographics of participants

Participant pseudonym	Gender	Racial profile	Position occupied
A	Male	Indian	Marketing Manager
H	Male	White	Business Development Manager
C	Male	Black	Strategy Manager
J	Male	Black	Social Media Strategist
D	Male	Coloured	ICT Manager
K	Male	White	Admin and Bus. Director
L	Male	Black	Sales & Marketing Manager
N	Male	Indian	Marketing Executive
E	Female	White	Marketing Director
M	Female	Black	Divisional Director – Marketing
F	Female	Black	Marketing Manager
I	Female	Indian	Senior Communications Manager
G	Female	White	Business Development Manager
B	Female	Coloured	Operations Manager

5.3 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Three broad categories of themes emerged. The first category comprised four themes, while the second category also comprised four themes. The last category comprised five themes, which are discussed in the next subsections.

5.3.1 Value of interaction

In this question, the study sought to understand the frequency, responses, benefits, or drawbacks that were derived from Twitter interactions/communication. The themes are presented below.

Theme 1: Frequency of engagement

The frequency of communication may be determined by the urgency and gravity of the message to be communicated. Participants indicated that Twitter was used to update stakeholders about organisational activities, services, and programmes. The consensus from the participants was summarized by one participant who stated:

Twitter is one of the upcoming communication channels, mostly preferred in our industry. We use Twitter in our daily communication processes because both our internal and external customers need regular feedback, it has become apparent that

every day we communicate through Twitter. We have discovered that it is a faster and efficient way of communication. [Participant E]

The above extract represents the consensus from all 14 participants in relation to the frequency of communication using Twitter. As has been shown in the extract above, it is evident that both internal and external customers require regular feedback; therefore, Twitter is used daily. The frequent use of Twitter demonstrates that firms are moving towards digital marketing channels to enable them to analyse marketing campaigns and activities happening in real time (Duffet, 2015). The frequency of communication should be high so that stakeholders feel valued and appreciated by receiving information from an organisation in which they have an interest.

Theme 2: Responses from tweets

The following responses were received:

In some instances, the responses are too low, considering that a larger audience would have been targeted and received the tweets. When diverse responses are received, there is need for the firm to provide appropriate responses that address issues raised on the communication platform. [Participant A]

Depending with the subject being discussed, diverse responses are received. I think people are cognizant of the fact that posting or sharing information on social media can be used negatively against one, so the responses are carefully crafted. [Participant H]

In as much as there are vast changes in how people and businesses communicate using digital platforms, it is not always true to say that users of digital platforms always provide feedback on these communication platforms. Diverse responses provided above could also be a demonstration that Twitter is not a popular social networking platform (Global Digital Report, 2019). Being unpopular could have created a negative perception in customers' mindsets. Furthermore, the poor conversations or responses on the platform compound the negative perception. The use of networking platforms is influenced by the information and ideas generated and shared by people. However, it is the content or quality of messages and information that generates debates regarding responses. Social networking platforms that are user friendly attract huge fan bases and can be used to target a large audience interested in a particular topic or in a certain location.

Theme 3: Benefits and drawbacks of using Twitter

Participants indicated the following drawbacks and benefits of using Twitter:

Users of social networking platforms can share videos, messages or any information of substance in a faster and efficient way [Participant E]

Sometimes it is not viewed as a formal communication channel but can be used as a tool of entry. It is quick and effective to get leads for the salespeople. However, Twitter has been attracting fraudulent activities; thus, it is not a very secure platform. [Participant F]

As shown in the above extracts, there was consensus among the participants that Twitter was a faster and efficient way of communication. One of the participants indicated that Twitter is a fairly new communication platform in the market; therefore, many people and companies were still exploring it. Participants acknowledged that Twitter users can share videos, messages, or any other information like any other platform. Other views from participants indicated that Twitter was not regarded as a communication channel but as a tool of entry into digital media. One of the drawbacks raised during the interviews was that the platform was anxious. Viewpoints from the participants demonstrated that the use of Twitter allows diverse people to participate in Twitter interactions; thus, different ideas and information are generated and accessible by many users. Smartphone users prefer short messages; therefore, it is easier to use Twitter because tweets are short in length – about 280 characters (Global Digital Report, 2019). Increasing demand for using Twitter has emerged where marketers promote blog content, videos, and presentations (Laudon & Laudon, 2013), which is in line with the views by Participant E. Firms use Twitter and other social media channels because customers provide instant feedback about a company's products and services (Villanti, 2016). This resonates with the views of Participant F, who indicated that users get instant responses to their tweets. Tiago and Verissimo (2014) also highlight that Twitter enhances visibility and accessibility to content.

Theme 4: Interaction with Transnet via social media

Participants were asked to indicate if interaction with Transnet through social media was contributing to the company achieving its goals. This theme was imperative to the study, as it supported the views of Kotler and Keller (2012), Tiago and Verissimo (2014), and the Global Digital Report (2019), which state the paradigm shift in modern marketing strategies. These responses were provided as follows:

It is a faster way of getting responses from Transnet and customers because all users of Twitter are fully aware that failure to get instant feedback can result in a backlash from other users on the platform. [Participant B]

Growing business transactions, leads and ideas are happening on social media. Therefore, it is only common business sense to embrace technologies that are ubiquitous and accessible 24/7. It is entirely the responsibility of Transnet to convert the tweets into meaningful strategies for business growth. [Participant M]

I believe the traffic volumes to the company's website is increasing on a daily basis, creating sales leads and helping the firm to improve its products and service offerings. Social media is the way to go in this day and age. [Participant N]

The key issues that emerged were that it was important for users of Twitter to communicate and provide instant feedback to the party they are communicating with. Both the external and internal customers of the company require timeous feedback on interactions that take place on Twitter to enable decision-making. Though some of the traffic to the website might not bring meaningful business to the firm, however, the exposure to the website can create awareness of the presence of the firm as has been stated by Participant M. Responses given also show that social media interactions help the SOE to get feedback timeously from various stakeholders, and at the same time social media interactions might influence people to act in certain ways or behaviour (Villanti, 2016). Twitter provides faster communication in the modern business environment where firms are required to provide answers to users of social media and information pertaining to product features or usage. Therefore, use of Twitter provides convenient communication.

The responses also demonstrate the benefits of using social media as a communication channel and that many firms and individuals are moving towards social networking platforms. Interest

to buy a firm's products or services is stimulated by the quality of content shared on social media (Chigada & Hirschfelder, 2017). An important revelation in the responses is the response by Participant E, who states that the modern business environment is conducted on social media because the 4th industrial revolution is dominant in most of the organisations that have advanced technological systems. The global business space is confronted with intense competition; therefore, adaption and use of state-of-the-art digital technologies help firms to respond quickly to market demands.

5.3.2 Factors contributing to the use of social media

Various themes emerged in this subsection. The intention was to extract participants' viewpoints regarding factors that contributed to individuals or firms using social media. The five themes that emerged are discussed below.

Theme 1: Quality of content shared

In the advent of intense competition for high-quality products and service offerings, firms try to outdo one another through value-added services and other benefits. One approach is the quality of content – both user and firm-generated content shared on social media. Users derive value from the quality of content shared.

With the use of digital tools, many companies are in the propensity of sending unsolicited adverts, messages to the point of saturation. Customers end up ignoring and avoiding such digital messages. On the other hand, users of social media also post messages that are not good for businesses. At times, users share inaccurate information which puts the company's image in disrepute. [Participant C]

High-quality content is a major trump card for attracting traffic to the website. [Participant M]

Participants indicated that they expected to see or receive high-quality tweets from online communities. The quality of digital content is a paramount factor for digital platforms because users appreciate high-quality information. Failure to receive feedback could signal the quality of content or their ideas were just adding to numbers of irrelevant tweets. Relevant and engaging content can improve visibility online and reach customers quickly and efficiently (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). If content does not stimulate interest and desire, users are bound to ignore and avoid it.

Feedback from their peers and friends helped to reshape participants' beliefs and perceived norms (Villanti, 2016). Their peers and friends only respond if the content on social media is meaningful. The content on digital platforms should enable users to control their public persona and experiment with themselves through text and group affiliation (Primack *et al.*, 2017). With the prevalence of spam on websites, it is becoming increasingly important for firms and individuals to share trustworthy and accurate content.

Theme 2: Benefits derived from social media interactions

The second factor contributing to the usage of social media was attributable to the benefits that accrue from these marketing communication channels. Globally, firms are moving towards electronic tools and platforms which are changing the marketing communication landscape (Villanti, 2016). Participants indicated:

I evaluate the pros and cons of social media. If the benefits outweigh the costs, then I have the reason to use social media. I am also motivated by debates on topical issues. These stimulate innovation and further interrogations on issues that may help users or the company. [Participant F]

Interacting with different users helps me to gain some understanding of issues happening in different parts of our country and globally. I share ideas, information and other important messages efficiently and faster. [Participant K]

The participants derived some benefits from Twitter in various ways that include debates on topical issues. Participant F highlighted that topical issues stimulate innovation and prompt further interrogations. Users also shared ideas, information, and other messages on Twitter in an efficient and faster way as stated by Participant K. The views raised during the interviews are supported by Smith (2014), who states that social media or precisely digital marketing tools proffer a variety of benefits which drive users to switch over from traditional tools. Baker (2011) asserts that diverse applications such as internet banking, social networking platforms on mobile devices, and computing capabilities of smartphones provide a one-stop-shop facility for users; thus, the drive to use social media becomes unstoppable. Marketers have devised their marketing strategies and are creating a perception that without social media, the chances of success are limited; because of that, users' perceptions are positively influenced by the messages from marketers (Sherman, 2017).

Theme 3: Ease of use of technology

A generational demographic of consumers is changing the marketing communication landscape through wide usage of social media (Hutchins, 2010). In addition, this generational demographic group has a good customers' tastes and preferences are ever-changing. This response was provided:

Users with mobile devices require a few tips to use social media. Overall, users should be given some training on how to use new technologies. When new technologies are complex and difficult to use, users will not find any motivation to adopt the technology. Our employees and customers have received adequate training and they feel that Twitter is easy to use. [Participant G]

With reference to the above-mentioned response, users are driven to use social media if there are no complex applications. Ease of use of technology can drive people towards the use of technology. Perceived ease of use is a key component of the TAM framework because it defines the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort (Davis, 1989). This study reveals that users will only use digital tools if there is little effort to using these digital tools. Sherman (2017) reveals that with the prevalence of smartphones, tablets, and iPads, users have developed interests to interact with their friends and peers on online platforms. It should be noted that it is not every person with a smartphone that is on social media. There are reasons for personal choices which are best addressed in a different study.

Theme 4: Compatible technologies supporting the company's overall strategy

During the interviews, an interesting but equally important theme emerged – technology should be part of the company's marketing communication strategy. In some instances, a euphoria for embracing new technologies tends to grip firms without undertaking due diligence and research to ascertain the strategic alignment of new technology with the firm's objectives. Participants stated:

If the technology is part of the company's 21st century motto, then everyone has an obligation to use it. However, a company should also assess if the technology supports the overall company strategy. Compatibility between new and existing technology will alleviate costs. [Participant L]

Users are more comfortable using reliable and dependable technologies. Furthermore, users are motivated to use new technologies if management has demonstrated the benefits of new systems in relation to improving efficiency and aligned to organisational objectives. [Participant M]

The responses provided demonstrate that technological advancements are driving firms and users to adoption and usage of new systems to keep abreast with the rest of the global village. Participants also indicated that firms should assess if new technologies support existing systems and company strategy. This assessment is important to mitigate the purchasing of systems that would not add value and improve efficiency to the firm. Users would be motivated to use new systems if management demonstrated the benefits derived from the technology. The viewpoints by the participants are in line with Somerville (2015), who states that firms should not just embark on implementing technologies without conducting research and ensuring that the technologies are in line with strategic marketing objectives. Appropriate budgets should be set aside, enabling the company to purchase technologies that will contribute significantly to the efficiency and effectiveness of its activities. Sherman (2017) also posits that technologies aligned to overall company objectives can become cost-effective for the firm to market its business because of the way firms reach out and engage with their customers. Furthermore, Smith (2014) brings out that technology adoption should be done after careful consultations and engagements with users to mitigate resistance. Once all parties have been consulted, and their input acknowledged, the use of that technology will transform the firm's profile, image, and processes (Sherman, 2017).

Users do not have a choice but to obey company rules and regulations; therefore, use of digital platforms is compulsory. Industries including banks and airlines with high traffic volumes would be expected to use advanced technologies to enhance service delivery. Such industries are also compelled by their industry regulations to use a specific type of technology; therefore, employees would not have a choice but to comply. As has been stated in the interviews, participants are forced by company policies.

5.3.3 Sustaining marketing strategy through social media

The study sought to establish if a company's long-term digital marketing objectives were sustained by digital platforms and tools. Survival by achieving long-term marketing goals should be the aim of every firm, big or small. However, the use of digital marketing strategies

alone cannot guarantee success. Duffet (2015) points out that many firms are combining traditional marketing with digital marketing strategies to leverage on the strengths of both strategies. Key themes that emerged in this subsection were as indicated below.

Theme 1: Use of other strategies to complement social media will be effective

The following responses were provided:

Small firms can use social media and survive, but for large corporations, fusion of social media and traditional marketing and other strategies will enhance sustainability of the firm. There is always a mistake and belief that social media marketing is the panacea to a firm's marketing challenges. [Participant A]

Firms need to develop long-term goals and then employ appropriate strategies to sustain them. With reference to marketing strategies, I believe combining different strategies works for the better. Firms should be cognisant that there is intense competition which requires astuteness and deployment of other strategies that complement existing strategies. [Participant D]

Feedback from the participants suggests that sustaining a company's marketing strategy is not easy in the context of competition and the emergence of alternative strategies. The consensus from the participants demonstrates that social media should be combined with other marketing strategies in the event that the company harbours survival and wants to achieve long-term goals. Combining different marketing strategies complements the strengths of the strategies as has been suggested by Participant A. Improving innovation through social media marketing will contribute to a firm's value chain while responding to customers' preferences and wants (Hill, 2014).

Mavondo (2013) conducted a study to establish a firm's marketing communication capability and brand performance. The study established that firms use diverse resources (resources-based view) to drive a brand's financial performance and sustainability. This finding supports the participants' views of combining different strategies where it has been argued that social media alone is not adequate to sustain a firm. Competitively, the firm will build its brand distinctively if various strategies, resources, and ideas are pooled together, which will, in turn, lead to superior brand and financial performance (Mavondo, 2013).

It is therefore prudent to have contingency measures in place. This is succinctly summarized by Wagner (2017), who states that combining social media communication channels with existing technologies is done to support the firm's mission and vision.

Theme 2: Competent personnel managing social media

Scarcity of IT skills can be a major hindrance to optimal utilisation of technology (StatsSA, 2018). Therefore, firms that aspire to leverage on social media and other technologies should hire competent and skilled personnel to manage their systems (Brown, 2011). The following responses were provided:

Competent IT personnel is required to manage these systems. However, these skilled people are always moving to greener pastures. This forces the company to outsource IT skills and can be costly in the long run. In addition, outsourcing can expose the company's information assets and secrecy to competitors who might be getting similar services from the service provider. [Participant C]

There is need for training and development of IT skills and management should incentivise them for innovation. Retaining IT skills might be difficult, but interventions should be implemented. [Participant K]

Prior to implementation of social media and other related technologies, management should establish the IT skills in the company. Technologies should be aligned to organisational skills and objectives. It is of no use having complex technologies without adequate human capital to complement the firm's technology vision. [Participant L]

The foregoing extracts illustrate the consensus from participants. It was pointed out that IT skills were a challenge in the company and country as a whole. Participants indicated that where there were IT skills deficiencies, firms outsourced the services, which, in turn, exposed the company's information assets and secrecy because there was no guarantee that the service providers kept trade secrets private and confidential. One participant stated that training and development and incentivising of IT personnel were important strategies that could be considered by firms. Not only does competent personnel manage the IT infrastructure, but they also focus on usage and access to and security of information assets. Security and privacy issues are increasingly becoming global concerns in the advent of cybercrimes (Orji, 2012). Chigada and Kyobe (2018), on the other hand, emphasise the need for enhanced security on information

systems and technologies. Participants have made it clear that without competent IT skills in the firm, technologies can become redundant.

What is evident from the responses is that prior to implementation of technologies, management should ensure that adequate human skilled resources are available. The optimal utilisation of technology can be hampered if complex systems are implemented when the organisation does not have highly skilled people. One factor that might contribute to unavailability of skilled IT personnel could be lack of budget or overlooking the importance and contributions of IT personnel to the firm's value chain (Hill, 2014). Sustainability of social media requires competent IT personnel to be in charge.

Theme 3: Customer engagements and empowerment

Moving towards social media can be rewarding for the firm in terms of reaching a larger target audience – faster communication – but what is more important is the constant engagements with customers (Kotabe & Helsen, 2015). Kotabe and Helsen (2015) bring out that firms are also moving towards customer empowerment in the development of products/services. Engagements and empowerment create a commitment to the brand. Participants stated:

Customers should be kept in the loop about any developments in the company. These could be new products or services offering, programmes, events or anything that might impact on society as a whole. Continuous interactions and engagements on social media expose the company to potential business opportunities, information and ideas.
[Participant A]

Constant interactions with customers enhance sharing of ideas and information which might be used by the firm to improve its processes and procedures. Users of social media comment and give feedback, thus, the feedback should be considered by the firm through positive interactions. [Participant G]

Continuous engagements and empowerment of customers is paramount for a firm's survival because ideas and information are shared, prompting the firm to take appropriate action. The responses also demonstrate that interactions on social media prompt innovation and an improvement on processes and procedures. In addition, participants revealed that interactions and engagements on social media expose the company to new ideas, information, and opportunities for strategy formulation. Smith (2014) states that digital platforms are integrated

into the value chain of the organisation to improve innovation. This happens in an enabling environment where customers' inputs are invaluable and considered by responding to customers' preferences and wants. Additionally, a firm can sustain its social media through customer interactions because information about competition, substitute products, and new technologies are shared on social media; thus, the firm can leverage on the information resources to keep abreast with the dictates of the marketplace (Duffet, 2015). It has been demonstrated that interactions and empowerment create an environment for innovation, as digital tools (social media) lead to innovations in camera technologies, social computing, and other tools to improve content display online (ITU, 2019).

Theme 4: Decisive action on Twitter feedback/suggestions

In this theme, participants stated that firms should employ dedicated personnel that monitor activities on the company's social media platforms. These dedicated personnel will be able to make decisions in respect of tweets or suggestions posted on Twitter. The current theme builds on the viewpoints raised by participants in the third theme. Interactions and empowerment without decisive action can be futile exercises. Participants stated:

Any feedback on social media must be analysed before making any haste decisions because users on social media can misinterpret the meaning and take offence from the media content. It is important for senior management to be responsible for social media strategy. [Participant D]

Both positive and negative feedback can come through on social media; however, it is how the firm responds that makes a difference. It is not wise to ignore messages or comments posted on social media. the power of social media cannot be underestimated, comments can impact negatively on the company's revenue or image, thus, it is important to scrutinize messages or suggestions on social media. [Participant E]

We have had instances where customers were communicating about irregular activities of some employees and some messages were sent through social media. This approach was strange, but as a firm, a decision had to be taken on the employees who were violating company rules and regulations. At the same time, the customers could have used a different approach of avoiding publishing the company's sensitive activities in the public domain. [Participant F]

Participants' contributions are invaluable to the study because there is evidence that acting on suggestions/feedback on digital tools is crucial. The goal of using digital platforms is to reach out to target audiences; hence, it would not make any business sense to have systems in place which are not optimally utilised to achieve organisational goals (Smith, 2014). The study indicated in previous chapters that social media is changing the way people and companies communicate and behave (Smith, 2014). With reference to that assertion, users or companies stay connected if there is communication. It has been argued that due to advertisement fraud, through unsolicited digital messages, people and firms are avoiding and/or ignoring these messages. The danger is that important messages might be ignored, resulting in exposure of the company as has been pointed out by Participant F regarding the abuse by employees which could affect the image of the firm.

When acting on feedback and suggestions, it is the prerogative of management to decide which feedback will preserve the reputation of the organisation. Organisations should develop a strategy to deal with customer feedback on social channels. Responding to customers' feedback is an indicator that the organisation is listening to its customers (Hutchins, 2014). In instances where customers compliment or praise an organisation's products and services, it is the responsibility of the organisation to thank them (Hutchins, 2014). With reference to complaints, customers expect the organisation to respond publicly, creating a lasting impression on other social media users that the company has done its best to fix the situation (Hutchins, 2014).

Duffet (2015) suggests that irrespective of the nature of the feedback, organisations must respond to all feedback. Organisations should know when to respond to individuals or group of users. The timing of responding helps organisations to know when it is time to move the conversation to a private forum (Duffet, 2015). This is a very important step because some users might be argumentative, creating confusion in the minds of other users (Duffet, 2015). In addition, the organisation must not engage in long conversations that might lead to misunderstandings and cyberbullying (Duffet, 2015).

Continuous improvement is the next theme that will be discussed.

Theme 5: Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement requires the organisation to be constantly adapting to changes in an attempt to provide high-quality service. The current theme is directly linked to the preceding

theme because feedback and suggestions from users and customers should be considered as part of continuous improvement. These viewpoints were shared during the interviews:

Continuous improvement involves checking processes, procedures including response patterns on social media. In the process of self-evaluation, firms address complaints and engage different stakeholders to elicit their ideas. [Participant B]

We have a quality management team that coordinates total quality management initiatives in the organisation. But it is everyone's responsibility to improve quality in their workstations. [Participant J]

The consensus from the participants indicates that continuous improvement is vital if the organisation has to sustain its social media marketing strategy. Key issues raised in the above extracts demonstrate that the starting point for continuous improvement is to acknowledge and consider feedback and suggestions from customers.

The uptake of digital tools has been discussed in both academic and non-academic forums. It has been revealed that firms are using digital marketing tools to target a wider audience (Duffet, 2015). With the advent of digital tools, the level of innovation is improving; thus, firms are integrating digital technologies into their value chain (Smith, 2014). The views by Smith (2014) are supported by interview responses that demonstrated that social media has transformed and continues to transform the marketing communication landscape.

Businesses use digital tools to target specific audiences with advertising messages (Hutchins, 2011). However, there is also a growing concern that customers are bombarded with digital messages, resulting in them ignoring or avoiding them. It was estimated that by the end of 2019, about 53.6 per cent of the global population would be using social media, which demonstrates the demand for digital tools (ITU, 2019). Responses from the interviews illustrated that global trends are driving firms towards digital tools; hence, the findings suggest the use of digital tools complements a firm's traditional marketing strategies.

It has been highlighted that various industries were benefiting from using digital platforms. Organisations were attracting high traffic volumes to their websites, developing sales leads, as well as achieving higher customer retention rates (Hutchins, 2010). Other industries such as banks were using internet banking, mobile banking applications, and social networking platforms to market their products and services (Sherman, 2017). However, the wide use of

digital tools has its drawbacks such as increasing cybercrimes; thus, issues of security and privacy were a major concern for businesses. The prevalence of cybercrime in South Africa is creating discomfort in many consumers and users because they feel that their personal information and identities are exposed (Chigada & Kyobe, 2018).

When implementing new technologies, it was imperative to use reputable suppliers. Participants also indicate the need for using reliable and trustworthy technology. In the event of breakdowns, reliable suppliers would be able to provide technical support. Both internal and external factors are relevant when firms decide to adopt new technology. Internal factors such as strategy, vision, and brand should be considered. Participants also emphasised the need for skilled and competent IT professionals. Both industry reports and participants concurred on the scarcity of skilled IT personnel in South Africa.

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter restated the research objectives of this study and presented demographics of participants, illustrating inclusivity of both genders into the study. Findings from face-to-face interviews were presented first in the form of emerging themes. To illustrate the viewpoints, some responses were cited verbatim.. Industry reports were then presented, demonstrating global trends and challenges relating to the use of digital platforms. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study are presented in the last chapter that follows.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The penultimate chapter analysed, presented, and discussed the study findings in relation to the research questions. Face-to-face findings were discussed. With reference to the discussions in the preceding chapter, the current chapter presents conclusions, implications, and recommendations respectively. First, the conclusions are presented, followed by the implications and recommendations.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

Three major categories of themes emerged during the interviews. These were (1) value of interaction, (2) factors contributing to the adoption of digital platforms, and (3) sustaining marketing strategy through social media. The conclusions and discussions for each theme are presented in the subsections that follow.

6.2.1 Value of interaction

Four themes that emerged in this category were frequency of engagement, tweets and benefits and drawbacks of using Twitter, and interactions with the firm through social media. With reference to the frequency of engagement, the study established that both internal and external users of Twitter require regular feedback because Twitter was used daily as a communication channel. Participants stated that Twitter was a faster and efficient communication channel. The frequent use of Twitter demonstrates that firms are moving towards digital marketing channels to enable them to analyse marketing campaigns and activities happening in real time (Duffet, 2015).

With reference to tweets or responses from Twitter, the study established that it was not always true that users of social media always provide feedback on these communication platforms (Global Digital Report, 2019). The use of social networking platforms is influenced by the information and ideas that are generated and shared by people. However, it is the content or quality of messages and information that generates debates of responses. Social networking platforms that attract huge fan bases can be used to target a large audience interested in a particular topic or in a certain location.

The third theme in this category focused on the benefits and drawbacks of using Twitter. The study established that Twitter was a fairly new communication platform; therefore, many users and companies were still exploring it. Participants acknowledged that Twitter users can share videos, messages, or any other information like any other platform. One of the drawbacks was that the platform was insecure. Tiago and Verissimo (2014) also state that Twitter enhances visibility and accessibility to content.

The study revealed that communicating through social media was positively impacting on the firm's goals because users received timeous feedback. Both the external and internal customers of the company require timeous feedback on interactions that take place on Twitter to enable decision-making. Interest to buy a firm's products or services is stimulated by the quality of content shared on social media (Hirschfelder & Chigada, 2018).

In the next subsection, the second category of themes is presented.

6.2.2 Factors contributing to the use of social media

Four themes emerged in this category. They were quality of content shared on social media, benefits of social media interactions, ease of use of technology, and compatible technologies supporting the company's overall strategy.

In conclusion, the study revealed that there is intense competition for high-quality products and service offerings, including the quality of content shared on social media. Users are more inclined to use digital platforms if they derive value from the quality of content shared. Relevant and engaging content can improve visibility online and reach customers quickly and efficiently (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). If content does not stimulate interest and desire, users are bound to ignore and avoid it.

The study established that, globally, the trend of firms moving towards digital marketing is changing the marketing communication landscape (Villanti, 2016). Participants derived some benefits from Twitter in various ways that include debates on topical issues which stimulated innovation and prompts for further interrogations. Smith (2014) states that social media or, precisely, digital marketing tools proffer a variety of benefits which drive users to switch over from traditional tools. Baker (2011) posits that diverse applications such as internet banking, social networking platforms on mobile devices, and computing capabilities of smartphones

provide a one-stop-shop facility for users; thus, the drive to use digital tools becomes unstoppable.

This study revealed that users will only use social media if there is little effort in using these digital tools. The ease of use of technology emerged as a third theme where it was revealed that generational demographics were changing the marketing communication landscape through social media (Hutchins, 2011).

In the fourth theme, the study established that technology should be part of the company's marketing communication strategy. In some instances, a euphoria for embracing new technologies tends to grip firms without undertaking due diligence and research to ascertain the strategic alignment of new technology with the firm's objectives. Participants also indicated that firms should assess if new technologies support existing systems and company strategy. This assessment is vital to mitigate the purchasing of systems that would not add value to and improve efficiency of the firm.

The third category of themes pertains to sustaining the firm's marketing strategy through social media.

6.2.3 Sustaining marketing strategy through social media

Themes in this category revealed that a firm's marketing strategy can be sustained by a combination of strategies. The use of social media alone was not adequate. Five themes that emerged in this section were the use of other strategies to complement social media, appointment of competent personnel, customer engagements and empowerment, decisive action on Twitter feedback/suggestion, and continuous improvement.

Theme 1: Use of other strategies to complement social media will be effective

The study revealed that sustaining a company's marketing strategy is not easy in the context of competition and the emergence of alternative strategies. Participants demonstrated that social media should be combined with other marketing strategies in the event that the company harbours survival and wants to achieve long-term goals. Combining different marketing strategies complements the strengths of the strategies. The adoption of new technologies should be done in line with company objectives. Improving innovation through social media marketing will contribute to a firm's value chain while responding to customers' preferences and wants (Hill, 2014).

It was pointed out that IT skills were a challenge in many companies and the country as a whole. The study indicated that where there were IT skills deficiencies, firms outsourced the services, which, in turn, exposed the company's information assets and secrecy because there was no guarantee that the service providers kept trade secrets private and confidential. Not only do competent personnel manage the IT infrastructure, but they also focus on usage and access to and security of information assets. Security and privacy issues are increasingly becoming global concerns in the advent of cybercrimes (Orji, 2012). The optimal utilisation of technology can be hampered if complex systems are implemented when the organisation does not have highly skilled people.

Moving towards social media can be rewarding for the firm in terms of reaching a larger target audience, faster communication, but what is more important is the constant engagements with customers (Kotabe & Helsen, 2015). Continuous engagements and empowerment of customers are paramount for a firm's survival because ideas and information are shared, prompting the firm to take appropriate action. The responses also demonstrate that interactions on social media prompt innovation and an improvement in processes and procedures. This happens in an enabling environment where customers' inputs are invaluable and considered by responding to customers' preferences and wants.

The goal of using digital tools is to reach out to target audiences; thus, it would not make any business sense to have systems in place which are not optimally utilised to achieve organisational goals (Smith, 2014). The study highlighted that social media is changing the way people and companies communicate and behave (Smith, 2014). With reference to that assertion, users or companies stay connected if there is communication. It has been argued that due to advertisement fraud, through unsolicited digital messages, people and firms are avoiding and/or ignoring these messages. Organisations should develop a strategy to deal with customer feedback on social channels. Responding to customers' feedback is an indicator that the organisation is listening to its customers (Hutchins, 2014).

The study revealed that continuous improvement requires the organisation to be constantly adapting to changes in an attempt to provide high-quality service as well as sustaining its social media marketing strategy. The prevalence of digital marketing illustrates that firms, big or small, are resorting to digital marketing. However, the challenge is that with many digital advertisers readily available, they are bombarding customers with many unsolicited digital

advertisements to the point of saturation, leading to customers avoiding or ignoring digital ads (ITU, 2019).

The drawbacks for digital marketing include security and privacy issues perpetrated by cybercriminals. Use of technical and technology security measures is not adequate to mitigate misuse and unauthorised access to information and computer assets, but moral standards are required. People should change their actions and behaviour. It was established that dependable technology should be used if the business is to remain relevant, and the business must interact with customers over the Internet. Dependable technology should provide computing services that are trusted within a time period, that is, technology should do what it has been designed to do in a safe and secure environment.

About 90 per cent of USA young adults (18-24-year olds) with internet access use social media for exploring information, learning, and transmitting norms and risk behaviours (Villanti, 2015). It is stated that 2.65 billion people use social media, and there are projections that by 2021, 3.1 billion people will be using social media (ITU, 2018). The social media penetration rates were attributable to the stability of the US economy and level of development. Developed countries such as the UAE and Singapore have strong economies.

Twitter currently has about 335 million global users and has not been performing well. Some users stated that there are poor sources of traffic, conversations on Twitter are of poor quality, and the platform is designed for celebrities in mind. The positive side of using Twitter is that people with smartphones, who do not need to read long messages on their screens, are comfortable using Twitter (Global Digital Report, 2019). Businesses are being driven towards the use of Twitter because they can promote blog content, videos, and presentations.

Businesses should consider both internal and external factors when considering new innovations and technologies. The calibre of management teams, strategies, technology, and financial and human resources are key internal factors for technology adoption. The operating environment in the organisation should be conducive to innovation and usage of technologies. All market, political, economic, legal, ecological, socio-economic, and technological forces can exert considerable pressure on the organisation, leading to failure or being forced to embrace certain technologies.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Different recommendations are made as informed by data collected through face-to-face interviews and literature review. The recommendations will identify areas that require focus in relation to the adoption and usage of digital tools at the SOE. These tools include skills development, integrating trading with digital marketing tools, using multiple social networking platforms, reliable and dependable technology, timeous response to feedback, improving quality of website content, and improving security and privacy issues.

6.3.1 Skills development

Sustaining the longevity of information systems is a key requirement in any organisation. Participants and literature brought out that there was a shortage of information technology skills in the country. Many businesses were struggling to attract and retain skilled IT personnel. In the organisation under study, it was reported that the SOE requires IT skills (Transnet, 2017, 2018). An intervention to address this challenge was to improve its apprenticeship and internship programmes. The Transnet report (2017) highlighted the need for optimal utilisation of the Skills Development Levy. The archival data reflect a common challenge confronting South Africa as an economy.

Advancements in technological innovations require IT skills that are constantly abreast with global trends. Sophisticated cybercrimes are perpetuated by complex criminals with advanced IT skills; thus, companies should have an equal match of skills that are able to detect and address cybercrimes (Orji, 2012). Participants mentioned that the SOE should employ the right skills to maintain a viable social media communication strategy. The views suggested that social media strategies fail if incompetent and less skilled people are put in positions of authority where they fail to execute their responsibilities. The study recommends comprehensive interventions in skills development and training aligned with succession planning.

6.3.2 Integrating traditional and digital marketing tools

As businesses move towards digital marketing, they should be cognisant that there is another cohort of consumers that still believes in face-to-face interactions and touch-and-feel approach, and these consumers can only gain confidence in a product or service if the salesperson demonstrates it to the customer. In addition, some older generation consumers are not

technologically savvy; on that account, a gap exists to use traditional marketing communication strategies to cater for this group of consumers. While it is beneficial for businesses to go digital, some loyal customers might not gain any benefit from the use of digital marketing tools because they lack exposure or might not have the technological resources.

Business should combine traditional marketing with digital marketing strategies to create awareness about their service or brand, with the intention of attracting and increasing traffic (Smith, 2014). Hill (2014) supports the idea that businesses that use a combination of digital and traditional marketing strategies have the advantage that their products or services can be seen by a larger audience. Businesses should also determine which products have better results online and which perform better with offline promotions. Furthermore, combined marketing strategies allow businesses to deliver personalised experiences to customers.

6.3.3 Usage of multiple social networking platforms

When businesses decide to use social media, a number of issues should be considered, including the effectiveness, popularity, and who it has been designed for. If these issues are not considered, businesses might spend resources on futile projects that are not beneficial to the organisation. There is also the aspect of planning and budgeting required for the implementation and usage of social media that should be considered (Somerville, 2015). The usage of multiple social networking platforms helps a firm to leverage the strengths of one platform over the other. In addition, multiple platforms helps the firm to reach a wider audience at different speeds.

6.3.4 Reliable and dependable technology

Discussions in the TOE model demonstrated that existing and new technology factors should be considered when using digital tools. With reference to literature, it has also been established that businesses should purchase technology from reputable and dependable suppliers. Laudon and Laudon (2013) state that in software engineering, dependability refers to the ability to provide computing services that are trusted within a time period. Technology should be reliable and do its job that it has been designed to do, be safe to use, and be secure from attack. An organisation or individual should be sure that the technology will sustain their DM efforts. With rapid technological developments, there is a growing number of suppliers that can work in users' favour because there is an array of choices at their disposal.

Responses showed that businesses using social media should ensure that the technology is user-friendly and secure. Complex technologies can easily push users away. In addition, the study revealed that technologies that are constantly malfunctioning or down can also drive away users; therefore, it is imperative to use reliable and dependable technology.

6.3.5 Timeous response to tweets/feedback

Responses or feedback provided over social interactions should be addressed. Participants indicated that online chatrooms and communities share all sorts of information, thus, it is the responsibility of the business to appoint a dedicated person to manage online responses. This person will be responsible for providing appropriate replies to issues raised online. Participants argued that failure to reply to tweets/suggestions might reflect negatively on the company's image. Users expect some feedback, which, in their eyes, demonstrates commitment from the company. If they do not receive feedback, users might feel disrespected and might not volunteer information in future.

Since social media are used to update stakeholders about products, services, or programmes, it is also vital to reciprocate on the same platforms if customers or stakeholders have suggestions which might be helpful to the organisation (Agarwal, Mondal & Nath, 2011). Baker (2011) brings out that the frequency of responding can be a huge determining factor on the part of the business. Delayed responses and non-responses can also negatively have an impact on the company's image. Firms use Twitter and other social media channels because customers provide instant feedback about a company's products and services (Villanti, 2016), which were in line with the viewpoints of some of the participants.

With reference to responses provided, it was clear that the SOE benefited from social interactions; therefore, timeous responses were important in enhancing the company's goals. Participant B highlighted that timeous responses to tweets were crucial to the company because users are quick to lash back at the company. The study recommends that timeous response to tweets is very important, and due care should be exercised on the content used when responding. In the modern-day business environment, users can suggest or share information that requires urgent attention; thus, firms are required to respond accordingly.

6.3.6 Quality of digital content

Both literature and participants indicated that with the emergence of digital tools, competition has intensified; therefore, social media users are cognizant of the volumes of digital content they receive. Smith (2014) cautioned that users are overwhelmed by the amount of information they receive, resulting in them ignoring and avoiding these pieces of information. Businesses should have a quality assurance process to validate the quality of information they share with their stakeholders on social media.

Sending unsolicited messages can push away customers, and in some instances, if the messages do not resonate with the stakeholders' expectations, stakeholders will influence one another and might avoid interacting with the organisation. At the same time, there are users who are in the propensity of sharing or posting irrelevant information or derogatory messages. This study recommends that a dedicated social media management team be appointed to take care of all social media content generation issues. Hirschfelder and Chigada (2018) state that the quality of both user and firm-generated content distinguishes success from failure. Relevant and engaging content can improve visibility online and reach customers quickly and efficiently (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). If content does not stimulate interest and desire, users are bound to ignore and avoid it.

6.3.7 Security and privacy issues

With ever-increasing identity theft, fraud, and all cyber-related crimes, firms have been losing information assets and their computing resources have been hacked. Security and privacy issues are cause for concern. Hackers and cybercrime syndicates gain unauthorised access to a firm's systems – security breaches. With the stunning growth of internet usage, concerns about privacy are rising. Personal information that may be of interest to firms or people with malevolent intentions is generated when people search the Internet. Unauthorised access to personal information may happen through the use of cookies. Cookies are tracking devices that help companies to track purchases and gather personal data (Laudon & Laudon, 2013). Some websites require individuals' personal information for one to access their services. Personal information captured on cookies is not encrypted and can be accessed by anyone. Chigada and Kyobe (2018) highlight the need for firms to enhance their information systems.

Though technical and technological security measures are in place, these elements are not adequate to protect information assets and information systems. It is therefore advisable to have

ethics in place to have a better and robust security system. People or society are important in the security of information and the use of computers. People interact with information and information systems; as such, moral judgement (ethical behaviour) must be introduced to guide the conduct of people (Taherdoost, Sahibuddin, Namayandeh & Jallilayoon, 2014). This study recommends that businesses enhance their information and computer assets against malicious and unauthorised access through technical, technological, and moral standards.

Having discussed various recommendations, the researcher presents the implications of this study for research, policy, practice, and skills development. The next section discusses the implications of the study.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, POLICY, PRACTICE, AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The findings of this study have an implication on the adoption and usage of social media in firms.

6.4.1 Further studies

This study focused on one type of social media – Twitter – as a marketing communication channel at the SOE. For further studies, researchers can conduct impact assessments to measure the impact of other social media channels. Secondly, future studies could be conducted to compare and contrast the effectiveness of two social networking platforms. This will provide adequate information to businesses when they consider the adoption of and use of social networking platforms. Thirdly, further studies can be conducted to determine the use of multiple social networking platforms; thus, firms will gain a deeper understanding regarding the use of different social networking platforms.

6.4.2 Implications for policy

As has been discussed earlier, firms adopting social media as marketing communication channels are making it compulsory for employees to use these technologies. This requires a policy shift which will reshape employees and management's mindset towards innovation and efficiency. Policy shift is critical in making everyone in the organisation accountable for how they use and access information and information systems assets. The code of conduct should

be amended to reflect the penalties of unauthorised access to computers and sharing of sensitive company information assets on social media. Findings in this study showed that employees and management in the SOE had no option but were forced to use Twitter; however, the study stated that a Board resolution was adopted to implement and use Twitter.

6.4.3 Implication for practice

The findings from this study demonstrated that there was interaction between the stakeholders and the company. The study also revealed that interactions on social media were beneficial to the firm. Thus, it is the responsibility of management to ensure that everyone in the organisation understands the organisation's strategic vision and how technology will contribute to performance, efficiency, and image. Stakeholders that continuously interact with the SOE should realise that many organisations – locally, regionally, and globally – are moving towards digital tools or automation, therefore, should also be prepared for the transition from traditional marketing communication channels to social media. With reference to employees, management should ensure that change from traditional systems to new systems is clearly communicated to everyone to ensure consensus and buy-in. There is a high possibility of users of systems resisting change, which might lead to failure of the system (Brown, 2011).

6.4.4 Implications for skills development

To sustain social media technology, interactions, and optimize its capabilities, it has been emphasized in previous sections that South Africa is confronted with a shortage of IT and engineering skills. Skills development should include both the technical as well as soft or human skills. Comprehensive skills development programmes need to be established so that service delivery implementers are not lacking in critical skills. This calls for continuous development and monitoring of skills gaps on the basis of new demands by the SOE. The SOE should also monitor the level of skills among the workforce and take advantage of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 to upgrade skills among the employees. Skills development is an ongoing process and hence should be complemented by a continuous development programme supported by the municipality.

6.4.5 Limitations of the study

When a study is conducted, there is a possibility of limitations. In this study, the first limitation was attributable to the use of non-probability purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Creswell (2014) states that when non-probability sampling techniques are used in research, the sample sizes vary between 4 and 15 participants because interviews will be conducted with each of the participants. Thus, the researcher was restricted by the sampling techniques to select a small sample size of 14 participants. Ngulube (2014) posits that researchers using qualitative research cannot generalise their samples to a population.

The other limitation of the study, which is closely linked to sampling, was the research method – qualitative method. The method allowed the researcher to use a small sample size of 14 participants, which is in line with many qualitative research studies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Bryman and Bell (2017) point out that qualitative methods involve small sample elements because they are influenced by data collection techniques. The sample size could have been addressed if the researcher had adopted a positivist philosophical assumption, where a larger sample size would have been selected through simple random sampling (Mouton, 2010).

6.5 FINAL CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to establish the extent to which Transnet Engineering was using Twitter as a marketing communication channel with its stakeholders. Theoretical works were reviewed to explain and understand the subject under investigation. The TOE framework was found suitable and applied to the study. Further information was sourced from reports, publications and the Internet to galvanise ideas and arguments raised in the study. Key issues focused on digital marketing, types of social media, and prevalence of digital tools in the business environment.

After reviewing relevant literature, the study followed a carefully executed research plan in gathering, analysing, interpreting, and application of data to the phenomenon under investigation. Face-to-face interviews were conducted during the data collection process. Responses from the interviews collaborated with findings from literature; thus, the research aim was addressed. The study established the need for high-quality content that is shared on social media. Quality content helps stimulate debates and the sharing of ideas, which might influence innovation. The study also established that firms should appoint competent and

skilled social media personnel to help sustain the firm's social media marketing strategy as well as address or interact with users on social media. Interactions and engagements on social media were identified as an important aspect of enhancing the effectiveness of Twitter. Users believed that it was faster and efficient to use Twitter; therefore, users would appreciate feedback from the firm as an acknowledgement that their inputs on Twitter have been noted.

The study recommended the training and development of IT personnel as a long-term succession planning strategy. It was acknowledged that there was a serious shortage of IT skills in South Africa. With ever-increasing identity theft, fraud, and all cyber-related crimes, firms have been losing information assets and their computing resources have been hacked. Security and privacy issues are cause for concern. Hackers and cybercrime syndicates gain unauthorised access to a firm's systems – security breaches.

Sending unsolicited messages can push away customers, and in some instances, if the messages do not resonate with the stakeholders' expectations, stakeholders will influence one another and might avoid interacting with the organisation. At the same time, there are users who are in the propensity of sharing or posting irrelevant information or derogatory messages. The major contribution of this study is the awareness it has brought to practice, society on how SOEs are moving towards the use of social media. Other entities might draw some lessons on the impact of social media as marketing communication strategies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE



Usage of Twitter by State-Owned Enterprises to Communicate with Customers: A Case of Transnet South Africa

My name is Tsebiso Mello, currently pursuing a Master of Business Science Degree at the University of Cape Town. My research assesses the usage of Twitter by state-owned enterprises to communicate with customers: You have been for inclusion in study because you occupy a critical role in your company that interacts with stakeholders on behalf of the company. Your participation would be greatly valued and will assist in developing recommendations for improving customer centricity in state-owned enterprises.

Please note that your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the research at any point in time. You are not required to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering and your responses will remain strictly confidential. Any identifiable information that you provide throughout the interview will not be used in the final report.

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and we will be discussing factors that contribute to effective communication with customers using Twitter.

Please note that the interview will be audio-recorded and by completing the consent form it gives the interviewer the permission to record the entire interview.

Researcher Contact details Primary Supervisor contact details

Ms Tsebiso Mello
Dr Pragasen Pillay

Email: tsebisomello@gmail.com
P.Pillay@uct.ac.za

Cellphone: 0787423783
Tel: +27 (0)21 650 5909

Co-supervisor contact details

Ms Caitlin Ferreira

Email:Ferreira.caitlin@gmail.com

Cellphone: 0834114525

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

1	Indicate your position	Executive Manager <input type="checkbox"/>	Senior Manager <input type="checkbox"/>	Middle Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist
2	Indicate your Department	Business Development <input type="checkbox"/>	ICT <input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Affairs <input type="checkbox"/>	Product and service development <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Length of service in the current position	Less than 2years <input type="checkbox"/>	2-5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	6-10 years <input type="checkbox"/>	+10 years <input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B: ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

Presence of social media

1. How does your company use social media?

a) Specifically Twitter?

b) How does it differ from other social media accounts?

2. Why did the company choose to use social media platforms?

3. Does your company find social media been effective?

a) If so, in what way?

4. Who do you mostly interact with on social media?

a)What does the content of these interactions focus on?

5. Does Twitter help your company to achieve its business goals? How?

Value of interaction

1. How do you predominantly engage with others on social media?

a) People that follow you?

b) People that you follow?

2. When you comment on the tweet of another company, what responses do you expect?

a) Why do you expect this response?

b) Do you always get this response?

c) What happens if you don't get this response?

3. What do you see as being the biggest advantages and disadvantages about the use of Twitter in an organisation, when used to communicate with external stakeholders?

4. Do you interact with Transnet on social media?

a) If so, in what manner do you interact with them?

5. Do you think Transnet should interact with its customers/stakeholders on Twitter?

a) Why?

b) If Transnet were to use Twitter to communicate with your company, would this be the preferred platform of communication?

c) Would it be beneficial/effective?

Opinion on Transnet sustainability

1. What content would be relevant for you to read coming from Transnet on Twitter?

2. Would you be interested in interacting with Transnet on social media?

a) If yes, what would you like this interaction to comprise of?

3. How do you think an active Twitter profile influences the relationship with customers

4. Does your company face any technological/logistical challenges in using Twitter?

5. What strategies does your company use to communicate with stakeholders?

a) Is the chosen strategy useful to the company and why was it preferred over other strategies?

6. Who currently manages your company social media profiles?

a) In your opinion, would you suggest that they are sufficiently competent to be effective in this role?

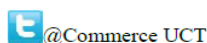
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE ETHICS COMMITTEE



Faculty of Commerce

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch, 7701
2.26 Leslie Commerce Building, Upper Campus
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 4375/ 5748 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 4369
E-mail: com-faculty@uct.ac.za
Internet: www.uct.ac.za



@Commerce UCT



UCT Commerce Faculty Office

29 July 2019

Ms Tsebiso Mello
School of Management
Studies
University of Cape Town

Dear Tsebiso Mello

REF: REC 2019/000/075

Adoption of Twitter by State-Owned Enterprises to communicate with customers: A Case of Transnet South Africa

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid for 1 year and may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants.

The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

Shandre Swain
Administrative Assistant
University of Cape Town
Commerce Faculty Office
Room 2.26 | Leslie Commerce Building

Office Telephone: +27 (0)21 650 2695 / 4375
Office Fax: +27 (0)21 650 4369
E-mail: sl.swain@uct.ac.za
Website: www.commerce.uct.ac.za <<http://www.commerce.uct.ac.za/>>

"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

APPENDIX C: TURNITIN PLAGIARISM INDEX REPORT

mlltse003:plagiarism_Mello.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%	2%	1%	5%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Eiffel Corporation Student Paper	1%
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
3	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1%
4	Submitted to Mancosa Student Paper	<1%
5	Submitted to Regenesys Business School Student Paper	<1%
6	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	<1%
7	mafiadoc.com Internet Source	<1%
8	Submitted to University of Leicester Student Paper	<1%
9	"Social Media: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", Springer Science and Business Media	<1%

APPENDIX D: A LETTER FROM A COPYEDITOR

LET'S EDIT

EDITING CERTIFICATE

24 April 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DECLARATION: Editing of Thesis

I hereby declare that I have edited the Master of Business Science in Marketing thesis of **TSEBISO LISBETH MELLO** entitled "**USAGE OF TWITTER BY STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES TO COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS: A CASE OF TRANSNET SOUTH AFRICA**". It is the responsibility of the student to address any comments from the editor or supervisor. The editor shall not be responsible for any subsequent additions or deletions made by the student in their document. Additionally, it is the final responsibility of the student to make sure of the correctness of the thesis.

Signature Removed

Khomotso Bopape

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Tel No.: **012 433 6584**, Fax No.: **086 267 2164** and Email Address: **editor@letsedit.co.za**

APPENDIX E: APPROVAL LETTER FROM TRANSNET ENGINEERING

Transnet SOC Ltd
Registration Number
1990/000900/30

160 Lynette Str.
Kilner Park
Pretoria
0186

PO Box 15912
Lynne East
Pretoria, 0039
T +27 12 391 1301
F +27 12 391 1342



www.transnet.net

Transnet Engineering
160 Lynette Street
Kilner Park
Pretoria
0186
29 April 2019

Enquiries :Mrs L Mangozhe
Email:Lynette.Mangozhe@transnet.net

Attention:Ms Tsebisso Lisbeth Mello

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT STUDY WITH TRANSNET CUSTOMERS

Title: "Adoption of Twitter by State-Owned Enterprises to communicate with customers: A Case of Transnet South Africa".

Receipt of your letter dated 12 April 2019 is acknowledged.

Permission is hereby granted subject to the following:

- That the company incurs no costs in the course of your study.
- That you make prior arrangements with the relevant customers in a manner that will not interrupt the daily provision of services.

Yours Sincerely

Signature Removed

.....
Executive Manager SADC Region

Date: 29.4/2019