



UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN VIRAL MARKETING

by

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We hereby certify that (with the exception of the Bibliography), we have language-edited the Master's thesis by Raeesah Chohan, entitled: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN VIRAL MARKETING. We are satisfied that, provided the changes we have made are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard, and is fit for publication.

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ABSTRACT

Using the Internet to share content online is not only a daily activity for many people, yet a means to share their experiences and emotion with others. This study aims to answer why Internet users in South Africa share content online and to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing. There are three main objectives of this study: to determine what encourages people to share content online, to investigate the role of emotion in sharing content online and to determine whether there is a difference between sharing content that elicits positive emotion versus sharing content that elicits negative emotion.

The findings assist marketers in conducting viral marketing campaigns that appeal to consumers. Using a two-stage research design, qualitative and exploratory research was conducted. The first-stage is netnography, which is a derivation of ethnography, and was based on YouTube. The second-stage consisted of semi-structured interviews that included two viral video marketing campaigns. This study found that people share content online when content that appeals to people is relevant. Whether people find content relevant or not can depend on their age and/ or gender. People share content online to be altruistic, for self-benefit and social capital. An additional reason for sharing content online is when the content is emotionally appealing. Particularly, it was found that content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion.

This study addresses gaps in literature in the following ways. Firstly, viral marketing is a growing concept that requires updated research about to provide an understanding of viral marketing that is consistent with its changes in its practice. Secondly, the model provided in this study defines what sharing means in terms of viral marketing, which no other study has done. Thirdly, where previous authors disagree about the difference between sharing content that elicits positive emotion versus sharing content that elicits negative emotion, this study contains updated findings which show that content which elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared. Additionally, this study shows how the Social Sharing of Emotion theory can be applied to a viral-marketing and online context.

The contribution that this study makes is that literature can benefit by understanding that content is king and relevance is important in encouraging people to share content online. Additionally, marketers should focus on creating content that is useful or makes the sender look good socially. Most importantly, to encourage people to share content online, the content should be emotionally appealing and focus should be placed on ensuring the content elicits positive emotion.

Keywords: *Content, viral marketing, online social networks, emotion, emotional valence, South Africa*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Online, content is shared from person-to-person at an “immense speed and reach”, which makes the content go viral (Botha & Botha, 2013; Botha & Reyneke; 2013:1). In the current Information Age, people share more content with more people; and they do so more frequently (Consumer Insights Group, n.d). Through the sharing of content online, people can now voice their opinions via the online social networks (Berger & Milkman, 2010). To grasp how powerful the sharing of content on online via the social networks is, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution showed that protesters and journalists used online social networks to converse with the world about the events and emotions relating to the revolution (Choudhury, Hendrix, Lee, Palsetia & Liao, 2012).

Everyday, 400 million tweets, 4.75 billion pieces of shared content on Facebook and 144 000 hours of YouTube videos are posted (Libert & Tynski, 2013). Online social networks are powerful because they have the potential to influence people with simply one post (Chebib & Sohail, 2011). For example, when a popular fashion editor posted a tweet on Twitter (see www.twitter.com) that complimented J.C. Penny’s store revamp (see www.jcpenney.com), J.C. Penny’s shares rose by almost 10% (Hudson, 2012). Another example is Dove’s ‘Real Beauty’ campaign (see YouTube, 2013e), which generated almost 30 million views in the span of 10 days (Libert & Tynski, 2013).

There are potential opportunities and threats in sharing content online (Botha & Reyneke, 2013); and the focus should now be placed on how to obtain an advantage from online social networks (Chebib & Sohail, 2011). It is therefore to no surprise that Ney (2011) stated that one of the main questions regarding online social networks is why people share content online. As a result, companies are increasingly using viral marketing, to influence other people’s opinions on brands, corporate reputations, and products (Botha & Reyneke, 2013).

Consumers and companies now communicate in a two-way, rather than in a one-way, manner – because of the influence that technology has had on communication (Camarero & San José, 2011). As the internet is increasingly integrated into consumers’ daily lives, marketers need to continuously improve their understanding of consumer online behaviour (Berger & Milkman, 2009). Consumers share content online daily (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Izawa, 2010); and, by using online platforms, consumers can tell others about their opinions and experiences (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Therefore, consumers are essential to the success of a viral-marketing campaign, because

successful viral marketing requires that people share favourable messages about a marketing campaign with others (Eckler & Bolls, 2011).

As consumers are exposed to more choices and show an increasing scepticism towards marketing campaigns, marketers face the challenge of ensuring that consumers appreciate and spread their marketing campaign messages (Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry & Raman, 2004). Encouraging consumers to share content online via their online social networks is the role of a viral-marketing campaign (Botha & Botha, 2013; Porter & Golan, 2006). In a short space of time, the message of the campaign can be spread throughout the online social networks, to multiple consumers at once, as with the spread of a virus (Botha & Botha, 2013).

Most viral content goes viral by accident; and only a few people have learnt how to purposefully create content that goes viral (Moreau, n.d.). While it cannot be guaranteed that content will go viral, people can ensure that the content has "got what it takes" to go viral (Ward, 2013). Content that *does* go viral is not forced to go viral (Bjoran, 2011). Exploring why people are encouraged to share content online is therefore of interest to marketers (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). To better understand viral marketing, this study focuses on why content is shared online, with a particular focus on the role of emotion in viral marketing.

Past researchers have suggested that there are different reasons why content goes viral (see for example Camarero & San José, 2011; Dobele, Lindgreen, Beverland, Vanhamme & Van Wijk, 2007; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Phelps et al., 2004; Roy, 2011; Sansone, Tartaglione & Bruni, 2012). However, there has been an agreement in literature that emotional reactions can explain why content goes viral (see Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Phelps *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, past research presents contradictory findings about the role of emotion in viral marketing. While research converges to the fact that strong emotion encourages sharing of viral content, research is limited in identifying which emotions are best for sharing the viral content (Libert & Tynski, 2013). For example, while some say that content that elicits positive emotional reactions is shared (see Berger & Milkman, 2010), others state that it is more likely that content which elicits negative emotion is shared (see Anderson, 1993). There is, therefore, a need to conduct further research on viral marketing, and particularly how emotional reactions can influence content to go viral (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). This first chapter provides the background to the research – by looking at what viral marketing is, why people share content, the role of emotion in sharing content, and emotional valence as a particular aspect in the sharing of content online. This background serves to illuminate the research questions and the objectives of the study. With an understanding of the purpose of this study, the two-stage research methodology is explained; this is followed by how this study contributes theoretically,

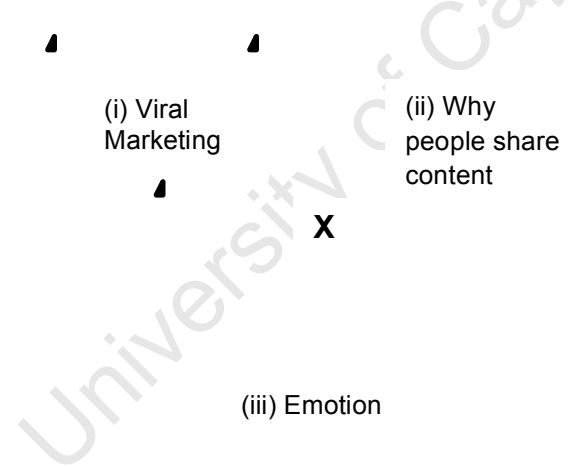
methodologically, and managerially to exploring the subject area. Lastly, a layout of the study is explained before this chapter is concluded.

As Berger (2013a) explains, content does not go viral because of “luck”, which is why it is important to understand the science behind why people share certain content more than other content in order to take advantage of online social networks.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

To provide a theoretical understanding of the role of emotion in viral marketing, Chapters 2 and 3 take an in-depth look at the relevant theoretical platforms (see Table 1.2). This section incorporates an understanding of the key tenants of this study: (i) What it means when content goes viral; (ii) the reasons why people share content online; and (iii) the role of emotion in sharing content online. These three concepts are shown in Figure 1.1, which follows.

Figure 1.1: Venn diagram showing the integration between viral marketing, why people share content online, and people’s emotion.



In Figure 1.1 above, there is an ‘X’ where the three concepts intersect, which represents the core aim of this study. This is to understand how emotion encourages people to share content online, and thereby to contribute to viral marketing.

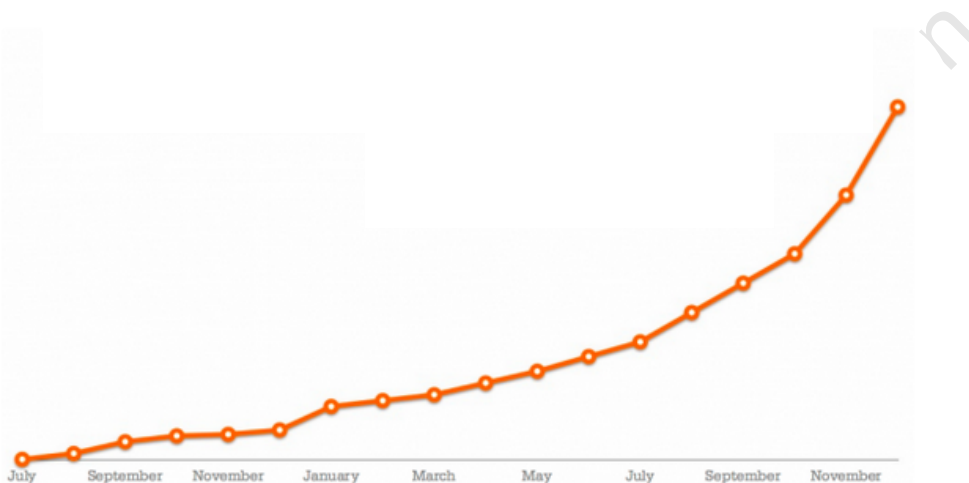
1.2.1 Concept 1: What does it Mean when Content Goes “Viral”?

Viral marketing is a term that people hear and read about increasingly, yet it is questionable whether people know what viral marketing really is. Kaplan and Haenlein (2011:1) explain that viral marketing is similar to the spread of a medical “virus”, such as the “H1N1” virus, where there is an exponential spread of the virus. Similarly, Camarero

and San José (2011) relate viral marketing to content that is spread exponentially. The following example (see Figure 1.2 below) is typically used as the first example of viral marketing.

In 1997, Hotmail encouraged internet users to register for a Hotmail account, by adding “Get your FREE web-based email” at the bottom of Hotmail emails, which were sent (MarketingSherpa.com, 2000). This resulted in the acquisition of 12 million Hotmail users within 18 months, at a time where there were only 70 million Internet users (Halim, 2013).

Figure 1.2: Graph showing the exponential increase in Hotmail users



SOURCE: Halim (2013)

The ‘Hotmail Phenomenon’ (see Figure 1.2 above) was one of the earliest examples of a successful viral-marketing campaign (MarketingSherpa.com, 2000). Some researchers use the term ‘exponential’ in their definition of viral marketing (see for example Kirby & Marsden, 2006; Datta, Chowdhury & Chakraborty, 2005 in Larson, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Additionally, viral marketing campaigns are an increasingly popular marketing tool because of the likelihood that, if successful, viral content could reach many people (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Figure 1.2 above shows the importance of the exponential spread of content in viral marketing.

Being a relatively new, as well as an emerging term, however, there are different opinions about what viral marketing is (see for example Kirby & Marsden, 2006; Phelps *et al.*, 2004; Golan & Zaidner, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). While some relate viral marketing to messages that are spread at an exponential rate (see Kirby & Marsden, 2006; Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011), others relate viral marketing to strategic marketing (see for example Kirby & Marsden, 2006; Golan & Zaidner, 2008; Phelps *et al.*, 2004).

Some authors said that viral marketing refers to when people converse about a product or service; and some relate viral marketing to word-of-mouth (WOM) (see Blomström, Lind & Persson, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). WOM occurs when people speak to each other about something (Golan & Zaidner, 2008), and when people tell many other people online about something; this is known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Thus, viral marketing and eWOM have been linked in past research (see Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

The definition of viral marketing applied to this study is that of Golan and Zaidner (2008:961), who said that viral marketing is “a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service”. In the light of this definition of Golan and Zaidner (2008), and to further understand viral marketing as an application to this study, Figure 1.3 below describes how this study perceives viral marketing.

Figure 1.3: The link between eWOM and viral marketing

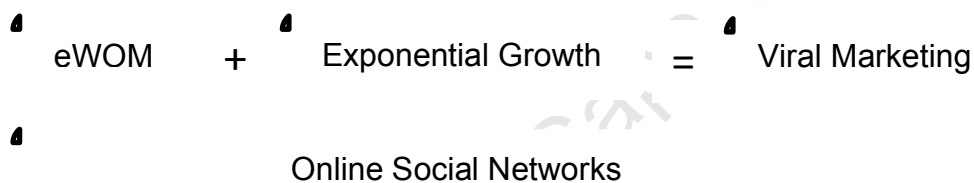


Figure 1.3 above, which is modified from Kaplan and Haenlein (2011:254), portrays clearly the *relationship between eWOM and viral marketing* model. The figure above shows that using the online social networks to combine eWOM and the exponential growth of content creates viral marketing. This relates to what Berger and Milkman (2010) said, that marketers should be aware that the online social networks encourage viral marketing. Specifically, many consumers are encouraged to share marketing content by using the online social networks (Sansone *et al.*, 2012).

Research should focus on how to benefit from using the online social networks (Chebib & Sohail, 2011). Since the Internet is cluttered, a successful viral-marketing campaign attracts people’s attention and motivates them to want to share content online with others (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). Additionally, sharing content in a viral manner is cost-efficient (Camarero & San José, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011), where content can be spread in a quicker manner and to a greater number of people (Ferguson, 2008). In the light of the above, there is a need to address why people share content online and specifically the role of emotion in the sharing of content online (see Section 1.1). In the following section *altruism*, *self-benefit*, *social capital* and *content* are discussed as a contribution to explaining why people share content online.

1.2.2 Concept 2: Why do People Share Content Online?

Factors that encourage people to share content online include the actual content and the characteristics thereof (see for example Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Camarero & San José, 2011; Hsieh, Hsieh & Tang, 2012; Porter & Golan, 2006). This is a way of helping others by being altruistic (see Berger & Milkman, 2010; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Roy, 2011; Sansone *et al.*, 2012). The sender benefits from sharing the content (see for example Roy, 2011) and the sender's social capital increases thereby (see for example Camarero & San José, 2011). These factors are shown in Figure 1.4 below.

Figure 1.4: Factors that encourage people to share content online



Figure 1.4 above shows that altruism, self-benefit, content and social factors can encourage people to share content online. This relates to Figure 6.1, which includes altruism, self-benefit, social capital and content in explaining why content is shared online. These factors are addressed by the first objective of this study: to determine what encourages people to share content online. This is the current understanding of what makes content go viral, although few studies look at all these factors together. Rather, researchers tend to typically look at the influence of one or two factors in isolation. This study aims to look at all the possible influencing factors together, in order to get a more complete picture of what makes content go viral.

All the objectives are provided together in Section 1.4. While Objective 1 attends to why people share content online in general, recently authors have argued that emotion plays a key role in content being shared online (see Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Berger & Milkman, 2009; Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Libert and Tynski (2013) explain that due to the increasing difficulty in capturing attention, it is worthwhile to encourage emotional investment by consumers in content. Thus, the following section addresses the third concept, which attends to the role of emotion in the sharing of content online.

1.2.3 Concept 3: What is the Role of Emotion in the Sharing of Content Online?

People can be influenced by the emotional tone of content (Eckler & Bolles, 2011). Therefore, in the discussion on viral marketing, emotion is an important aspect to

consider (Phelps *et al.*, 2004). Specifically, Berger and Milkman (2010) suggest that marketers consider emotion when determining what encourages people to share content online. This study uses the definition of emotion provided by Scherer (2001) that emotion is “an episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all or most of the five orgasmic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as [being] relevant to [the] major concerns of the [individual]”.

Past research has shown that people share content online because of the emotional reactions that they have (Dobele *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, consumers deal with brands in an emotional way, as well as in a rational manner (Chittaro & Ranon, 2002). Therefore, emotions are an important aspect to consider in marketing (Christodoulides, Michaelidou & Siamagka, 2012; Jones, Spence & Vallaster, 2008). Emotion is also important to consider in viral marketing (Phelps *et al.*, 2004), as people can be influenced by the emotional reaction that they have after viewing viral content (Ecker & Bolls, 2011). Marketers should, therefore, focus on the emotional reactions that consumers have, in order to better understand whether they will share content with others, or not (Berger & Milkman, 2010).

Eckler and Bolls (2011) said that the marketing content that appeals to people’s emotion encourages them to share such content. To create an effective viral-marketing campaign by encouraging consumers to share the content of the campaign online, the content needs to captivate the consumer’s emotions (Izawa, 2010). This study, therefore, places the emphasis on the role of emotion in sharing content online.

Better understanding the emotional reactions that consumers have when exposed to a viral-marketing campaign provides valuable insight into consumer behaviour, and about why campaigns go viral (Botha & Botha, 2013). The Social Sharing of Emotion theory explains that people may share emotional reactions with others, in order to deal with their own ambiguous emotions reactions (Rimé, 2009). More recent studies (see Botha & Botha, 2013; Kivran-Swaine, & Naaman, 2011) argue that the Social Sharing of Emotion happens on online social networks as well. There is typically very little theory in viral marketing research; and this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by introducing the Social Sharing of Emotion theory (see Section 2.3), to explain the role of emotion in viral marketing.

Emotions are therefore important to consider when addressing why people share content online (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Dobele *et al.*, 2007). However, there is little empirical evidence to support this contention. Thus, the second objective of this study is to investigate the role that emotion plays in sharing content online.

In past studies on emotion, there has been a particular focus on emotional valence, which is a term to describe the type of emotion, where emotion can either be positive or

negative (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Botha & Botha, 2013). This study also focuses on emotional valence, and specifically the role it plays in sharing content online.

The approach adopted by this study to measuring emotion is the dimensional approach (see Russel, 1980). This approach requires an understanding of the circumplex of emotion, which is based on emotional arousal, the intensity of the emotion, and emotional valence: whether the emotion is positive or negative (see Figure 2.1). Specifically, past research provides different views on the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion versus the type of content that elicits negative emotion (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012; Roy, 2011).

Consequently, there is a need to conduct research to clarify whether there is a difference between the likelihood that people will share content that elicits positive emotion, as opposed to content that elicits negative emotion. In the light hereof, a look at what past research has said about positive and negative emotion follows.

Beginning with positive emotions: It has been said that positive emotions occur when people are assisted in attaining their goals (Rimé, 2009; Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). The outcome of having a positive emotional reaction is that people are more active (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981), helpful (Bagozzi et al., 1999) and socially interactive (Botha & Botha, 2013). Negative emotions occur when a goal is not achieved (Bagozzi et al., 1999), or obtaining the goal is interrupted (Rimé, 2009). Clarity is required on how people deal with positive versus negative emotion (Berger & Milkman, 2009). Table 1.1 below shows that authors share different views about the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion versus content that elicits negative emotion.

Table 1.1: Different opinions on the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion and content that elicits negative emotion

	Content that elicits positive emotion	Content that elicits negative emotion
Likely to be shared	Hsieh, Hsieh and Tang (2012); Phelps <i>et al.</i> (2004)	Edell and Burke, 2011
Not likely to be shared	-	Camarero and San José (2011)
More likely to be shared	Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011	Roy, 2011

Table 1.1 above shows that there are different opinions in past research on the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion, and content that elicits negative emotion. Specifically, Table 1.1 shows that while some say that content that elicits positive

emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion, others argue vice versa. Additionally, Nelson-Field, Riebe and Newstead (2011) argue that there is no difference between the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion and the content that elicits negative emotion. In the light of the above contradictions in past research, the third objective of this study aims to determine whether there is a difference between sharing content that elicits positive emotion versus sharing content that elicits negative emotion.

The four concepts of this study explained above are based on what it means when content goes viral; why people share content online; the role of emotion in sharing content online; and the role of emotional valence in sharing content online. These concepts provide a platform for the research question and the objectives of this study. These are presented below.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to gain deeper insight into the why people share content online, and thereafter the role of emotions in viral marketing, with a specific focus on the effect of emotional valence in sharing content online. To clarify the purpose of this study, the research question and objectives follow, beginning with the research question, which is:

- *Why do consumers share content online?*

In the light of the research question, and the background discussed, the following research objectives were developed:

- *Objective 1: To determine what encourages people to share content online*
- *Objective 2: To investigate the role that emotion plays in sharing content online*
- *Objective 3: To determine whether there is a difference between content that elicits positive emotion versus content that elicits negative emotion*

The research objectives above were briefly introduced earlier in this chapter, and are further explained in Chapter 3. To address the broad research question and the objectives, an exploratory research design was used.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This study follows an exploratory two-stage research design, with qualitative methods of conducting research on the primary data. Qualitative research provides greater insight into consumers' emotions, and the role thereof in sharing content online (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Izawa, 2010; Lagger, Lux & Marques, 2011).

The first stage of the two-stage research design was netnography. Considering that this study aims to understand why people share content online, people's online social network behaviour was observed first. Ethnography is the observation of behaviour; while ethnography 2.0 is ethnography that is applied to online environments. A derivation of ethnography, which observes how people interact, is called netnography (Kozinets, 2012). Netnography allows for an understanding of consumer emotions by analysing comments and behaviour on online forums (Blomström *et al.*, 2012).

The second stage of the two-stage research design was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are more structured than general qualitative interviews (McGivern, 2006) that have pre-determined questions. These questions were based on the netnography findings.

The target population consisted of internet users in South Africa. Consumers with internet access via mobile, tablet or PC forms, have the ability to share content with their social network at any given time (Izawa, 2010). To increase the representativeness of the sample, quota sampling was used: for both the netnography study and semi-structured interviews. As consumer demographics could influence the willingness to share online content, the respondents were screened, according to age and gender (see Section 4.4.2).

The sampling frame consisted of a group of participants who represent internet users in South Africa, based on age and gender. The sample size for the netnography study was 10 participants, who were observed over 21 days. This is the equivalent of 210 days of observation; and the sample size for the semi-structured interviews was 20 participants.

A netnography data-collection method using the online social network, YouTube (see www.YouTube.com), was conducted in order to observe what content a selected group of YouTube users share with others. Following an analysis of the findings from the netnography study, the researcher of this study conducted semi-structured interviews. The participants were asked to watch two viral-marketing campaigns on YouTube, namely: Volkswagen's 'The Force' campaign (see Appendix 4.b) and Audi's 'Prom' campaign (see Appendix 4.c). These videos were pre-tested on 10 participants.

The semi-structured interviews first questioned participants on their general viral behaviour. Then, after watching each video, the participants for the semi-structured interviews were asked to answer a set of questions based on their general consumer behaviour online, the emotions experienced when watching the video, why participants were or were not encouraged to share the campaign, why others are or are not encouraged to share the campaign, what companies can do to improve their videos and demographic questions. Blomström *et al.* (2012) recommended the use of interviews to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing.

The findings were interpreted using Dey's (1993) research spiral and Jacobsson's (2010) process of analysis (see Section 4.7.2). Additionally, the dimensional approach to measuring emotion (see Scherer, 2005) was applied by using the emotional wheel that categorises emotion in terms of arousal, the intensity of the emotion, and the emotional valence (see Section 4.7).

Earlier, the three core purpose of this study was explained, and the three objectives were introduced (see Sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3). In addition to the aforementioned purposes of the study, there are further theoretical, methodological, managerial findings, and some contributions that this study offers. The section below explains these contributions.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

Understanding the sharing of content online is important, as it has given public voice greater power (Izawa, 2010). For example, United Airlines fell victim to negative publicity, when an unsatisfied customer uploaded a YouTube video to spread the negative experience had with, and essentially the negative emotion felt towards the airline; and this went viral (Izawa, 2010).

Technology has allowed for a two-way, rather than the traditional one-way, communication between companies and consumers (Camarero & San José, 2011). Additionally, consumers share content online daily; and they can share their opinions with many people online (Berger & Milkman, 2010). For instance, a consumer who experiences poor service at a restaurant could share that negative experience with the online social network, by positing a negative review of the restaurant online.

Consumers have greater power (Camarero & San José, 2011; Larson, 2009) in terms of influencing what people say about brands on online social networks (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Roy, 2011) and each other's opinions on brands (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). It is, therefore, in the best interests of companies to understand the online social networks (Clifford-Marsh, 2009 in Larson, 2009) and what is said about the company online.

This study contributes to the current understanding of viral marketing on multiple levels. The sections below explains the theoretical, methodological, managerial and findings that have contributed to the study, beginning with the theoretical contributions. These follow now.

1.5.1 Theoretical

This study also contributes theoretically, in the following ways.

It should be noted that current definitions of viral marketing are likely to change, as its application grows (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Therefore, by conducting new research on viral marketing, from the perspective of emotion, this study contributes by providing an updated and adapted understanding of viral marketing.

Research on the role of emotion in sharing content via the online platforms may not be as developed as that of sharing content via other mediums (Izawa, 2010). Thus, an effective viral-marketing campaign needs to understand what captivates consumers about the content that they choose to share online (Izawa, 2010). The determinants of successful marketing campaigns do not, however, necessarily contribute to successful viral-marketing campaigns (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Thus, it is necessary to conduct research on what constitutes a successful viral-marketing campaign.

The model provided in this study (see Figure 6.1) defines what sharing means in terms of viral marketing, as no other study has done. This study, therefore, contributes to the literature by providing a deeper insight into why content is shared online; and while previous studies have tended to typically look at contributing factors in isolation, this study attempts to provide a complete picture of the influencing factors of viral content (see Chapter 6), where particular attention is paid to the role that emotion plays in content being shared online.

This study, therefore, contributes theoretically in terms of definitions for viral marketing, the Social Sharing of Emotion theory, why content is shared online, and what encourages viral-marketing campaigns, and renders them successful.

Additionally, the two-stage research design applied to this study contributes to future research in ways that will be explained in the next section.

1.5.2 Methodological

This study conducted a two-stage research design by applying netnography and semi-structured interviews (see Sections 4.3.4 and 4.3.5), where an explanation of how the methodology could assist future research is provided below.

Using netnography for market research is an undeveloped method (Xun & Reynold, 2009). Therefore, by applying netnography, this study contributes to the literature by showing how netnography can be applied, specifically to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing. Netnography as an analysis of YouTube users specifically could be done in future by looking at how it has been done in this study. Additionally, by

applying netnography to YouTube, the methodology used could provide future researchers with a better understanding of how to apply netnography to YouTube.

As the findings from the netnography study were used to create the questions asked in the semi-structured interviews, further studies could benefit from reading this study's methodology – in order to have some idea of how to use the findings from the netnography study to create interview questions. On a broader note, conducting the two-stage research design shows future researchers how to use the findings from one research method, and to apply these to a second research method.

Many studies simply use ad hoc emotions; they do not take the trouble to define emotion well; and they use contradictory frameworks to measure emotion. Therefore, this study draws from a vast body of sociology theory to inform viral-marketing theory; and thereby, it provides a better definition of how to measure emotion in this context, by using the dimensional approach to measuring emotion. Applying the dimensional approach also shows future researchers how to interpret findings with regard to positive and negative emotion; and it demonstrates to non-academics how positive and negative emotion can be interpreted and understood by using the dimensional approach.

While the theoretical and methodological contributions of this study have been addressed above, below are ways in which marketers and others could put the findings into practice.

1.5.3 Managerial

The findings of this study provide an understanding of how to improve marketing practice, in the ways that are explained below.

While creating online marketing content is an increasingly popular marketing tool, there is confusion around the implementation of online marketing campaigns (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). This study addresses the reasons why consumers share videos online. By understanding this, marketing managers could better understand what makes videos go viral. This would allow marketers to formulate better strategies for their online marketing campaigns.

While it is evident that sharing content online is becoming increasingly common; it is beneficial to understand what makes certain content more viral than others, in terms of emotions, by gaining insight into the motives behind sharing content online (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Izawa, 2010). Understanding the causes of viral marketing allows marketers to conduct broad, yet effective, targeting methods, rather than simply targeting opinion leaders (Berger & Milkman, 2009).

While viral marketing via platforms, such as online social networks, are considered to be cost-effective in comparison to traditional platforms, such platforms rely on consumers to spread the message, and essentially to ensure the success thereof (Berger & Milkman, 2009).

Understanding the role of emotional valence in sharing content online is essential for the success of a viral-marketing campaign, and to avoid the risk of experiencing negative emotion, or no coverage at all (Berger & Milkman, 2009).

Currently, marketers may not fully understand the role of emotion in the success of viral-marketing campaigns (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). In order to understand the best way to design a viral-marketing campaign, this study provides a complete picture of the factors that could influence the sharing of content online.

With online social networks growing in relevancy, effectively managing companies' online profiles is a complex challenge, because this would include monitoring discussions, statuses, messages, interaction between consumers, and interaction between the company and the consumers (Sansone *et al.*, 2012). At the same time, however, managing companies' online profiles could improve customer perceptions of the brand by monitoring what consumers say about the brand (Sansone *et al.*, 2012).

Analysing consumer activity on online social networks is beneficial for marketers because it provides an unbiased understanding of consumer opinions and competitor offerings, wants and needs – where consumers comment freely, as opposed to those under pressure during interviews (Sansone *et al.*, 2012).

Some of the setbacks for using online social networks, however, are that using multiple online social networks could be detrimental to the effective monitoring of all of them; determining the return on investment (ROI) is then challenging (Sansone *et al.*, 2012), and company profiles might be perceived as being intrusive (Li, Edwards & Lee, 2002). However, with a good understanding of online social networks, and how to conduct viral marketing well, these setbacks can be avoided.

Company profiles created in the online social networks generally provide content that encourages interaction with consumers, because conversing with consumers in a sincere – rather than in an 'advertising' nature – encourages long-term conversations; and therefore, it enhances relationships with consumers (Sansone *et al.*, 2012). However, consumers are increasingly sceptical about marketing campaigns, which poses a challenge for the marketers (Phelps *et al.*, 2004).

Consumer-generated content gives consumers the power to enhance or damage a brand's reputation (Camarero & San José, 2011). Viral marketing depends on consumers to spread the message of the campaign. Additionally, consumers using the

internet are able to notice when content is persuasive, and when too much focus is placed on the marketed product or service (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012).

The above managerial contributions are based on the findings obtained in this study. The following section explains how these findings contribute to research.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

There are five remaining chapters of this study that will address the theory, the methodology, the findings and the conclusions of this study. Figure 1.5 (see below) shows how this study is laid out.

Figure 1.5: Demarcation of this study

Chapter 1	Introduction	
Chapter 2	Review of the theoretical foundations of the study	
	Role of emotion in marketing	Social Sharing of Emotion theory
Chapter 3	Review of the theoretical foundations of the study	
	Role of emotion in viral marketing	Explanation of the three research objectives
Chapter 4	Methodology	
Chapter 5	Findings	
Chapter 6	Conclusions and Recommendations	

There are six chapters in this study: Chapter 1, which is the current chapter, has provided an introduction to the study. Chapter 2 includes the theoretical foundations of the study, with a particular focus on the role of emotion in marketing. Chapter 3 is also based on the theoretical foundations of the study – by focusing on the role of emotion in

viral marketing and explaining the three objective of this study. Chapter 4 describes the two-stage research design methodology used. Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of the findings obtained from conducting the methodology. Thereafter, Chapter 6 explains the conclusions, the recommendations for future research, and the limitations of the study.

1.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as the beginning of this exploratory study (see Section 4.3.1). Figure 1 shows that the integration of viral marketing, why people share content online and emotion is the core aim of this study, which is to determine the role that emotion plays in encouraging people to share content online. The research question and objectives of this study (see Section 1.3) specifically address this core aim.

A two-stage research exploratory and qualitative research methodology is applied to attend to these objectives. The methodology comprises a netnography study and semi-structured interviews as the two stages. The study contributes by benefiting future researchers, conducting a methodology that can serve as an example to future researchers, providing marketers with knowledge on how to create content that is more likely to be shared and findings that answer the objectives of this study.

There are 5 remaining chapters of this study that attend to the theoretical foundations of the study, methodology, findings and conclusions obtained. The chapter that follows, Chapter 2, provides the broader context to emotion theory and focuses specifically on emotions and the role it plays in marketing and touches on the Social Sharing of Emotions theory.

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN MARKETING: DEFINING EMOTION, THE SOCIAL SHARING OF EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL VALENCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Understanding the role that emotion plays in viral marketing is the focus of this study, where the outline of the study was explained in the previous chapter. Before exploring the role of emotion in viral marketing in Chapter 3, this chapter attends to a broader topic, which is the role of emotion in marketing. Emotion has been the topic of study for psychologists, sociologists, economists, and even for natural scientists. This study analyses emotion from a marketing perspective, to serve the purpose of exploring the role that emotion plays in marketing.

When defining emotion, care should be taken, as there is a variety of divergent definitions in past literature. Thus, the past definitions of emotion are analysed in this chapter. To further address emotion in its complexity, the way that emotion is referred to in this study is clarified by discussing different terms that are used synonymously with emotion in the literature. The terms *preferences*, *attitudes*, *moods* and *feelings* are described and distinguished from emotions. Additionally, the different types of emotion, namely *aesthetic*, *utilitarian*, *basic*, *positive* and *negative* emotions are identified. Positive emotion occurs when individuals are assisted in achieving their goals; and negative emotion occurs when individuals are hindered from achieving their goals. These definitions are clarified in sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2. Whether emotion is positive or negative is referred to as emotional valence.

To further understand the above introduced emotion and emotional valence, as applied to a research study, the measurement of emotion is addressed in Sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.6. In measuring emotion, the *fixed-response alternatives* approach, *differential emotional theory*, the *free-response format* approach, and the *forced-choice method* are discussed (see section 2.2.5). Specifically, the forced-choice method consists of the reputable *discrete approach* (see Section 2.2.6), where emotion is categorised, and the *dimensional approach*, where emotion is placed on a continuum of valence and arousal. Arousal refers to how intense an emotion is (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). By focusing on emotion, this study is particularly interested in what makes people share their emotions with others.

A theory from sociology is used to explain how emotion plays a role in viral marketing: the Social Sharing of Emotion. This theory explains that emotion is shared when what individuals experience differs from what they expected to experience. The Social Sharing of Emotion theory is an important contribution to this study; and it gives a way to understanding the role that emotion plays in viral marketing.

Emotion and emotional valence play a role in consumer behaviour, in terms of the decision-making process and consumers' response to marketing content. Growing interest in the role of emotion in marketing, and specifically in consumer behaviour, (Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) means that more information is required on the role of emotion in marketing (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999) and particularly in understanding how emotion can influence the consumer decision-making process (Sherman, Mathur & Smith, 1997).

This chapter begins with addressing the theory on emotion and an explanation of the Social Sharing of Emotions theory, which is followed by a discussion on the role of emotion and emotional valence in marketing. Thereafter, a brief introduction to the role of emotion in viral marketing; and subsequently, the conclusion to this chapter are provided.

2.2 EXPLORING EMOTION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ADDRESSING ITS COMPLEXITY

Emotion is complex in its definition, understanding, measurement and application. This section addresses the complexities around emotion, from the perspective of better understanding the role that emotion plays in marketing. To begin, the focus on emotion, is discussed from a cognitive perspective. This is followed by the different definitions of emotion and the interchangeable terms that have been used to describe emotion.

2.2.1 Emotion from a Cognitive Perspective

Emotion is important to consider in marketing, because a consumer's emotions can influence the decision-making process (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). The choice to share content online is a choice that can be made cognitively (Rimé *et al.*, 1988). This also relates to the social sharing of emotions theory that was earlier explained. Thus, due to its exploratory nature, this study is open to the idea of using the cognitive approach to measuring emotion, in order to better understand the role of emotion in marketing. By understanding why consumers mentally choose to experience emotion in response to marketing campaigns, marketers can identify how to appeal to consumers cognitively, and subsequently, emotionally.

Cabanac (2002:1) defines emotion as "any mental experience with high intensity and high hedonic content", where 'hedonic' means to be pleasant or unpleasant. Note that this definition includes the word "mental". This means that there is a cognitive aspect to emotion that should be considered.

Emotion results from cognitive and psychological responses that can be expressed physically (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) explained that

individuals address emotion in a cognitive manner by judging stimuli that are sensed, categorising the emotion, relating an emotional reaction to a previous experience found in their memory, or identifying how the emotional reaction can be dealt with.

In Russel's (1980) study, the cognitive structure of affect theory is used by individuals to analyse their own and others' emotional reactions by cognitively using their knowledge of emotion, based on cues that vary from the tone of voice to blushing. Sometimes, an individual's emotional state influences his/her interpretation of information that can then be used as part of an analysis (Russel, 1980). For instance, when deciding on whether to purchase a red or black dress, consumers may choose the dress that they feel prettier in. Marketers should, therefore, understand what makes consumers have emotional reactions that encourage them to decide to purchase the brand.

Others argue that while emotion and cognition work together, they are independent of each other (Scherer, 2005), as there have been discussions regarding whether or not a hedonic reaction, such as feeling sad, has a more emotional and less cognitive nature (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). It should be noted that while cognition is not the only influence on emotion, it is viewed as one of the most essential influencers of emotion (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981; Scherer, 1993 in Cabanac, 2002). Cabanac's (2002) definition addressed above is one of many definitions of emotion.

Before introducing the definition of emotion that this study uses, the section below looks at different definitions of emotion, as encountered in the previous literature.

2.2.2 Definitions of Emotion

Defining terms is necessary for research because it allows for a comparison of these terms and the research therein (Scherer, 2005). Thus, this section analyses various terms for emotion; and it decides on the definition that this study is going to adopt. It is a particular challenge to define emotion, due to the different opinions on what an emotion is (Cabanac, 2002; Scherer, 2005; Young, 1973 in Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). The reason for conflicting definitions of emotion is that these definitions are of different natures: for example, psychological, behavioural, broad or narrow definitions (see Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). There is, therefore, a need to address the divergence of these definitions, to allow for a more convergent understanding of emotion (Plutchik, 1980 in Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981).

The definitions of emotion vary depending on the context in which it is referred to (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). For instance, definitions intended for laymen are simpler than those intended for researchers of emotion (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). There are different approaches to defining emotion, namely: introduction, emotion, motivation, motivation/emotion, physiological, learning, social, experimental, history and

systems, clinical, anthropology and dictionary/ encyclopaedia (see Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981: 348).

Due to the growing number of scientific explanations of emotion, scientists themselves find it challenging to agree on only one definition (Scherer, 2005). Thus, there is a need to find a simple definition of emotion for the layman, in order to allow for easier development and application of emotion to research, and the greater collaboration of research between disciplines (Scherer, 2005). Table 2.1 below provides examples of definitions that could be used in this context.

Table 2.1: Six definitions of emotion, as found in past literature

	Author(s)	Year	Definition of Emotion
1	Kleinginna and Kleinginna	1981:355	“A complex set of interactions among subjective and objective factors, mediated by neural or hormonal systems, which can (a) give rise to affective experiences, such as feelings of arousal, pleasure or displeasure; (b) generate cognitive processes, such as emotionally relevant perpetual effects, appraisals, labelling processes; (c) activate widespread physiological adjustments to the arousing conditions; and (d) lead to behaviour that is often, but not always, expressive, goal-directed and adaptive.”
2	Larrousse Dictionary	n.d	A sudden trouble, transient agitation caused by an acute experience of fear, surprise, joy, etc.
3	Oxford English Dictionary	n.d	“A strong feeling deriving from one’s circumstances, mood, or relationships with others”
4	Schachter and Singer	1962:398	“A state of physiological arousal and of cognition appropriate to this state of arousal.”
5	Cabanac	2001:1	“Any mental experience with high intensity and high hedonic content (pleasure/displeasure)”
6	Scherer	2001	“An episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all or most of the five orgasmic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event, as being relevant to the major concerns of the [individual].”

Table 2.1 above provides some definitions of emotion, as found in the past literature.

The definition of Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) (see definition 1) is a widely held analysis of the definitions of emotion in past literature that have a rich influence on literature, and which would, therefore, be ideal to apply to a study on emotion. It is a broad definition that includes multiple components, from which emotion derives, such as affect, cognition, psychology and expression (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). While it is beneficial to use these factors together in defining emotion, there is a need to clearly define the boundaries of these factors because some of them may go beyond the study on emotion (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). Additionally, Ockham's razor explains that "when you have two competing theories that make exactly the same predictions, the simpler one is the better" (Gibbs, 1996). Therefore, using a simpler definition would be better.

The term 'emotion' is sometimes too narrowly defined (Cabanac, 2002), where many fail to address the following: (i) How emotion impacts behaviour; (ii) using emotion as a tool for adaptation; and (iii) the subjective nature of emotion (Plutchik, 1980 in Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). Therefore, definitions 2 and 3 are simple definitions that are aimed at the layman; yet they are too narrowly defined to be applied in this study.

Definitions 4, 5 and 6 place the emphasis on the physiological aspect of emotion. Definitions 4 and 5, however, do not provide as much of a thorough understanding of emotion as definition 6 does. Thus, definition 6 by Scherer (2005) is used to define emotion in this study as: "An episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all or most of the five orgasmic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event, as [being] relevant to [the] major concerns of the organism."

Scherer's (2001) definition of emotion comprises three components, namely: *events*, *stimulus evaluation*, and *responses to stimuli*. Thus, to better understand emotion in terms of Scherer's (2001) definition, to which this study refers, the following paragraph further explains Scherer's (2001) definition in terms of these components.

Scherer (2005) explains that emotion occurs because of *events* that induce a response from the individual. *Stimulus evaluation* helps individuals in responding, to appropriately adapt to the event (Scherer, 2005). When events interrupt an individual's general behaviour, the parts of the individual organism contribute to creating a *synchronised response* (Scherer, 2005). Therefore, while emotion initially disrupts behaviour, they assist the individual in adapting to the changes that are derived from an event (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981).

While the above paragraphs have addressed the definitions of emotion, it should be noted that there are cases where certain terms are used synonymously with the term 'emotion'. To clarify the use of emotion in this study, these terms are addressed below. It should be noted that in discussing the difference between these terms and emotion, Scherer's (2001) definition that this study adopts was considered. In addition to different definitions of emotion, there are also different terms that are used to refer to emotion in past research (see Bagozzi et al., 1999; Scherer, 2005). To clarify which terms this study uses, the following section looks at the terms that are used synonymously with emotion.

2.2.3 Terms that are used synonymously with Emotion

In emotion literature, the term 'emotion' is used interchangeably with other terms (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1992; Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). For instance, while moods are associated with the experiences that consumers have with brands in past literature (Swinyard, 1993 in Sherman *et al.*, 1997), it has been said that moods, affect and emotion can be used interchangeably, as mood and affect are two types of emotion (Babin *et al.*, 1992 in Sherman *et al.*, 1997). However, other authors distinguish between these three concepts (see Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Scherer, 2005).

Thus, as the term 'emotion' is often used synonymously with other terms (see Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Scherer, 2005), there is a need to clearly differentiate between emotion and these other terms (Kleinginna and Kleinginna, 1981; Scherer, 2005). The following table shows the different terms that are sometimes used synonymously with emotion.

Table 2.2: Terms that are used synonymously with emotion

Term	Definition
Preference	Evaluating an object by either liking, disliking or preferring it over other objects is known as having a preference (Scherer, 2005).
Attitude	An attitude is described as an evaluative judgement (Bagozzi et al., 1999) and a belief towards objects, people or events (Scherer, 2005).
Moods	Moods are described as dominant, lasting subjective feelings that have a low intensity and weak response synchronisation, influence an individual's behaviour, and may be formed without obvious causes related to specific events (Scherer, 2005).
Feelings	Feelings refer to the emotional experience from a subjective point of view, where individuals experience physiological and mental changes due to exposure to an event (Scherer, 2005).

The terms shown in Table 2.2 above are sometimes used synonymously with emotion. To clarify what this study has used, these terms are discussed and compared to Scherer's definition of emotion, in the same order in which they are presented in Table 2.2, beginning with preferences.

Preferences occur when events have a low intensity, and response synchronisation is not formed, resulting in positive or negative feelings that arise (Scherer, 2005). Thus, looking back at the definition of emotion by Scherer (2001) that this study adopts, the difference between preferences and emotion is the absence of any response synchronisation.

Attitudes differ from emotions, because they do not necessarily depend on events to occur (Scherer, 2005). Attitudes are characterised by low-intensity, weak-response synchronisation, and an inhibited ability to influence specific behaviours due to possible constraints in the situation (Scherer, 2005).

Compared to *moods*, emotions tend to be more intense, more likely to induce action, and arise from different means, because individuals have different emotional responses to the same event (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). Lastly, a *feeling* is a subjective experience that contributes to the creation of an emotion (Izard, 1971 in Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). Thus, feelings are part of the development of an emotion, as opposed to being the actual emotion.

Therefore, it has been clarified that preferences, attitudes, moods and feelings differ from emotion. The term emotion is used for the remainder of this study; and it is defined using the above explained definition by Scherer (2001). Additionally, while others refer to emotional experiences or emotional responses, this study refers to emotional reactions. Within the umbrella term “emotion”, however, there are different types of emotion that can be identified.

2.2.4 Different Types of Emotion

Emotion is a vast area of research that includes many types of emotion, a selection of which can be applied to a marketing context and are presented in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Different types of emotion

Type of Emotion	Definition
Aesthetic Emotions	Aesthetic emotions are not involved with the individual’s goals or physiological needs, yet they relate to the appreciation of aspects, such as nature or art (Scherer, 2005).
Utilitarian Emotions	Utilitarian emotion refers to regularly experienced emotions, such as anger, joy and shame, which assist individuals in adapting to events that could have vital consequences for the individual (Scherer, 2005).
Basic Emotions	Many ‘basic emotions’ are utilitarian emotions, which are essential for the adaptation to events (Scherer, 2005), for example sadness and joy.
Positive Emotions	When individuals are assisted in achieving their goals, they experience a positive emotion (Rimé, 2009), such as satisfaction. This is also known as positive valence.
Negative Emotions	When a goal that individuals have is interfered with, they experience negative emotions, such as anxiety and insecurity (Rimé, 2009). This is also known as negative valence.

Table 2.3 lists five different types of emotion. The first type of emotion is an *aesthetic emotion*. Academically, aesthetic emotion has been described as emotional reactions to artwork, for example theatrical or musical artwork (Justin, 2013). Thus, an individual can experience physiological and behavioural changes due to initiators, such as music or art, yet it should be noted that these changes are not particular actions, because they are common physiological changes, such as goose pimples (Scherer & Zetner, 2001 in

Scherer, 2005; Scherer, 2005). Aesthetic emotion could, therefore, be applied to marketing, because marketing campaigns use factors, such as visual effects and music.

While aesthetic emotional reactions generally do not explicitly affect an individual's well-being, utilitarian emotional reactions occur when the individual's goals are oriented towards their own well-being or survival (Jaquet, Danuser & Gomez, 2012). *Utilitarian emotions* are of a high intensity, as Scherer (2005) describes, and involve a large number of subsystems in an organism for the synchronisation required to conduct the emotional reaction, for example a motivational enhancement that relates to joy and pride. In terms of marketing, utilitarian emotion can be experienced when, for example, an individual has worked hard to purchase a designer handbag, and subsequently experiences a high level of joy once the handbag has been purchased.

Basic emotions, such as anger, are more commonly experienced; and they are smaller in number than the total number of emotions that are experienced by an individual (Scherer, 2005). These emotions can occur as a result of viewing a marketing campaign, or, for example, feeling sad after watching a campaign that addresses rhino poaching.

Positive and negative emotion is the types of emotion that are most important to this study in addressing the role of emotional valence in viral marketing. Emotional valence is a term that refers to whether emotions are positive or negative. This study looks at both positive and negative emotion, which is why the role of emotional valence in marketing is addressed later (see Section 2.6).

The following section addresses the measurement of emotion.

2.2.5 How can Emotion be Measured?

To measure emotion effectively, Scherer (2005) suggests that the following points be considered: (1) Focusing on the feeling aspect of emotion; (2) gaining a thorough understanding of the emotional reaction by asking participants about factors other than valence and arousal; (3) using globally understood emotional terms; and (4) adopting a user-friendly approach to viewing the measurement instruments in favour of participants (Scherer, 2005). Considering that emotion has been the topic of study for marketers, sociologists, psychologists and neurologists, to name but a few, there have been multiple approaches to the measurement of emotion.

The following paragraphs shed light on some of the different approaches used to measure emotion, and then specifically, the approach that this study has used. Three different approaches to measuring emotion are presented below, namely: the differential emotion theory, the free-response, format and the forced-choice method.

- The differential emotions theory is based on the assumption that individuals are motivated by negative, positive and neutral emotion that occurs to allow them to survive and interact with each other (Izard, 1977). It has been used to determine marketing success, by applying it to the emotional reaction that consumers have after they have purchased a product (see Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). This study does not apply the differential emotional theory, because the focus is more on why consumers share viral marketing content, rather than why they purchase products.
- Another measurement method is the free-response format, where participants are unrestricted in their responses. This allows them to describe their emotional reaction freely (Scherer, 2005). While these responses may be inhibited because some participants may find difficulty in expressing their views, and the manner in which participants explain their answers may differ, an advantage of the free-response format is that responses are more accurate, because there is more room for providing a thorough description of the emotional reaction (Scherer, 2005). Thus, a free-response format was used in this study in the form of semi-structured interviews (see Section 4.3.5), in order to gain thorough insight into the participants' responses.
- A method that is of interest to this study is the Forced-choice method, which consists of the discrete approach and the dimensional approach (Scherer, 2005). The discrete approach to measuring emotion has a reputable position in research; and it incorporates the origin and evolution of language (Scherer, 2005). Discrete emotions, which comprise emotions, such as love, joy, fear and anger, focus on specific actions (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). Additionally, according to the discrete approach, emotion can be allocated to different categories, where each group differs from the other, and is based on its own fundamental emotion (Lawler & Thye, 1999). The second aspect of the forced-choice method is the dimensional approach, which allows for an understanding of subjective responses by participants regarding their emotional experiences (Wundt, 1905 in Scherer, 2005).

This study uses both the free-response format, in the form of semi-structured interviews, and the dimensional approach, in the form of netnography and semi-structured interviews. However, there is greater focus on the dimensional approach to allow for a better subjective understanding of participants' emotions. Therefore, the dimensional approach further explained in the section that follows.

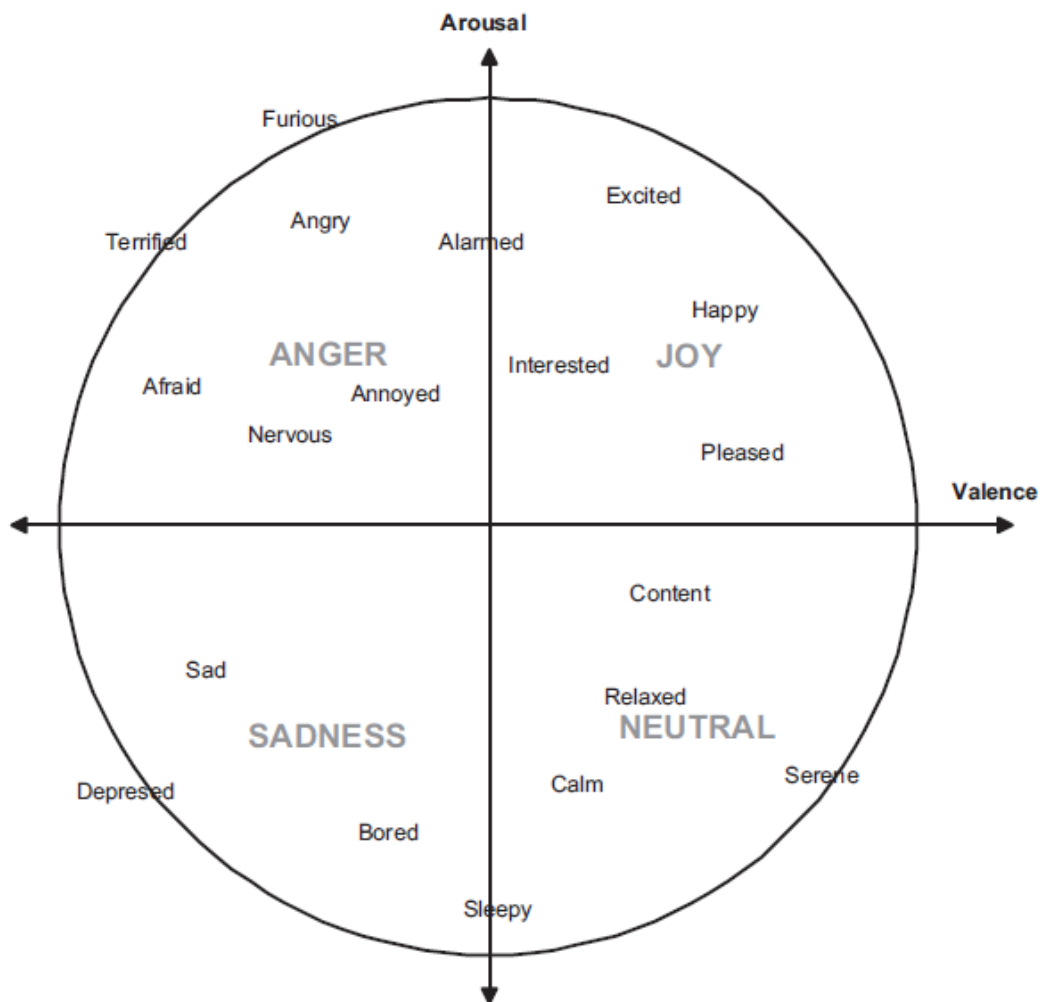
2.2.6 The Dimensional Approach to Measuring Emotion

The dimensional approach was invented by Wilhelm Wundt (1905), in order to understand the subjective responses to emotional experiences using. This he did, by using three dimensions, namely: Valence, arousal and tension, which relate to physiological emotional reactions (Wilhelm Wundt, 1905 in Scherer, 2005). However, after the refinement of the scale, most studies (see for example Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Russel, 1980; Tellegen, Watson & Clark, 1988) now use only two dimensions (valence and arousal), because it is challenging to consistently identify the 'tension' dimension from the 'arousal; dimension (Russell, 1983 in Scherer, 2005).

To illustrate this, Figure 2.1 below depicts the circumplex of emotion that is used in the dimensional approach. It should be noted that the circumplex of emotion originated from Russel (1980), who was a seminal author on emotional valence. However, Figure 2.1 was adopted from Giannakopoulos, Pikrakis and Theodoridis (2009) because it is more detailed than the figure provided in Russel (1980).

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Figure 2.1: The circumplex of emotion used in the dimensional approach for measuring emotion



Source: Giannakopoulos *et al.* (2009)

As seen in Figure 2.1 above, the circumplex of emotion consists of two dimensions, valence and arousal, where valence is based on a continuum between pleasant and unpleasant; and arousal is based on a continuum between passive and active (Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009). With regard to Figure 2.1, this study will refer to the terms pleasant and unpleasant as referring to positive and negative, respectively, in order to maintain consistency. The emotional states on the wheel are a combination of both valence and arousal, based on their position on the wheel (Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009).

Valence, as explained earlier, describes whether the emotion is positive or negative; while arousal refers to the level of intensity that the emotion brings (Eckler & Bolls,

2004). Thus, the dimensional approach to measuring emotion categorises the participant's answers into whether the emotion experienced is positive or negative, as well as how intense the emotion experienced was (Scherer, 2005). While this approach has been criticised as ambiguous, because it is unknown whether the 'valence' dimension explains the nature of the event or the feeling that derives from it (Scherer, 2005), the majority of social science researchers use this multi-dimensional approach to measure emotion, as this method has been shown to be reliable and straightforward (Scherer, 2005).

The dimensional approach allows researchers to obtain insight into the subjective responses by participants on their emotional reactions (Wundt, 1905), and to look at individual emotions within the valence framework (Russel, 1980). This approach is currently widely applied (see Botha & Botha, 2013; Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009; Russel, 1980); and it is popular to, therefore, use the dimensional approach, as it is applied in this study to measure emotion in terms of valence. In the light of the above, the dimensional approach is further explained below.

In comparison to the discrete approach, the dimensional approach places more emphasis on the subjectivity of the emotion experienced by the individual (Scherer, 2005). Thus, because this is an exploratory study that aims to better understand the role of emotion and why people share content online, using an approach that encourages participants to answer subjectively is ideal. Additionally, although there is disagreement in the past research regarding the specific dimensions of the dimensional approach, many authors that study emotion use the dimensional approach, instead of the discrete approach (see Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Botha & Botha, 2013; Lawler & Thye, 1999).

Botha and Botha (2013), for example, who similarly studied emotion in an online context, used the dimensional approach. Thus, as this study aimed to gain insight into why content is shared online, and the role that emotion plays in the sharing of content online, the dimensional approach to measuring emotion was used.

There is, however, a setback to using the dimensional approach. Individuals' ability to communicate their emotion in a thorough manner to other individuals is an area of concern, especially since the researcher is not entirely knowledgeable about the event that caused the emotional reaction (Scherer, 2005). Thus, although the dimensional approach focuses on valence and arousal, it should be noted that researchers may require additional information, in order to gain a thorough understanding of the emotional reaction (Scherer, 2005). However, considering the above advantages of applying the dimensional approach, this study used the dimensional approach to measure emotion.

With the study of emotion, it becomes apparent that the social dimension of emotion cannot be ignored. Previous studies have shown that emotion plays a role in sharing content online (see for example, Berger & Milkman, 2009; Phelps *et al.*, 2004). However, there is a lack of theory about the role of emotion in viral behaviour, the social dimension of emotion, and how people have emotional reactions because of others, which then influences their behaviour. Therefore, since the focus of this study is to look at emotion and behaviour in a viral context, the Social Sharing of Emotion that is explained below is applicable to this study.

2.3 THE SOCIAL SHARING OF EMOTION

An individual's emotions are influenced by social interactions with others (Hill, Rand, Nowak & Christakis, 2010) and past research has shown that emotion should be studied from a social point-of-view (Butler & Gross, 2009; Rimé *et al.*, 1998). Emotion can influence peoples' behaviour (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999), social contact between people has a strong influence on their emotion (Hill *et al.*, 2010); and consumers are influenced by the emotional reaction they have after viewing content (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Therefore, this study applies the Social Sharing of Emotion theory, in order to better understand the role of emotion in encouraging people to share content online, and thus to contribute to viral marketing.

To introduce the Social Sharing of Emotion theory, the following example given by Rimé (2009) is presented. Two individuals were involved in an accident that happened at an intersection. The victims were wounded and lying on the ground. In the span of a minute, a group of individuals had gathered around them. Many of these individuals were on their phones, telling someone close to them about what they had just witnessed (Rimé, 2009). This example shows that when individuals have an emotional reaction, they feel the need to share it with others (Rimé, 2009).

This example introduces the Social Sharing of Emotion theory to this study. It should be noted that this study refers to the individual who shares the emotion as the sender; and the individual with whom the emotion is shared is seen as the receiver. This study argues that this sharing could be extended to an online context (sharing content online with social networks), and the inclusion of this theory could, therefore, provide greater insight into this behaviour. Viral marketing literature is relatively new; and often devoid of theory. The following section explains what the Social Sharing of Emotion is.

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory explains that emotional episodes occur when what consumers believe to be true differs from what they have actually experienced; and that to maintain a level of equilibrium between the two, the emotion experienced is shared with others (Rimé, Philippot, Boca & Mesquita, 1992). According to the Social

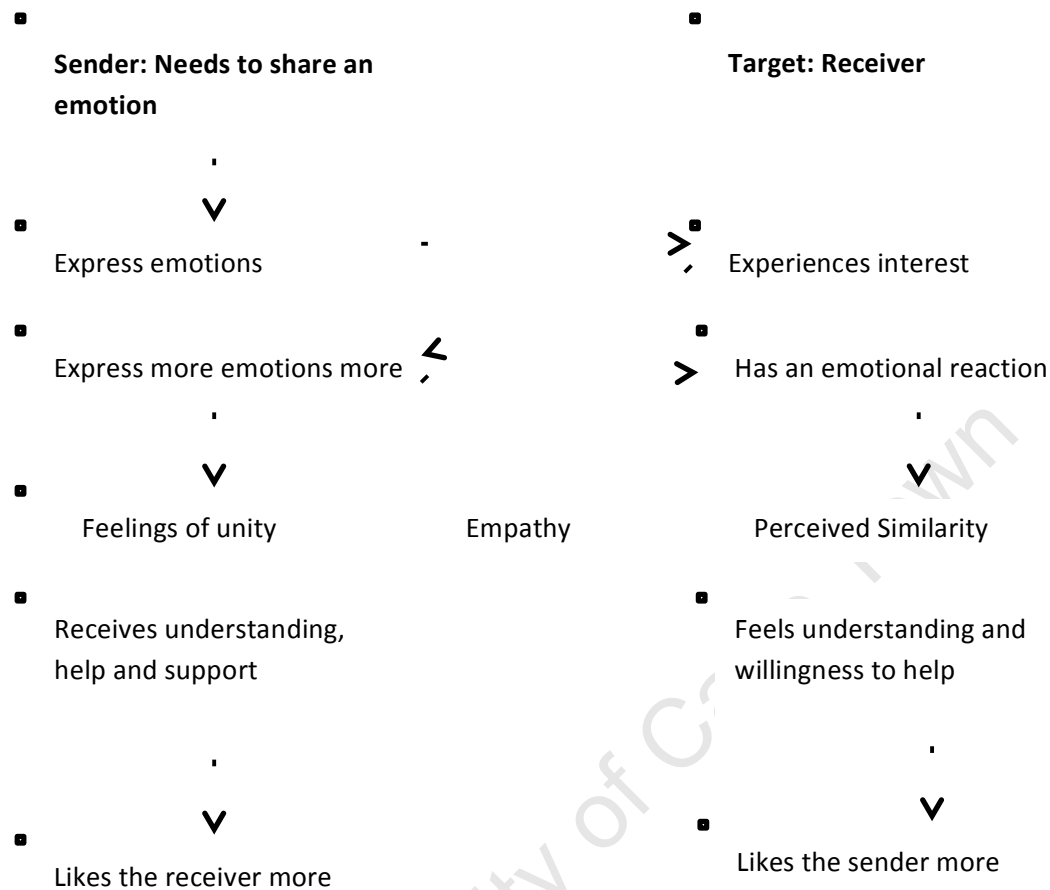
Sharing of Emotion theory, the anti-climax in the accident example above where bystanders did not expect to see wounded bodies in front of them, encourages consumers to share the experience with others, in order to be able to better cope with the experience. Therefore, emotional reactions disrupt individuals cognitively and socially, encouraging them to communicate to each other on the emotional reaction had; and cope with the emotion experienced (Rimé *et al.*, 1992; Rimé, 2009).

When an individual has an emotional reaction, there are long-term social and cognitive effects of the emotion reaction (Rimé, 2009). Emotional reactions may differ according to the individual; and they can test their beliefs, assumptions and expectations, for example the impact of traumatic emotional reactions on an individual's self-esteem (Rimé *et al.*, 1998). In this way, social support assists in improving self-esteem (Rimé *et al.*, 1998), which may be why individuals share their emotions socially, in the hope of gaining assistance on how to cope with them.

Across all ages individuals turn to the attachment figures, such as their parents and later friends, to speak about their emotional reactions (Rimé, 2009). Thus, when individuals share their emotions they benefit in the long-run psychologically, by coping with the emotion in a cognitive and physical manner (Rimé *et al.*, 1998). In the same way, as individuals want to share their emotion socially with others, they also want to know about the emotional reactions that others have (Rimé, 2009).

This is clearly shown in the earlier example regarding the accident and the onlookers. When emotional experiences are shared, individuals are more likely to engage with one another (Kivran-Swaine & Naaman, 2011). Therefore, another effect of sharing emotion is that it improves the social connections between individuals (Rimé, 2009), which is shown by Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Interpersonal dynamic of the Social Sharing of Emotion



SOURCE: *Adopted from Rimé (2009:72)*

As can be seen in Figure 2.2 above, when the sender shares his/her emotional reaction with the receiver, the receiver expresses interest, which encourages the sender to express more emotion. This induces emotional arousal in the receiver. The receiver then feels empathy and wants to help the sender, where a higher emotional intensity results in less words being expressed and more physical comfort from the receiver. Consequently, the receiver and the sender like each other more and the bond between them is strengthened as the sender and receiver become closer (Rimé, 2009). Sharing emotional experiences gives the sender social attention, and creates empathy for them from the receiver (Rimé, 2009).

In the light of the above, relationships within online social networks and social integration can be improved, especially when the sender receives empathy and interest from the receiver. Thus, sharing emotion socially could contribute to better social bonds in online social networks.

The Social Sharing of Emotion can occur over different time frames, such as a day, week or decade after the emotional reaction (Rimé *et al.*, 1998; Rimé, 2009). Individuals share the emotional reaction and the resulting emotional reactions that they have experienced, with one or more individuals (Rimé, 2009). In this way, the Social Sharing of Emotion can become repetitive (Rimé, 2009). The receiver then learns about the emotional reaction, since s/he was absent at the actual emotional event (Rimé, 2009).

It should be noted that the Social Sharing of Emotion does not always occur. Below are three incidents when the Social Sharing of Emotion did not occur, according to Rimé (2009):

- When emotional reactions, such as guilt, that affect the self-conscious, are experienced;
- When the emotional reaction is highly intense or traumatic;
- The nature of the online social network may discourage the Social Sharing of Emotion.

Emotion that can induce shame or guilt is not always shared, because the impact of these emotions on an individual's self-conscious hinders the likelihood that the emotion will be shared (Rimé, 2009), as the individual would not want others to know that these emotions were felt.

The dimensional approach to measuring emotions includes the arousal dimension (Russel, 1980). It has been said that emotion which has a high-arousal, or that are highly intense, are more likely to be shared (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Rimé, 2009). However, the second incident, where emotion may not be shared, explains that highly sensitive negative emotional reactions are more likely to be kept private (Rimé, 2009). For example, individuals that are less effected by a traumatic emotional reaction do not share the emotional reaction any less than those who are more effected by it; yet, there are secret aspects of the traumatic experience that are frequently not shared (Rimé, 2009). Therefore, while someone might complain on Twitter (see www.Twitter.com) about being robbed, they would probably be hesitant to tweet about being raped. In the third incident, users of the online social network may not be interested in the emotion shared; or the emotion shared may be humiliating to those with whom it is shared (Rimé, 2009).

What discourages the continuous sharing of an emotional reaction is when those with whom the emotion is shared try to prevent the sharing of the emotion (Rimé, 2009) with the online social network. For instance, sharing a YouTube video (see www.YouTube.com) on a sensitive topic, such as religion, may not be appropriate to send to someone who strongly opposes what is said in the video. Additionally, when individuals in an online social network are well-connected to each other, and have

strong ties in the online social network, they may be hesitant to socially share their emotion, in case it would be detrimental to their social ties (Kivran-Swaine & Naaman, 2011).

Individuals sometimes express emotion more freely when the social ties are weak (Kivran-Swaine & Naaman, 2011). Similarly, although individuals share emotional reaction with those to whom they are close, they would be less likely to share these emotional reaction on public platforms for other individuals to see (Kivran-Swaine & Naaman, 2011). Consequently, the nature of the online social network could discourage people from sharing their emotion socially.

Understanding the Social Sharing of Emotion is important, because it contributes to strengthening the emotional memory, their relationships with other individuals, and their integration into society; and additionally, it encourages the spread of information on their emotional reactions through the online social networks (Rimé *et al.*, 1998). Past research continuously addresses the link between the Social Sharing of Emotion theory and online social networks (Kivran-Swaine & Naaman, 2011). In the light of the above explanation of the Social Sharing of Emotion, this study uses the Social Sharing of Emotion theory to better understand the role that emotion can play in viral marketing with the focus on the sharing of emotional content with online social networks. This is also in agreement with a similar study conducted by Botha and Botha (2013) that adopted the Social Sharing of Emotion theory in a viral-marketing context.

Online, consumers share emotion via online social networks, as sometimes it is impossible to share emotional reactions interpersonally (Botha & Botha, 2013). Thus, consumers are encouraged to forward emotionally appealing content online and contribute to making it go viral (Botha & Botha, 2013). As emotion can encourage social interaction and understanding consumers' emotion provides insight into their online sharing behaviour (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Botha & Botha, 2013), this study focuses on the role of emotion in viral marketing.

Before addressing emotion in the viral marketing context, the following section attends to emotion in marketing broadly. Since past research has found that emotion impacts factors, such as the decision-making process, perception of in-store environment and responses to marketing content (see Belk, 1975; Edell & Burke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1989; Olney, Holbrook & Batra, 1991; Oxenfeldt, 1974), it is important to consider the role of emotion in marketing.

2.4 THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN MARKETING

Emotion influences the actions of role players in marketing, such as consumers, (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). The majority of previous studies that attend to emotion in marketing, have placed the emphasis on consumers' emotional reactions to advertising (Derbaix, 1995; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005), as well as the role that emotion plays in customer satisfaction (Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). To better understand the role of emotion in marketing, Table 2.3 below looks at what other studies have said about the role of emotion in marketing.

Table 2.4: A summary of the different perspectives regarding the role of emotion in marketing

Author(s)	Year	Different opinions about where emotion fits into the context of marketing and specifically: responses to advertisements, perception of in-store environment and the consumer decision-making process
Bagozzi et al.	1999	While processing information, responses to persuasive marketing tactics and consumer behaviour are influenced by emotional responses, and understanding the role of emotion in marketing is important.
Belk	1975	Consumers are influenced by the situation that they are in, and specifically found that mood had an influence on the consumer decision-making process, introducing 'mood' into research around consumer behaviour.
Edell and Burke	1987	The effectiveness of an advert can be determined by the emotional response to it..
Holbrook and Garner in Sherman, Mathur and Smith (1997)	1993	Using colours and music in-store, which impact consumer emotion could improve the profitability.
Holbrook and Westwood	1989	Conducted research into consumer emotional responses to television advertisements.
Olney, Holbrook and Batra	1991	Pleasure and arousal play mediating roles in the content of an advertisement and the attitude.

Oxenfeldt	1974	Consumers' opinion about a store is influenced by their emotional response felt towards the store.
Sherman, Mathur and Smith	1997	Consumer emotion is an essential influence on their likelihood to purchase a product.
Oliver	1993	Emotional reactions mediate satisfaction with products.

Table 2.3 portrays what other studies have said about the role of emotion in marketing. In particular, Table 2.4 pinpoints that emotion influences the consumer's perception of the store environment (Oxenfeldt, 1974), responses to advertisements (Edell and Burke, 1987; Olney, Holbrook & Batra, 1991; Holbrook & Westwood, 1989).

Consumers' decision-making process is influenced by their emotion (Sherman *et al.*, 1997), the information to which they are exposed (Sherman, Mathur & Smith, 1997) and external stimuli (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982 in Sherman, Mathur & Smith, 1997). Essentially, consumers are influenced by the situation that they are in (Belk, 1975). This is important for marketers to note, because it means that the place where consumers view marketing campaigns, or the nature of the online social network where the content is shared, could influence the emotional reaction that consumers have to the marketing campaign.

Sherman *et al.* (1997), who studied the influence of emotion and store environment on the consumers' decision-making process, found that consumers' emotion is an essential influence on their likelihood to purchase a product, which suggests that retailers should consider consumers' emotional reactions during strategic planning. Similarly, Holbrook and Garner (1993) in Sherman *et al.* (1997) found that using colours and music in-store that impact consumers emotionally could improve profitability. This relates to the aesthetic emotion type that was introduced earlier (see Section 2.3). Therefore, by understanding how to effectively appeal to consumers' aesthetic emotions, marketers can strategically encourage favourable emotional responses from consumers.

In essence, emotion experienced by consumers derives from the judgements that these consumers make about the content to which they are exposed (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). Thus, as consumers judge marketing campaigns, they have an emotional reaction to the message of the campaign, as well as to the brand itself (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012). Thus, understanding consumer emotion could assist with marketing strategy in terms of building longer-lasting relationships with customers and strategically creating more positive emotional reactions that consumers associate with the brand (Sherman *et al.*, 1997).

The above points support the contention that emotion is an aspect to consider when conducting effective marketing. Thus, the purpose of this study is to better understand the role that emotion plays in marketing, with a particular focus on viral marketing. Indeed, studies have suggested that emotion plays a key role in why content goes viral (see for example Bagozzi et al., 1999; Berger & Milkman, 2009; Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Nelson-field *et al.*, 2011).

When investigating the role of emotion, the majority of studies have looked at emotional valence (see for example Bagozzi et al., 1999; Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Botha & Botha, 2013). This study focuses on the role of emotion in viral marketing and sheds light on emotional valence in terms of marketing, with particular attention to both positive and negative emotion.

2.5 EXPLORING EMOTIONAL VALENCE

Emotion can be used to carry out goals, where positive emotion relates to the achievement of a goal, and negative emotions relate to the failure to achieve a goal (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Rimé, 2009). The study of emotion focuses on specific emotions, as well as the more general emotions, such as positive emotion and negative emotion. Emotional valence refers to whether an emotion is positive or negative. This is of interest to this study, where the aim is to better understand the role of emotional valence in viral marketing. Positive and negative emotion will be explained separately below, beginning with positive emotion.

2.5.1 What is Positive Emotion?

Earlier, Figure 2.1 showed the circumplex of emotion that was adopted from Giannakopoulos *et al.* (2009), and which had originated from Russel (1980). In the circumplex of emotion, certain emotions, such as excited, interested, content and calm, can be classified as comprising positive emotion (see Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009). Within positive emotion, some are considered high-arousal, such as excited and interested, and others low-arousal, such as contentment and calm (see Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009).

Scherer's (2005) definition of emotion as "an episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all or most of the five orgasmic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event, as [being] relevant to major concerns of the organism", was applied to this study and explains that emotional reactions are responses to events that occur. Positive emotional reactions occur when individuals are assisted in achieving their goals (Rimé, 2009), or when they achieve their goal (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

In terms of Scherer's (2005) definition, positive emotional reactions, therefore, occur when an event happens that helps people to achieve their 'goal'. Since the individual's abilities are assured, their self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem can then improve (Rimé, 2009). Consider an athlete who has trained well in advance for an annual marathon. On the day of the marathon, he runs the marathon and comes first. He is satisfied, proud and content that his hard work has paid off, and that he has reached his goal of being the fastest runner in the marathon. He experienced positive emotion. The section below addresses what negative emotion is.

2.5.2 What is Negative Emotion?

In the light of Scherer's (2005) definition of emotion, which explains that certain events trigger emotional reactions, negative emotion can be explained. Negative emotion arises when people are prevented from achieving their goal (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999), where people experience negative emotional reactions, such as anxiety and insecurity, due to a lower self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy (Rimé, 2009). Therefore, when events occur that prevent people from achieving their goal, they have negative emotional reactions.

Similar to positive emotion, Figure 2.1 shows that certain emotions, such as angry, annoyed, sad and bored, are classified as negative emotion (see Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009). Within these negative emotions, some are considered high-arousal, such as angry and annoyed, while others are of a low-arousal, such as sad and bored (see Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009). Looking back at the marathon example introduced earlier, what would happen if, on the day of the marathon, he had a car accident and could no longer participate in the marathon. His goal of running the marathon, let alone winning it, would no longer be achievable, despite his hard work training for it. He would, therefore, experience negative emotions, such as anger, frustration and sadness.

This section explains that when people achieve, or are assisted, in achieving a goal, they experience positive emotional responses; and when people are prevented from achieving their goal they experience negative emotional reactions. The exact manner in which consumers deal with positive, as opposed to negative emotion, in an online context requires further clarity (Berger & Milkman, 2009). This raises a need to conduct research on this matter to deal with its inconclusive nature. In the light of the lack of clarity on the impact of positive and negative emotion in passing viral content online, this study takes an exploratory look at the role of emotional valence in the passing of content among online social network users. Thus, the following section looks at the role of emotional valence in marketing.

2.6 THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL VALENCE IN MARKETING

Emotion plays a key role in the actions of managers and consumers (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). As consumers are a core aspect of marketing, emotion plays an important role in influencing consumers' reactions and consumption experiences (Babin *et al.*, 1998). However, research is required specifically on positive and negative emotional reactions by people (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Therefore, this section looks specifically at the role of emotional valence in marketing.

2.6.1 Why is it Important to Consider the Role of Emotional Valence in Marketing?

In previous studies, emotion has been discussed with regard to various marketing contexts, such as customer satisfaction (see Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005:1), customer complaints (see Stephens & Gwinner, 1998 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005:1), service failures (see Smith & Bolton, 2002 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005:1) and service quality (see Edvardsson, 2005 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005:1). Many studies have placed the focus on researching emotion in terms of advertisements (see Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Edell & Burke, 1987; Olney *et al.*, 1991; Derbaix, 1995).

There are differences in past research with respect to the structure and content of emotion (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). With regard to the structure of emotion, some focus on a complete set of specific emotions (see Richins, 1997 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005:1), while others focus on one or more specific emotions, such as surprise (see Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003), embarrassment (see Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2003) and anger (see Taylor, 1994 in Laros & Steenkamp, 2005:1). In consideration of the content of emotion, some researchers discuss emotion in terms of arousal (see Russel, 1980), while others discuss emotion in terms of valence (see Tellegen, Watson & Clark, 1985).

Research on emotion in marketing is divergent (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). It is more common for researchers to use a few dimensions of emotion (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999), where using the positive and negative dimensions of emotion tend to be popular forms of conducting research on emotion.

Past researchers provide suggestions as to why content goes viral, in terms of different factors, where one factor is the emotional reaction that the viewer of the content has towards it (see Phelps *et al.*, 2004). However, a recent study by Botha and Reyneke (2013:2) stated that no previous studies relate the "knowledge [of] emotions in marketing... [to] the spread of viral videos".

Of those who did look at emotion in marketing, it was found that positive and negative emotion may sometimes, but will not always, be distinct (Babin *et al.*, 1998). People share content when the content elicits positive emotional reactions (Phelps *et al.*, 2004);

content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion (Berger & Milkman, 2010); and content that elicits negative emotion is more likely to be shared (Anderson, 1993). Thus, the different findings about the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion versus content that elicits negative emotion in past research shows that there are inconclusive findings about emotional valence in marketing.

It should be noted that, regardless of the valence of the emotion, Berger and Milkman (2010) recently found that emotions that are of a high arousal are more likely to be shared. For example, contentment is a low-arousal emotion while happiness is a high-arousal emotion, yet both are positive emotions (see Laros & Steenkamp, 2005; Russel, 1980). Since sharing information requires action, Berger and Milkman (2010) suggest that high arousal has an influence on sharing content. Additionally, Nelson-Field *et al.* (2011) found that videos, which elicit high-arousal emotion are more likely to be shared than videos that elicit low-arousal emotion.

Needless to say, more research is necessary for: (i) A broad understanding of the role of emotion in marketing; and (ii) whether content that elicits positive emotion is shared more readily than content that elicits negative emotion.

The majority of research on emotion in marketing looks at the impact of valence on consumer behaviour. However, only recently have authors started to investigate the influence of specific emotional responses on marketing outcomes. While previous research distinguishes between positive and negative emotion (see for example Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; and Berger & Milkman, 2009), it is necessary for further research to be done to determine the influence of positive and negative emotion on consumers (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012; Jones *et al.*, 2008).

2.6.2 How does Emotional Valence impact Marketing?

Sherman *et al.* (1997) found that emotion plays a mediating role in the consumer-purchase process. When consumers experience positive emotional reactions towards a brand, the brand is more likely to capture their attention and they may spontaneously purchase the brand because they have positive thoughts about the brand (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). However, it is argued that deriving positive emotion from viewing content online does not guarantee that the consumers' reaction to the campaign will be favourable for the brand (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Therefore, there are disagreements in the past literature on the role of positive emotion in marketing, which this study will now address.

In a similar sense to the above, negative emotion derived from viewing a brand's marketing campaign can result in negative attitudes towards the brand (Eckler & Bolls, 2011); and a negative in-store experience can result in negative consumer behaviour

(Sherman *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, while it is important to encourage consumers to maintain positive behaviour towards a brand, it is equally important for marketers to transform the negative behaviour towards the brand into positive behaviour (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). This can be done by better understanding positive emotion.

Others consider arousal in the discussion of emotional valence (see Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). A sad consumer may become “withdrawn”; while an angry consumer may become aggressive (Shaver, Schwartz, Donald, & O’Connor, 1987; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). Thus, while sad and angry are both negative types of emotion, the behaviour that they induce will be different. The differences between positive and negative emotion are important to note, because of the effects that certain emotions have on consumers and their behaviour (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005).

For instance, some authors argue that negative emotion encourages consumers to spread messages more than positive emotion, while others argue vice versa (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012). It is, therefore, essential to conduct more research into the role of emotional valence in marketing.

When individuals have positive emotional reactions, they respond by sharing the positivity (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Gable, Reis, Impett & Asher, 2004; Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981); and this positively influence the way that they and the receivers feel emotionally (Rimé, 2009). Eliciting positive emotion in people encourages them to be more willing to share content that produces positive emotion, to help the recipient of the content, or to create personal rewards for them (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). Thus, when social interactions result in positive emotion, the association between consumers and their online social network is strengthened (Botha & Botha, 2013).

To understand why content is shared on online social networks, it is appropriate to consider positive emotion. The second aspect of emotional valence is negative emotion, of which an explanation follows. Thus, eliciting positive emotion among consumers is beneficial because, as mentioned earlier, consumers tend to enjoy sharing positive experiences with their online social network (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Rimé *et al.*, 1998).

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory, mentioned earlier, explains that consumers share emotional reactions, in order to cope with the emotional reactions that they have had. Particularly, having a negative emotional reaction encourages the need to regain equilibrium, in order to cope with the emotional reaction (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999). Thus, negative emotion can encourage individuals to connect socially in the form of conversations, gaining emotional support, social comparison or telling stories (Rimé, 2009).

Individuals look for emotional support to deal with the effect that negative emotion can have had on them (Rimé, 2009). For instance, if a meal that is labelled as ‘strictly

vegetarian' at a restaurant is served with meat, the vegetarian consumer may have negative emotional reactions, such as disappointment or anger, and write about the story on their Facebook page, telling their Facebook contacts about what happened at the restaurant. Therefore, when sharing a negative emotion, individuals should understand that, in return, they would receive assistance and comfort (Rimé, 2009).

Sharing negative emotion can be less predictable than the sharing of positive emotion. Rimé (2009) stated that, based on a study by Rimé *et al.* (1991), when a negative emotional reaction is shared socially, the emotional reaction is reactivated (Rimé, 2009). Thus, it can be argued that sharing a negative emotional reaction should be prevented (Rimé, 2009). However, if individuals are still willing to share negative emotional reactions, despite the fact that these emotions would be reactivated, this means that consumers choose to share these negative emotional reactions.

Butler and Gross (2009) argue that consumers gain satisfaction from sharing negative emotional reactions. For instance, a campaign for the support of a cause, which causes emotions, such as sadness, anger or fear, may encourage consumers to share the campaign (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, in addition to analysing the sharing of positive emotion, this study looks into why consumers share negative emotional reactions on marketing content to provide marketers with an understanding of how to strategically use negative emotion to their advantage, when implementing marketing campaigns.

Other studies have found that consumers share emotions that they deem will be approved by their social network (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Izawa, 2010; Rimé *et al.*, 1998); for example, by not sharing a controversial campaign, such as the Nando's adverts (see Appendix 2.a). Thus, there are differing views regarding why consumers share positive and negative emotional reactions. This means that further analysis on the role of emotional valence in marketing is required to better understand how consumers' positive and negative emotional reactions impact their behaviour.

The role of emotional valence in the passing of viral content has been widely debated in the literature, with particular emphasis on the following: whether negative emotional content is shared more readily than positive emotional content, or vice versa; how negative and positive content should be shared on online social networks; and how sharing negative, as opposed to positive, content affects the online social networks (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Botha & Botha, 2013; Eckler & Bolls, 2004).

This is further explored in Chapter 3, which focuses on the role of emotion in viral marketing. The following section introduces this topic. Past research suggests that different factors can encourage people to share content online, such as altruism, self-

benefit (see Berger & Milkman, 2010 and Roy, 2011), social capital (see Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2012) or because of the nature of the content (see Camarero & San José, 2011 and Porter & Golan, 2006). However, increasingly, researchers are saying that the emotional reaction that people have towards the content is an important factor to consider in terms of having an influence on content going viral (see Phelps *et al.*, 2004; Botha & Reyneke, 2013).

2.6.3 Introducing the Role that Emotion plays in Viral Marketing

Since the emotional appeal of content can influence consumers, (Eckler & Bolls, 2011), emotion plays a key role in viral marketing (Phelps *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, to introduce the role of emotion in viral marketing, this section briefly addresses the role that emotion plays in viral marketing, beginning with a look at what viral marketing actually is, by analysing what is demonstrated in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: Various views of viral marketing

Dobele <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Viral marketing allows for a low-cost way of communicating marketing messages, as well as a significantly reduced response rate and a greater potential for impacting the market.
Phelps <i>et al.</i> (2004)	Viral marketing messages are credible, as consumers are motivated to forward messages to assist their community rather than to simply recruit more customers.
Helm (2000) in Golan & Zaidner, 2008	Viral marketing is “a communication and distribution concept that relies on customers to transmit digital products via electronic mail to other potential customers in their social sphere and to animate these contacts to also transmit the products”.
Welker (2002) in Golan & Zaidner, 2008	Viral marketing refers to “strategies that allow an easier, accelerated, and cost-reduced transmission of messages by creating environments for [a] self-replicating exponentially increasing diffusion, spiritualization, and impact of the message”.
Golan & Zaidner (2008)	Viral marketing can be defined as a “broader framework that encompasses a wide array of electronic word-of-mouth strategies aimed at encouraging brand-related online peer-to-peer communication”.

From Table 2.5 above, the following points can be inferred. Firstly, viral marketing is a low-cost way to efficiently target consumers with marketing content. Secondly, it is a

credible way of 'speaking' to consumers – because marketing content is shared more between consumers than on a brand-to-consumer basis. Lastly, viral marketing occurs online and is dependent on consumers when it comes to sharing the marketing content online with others.

Essentially, the message of the campaign needs to capture the attention of the consumers to encourage them to forward the campaign.

As emotion encourages social interactions, and understanding consumers' emotions provides insight into their online sharing behaviour (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Botha & Botha, 2013), this study focuses on the role of emotions in viral marketing. It will also specifically look at why people share content online, the role of emotion in sharing content online, and whether content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion.

This chapter has addressed emotion and the role that emotion plays in marketing. A synthesis of what has been discussed in this chapter, together with an introduction to the next chapter, is provided in the following conclusion.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Emotion is defined in this study as “an episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all, or most, of the five orgasmic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event, as [being] relevant to major concerns of the [individual]”, Scherer's (2001). It was made clear in this chapter that the term *emotion* will be used instead of other terms that are used synonymously with emotion in the previous literature.

Positive emotion and negative emotion are two types of emotion that are of interest to this study. Emotional valence refers to whether emotion is positive or negative. Emotion can influence the consumer decision-making process, and consumers' attitude towards the brand. Therefore, the role of emotion and emotional valence in marketing, as discussed in this chapter, shows that it is beneficial for marketers to better understand how emotion can impact marketing. Marketers could better understand this by looking at how and why consumers share their emotional responses socially.

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory explains that when what consumers expect to experience differs from what they actually experience, they are encouraged to share the emotion with others, in order to cope with the emotional reaction that they have experienced. This is important to this study, because it can explain why consumers share their emotions online, through the sharing of content that elicits emotional reactions.

Understanding why content is shared online provides insight into what makes content online go viral, which is what Chapter 3 will address. More specifically, Chapter 3 formally introduces online social networks and viral marketing, before exploring why content is shared online. Based on this, the objectives of this study are introduced in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE: VIRAL MARKETING: ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH, ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS AND EMOTIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Consumers can sometimes remember the emotional reaction had from viewing marketing content rather than the marketing content itself (Jones *et al.*, 2008). The previous chapter explored the role that emotion plays in marketing, how emotion can be defined, emotional valence, and the role of both emotion and emotional valence in marketing in general. It also introduced the Social Sharing of Emotion theory, which is applicable to this study.

Considering that the purpose of this study is to better understand viral marketing in general, as well as the role of emotion in viral marketing, this chapter pays particular attention to viral marketing in terms of the online social networks, eWOM and the role of emotion in these contexts. After reading this chapter, marketers will have a theoretical background to viral marketing and its connection to emotion, which serves as the foundation to the methodology (chapter 4), and the results that follow in Chapter 5. Herewith a brief overview of what will be addressed in this chapter, and the primary assumptions that have been made.

Content is shared online for *altruistic*, *self-benefit* (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Roy, 2011), and *social capital* (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2012). The nature of the *content* also influences its likelihood to be shared online (Camarero & San José, 2011; Porter & Golan, 2006). A platform for sharing content online is online social networks. An online social network is an Internet community where individuals interact, often through profiles that (re)present their public personae (and their network of connections) to others” (Acquisti & Gross, 2006:2).

When content is shared online via online social networks, eWOM occurs. eWOM is a type of WOM that Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) say allows content to be spread to multiple individuals. The connection between viral marketing and eWOM has been described differently in past research. While some say that viral marketing is eWOM (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011), this study argues that viral marketing is merely an application of eWOM.

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory explains that people share emotions to deal with the emotional experiences that they have had (Rimé, 2009). The Social Sharing of Emotion theory was applied to this study, because, as Eckler and Bolls (2011) state, consumers are influenced by the emotional tone of the viral content. While there is a lack of theory in viral marketing literature, this study argues that if emotion plays a

central role in why content goes viral, then the Social Sharing of Emotion theory can help to better understand that role. There is also disagreement among researchers on the influence of content that elicits positive emotion versus the content that elicits negative emotion when sharing content online (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Roy, 2011).

General motivations to share content online are explored; and increasingly, emotion is said to play a key role in viral marketing. Thus, there are three objectives of this study presented in this chapter, which address why people share content online, the role of emotion in sharing content online, and whether there is a difference between the sharing of positive and negative emotional content.

This chapter is structured in the following way. Viral marketing is addressed in terms of its definition and relation to eWOM. How and why content is shared online is explained thereafter; and this is followed by defining what online social networks are, and focuses on YouTube as the context of this study. It then becomes apparent that emotion plays a key role in viral marketing, and the role of emotion in marketing (see Chapter 2) is revisited, and the remaining sections look at the role of emotion and emotional valence in viral marketing. Throughout the chapter, the three objectives of this study are revisited and argued.

3.2 DISCUSSING VIRAL MARKETING AND ITS LINK TO ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH

As presented above, viral marketing occurs when consumers speak to each other about a product or service (Phelps *et al.*, 2004). Similarly, WOM occurs when consumers speak to someone else about a product, service or brand, this is known as WOM (Golan & Zaidner, 2008). eWOM has been described as a type of WOM that allows content to spread to multiple individuals (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Viral marketing has been linked to the concept of WOM (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; MarketingSherpa.com, 2000); and some authors say that viral marketing is eWOM (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). This study argues that eWOM forms part of viral marketing. To present this argument, this section explores the viral marketing concept, eWOM, and its link with WOM and the benefits that viral marketing offers. A look at the foundations of viral marketing follows.

3.2.1 The Foundations of Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a relatively new term that has been the topic of academic debate as regards its formal definition, and also where it should be positioned in the broader marketing realm. For example, while some argue that it forms part of WOM as eWOM (for example Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011), others define viral marketing without referring specifically to WOM or eWOM (see Kirby & Marsden,

2006). Table 3.1 below provides a look at these different approaches through various key authors' definitions of viral marketing.

Table 3.1: Definitions of viral marketing, as found in past literature

	Author	Year	Definition of Viral Marketing
1	Kirby and Marsden	2006	Viral marketing refers to strategies that aim to encourage consumers to share the message of a marketing campaign with other consumers, so that the message of the campaign, as well as its influence is spread exponentially, ultimately reaching multiple consumers.
2	Phelps <i>et al.</i>	2004	Viral marketing refers to WOM by consumers who talk to each other about a product or service.
3	Vilpponen, Winter and Sundqvist	2006	Viral marketing refers to word-of-mouth communication in situations where positive network effects prevail and where the role of the influencer is active due to positive network effects.
4	Hawkins and Mothersbaugh in Larson (2009)	2007	Viral marketing is a tool used to create exponential WOM, or 'buzz', about a marketing message.
5	Datta <i>et al.</i> in Larson (2009)	2005	Viral marketing uses social networks to create exponential growth in the spread of marketing messages about the brand, similar to the spread of a viral illness.
6	Golan and Zaidner	2008:961	"Viral marketing refers to a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service."
7	Kaplan and Haenlein	2011:1	Viral marketing is "eWOM whereby some form of marketing message related to a company, brand, or product is transmitted in an exponentially growing way – often through the use of social media applications."

Table 3.1 provides seven definitions of viral marketing that are found in past literature. Firstly, the definitions of Kirby and Marsden (2006) and Golan and Zaidner (2008) relate viral marketing to strategies. This indicates the strategic importance of viral marketing as a marketing technique and its effect on consumers and brands. In other words, creating an effective viral-marketing campaign requires strategic thinking. This corresponds to the statement of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) that viral marketing campaigns require careful planning. When discussing viral marketing and eWOM later in this chapter, the strategic aspect of viral marketing will be highlighted again.

Secondly, the definitions of Kirby and Marsden (2006), Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2007) in Larson (2009), Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009 and Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) explain that viral marketing encourages the exponential spread of marketing messages. This is in agreement with Camarero and San José (2011), who state that it is essential to include the exponential spread of messages when discussing viral marketing.

In fact, Datta *et al.* (2005) in Larson (2009) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) compared viral marketing to a viral illness. Thus, the exponential aspect of viral marketing and its comparison to a viral illness, explains why the word 'viral' is included in the term 'viral marketing'. An example of a marketing campaign that went viral is the Old Spice advertisement: 'The Man Your Man Could Smell Like' by Procter & Gamble (see YouTube, 2013c), which was only 33 seconds long and achieved 23 million views in 36 hours (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). This advert will be referred to later in this chapter.

A third point to consider is that all seven definitions above refer, either directly or indirectly, to word-of-mouth between consumers within a network – as a characteristic of viral marketing. WOM, eWOM and the link between viral marketing and eWOM will be discussed later.

In considering the definitions of viral marketing found in past research (Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009; Golan & Zaidner, 2008; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2007 in Larson, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Phelps *et al.*, 2004; Vilpponen *et al.*, 2006), this study uses the reference of Golan and Zaidner (2008) to viral marketing as “a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service”. Bearing this definition of Golan and Zaidner (2008) in mind, the following sections explore eWOM, its link with viral marketing, and the benefits of viral marketing to marketers.

3.2.2 WOM, eWOM and the link between the two

Speaking about a product, service, or brand to someone else is known as WOM, a concept that is based on the diffusion of information (Golan & Zaidner, 2008) in a non-commercial manner (Huang, Lin & Lin, 2009). When applied to marketing, WOM

encourages the personal connection between the company and the consumer that is based on familiarity and trust (Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009). Additionally, WOM provides the recipient with unbiased information from friends (Smith, Coyle, Lightfoot & Scott, 2007), which has not been influenced by any marketing or persuasive tactics.

Bearing the characteristics of WOM, as explained above in mind, the arrival of digital channels (Camarero & San José, 2011), such as websites, blogs, forums and online social networks (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Roy, 2011) has provided a platform for WOM (Larson, 2009), and supplemented eWOM. To elaborate, the advent of the internet and online social networks has enhanced the effect of eWOM, where consumers are able to send a message to their said 150 friends, who in turn diffuse the message through their online social networks, resulting in the message being sent to multiple consumers (Camarero & San José, 2011).

As a consequence, millions of consumer-generated comments are accessible by consumers online (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). These allow consumers to form an opinion about brands based on the comments.

Compared to WOM, eWOM allows information to spread to multiple individuals, whereas WOM spreads information only on a face-to-face basis, thereby limiting the number of recipients (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). In the light of the above, a better understanding of eWOM is important (Goldsmith, 2006). Hsieh *et al.* (2012) maintain that more research is required on the effect of eWOM in communicating messages. Additionally, monitoring traditional WOM can be tedious (Reingen & Kernan, 1986), while the monitoring of eWOM is easier, allowing for improved analyses of and learning from eWOM (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

Bearing in mind the growing scepticism among consumers about marketing messages, (Phelps *et al.*, 2004), eWOM, or consumer-generated content, there is a cause for concern among marketers. Consumers trust each other more than they trust marketers, because the information received from people whom they know is perceived as more credible than the information that is received from the marketers (Goldsmith, 2006; Huang, Lin & Lin, 2009). Marketers are, therefore, advised to encourage consumers to spread favourable messages about their brand, so that eWOM could work to the marketer's advantage (Goldsmith, 2006).

Using eWOM benefits marketers for the following reasons: a different marketing strategy may be applied to each online channel that is used; the low costs associated with using eWOM; the ease of accessibility, and the exponential spread of eWOM messages – where such messages can reach multiple consumers (Goldsmith, 2006).

eWOM allows marketers to use the internet to conduct market research, by analysing what consumers say online (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). Thus, from this point forward this

study will refer to eWOM, as opposed to WOM, as an appropriate application to the context of this study. Specifically, considering that this study's definition of viral marketing includes eWOM as a tool that viral marketing uses (see Golan & Zaidner, 2008), it is pertinent that this study discusses eWOM in the context of viral marketing. The connection between viral marketing and eWOM is addressed below.

3.2.3 The Connection between Viral Marketing and eWOM

Past research describes viral marketing as strategic in nature (Golan & Zaidner, 2008; Kirbey & Marsden, 2006); while eWOM is described as being based on "informal communications" (Litvin *et al.*, 2008). However, as stated earlier, viral marketing has been linked to the concept of WOM (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; MarketingSherpa.com, 2000). Recollecting the discussion on the definitions of viral marketing earlier, this study uses the definition of Golan and Zaidner (2008), as being "a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service".

There is a strong link between viral marketing and eWOM that is also depicted in past research (see for example Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009). To justify the link between viral marketing and eWOM, Table 3.2 (see below) provides two definitions of eWOM, and the definition of Golan and Zaidner (2008) for viral marketing, to which this study refers. Table 3.2 serves as a platform for showcasing the connection between viral marketing and eWOM, as explained below.

Table 3.2: Definitions of eWOM and this study's definition of viral marketing

Author	Year	Definition of eWOM	Golan and Zaidner's (2008:961) Definition of Viral Marketing
Hennig-Thurau <i>et al.</i>	2004:2	"Any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet."	Viral marketing refers to "a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service".
Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan	2008:461	"Informal communications directed at consumers through internet-based technology concerning the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers or providers."	

Of interest to this study, the definitions of Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) and Litvin *et al.* (2008), as shown in Table 3.2, both touch on the theme that eWOM uses the internet to share content with multiple individuals. Now, consider the definition of Golan and Zaidner (2008) for viral marketing that this study uses, as shown in Table 3.2. When consumers share content with multiple people, the content can be spread exponentially (Camarero & San José, 2011). Thus, as viral marketing is defined as strategies that encourage consumers to speak to each other about a product or service (Golan & Zaidner, 2008); and this essentially spreads the content exponentially with multiple people (Kirby & Marsden, 2006), this study maintains that viral marketing is an application of eWOM. Figure 3.1 which follows depicts how viral marketing is viewed in terms of eWOM.

Figure 3.1: The link between eWOM and viral marketing

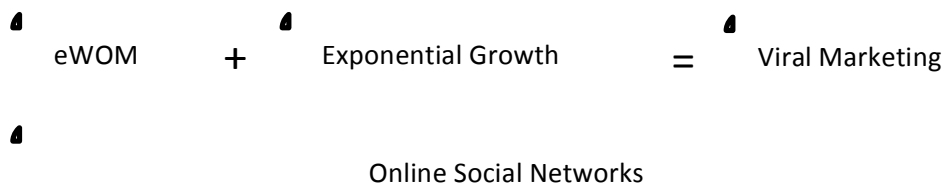


Figure 3.1 above is a modification of the model of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011:254). Their model represents the *relationship between WOM and viral marketing*. This model of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) shows that WOM and exponential growth result in viral marketing which, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), is eWOM.

However, this study disagrees that viral marketing is eWOM. Instead, this study modifies the model of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), by replacing WOM with eWOM, and defining viral marketing differently (see Figure 3.1 above), because, as explained earlier, eWOM is WOM that is applied to online social networks, which is the context of this study. Additionally, although Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) referred to the social media, this study uses the term online social networks, for consistency purposes.

Figure 3.1 above describes that eWOM – added to exponential growth via the online social networks – results in viral marketing. To adapt to consumers using the internet, marketers should note that online social networks encourage eWOM, and essentially viral marketing (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Additionally, interaction between companies and customers gives way to viral marketing campaigns (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011). Thus, viral marketing depends on eWOM occurring exponentially and spontaneously via the online social networks. Camarero and San José (2011) support this by stating that viral marketing uses eWOM, along with online social networks.

Since viral marketing is an application of eWOM, and uses the online social networks (see Camarero & San José, 2011), it is important to understand how to conduct viral marketing effectively when using these tools. The reason why viral marketing should be conducted well is because it benefits marketers in ways that are explained in the following section.

3.2.4 The Benefits of Viral Marketing to Marketers

Understanding how to conduct successful viral marketing campaigns allows marketers to avoid the risk of experiencing negative WOM, or no coverage at all (Berger & Milkman, 2009). For example, when Burger King launched in Cape Town, a Twitter account named 'BurgerKingZA' (see www.Twitter.com/BurgerKingZA) was created, and

consumers in South Africa began tweeting their excitement about having the new franchise in Cape Town. This created an exponential growth of awareness about the launch, and resulted in lengthy queues outside the fast-food outlet for weeks after its opening (see Seggie, 2013).

Consumers began tweeting '#BurgerKingZA' to ask how long the queues were at a particular time, to determine whether they should venture out to Burger King, or not. When consumers constantly read tweets about Burger King, it reminds them of the brand and the store. This is an example of how viral marketing can be beneficial, when it is successful. The following points identify the benefits that viral marketing can bring to marketers.

Firstly, as explained earlier, viral marketing is characterised by the exponential spread of marketing content online. Thus, viral marketing is associated with low costs and efficient results (Camarero & San José, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011), because content can be spread at a faster rate and to a greater number of recipients, which encourages more consumers to try out the products and services of, and to speak about the brand (Ferguson, 2008).

Secondly, viral marketing allows marketers to target consumers effectively. It is important to target the right individuals, in order to make content go viral (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). In the context of viral marketing, consumers are better able to target their 'friends', by having a more accurate understanding of what they would enjoy or appreciate (Bulkeley, 2002 in Larson, 2009). Conducting viral marketing, therefore, assists marketers in terms of the 'reach and targeting' of the marketing message. In this way, viral marketing allows brands to share marketing messages by relying on consumer-to-consumer WOM (Ferguson, 2008). This is important, considering that a fifth of individuals can contribute 80% to spreading a message (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

Lastly, viral marketing contributes to the maintenance of effective integrated marketing and communication (IMC) strategies (Larson, 2009), by ensuring that messages are spread through the online social networks. Bearing in mind that consumers are increasingly resorting to online social networks to communicate or to follow brands, IMC strategies are highly vital. A successful viral marketing campaign could, therefore, portray a positive image of the brand on all the brand's online social networks, which could result in a 'viral' positive image of the brand.

To determine what makes content go viral, the following section attends to how and why content is shared online.

3.3 SHARING CONTENT ONLINE

Since the internet is integrated into daily life, it is more accessible, and therefore easier for consumers to share content online. To better understand the growing act of sharing content online, this section looks at how content is shared online.

3.3.1 How is Content Shared Online?

The advent of technology has enhanced communication, as companies now communicate to consumers in a two-way approach, as opposed to the traditional one-way manner (Camarero & San José, 2011). Sharing content online is a daily activity for many consumers (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Izawa, 2010), and consumers are now able to share their experiences and opinions with multiple recipients on online platforms (Berger & Milkman, 2010). For instance, when consumers have their nails done at a beauty salon, and are pleased with the outcome, they may tweet a picture of their nails and promote the salon via their social network.

Consumer-generated comments about products or companies that are available online are characterised by: (1) Allowing consumers to read other consumers' comments or share their own comments; (2) having a stronger influence on consumers because consumer-generated comments are easier to create and understand; and (3) referring to all aspects of consumption (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Thus, consumers are given greater power (Camarero & San José, 2011; Larson, 2009) in influencing what is said about brands online (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Roy, 2011), and thereby essentially determining a brand's reputation (Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009). Companies should, consequently, better understand the online social networks, to improve their profitability and customer loyalty (Clifford-Marsh, 2009 in Larson, 2009).

Consumers can learn about a brand, by using the online social networks to obtain information (Roy, 2011) about the brand. Additionally, consumers are able to communicate their preferences or needs online (Sansone *et al.*, 2012) and can also influence what is said about brands online (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Camarero & San José, 2011; Larson, 2009; Roy, 2011). Therefore, companies are required to consistently communicate with consumers, to provide and receive feedback about their products and services, and to effectively manage their public relations – in order to maintain a favourable reputation (Sansone *et al.*, 2012).

Events that occur may influence consumers to share content, where sharing content about the event would be common because the content would be highly relevant at the time, as people would be largely informed about it (Berger & Milkman, 2010). This relates to the 'trending topics' aspect of online social networks, where topics that are most talked about at a specific time are known as 'trending' (see Nolte, 2009).

Knowing how content is shared online is important. This study defines 'sharing' content online as: (1) Telling others about content via word-of-mouth (WOM); (2) 'liking'; (3) forwarding; (4) posting; or (5) commenting on content via an online social network; or (6) following people who have posted the content online (see Section 6.2.1). Marketers benefit even more by understanding why consumers choose to share content online. Thus, to better monitor consumer-generated content, and viral marketing, the following section identifies factors that encourage consumers to share content online and the attributes of content that are most likely to be shared online.

3.3.2 What Encourages Consumers to Share Content Online?

Viral marketing is fundamentally based on passing messages to others; and it depends on individuals to carry out its success (Camarero & San José, 2011). However, the reason why each individual decides to share content differs (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Botha and Reyneke (2013) argue that when determining what makes videos go viral, the content of the video should be considered. In the study of Phelps *et al.* (2004), the participants expressed the view that the reasons for not sharing emails were: lack of interest in, irrelevancy of, or being offended by the content of the email.

Additionally, others maintain that emotion encourages people to share content online (see Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Phelps *et al.*, 2004; Nelson-field *et al.*, 2011). This issue will be discussed later. Therefore, the reason why each individual decides to share content differs (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Thus, further clarity is required on what encourages consumers to share content online. The following paragraphs summarise what previous studies have said about why consumers are encouraged to share content online.

Altruism and *self-benefit* are two dominant reasons for consumers to share content online (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). *Altruistically*, consumers are more likely to share information that they believe would assist their online social network (Roy, 2011); for example, interesting and practically useful content, such as learning about a discount at a restaurant (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011). This is because it assists others in conducting more successful purchases; it allows the sender to feel good about being altruistic (Roy, 2011); it improves interpersonal relationships within networks (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Sansone *et al.*, 2012); and it adds value to the network (Roy, 2011). For example, sharing content about the cancellation of an event on Twitter benefits the online social network because it informs them about the cancellation before arriving at the cancelled event.

In terms of *self-benefit*, consumers share content in order to gain socially through better integration and positioning in society, and being socially recognised as knowledgeable, philanthropic and trustworthy (Roy, 2011). For instance, being the first to tweet about the death of a well-known public figure would serve to portray oneself as up-to-date,

and the one to ask about current affairs in the future. This is in agreement with the statement of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) that consumers share content, which they perceive is not already known by people in their online social network.

From a social perspective, it may be said that consumers' *social capital* drives viral marketing: passing content is more likely to occur, when the online social networks are large, and they can target consumers who are well-integrated into their online social network (Camarero & San José, 2011). A 'social hub', for example, is an individual who has many connections (Goldenberg, Han, Lehmann & Hong, 2009). Thus, to encourage their marketing messages to go viral, social hubs should be targeted by marketers. Sharing emotion socially can improve social bonds, because when consumers share emotion, they can obtain social empathy (Rimé, 2009) (see Section 2.3).

Content that encourages consumers to voluntarily communicate with each other about brands (Camarero & San José, 2011; Porter & Golan, 2006) is more likely to go viral. Thus, consumers' attitude towards the content, their connection with the sender of the content (Camarero & San José, 2011), and the perceived credibility of the content (Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009) influences their likelihood to open and share the content online. For instance, a favourable attitude towards the sender of content increases the likelihood that consumers would be receptive to that content (Camarero & San José, 2011).

Fourthly, viral marketing depends on the *content* of the campaign (see Camarero & San José, 2011; Hsieh *et al.*, 2012; Porter & Golan, 2006). Researchers provide different conclusions on which content is likely to be shared. It is said that content that relaxes, satisfies (Camarero & San José, 2011), interests (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Camarero & San José, 2011), surprises (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Sansone *et al.*, 2012), humours (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Hsieh *et al.*, 2012), or entertains consumers is more likely to go viral (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Consumer Insights Groups, n.d).

It has also been said that people also share content because of the overall message of the content (Clark, 2013), where annoying or boring messages are said to be unlikely to capture consumers' attention (Camarero & San José, 2011; Hsieh *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, there are gaps in the literature, and a failure to discuss all the aspects of content. This would encourage people to share the content online. This study, therefore, looks at the different factors together, by considering that content can be entertaining, humorous, interesting, unique, as well as popular; and it can also convey a message to its viewers (see Figure 6.1).

The relevance of content should be considered when understanding why content is shared online (see for example Botha and Reyneke, 2013; Ho & Dempsey, 2010;

Wedmore, 2013). Botha and Reyneke (2013) argue that the relevance of content plays an important role in the success of viral marketing. Phelps *et al.* (2004) found that reasons for not sharing content were based on the relevance of the content to the viewer. Therefore, this study looks at relevance when determining why content is shared online. Hsieh *et al.* (2012) explain that consumers prefer viewing and are more willing to share content, and specifically videos, that have better sound and visual effects. For example, 'Gangnam Style' (see YouTube, 2013b), which is currently the most viewed YouTube video (BBC, 2012), has a catchy tune and appealing visual images. Since YouTube is a focus of this study, it is appropriate to consider factors, such as music and the visuals of content in better understanding what makes content go viral.

In the light of the above explanation of what previous researchers have said about why content is shared online, and the importance of understanding what makes content go viral, the first objective of this study is provided below – to better equip marketers in understanding what consumers' behaviour comprises as regards online sharing.

Objective 1: To determine what encourages people to share content online.

Objective 1 aims to determine why consumers share content online, bearing in mind the aforementioned reasons, namely: *altruism*, *self-benefit*, *social capital* and the nature of the content. As online social networks serve as media for exchanging content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011), the following section explores online social networks.

3.4 EXPLORING ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Consumer-to-consumer communication has evolved due to the internet (Roy, 2011). Consumers are more likely to communicate online rather than face-to-face; and, due to ease of accessibility and availability, they are now better able to obtain, as well as to share unbiased information about products (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Roy, 2011). Therefore, online social networks are vital information providers that influence the consumer decision-making process (Roy, 2011). For instance, if a consumer were looking for feedback about a new restaurant that they wished to try, they would search for the name of the restaurant on Twitter, or on the other online social networks, such as Yelp (see www.Yelp.com), to see what other consumers have said about the restaurant. Thus, bearing in mind that online social networks are used to provide content (Roy, 2011), it is fitting to discuss the sharing of content on online social networks.

An online social network is “an Internet community where individuals interact, often through profiles that (re)present their public personae (and their network of connections) to others (Acquisti & Gross, 2006:2). Yuppiefchef (see www.Yuppiefchef.com) shares

relevant content, such as articles and pictures with their followers on the Twitter online social network (see www.Twitter.com/Yuppiechef). In this way, Yuppiechef engages with its followers, and uses the online social networks to exchange content with consumers. This section addresses (i) what online social networks are and (ii) how content is shared across online social networks. To better understand what online social networks are, Figure 3.2 below provides definitions of *networks*, *social networks*, as well as the abovementioned definition of *online social networks* (by Acquisti and Gross, 2006:2) that this study uses, because the 'online social networks' fall under the umbrella terms: 'networks' and 'social networks'.

Figure 3.2: Definitions of networks, social networks and online social networks

- A **network** is “a set of nodes and links, representing individuals and the interactions among them, respectively” (Pastor-Satorras, Vázquez, & Vespignani, 2001:1).

▪
▼

- A **social network** is “a set of people... connected by a set of socially meaningful relationships” (Wellman, 1996:1).

▪
▼

- An **online social network** is “an Internet community where individuals interact, often through profiles that (re)present their public personae (and their network of connections) to others (Acquisti & Gross, 2006:2).

Firstly, individuals in *networks* are connected by interacting with each other (Pastor-Satorras, Vázquez, & Vespignani, 2011). *Social networks* are described as connections between people, based on “socially meaningful relationships” (Wellman, 1996:1). Online social networks, however, are platforms where individuals connect with each other through online public profiles (Acquisti & Gross, 2006). This has also been said by Boyd and Ellison (2007:211), who described online social networks as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, [to] articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and [to] view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”.

The fact that individuals on online social networks interact via their public personae (Acquisti & Gross, 2006), and that individuals on networks (Pastor-Satorras *et al.*, 2011) and social networks (Wellman, 2006) do not, serves as a distinguishing factor of

online social networks from networks, and from the social networks. Online social networks also interact online, and not face-to-face, as is the case with the social networks. Having clarified the distinction between online social networks, networks and social networks, the term online social networks is used in this study – for consistency purposes.

Marketers should better understand online social networks because they benefit customers and companies in the following ways: (1) They encourage interaction between them (Larson, 2009); (2) they allow for them to communicate on a personal basis (Roy, 2011); (3) they create relationships between them; (4) they provide them with information; (5) they improve the brand equity; (6) they benefit companies' reputation; (7) they improve the segmentation of customers (Sansone *et al.*, 2012); and (8) they are associated with low costs and greater efficiency (Berger & Milkman, 2010).

YouTube is an online social network that allows users to upload videos, to comment on, or like videos, and to subscribe to other users or channels in which they are interested (see www.YouTube.com). Twitter, another online social network, allows users to post content, such as status updates and multimedia on their accounts (see www.Twitter.com). While this study focuses on YouTube as an online social network where people share content, there are some references throughout the study to Twitter. Others include Facebook (see www.Facebook.com), Pinterest (see www.Pinterest.com) and Instagram (see www.Instagram.com), among many others, as online social networks are growing each day.

The following section looks at the sharing of videos on YouTube, which is the online social network that this study uses.

3.5 USING THE VIDEO-SHARING ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK YOUTUBE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND VIRAL MARKETING AND WHY CONTENT IS SHARED ONLINE

Viral marketing campaigns require social connectedness, in order to function (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; MarketingSherpa.com, 2000). Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) state that viral marketing uses online social networks, because the social, community and network aspect of online social networks serve as a platform for sharing content with many people. From a marketing perspective, the online social networks, therefore, allow marketing content to go viral because they influence consumer responses to marketing; and they encourage multiple consumers to speak about brands in a favourable light, especially those who prefer online marketing to traditional marketing (Sansone *et al.*, 2012).

The online social network that this study uses is YouTube. Berger and Milkman (2010) explain that the nature of the online social network influences the likelihood that content will be shared. In the light hereof, an exploration of YouTube as a platform for viral marketing, which is also the online social network chosen for this study, is presented below to better understand its use in viral marketing.

The growing ease in using the internet to share content online has resulted in videos being spread at an increasing rate: when consumers view videos that contain marketing messages, they are able to forward the video to multiple people, resulting in an exponential spread of the message (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012). For example, in July 2012, the YouTube video 'Gangman Style' by Psy was uploaded (see YouTube, 2013b). By November 2012, it became YouTube's most viewed video (BBC, 2012), and by December 2012, it had reached 1 billion views: a world record (Grandoni, 2012). Gangman Style is an example of a video that went viral (Bass, 2012).

Viral videos depend on consumers to forward the video (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012). Bearing in mind that online social networks give consumers power to generate and view content online (Lee, 2012), YouTube, in particular, allows internet users to create and view unlimited videos, of multiple genres (Santos, Rocha, Rezende & Loureiro, 2007). YouTube has over 1 billion monthly unique visitors (Anon, 2013), and most consumers view YouTube as a symbol for the internet (Herold, 2008). Thus, although online videos are popularly used by marketers, more research is required on what influences consumers to share videos online (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012), because consumers can influence the success, or failure, of a viral-marketing campaign.

To recap, Objective 1 (see Page 55) addresses why content is shared online. This relates to the discussions above, which broadly address viral marketing, online social networks, and the relation between the two, in order to better understand why consumers share content online, and essentially encourage content to go viral. More research is required on understanding why consumers share videos online (Wallsten, 2010). Interestingly, authors state that emotion plays a central role in content going viral (see for example, Berger & Milkman, 2009; Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Dobeles *et al.*, 2007). However, few of these studies are empirical, and studies often have contradictory findings. Therefore, after looking at broad motivations for sharing content online, a particular focus is placed on the role that emotion plays in the sharing of content online. Thus, the following section focuses on the role of emotion in sharing content online, and its important influence on viral marketing.

3.6 EMOTION IN VIRAL MARKETING

Section 2.2 took an in-depth look at the importance of emotion in the social sciences; and Section 2.4 looked at the importance of emotion in marketing. The following section explains the three objectives of this study. This section elaborates on the role that emotion plays in viral marketing, beginning with a brief outlook on the role that emotion plays in marketing in general.

3.6.1 A Recap on Emotion and its Role in Marketing

Emotion plays a critical role in marketing, because it strongly influences consumers' overall attitude towards a brand (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012; Jones *et al.*, 2008) and their decision-making process (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). While some consumers deal with brands or purchases in a rational manner, others do so emotionally, which is why when consumers interact with brands via technological devices, it is necessary to interact with consumers in a manner that relates to consumers emotionally, as well as rationally (Chittaro & Ranon, 2002).

Consumers remember an emotion reaction frequently more often than they remember the marketing content (Jones *et al.*, 2008). For instance, inducing positive emotion in consumers encourages positive attitudes towards the brand and intentions to purchase the brand (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012). It is, therefore, beneficial for brands to influence consumers to associate the brand with positive emotion (Jones *et al.*, 2008).

Earlier it was discussed what other researchers have said on why content is shared online (see for example Berger & Milkman, 2010; Camarero & San José, 2011; Roy, 2011). However, past researchers have also stated that consumers share viral content because of emotion (Dobele *et al.*, 2007). Specifically, it has been suggested that the emotion that derives from watching videos encourages the video content to go viral (Dobele *et al.*, 2007; Phelps *et al.*, 2004). In the light hereof, it is important to consider emotion in better understanding why content is shared online.

The following sections address emotion and emotional valence in terms of viral marketing.

3.6.2 The Role that Emotion Plays in Viral Marketing

Emotion plays an important role in viral marketing (Phelps *et al.*, 2004) because consumers are influenced by the emotional tone of viral content (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Thus, to better understand why consumers share content and what makes online content go viral, marketers need to explore the psychological processes experienced by consumers, and the influence on their likelihood to share content, by focusing on the emotion derived from content that is released to consumers (Berger & Milkman, 2010).

To do this, marketers should aim to recognise consumer emotion, in order to provide an environment that appropriately relates to consumers' emotional responses (Leon, Nikov & Chadee, 2010). For example, Leon *et al.* (2010), who studied the role of emotion in eCommerce, found that websites should appeal to consumer emotions, and particularly to the emotions of the targeted consumer, because companies should focus on the way consumers feel after viewing the content (Leon *et al.*, 2010).

While past research has suggested that content, which has attributes such as being informative, humorous and creative is more likely to go viral, there is an agreement among researchers that the most important factor that influences content in going viral is the emotional reaction that the content creates in the viewer (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Dobele *et al.*, 2007).

Dobele *et al.* (2007) argue that viral content should emotionally connect with the consumer viewing the content, because the Social Sharing of Emotion is integral in viral-marketing campaigns. Botha and Reyneke (2013) state that because the argument of Dobele *et al.* (2007) was not tested, and the authors often did not base their conclusion on empirical research, more research is required to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing.

Thus, to gain further insight into emotion in viral marketing, the following objective was formulated:

Objective 2: To determine the role that emotion plays in sharing content online.

To address Objective 2, whether participants of the study had general emotional reactions to content, as well as their likelihood to share the content with others online, was explored. The circumplex of emotion (see Figure 2.1) was also used to further understand the emotional reactions experienced by the participants, in terms of emotional valence and arousal.

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory (see Section 2.3) might help to explain why the emotional reaction when watching a video could cause viewers to share the content with their online social networks. The theory explains that when consumers experience emotions, they are encouraged to share these emotions with others (Rimé, 2007; 2009). A consumer's emotion can influence the emotion of other consumers that surround them (Barsade, 2002). Therefore, if a consumer has an emotion reaction after watching a video, they could be encouraged to share the video with others, to pass on the emotional reaction had. An explanation of applying the Social Sharing of Emotion theory to understanding the role of emotion in sharing content online follows.

3.7 THE SOCIAL SHARING OF EMOTION THEORY APPLIED TO THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN VIRAL MARKETING

When people have emotional reactions, it impacts the emotion of those who are around them (Barsade, 2002; Gountas & Ewing, 2003; Gountas, Ewing & Gountas, 2007). Thus, emotion should be studied from a social perspective (Butler & Gross, 2009) because emotion is social (Chakrabarti & Berthon, 2012).

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory explains that people sometimes share emotional reactions in order to cope with an ambiguous emotional reaction, thereby using their online social network to better understand the emotion experienced (Rimé, 2009). Thus, sharing emotion socially can improve social bonds, because when consumers share emotion, they can obtain social empathy (Rimé, 2009). This theory can be applied to the sharing of content that elicits emotion, in online social networks (Botha & Botha, 2013). Online social networks allow individuals to share their “thoughts, activities and information” quickly with their contacts in the online social network (Kivran-Swaine, & Naaman, 2011:1).

Therefore, to effectively address these objectives, the Social Sharing of Emotion theory introduced in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.3) is applied to this study; and it is used to better understand the role of emotion in sharing content online.

It has been found that consumers share content when they experience positive emotion, such as *happy*, *excited*, *connected* and *inspired* (Phelps *et al.*, 2004). Hsieh *et al.* (2012) explain that people share videos to pass on the positive emotions felt after watching the video to entertain the recipient. However, contrasting statements have been given regarding negative emotions and sharing content.

Camarero and San José (2011) found that a negative emotion derived from viewing the content does not influence the consumer’s intention to share the content with others. However, Edell and Burke (1987:426) argue that experiencing negative emotions could encourage people to share content with others. Thus, while although Camarero and San José (2011) state that negative emotion does not encourage the sharing of content online, Edell and Burke (1987) stated the exact opposite.

Some researchers state that positive content are spread faster than negative content (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Others, however, say that in online social networks, negative content spreads more quickly than positive content (Hill, Rand, Nowak & Christakis, 2010), and that consumers share negative experiences with more people than they would share positive experiences (Roy, 2011). Additionally, some argue that the spreading of positive and negative content does not differ (Nelson-Field *et al.*, 2011; Rimé *et al.*, 1992).

Thus, there are contradictory views in past literature, regarding the influence of negative emotions on sharing content online (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012), as well as on the sharing of positive and negative emotions via online content (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Hill *et al.*, 2010; Roy, 2011).

In the light hereof, this study aims to gain greater insight into whether content that elicits positive emotions is shared more than content that elicits negative emotion, with the following and final objective of this study:

Objective 3: To investigate whether there is a difference between the sharing of content that elicits positive emotion versus the sharing of content that elicits negative emotion

The above three objectives that address why people share content online, the role of emotions in sharing content online, and whether content that elicits positive emotions is shared more than negative emotions, serve the purpose of better understanding the role of emotion in viral marketing.

3.8 CONCLUSION

While it has been found that some of the main reasons for sharing content online are *altruism*, *self-benefit* (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Roy, 2011), *social capital* (Camarero & San José, 2011), and the *nature* of the content (Camarero & San José, 2011; Porter & Golan, 2006), researchers agree that an important aspect to consider is the role of emotion in sharing content online (Berger & Milkman, 2009; Dobele *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the first objective of this study addresses why people share content online.

This study defines viral marketing as “a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service” (Golan & Zaidner, 2008). In terms of its link with eWOM, it was argued in this chapter that viral marketing is an application of eWOM, using a figure adopted from Kaplan and Haenlein (2011).

The Social Sharing of Emotion theory explains that consumers share their emotions when they experience emotional episodes where what they expected to experience differed from what they actually experience (Rimé, 2009). Thus, the emotional reaction that people have to content is an important consideration when understanding what makes content viral. In the light hereof, this study’s second objective is to determine the role of emotion in sharing content online.

Additionally, there are conflicting opinions in past research regarding whether content that elicits positive emotion is spread more readily than content that elicits negative

emotion, and vice versa (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Hill *et al.*, 2010; Roy, 2011). Therefore, a final objective of this study is to investigate whether content that elicits positive emotion is shared more readily than content that elicits negative emotion.

To investigate these objectives, Chapter 4 explains the methodology that was used in this study.

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CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, particular attention was given to viral marketing and the role that emotion, in particular, plays in viral marketing. This was done, in order to gain insight into why consumers share content online. This chapter explains the methodology used to measure the three objectives stated in Chapter 3.

As explained in Chapter 2, there are differing views on emotion; and more literature is required on understanding how emotion impacts marketing. Additionally, Chapter 3 addressed the need to learn more about the role of emotion in viral marketing, since online social networks are increasingly becoming integrated into daily life. Thus, further understanding is required on the role of emotion in marketing, and particularly in viral marketing.

This study questions why consumers share content online; and what the role of emotional valence is in sharing content on online social networks. Additionally, as explained in Chapter 3, the three objectives of this study are: (1) To determine what encourages people to share content online; (2) to investigate the role of emotion in sharing content online; and (3) to determine whether content that elicits positive emotion is more readily shared than content that elicits a negative emotional response (see Section 4.2).

Little is known about the spread of content online. This chapter attends to how these objectives were measured. This study is exploratory in nature, where the aim is to explore and gain insight into why people share content online, and in particular the role that emotion plays in the sharing of content online. In exploratory studies, qualitative research is an appropriate application (Malhotra, 2010). Additionally, while quantitative research has been adapted to viral marketing literature, it fails to provide a thorough understanding of the participants' emotions (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Thus, qualitative research is conducted with the aim of gaining further insight into the topic.

To obtain an accurate representation of internet users in South Africa, quota sampling was used. Following the sampling process, the data-collection process is discussed. Lastly, the ethical considerations will be addressed.

This chapter, therefore, starts with a discussion of the research design and (see Section 4.2) this is followed by a description of the target population and the sampling design (see Section 4.3). Thereafter, the development of the interview questions (see Appendix A) (see Section 4.4), the data collection (see Section 4.5) and the data-analysis methods (see Section 4.6) will be discussed. Lastly, the ethical considerations that were

considered (see Section 4.7) and a conclusion (see Section 4.8) are provided. It is suggested that methodologies are motivated by the research question, such that the research question is answered by the findings, and they relate to the qualitative research (Kozinets, 2010). Thus, to attend to the research question and objectives, a two-stage research design was used.

4.2 TWO-STAGE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Research designs are an outline of a research study that specifically describes how the research question will be answered (Malhotra, 2010). Effective research designs are characterised by a clear focus and research questions, a consideration of the time and resource constraints, clearly defined sampling methods, and a strong connection with the theory of the study (Flick, 2007). Thus, this study applied the research question and sampling methods in a clearly defined manner that provides a rich understanding of the role that emotion plays in viral marketing.

A key point to note about this methodology is that it applies a two-stage research design to obtain the findings, where the absence of important information resulting from one method could be found in the second method. This means that there were two methods that were used, namely netnography and semi-structured interviews. Thus, to prevent confusion or ambiguity, while reading this methodology, certain sections address each stage of the two-stage research design individually, where necessary.

Table 1 below portrays the two-stage research design that is applied to this study. Stage 1 consists of netnography. Considering that viral marketing occurs through online social networks, netnography is applied to this study. Netnography, a derivation of ethnography, is a method of analysing online consumer behaviour by observation. Ethnography is the observation of behaviour; and this can be applied to online environments. Before exploring netnography, an explanation of ethnography is required.

Netnography was particularly appropriate for this study, because it was applied by observing YouTube users' sharing behaviour for a period of time. Netnography is also a relatively new method that requires more research on how to improve its application in future research. The results obtained from the netnography study were used to assist in implementing the second stage of the two-stage research design.

The second stage of the two-stage research design used semi-structured interviews developed from the findings of the netnography study. The reason why semi-structured interviews were used was to gain further insight into the emotion that participants felt when watching videos, as well as their reasons for sharing the content online.

To best describe the two-stage research design and method, this section discusses exploratory research designs, qualitative research, netnography and semi-structured interviews. Each concept is explained and, where applicable, the advantages and disadvantages are discussed and the reason for choosing to use it is justified.

4.2.1 Exploratory Research Design

Exploratory research aims to gain insight into and essentially have a greater understanding of the topic at hand (Lagger, Lux & Marques, 2011; Malhotra, 2010; McGivern, 2006). This is accomplished by comparing the findings obtained from the research study with common knowledge (Calder, 1977). Thus, with the intention of gaining insight into what encourages a person to share content online, this study used an exploratory research design. Further justification for why an exploratory research design was chosen for this study will be provided in the following paragraphs.

Conclusive research designs attend to clearly defined hypotheses, formalised research processes, large and representative samples, and a quantitative approach to analysing the data (Malhotra, 2010). On the other hand, applying an exploratory research design allows researchers to define the research problem; and more specifically, to formulate hypotheses during the research process, determine what should be researched further, conduct a more flexible research process, use a small and non-representative sample, apply a qualitative approach to analysing data (Malhotra, 2010) and to create opportunities for further studies (Lagger *et al.*, 2011).

In the light of these concerns, the nature of exploratory research is such that new insights arise in the course of the research process that could change the direction of the study (Malhotra, 2010). Thus, exploratory research designs are suitable for studies such as this one, where greater flexibility and a large amount of insight are required.

For instance, Calder (1977) explains that researchers conduct focus groups because of its less-structured nature, which allows for the creation of theory and hypotheses that can be used in future research. While focus groups were not applied to this study, the findings obtained from the netnography study, which is also a flexible research method, were used to formulate the questions for the semi-structured interviews. Thus, applying an exploratory research design was beneficial to this study.

Considering that there is comparatively little research on viral marketing, and still less empirical studies on going viral, it was appropriate for this study to adopt an exploratory research design, because the role of emotion in viral marketing is not yet clearly defined in the literature. However, there are disadvantages of exploratory research designs that were considered.

Exploratory research does not guarantee that the information obtained provides an accurate representation of the target population, possibly resulting in inconclusive findings (McGivern, 2006). Therefore, care was taken with the reporting of the findings.

Similar studies which had addressed the effect of emotional tone on viral video marketing campaigns (see Eckler and Bolls, 2011), the role of emotion in consumer behaviour (see Penz and Hogg, 2011), and what makes people watch online videos (see Lagger *et al.*, 2011) also used exploratory research designs. Thus, it is appropriate that this study should be exploratory in nature. The next section justifies why this study conducted qualitative research.

4.2.2 Qualitative Research

As explained in the previous section, this is an exploratory study. An exploratory study is said to greatly benefit from conducting qualitative research (Malhotra, 2010). Thus, this section explains the application of qualitative research to the study, beginning with a look at what qualitative research is.

4.2.2.1 What is qualitative research?

Although qualitative research has previously been referred to as research that is not quantitative, there are currently many more ways to define qualitative research (Calder, 1977; Flick, 2007). However, agreeing on a single definition for qualitative research is increasingly challenging among researchers (Flick, 2007). Thus, this study addresses qualitative research by referring to its characteristics. To elaborate, qualitative research utilises words instead of numbers; it aims to gain insight into participants' perspectives; it should, therefore, provide a better understanding of the issue at hand; and it is essentially a term that refers to many methods of conducting research on the social aspects, as there are a variety of qualitative research techniques currently available (Flick, 2007).

Qualitative research is a better option for providing a thorough understanding of participants' emotions and motivations in viral research, compared to quantitative research (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). This is because qualitative research provides a more in-depth interpretation of the participants' reactions and personal thoughts, as measured in a natural environment (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Malhotra, 2010).

Qualitative research techniques are categorised as either direct or indirect, where the direct approach does not hide the purpose of the study, while the indirect approach does so (Malhotra, 2010). This study uses both approaches, where the indirect approach is applied to the netnography study; and the direct approach is applied to the semi-structured interviews.

4.2.2.2 What are the advantages of qualitative research?

The advantages of applying qualitative research are as follows. By analysing the common practices of people, qualitative research provides insight into the experiences that they have, by observing and recording how people interact and communicate with each other in terms of their perceptions, actions and experiences (Flick, 2007). This allows for a subjective and in-depth insight into consumers (Calder, 1977).

There is a need to gain more knowledge about when to apply which qualitative technique, and how to apply it effectively (Flick, 2007). Thus, when interpreting and analysing participants in a natural setting, this is a dominant feature of qualitative research; it could also be challenging, because it means that intuition plays a vital role in conducting qualitative research (Flick, 2007; Kumar, Aaker & Day, 1999:214); and, therefore, the role that the researcher plays is important because the research experience allows them to contribute their opinions to the study (Flick, 2007).

The researchers of this study, therefore, conducted the research themselves.

4.2.2.3 What are the disadvantages of qualitative research?

A first challenge is associated with the reporting qualitative findings; and it relates to presenting what has been found from the research accurately. This is why there is a need to apply assessments to the level of quality in the findings obtained from qualitative research (Flick, 2007). Thus, when addressing the findings of this study, relevancy, quality and accuracy were considered. The specific ways that the quality of information obtained was assessed will be explained later in this chapter.

Qualitative research is influenced by participants' attitudes towards aspects of the study, such as its topic or context (Flick, 2007). This leads to a second issue, where participants may be hesitant to honestly express information about their subconscious, to avoid harming their social standing (Malhotra, 2010). Specifically, Malhotra (2010) mentions that when answering questions about the emotional aspect of their subconscious, participants may hide their honest feelings, in order to prevent damaging their social standing, or answering in a biased manner. Additionally, Rimé *et al.* (2009) explained that using qualitative methods to study the Social Sharing of Emotion is challenging, because, in the participants' answers, the difference between actual "feelings" and "facts" with regard to the reasons why they shared their emotions, is not clearly distinguished.

To address this second concern, the participants in the semi-structured interviews were interviewed with their consent and voluntary participation; and they were told that their responses would remain anonymous. The researcher also made participants feel

comfortable and relaxed when answering questions. In addition, regarding the netnography study where YouTube users' activity on YouTube was observed, individuals may choose whether to make their YouTube activity public. Thus, while the netnography study participants were informed about their inclusion in the study, their choice to make their YouTube activity public meant that they were comfortable sharing the activity with others. Thus, the second drawback of qualitative research has been dealt with in this study.

It should be noted that Lager *et al.* (2011) conducted a quantitative study based on what they found in their qualitative study; and Calder (1977) stated that using a qualitative research approach without adding a quantitative research approach can result in findings that are basically common knowledge, which have not been "scientifically" tested (Calder, 1977). Additionally, when inferences are made about a target population, and are based on a 'weak' sample size, the issue of generalizability arises (Calder, 1977). Thus, it is suggested that qualitative research should be followed by quantitative research, in order to reduce the risks associated with generalisability (Calder, 1977).

Some researchers, however, compare the findings of the exploratory research (or qualitative research) to those of the quantitative research, which then creates the issue of generalisability (Calder, 1977). Thus, Calder (1977) later argues that qualitative research techniques can and should be analysed single-handedly, in other words without attention to generalizability or quantitative approaches. Additionally, quantitative research provides insufficient findings for studies that aim to gain insight into consumers' emotional behaviour, because the findings obtained are numerical and quantified (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Thus, this study conducts purely qualitative research. Therefore, this study is a qualitative study.

4.2.3 Stage 1: Netnography

Earlier it was said that the first stage of this two-stage research design is netnography. This is a particular derivation of ethnography that applies ethnography to an online context. To better understand netnography, this study first explains ethnography, from which netnography derives, beginning with a discussion on what ethnography is. Table 4.1 below provides definitions of ethnography, ethnography 2.0 and netnography.

Table 4.1: Definitions adopted by this study of the research approaches that lead to netnography

Research Approach	Definition
Ethnography	“A method or set of methods for studying and learning about a person or, more typically, a group of people, in their own environment over a period of time” (McGivern, 2006).
↓	
Ethnography 2.0	An important method of conducting research that is based on a collaboration and which uses digital technology (White, 2009).
↓	
Netnography	“A qualitative method that aims to understand and recognise consumers’ attitudes by analysing what is written in online forums” (Blomström <i>et al.</i> , 2012:14).

Table 4.1 above depicts the definitions for ethnography, and the two derivations of ethnography, namely ethnography 2.0 and netnography. It also indicates the differences between the definitions, to allow for clarity regarding these three, rather similar, research methods. It should be noted that ethnography 2.0 and netnography differ from ethnography in that they are applied in an online context. Also, compared to ethnography 2.0, netnography has a particular focus on better understanding the attitudes of consumers and what has been written online.

Consumers are spending more time online, as the integration between online and offline activity grows (Kozinets, 2010). Additionally, consumers who are a part of online communities are growing in importance (Kozinets, 2002). Thus, netnography incorporates online consumer culture with ethnography, to better understand consumer behaviour at a time when technology is becoming increasingly infused into daily life (Kozinets, 2010).

Consumers use online platforms to share their emotion (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). For instance, when commenting on a YouTube video that they find humorous, they may write “ha ha ha” to express the emotion that they felt when laughing, while watching the

video (e.g. happy). Thus, analysing online consumer behaviour allows researchers to determine why consumers share viral content online, in terms of their emotional responses (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, since this study aims to better understand the role that emotion plays in viral marketing, netnography is an appropriate application in this study.

With the above distinction of netnography from ethnography and ethnography 2.0 in mind, the sections below explain ethnography, ethnography 2.0 and netnography individually.

4.2.3.1 Ethnography

This section explores ethnography by addressing what it is, what its advantages and disadvantages are, and how it can be applied.

- **What is ethnography?**

Ethnography is defined as “the art and science of describing a human group – its institutions, interpersonal behaviours, material productions, and beliefs” (Angrosino, 2007). McGivern (2006) defines ethnography as “a method or set of methods for studying and learning about a person or, more typically, a group of people, in their own environment over a period of time”. Both definitions address the concept of observing individuals’ behaviour. As McGivern’s (2006) definition is simpler and more thorough, it is used to define ethnography in this study. To put it simply, ethnography is “writing about other people” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

To elaborate, ethnography records the observations of participants (Silverman, 2010) over a period of time, with the purpose of analysing social behaviour through participating in the social behaviour or observing it (Flick, 2007). In doing so, patterns are found in the information obtained from observing how people behave (Flick, 2007). Although the application of ethnography has evolved to include various social disciplines, the primary purpose of ethnography was to gain insight into human behaviour, so that trends could be picked up and used for predictions (Flick, 2007).

Ethnography requires more than one data-collection technique to be conducted (McGivern, 2006; Flick, 2007). It is usually conducted in the form of an observation (McGivern, 2006). Thus, this study conducts netnography, a derivation of ethnography, and semi-structured interviews that are both explored later. The structure of the interviews is based on the findings obtained from the observation; and it is, therefore, referred to as the second stage of the two-stage research design. However, firstly the advantages and disadvantages of ethnography will be discussed.

- **What are the advantages of ethnography?**

Ethnography is advantageous in the following ways: (i) It provides insights that may not be achieved by conducting interviews only; (ii) gives a broad outlook on participants' behaviour with regard to social and cultural aspects; (iii) it gains an understanding of the participants' perspective; and (iv) it allows researchers to view the behaviour and activities that occur at the same time and place in which it usually occurs (McGivern, 2006). Additionally, because this is an open-ended research technique, ethnography has an adaptive and flexible nature that allows it to be applied to the behaviours of a variety of people, and to particular types of research (Kozinets, 2002).

Although these advantages of using ethnography allowed this study to gain an insight into consumer perspectives and behaviour in a natural environment, the disadvantages of ethnography were addressed as well.

- **What are the disadvantages of ethnography?**

As Phelps *et al.* (2004) maintain that all exploratory research has its limitations, there are also disadvantages to applying ethnography. Firstly, the relationship between the observer and participants may be faced with issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), such as privacy or invasiveness. Thus, the participants of this study were informed of their participation, but their inclusion in the study remained anonymous.

Secondly, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) provide examples of past research, where the ethnographic observations could have been limited to the researcher's perspective. To apply this to general ethnographic research, it could be said that if the researcher has a specific opinion about a certain racial or age group, for example, the observations made about these people may not be entirely accurate. This potential bias was taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

Another disadvantage is that the effective application of ethnography is largely dependent on the skills of the researcher (Kozinets, 2002). Researchers are required to commit to the ethnography for a long period of time, and to deal with the participants daily in a face-to-face manner (Flick, 2007). Therefore, multiple participants were observed for multiple days. Specifically, 10 participants were observed for 21 days, which is, therefore, equivalent to 210 days of observation.

A final drawback of ethnography is that when adopting an exploratory research design, further and more detailed analysis than the basic analysis obtained from the exploratory study is not done (Izawa, 2010). This means that the information gained from the ethnography would not be thorough enough to provide complete findings. Therefore, this study used the semi-structured interviews research method in addition to netnography, which improved the thoroughness of the findings.

Before explaining ethnography 2.0 and netnography, the section below addresses how ethnography is applied.

- **Applying ethnography**

When studying everyday routines, ethnography is an appropriate qualitative research technique, and the insights gained from ethnography aim to generate theories, as opposed to testing any specific hypotheses (Flick, 2007). These uses of ethnography are favourable for this study, where the aim is to understand why consumers share content online, and to discover the role that emotion plays in viral marketing. This study has also aimed to give an overall picture of why content is shared online.

An important aspect of ethnography is to capture the information from the participants' point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Participants of ethnography are able to communicate to the researcher on their opinions regarding the researchers' observations (Flick, 2007). The researcher is integrated into the participants' environment, in order to better understand their way of life, in terms of their attitudes, behaviours and situations (McGivern, 2006). Thus, the application of ethnography aims to achieve a complete description of the target population (Flick, 2007; McGivern, 2006).

Ethnography is applied where the participants are situated, which allows the researcher to objectively observe and subjectively participate in the actual participants' behaviours (Flick, 2007). It should be noted that the role researchers play in the observations range, depending on how integrated the researcher is into the observed environment (McGivern, 2006).

Lastly, to successfully apply ethnography, the study should have a well-defined topic (Silverman, 2010). Therefore, this study has a well-defined topic, namely: understanding the role of emotion in viral marketing.

Netnography is an application of ethnography to the internet (Kozinets, 2002). The concept of applying ethnography to the internet has already been discussed in previous literature (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gatson & Zweerink, 2004); and it has been termed ethnography 2.0 (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). An explanation of ethnography 2.0 follows.

4.2.3.2 Ethnography 2.0

As mentioned earlier, the flexible nature of ethnography renders it highly adaptable. Thus, because more research is required in conducting ethnography online for marketers, when considering the increasing integration of the internet into the daily life of consumers (Xun & Reynold, 2009), forming new qualitative research techniques is

necessary (Flick, 2007). Additionally, because it is important to be able to steer through what is seen and read on online media, the future of ethnography is to shift from face-to-face to that which is read and communicated online (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) term online ethnography as Ethnography 2.0, due to the interactive aspect of conducting ethnography online, which distinguishes it from traditional ethnography. Ethnography 2.0 is an important method of conducting research that is based on a collaboration, and which uses digital technology (White, 2009). This study refers to ethnography 2.0 by using White's (2009) definition.

An advantage of ethnography 2.0 is that the observer and the participant do not interact face-to-face because: (i) When conducting research on participants while in their presence, the quality of the information obtained may be affected; and (ii) the absence of face-to-face interaction between the observer and the participant means that there is less opportunity for conflict between the two (Gatson & Zweerink, 2004).

However, there are two issues with regards to ethnography 2.0. Firstly, as it may be said that anybody could be an online ethnographer, an issue arises as to who observes who; and whether the online ethnographer is observing in an ethical manner (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The second issue is that the knowledge required in observing online behaviour is found in laymen, as well as in experts. This means that researchers should note that their observations of online behaviour may not be any different from observations that could be made by the participants under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This study addressed the former issue by ensuring that observations were made ethically, in the manner explained (see Section 4.7). The researcher perceives the latter issue as a possible advantage because it means that the skills required for the observer are low, and therefore less costly to obtain. This also overcomes one of the major shortfalls of qualitative research: the skills required of the researcher.

Ethnography 2.0 is the act of conducting ethnography online (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011); and netnography is the application of ethnography to online communities (Kozinets, 2002). Ethnography 2.0 and netnography are therefore similar. For the remainder of this study, the term 'netnography' will be used. Netnography is becoming a widely accepted research tool used to understand the interactions within online communities (Bowler, 2010). In this study, netnography was used to: (i) Gain greater insight into online sharing behaviour and the possible role that emotion could play; and (ii) to inform the design of the semi-structured interviews.

4.2.3.3 Netnography defined

Netnography is the application of ethnography to online communities (Kozinets, 2002). Kozinets (2002) defines netnography as "a qualitative research methodology that

adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications”. Blomström *et al.* (2012:14) simplify this and define netnography as “a qualitative method that aims to understand and recognise consumers’ attitudes by analysing what is written in online forums”. The latter definition was used in this study.

Netnography aims to understand the trends and meanings that are found in online consumer communities (Kozinets, 2002). To better understand online consumer groups’ needs and decisions, netnography makes use of public information on online communities (Kozinets, 2002). This study specifically looked at the sharing of videos on YouTube (further discussed in Section 3.5).

In applying netnography to this study, the advantages and disadvantages were considered. The following table summarises the advantages and disadvantages of netnography.

Table 4.2: A summary of the advantages and disadvantages of netnography

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows market research to occur in an online context.	Interactive versus non-interactive observation is a controversial issue.
Adaptation of market research to social media.	Researchers need effective skills for observing and interpreting data in an ethical and efficient manner.
Greater insight into consumer behaviour in an online context.	The true identity of participants may be challenging to obtain because of the anonymity found on the internet.
It is a quicker, simpler and cheaper process.	-
Does not invade the privacy of participants.	-
Provides insight into market trends.	-
Provides improved consumer targeting.	-

SOURCE: Blomström et al. (2012); Bowler (2010); Kozinets (2002, 2010, 2012); Xun and Reynold (2009)

Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages summarised in Table 4.2 above, the evidence supports the contention that netnography is an appropriate and efficient qualitative method to be applied in this study because: (1) The advantages outweigh the disadvantages; and (2) the disadvantages have been addressed in this study (see Section 4.3.3.5). These advantages and disadvantages, as well as how the disadvantages were addressed, are explained in the sections below.

4.2.3.4 Advantages of using netnography

As is shown in Table 3, using netnography provides the following advantages:

- Parallel to traditional communities, online communities consist of a group of people with mutual interests who form relationships and learn from each other by sharing information (Bowler, 2010; Kozinets, 2010). However, online consumer behaviour differs from traditional consumer behaviour in that conversations online are easily recorded and analysed via technological assistance (Kozinets, 2012). Therefore, netnography assists market researchers in conducting research in an online environment (Kozinets, 2012), by using technology to easily record consumer behaviour online.
- Although marketers are incorporating online social networks into their marketing strategies, many research methods remain traditional (Kozinets, 2010). To attend to this mismatch in research and development, netnography aims to incorporate online social networks' insights obtained about consumer culture, by enhancing the value of interaction between consumers online (Kozinets, 2010).
- Other advantages of netnography include providing a broader description of the market; realistic analyses of online communication; an understanding of consumer behaviour from a social point-of-view; an overview of what brands actually mean to consumers; and an insight into innovativeness and trends (Kozinets, 2010). Bearing in mind that this study has aimed to better understand the motives behind consumers' online behaviour, as well as their social sharing of emotion, as explained in Chapter 2, the aforementioned benefits of using netnography are advantageous to this study.
- Compared to traditional ethnography, netnography is quicker, simpler, more cost-effective, less invasive (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets, 2010); and it provides a more realistic outlook than other quantitative research methods (Kozinets, 2010). Netnography allows marketers to gain insight about consumers, without imposing on them (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

- Netnography is more conspicuous and natural than other research methods (Kozinets, 2002). This is beneficial for two reasons. Firstly, it allows researchers to view what consumers do online in a natural manner (Kozinets, 2002). Secondly, researchers are able to access subjects in online communities continuously, which opens doors for more research opportunities, and makes it easier to collect data almost automatically, by simply taking what has been downloaded online (Kozinets, 2002). In the light of these advantages, netnography was selected as a suitable qualitative research method for this study.
- From a marketing perspective, netnography provides ideas about consumer trends; and it provides researchers with feedback on brands that have not been influenced by marketers (Kozinets, 2002). While this means that there is a lot of data that can be collected by netnography – due to the vast amount of information available on the internet – it also means that there is a large dependence on the researcher to be able to judge which information is important and applicable to the research question (Kozinets, 2002). The researcher of this study conducted the netnography study with the research question and objectives constantly in mind.
- Netnography is appreciated in market research because of its contribution to understanding online consumer behaviour, its adaptability to online interactions via platforms, such as the social media, and its ability to analyse participants in an interactive, natural environment (Kozinets, 2012). Additionally, the growing use of and interest in netnography gives researchers an improved chance of effectively reaching the target market by accessing their online consumer behaviour (Xun & Reynold, 2009). Thus, using netnography improves the quality of insights derived from the research conducted (Xun & Reynold, 2009).

In the light of the above advantages, it is beneficial to use netnography. However, there are disadvantages to using netnography (see Table 3). These will be explained in the next section.

4.2.3.5 Disadvantages of using netnography

The disadvantages of using netnography centre around interaction between the observer and the participant, the skills needed by the researcher, and obtaining the true identity of the participants (see Table 3). These disadvantages are further explained below.

- Firstly, whether researchers should participate in netnography or not is a controversial topic, which is why netnography studies vary in practice between interactive and non-interactive observations (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Xun & Reynold, 2009). Netnography can be conducted with interaction by the researcher, or without interaction by the researcher; where some authors argue that one approach is better than the other, and others argue the contrary (Blomström *et al.*, 2012).
- Blomström *et al.* (2012) conducted interactive observations, to allow for a thorough understanding of participants' answers, and to become familiar with the process of traditional ethnography, so as to gain the advantages of ethnography that are absent in netnography. However, this study agrees with the findings of Kozinets (2002), a prominent netnography author, who argues that netnography should be based on non-interactive observations. The reason for this is to keep the netnography study environment as natural as possible, with little intervention by the observer.
- Additional drawbacks of applying netnography are that researchers need to have interpretation skills, to apply the usual practices of collecting data in a trustworthy manner. The narrow focus on online communities and the generalisations that are derived from netnography when applied to other online communities, must be backed up by substantial evidence (Kozinets, 2002). To attend to this, the limitations of the online platform used should be incorporated into the information obtained (Kozinets, 2002). This has been done by this study.
- In accordance with its applicability to this study, two limitations of netnography are noted and dealt with (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Firstly, granting anonymity to the participants limits the researchers' ability to determine the true identity of the consumer behind any activity on an online forum (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). However, the focus of this study is to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing among internet users in South Africa, which means that not knowing the true identities of the participants did not seriously detract from the value of this study. In fact, this is an advantage, because of the sensitive nature of talking about emotion; and it relates to what Blomström *et al.* (2012) said about consumers using online platforms to share their emotions (see Section 4.3.3).
- Secondly, analysing participants' comments without their consent could raise ethical concerns (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Xun & Reynolds, 2009). However, the participants in the netnography study were informed of their inclusion in the study.

- Similar to ethnography 2.0, explained earlier, a challenging aspect of netnography is identifying who exactly the participants are (Kozinets, 2002). As regards privacy and netnography, Kozinets (2002) explains that some participants requested that their posts be unpublished, even though he guaranteed their anonymity. Kozinets (2010) suggests that netnography researchers should ensure the anonymity of the participants. Participants in this study will be asked beforehand whether they agree to anonymously participate in the study. Thus, this paper addressed the limitations of netnography, as far as possible.

4.2.3.6 Netnography as an application to this study

The following paragraphs address netnography as an application to this study. The application of netnography should be done with caution (Kozinets, 2002). Specifically, the essential difference between traditional ethnography and netnography is that with netnography, the researchers should analyse how communication is done in online communities – instead of observing how consumers act as a whole, in a specific community (Kozinets, 2002).

Kozinets (2002) explained that when applying netnography, the following should be considered: (1) The questions should be specific; and online communities should be selected on how they relate to the research question; (2) a large amount of activity should be observed; (3), it should include many members who post directly to the online community; (4) it should have more descriptive data on members of the online social network that also relate to the research question.

This netnography study made 271 observations of activity on YouTube. Additionally, the researchers need to gain enough knowledge about the online community and the participants; and they should select online communities for netnography that focus on “consumption-related topics” (Kozinets, 2002).

In the light of the above paragraph, although no questions were asked in the netnography study, YouTube is an appropriate online platform for netnography to be applied, because it consists of advertisements and profiles made by brands; it has many users, a high level of activity, and contains data that can be used for analyses; and it serves as a platform from which users can interact with each other.

This section about netnography has addressed the first stage of this two-stage research design. The following section explores the second stage of the two-stage research design, namely, semi-structured interviews.

4.2.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews allow researchers to collect information in a direct manner on a one-on-one basis (Malhotra, 2010). There are different types of interviews. This study applied semi-structured interviews, based on the findings from the netnography study. This section looks at what semi-structured interviews are, their advantages and disadvantages, and how they should be applied in research studies.

4.2.4.1 Semi-structured interviews defined

Interviews are a common form of data collection in qualitative studies (Gavin, 2008). While depth interviews ask the interviewee one structured question, to which they must respond, thereafter they allow the interviewee to talk about the topic in a free manner (Malhotra, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are interviews that are more structured (McGivern, 2006); yet they are also not fixed. A semi-structured interview is the most frequently used interview technique (Flick, 2007). Thus, semi-structured interviews are applied to this study to gain insight into the participants' subjective opinion on the role of emotion in viral marketing. Table 4.3 below lists the advantages and disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews.

Table 4.3: Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

Advantages	Disadvantages
Greater level of interaction.	A timely process.
Thorough insight.	Provide an indirect understanding of consumer behaviour.
Interviewer can ask additional questions.	Quality of answers depends on the researcher's interviewer skills.
Cost effective.	It can be costly.

To put it simply, the benefits of applying semi-structured interviews are that it provides greater interaction, insight, flexibility and focus on the research question; and it is cost-effective. However, the drawbacks of semi-structured interviews are that they are a time-consuming and a costly process. Interpretation difficulties mean that interviewers require a high level of skills, and the answers provide an indirect understanding of consumer behaviour. It should be noted that while Malhotra (2010) stated that semi-structured interviews are costly, McGivern (2006) described this method as being cost-effective.

However, because the researchers of this study conducted the semi-structured interviews themselves, the costs were reduced. The sections below explain the above advantages and disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews.

4.3.5.2 Advantages of using semi-structured interviews

- Semi-structured interviews allow for a greater level of interaction, within the boundaries of the pre-planned questions (Lagger *et al.*, 2011). A second advantage is that, participants are allowed to answer more thoroughly and freely (Lagger *et al.*, 2011; Malhotra, 2010), which provides a significant level of insight (Malhotra, 2010).
- Another advantage is that participants vary in terms of their education and background. This is why semi-structured interviews are a better method than fixed interviews (Barriball & While, 1994). For instance, the interviewer can change questions to suit a specific participant, while maintaining a consistent focus on the research question or purpose of the study. Additionally, questioning errors occur when mistakes are made, and when participants are asked questions, or when they are not asked questions when more information is required (Malhotra, 2010). Therefore, the third advantage of using semi-structured interviews is that interviewers are able to ask additional questions, where appropriate and necessary (Lagger *et al.*, 2011). They can thus take advantage of the flexible nature of qualitative interviews, as the questionnaire can be modified during the interview to gain as much information as possible from the interview (McGivern, 2006).
- Lastly, semi-structured interviews are advantageous – because they are based on a clear focus – and, therefore, usually require only one meeting with the interviewee (Flick, 2007). Thus, this method is effective in terms of costs; and it is a suitable way of collecting information when the range of the participants is extensive (McGivern, 2006).

4.2.4.3 Disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews

- There are also disadvantages to using semi-structured interviews. Conducting semi-structured interviews is a time-consuming process, which limits the amount of interviews that can be done (Malhotra, 2010). Another disadvantage is that the quality of the answers obtained is dependent on the researcher's interviewer skills in terms of ensuring that the information obtained is adequate in answering

the research question, and that the answers are correctly interpreted (Malhotra, 2010).

- A third setback is that the interviewer would require the necessary skills to ensure that quality-driven findings are obtained (Barriball & While, 1994; Malhotra, 2010). Thus, obtaining an effective interviewer can be costly (Malhotra, 2010). Lastly, semi-structured interviews are limited in that they do not provide visual answers to the research question; and they provide an indirect understanding of consumer behaviour (Flick, 2007), where the participants' responses are descriptions of their consumer behaviour.
- As this is an exploratory study, the fact that semi-structured interviews provide greater insight and allow the interviewer to probe the interviewee by asking additional questions about a point of interest, semi-structured interviews were selected to be conducted in this study. The next section addresses the application of semi-structured interviews, and explains how the setbacks of conducting semi-structured interviews were addressed in this study.

4.2.4.4 Applying semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are an appropriate research method, where the aim is to gain an understanding of the participants' opinions on sensitive issues that allow the interviewee to ask for further information, or to clarify certain aspects (Barriball & While, 1994).

Other studies agree that a qualitative approach might be suitable, in order to better understand the relatively new viral topic (see for example Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Lager *et al.*, 2011). It is suggested that qualitative interviews be conducted when the researcher intends to learn more about the participants' experiences, behaviour, attitudes, motivations, knowledge and interpretations, by recording what participants say, in their unique way, about themselves (McGivern, 2006).

Additional reasons for conducting interviews include gaining a thorough understanding and rich data, and where the researcher perceives interviews as being the most effective and appropriate way of collecting data (McGivern, 2006). Now that the reasons why semi-structured interviews were used in this study have been explained, the following paragraphs relate to the application of semi-structured interviews in this study.

To obtain further information about consumers' motives, emotions and individual experiences (Gavin, 2008; Lager *et al.*, 2011; Malhotra, 2010), the researcher of this

study interviewed participants via a one-on-one basis. Since describing personal emotions could place social pressure on participants if they were to answer to a group of people, a one-on-one interview should provide a more comfortable environment in which participants answer the questions (Malhotra, 2010). Hidden-issue questioning occurs when questions are asked in a manner that indirectly answers the research question of the study, and addresses the way the participants feel, by using questions to identify their personal “sore spots” (Malhotra, 2010).

Thus, hidden-issue questioning was applied to identify the participants’ personal attitudes towards the campaign. Therefore, applying semi-structured interviews was the most suitable method for addressing the objectives of this study.

The key to the success of qualitative research is to talk to the right participants that are representative of the whole target population. An explanation of the target population and sampling design follows.

4.3 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING DESIGN

All research begins with an assumption that statements can be made, which are applicable to that found in the actual findings (Flick, 2007). This is known as intended generalisation (Flick, 2007). Although generalisability is not a main tenant of qualitative research (Flick, 2007), care was taken to draw as representative a sample as possible from the target population. The following sections discuss the target population and the sampling approach used in this study.

4.3.1 The Target Population

A target population for a research study is made up of the aspects that the study aims to investigate (Malhotra, 2010). To conduct effective and accurate research, a precise explanation of the target population is required (Malhotra, 2010). The target population of this study comprises consumers in South Africa who use the internet. Consumers with internet access via mobile, tablet or PC forms are able to share content with their social network at any given time (Izawa, 2010). The following statistics and descriptions of internet users in South Africa are based on secondary sources that were published in November and December 2012. Thus, although they may be slightly out-dated, they are sufficient for this study.

Age, location and gender are the demographics on which this study focuses. Internet users in South Africa are between 25 and 40 years old; they usually have a high monthly income; and they mostly live in Cape Town and Gauteng (Mybroadband, 2013). They are young, as sources have described their age group being between 15 and 35 years old (Emarketer, 2013) and 25 and 40 years old (Mybroadband, 2013). However,

an interesting trend to note is that consumers over 60 are the fastest-growing age group on Facebook, in South Africa (Worldwideworx, 2012b).

In terms of location, over 50% of internet users are in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria (Mybroadband, 2013). As regards gender, Worldwideworx (2012a) states that 47% of internet users are females, and 53% are males (De Lanerolle, 2012). However, Meier (2013) said that of YouTube users in South Africa, there are more female users (51%) than male users (49%). Consequently, as this study focuses on YouTube as the online social network, the quota used (see Table 4.4 below) shows a ratio of 2:3 for males to females (two males to every three females) to be selected for participation in this study.

The following paragraphs discuss the income, the demographics, how consumers access the internet, and the languages spoken by internet users in South Africa. Although this study does not formally incorporate these aspects into the sampling procedure, it is useful as background information to gain a complete overview of the target population, and to better interpret the findings obtained. Beginning with income, just under half of internet users have a monthly household income of over R25 000 (Mybroadband, 2013). Internet users in South Africa are more likely to be wealthy, and fewer than 60% are from the middle-to-high income bracket (Emarketer, 2013). However, it was found that about 40% of internet users in South Africa were from the low-income bracket or from below the poverty level, where they earn less than R1500 a month. This means that internet use in South Africa is also growing in other sectors (De Lanerolle, 2012; Emarketer, 2013).

Almost 75% of internet users in South Africa access the internet via mobiles (De Lanerolle, 2012). Interestingly, 52% of internet users first accessed the internet via a mobile phone (De Lanerolle, 2012). More people own mobile phones that can access the internet than those who own a computer; and it is easier to access the internet on mobile phones (Emarketer, 2013). More people in South Africa are using the mobile internet; and it is predicted that mobiles will be used more than fixed lines in the future (Worldwideworx, 2012a).

The internet remains expensive, or not easily accessible (Emarketer, 2013). Many internet users use public PCs, or shared facilities, such as internet cafés (De Lanerolle, 2012; Emarketer, 2013). There is a 15,8% broadband internet penetration in South Africa (Worldwideworx, 2012a). However, over the last two years, internet use in South Africa has doubled (Emarketer, 2013), because of cheaper mobile internet rates (Worldwideworx, 2012a). While 17% of people read the newspaper daily, 22% go online daily (De Lanerolle, 2012). Lastly, over two-thirds speak an African language; and fewer than 20% speak English (De Lanerolle, 2012; Emarketer, 2013). This issue was considered when the semi-structured interviews were conducted.

To better understand how internet users in South Africa look, two sources providing statistics on internet use in South Africa were analysed. The findings from these sources are depicted in Table 4.4 below (All Media Product Survey, 2012; De Lanerolle, 2012).

Table 4.4: Percentage of Internet users in South Africa based on age

De Lanerolle, 2012			All Media Product Survey, 2012		
Age Group	Percentage	Ratio	Age Group	Percentage	Ratio
15 – 24	40%	4:10	15-24	37%	4:10
25 – 34	33%	3:10	25-34	29%	3:10
35 – 44	15%	2:10	35-49	23%	2:10
44+	13%	1:10	50+	10%	1:10

The findings of De Lanerolle’s (2012) and the All Media Product Survey (2012) were based on internet users in South Africa. It should be noted that the findings of the All Media Product Survey (2012) were specific to internet users who had used the internet within the past 7 days (All Media Product Survey, 2012). As Table 4.4 above depicts, the percentages of the age groups and gender profiles that use the internet differ slightly. Thus, this study used the following ratios per age group: 15 – 24 years old: 4 ; 25 – 34 years old: 3; 35 – 49 years old: 2; 50+ years old: 1.

To gain information on the target population, a sample, which is a smaller group of the target population, is analysed (Malhotra, 2010). In order to gain confidence in the representativeness of the participants used in this study (Silverman, 2010), the following sampling design was used.

4.3.2 Sampling Design

Sampling in qualitative research addresses the appropriate selection of participants and the effective selection of the place where participants can be found, and how it impacts the comparability of the study (Flick, 2007). Even though generalisation is not a goal of qualitative research - rather gaining insight into a particular problem – it is still important to target a representative sample. Thus, it is important to carefully consider the sampling design to be used.

Sampling frame error is a type of response error that occurs when a population differs from how the researcher defines the population in terms of the sampling frame (Malhotra, 2010). To address this difficulty, the participants should be screened, in order to avoid including any inappropriate individuals in the sampling frame (Malhotra, 2010). For the netnography study, the participants were screened according the following: (i) Whether they were located in South Africa, because the target population for this study is internet users in South Africa; and (ii) their level of activity on YouTube, to ensure that

the participants selected were frequently active on YouTube. For the semi-structured interviews, the participants were screened, according to their location, age and gender.

The following points apply to the sampling method for both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews. Firstly, the extent of the sampling design is Cape Town, and the time frame is limited to April and May 2013. Secondly, a sampling frame, which includes ways in which the target population can be identified (Malhotra, 2010), was not available to the researcher of this study. Lastly, the sampling without-replacement approach, where the participants are included in the sample only once (Malhotra, 2010), was applied to this study, in order to obtain as much information as possible from different sources.

Two broad sampling approaches that can be adopted are: Probability sampling, where the participants are selected, based on a certain probability and non-probability sampling, where participants are selected based on the researchers' judgement (Malhotra, 2010). In exploratory studies, probability sampling is not usually applied (Malhotra, 2010); and a non-probability sampling approach is appropriate for exploratory studies, where it is unnecessary to acquire population characteristics that accurately depict the target population's characteristics (McGivern, 2006).

Also, non-probability sampling gives the researcher some control over selecting the elements to be used in the sample (McGivern, 2006). Thus, this study adopts non-probability sampling techniques; but to overcome some of the issues around representativeness introduced by convenience sampling, quota sampling is used (further explained in Section 4.4.2.1)

The final aspect to consider is the sample size. When deciding on the sample size for qualitative studies, the following points should be taken into account: (i) A greater level of precision and a larger sample size is appropriate for more important decisions; (ii) exploratory research designs generally use small samples; (iii) a small sample is appropriate where there are no sophisticated analyses; (iv) the samples sizes used in similar studies; and (v) the resource constraints, such as the cost and the time available (Malhotra, 2010).

In the light of the above paragraph, this study has not applied highly sophisticated data analyses; it is of an exploratory nature, and is based on the sample sizes for the netnography study and semi-structured interviews, and on what similar studies have done. The next few paragraphs explain the quota sampling method used in this study. .

The quota sampling approach was applied to both the netnography study and to the semi-structured interviews. Quota sampling is two-stage; where the first stage is based on defining quotas; and the second stage is based on either convenience or judgement (Malhotra, 2010). The quotas are based on the target population's characteristics, to

ensure that the sample effectively represents the whole target population (Malhotra, 2010). Specifically, quota sampling uses primary and secondary sources, such as census data to create a sampling framework that describes the target population (McGivern, 2006).

This study used secondary data (see Table 4) to derive quotas (see Table 5). The researcher should then select only those participants who meet the quota criteria (McGivern, 2006).

Quota sampling is a cost-effective, convenient (Malhotra, 2010) and a quick sampling approach that is also an advantageous alternative, when the researcher does not have access to a sampling frame (McGivern, 2006). Additionally, quota sampling allows researchers to obtain a sample that is representative of the entire target population (Gavin, 2008; Malhotra, 2010) – which in this study is the internet users in South Africa. Thus, considering the resource constraints of this study, and the absence of a sampling frame, quota sampling was applied, with the hope of obtaining a representative sample of internet users in South Africa. Therefore, quota sampling, where convenience sampling was applied in the second stage of the quota-sampling approach, was used for both netnography and semi-structured interviews.

The sampling design for the netnography study follows.

4.3.2.1 Sampling Design for Stage 1: Netnography

The participants for the netnography study were selected on a non-random basis, where non-probability, quota sampling was used; and the second stage of the quota sampling process was convenience sampling. Salzmann-Erikson and Eriksson (2012) state that quota sampling should be applied when conducting netnography, because it allows participants to be chosen, according to specific quotas; and it deals with the issue of bias when recruiting participants online, as some groups of people might be less represented online than others.

This view is supported by Flick (2007), who suggested that sampling in ethnography must consider the time-and-context aspects, such that the right person is selected at the right time (Flick, 2007). For instance, there may be more consumers who comment on a particular YouTube video who are from America than from South Africa. Thus, instead of simply selecting all those who comment, it is necessary to ensure that the selected participants accurately represent the internet users in South Africa.

For this reason, the participants for the netnography study were screened, according to their location, where only those participants based in South Africa were selected. Once it was found that a YouTube user was based in South Africa, the researcher of this

study looked at his/her level of activity. YouTube users with a high level of activity, over the duration of three weeks, were selected. This was done, because it was convenient for the researcher to use YouTube users who had been active, so as to obtain more information from the netnography study.

A sample size of ten participants was obtained for the netnography study. This number is comparable to that of Blomström *et al.* (2012), who used ten participants for their netnography study. They had to determine which factors trigger word-of-mouth; while the researcher in this study stopped observing participants once a level of saturation had been reached (Calder 1977).

The following section explains the sampling design for the semi-structured interviews.

4.3.2.2 Sampling Design for Stage 2: Semi-structured Interviews

Similar to the sampling process for the netnography study, the participants for the semi-structured interviews were selected based on a quota-sampling design that included a convenience-sampling approach.

Lagger *et al.* (2011) suggest that quotas be applied to interviews, based on demographics, so that an unrealistic sample consisting of many participants from few countries be disallowed. To obtain a realistic quota, the ratios with regard to age and gender are presented in Table 4.5 below. These constraints were used when conducting quota sampling for the semi-structured interviews.

Table 4.5: Ratio with regard to the age and gender of Internet users in South Africa

Age Group	Ratio	Gender Group	Ratio
15-24	4:10	Female	6:10
25-34	3:10	Male	4:10
35-49	2:10		
50+	1:10		
Total	10:10	Total	10:10

Table 4.5 shows the ratios that were used to conduct quota sampling. For each age and gender group, there is a quota for the participants to be selected. These quotas are based on the ratios of the age group to the percentage of people in that age group, who are present in the population. For example, with a sample of ten participants, there would be only four people between 15 and 24 years old (see Table 4.5). It is advisable that the participants selected for the interviews meet the criteria of the quota-sampling approach (McGivern, 2006). Thus, the participants selected for this study's semi-structured interviews needed to meet the quotas presented in Table 4.5.

As explained earlier, small sample sizes for qualitative research are preferred. Botha and Reyneke (2013), who studied a similar topic, the role of content and emotion in viral marketing, conducted 40 semi-structured interviews, until a level of saturation was reached (Botha & Reyneke, 2013; Calder, 1977). Blomström *et al.* (2012) had ten participants for their semi-structured interviews; and Lager *et al.* (2011) conducted semi-structured interviews using 22 participants. Lager *et al.* (2011) adopted an exploratory approach to studying what makes people watch online videos; while Blomström *et al.* (2012) used semi-structured interviews, and studied the influence of emotion in encouraging word-of-mouth. Since this study was faced with time constraints, a total of 20 participants for the semi-structured interviews were selected.

As semi-structured interviews were based in Cape Town, the sampling frame for the semi-structured interviews consisted of internet users in Cape Town.

Since consumer demographics may influence their willingness to share content online, Blomström *et al.* (2012) screened the participants, according to their age and location. In addition, age and location were the demographics used to break down the internet users in South Africa (see Table 4.4 and Table 4.5). Thus, by obtaining a sample that meets the quotas presented in Table 4.5, a sample that effectively represents the target population could be obtained.

The interview protocol is explained below; it includes two video-marketing campaigns and a set of predetermined questions.

4.4 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

In this section, the development of the semi-structured interview is explained. The interview protocol that was used in this study comprised questions for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A), and two viral marketing campaign videos (see Appendices B and C). The next section explains the findings from the netnography study that was used to formulate the questions for the semi-structured interviews.

4.4.1 Findings from the Netnography Study that gave way to the Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Using findings from the netnography study, the questions for the semi-structured interview were compiled. This section explains the netnography study findings that were used to inform the semi-structured interview questions. These findings refer to each participant using the abbreviations used to name each netnography participant (see Appendix 5.d).

Firstly, there were only three observed incidents where advertisements were viewed. PD viewed the 'Nando's Meals Make the News' advertisement; and PB viewed Volkswagen's 'The Answer' advertisement, and the Earth Hour for the WWF advertisement. As a result, the semi-structured interviews were structured to ask interviewees what they generally watch, instead of focusing exclusively on specific advertisements.

Half of the participants (50%) for the netnography study (PA, PE, PG, PI and PJ) commented on videos with expressions, such as "hahaha" and "lol" (laugh out loud), showing that they found it amusing. This shows that these participants (PA, PE, PG, PI and PJ) expressed to others that they had found a video amusing, thereby sharing a positive emotion with others.

PC and PJ commented on a video about a woman being beaten up at a petrol station, saying "our president would blame this on apartheid...look the other way, take a shower. Then send some more troops to go bash up more women and children in a foreign country. Cry my beloved country...Cry!" and "ek's nou so f....n kwaad", which translated to English means "I am now so f....g angry". These comments portray negative emotion. Additionally, PC commented on a video that showed robbers stabbing a citizen, commenting: "I have heard all of it. Apartheid's fault, the poor must steal. But to stab someone, whilst robbing him reflects on one's integrity. Savage? Rob, stab and steal = OK?".

In the light of the above, there were more comments that expressed positive emotion than comments that expressed negative emotion. However, it should be noted that other studies have stated that content that elicits negative emotion is shared more frequently than content that elicits positive emotion (see Edell & Burke, 1987; Hill *et al.*, 2010). Some have even said that there is no difference between the sharing of positive and negative emotion (see Nelson-Field *et al.*, 2011; Rimé *et al.*, 1992).

Consequently, the semi-structured interview questions were structured to ask participants how they felt after watching the video in question, and whether they would share the videos with others. To determine whether positive emotion is shared more than negative emotion, two video-marketing campaigns on YouTube were used in the semi-structured interviews. These are explained below.

4.4.2 Viral Marketing Campaigns used for the Semi-Structured Interviews

Participants in the semi-structured interviews were shown two video-marketing campaigns. Videos were used for the following reasons: (1) Videos constitute content that can be shared online; and they were therefore a suitable measure for determining why content is shared online; (2) in investigating whether positive emotion is shared more often than negative emotion, using one video that elicited positive emotion, and

one that elicited negative emotion was appropriate – in order to see the emotional reactions by the participants; and (3) both videos were of a corporate nature, allowing for a better understanding of how people perceive the marketing content of companies.

Two viral marketing campaigns, both of which won Cannes awards, and are under two minutes long, were selected to be used in this study (see www.canneslions.com). The first advert is Volkswagen's: 'The Force' campaign (see Appendix 4.b), which was uploaded on 2 February 2011. This video has received 57 329 459 views; and it has a duration of 1.02 minutes (see YouTube, 2013a). The video is about a small boy dressed up as Darth Vader, a character from the movie Star Wars, who tries to use Darth Vader's 'power' to switch different devices on. The humour in the video comes when his father uses the car keys of a Volkswagen car to switch the car, so that the small boy believes that he himself switched on the car, using his 'power'.

Past literature states that humour in marketing campaigns results in favourable responses by consumers (see Cline, Altsech & Kellaris, 2003). Thus, this video has been selected because it is humorous and elicits positive emotion. Additionally, the campaign has won a Cannes award (Nudd, 2011), which confirms its success.

The second advert is Audi's: 'Prom' campaign (see Appendix 4.c), which was uploaded on 24 January 2013, and has received over 10 522 696 views; and it has a duration of 1:03 minutes (see YouTube, 2013b). The video is about a teenage boy who is going to his high school prom alone. However, his father gives him the keys to a brand new Audi, which makes him feel 'brave'. Using this bravery, he kisses another boy's girlfriend. Thereafter, he is shown driving the Audi home with a bruise on his eye, showing that he had been punched, while he was screaming with happiness. Therefore, even though he was punched, he felt brave and good about himself – simply because he was driving an Audi.

Although there is an indication of humour in the Audi advert, it is more dramatic. Both videos are multimedia rich, as they are made with quality in terms of visual and sound effects, are advertisements for cars, are from well-known German brands, and are almost exactly of the same duration. The videos were used to control for: (1) Product category, which was a car; (2) the duration of the videos – they were both of the same duration; and (3) brand positioning, where Volkswagen and Audi are both perceived as being German, and made of good quality materials. While it was challenging to obtain a video within these control factors that induced negative emotion, the Audi video served as the best bet.

To determine which emotions were generally elicited from each video, a pre-test was conducted, where ten random people were asked to watch the videos and state whether they induced positive or negative emotion. The findings of this pre-test showed that

100% of the pre-test participants said that the Volkswagen video elicits positive emotional responses. For the Audi video, 40% said that it induced positive emotional responses, 40% said that it induced emotions that were slightly negative; and 20% said that it induced negative emotion. Thus, this study maintained that the Volkswagen video induces positive emotion, while the Audi video induces emotions that are slightly more negative. With this in mind, these videos were appropriate to attend to Objective 3: to investigate whether there is a difference between sharing content that elicits positive emotion versus sharing content that elicits negative emotion. Using these videos in addition to questions, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to attend to the three objectives of this study.

4.4.3 Questions to be used for the Semi-Structured Interviews

Based on the findings collected from the netnography study observations, the questions to be used in the semi-structured interviews were compiled (see Section 4.4.1). The questions selected served as a way to further explore the findings in the netnography study that the researcher perceived should be elaborated on. Additionally, as qualitative research design is dependent on the research objectives (Gavin, 2008), the questions were compiled, while bearing the research question and objectives of this study in mind.

While the list of questions were prepared prior to conducting the interviews (Lagger *et al.*, 2011), the purpose of the semi-structured interview (see Appendix 4.a) was to gain greater insight into the participants' answers, with respect to the following: general consumer behaviour online; the emotions experienced when watching the video; why participants were or were not encouraged to share the campaign; why others were or were not encouraged to share the campaign; what companies can do to improve their videos and demographic questions.

Blomström *et al.* (2012) suggest that the questions to be used in the semi-structured interview be compiled with the aim of the study in mind. Thus, in accordance with this study's aim, to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing, the questions for the semi-structured interview should address the emotion felt while watching the video – and the reasons for sharing, or not sharing, the viral-marketing campaign. This is similar to what Blomström *et al.* (2012) did in their study, which was to ask interviewees why, or why were they not encouraged to share the video (Blomström *et al.*, 2012).

For the questionnaire, an initial page described the aim of the study, after which participants would view the YouTube videos. After each video, the questionnaire would ask the participants how they felt emotionally after watching the video campaign, and whether they would be willing to share the campaign (see Appendix 4.a).

The structure of the questionnaire (see Appendix 4.a) follows a funnel approach, beginning with asking the participants about their average day. Since an area of

concern was the individuals' ability to express their emotional responses thoroughly; and since the researcher was not fully knowledgeable about the emotional event, gaining additional findings might be necessary, to obtain a more thorough understanding of the participants' emotional experience (Scherer, 2005).

The semi-structured interview began with questions that addressed the how, when and why of the participants themselves, and then of others, who they knew would watch and share videos. By asking participants to interpret the behaviour of other people, indications of their attitudes can be obtained (Malhotra, 2010), as well as insights into their individual custom of using the Internet, and specifically the online social networks. With this information in mind, the researcher was thus able to tailor the remaining questions to better suit the interviewee.

Thereafter, questions relating to each of the two viral-marketing campaigns (see Appendices B and C) on whether they enjoyed watching the campaigns were asked. The question that follows asks which video the participants preferred. The purpose of these questions was to probe into why the videos would be shared or not, and if yes, how and with whom they would be shared. To address Objective 3, which was to investigate whether content that elicits positive emotion is shared more readily than content than elicits negative emotion (see Section 4.2), the participants were asked how they felt after watching each video.

To incorporate the demographics into the data analysis process, it has been suggested that the participants be asked their age (Izawa, 2010). Thus, at the end of the semi-structured interview, participants were asked to give their age.

To ensure quality in the semi-structured interview process and the findings obtained from it, it is necessary that a guide be developed, such that a level of consistency is applied across all the semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2007). This encourages the ability to identify differences in individuals, based on differences in their responses, rather than to rely on the differences in the procedure from which the findings were collected (Flick, 2007).

The questions for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 4.a), were written with guides on what to probe for further information, in order to address the research questions and the objectives in this study.

Additionally, to further guarantee the effectiveness of the semi-structured interviews, Blomström *et al.* (2012) conducted a pre-test to determine whether the questions asked contributed to the research objectives. Therefore, a second pre-test (see Section 4.4.2) was conducted by using five participants – with the aim of determining whether the questions for the semi-structured interview effectively addressed the objectives of this study. Once the findings from the second pre-test had demonstrated that the questions

were appropriate for use, the researcher of this study conducted the semi-structured interviews.

Using the interview protocols explained above, namely the Volkswagen video, the Audi video and the semi-structured interview questions. The findings would be collected in a manner described in the following section.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

The collection of qualitative findings is applied in a natural environment and non-statistical manner, for obtaining rich and expressive data (Gavin, 2008; Malhotra, 2010). This was how this study collected the findings.

Before collecting the findings, the past literature was reviewed to apply the suggestions made for collecting qualitative findings. The following pointers were found and applied: (1) Researchers play an important role in collecting qualitative findings; (2) the collection-process for the findings needs to be the same, or as similar as possible, for all the participants (Gavin, 2008); and (3) the credibility of the findings obtained is decided by the researcher of the study (Gavin, 2008; Kozinets, 2010). Qualitative research places more importance on the credibility of the data collected, than on their reliability or validity (Gavin, 2008). Thus, to ensure effective and credible collection of findings, and in consideration of these suggestions, the researcher of this study collected the findings herself from the participants in a uniform manner, and considered the ethical guidelines for collecting the data, as explained later (see Section 4.7).

4.5.1 Data Collection for Stage 1: Netnography

For the netnography study, the data can be collected directly from what is posted on the online communities and/or by recording the interactions between members of the online community (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets, 2010). Thus, the data collection for this study was done directly.

It has been suggested that netnography researchers collect data systematically; and in order to avoid error, they should consistently aim to answer the research question, understand how to interpret the data appropriately, manage time effectively, inform the participants about the intention to collect data, ensure the anonymity of the participants, encourage the participants' feedback, aim to obtain evolutionary data, be open to elaborating on the information obtained (Kozinets, 2010), and compile field notes to reflect their experience and to obtain deeper insights (Kozinets, 2002).

The researcher of this study considered these guidelines while collecting the data from the netnography study, and she informed the participants of their inclusion in the study.

It is advised that the online community selected for a netnography study should: Appropriately relate to the research question, contain a substantial amount of in-depth information; and the users should be a heterogeneous group of users, active on the site, interacting with each other, and contributing to an active atmosphere within the online community (Kozinets, 2010). On YouTube, there is a variety of users from all around the world; a vast array of genres and topics can be found; it is the primary online video social media platform for many; and it is constantly active with new video uploads, comments and users. Thus, in the light of the selection criteria, this study used YouTube as the online community (see www.YouTube.com).

The researcher of this study communicated with ten YouTube users, who were observed over a period 21 days, which is equivalent to 210 days of observation. This is similar to the amount of time that Blomström *et al.* (2012) used; they also used netnography in a viral-marketing context.

The participants for the netnography study were selected if they had a YouTube channel. YouTube members are able to comment on, like, upload, categorise videos and subscribe to channels. Each member has a channel, where a log of their activity is recorded. The log of each participant in the netnography study process was analysed and recorded in as much detail as possible. Particularly, the specifics of each video referred to were recorded, namely: The title of the video; the title of the YouTube member who uploaded it; the URL of the video, upload date, number of views at the time the netnography study was conducted, and the duration of the video. Where YouTube users commented on a video, the comment was recorded in the analysis; and where they categorised a video, the name of the folder to which they added the video was recorded. Further observations included the date of the activity, allowing for an analysis of the frequency of activity on YouTube.

The application of the second stage of the two-stage methodology, explained earlier as integral to the semi-structured interviews, is explained below.

4.5.2 Data Collection for Stage 2: Semi-structured interviews

The interviews for this study ranged between 15 to 25 minutes in duration, and were conducted face-to-face, between 26 June 2013 and 7 July 2013. Once the participants had been selected and approached, they were told the following: (i) About the interview; (ii) that no identifiable information would be requested; (iii) their responses would remain anonymous; (iv) the interview would require about 30 minutes of their time; and (v) they could opt out of the project at any time (see Appendix 4.a). Upon their agreement, the participants' written consent was obtained (see Appendix 4.c), and no incentives were provided to the participants.

The interview followed the following five steps, where the participants were asked: (1) Questions 1 – 7 (see Appendix 4.a); (2) to watch the Volkswagen video (see Appendix 4.b); (3) questions about the Volkswagen video (see Question 8, Appendix 4.a); (4) to watch the Audi video (see Appendix 4.c); (5) questions about the Audi video (see Question 8, Appendix 4.a); (6) a question about the two videos together (see Question 10, Appendix 4.a); and (7) about the final two questions (see Appendix 4.a).

Botha and Reyneke (2013) used a similar approach when conducting semi-structured interview, in the sense that each of their participants was shown two videos before they were interviewed about the videos; their emotional responses to the videos and their likelihood to share the video were issues that were questioned. As Eckler and Bolls (2011) suggest, the interviewer then thanked the participants for their participation in the study. The videos were watched by the participants on an iPad with earphones that were provided by the researcher. Twenty participants were interviewed, and the quotas for age and gender were met (see Table 4.4).

As the interviews were recorded on a mobile phone, the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were written down. A record of these transcripts is available from the researcher upon request.

An exploratory research design and semi-structured interviews allows room for flexibility (Malhotra, 2010). Thus, although it is challenging to think of appropriate questions on the spot, the interviewer could ask additional questions where necessary, to guarantee that the responses would be comparable and quality-driven, or the interviewer could elaborate on an interesting point made (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Malhotra, 2010). Consequently, the interviewer asked additional questions that were tailored to the interviewees' responses, such that interesting, relevant or appropriate responses were elaborated on.

Although others have written the answers on paper and then typed them onto the computer (Lagger *et al.*, 2011), the interviewee recorded the interviews on a mobile phone, and thereafter transcribed them onto the computer. Recording, and then transcribing, prevented the recording of any errors (see Malhotra, 2010).

The data generated by the fieldwork were analysed in the following manner.

4.6 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

While analysing the qualitative data for both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews, this study considered the following steps provided by Malhotra (2010): (i) The researcher should determine which data need to be enhanced, set aside or reduced, in relation the study's purpose; (ii) using visual interpretations of the data

highlights the trends that were found; and (iii) the meaning of the data found and their relation to the research question should be examined. Thus, the analysis of the findings was done, while constantly bearing the research question in mind.

The two-stage design nature of this methodology gave way to two approaches applied for analysing the data. A description of each approach is presented below, with reference to the respective research method being either netnography or semi-structured interviews.

4.6.1 Interpretation of the Findings for Stage 1: Netnography

Beginning with netnography, the first stage of this two-stage methodology, the researcher of this study analysed the notes collected on the selected YouTube users' online behaviour, and used this as and insight into the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews.

This study defined 'sharing' as: (1) Telling others about content via WOM; (2) 'liking'; (3) forwarding; (4) posting; or (5) commenting on content on an online social network; or (6) following people who had posted the content online (see Section 6.2.1). Comments, as Lee (2012:15) describes them, are "personal expressions of emotion, thoughts and actions". Therefore, analysing comments gave the researcher an insight into what the participant felt when commenting.

Following the data collection, the data need to be structured in such a way that patterns are formed (Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Gavin, 2008). Blomström *et al.* (2012) analysed the data obtained from the netnography study by categorising them. Before categorisation, the data should be described by the researcher in an unbiased and detailed manner, to determine which information is most important (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, to categorise the data, the researcher is required to maintain his/her objectivity throughout the data-collection process. Thus, points made during the observation were first recorded in an unbiased manner, by recording exactly what was observed. As a result, a second look at the observations resulted in trends being picked up and specific information found, in relation to the research question and to the objectives.

The data from the netnography study were categorised in terms of the: (1) 'Sharing' action; (2) video watched; (3) details about the video, namely: the date it was published, the number of views it had at the time of observation, and its duration; and (4) the details of the 'sharing' action, such as the comment made by the participant (see Appendix 5.e). These were used in defining 'sharing' because they are the actions that people conduct on YouTube; and, as these actions can be observed by others, they constitute telling people about the video. For instance, when a YouTube user comments on a video, the subscribers would view the action on their news feed, and could therefore see the video, as well as the comment made.

An explanation follows on how the findings for the semi-structured interviews were analysed.

4.6.2 Interpretation of Findings for Stage 2: Semi-structured Interviews

Blomström *et al.* (2012) used Dey's (1993) research spiral and Jacobsson's (2010) (in Blomström *et al.*, 2012) process of analysis, to analyse the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews. This study followed the steps that Blomström *et al.* (2012) used to analyse their data.

Firstly, Jacobsen (2010) in Blomström *et al.* (2012) says that researchers should describe the data in a detailed and unbiased manner. The second step is to reduce and systemise the data, in order to gain an overall impression of the findings, which allows for patterns in the findings to be observed, and to identify which findings are the most important (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Blomström *et al.* (2012) noted that researchers can categorise throughout the analytical process, and be open to new ideas, which could influence and possibly arise during the analysis.

Researchers should note that maintaining objectivity throughout the study is challenging, which is why it is important to note where one's own objectivity is weak (Jacobsson, 2010 in Blomström *et al.*, 2012). Blomström *et al.* (2012) noted that if the researcher chooses which findings are important, and which are not, it could be argued that the findings are subjective. The last step is to identify patterns and "common denominators" in the findings (Blomström *et al.*, 2012). The above approach was adopted to address all three objectives. A combination of the netnography and semi-structured interview data was used to address each objective:

- **Objective 1: To determine what encourages people to share content online**

Questions 6, 7 and 8 (see Appendix 4.a) directly asked whether a video would be shared, and why. The answers to these questions provided findings for Objective 1. These findings were analysed, according to the process adopted from Blomström *et al.* (2012) above. The findings for Objective 1 were categorised into altruism, self-benefit, content and social (see Section 3.3.2), which past literature sources maintain are factors that encourage people to share content online (see Berger & Milkman, 2010; Camarero & San José, 2011; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2012; Porter & Golan, 2006; Roy, 2011).

The way that findings were interpreted for Objective 2 follows.

- **Objective 2: To investigate the role of emotion in sharing content online**

From the netnography study data, the comments made by the participants were analysed, to determine whether these comments expressed emotional reactions.

Comments that included words such as “I love” or “I hate” were termed as expressing an emotional reaction. A collection of these comments was used to address Objective 2. With these findings in mind, the responses from the semi-structured interviews were analysed.

For Objective 2, Questions 7 and 8 of the semi-structured interviews, that addressed participants’ emotional responses (see Section 4.5.2 and Appendix A) were analysed. The findings were categorised into whether an emotion was felt or not, and whether the video in question would be shared or not. With regard to the participants’ responses for the question: “How did this video make you feel?”, the researcher categorised those responses which said that they felt nothing or indifferent as “no emotion”; and all other responses as “emotion”. In some cases, when participants had already stated that, for example, they found the video “funny”, the researcher interpreted this as the way they “felt” after watching the video.

- **Objective 3: To investigate whether content that elicits positive emotion is shared more than content that elicits negative emotion**

To identify whether the emotions elicited were positive or negative, the data from the netnography study and the responses from the semi-structured interviews were categorised, according to the dimensional approach (see Section 2.2.6). This study used the dimensional approach to understand the participants’ emotional responses in terms of valence and arousal. Scherer (2005) says that the dimensional approach is reliable and straightforward; and Botha and Reyneke (2013), who also addressed the role that emotion plays in sharing content online, used the dimensional approach to categorise emotion. The dimensional approach uses the circumplex of emotions to categorise emotion into positive or negative emotion, and high or low intensity (see Figure 2.1).

Comments made by the netnography study participants were analysed, using the circumplex of emotions (see Figure 2.1), and then categorised as either positive or negative emotion, where comments that showed ‘interest’ in the video were categorised as eliciting a positive emotion; and comments that included profanity used to express anger were categorised as eliciting a negative emotion. In cases where the words in the comment did not exactly correspond to the circumplex of emotion, the researcher of this study used her discretion to determine the valence of the participants’ emotional reaction.

Questions 7 and 8 which addressed participants’ emotion (see Appendix 4.a) were also analysed for Objective 3. The words that the participants used in their responses to describe how they felt were matched with the words on the circumplex of emotions (see Figure 2.1). When a word used by a participant to describe an emotion was found on

the circumplex of emotions, the researcher of this study classified the emotion, according to whether it was a positive or negative emotion. For example, “excitement” was said by Participant 18, and this is found in the upper-right quadrant on the emotional wheel, where “excite” is found. Therefore, “excitement” is an emotion that has a positive valence, and is of a high arousal.

While this section explained how the findings would be interpreted for each objective, the researcher of this study ensured that the ethical standards were met. In the light of this, the next section explains how ethical measures were considered for this methodology.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative research can be unethically applied, when the purpose of the study is hidden from the participants: especially when the participants are uncomfortable, and the information obtained is used incorrectly (Malhotra, 2010). This study considered how the research should be conducted ethically, in the ways that are addressed in the following paragraphs.

Kozinets (2002) suggests the following ways to conduct a netnography study ethically: (i) The participants should be informed of the researchers’ presence and intentions; (ii) anonymity and confidentiality should be guaranteed; (iii) feedback from the online community members should be requested; and (iv) the private and public issues of the online platform should be considered by the researcher. Thus, when netnography was conducted, the researcher of this study ensured that the above-mentioned points were all applied.

An ethical concern regarding netnography is that an ethical issue arises when it is questionable what informed consent actually is on these online platforms, and whether online communities should be considered public or private (Kozinets, 2002). However, this study maintains that YouTube users can choose whether they would like their YouTube activity to be made public, or kept private. When a YouTube user agrees to creating a YouTube channel or Google + profile, their YouTube activity is automatically public. Additionally, these users have the choice to delete their YouTube activity. Thus, the YouTube profiles that were publically available were targeted; and a message was sent to the netnography study participants to inform them of their participation in the study.

To address these points, this study informed the participants of the semi-structured interviews on the purpose of the study; they ensured that participants were comfortable; their participation was voluntary; their privacy was respected by granting them

anonymity (see Appendix A); and that the information would be utilised correctly – for research purposes only.

4.8 CONCLUSION

To address the research questions and the objectives that were introduced in the previous chapters, this two-stage research design methodology has applied netnography and semi-structured interviews. Being an exploratory study that uses qualitative research techniques, the aim of the methodology was to gain insight into the role of emotion in viral marketing.

Netnography is a derivation of ethnography that applies ethnography to the internet. This chapter also introduced ethnography 2.0, which is a term used to describe ethnography that is applied online. Semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this study because of their flexible nature. This allowed the interviewer to obtain a comprehensive insight into the participants' answers.

A description of the target population for this study, which is internet users in South Africa, provided an understanding on what they would look like. Quota sampling was conducted, where a quota based on age and gender was used, and the participants were selected using convenience sampling as the second stage in quota sampling. This was applied to both netnography and the semi-structured interviews. A sample size of 10 for the netnography that resulted in 271 observations made, and 20 for the semi-structured interviews was used. This was in agreement with the methodology of similar studies (see Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Lager *et al.*, 2011).

The interview protocol used for the semi-structured interview was developed, based on the netnography findings (see Appendix 5.e); and the Volkswagen and Audi videos (see Appendices 4.b and 4.c) were used. The interpretation of the findings was tailored for each objective, where Objectives 2 and 3 used the emotional wheel, as used by Russell (1980), as an integral part of the dimensional approach to measuring emotion. This methodology was also conducted with ethical consideration for both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews.

The methodology described in this chapter refers to how this study would obtain the findings that are presented in Chapter 5. Specifically, Chapter 5 describes what was found for this study, based on the three objectives.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This exploratory study has used a two-stage research design, where the first stage is a netnography study (see Section 4.2.3), and the second stage consists of semi-structured interviews (see Section 4.2.4). To learn about internet users in South Africa, quota sampling was conducted, using quotas based on location, age, gender (see Section 4.4.2). This chapter presents what was found after collecting (see Section 4.6) and interpreting (see Section 4.7) the findings for both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews.

Once the netnography study had been conducted, the findings obtained were used to create the questions for the semi-structured interviews. After receiving ethical approval from the University of Cape Town (UCT) (see Appendices 4.a and 4.b), the netnography study was conducted, which was followed by a pre-test on the two videos used in this study and the semi-structured interviews. The discussion of the findings is based on the objectives of this study.

The objectives are laid out separately, in the following order: Objective 1, Objective 2 and Objective 3. While the findings from the netnography study were used to give insight for all three objectives, the findings for the first objective are primarily based on the semi-structured interviews; while those of the second and third objectives are primarily based on the findings from both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews.

This chapter is laid out as follows. It begins with the fieldwork and sample size of both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, what the participants said about the Volkswagen and the Audi video are explained. Thereafter, the findings for Objective 1, Objective 2, and Objective 3 are given. Lastly, a concluding section ends this chapter.

5.2 FIELDWORK AND SAMPLE SIZE

Before the findings of this study are presented, the section addresses the fieldwork and sample size for both the netnography study and the semi-structured interviews below.

5.2.1 Netnography Study

Permission to conduct the netnography study was granted by the University of Cape Town (UCT) Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee (see Appendix 5.a). The

researcher conducted the netnography study herself for three weeks (Blomström *et al.*, 2012).

The netnography study was conducted using the following process. YouTube users had to be selected and then observed online for three weeks (from 16 April until 7 May 2013). The participants were selected based on the following aspects: (1) whether their profile stipulated that their location is “South Africa”; and (2) whether they had had at least three posts of activity within the past week. This showed that they were relatively active on YouTube. This met the target population of this study – which was the internet users in South Africa. Thus, to obtain more thorough findings on internet users in South Africa, YouTube users who showed frequent and recent activity were selected.

For ethical reasons, the participants were informed of their inclusion in the study before they were observed. No incentives were provided to any of the participants. Ten participants were observed. This is the same sample size that Blomström *et al.* (2012) – who studied the role of emotions on word-of-mouth – had for their netnography study. Additionally, it was advised that the sample of for a netnography study should be calculated, so that there would be a minimum number of posts observed, such that “more [posts] than necessary” were not included (Salzmann & Eriksson, 2012:11). A record of the observations made from the netnography study is available upon request. The participants from the netnography study are referred to as PA, PB, PC, PD, PE, PF, PG, PH, PI and PJ (see Appendix 5.d).

Of the ten participants for the netnography study, observations were made over a period of 21 days, which is therefore equivalent to 210 days of observation; and this resulted in 272 data entries. Of these 272 observations, videos were ‘liked’ 131 times (48%), commented on 65 times (24%), and the channels were subscribed to 56 times (21%). ‘Liking’ a video was, therefore, observed as the action most likely to be done (48%), followed by commenting on a video (24%). Below is an explanation of the fieldwork and sample size for the semi-structured interviews.

5.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The second stage of the two-stage research design is semi-structured interviews. These were conducted after the netnography study (see Section 4.6.2). Once permission to conduct the semi-structured interviews was granted by the University of Cape Town (UCT) Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee (see Appendix 4.b), the researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews herself between 26 June 2013 and 7 July 2013. A total of 20 participants were interviewed. This corresponds to similar studies, where Blomström *et al.* (2012) had 10 semi-structured interview participants; Botha and Reyneke (2013) had 40; and Lager *et al.* (2011) had 22. Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, a pre-test was conducted in the following manner.

The participants for the semi-structured interviews will be referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19 and P20 (see Appendix 5.f). Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, a pre-test was done to determine which emotions were elicited by the Volkswagen video.

5.2.2.1 Pre-test

A pre-test was conducted, where ten participants were selected based on convenience; and they were asked to watch the Volkswagen and Audi videos. Thereafter, these pre-test participants were questioned on whether the Volkswagen video and the Audi video had elicited positive or negative emotions (see Section 4.4.2). The findings from this pre-test are shown in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Findings from the pre-test for the Volkswagen and Audi videos

	Volkswagen	Audi
1	Positive	Positive
2	Positive	Slightly negative
3	Positive	Positive
4	Positive	Negative because I don't agree with the message
5	Positive	Less positive than the first one
6	Positive	Positive
7	Positive	A bit negative because the man is punched
8	Positive	Positive
9	Positive	Positive
10	Positive	Positive

As may be seen in Table 5.1 above, all ten participants said that the Volkswagen video elicited positive emotions. For the Audi video, five participants said that the video

elicited positive emotions, while the rest said that it was slightly negative, or less positive than the Volkswagen video. In the light of these findings, this study maintains that the Volkswagen video tends to elicit positive emotions, while the Audi video tends to elicit negative emotions.

A second pre-test was conducted on the five participants, to determine whether the questions for the semi-structured interview effectively addressed the objectives of this study. Once the second pre-test had demonstrated that the questions were appropriate, the researcher of this study conducted the semi-structured interviews. The structure of the semi-structured interviews is explained in the following section.

5.2.2.2 Structure of the interview data

Semi-structured interviews are more structured than general interviews (Malhotra, 2010); yet they are more flexible than fixed interviews (see Section 4.2.5). The questions used for the interview are provided in Chapter 4 (see Appendix 4.a). The participants were approached based on their age and gender. In accordance with the sample design of the study, they were told about the interview and informed that no identifiable information would be requested. They would remain anonymous, but would require about 30 minutes of their time, and that they could opt out at any time (see Appendix 4.a).

Once they had agreed, their written consent was obtained (see Appendix 5.c). No incentives were given to the participants.

The interview followed the following five steps: (1) The participants were asked questions 1 – 7 (see Appendix 4.a); (2) thereafter, the participants were asked to watch the Volkswagen video; and this was followed by questions about the Volkswagen video (see Question 8 in Appendix 4.a and see Appendix 4.b); (3) the interviewees were then asked to watch the Audi video, followed by questions about the Audi video (see Question 9 in Appendix 4.a and see Appendix 4.b); (4) a question was then asked about the two videos together (see Question 10 in Appendix 4.a); and (5) the final two questions were about companies in general (see Question 11 in Appendix 4.a) and demographic questions (See Question 12 in Appendix 4.a). The videos were watched by the interviewees on an iPad with earphones that were provided by the researcher.

Twenty participants were interviewed and the quota (see Section 4.3.2.3) was met (40% between 15 and 24; 30% between 25; 34% between 35 and 49; and 10% over 50 years old); and gender (60% females and 40% males).

The following section explains what the semi-structured interview participants said about the Volkswagen and the Audi videos, respectively.

5.3 FINDINGS ABOUT THE VOLKSWAGEN AND THE AUDI VIDEOS

This section provides insight into what was said about the Volkswagen and the Audi videos.

5.3.1 Findings about the Volkswagen Video

The responses that participants gave provided the researcher with an idea of what they thought about the video in general. These responses are provided below, beginning with the responses for the Volkswagen video, and followed by the responses for the Audi video.

P6, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P18 enjoyed the Volkswagen video for different reasons, saying “I liked the little boy... he has hopes” (P6), “I suppose I was amused and I’m at a stage in my life where I’m slightly broody, like... Oh! Look at that kid, and he’s so cute dressed up like that” (P11), “I liked the childish behaviour” of the little boy (P14), “you didn’t know at the end what the product was... towards the end you realised wow! It’s about the VW” (P15). “It starts off nicely and you don’t know what you are expecting... it’s quite gripping” (P18) and “it makes you curious about what’s going to happen, because it starts scary and ends up being funny... and... tells you what is the feature of the car” (P16). P10 said that the Volkswagen video “brings out the honesty and playfulness that children have that sometimes gets lost in the world that adults live in” and P9 found the Volkswagen video to be amusing, saying that she likes “seeing children”.

When asked which video they preferred, P2, P8, P9 and P12 said that they preferred the Volkswagen video, because “kids are cuter than teenagers” (P2), “I guess it’s just because Star Wars is well-known and then that link” (P8), “there was innocence” (P9), “it immediately caught your attention because of the Star Wars’ theme and so on, and there’s the small boy and the funny factor” (P12) and “it was hilarious, and the way it was done... I like ads like that” (P19).

Seven of the participants (P3, P9, P10, P12, P13, P16 and P19) enjoyed the Volkswagen video because it was funny; and eight participants (P3, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14 and P19) preferred the Volkswagen video because it was funny, whereas P12 said that “you remember funny videos for longer”. P8 said that he could see that the Volkswagen video would be one of those funny ones because the connection between a car and Star Wars was “random”.

P9, P12, P19 remarked on the Star Wars theme of the Volkswagen video, saying that “Star Wars and Darth Vader...resonate with so many people and their childhood” (P9), it “had a catchy tune and...immediately caught your attention because you knew what it was based on” (P12), “the way he was dressed like Star Wars and the music... you

knew you were going to enjoy it” (P19), “I used to do things like [what the small boy in the video does] when [he] was small” (P13) and “everyone loves Star Wars” (P3). However, P7 said that she does not like Star Wars and P5 and P15 did not know about Star Wars, whereas P5 did not “really get what [was] going on” in the Volkswagen video. The next section presents what was said about the Audi video.

5.3.2 Findings about the Audi Video

When asked which video they preferred, P6 and P7 said that they preferred the Audi video because “it has more action in it”, and “the car is better” (P6); “there was more music and suspense”, and “you wanted to know what was going to happen” (P7). P11 said that the Audi video was “quite well done”. However, P17 did not prefer the Audi video because “looking at it from an educational point-of-view” – she teaches “value-based” education – and the Audi video had “no values”.

P6, P5 and P7 could relate to the Audi video, saying: “not so long ago we were all in school and kind of the same way at one point” (P6) and “I own an Audi... if it was another car I wouldn’t have liked it as much” (P7). P11 could not relate to the Audi video because she’s “not a guy who is into cars”, however she has a brother and friends “who are obsessed with cars and get excited when they get into different cars and seem to be different people when they are driving them”, saying that “it gives them a little bit of attitude”.

Therefore, the Volkswagen video was complimented as it was funny and because of its Star Wars theme and the Audi video was criticised as portraying a message with no value; yet it was also complimented in its showcasing of the Audi car and the ability to resonate with people.

To determine why content is shared online, it was decided to investigate the role of emotions in marketing, and to determine whether the content, which elicits positive emotions is shared, rather than the content that elicits negative emotions. The following sections provide the findings obtained for each objective, beginning with Objective 1.

5.4 OBJECTIVE 1: TO DETERMINE WHAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO SHARE CONTENT ONLINE

In investigating what encourages people to share content online, the findings were categorised into the following: altruism, self-benefit (see Roy, 2011), content and social capital (see Camarero & San José, 2011), which were explained in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3.2), beginning with altruism. It should be noted that when discussing what has been found on what encourages people to share content online, this study also

considered what the semi-structured interview participants said that they liked to watch online.

5.4.1 Altruism

Altruism refers to the concept where people share content with their online social network, in order to assist the recipients (Roy, 2011). An example of content that is shared for altruistic reasons is content that is practically useful and/or interesting (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Sharing content for altruistic reasons also allows the sender to feel good about being altruistic (Roy, 2011). This theory provided the framework to identify how people are altruistically encouraged to share content online, as explained by the participants. The following paragraphs address what participants said encourages them to share, or not to share, videos, in terms of altruism, and specifically address:

- Whether the recipient would appreciate the content shared;
 - The perceived benefit that the content shared would provide to the recipient.
- P10 said that people would share videos with those who they believe would appreciate them. For example, P9 would share the Volkswagen video because her family would appreciate the “amusement factor” and “German sense of humour”. P18 said that he would want to share the Audi video with someone that he knows who “would benefit in the long-run for choosing the vehicle that they liked”. P12 said that he shares videos of “current affairs, things that everyone will find interesting, not really my personal taste, otherwise it’s just a waste of time, really”. P16 said that she shares religious videos to “inform or enlighten everybody else”.
 - P17, who is a school principal, said that she would not share the Volkswagen video because it doesn’t teach the recipient any value. Similarly, although P17 said that she might talk about the Audi video, she “certainly wouldn’t show it to people”, even though they use a lot of adverts in teaching, “because it will give the little kids the wrong impression”.

In the light of the above, where participants said that they would share videos online because the recipient would appreciate them (P9; P10), it would benefit the recipient in the long-run (P18), to interest all the recipients of the video (P12), and to inform the recipients (P16). This study has found that people indeed share videos for altruistic reasons. It has also been said that people share content online to benefit themselves (Roy, 2011), which the following section now addresses.

5.4.2 Self-benefit

People are encouraged to share content online for *self-benefit*, when they can gain socially by better positioning and integrating into society, where others recognise them as trustworthy, knowledgeable and philanthropic (Roy, 2011). For example, when people share content that they perceive others don't already know about, they do it for self-benefit (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). This section addresses the self-benefit factor, by looking at sharing content, in order to promote their self-image and make others perceive them in a favourable light.

- P11 said that “when you share something, it’s almost a reflection of who you are”, which is why she would not share the Audi video because even though she likes the car it’s not the kind of thing that she likes that it would give her attitude or get her a guy. P9 said that people might share the Audi video because it is “what in an ideal world they’d like to see themselves as... it’s got that [masculine] thing”.
- P1 said that “maybe a Volkswagen employee or someone on the board of Volkswagen” would share the Volkswagen video; and P15 said that the “distributers of Audi will share it”. Additionally, P10 said that the last video which she shared was about an advertising campaign for the Sunflower Fund, which she worked on, to promote awareness for the video and showcase what was done for the brand. Similarly, P7 said that she would only share the Audi video if it were about a brand new car to show someone a car that she likes because she wants to buy it. Additionally, as P1 and P15 said that people may share videos that are linked to the brand that they work for. Thus, the above statements imply that people share content online to promote their work or brand, or to promote themselves or their image, in other words to attain self-benefit.

As this study has focused on online social networks (see Section 3.4), the *social capital* factor is an appropriate incorporation to this study.

5.4.3 Social Capital

Camarero and San José (2011) maintain that content is more likely to be shared when the targeted consumer is highly integrated into their online social network and online social networks are large. Therefore, the social capital of a consumer could encourage the content to be shared online (Camarero & San José, 2011). This section shows the findings of this study that relate to the social factor explained above. Two points are made; the first is about the influence of the level of activity on online social networks on sharing content online; and the second is about with whom content would be shared in a social sense. The following points were noted about the influence of the social factor in encouraging participants to share content online:

- Online social networks serve as a medium for sharing content online;

- The influence of the people on participants' online social networks in encouraging them to share content online.
- Firstly, when asked whether they would share videos in general, P13 and P14 said: "No, I'm not really active on [online social networks]" (P13); and "if I'm watching something interesting I will share a link, but I won't share it on the social networks [online social networks]" (P14). When asked whether they would share the Audi video, P2 said "No... if I see a video I might tell my sisters to see it. I don't share it on Facebook... I don't really use Facebook... I don't share it on [online] social networks or anything" (P2). Thus, three participants (P2, P13 and P14) mentioned the online social networks in their reasoning for a video not being shared with others.
- Secondly, P14, who said "If I'm watching something interesting I will share a link, but I won't share it on the social networks [online social networks]" P14 also said that he would share the Volkswagen video with "someone you are close to, not your average friend", such as his wife. On the other hand, P6, who said that people on her online social networks share videos and that she herself shares videos, said that she shares videos with her online social networks, saying "if I find it funny then the people I know on my [online] social network would also probably find it funny; they have a similar interest" (P6). Therefore, while P14 would share the Volkswagen video with people to whom he is close, yet not on online social networks, P6 said that she shares videos on her online social network because people there have similar interests to her own.

In the light of the above two points, it seems that consideration of one's online social networks can influence peoples' likelihood to share content online.

With regard to the social factor, the online social network used as a medium or sharing content online and the people on the online social network can encourage or discourage people from sharing content online. In consideration of the social factor, and that people share content to benefit others and/or themselves, others have also said that people share content because of the content itself (see Camarero & San José, 2011). Thus, the influence of the content itself on sharing content online is addressed below.

5.4.4 Content

Consumers' connection with the sender of the content, their attitude towards content (Camarero & San José, 2011), and the perceived credibility of the content (Datta *et al.*, 2005 in Larson, 2009) are factors that encourage consumers to open and share content online. When consumers have a favourable attitude towards the sender of the content, they are more likely to be receptive to the content (Camarero & San José, 2011). Thus, when consumers are encouraged to voluntarily share content online (Camarero & San José, 2011; Porter & Golan, 2006), the content is more likely to go viral. Before

addressing what was found from the semi-structured interviews, the findings from the netnography study that relate to content follow.

The netnography study found that funny videos are likely to be appreciated. For instance, PH liked a video about two men trying to eat food like animals do, PJ commented on a movie trailer, saying “yeah, at least make the trailer a bit funny” and PE liked videos about Trevor Noah, a South African comedian.

Another finding from the netnography study was that people like videos that they are interested in, and specifically those from which they can learn. For example, PA watched videos about gaming that provide tips on how to play the game and commented: “Oh my word man!!! Straight after I saw this video, I got my first nuclear!!!! : thank you!”. PA therefore learnt from watching the video how to get the “first nuclear”, where a “nuclear” refers to a reward obtained in the game while playing it, because of what the video taught them. PA, PB and PI liked or commented on “how to” videos. Therefore, 40% of participants (PA, PB, PI and PJ) liked or commented on videos that showed them “how to” do something.

Lastly, it was observed in the netnography study that the participants liked videos that are entertaining. For example, PH had a folder based specifically on bastille music, and PC and PG commented on South African music videos, namely: ‘Pieter Koen - Ek’s Nie Mooi Nie’ and ‘Lindiwe Suttle’s “1000 Miles” Music Video Trailer featuring Sbusiso “DJ Sbu” Leop’. It was also found that P1 enjoys watching video trailers about new movies coming out. P6 watches reality shows, such as Idols; P8 enjoys watching serials; PE ‘liked’ a video about the ‘friends’ serials; and PE, PF and PG ‘liked’ or ‘commented’ on videos about South African celebrities, such as Bonang Matheba, Mpho Maboi and Joanne Strauss.

It was found that the netnography participants showed an appreciation for funny videos, interesting videos and entertaining videos, with specific mention of music videos, videos about celebrities and serials. The findings from the semi-structured interview follow, where it is explained that there are key characteristics of the content which might also promote the sharing of content online, namely:

- Content that is entertaining;
- The humour of content (see Hsieh *et al.*, 2012);
- The level of interest the people have in the content;
- How unique the content is in comparison to other contents;
- The perceived popularity of the content;
- The message of the content;
- How relevant the content is (see Botha & Reyneke, 2013).

These points about the characteristics of content that encourage people to share content online are explained below, beginning with when content is entertaining.

5.4.4.1 Content that is entertaining

In considering entertainment, P4, P5, P6, P16 and P19 said that they like to watch music videos, while P6 said that the reason is because watching it online is the “easiest and fastest way to get it” (P6). P5 specifically likes “jazz and Christian” music videos; P4 likes Japanese music; P16 likes Indian and classical music and P19 likes Indian music. P16 said that watching music videos makes her happy, feel good and allows her to de-stress; and P19 said that watching music videos is “a form of relaxation”.

5.4.4.2 Humour

Five participants (P3, P9, P13, P14 and P19) said that they would share the Volkswagen video because they found it *funny*, while P13 said “some of my friends would find it funny... it’s a fun thing to share”, and P8 said that while he would not go out of his way to tell people about it, he might mention it if others talk about it, because it is funny. P1, P8, P12, P16 said that people might share the Volkswagen video, saying that it’s “funny enough to be shared” (P16). However, P4, P5, P15 and P17 would not share the Volkswagen video because they did not find it funny; and P8 and P13 said that they would not share the Audi video because “it’s not that funny (P8) and “not as funny as the first one” (P13). As many as 13 participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17 and P19) said that a reason for sharing or not sharing the Volkswagen video was because of the level of humorous content it contained, it can be said that humour can influence people to share or not to share content online. This corresponds to what Hsieh *et al.* (2012) said, that funny video content is more appealing and encourages consumers to share the video with others (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012).

Six of the semi-structured interview participants (P4, P6, P7, P8, P11 and P19) like to watch funny videos, saying “[it] makes me laugh, and... de-stress” (P8), “to keep the stress out of us” and “to make your day a bit more interesting” (P4), “they make you laugh... are feel-good and light-hearted, everybody likes to feel good” (P7), “they are just funny, you know, escapist” (P11). Additionally, P6 said that it makes her feel “happy” (P6) and P8 said that he likes to watch cartoons because the funny ones make him laugh and “de-stress”.

5.4.4.3 Interest in the content

Another aspect that emerged was the level of interest that participants have in the content. P5 said that people would not share the Volkswagen video because, for her, it was “not really interesting”; and P16 said that she wouldn’t share the Audi video

because she did not find it interesting. Thus, a reason for not sharing the Volkswagen (P5) and Audi (P16) video was that they were not interesting.

P14 said that they watch news-related videos, saying that they watch “something on News24 and it takes you to a video link” (P14); and an example given was that “today [Nelson] Mandela’s daughter was being interviewed on SABC, so I watched it” (P15). However, when asked whether he would share the video about Nelson Mandela’s daughter, P15 said no because “it’s on News2, the whole world can see it”.

P1, P2, and P15 said that they like to watch videos that are interesting, saying that: “If the topic interests me... for example, this morning I was lying in bed and there was something about ‘10 healthy things to eat’ so I just clicked on that and I watched that” (P1), “I click on it and if it’s interesting then obviously I want to see similar videos like that” (P2); and “if I find it interesting I’ll watch it right through. If it’s not interesting I won’t watch the rest” (P15). Additionally, when asked why she would click on a video shared on her online social network, P9 said “just something that I would find interesting, maybe a different perspective, maybe something that wouldn’t be seen on television for example” (P9). P3 and P9 said that they like to watch videos about sport, while P3 said “it’s interesting. It makes me feel knowledgeable because I always get informed before everyone else” (P3).

P7, P13 and P16 said that they like to watch videos from which they can learn, saying “I like things that are new and the latest stuff... [because] I feel like I’m up-to-date” (P7), “you can’t learn from reading only” (P7), “I watch videos that show like how to fix my phone” (P13) and “I like to learn” (P16). Specifically, P16 likes to watch videos, such as “how to wear a scarf” and “recipes”.

In relation to the level of interest in the content, the product being marketed by the content can influence people to share content online. The cars marketed in the Volkswagen or Audi videos were mentioned by four participants (P3, P6, P7 and P16), where P3, P6 and P16 said that they would share the Volkswagen video to tell others about the Volkswagen car being marketed, saying that: “I’m a guy and guys like fast cars” (P3), “it’s a better car” (P6), P18 would share the Volkswagen video because she is a Volkswagen fan and knows that the marketed car is “very good”; and P7 said that she would only share the Audi video if it were about a brand new car to show someone a car that she likes because she wants to buy it. However, while four participants spoke about the car in their reasoning behind sharing the video with others, P8 said that he preferred the Volkswagen video because it had “absolutely nothing to do with the car” (P8). Therefore, the product on which the content is based can encourage or discourage people from sharing the content online.

5.4.4.4 Uniqueness of the content

P1, P2, P7, P8, P10 and P16 evaluated their likelihood to share the video by comparing it to other videos. P2 said that the Volkswagen video is “nice, but it’s not WOW” and that she said that she wouldn’t tell people about it. Similarly, P10 said that she doesn’t think she would share the Audi video because it was not specifically unique, different or original; and P7 said that people only share content that is awe-inspiring, and that the Audi video was not good enough. P1, P2 P8 and P16 said that they wouldn’t share the Audi video because “there are better videos” (P8), “there was nothing different about [the Audi] video” (P1), “it’s one of the many adverts that you see” and “probably one of the last ads I’d remember to discuss” (P2) and “it’s like any American movie about youngsters [and] quite predictable” (P16). Six participants (P1, P2, P7, P8, P10 and P16) were concerned about the uniqueness of the relative video, in comparison to other videos. Therefore, how unique content is in comparison to other content influenced six participants to share or not to share the content online.

5.4.4.5 Perceived popularity of the content

Responses by P1, P2, P6, P7, P11 and P12 regarding what encourages them to watch a video or click on a link shared on an online social network, were as follows: “unless someone tells me, oh there’s this video that I want you to watch, or unless there’s a link on Facebook or... Twitter” (P1), “when it has lots of likes or comments then you want to know what the video is about” (P2), “if... everyone is talking about it... *you obviously want to see what everyone is talking about*” (P2), “the comments under the link, or how many people like it” (P6) “only if it’s a must-see” (P7), “loads of people were sharing [it]” (P7) and “if it’s gone viral and people are speaking about it I also want to check it out for the social commentary aspect and staying informed... if it has lots of views then you almost think that it must have something interesting going on” (P11) and “if they substantiate why you should watch it” (P12). Therefore, the perceived popularity of the video, what others have said about the video, and whether watching the video is substantiated, can encourage people to view the content online. The following paragraphs address what people like to watch online.

5.4.4.6 The message of the content

The message of a video can influence peoples’ decision to share the video with others. Although P4 preferred the Volkswagen video because it has “a much better message”; three participants P4, P14 and P17 criticised the message of the Audi video, saying that it is “stupid” (P4) and that “you drive a car and suddenly you can do whatever you want to” (P4); the video is “associated with pride... it’s about being carefree, like I can ‘do what I want to impress them’” and shows that “if you dress like that you can do whatever

you want to the car” (P17) and “makes the child feel powerful, but he’s not powerful, the car is powerful” (P17) and that the video “gives false hopes... that because the car gave him power he felt he had the right to do what he wants”. Therefore, the message that content portrays can influence whether the content is shared with others or not.

5.4.4.7 Relevance

A prominent theme found in the findings was the relevancy of the content. This section is separated into what participants said about the relevancy of content (see below) and later explains how age and gender are factors that make content relevant.

- **What participants said about the relevancy of content**

The relevance of the content seemed to influence participants in sharing behaviour. Six participants (P1, P3, P6, P9, P11 and P13) said that they were likely to share the Volkswagen video because it resonates with Star Wars, saying that: “I found it really cute because I can relate to that because I was quite big when my brother was small and my father bought him Spiderman panamas, which he would never take off, and it had the mask, and he couldn’t see through the eye hole, but he would wear it the whole day, every day, I know how it is when little boys want to be superheroes” (P1), “my brother would [share it] cause he likes Star Wars and Darth Vader and he likes VW” (P6), and “a lot of my friends like Star Wars, so I will send it to them” (P3), “I know with my brother for example he’s obsessed with star wars, so he would definitely share that and he would also appreciate it” (P9). “I might share it if I had a friend who was Star Wars obsessed” (P11) and “I know my friends really like that movie” (P13). Therefore, when the theme of the content is relevant to people, it can encourage them to share the content online. Additionally, P7 said that she would not share the Volkswagen video because she does not like Star Wars; and P15 preferred the Audi video because it made sense to him, as the Volkswagen video was about Star Wars with which he did not resonate. Thus, 7 participants mentioned the Star Wars theme, when discussing their likelihood to share the video online.

With regard to the Audi video, P6 said that others would share it because they “can relate to it”, and because it seems faster it is more of a younger generation car compared to the Volkswagen, which is “more of a family car, especially with the little kid”. Additionally, P6 would share the Audi video because she can relate to it, saying that: “one or two of my friends have been there, especially the guys, who got beaten up but they have fancy cars so they get away with it” (P6). P5 said that the Audi video is more likely to go viral because “it’s what people like in this age, like flashy stuff and... girls partying and stuff” (P5). Accordingly P5 and P6, therefore, stated that when relating to the Audi would encourage the sharing of the Audi video. In the light of the above

paragraphs relating to content, when people are familiar with the theme of the content, they are likely to share the content. This is similar to what Botha and Reyneke (2013) found that with videos that have specific content, such as Star Wars, the first aspect of the video discussed is the relevance of the video, which is also linked to the sharing of the content online.

Two additional points to consider with regard to the relevancy of content in encouraging people to share content online is age and gender. The following paragraphs attest to age and gender, as factors that make the content relevant.

- **Age as a factor that makes content relevant**

Participants in the semi-structured interview were selected based on their location, age and gender (see Section 4.3.2.3) to obtain findings that were representative internet users in South Africa. This section explains how the responses from the semi-structured interviews differed across the age and gender categories used in this study, beginning with age below. To recall, the age categories were as follows: A (15 – 24 years old), B: (25 – 34 years old), C: (35 – 49 years old) and D: (50 and above years old). In the light of these age groups, Table 5.2 below shows how many participants were and were not willing to share the Volkswagen video with others, as categorised according to their age groups.

Table 5.2: Participants who were or were not willing to share the Volkswagen video as categorised by their age group

Age Group	Willing to share	Not willing to share
A	4	4
B	4	2
C	3	1
D	0	2

Table 5.2 above shows that from age group A, half said that they would share the Volkswagen video (P1, P10, P12 and P13); and the other half (P2, P3, P4 and P8) said that they would not share it. From age group B, 4 participants (P3, P6, P9 and P14) said that they would share the Volkswagen video compared to the 2 (P7 and P11) who said they would not. Similarly, with age group C, 3 participants (P14, P18 and P16) said that they would share it, while only P20 said that he would not. Lastly, for age group D, both

of the 2 participants that belonged to this age group (P15 and P17) said that they wouldn't share the Volkswagen video with others.

The above findings indicates that within the age groups B (25 – 34 years old) and C (35 – 49 years old), more participants were willing to share the Volkswagen video with others. To explain this, the responses from participants follow. Firstly, P14 (age group B) said that the “average mature adult would share [the Volkswagen video], but not the average teenager... different things appeal to different people”. Additionally, P17 recalled a time when someone younger than her “couldn't understand where [P17] was coming from when [P17] said that [the Volkswagen] video shows no values... I suppose as you get older you realise that values are important”. These statements by P14 and P17 relate to the above finding that the participants in age groups B and C were more likely to share the video than those in age group A (see Table 6 earlier).

In line with the above response by P14, P11 (age group B) preferred the Volkswagen video and found it amusing because at her current life stage she feels “broody” and “more likely go to my friend's baby show than to a prom”, and said that people who have children may share the Volkswagen video, as it may be something that their children would do. Additionally, P11 complimented the Volkswagen video, saying: “it's clever because it is a family-oriented car, so people who watch that are family-oriented will be amused by something like that and appreciate little boys doing silly things”. Therefore, it is more likely that people from age groups B and C would share the Volkswagen video with others; however, people from age group A are likely to share it as well, and people from age group D would be unlikely to share it.

The second video used in the semi-structured interviews was the Audi video. The findings, with respect to the age groups, about whether participants were or were not willing to share the Audi video, are presented below in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Participants who were or were not willing to share the Audi video as categorised by their age group

Audi	Willing to share	Not willing to share
A	0	8
B	2	4
C	2	2
D	0	2

As seen in Table 5.3, the following findings relative to each age group were obtained, on sharing or not sharing the Audi video: (i) for age group A, all participants (P1, P2, P4, P5, P8, P10, P12 and P13) said that they would not share the Audi video, (ii) for age group B, 2 participants (P3 and P6) said that they would share the Audi video; while 4 (P7, P9, P11 and P14) said that they would not share it (iii); for age group C, 2 (P18 and P20) said that they would share the video, while 2 (P16 and P19) said that they would not; and (iv) for age group D, none said that they would share the video, while 2 (P15 and P17) said that they would not share it.

P2 (age group A) said that “maybe if a teenager watched the second video, they may prefer it because they can relate to it more, than someone who is 21”, P6 (age group B) said that the Audi video is “more teenager”, and P16 (age group C) said that “youngsters probably would share [it]... it looks like it’s aimed at them”. Additionally, P9 (age group B) said that the Audi video was not that effective because it is targeted at a particular audience, who “place a lot of importance on bravery, as defined in that video, and also a lot of risk-taking and... irresponsible behaviour”, that doesn’t include her.

Contrary to the above responses, the findings (see Table 5.3) show that no participants in age group A were willing to share the video with others. This relates to what P13 (age group A) said, that the Audi video “is more for teenagers, but Audis are bought by older people”; and what P6 (age group C) said that she would share the Audi video because “people [her] age would relate better” to the Audi rather than the Volkswagen video. Additionally, P11 (age group B) said, that at her age most of her friends are interested in buying an Audi S3 or high-tech gadgets for their house rather than a family car.

Therefore, while P2, P6 and P16 said that the Audi video is more for young people, this study found that people from the older age groups, namely age groups B and C, were likely to share the video, which is also in accordance with what P13, a 15-year old participant, said – that the Audi is bought by older people.

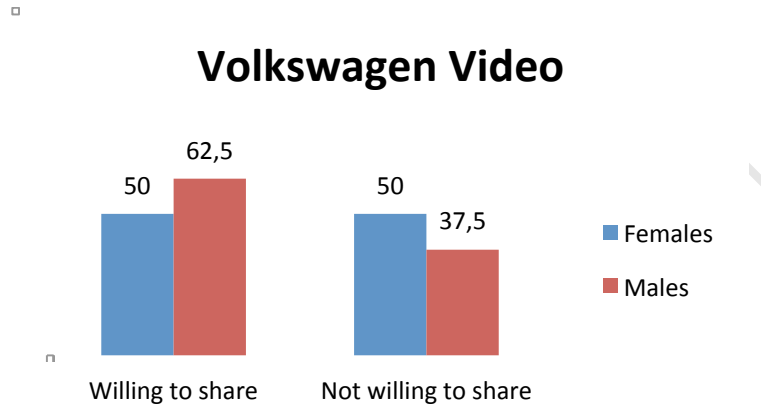
In the light of the findings from the Volkswagen and Audi videos that relate to age groups above, it can be said that people from age groups B and C are more likely to share videos; those from age group A are less likely to share videos; and people from age group D are unlikely to share videos with others online. Therefore, age is a factor that can make content relevant to people and can encourage or discourage people from sharing content online.

Another demographic used in this study is gender (see Section 4.3.2). The findings with regard to gender follow.

- **Gender as a factor that makes content relevant**

Sampling was also done based on gender. Herewith, the following findings were obtained, beginning with the Volkswagen video and followed by the Audi video. Firstly, with respect to the Volkswagen video, Figure 5.1 below shows the findings obtained.

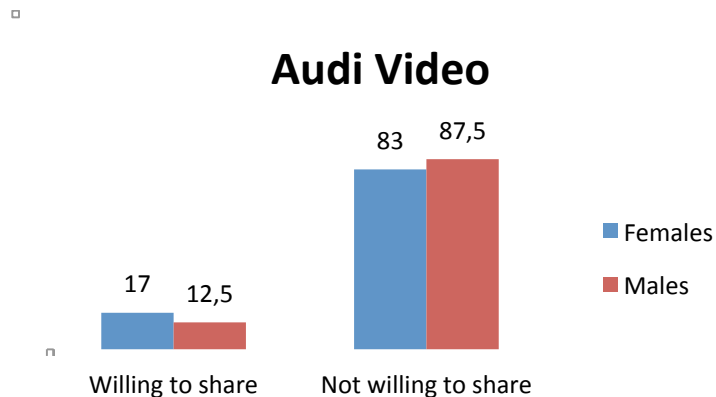
Figure 5.1: Percentages of female and male participants who were or were not willing to share the Volkswagen video



This study found that 50% of the female participants (P1, P6, P9, P10, P16 and P18) said that they would share the Volkswagen video with others, compared to 62.5% of male participants (P3, P12, P13, P14 and P19) who were willing to share the video. 50% of female participants (P2, P4, P5, P7, P11 and P17) said that they would not share the Volkswagen video, compared to 37.5% of the male participants (P8, P15 and P20) who also said that they would not share the video.

Figure 5.1 above indicates that more male participants were willing to share the Volkswagen video than were the female participants. Additionally, more female participants were not willing to share the Volkswagen video than the male participants. Therefore, it may be said that the males are more likely to share the Volkswagen video than females. The findings for the Audi video, seen in Figure 5.2 below, differ from that which was found for the Volkswagen video.

Figure 5.2: Percentages of female and male participants who were or were not willing to share the Audi video



This study found that 17% of the female participants (P3, P6 and P18) said that they would share the Audi video, compared to 12.5% (P3 and P20) of male the participants. 83% of female participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11, P16 and P17) said that they would not share the Audi video, compared to 87.5% of the males (P8, P12, P13, P14, P15 and P19) who also said that they would not share the video.

As may be seen in Figure 5.2, more female participants were willing to share the Audi video than male participants. Additionally, more male participants were not willing to share the Audi video than were the female participants. Therefore, although P3 said that the Audi video would be shared by guys because “it’s a car for guys”, and because “guys like fast cars”, this study has found that females are more likely to share the Audi video with others than are their male counterparts.

In the light of the above findings on gender, the males were more likely to share the Volkswagen video, while the females were more likely to share the Audi video. Therefore, as with ‘age’, gender is a factor that can make content relevant or not, and which can encourage or discourage people from sharing the content online.

Objective 1 set out to determine what encourages people to share content online, based on the altruism, self-benefit, content and social factors. By addressing this objective, evidence would suggest that people share content online for: (i) Altruistic reasons, when it benefits the recipient; (ii) self-benefit, when it makes them look good, or promotes their work; (iii) social factors, where people can be encouraged or discouraged from sharing content online because of online social networks; and (iv) the actual content, where humorous, interesting, unique, popular and relevant content, as well as content that has a favourable message encourages people to share the content online. While this study has found (see above) that altruism, self-benefit, content and social factors can influence people to share content online, past researchers have placed the focus on

emotions as an influence on sharing content online (see for example Berger & Milkman, 2009; Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Dobeles *et al.*, 2007).

Thus, the following two objectives that are addressed (see below), focus on the role of emotions in sharing content online.

5.5 OBJECTIVE 2: TO INVESTIGATE THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN SHARING CONTENT ONLINE

The second objective of this study is to investigate the role of emotions in encouraging people to share content online (see Section 3.6.2). To attend to this, Russel's (1980) circumplex of emotions was used to measure the emotions (see Section 2.2.6). The findings obtained are presented in the following paragraphs. These reasons explain why the participants were, or were not, encouraged to share the content online, in terms of their emotions.

Before attending to the findings from the semi-structured interviews, it should be noted that from the netnography study observations, the participants commented on videos by expressing emotional reactions with comments, such as "I love", "LOL" (laugh-out-loud), and "hahahahahahahahahahaha", "whoop whoopie", "this is fun to watch", "ek's nou so v...n kwaad (I am now so f***** angry)", and "I hate". This implies that emotions play a role in sharing content online. However, to confirm and enhance this finding, this section looks at the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews on the role of emotions in sharing content online, beginning with what was found for the Volkswagen video; and thereafter, the findings for the Audi video.

5.5.1 Did Emotion Play a Role in Sharing the Volkswagen Video Online?

As explained earlier (see Section 5.2.2), there were 20 participants for the semi-structured interviews. These participants were asked: "How did this video make you feel?" after watching the Volkswagen video. The responses were categorised as "no emotion", where participants said that they felt nothing or indifferent. The remaining responses were categorised as "emotional" (see Section 4.6.2). Additionally, in some cases where participants had already stated their emotional reaction, for example, that they found it "funny" before being asked how they felt, this response was recorded as an emotional reaction (see Section 4.6.2). Additionally, when participants had not yet stated whether they would share the video or not, they were asked whether they would share the video with others.

Of the participants, 17 (P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18 and P19) said that they had emotional reactions after watching the Volkswagen video, saying that they felt "happy" (P7; P8; P14), "nice" (P18), "like it was

a little bit funny”, amusing (P9; P11), “funny” (P8), “relaxed” (P19), “interested” (P15) and “good” (P16). However, three participants (P4, P5 and P20) had no emotional reaction, where P4 and P5 both said that the Volkswagen video made them feel “nothing” and P20 said “I didn’t really feel anything”. Table 5.4 shows the number of people who did and did not have an emotional reaction after watching a video, as well as those who were and were not willing to share the video with others.

Table 5.4: The findings obtained to investigate the role of emotion in sharing content online for the Volkswagen video

	Emotion	No Emotion
Share	11	0
Not Share	6	3

As may be seen in Table 5.4, 11 of the participants (P1, P3, P6, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16, P18 and P19) had an emotional reaction after watching the Volkswagen video and were willing to share the video, and seven participants (P2, P7, P8, P11, P15 and P17) had an emotional reaction after watching the video, yet were not willing to share the video. Additionally, three participants (P4, P5 and P20) had no emotional reaction and were not willing to share the video. Thus, the three who did not have any emotional reaction were less likely to share the video; and, of the 14 who had an emotional reaction, 11 were willing to share the video, while six were not. This shows that participants, who had emotional reactions, were encouraged to share, or not to share the video. However, when people have do not have any emotional reaction, they would definitely not share it. Therefore, for the Volkswagen video, emotions did play a role in sharing content online. The findings regarding the Audi video follow.

5.5.2 Did Emotion Play a Role in Sharing the Audi Video Online?

Of the participants, 10 (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P11, P13, P14, P15 and P18) said that they felt emotions after watching the Audi video. When asked how the Audi video made them feel, they responded with: “I did laugh at the end” (P2), “nice” (P5), “funny cause like you can relate to it” (P6), “I felt like I could relate” (P7), “typical man, he kissed a girl, got beaten up and now he’s in a fast car, so it’s made his night” (P11), “gives you that feeling”, “interested” (P15) and “like I want to buy an Audi after this ad” (P18). However, 10 of the participants (P1, P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P12, P16, P17 and P19) said that they didn’t feel any emotions after watching the Audi video. Specifically, when asked how the Audi video had made them feel, they responded with: “indifferent” (P8), “didn’t really evoke that much emotion”, even though she could “resonate with the power of a car or a

specific brand and the feeling that it has” (P10), “didn’t really impact” her (P16), “I didn’t really have any reaction from it” (P17), “didn’t feel anything with that ad at all” (P19) and ““nothing specific” was felt after watching it (P1).

These figures are shown in Table 5.5 below, as well as the figures of those who were and were not willing to share the video with others.

Table 5.5: The findings obtained to investigate the role of emotion in sharing content online for the Audi video

	Emotion	No Emotion
Share	4	0
Not Share	6	10

As may be seen in Table 5.5 above, four participants (P3, P6, 18 and P20) had an emotional reaction after watching the Audi video and were willing to share the video; and 6 participants (P2, P7, P11, P13, P14 and P15) had an emotional reaction, yet were not willing to share the video. Additionally, ten participants (P1, P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P12, P16, P17 and P19) had no emotional reaction, and were not willing to share the video. Thus, the ten who did not have any emotional reaction were not willing to share the video; and of the ten who did have an emotional reaction, four were willing to share the video, while six were not. This suggests that ten of the participants who had had an emotional reaction were either encouraged or discouraged from sharing the video; while those who had no emotional reaction would definitely not share it. Therefore, for the Audi video, emotions do play a role in sharing the content online.

Objective 2 set out to investigate the role of emotions in sharing content online. What this section shows is that this study has found that emotions *do* play a role in sharing content online, and in particular with both the Volkswagen and Audi videos. The chances of sharing content online are greater if there was an emotional reaction to the content.

This conclusion relates to the Social Sharing of Emotions theory. To recall, this study uses Scherer’s (2001) definition that an emotion is “an episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all, or most, of the five orgasmic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event, as being relevant to major concerns of the [individual]” (see Section 2.2.2). From Scherer’s (2001) definition, it may be said that when events occur that disrupt normal behaviour, an emotion is experienced. The Social Sharing of Emotions theory says that when what is expected to

happen differs from what actually happens, people share the emotional reaction that they have had (Rimé *et al.*, 1992).

In other words, since an emotional reaction happens when events disrupt normal behaviour (see Scherer, 2005) and people share emotions when what actually happens differs from what is expected to happen (see Rimé *et al.*, 1992), it may be said that Objective 2's finding that emotions play a role in encouraging people to share content online relates to the Social Sharing of Emotions theory.

This study takes the role of emotions in sharing content online a step further. As past researchers have found, the positive and negative emotions play a specific role in viral marketing (see Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012; Rimé, 2009), the final objective of this study takes the finding that emotions *do* play a role in encouraging people to share content online further, by addressing the role of positive and negative emotions in sharing content online (see Section 3.7). The next section is based on this assumption.

5.6 OBJECTIVE 3: TO DETERMINE WHETHER CONTENT THAT ELICITS POSITIVE EMOTIONS IS MORE LIKELY TO BE SHARED THAN CONTENT THAT ELICITS NEGATIVE EMOTION

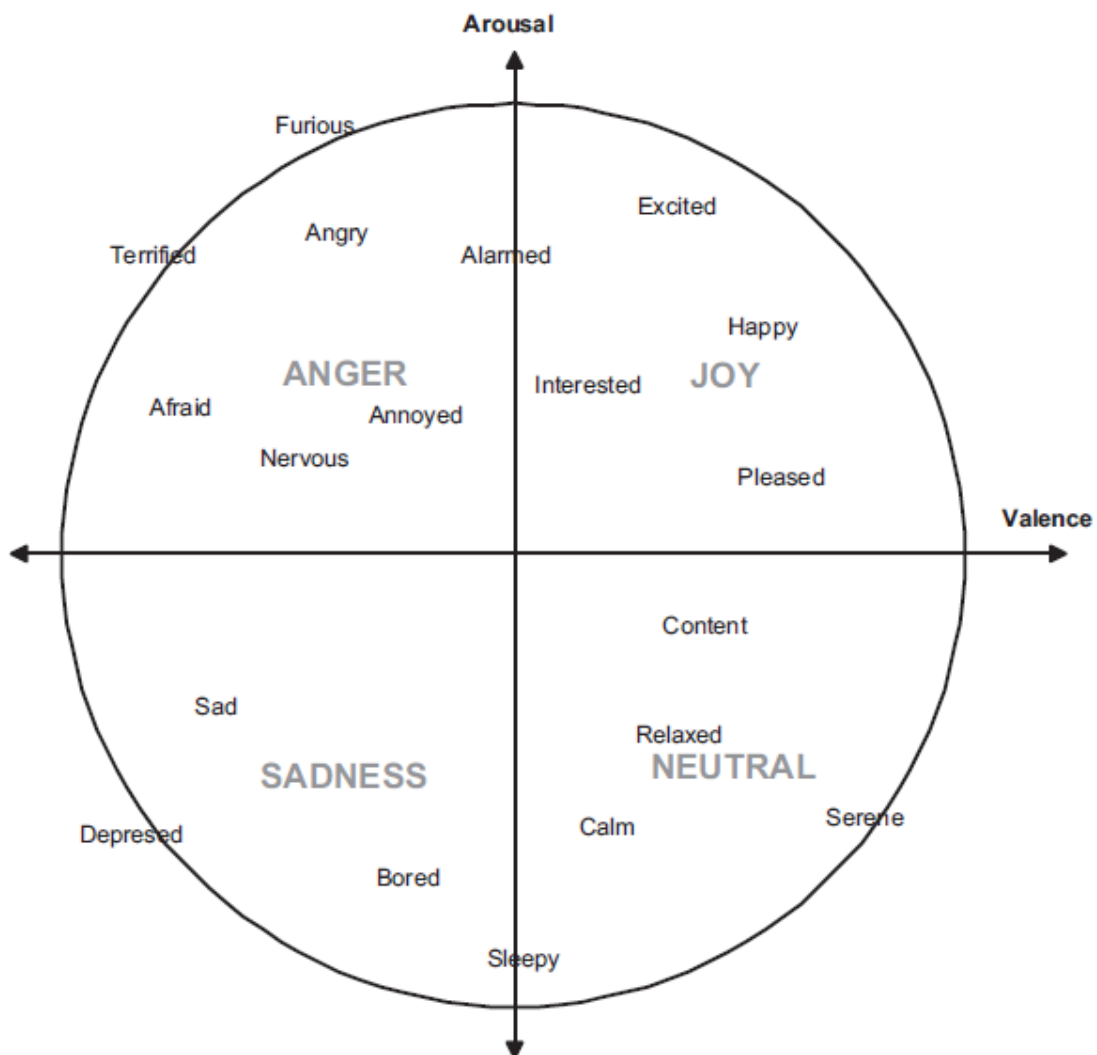
In addressing Objective 2 (see Section 5.5), it was found that emotions *do* play a role in sharing content online. To obtain a more detailed understanding of the role of emotions in viral marketing, this section places the focus on the role of positive and negative emotions specifically, when encouraging people to share the content online. As past research disagrees about whether positive content is shared more than negative content (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Hill *et al.*, 2010; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012; Roy, 2011), the third objective of this study is to determine whether content that elicits positive emotions is shared more than content which elicits negative emotions.

This study used the dimensional approach to measure the emotions (see Section 2.2.6), and referred to this as the circumplex of emotions, which allows for an understanding of emotions based on arousal and valence (see Section 2.2.6). Valence refers to positive and negative emotions, and arousal refers to high intensity and low intensity responses (Scherer, 2005). Specifically, a circumplex of emotions is used to show the emotional states that are a combination of valence and arousal, depending on where they are positioned on the wheel (Giannakopoulos *et al.*, 2009).

On the circumplex of emotions (see Figure 5.3 below), the two dimensions are valence and arousal. The upper-left quadrant contains emotions that are negative and high in arousal; the upper-right quadrant contains emotions that are positive and high in

arousal; the bottom-left quadrant contains emotions that are negative and low in arousal; and the bottom-right quadrant contains emotions that are positive and low in arousal. Specifically, the words that participants used in their responses to describe how they felt were matched with the words on the circumplex of emotions (see Figure 5.3). When a word used by a participant to describe an emotion was found on the circumplex of emotions, it was classified as either a positive or negative emotion (see Section 4.6). Therefore, to interpret the findings for Objective 3, Figure 5.3 below revisits the circumplex of emotions that was used.

Figure 5.3: The circumplex of emotions used in the dimensional approach to measuring emotion



Source: Giannakopoulos et al. (2009)

Figure 5.3 was used to determine whether the emotional reactions by participants were positive or negative and - where applicable - were of a high- or low-arousal. In determining whether content that elicits positive emotions is shared more readily than content which elicits negative emotions, the findings from the netnography study, and from the semi-structured interviews, are presented separately below.

5.6.1 Netnography

Participants from the netnography study commented on or liked videos that elicit positive emotions; and in turn, they shared their positive emotional reactions with others. The following examples provide evidence to support this, explaining that positive emotions were shared when:

- Complimenting the video;
 - The video elicited humour in the participant;
 - The participant was interested in the contents of the video.
- Compliments were given, that expressed positive emotions elicited after watching the video. For example, on a video about mathematics, PA complimented the video by saying, “This is a lot better than my maths teacher which I now have”, PG commented on a video about South African celebrity Mpho Maboi, saying: “I love Mpho, she is so herself, she is smart, calm and she is fabulous!”
 - Videos that elicited humour were commented on, with comments such as “WOW...please excuse me while I fall of the chair”, “LOL” (laugh-out-loud) and “lol hahahahahahahahahahaha”. Additionally, PD commented on a funny video by restating the funny scene, saying “Where are you all going? Where are you all going?” and PE ‘liked’ a video about the funny series, ‘friends’. Additionally, on a funny video, PJ commented saying “now i gotta wait another week for 5 minutes of this... haha”.
 - Additionally, According to the circumplex of emotions (see Figure 1 below), interest is a positive emotion. In the netnography study, it was observed that PD expressed interest in a video about the ‘World’s Roundest Object’, saying: “What exactly is measuring all these things?” Other comments that showed interest were: “I was here... whoop whoop”: “This is fun to watch... they aren't boring” and “nice, Sam and Sammy! Great stuff!”

Therefore, it was observed that the netnography study participants shared positive emotional reactions in the form of comments, or by ‘liking’ the video, to compliment the video, share the humour elicited from the video, and show that they were interested in

the video. In the following instances, participants from the netnography study commented on those videos that elicited negative emotions when:

- Anger was expressed;
 - The content of the video was criticised.
- Anger was expressed towards certain videos on crime. On a video that showed a house robbery, negative emotions were elicited; and PC 'liked' it. Similarly, on a video of a man being stabbed by people who were trespassing on his property, PC commented saying: "I have heard all of it. Apartheid's fault; the poor must steal etc. But to stab someone whilst robbing him reflects on your integrity". On a video that shows a woman being beaten up, PC complained, saying: "Our president would blame this on apartheid...look the other way, take a shower; and then send some more troops to go and beat up more women and children in a foreign country"; and PJ expressed anger by commenting: "ek's nou so v....n kwaad, ek kan in my broek k..k!! maar ek's meer de blixem in vir daai p#@@s manne!", which translates to swearing and expressions of anger.
 - Another form of expressing negative emotional reactions to videos was by criticising the content of the video. PC criticised a video on luxury cars, saying: "Monkey see, monkey do... Porsche does [it] first"; PG criticised the South African resort, Sun City, after watching a video that featured it, saying: "Sun City... I hate it. It's so boring"; PJ criticised what was seen in certain videos, saying: "I hate these types of people, thinking she's the shit, meanwhile she is shit!!", "i hate song remakes, sing it like it is don't change it..." and: "yeah, at least make the trailer a bit funny". These are examples of expressing criticisms towards content viewed by sharing negative emotional reactions elicited after viewing the contents.

In the light of the above examples of sharing negative emotional reactions on YouTube, participants from the netnography study shared negative emotional reactions to express anger or to criticise the content viewed. The above findings from the netnography study showed that people can share positive and negative emotional reactions on online social networks. With this in mind, the following section explores what was found from the semi-structured interviews.

5.6.2 The Semi-Structured Interviews

Using Figure 5.3, the findings that were obtained from the semi-structured interviews were interpreted. For the semi-structured interviews, the findings for Objective 3 begin by looking at the Volkswagen video, and thereafter the Audi video. Table 5.6 below shows the figures for the participants who said that they had positive and negative

emotional reactions after watching the Volkswagen video, as well as those who were willing, and those who were not willing, to share the video.

Table 5.6: The findings for the Volkswagen video regarding Objective 3

Volkswagen	Positive emotions	Negative emotions
Share	11	0
Not share	5	1

Table 5.6 shows that of the 17 participants who had an emotional reaction after watching the Volkswagen video, 16 participants had emotional reactions that lie in the upper-right quadrant (see Figure 5.3), where positive valence and high arousal intersect. Specifically, it was said that the Volkswagen video made them feel “happy” (P14), “nice because it’s got excitement [and] grips you in a way that you don’t know what to expect... you’re waiting to see the end results” (P18). “like it was a little bit funny” (P7), “happy” because the boy in the video is “cute and full of life” (P6), amusing (P9; P11), “funny” (P8), “relaxed and...enjoyed it” (P19), “interested” (P15) and “good... because it is entertaining” (P16). Additionally, P1 said that she felt happier after watching the Volkswagen video; and P2 said: “at the end I was like ah that’s cute”. P17 was the only participant who had a negative emotional reaction, saying that she “didn’t feel nice”.

Of the 17 participants who had positive emotional reactions, 11 (P1, P3, P6, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16, P18 and P19) said that they would share the Volkswagen video with others. However, five participants (P2, P7, P8, P11 and P15) said that they would not share the Volkswagen video with others. P7 said that she would not share the Volkswagen video with others because she “doesn’t like Star Wars”. P8 felt that the video was “funny”, but would not share it himself because “it’s an effort”, yet he says that “others might because it’s funny”, and that he “might mention it if they’re talking about it”. P11 said that she would “probably not” share it, unless she has a friend who was “Star Wars obsessed or broody”. P15 said that the Volkswagen video made him feel “interested” to see what’s happening”, but that he would not share it.

Therefore, of the participants who felt positive emotions after watching the Volkswagen video, there were more who were willing to share the video (11 participants), than those who were not willing to share the video (five participants). Additionally, as shown above, the reasoning that participants who had positive emotional reactions gave for not sharing the video were not definite; for example, P11 said that she would probably not

share it unless she has a Star Wars-obsessed friend; and P8 said that he won't share it himself, as it's an effort, but he might mention it if others were talking about it.

The only participant who had a negative emotional reaction, namely P17, was not willing to share the video with others. Thus, these findings indicate that if someone has a positive emotional reaction after watching the Volkswagen video, they are more likely to share the video with others. An interpretation of the findings for Objective 3 with regard to the Audi video follows.

Table 5.7: The findings for the Audi video regarding Objective 3

	Positive emotions	Negative emotions
Share	3	0
Not share	4	3

Table 5.7 above depicts the following findings. Of the 10 participants who had emotional reactions after watching the Audi video (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P11, P13, P14, P15 and P18), seven participants (P2, P5, P6, P7, P13, P15 and P18) felt positive emotions after watching the video. When asked how the Audi video made them feel, they responded with: "The start was catchy, you're smiling and think it'd be cute. I did laugh at the end when he gets punched" (P2), "nice" (P5), "funny cause like you can relate to it" (P6), "I thought it was cool... I felt like I could relate because I own an Audi." (P7), "you want to do what he did, it gives you that feeling" (P13), "interested" (P15) and "I want to buy an Audi after this ad" (P18).

Three of the participants had negative emotional reactions after watching the video, saying, "Typical man, he kissed a girl, got beaten up and now he's in a fast car; so it's made his night" (P11); "I didn't like the part with the lady" (P14); and "I felt like it portrays some sort of arrogant attitude where young boys think that because they drive an expensive car they can do what they want... I wasn't impressed" (P20).

In a similar case to what was found with the Volkswagen video, all three participants (P5, P11 and P14) who had negative emotional reactions after watching the Audi video were not likely to share the video. P14 said that he would not share the Audi video, saying "probably not... when you share something it's almost a reflection of who you are... I don't want people to think... I don't find it amusing to share... I like the car, but it's not the kind of thing that I like, like it will give me attitude or get me a guy, you know... so there's not enough of a link there." (P11), "I wouldn't share the second one it's associated with pride. It's about being carefree, like I can 'do what I want to impress

them” (P14); and “I wasn’t impressed with it, so I don’t want to tell others about it” (P20).

These findings suggest that when people have negative emotional reactions to content, they are unlikely to share the content with others. In the light of the findings presented in the above two paragraphs, those with positive emotional reactions after watching the Audi video were more likely to share it than those who had negative emotional reactions after watching it.

It should be noted that of the seven participants who had positive emotional reactions to the Audi video, less were willing to share it with others (three participants) than those who were not willing to share it with others (four participants). Taking a look at the reasons that the four participants had who were not willing to share it, and felt positive emotions towards it (P2, P7, P13 and P15) gave for not sharing the Audi video, they said: “I don’t really share videos... it’s nothing great about the advert, you’re watching TV and its one of the many adverts that you see... I don’t think I’d remember about it... It’s probably one of the last ads I’d remember to discuss” (P2); “it’s not the type of thing I share... unless it was a brand new car that I’ve never seen (P7); “it’s something you would see on TV...it’s not as funny as the first one” (P13); and “I don’t see the need [to share] it” (P15).

Therefore, with those who had positive emotional reactions, the reason for not sharing the video was related to the content of the video.

The above finding, that when people have positive emotional reactions their likelihood to share content online would depend on how they relate to the content, this relates to what was found when addressing Objective 1, that the content itself plays a role in encouraging people to share content online. For example P2, who had a positive emotional reaction to the Audi video, was not willing to share it because there is “nothing great about the advert”; “it’s not as funny as the first one”; and “I don’t really share videos”. These reasons relate to the *social capital* and *content* factors addressed in Objective 1 (see Section 5.4.3 and 5.4.4). Therefore, it is likely that content that elicits positive emotions would be shared; yet there are additional factors that would influence whether people would be willing to share the content, such as the nature of the content and social factors.

An additional finding about participants who had positive emotional reactions and were willing to share the Audi video (P1, P6, P14, P15 and P18) was that they had emotional reactions that lie in the upper-right of the circumplex of emotions; and therefore, are of a high arousal as well, namely: happy (P1; P6; P14), interested (15) and excitement (18). Therefore, it can be said that the participants who had positive emotional reactions that were also high in arousal, were more likely to share the video with others online,

compared to those who had negative emotional reactions or positive, low-arousal emotional reactions.

In the light of the above findings, this study concludes the following: (1) Content, which elicits negative emotions, is not easily shared; (2) the likelihood that content, which elicits positive emotions is shared depends on the content itself, the level of arousal of the emotion and social factors; and (3) positive content is more likely to be shared than negative content.

Earlier it was said that the Social Sharing of Emotions theory relates to the findings that emotions play a role in sharing content online (see Section 5.4). A finding above from Objective 3 is that when people have negative emotional reactions from viewing content, they are unlikely to share the content online. This finding also relates to the Social Sharing of Emotions theory. The Social Sharing of Emotions may not occur when (1) Emotional reactions affect the self-conscious, such as guilt; or (2) are traumatic (Rimé, 2009). Additionally, another finding is that the likelihood that content, which elicits positive emotions is shared depends on the social factors. This relates to the Social Sharing of Emotions theory, which explains that emotions may not be shared when the nature of the online social network discourages people from sharing the emotion online. Therefore, the findings for Objective 3 relate to the Social Sharing of Emotions theory.

This study selected participants for the semi-structured interviews based on their location, age and gender (see Section 4.3.2.3). While all the participants used in this study were based in South Africa, the ages and gender of the participants varied. The following section addresses the differences in the participants' age and gender, and in their responses in the semi-structured interviews.

This section set out to present the findings with respect to the three objectives of this study and the demographic factors that have been considered. Specifically, the following was found: (i) People share content online on the basis of altruism, self-benefit, social factors and the actual content; (ii) emotions play a role in sharing content online; (iii) content that elicits negative emotions is unlikely to be shared; and (iv) the likelihood that content, which elicits positive emotions would be shared depends on additional factors, namely: the nature of the content, and the level of arousal of the emotion elicited from the content. While these findings were presented, this chapter also contributes to a better understanding of the role of emotions in viral marketing. Before Chapter 6, which takes these findings a step further, the following conclusion is provided.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Using the responses from semi-structured interview participants, and where applicable, the observations of participants from the netnography study, research was conducted to better understand the role of emotions in viral marketing. Specifically, this chapter explains why this study has found that altruism, self-benefit, social factors and content encourage people to share content online, which addressed the first objective of this study.

In line with other studies (see for example those of Berger & Milkman, 2009; Blomström *et al.*, 2012; Dobele *et al.*, 2007), the researcher of this study examined the findings of Objective 2, and found that emotions play a role in sharing content online. For the final objective of the study, and in accordance with Christodoulides *et al.* (2012) and Rimé (2009), it was found that content that elicits positive emotions is more likely to be shared than content, which elicits negative emotions. The Social Sharing of Emotions theory was applied to the findings for Objectives 2 and 3. However, this study additionally found that the likelihood of content that elicits positive emotions being shared depends on the nature of the content and the arousal of the emotion elicited.

Taking the findings of this chapter further, the following chapter (see Chapter 6) concludes what this study has found. Additionally, based on these conclusions, the managerial implications for others, the limitations of the study and some recommendations for future research are explained. Chapter 6, which serves as a description of the overall objective of this study, also serves as the final and concluding chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Emotions have been the topic of study in psychology, sociology, and economics, among other disciplines. This study analyses emotion from a marketing perspective, to serve the purpose of exploring the role that emotion plays in viral marketing. The different definitions of emotions are discussed (see Section 2.2.2). This is followed by the different terms used synonymously with emotion, namely: *preferences*, *attitudes*, *moods* and *feelings* (see Section 2.2.3); additionally there are the different types of emotion, such as: *aesthetic*, *utilitarian*, *basic*, *positive* and *negative* emotion.

The way emotion is measured has already been addressed, in particular the fixed-response alternative approach, differential emotional theory, the free-response format approach and the forced-choice method (see section 2.2.5). The forced-choice method comprises the discrete approach and the dimensional approach, where emotion is placed on a circumplex of emotion, based on emotional valence and arousal.

Following the focus on emotion specifically, Chapter 2 discussed the role that emotion plays in marketing (see Section 2.4). As a result of the increasing interest in the subject of emotion (Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), more research is required on the role of emotion in marketing (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Sherman *et al.*, 1997). To better understand this, Chapter 2 introduced the Social Sharing of Emotion theory (see Section 2.3), which explains that in order to deal with emotional experiences, people share the emotions they have experienced (Rimé, 2009).

Chapter 3 then discussed viral marketing in terms of the online social networks, eWOM and emotion. An online social network is an Internet community where individuals interact, often through profiles that (re)present their public personae (and their network of connections) to others” (Acquisti & Gross, 2006:2); and eWOM is a type of word-of-mouth (WOM) that Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) say allows content to spread to multiple individuals. When content is shared online via the online social networks, eWOM occurs.

This study has argued that viral marketing is an application of eWOM. The definition of Golan and Zaidner (2008) for viral marketing was used, which says that viral marketing is “a broad array of online WOM strategies designed to encourage both online and peer-to-peer communication about a brand, product or service”. With the above theoretical background, Chapter 3 explained the three objectives of this study.

Past studies have said that people share content online because of *altruism*, *self-benefit* (Berger & Milkman, 2010; Roy, 2011), *social capital* (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2012) and the nature of the *content* itself (Camarero & San José, 2011; Porter & Golan, 2006). Hence, the first objective of this study is to determine what encourages people to share content online (see Section 3.3.2). This study has attempted to add emotion to these four reasons, by investigating the role that emotion plays in content being shared online.

In further investigating the role of emotion, the third objective: to determine whether content that elicits positive emotion is shared more readily than content that elicits negative emotion, was investigated. There is a disagreement among researchers on whether content that elicits positive emotion versus content that elicits negative emotion is more readily shared online (see Berger & Milkman, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Hill *et al.*, 2010; Roy, 2011).

To better explain the psychological reaction in consumers that could influence the sharing of positive or negative content, the Social Sharing of Emotion theory was introduced.

To attend to the objectives, Chapter 4 explained the methodology, which this study conducted. This study was exploratory in nature, where the aim was to explore and gain insight into the role of emotion in viral marketing. Thus, qualitative research was employed. This is conducted when the aim is to gain further insight into a topic, and when the outcome or direction of the study is unspecified (Malhotra, 2010).

The methodology discussed the two-stage research design that was used to obtain the findings. The two methods used were netnography and semi-structured interviews. Netnography, a derivation of ethnography, is a method of analysing online consumer behaviour by observation. The results obtained from the netnography were used to assist in the development of the semi-structured interviews. In the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked about their internet usage and their opinions about sharing content online, with particular focus on the role of emotion.

To obtain an accurate representation of internet users in South Africa, quota sampling was used for both the netnography and the semi-structured interviews, where the second stage of the quota sampling was convenience sampling. The quotas used were based on location and on the level of online activity for the netnography study and the location, age and gender of the participants in the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 5 presented the findings relating to the three objectives, finding that *altruism*, *self-benefit*, *social capital* and the *actual content* are factors that encourage people to share content online. The emotional reaction had after viewing the content and the valence of the emotional reaction also play a role in sharing content online; and content

that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion.

The conclusions (see Section 6.2) based on these findings are given in this chapter. Based on these conclusions, the managerial implications for marketers are explored (see Section 6.3), in order to give marketers a better understanding of how to make their content go viral online. Thereafter, the limitations faced by this study are discussed (see Section 6.4), and recommendations for future research are suggested (see Section 6.5). Subsequent to this introduction, the next section presents the overall conclusions found in this study.

6.2 THE OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results, the following overall conclusions were made. The first section discusses general findings about what made participants share content online. Thereafter, the role of emotion in the spread of content online is discussed.

6.2.1 What Encourages People to Share Content Online?

This study introduced four factors that encourage people to share content online (see Section 3.3.2), namely: altruism, self-benefit, society and content; and it then addressed the role of emotion and emotional valence in sharing content online. These are presented in Figure 6.1 below, which depicts the overall findings of this study on why people share content online.

Figure 6.1: Why is content shared online?

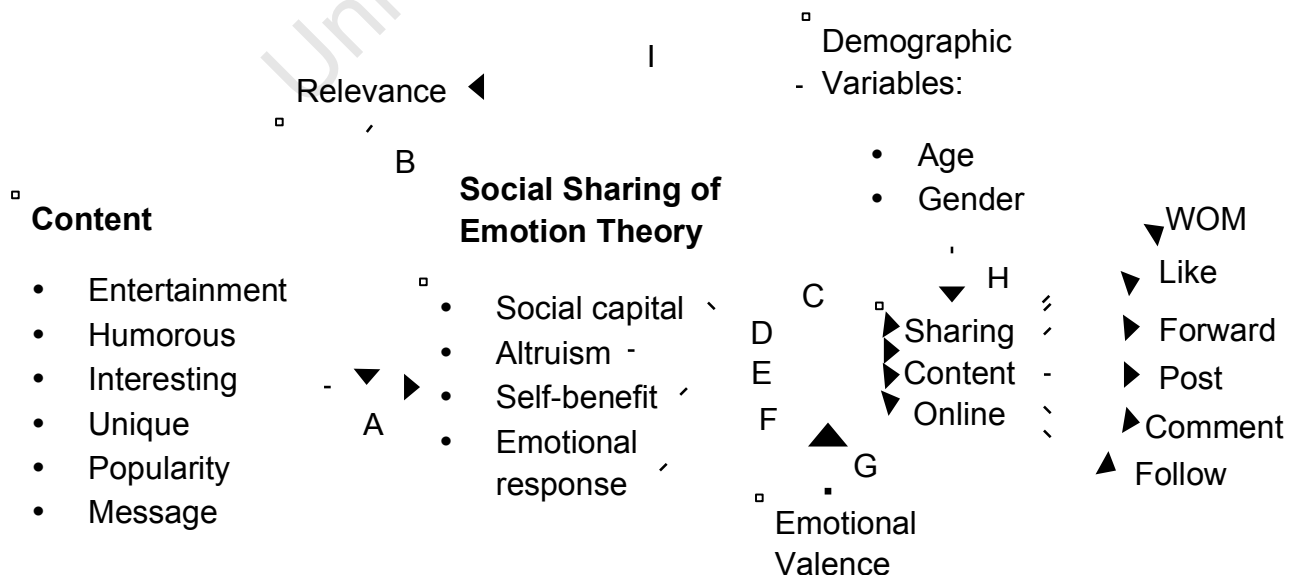


Figure 6.1 above shows why content is shared online, in terms of the different factors, namely: content, the Social Sharing of Emotion theory, emotional valence, sharing of content online, demographic variables and relevance. The arrows in Figure 6.1 represent the link between factors; for example 'A' represents the link between content and the Social Sharing of Emotion theory and 'B' represents the link between relevance and link 'A'. In the paragraphs to follow, these factors will be explained, beginning with *content*. The figure above shows that content as well as the various social and psychological factors can encourage the sharing of content online. This process is explained as follows. People are more likely to share content online when it is entertaining, humorous, interesting, unique, and popular or when it conveys a favourable message (see A). The content is shared by a person when it is relevant to that person (see B). Relevance can also be based on the age and gender of the person (see H and I).

When people deem content to be relevant, there are social factors (see C), altruistic reasons (see D), self-benefit (see E) and an emotional reaction (see F) towards the content that encouraged them to share the content online. Specifically, emotional valence (see G) moderates the likelihood that having an emotional reaction towards content contributes to sharing the content online, where content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion.

Consequently, when content is relevant and is socially or psychologically appealing, it is more likely to be shared online. This study describes sharing content online as telling others about content via WOM, 'liking', forwarding, positing or commenting on content on an online social network, or following people who have posted the content online. The conclusions found about each factor are depicted in Figure 1.

- The actual *content* is an important factor to understand when addressing why people share content online (Botha & Reyneke, 2013). What this study has found is that people are more likely to share content that is entertaining, humorous, interesting, unique and popular. This is in accordance with others studies, which found that people are more likely to share entertaining (see Consumer Insights Group, n.d.) and interesting content (Berger & Milkman, 2010). It was also found that the overall message of the content, as well as the product being marketed can influence people to share content online. For example, the viral: "Will It Blend" video that shows an iPhone being blended (see YouTube, 2007) shows what many people have not seen before, thereby encouraging them to share it with others, even though "most people couldn't care less about blenders" (Clark, 2013). Therefore, the actual *content* is a key factor to consider when determining why people share content online.

- A prominent theme found was that when content is relevant, it is more likely to be shared. Relevance was found to be eminent in three cases. Firstly, when people find the content relevant to themselves, or to others whom they know; for example, the Star Wars theme of the Volkswagen video was used in this study. Secondly, when content is relevant to peoples' age. This study found that age does encourage people to share content online. For example, when watching a video about children at an age where one is thinking about having children, or already has children of one's own. Lastly, when content is relevant to the gender of the person viewing the content, it is more likely to be shared. Therefore, when content is relevant to a person, it is more likely that the person would share the content online.
- In terms of *social capital*, people who are less active on online social networks, or who do not belong to any online social networks are less likely to share content online. This study found that while people usually share content on Facebook, those who are not active users in the online social networks are more likely to share content with a few family and friends via email, or to tell others about the content in person. Therefore, this study concludes that online and offline social networks can influence peoples' likelihood to share content online, or not to share it.
- *Altruism* is another factor that encourages people to share content online. People share content when they believe that the recipient would appreciate it; and specifically, they do so to inform, interest and benefit the recipient. Along similar lines, others have stated that a positive relationship exists between altruism and eWOM (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). People consider how content that they intend to share might be useful to the recipient (Consumer Insights Group, n.d.) and such content is shared with the intention of entertaining the recipient (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Additionally, Ho and Dempsey (2010) found that people are likely to share content with others when the content resonates with what the recipient is interested in. Thus, a reason for sharing content online is *altruism*. In addition to helping others, this study found that people also share content online for *self-benefit*. In fact, people consider how sharing content might benefit themselves, before they decide to share it (Berger, 2013a). The difference between being online and offline is that online it is possible that anyone, anywhere, could see what you have posted (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Specifically, this study concludes that people share content to make others perceive them more favourably, or to promote their work and build their reputation.

- In relation to *self-benefit*, others have said that people share content, in order to be better accepted socially (Kennedy, n.d; Roy, 2011), to enhance their real-life interactions (Schau & Gilly, 2003), to seem smart (Berger, 2010), and be the first to share specific content, so that others would view them as being “in-the-know” (Berger, 2013a). Basically, the better content would make them appear to others, the more likely they would be to share the content with others (Berger, 2013a). Berger (2013a) gives the example of an email sent to him from LinkedIn (see www.Linkedin.com) that said he was “one of the top 5% most-viewed LinkedIn profiles for 2012”. This resulted in thousands of people telling others about the “new-found status”. For example, as Schau and Gilly (2003) said, people who have recently graduated and are looking for a job are more aware of how they appear to potential employers.
- It has also been said that people share content to feel more involved (Consumer Insights Group, n.d.) and to make themselves feel good (Bjoran, 2013). The findings of this study deduce that people share content to promote their work, which is in accordance with Consumer Insights Group (n.d.), which states that people share content to tell others about brands or causes.
- Beyond simply promoting their work, people also like to tell others what they are interested in. The Consumer Insights Group (n.d.) states that people share content to define themselves to others – by giving others a better understanding of who they are, and where their interests lie. Individuation occurs when people share their opinions, in order to stand out from others (Maslach, Stapp & Santee, 1985). Ho and Dempsey (2010) found that individuation is positively related to sharing content online, with the aim of showing others how “unique” they are. People who want to stand out from others are more willing to express their opinions (Maslach *et al.*, 1985). Therefore, people are encouraged to share content online for *self-benefit*.

Objective 2 that follows addresses the role of emotion in sharing content online.

6.2.2 Does Emotion Play a Role in Sharing Content Online?

Objective 2 addressed the role of emotion in encouraging people to share content online. From the netnography study, it was found that people share the emotion elicited from watching the video. With regard to the semi-structured interviews, it was found that people who experience emotion after watching videos are either encouraged or discouraged from sharing the video; while those who experienced no emotion were not motivated to share it. This was the case with both the Volkswagen and the Audi videos. Therefore, emotion definitely plays a role in sharing content online.

The conclusion that emotion plays a role in sharing content online corresponds to what Botha and Reyneke (2013) said: that emotions are an important aspect to consider when determining whether people will share a video online, or not, because before sharing a video with others, people need to emotionally connect with the video. When someone watches a video and experiences no emotion from watching it, they would be less likely to share the video (Botha & Reyneke, 2013).

The Social Sharing of Emotion can be applied to the above conclusion that emotion plays a role in sharing content online. An emotional reaction occurs when events disrupt normal behaviour (Scherer, 2005) and the Social Sharing of Emotion theory maintains that people share an emotional reaction when what is expected to happen differs from what actually happens (Rimé *et al.*, 1992). Thus, the Social Sharing of Emotion can be applied to the conclusion of this study: that emotion plays a role in sharing content online.

Therefore, emotion plays a role in encouraging people to share content online. However, bearing in mind that previous studies have looked at the role of positive and negative emotion in viral marketing (see Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012; Rimé, 2009), this study took it a step further, and looked at whether content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotion, as addressed by the third and final objective below.

6.2.3 Is Content that Elicits Positive Emotion Shared More Readily than Content which Elicits Negative Emotion?

This study concludes that content that elicits positive emotion is likely to be shared, yet it depends on the nature of the content itself. For example, it was found that sharing a funny video with others made the sender feel happy (see Section 5.6). This relates to the interpersonal dynamic of the Social Sharing of Emotion (see Section 2.3), which shows that sharing emotional experiences gives the sender social attention from the recipient (Rimé, 2009). In the light of the Social Sharing of Emotion theory and the findings of this study, it may be concluded that people share emotions to help others, as well as themselves. Specifically, people feel happy when they share funny videos, which relates to what Bjoran (2011) said: that “almost universally, people want to laugh”. Berger and Milkman (2010) similarly state that practically useful and positive content is shared, in order to inform the recipient and to improve their mood.

Content that uplifts people positively “always gets shared”, because there are many people who are “unhappy”; therefore content, that is inspiring or positively uplifting provides them with a means to “get out of their rut” (Halpern, n.d.). This relates to the earlier mentioned conclusion about altruism being a factor that encourages people to share content online (see Section 6.2.1), as well as the most recent conclusion that positive content is more likely to be shared, depending on the nature of the content.

With regard to negative emotion, this study concluded that people are discouraged from sharing content that elicits negative emotion, which aligns with the findings of Botha and Reyneke (2013) that people who have a negative or no emotional reaction to a video are not likely to share that video. However, it should also be noted that Berger and Milkman (2010) also found that negative emotion can increase the sharing of content socially, and could sometimes inform people about things, or generate publicity for brands (Berger, 2013b).

From the netnography study, it was concluded that people commented on videos to which they have positive emotional reactions, by showing an appreciation for them. Another conclusion was that people commented on the negative emotional reactions they had after watching a video. Thus, it was concluded from the netnography study, that people share content that elicits both positive and negative emotional reactions.

The semi-structured interviews took these conclusions a step further, where the following conclusions were drawn. People are more likely to share content that elicits positive emotion than content that elicits negative emotion – even though content that elicits positive emotion may not be shared. In practice, it would depend on the nature of the content. Similarly, Berger and Milkman (2010) state that positive content is more likely to be viral than negative content, despite the fact that positive content is posted less frequently than negative content.

Additionally, Botha and Reyneke (2013) found that people who have a positive emotional reaction to a video are more likely to share the video. Abbott (2013) maintains that positive content is much more likely to be shared than negative content and Libert and Tynski (2013) found that positive emotions were more common than negative emotions in viral content. An earlier conclusion was that people share content for *self-benefit* – in order to improve the way others see them – by telling others about themselves. In the light hereof, Abbott (2013) explains that since the individual is telling others about himself by sharing content, it is more likely that the content that they share would be positive.

In terms of the findings that the sharing of content, which elicits positive emotion depends on the nature of the content, others have said that content, which elicits high levels of arousal, such as anxiety is more likely to be shared than emotions of a low intensity, such as sadness, regardless of whether it is positive or negative (see Abbott, 2013; Berger, 2013b; Berger & Milkman, 2010; Botha & Reyneke, 2013).

Bjoran (2011) put it simply, by saying that: “if it bleeds, it leads”. An example is BMW’s ‘The Hire’ series of short videos (see Boeriu, 2009) that elicited high-arousal negative

emotions, such as anxiety, and generated more than a million YouTube views (Abbott, 2013). Basically, the more emotional the experience, the more likely individuals are to speak about the experience, which Rimé *et al.* (2009) suggest is partially because the experience created greater interest (Rimé *et al.*, 2009).

Past research has found that the valence or type of emotion experienced does not influence the Social Sharing of Emotion (Rimé, 2009; Rimé *et al.*, 1992). However, this study relates the earlier conclusion that people who experience negative emotional reactions elicited from content to the Social Sharing of Emotion theory, because Rimé (2009) says that the Social Sharing of Emotion might not occur when people have negative emotional reactions (see Rimé, 2009).

This section provided the conclusions for the three objectives of this study. This, in the light of the above conclusions, the researcher of this study maintains that content, which elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared than content which elicits negative emotion; however, the likelihood of sharing content that elicits positive emotion depends on the level of arousal that the content induces, as well as the nature of the content.

This study, therefore, concludes that content is a key factor to consider when encouraging people to share content online. Particularly, content must be relevant to people, in order for them to share the content online. When people find content relevant, social factors, altruistic reasons and self-benefit are factors that encourage them to share the content with others. Additionally, people are likely to share content online when they have an emotional reaction to the content – and specifically a positive emotional reaction, where content that elicits positive emotional reactions is more likely to be shared than content, which elicits negative emotional reactions.

In the light of these conclusions, the following managerial implications of this study are offered below.

6.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Companies in South Africa, most of which have incorporated online social networks into their strategies (Worldwideworx, 2012b), need to better understand how to use online social networks more effectively (Goldstuck in Worldwideworx, 2012b). In the light of the above conclusions, this section provides managerial implications for marketers to take note of when creating and implementing viral-marketing campaigns. It should be noted that the managerial implications also provide pointers for people in general who intend to make content go viral.

6.3.1 Content is King

- Berger and Milkman (2010) concluded their study with the following suggestion: rather than focusing on appealing to “opinion leaders”, marketers should focus on creating content, which has characteristics that encourage people to share it (Berger & Milkman, 2010:32). Currently, being able to share content online is an action that anyone who has access to the internet is able to take. Thus, while some say that people who have many connections should be targeted by marketers (Goldenberg *et al.*, 2009), this study says that marketers should create content that is likely to be shared, either by being altruistic, benefiting the sender or appealing to their emotions positively. It has been suggested that for content to be worthy of sharing, it should be: (i) Useful to the receiver, such as telling the viewer “how to” do something; or (ii) visually appealing, such as in the form of a list or an infographic, which can be done by using the free tools that are available online (Bowler, 2013).
- To encourage greater sharing of their content online, marketers should ensure that the content is not too persuasive in nature. This is because consumers are sceptical about marketing campaigns (Phelps *et al.*, 2004), and unlikely to forward videos that are loaded with information about the brand (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). It is important that people should trust the sender of the content, to encourage them to share the content (Consumer Insights Group, n.d.), which is why the source of the content should be viewed as credible (Abbott, 2013).
- Consumers should also be encouraged to interact with each other (Consumer Insights Group, n.d.). This could be done by creating content that is easy to share, for example short tweets, and the presence of “sharing buttons” that make sharing the content easy (Abbott, 2013), thereby encouraging a two-way as opposed to a one-way conversation with consumers. Interacting with consumers allows marketers to better understand the consumer decision-making process, their emotions, and essentially their behaviour online (Leon *et al.*, 2010). This can be done by following up on the content that they have shared (Abbott, 2013). However, this study found that older people are more attentive to product information, as they look for the value that a viral-marketing campaign gives them. Thus, marketers should interact with consumers more via their viral-marketing campaigns, while sharing some information on the product being marketed.
- Humour is a powerful tool to encouraging people to share content online. As Berger and Milkman (2010) said, advertisements that amuse people are more

likely to go viral than advertisements that make people feel happy. Marketers should incorporate, when appropriate, humour into their marketing campaigns. Funny videos are said to be more appealing, to encourage interaction and to influence consumers to share the video with others, which is why it is essential that marketers incorporate humour into their marketing strategies when implementing viral-marketing campaigns (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012). Content should appeal to people's sense of humour, because humour is real, it creates trust, and is memorable (Abbott, 2013). Meme's are an example of content that is funny, evokes strong emotion and are concise (Abbott, 2013).

6.3.2 Relevance

- The relevance of the content is just as important as the actual content. Although people who did not know about Star Wars were still attentive to the Volkswagen car being marketed, and followed the storyline of the video, the humour behind it was not picked up to the same extent as it was by those who knew about Star Wars. Thus, the content of a video should be restricted in the sense that it is less specific and more general (Botha & Reyneke, 2013). This would allow for "more affiliation" between consumers on the content of the video, and a greater likelihood that the video would be shared (Botha & Reyneke, 2013:16). In other words, as some said that they would share the Volkswagen video with those who they know like Star Wars, there is a possibility that it would be shared with more people – not only with those who like Star Wars. Therefore, marketers should ensure that content should effectively appeal to the target market by not being too specific, yet not too general either.
- Marketers can ensure that the initial targeting of the release of a video campaign is done in a manner that captures the attention of people who would find the video relevant. In order to encourage people to share a video, the target market should be well understood (Wedmore, 2013). A way to target people effectively is to analyse the online social network profiles of the targeted people, to understand the type of content that they share, such as through a retweet or blog post (Bowler, 2013). Once it is understood what others are saying about the topic of the content to be shared, it should be ensured that the content has greater value than that which is currently being written about the topic online (Bowler, 2013). For example, using a local fashion blogger with a specific audience, such as teenage girls, to share a video that would be relevant to teenage girls, on their blog. In this way, the video is initially shared with people who would find the content of the video relevant. Marketers should create content that includes keywords, which would be relevant to the target market (Bowman, 2013; Wedmore, 2013). For instance, videos could be engaging, yet the title of the

video might not include the keywords that people use in their searches online (Wedmore, 2013). A way to do this is to use Google Adwords, which allows marketers to select keywords that people in the target market would look for (Bowman, 2013). The keywords used should be appropriately mentioned in the content, to ensure that the keywords are optimised for search purposes, as for example, in the title of the content (Bowman, 2013).

- At the same time, however, the humour should resonate with the target market, so that it is not perceived as being silly or rather inappropriate. Viral-marketing campaigns are more likely to be successful when they resonate with the target market and encourage them to share content (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). Hence, marketers should strategically consider the market that they are targeting when creating content, and also whether the target market would be encouraged to share the content online.
- Steizner (2013) speaks of the following example that Jonah Berger gave in his book, entitled: *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*. Rebecca Black's 'Friday' YouTube video (see YouTube, 2011) went viral although many people hated it. However, it had a view count that peaked on Fridays, which shows that when the days reached Friday, people were reminded of the video (Steizner, 2013). Therefore, marketers should consider "triggers" that encourage people to remember the content, by understanding the context of the targeted consumers (Steizner, 2013). This is what Volkswagen did with their 'The Force' campaign, by using the Star Wars' theme, with which many people resonate.

6.3.3 Social and Psychological Factors

- Ho and Dempsey (2010) also found that people share content, in order to be altruistic, and to differentiate themselves from others. These authors suggest that marketers consider both altruism and the need to be individualistic when attempting to understanding why people share content. Thus, the focus should be placed on generating content that is practically useful. This can only be done by telling viewers how they can use the content (Halpern, n.d.). For example, a marketing campaign for a car should show users that the car can be used for space, for speeding, or to improve the driver's status. Wedmore (2013) explains that to encourage people to share videos online, the videos should show and tell the viewers how they would benefit from watching the video.
- As it was found in this study that people like to share content that they think is unique, Abbott (2013) explains that content must depict the character of the

sender. People are encouraged to share content that tells others about themselves, so that the content which they share impresses the viewers on the online social network (Abbott, 2013).

- Online social networks influence people, and can encourage them to share content online. Bowler (2013) suggests creating honest relationships with people, so that they are influenced to share the content with others on online social networks, and thus to share the message with the target market.

6.3.4 Using Emotion as a Tool to Encourage People to Share Content Online

- This study found that emotion plays a role in sharing content online. Similarly, Libert and Tynski (2013) advise that strong emotion should be used to encourage people to share content and, specific to YouTube videos, people should be given an “emotional rollercoaster” when watching the video. Therefore, the content shared by marketers should be emotionally appealing. For content to be emotionally appealing it should be: (i) Based on an important topic; (ii) able to make the viewer feel “empowered”; (iii) it should come from a source that is perceived to be trustworthy; and (iv) it should be able to tell the viewer what they can do with the content (Nussey, 2011). Additionally, this study concluded that emotional appeal is experienced when content is relevant to the interests of the target market. To do this, marketers need to understand how their target market thinks and feels, and to constantly bear this in mind, when implementing the marketing campaign (Idler, 2012). Additionally, marketers should conduct research on improving the emotional appeal elicited by content, such as analysing feedback from previous content that was sent out (Nussey, 2011).
- Specifically, there should be a focus on high-arousal emotions. The more effective the emotional reaction, the more likely it will capture their attention in an era where attention is increasingly scarce, and essentially encourage them to share it with others. Halpern (n.d.) provided the example of writing an article that induced anger among many people, causing them to tell others about it and comment on it, which contributed to making the article go viral. According to Halpern (n.d.), high-arousal emotions that encourage content to go viral are awe, anger, anxiety, fear, joy, lust and surprise. It is suggested that marketers share content, which is designed to elicit emotions that are of a high arousal, as opposed to simply portraying the product or service being marketed in a positive light (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Abbott (2013) provides the example (see Appendix 6.a) of the difference in appeal between the picture of a hoodie compared to the picture of a cake. Both the hoodie and the cake are about the same topic: being the ‘Boston Celtics’, which is the name of a basketball team

that plays for Boston in the United States. However, cakes are associated with positive emotions, because they are seen as tasty. This shows that content, which induces stronger emotions is more likely to be appealing (Abbott, 2013). Lang and Yegiyani (2008) explain that content that elicits high arousal messages is more likely to be effective compared with content that elicits low-arousal emotions, regardless of the emotional valence. People are aware of and attentive to the fact that content can manipulate their actions by appealing to their emotions (Lang & Yegiyani, 2008). Therefore, marketers need to place greater weight on the emotional appeal that content has for the viewer of the content, by ensuring that the emotions elicited from the content have a high-arousal potential (Lang & Yegiyani, 2008).

6.3.5 Focusing on Content that Elicits Positive Emotion

- While it has been found that content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to go viral than content which elicits negative emotion, marketers should not ignore the opportunity to use negative emotion. However, the negative emotions that are used should be the ones that are high in arousal (Berger & Milkman, 2010). For example, BMW's 'The Hire' short films that were available online induced anxiety in viewers; and consequently, it went viral (Berger & Milkman, 2010). To control negative content about their brand that is shared, marketers should carefully manage what content is shared about their brand online, as negative content about a brand can damage the image of the brand (Berger & Milkman, 2010). However, marketers should be wary of whether content about their brand elicits high arousal negative emotion, such as anxiety, or low arousal negative emotion, such as disappointment (Berger & Milkman, 2010).
- Content that elicits positive emotion is more likely to be shared. Libert and Tynski (2013) explain that content should tap into the target populations' emotions while portraying the brand in a positive light. For example, the earlier mentioned Dove 'Real Beauty' campaign has been successfully viral by uniting those with low self-esteem which essentially induced a positive emotional reaction among viewers (Libert & Tynski, 2013). Similarly, Kerpen (2013) states that in terms of stories, messages that are an "enjoyable tale" are more likely to be shared. Thus, marketers should create content that is based on 'stories' that make people feel better after viewing the content. The Volkswagen video, which went viral, for example, keeps people interested in knowing what would happen next; and it leaves them laughing at the end of the video. Marketers should share content that does the following: (i) It portrays a favourable image of the brand; (ii) it shows how the product marketed by the content is better than the competitors'

products; and (iii) it induces a positive emotional reaction in the viewer of the content (Nussey, 2011).

- Marketers should be aware of the long-term benefit that sharing content that elicits positive emotion has on the brand (Nussey, 2011). This is because when content elicits positive emotion, it may encourage the person who viewed the content to remember the positive emotion elicited from the content, and bear it in mind when they are faced with a future decision on whether to purchase a product from the brand, or not (Nussey, 2011).
- Considering that content that elicits negative emotion is less likely to be shared, marketers should be aware of which emotions the marketing content generally elicits. For instance, what may be funny to some people, may be insulting to others, such as the Nando's 'Xenophobia' campaign (see for example Appendix 2.a). Idler (2012) suggests that marketers test the marketing campaign on a few people to determine whether the campaign should be continued. This would allow marketers to understand how people perceive the marketing content, and address any issues, such as the eliciting of negative emotions, for example offense, before implementing the campaign. With the integration of online social media to daily life, it is possible for negative perceptions on marketing content to go viral and result in damage to the brand's reputation.

Although this study has addressed the objectives effectively, and has clearly provided the above managerial implications, there were some limitations to the study. These will be explained below.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study are presented below, in the light of the way in which the study was conducted, and the focus of the study. Firstly, since the researcher of this study conducted the study within the span of seven months, there were time constraints that limited the amount of data that could be collected.

Another limitation was that, with a focus on the role of emotion in viral marketing and online social networks, this study was limited in the amount of past research that could be used, as the use of online social networks has only come about in recent years, and studies that focus specifically on emotion in viral marketing are still very few. Likewise, the researcher of this study found that there is less research on netnography compared with other research techniques, such as traditional ethnography or focus groups. An important point to note is that, online, social interactions may be influenced in real-time,

by aspects, such as social trends (Xun & Reynold, 2009). Thus, conducting netnography, instead of ethnography, poses a limitation, as the observation is more virtual; and some of the events that might influence participants' behaviour could easily be missed.

YouTube users' activity that can be observed is only recorded when they are logged on, and if they have a YouTube channel. The number of times a user shows activity on YouTube in a day or week does not indicate how many times they use YouTube to watch videos. People could be watching videos all the time on YouTube, yet only sometimes like or comment on the video. This serves as a limitation to the study because, in the netnography observation, only the activities that were shown on the YouTube users' channel were observed and recorded. Thus, there are more observations that could have been made, or might have been missed, due to this factor.

Additionally, some people have seen YouTube videos on other sites, such as News24. They therefore comment on News24 or post tweets on Twitter and not on YouTube. Thus, only observing behaviour on YouTube is a limitation. Additionally, this study was restricted to the videos shared on YouTube, and the netnography was conducted on YouTube only. There are many other online social networks that allow for content sharing, such as Reddit (see www.reddit.com). Users of other social media platforms could additionally depict different behaviours and other behavioural patterns (Lee, 2011). In the semi-structured interviews, the Volkswagen video was always shown before the Audi video. Many commented: "not as funny as the first one", which limits this study in the sense that the results could have differed, had the Audi video been shown before the Volkswagen video. The selection of participants was restricted to those who live in South Africa. As South Africa is an emerging economy (De Waal & Van Eyden, 2012), there are characteristics of those who live in South Africa and their internet use that cannot be generalised to other audiences. For example, fewer people in South Africa might be able to afford smartphones, compared with those in the more developed countries. Therefore, the results of this study are somewhat tailored to South Africa. And this is a limitation.

As the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Cape Town only, the sample was limited in accurately representing internet users in South Africa. However, the researcher ensured through the quota sampling that the netnography study allowed for better representation of internet users in South Africa.

Lastly, participants were asked how they felt. As this is a sensitive and subjective question, the validity of their answers could well be questioned.

In consideration of the limitations of this study presented above, and the conclusions and managerial implications explained earlier, the final section of this chapter provides

recommendations for future researchers who wish to enlarge on this study's topic, or on any of the particular conclusions that were drawn.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Viral marketing and online social networks are concepts that are constantly changing, which means that researchers need to be rather market-driven than market-led, in order to be able to conduct research that remains valid. This section addresses the recommendations that researchers should take note of for future studies.

- Firstly, in terms of Figure 6.1, it was found that content is king in encouraging people to share the content online, where people are more likely to share content that is entertaining, humorous, interesting, unique and popular, as well as content that conveys a favourable message. Therefore, future research should investigate which of these attributes of content are the most influential in encouraging people to share content online. This could be done by exploring whether people prefer to share content that is interesting rather than content that is popular.
- Bjoran (2011) explains that content cannot be forced to go viral. Marketers need to know their audience, and bear in mind what the characteristics of the viral content are when creating content (Bjoran, 2011). This study has been able to conclude what the factors are that encourage people to share content online. However, the characteristics of content that are more likely to be shared online should be further explored (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). Additionally, content is sometimes shared online through the online social networks, while at other times it is shared via email to a few people. Thus, future research should look at the influence of the size of the audience on why people share content online (Berger & Milkman, 2010). Future research could compare whether successfully reaching and impressing a particular and specific target market would result in the video going more viral than videos that target a broader market.
- This study has focused mainly on the reasons for sharing content online from the perspective of the sender, although some light was shed on the recipient as well. Future studies could focus on the recipient of the shared content, to determine whether people respond to content differently depending on who the sender is, or on which medium was used to share the content with them (Ho & Dempsey, 2010).

- Another recommendation is that future research should look at the influence of the weather on encouraging people to share content online, for example people may share content that induces positive emotions on overcast days – with the aim of making the recipient feel happier (Berger & Milkman, 2010). The same can be said about the impact of events. For example, when a sporting event occurs, people might be more likely to share content that relates to the event (Berger & Milkman, 2010).
- Since humour was found to be a prominent reason why people share content online, future studies should focus more on humour as an influencer of viral marketing, and particularly whether positive humour or negative humour is more effective. Future research should look at what different consumers find funny, and further explore the different types of humour.
- Another focus for research in the future could be the costs of viral marketing campaigns and the benefits measured (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012), where the impact of a viral marketing campaign could be calculated with tools, such as ROI. This could help to strategically create viral-marketing campaigns that are successful in terms of reach, and that are cost-effective as well.
- To further understand consumer behaviour on online social networks, methodologies should be improved to adapt to the quickly changing online social networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). This could be done by more ethnographic research on consumers who use the Internet and its platforms (Boyd & Ellison, 2008), such as the use of netnography.
- Future research should consider the impact of mobiles on the role of emotion in viral marketing, due to the increasing use of mobiles and tablets to use the internet and specifically watch YouTube videos. Additionally, future studies would benefit from addressing the influence of income levels on consumers' likelihood to watch videos online, as well as their perception of videos that they watch online; as those who cannot afford a smartphone watch videos on PCs, which are sometimes not as easily accessible as smartphones.
- Other recommendations are to look at the impact of other aspects on sharing content online, such as “corporate credibility” on their likelihood to share content (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012), the link between music and emotion, the perceived popularity of the content as a mediator or moderator on the likelihood that the content would go viral, and whether it is better to include more or less information about the product being marketed.

- Based in a diverse country, such as South Africa, future research should tap into the influence of demographics, such as race and income distribution, to explore the likelihood that content would be shared online. Additionally, South Africa is an emerging market (De Waal & Van Eyden, 2012). Thus, it would be beneficial to better understand how to conduct effective viral-marketing campaigns in South Africa; and this could only be done by pursuing further research on people in South Africa.
- It is also recommended that future research explore whether being the first to share content is a key influence in sharing content online, and whether real-time updates on online social networks, such as Twitter, weaken or possibly strengthen this link. On a similar note, researchers should conduct studies on how to make their content appear more credible, because the ability for people to create their own content could damage the value of the verified marketing content.
- By focusing on a variety of genres, the influence of a genre on emotion expressed can be addressed (Lee, 2011); for example, high-fashion marketing campaigns compared to technology marketing campaigns, or even marketing campaigns compared to music videos. The emotions elicited from sharing different genres of content may vary, which would benefit marketers in knowing how to tailor their content, according to the genre to which their product belongs.
- Future research could apply the methodology used in this study by showing participants videos that are tailored specifically for the target market. This would allow for a more accurate representation of the role of emotions in encourage targeted consumers to share content online.
- Since a limitation of this study was that asking participants how they felt is a subjective and potentially sensitive question, other market research techniques might obtain responses with a greater validity, for example, neuromarketing, which uses a Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging fMRI machine. fMRI machines measure physical changes in people and specifically changes in brain activity (Devlin, 2007). Therefore, an fMRI machine can be used to measure emotional reactions in people.
- The final recommendation is the following. The type of person was found to be a theme when deciding what encourages consumers to share content online.

People who are more active on online social networks are more likely to share content online. This implies that despite a viral-marketing campaign appealing to consumers, the likelihood of sharing the campaign would differ depending on the type of consumer. Thus, a topic for future research is to determine whether consumers who are more active on online social networks are more likely to encourage a marketing campaign to go viral.

While viral-marketing strategies vary according to the company (Larson, 2009), this study has noted what marketers, future researchers and people, in general, could do to encourage people to share their content online, based on the actual content and the emotion that the content elicits. The following section constitutes the final conclusion of this study, by synthesising what has been said in this chapter.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to better understand the role of emotion in viral marketing. This chapter, specifically, has discussed the conclusions drawn from conducting netnography and semi-structured interviews in terms of Figure 1 (see Section 6.2). Figure 1 describes the conclusion of this study – that people share content when it is relevant to them and appeals to them socially or emotionally, where content that elicits positive emotions is more likely to be shared than content that elicits negative emotions.

Using these objectives, some of the managerial implications for marketers were given to inform marketers on how to use a better understanding of consumer emotions to ensure that their content is shared online, and could go viral. Limitations to the study were also explained (see Section 6.4), although these did not significantly inhibit the findings. Using this study's findings as a base, future researchers could conduct studies to further understand the sharing of content online in terms of emotion, in ways that were recommended earlier (see Section 6.5).

The idea that content goes viral because of "luck" is wrong, because in order to take advantage of online social networks, people need to understand the science behind why certain content is shared rather than other content (Berger, 2013a). However, while it cannot be guaranteed that content will go viral, senders can ensure that the content has "got what it takes" (Ward, 2013).

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 2.a: Nando's' Xenophobia Advertisement

The advert below is one of Nando's' controversial campaigns (Neethling, T. 2012).

The pro-diversity ad
broadcasters don't want you to see.

We open on a fence in the middle of nowhere. We hear the voice of a xenophobe say, "You know what's wrong with South Africa? All you foreigners."

A man carrying a suitcase climbs through a hole in the fence. The voice says, "You must all go back to where you came from."

He disappears in a puff of smoke.

We see a long queue of immigrants. The voice says, "You Cameroonians, Congolese, Pakistanis, Somali, Ghanaians, and Kenyans."

With every nationality he mentions, a person disappears in puff of smoke.

We see a Nigerian man on a street corner in Hillbrow talking to young couple in a car. The voice says, "And of course you Nigerians and you Europeans." The Nigerian and the European couple disappear.

Flames of white smoke escape from the Plaza. "Let's not forget all you Indians..."

We see three Chinese men offloading a truck in an airway. The voice continues, "...and Chinese." POOF! They're gone.

We see a farmer driving a bakkie. The voice says, "Even you Afrikaners!"

The farmer disappears in a puff of smoke.

The passengers sitting in the back of the bakkie start disappearing.

The voice says, "And it's back to Swaziland for you Swazis, Lesotho for you Sothos, Tswana, Venda, Zulu, everybody."

The now empty bakkie passes a lone Khoisan man standing in a field. He says, "I'm not going anywhere. You 'fok' found us here."

The voice of Nando's says, "REAL SOUTH AFRICANS LOVE DIVERSITY."

"That's why we've introduced two more items to our menu: delicious Peri-crushed Wings for R89.99..."

The meal also disappears in a puff of smoke. "...and mouthwatering Trinchado and chips for R14.99"

Nando's
www.nandos.co.za

SABC, DSTV, M-Net and e.tv have banned this ad. They've made the decision for you. That's why we're giving you the option of seeing it here. And here: bit.ly/nandosdiversity. Unlike our broadcasters, we're giving you the right to choose.

SOURCE:

<http://t1.gstatic.com/images?q=tb:ANd9GcRYW8sayNpriKMTRfW5H9kYCsuHtbQw0NHcof7kGz2cyyPziBmg>

Appendix A shows the Nando's' advert which created controversy in the media and depicts Nando's' witty, daring humour in response to the media.

Appendix 4.a: Questions for the Semi-Structured Interviews



As a **UCT masters** student, I would appreciate your honest feedback on two viral video campaigns and the use of YouTube. This research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee. You will not be requested to supply any identifiable information, ensuring **anonymity** of your responses. Your participation will require about **30 minutes** of your time and you can **opt out** at any time. Your responses will be **confidential**, and only **aggregate findings** will be given. If you wish to obtain access to the study or have any queries, please email **Raesah: chhrae001@myuct.ac.za**.

1. Talk me through your average day...

- Then probe for social media usage and times that these media is typically used (e.g. “when I wake up in the morning, I like to read the news on News24 on my cellphone”)
- Spend time on this question to get a general feel for media usage and preferences (whether they have a smart phone or not, the apps they have, probe for a YouTube app)
- Gain insight into how integrated the internet and social media is in their lives, and particularly what their preferences are in terms of these.
- Learn about how they interact with others and then bring this up later to gain insight about how interacting with others influences them to share a campaign.

2. Do you watch any online videos during the day?

- a. If no for day, then ask if they watch videos any time during the week?
- b. If yes: what do you watch, when do you watch, why do you watch?

3. **What (mediums / technology) do you use to watch videos?**
 - a. Use the answer from this question to probe more in the rest of the interview (i.e if they use a smart phone, they have quicker access to YouTube)
 - b. Why do you use this instead of something else? Eg. Why do you use your phone instead of your laptop.

4. **Does anybody else watch videos in your household? How and when?**
 - Probe into particular, media, language, time, genre etc.

5. **Which type of videos are you particularly interested in?**
 - Why?
 - Then probe on the particular videos that they are interested in and the emotions that these videos derive.
 - Also probe about why they would not be interested in other videos.

6. **Do people in your social networks share videos?**
 - a. If yes: do you watch them:
 - If yes:
 - What makes you want to watch them?
 - Probe into emotions
 - If no: what do they share?

7. **Do you share videos?**
 - If no, then probe into why not.
 - Follow-up questions:
 - Would you like to watch YouTube videos in the future?
 - What do you think that YouTube can do to make these videos more accessible / valuable to you?
 - How would you like to access these videos? **If at all?**
 - Probe into emotions:
 - Which videos are they most likely to share, why, why not. Why videos are they least likely to share, why and why not.
 - Find out what they are interested in and how this links to their emotions
 - If yes, then probe into why and what they use it for:
 - Follow-up questions:
 - What do you watch?

- When and where, and on which media, do you access YouTube?
- What do you use it for? (i.e what do they usually search for)
- Why do you think it is important?
- What can be done, in your information, to improve YouTube videos?
- If other social media platform: what makes you follow a link to YouTube? (i.e how do they judge whether they should or shouldn't watch the video that has been shared on another social network?)

- Probe into emotions:
 - ➔ Which videos are they most likely to share, why, why not. Why videos are they least likely to share, why and why not.
 - ➔ Find out what they are interested in and how this links to their emotions
 - ➔ Probe about content that is surprising and whether it is more likely to be shared or arise interest.

Please watch Volkswagen's 'The Force' campaign

8. Did you enjoy watching Volkswagen's 'The Force' campaign?

a. If no: why?

- ➔ Would people you know agree with you? Why? Why not?
- ➔ Probe into emotions about how the way that the video made them feel influences their attitude towards the video

b. If yes: why?

- ➔ Would people (or you) share this video?
 - ➔ If yes:
 - a. Why? How would they (or you) share it (Facebook, Twitter etc.).
 - b. To whom would you share it? (Learn about whether they would share it with their whole social network or a few close contacts and why)
 - c. Probe into emotions about how the way that the video made them feel influences their likelihood to forward the video
 - ➔ If no:
 - a. Why?

- b. Would you tell people about it?
 - i. If yes: who would you tell? Why?
 - ii. If no: why not?
 - c. Probe into emotions about how the way that the video made them feel influences their decision to forward the video
- c. How did it make you feel?
- Probe about negative or positive emotions

Please watch Audi's 'Prom' campaign

9. Did you enjoy watching Audi's 'Prom' campaign?

- For this question, probe about negative emotions or the drama aspect of this video or the happy and positive aspect of this video – see whether they emphasise positive or negative and probe on that)
 - a. If no: why?
 - Would people you know agree with you? Why? Why not?
 - Probe into emotions about how the way that the video made them feel influences their attitude towards the video
 - b. If yes: why?
 - Would people (or you) share this video?
 - If yes:
 - a. Why? How would they (or you) share it (Facebook, Twitter etc.).
 - b. To whom would you share it? (Learn about whether they would share it with their whole social network or a few close contacts and why)
 - c. Probe into emotions about how the way that the video made them feel influences their likelihood to forward the video
 - If no:
 - a. Why?
 - b. Would you tell people about it?
 - i. If yes: who would you tell? Why?
 - ii. If no: why not?
 - c. Probe into emotions about how the way that the video made them feel influences their decision to forward the video

- c. How did it make you feel?
 - Probe about negative or positive emotions

10. Which video did you prefer?

- a. Why?
 - Probe about humour in the Volkswagen advert and whether people prefer watching funny videos and why?
 - Probe about the drama aspect in the Audi video, leads to negative emotions and upsetting videos such as news
 - This is a good question to probe about emotional valence which was the point of choosing these two videos, and bearing in mind that the PANAS scale has been removed.

11. Do you think companies should spend more time on creating better videos?

- a. Why?
- b. How could they improve?

12. How old are you?

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Appendix 4.b: Volkswagen's 'The Force' campaign

The picture below represents Volkswagen's 'The Force' campaign



The picture above is a screenshot of Volkswagen's 'The Force' campaign (see YouTube, 2013a) which is used in this study

University of Otago

Appendix 4.c: Audi's 'Prom' campaign

The picture below represents Audi's 'Prom' campaign



The picture above is a screenshot of Audi's 'Prom' campaign (see YouTube, 2013d) which is used in this study

University of Cambridge

Appendix 5.a: Ethics Approval for the Netnography Study

UCT Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee's approval letter, confirming that netnography could be conducted for this study.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



**Faculty of Commerce
Ethics in Research Committee**

Courier: Room 2.26 Leslie Commerce Building Upper Campus University of Cape Town
Post: University of Cape Town • Private Bag • Rondebosch 7701
Email: Harold.Kincaid@uct.ac.za
Telephone: +27 21 650 5041
Fax No.: +27 21 650 4396

UCT/COM/122/2013 10th April 2013

Raeesah Chohan
University of Cape Town
Chohan.raeesah@gmail.com

Dear Researcher

Project title: Understanding the role of emotions in viral marketing

This letter serves to confirm that the project entitled, "**Understanding the role of emotions in viral marketing**", as described in your final submitted protocol 2013, has been approved. You may proceed with the research.

Please note that if you make any substantial change in your research procedure that could affect the experiences of the participants, you must submit a revised protocol to the Committee for approval.

Best wishes for great success with your research.

Regards,

Harold Kincaid

Professor Harold Kincaid
Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee

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

The approval letter above indicates that the UCT Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee approved the conduction of netnography for this study.

Appendix 5.b: Ethics Approval for the Semi-Structured Interviews

UCT Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee's approval letter, confirming that semi-structured interviews could be conducted for this study.

7/24/13

Gmail - (no subject)



Raesah Chohan <chohan.raeesah@gmail.com>

(no subject)

harold kincaid <kincaidharold592@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 26, 2013 at 3:23 PM

To: Raesah Chohan <chohan.raeesah@gmail.com>

Cc: Seshni Callakoppen <sesjni.callakoppen@uct.ac.za>, Elsamari Botha <elsamari.botha@uct.ac.za>, Chao Mulenga <Chao.Mulenga@uct.ac.za>

All, I was not sent this proposal. It is now approved and letter will be coming. BTW, please raise these issues with me and not Seshni—I know the status of everything that has been sent to me. regards, Harold

The approval email above indicates that the UCT Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee approved the conduction of semi-structured interviews for this study.

Appendix 5.c: Letter of Consent

The letter of consent the participants were given before being interviewed for the semi-structured interviews.



I _____ agree to participate in this
interview on this day _____.

Signature of participant: _____

Signature of interviewer: _____

The letter of consent above was given to participants to sign before participating in the semi-structured interview.

Appendix 5.d: Abbreviations for Participants of the Netnography Study

The table below shows the meaning of the abbreviations used for the netnography participants.

Abbreviation	Meaning
PA	Netnography Participant A
PB	Netnography Participant B
PC	Netnography Participant C
PD	Netnography Participant D
PE	Netnography Participant E
PF	Netnography Participant F
PG	Netnography Participant G
PH	Netnography Participant H
PI	Netnography Participant I
PJ	Netnography Participant J

The table above depicts what the abbreviations used in this study mean, where each abbreviation represents a netnography participant. The netnography observations of each participant are shown in Appendix E below.

For example, PA = “Netnography Participant A”

Appendix 5.e: Findings from the Netnography study

The findings from the netnography are available on request. These findings were laid out in the following manner:

Code	Action	Video	Date published	Number of views*	Duration	Comment
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The heading of the tables in the netnography study's results represent the following:

Code = The code referred to throughout the thesis. For example, A1 = Participant PA, Row 1

Action = The action conducted by the netnography study participant, where actions can be 'liked', 'commented on', 'replied to a comment', 'subscribed' and 'added'

Video = The details of the video that the action was based on

Date published = The date that the video in focus was published

Number of views = The number of views as of the date that the netnography study observation was made

Duration = The duration of the video in focus (in minutes)

Comment = Where commented, this column shows that comment made. When 'subscribed' or 'added', this column shows the channel subscribed to or the folder that a video was added to.

An example of the findings from the netnography study is provided below.

A2	Comment	Vrou by vulstasie aangerand VolksbladNuus http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2uxEJryt-0	12 th April 2013	27 259	2:13	Comment: "Hahahaha!!! that's hilarious !!"
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The above finding from the netnography study shows that Participant A's second activity was a comment made on a YouTube video entitled: '*Vrou by vulstasie aangerand*'. This video was uploaded on 12th April 2013, had 27 259 views as of the date of the netnography observation and is 2:13 minutes long. The comment that Participant A made on the video was: "Hahahaha!!! that's hilarious !!"

Appendix 5.f: Abbreviations for the Semi-Structured Interview Participants

The table below shows the meaning of the abbreviations used for the semi-structured interview participants.

Abbreviation	Meaning
P1	Semi-structured Interview Participant 1
P2	Semi-structured Interview Participant 2
P3	Semi-structured Interview Participant 3
P4	Semi-structured Interview Participant 4
P5	Semi-structured Interview Participant 5
P6	Semi-structured Interview Participant 6
P7	Semi-structured Interview Participant 7
P8	Semi-structured Interview Participant 8
P9	Semi-structured Interview Participant 9
P10	Semi-structured Interview Participant 10
P11	Semi-structured Interview Participant 11
P12	Semi-structured Interview Participant 12
P13	Semi-structured Interview Participant 13
P14	Semi-structured Interview Participant 14
P15	Semi-structured Interview Participant 15
P16	Semi-structured Interview Participant 16
P17	Semi-structured Interview Participant 17
P18	Semi-structured Interview Participant 18
P19	Semi-structured Interview Participant 19

P20	Semi-structured Interview Participant 20
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The table above depicts what the abbreviations used in this study mean, where each abbreviation represents a semi-structured interview participant. The semi-structured interviews with each participant are shown in Appendix G below.

For example, P1 = “Semi-structured Interview Participant 1”

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Appendix 5.g: Age and Gender Quotas

The table below shows the number of semi-structured interview participants that belonged to each age and gender group, in accordance with the quota used for the quota sampling method (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2).

Table X: Number of participants that belonged to each age and gender group

Group	Age	No.	Males	Females	Target
A	15 – 24	8	3	5	8
B	25 – 34	6	2	4	6
C	35 – 49	4	2	2	4
D	50+	2	1	1	2
		20			20

The table above shows the number of semi-structured interview participants that belonged to each age and gender group and the 'target' that arose due to the quota sampling method used. As indicated on the table above, there were 8 semi-structured interview participants from age group 'A', 6 from age group 'B', 4 from age group 'C' and 2 from age group 'D'.

APPENDIX 6.a: Example to Show Content that Elicits High-Arousal Emotion versus Content that Elicits Low-Arousal Emotion

An example given by Abbott (2013) to show that content which elicits strong emotions is better than content that does not.



In the above picture, the picture of the hoodie is less appealing than the picture of the cake, although both are about the Boston Celtics. This shows that content which elicits strong emotions is more appealing and therefore more likely to be shared.