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TECHNOLOGY**

**APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS TO BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE IN NAMIBIA**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

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**APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS TO BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE IN NAMIBIA**

is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university or other higher education institution for the award of a degree.

I further declare that I will fully acknowledge any sources of information I will use for the research in accordance with the Institution rules.

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## Dedication

To Ari. May this serve as proof that anything is possible.

## Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my supervisors for guiding my efforts. My parents, for providing the deep well of motivation to forge on when I floundered. And Josefina, for always believing in the dream.

## Abstract

**Keywords:** *social media, analytics, framework, Namibia*

Social media use within the business and branding spheres has exploded globally over the past few years. While Namibian SMEs are actively involved in social media marketing, there is a lack of deeper knowledge of audience analysis, campaign analytics and proper strategic planning for full benefit extraction. This is compounded by the relative lack of locally produced and published research within the field of social media that explicitly tackles the topic of analytics and social media strategy. Furthermore, existing frameworks present some challenges towards implementation, such as a lack of focus on contextual environmental advantages that might inform creative strategy. Through a literature review of existing platforms and research frameworks, we find that these existing frameworks do not take into account potential perceptions that may help or hamper their implementation among SMEs with differing levels of social media maturity. Guided by qualitative methods like focus groups and brand interventions, and bolstered by quantitative methods like secondary data analysis and public surveys, we find that issues of user perception, messaging presentation and placement are key themes that plague successful implementation and exploitation of social media strategy and analytics data for business intelligence. This research thus presents a better understanding of the local social media marketing and analytics environment, determines currently existing best practices among larger organizations, and uses this data to formalize a social media marketing and analytics framework for Namibian SMEs. The research takes on a pragmatic bent that complements the fast-evolving nature of social media, and theoretically contributes a novel, social-first adaptation of the popular DeLone & McLean Information System Success Model of IS research.

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## Abbreviations

**SMA** – Social Media Advertising

**WA** – Web Analytics

**BI** – Business Intelligence

## Glossary

<b>Social media analytics</b>	The process of understanding consumer behaviour on a social media website (or other online platform) in order to achieve certain organisational goals
<b>Business intelligence</b>	Methods, tools, systems, paradigms, methodologies, and applications that work together to analyse critical business and market data in order to help a business better understand its market and make timely business decisions
<b>Digital marketing</b>	Integrating several platforms and approaches in order to attract, engage and drive consumer purchases

# Chapter 1: Introduction

The world of social media and digital marketing has exploded in the past decade as an avenue for online networking and collaboration, and its commercial benefits can hardly be ignored (Lewis, 2016). With some of the largest social media websites counting more than a billion daily users, it behoves the managers and/or owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to seek out efficient ways to capitalise on this massive user-base (Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). Online consumer acquisition and retention strategies may wildly swing in terms of breadth and scope, but there are two specific methods that are popularly used. The first one involves funnelling visitors to your website in order to achieve a certain goal, usually a conversion that involves the exchange of payment for a product or service. The second method involves creating, growing and maintaining a social media presence where one directly connects and communicates with an existing audience (Smith, 2012; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Either way, in order to remain relevant with regards to client needs analytics plays a huge role in market analysis and user growth (Fan & Gordon, 2014). As social media use grows within businesses, the need for social media analytics (SMA) becomes critical to support business intelligence (BI).

To briefly lend context, three terms relevant to this study are going to be defined: social media analytics, digital marketing and BI. Social media analytics can be defined as the process of understanding consumer behaviour on a social media website (or other online platform) in order to achieve certain organisational goals (Dakela & Sibongiseni, 2011). These goals may range from increased sales, to building and growing a subscriber database, to garnering technical data on your visitors' site movements in order to better optimize content. Web Analytics (WA) relies on data from three primary sources; these being unique visitors, visits or sessions, and page views (Burby & Brown, 2007).

By its very definition of "digital marketing" has undergone several evolutions over the years and keeps changing rapidly as new technologies are invented and released into the marketplace (Bullas, 2017). Digital marketing involves integrating several platforms and approaches in order to attract, engage and drive consumer purchases (Odden, 2014). These platforms include social

media, content marketing, influencer marketing (through the use of celebrities or experts), search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing to help brands connect with their customers and track the performance of marketing efforts in real-time (M. Lewis, 2016). Digital marketing further features data collection in order to better personalize each customer's journey, thus creating more meaningful experiences for each individual across different touchpoints (den Holder, 2017). This leads to a better grasp of the return on investment (ROI) when it comes to effort, time, funds, personnel, and the limited nature of these resources prioritises efficacy above all else.

As a collective concept, BI can be defined as the methods, tools, systems, paradigms, methodologies, and applications that work together to analyse critical business and market data in order to help a business better understand its market and make timely business decisions (Chen, Storey, & Chiang, 2012). These three concepts are intertwined with each other, and will be expounded upon in subsequent chapters.

This research is based on two broad intentions. The first involves determining the participant-assessed impact of social media on SME marketing in Namibia. This will also involve ascertaining the general knowledge of social media strategy within the SME community. The second, central intention involves the formulation of an over-arching strategy using an empirical approach. This incorporated a research design where baseline information was obtained from existing SMEs, the application of individual strategies was studied, and an analysis was carried out to determine best practises.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing and social media marketing offers several more benefits (Lewis, 2016). The potentially larger reach of social media has been facilitated by the ubiquity of internet access and is one more benefit that puts digital marketing ahead of traditional marketing (Smith, 2011). These benefits are greatly enhanced when social media analytics are aligned to BI. The first benefit is better audience service delivery due to segmentation, with social media analytics allowing for a more granular segmentation process

through several metrics such as device used, time spent online, inbound traffic sources, etc. The web analytics process involves tracking browser elements such as cookies and sessions, whereupon the user's browsing information is stored both locally (Krishnamurthy & Wills, 2009) and remotely. This leads to a greater degree of effectiveness and accuracy (Järvinen, Tollinen, Karjaluoto, & Jayawardhena, 2012) and can be used to inform related business strategies. User-generated discussions and content on various platforms such as forums, newsgroups and social media sites reveals another opportunity for researchers and business owners to "listen" to the collective voice of customers, employees, investors, and the media. Social media analytics offers a viable route to understanding and incorporating this collective voice into future business decisions, thereby enhancing overall BI.

There is however little understanding of the link between SMA and BI, as well as the application thereof, that is available to small businesses in Namibia. Recent research strides have been made within Namibia, both academic and editorial, in emphasising the importance and impact of social media (Tyson, 2015). These included forays into the educational sector (Haipinge, 2016), the business sector (Vesikko, 2013) and the law enforcement domain (Kapitako, 2016). The dearth of peer-reviewed, internationally published research that specifically deals with social media analytics within the context of Namibia, as well as the limited relevance of blog and news content for SMEs, was one of the obstacles to conducting extensive local literature review on the topic. A quick internet search of "social media marketing in Namibia" turned up disparate results, with very few of them relating to educative social media branding efforts within the country. This presented a challenge for local businesses trying to improve their BI and analytics (BI & A) methodologies in order to make better decisions.

Furthermore, this study was theoretically framed within the DeLone & McLean IS Success Model. Since its inception in 1992, the model has been cited and adapted to a wide range of different IS studies (Delone & Mclean, 2004). While a few of these D&M-related studies have touched on social media in general, only a sparse handful go into depth on social media marketing, brand building and analytics (Chang, Hsu, Huang, & Yang, 2018). The application of the D&M IS Success Model to SMA is an important adaptation that showcases the link between the basic D&M tenets (system quality, information quality, etc.) and social media marketing strategy. Thus, the

contribution of this research will be based on empirical research of SMA by Namibian SMEs and the scope expansion of the D&M IS Success Model.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

While local SMEs are actively involved in social media in Namibia, there is a lack of deeper analytics knowledge among these businesses to fully extract tangible value from the many available platforms. Despite social media having gained popularity among Namibian businesses, it remains a challenge for local businesses to carry out social media analytics and relate this to their BI efforts. There have been local initiatives to assist businesses to understand these insights, by introducing concepts such as the social media maturity model (Bosomworth, 2012). However, the relative complexity of the social media maturity model, as well as a lack of the necessary resources and manpower to realise its highest ideals, both pose a problem for many businesses (Kerkhof, 2012). This ultimately feeds into the difficulty of local outfits in mastering social media analytics, as it requires foreknowledge, a good grasp of BI and basic data mining skills (Lawrence et al., 2010). In this regard, part of the problem is the lack of a standardised social media analytics framework to guide local SMEs.

Most modern social media platforms offer integrated analytics dashboards that provide information related to several contextual metrics, with other third-party providers offering similar, often more comprehensive analytical data (Lee, 2017). However, such features have not been fully utilised and implemented by local businesses. On sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, it is possible to find out how many people have viewed a post, engaged with it (likes, shares, comments), their locations, their ages, and the number of clicks on a specifically tracked link or post element. These relatively stripped-down analytics provide an at-a-glance perspective of how well a Page's content is doing among its target audience. The absence of use of these built-in dashboards highlight the current gap between social media usage and its full analytics component.

Several studies have already explored various methods of using social media to successfully advertise goods and services, as well as to retain customers and build brand loyalty (V. Kumar &

Mirchandani, 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2011). However, a locally contextualized study that experimentally tracks the implementation and impact of such social media strategies for Namibian SMEs is lacking. Previous local studies focusing on the commercial impact of social media marketing have looked only at niche fields such as the brewery industry (Vesikko, 2013). Furthermore, the findings of international researchers on the paucity of empirical research relating to BI and social media analytics aligns with our own justification for carrying out this research (Daniels & Friborg, 2016).

Based on the above, it is clear that there exists a gap in our current knowledge of a formalised analysis of tailored social media strategies for the Namibian market. In thus investigating the validity and anticipated efficacy of granular social media analytics strategies for Namibian SMEs, a roadmap for locally-based start-ups and SMEs can be derived and discussed, providing measurable results for using social media to enhance BI. The adaptation and application of core tenets of the D&M IS Success Model will further prove useful in cementing the relevance and significance of such a strategic framework.

### 1.3 Research Questions and Objective(s)

The how's and why's of social media analytics and their attendant impact on commercial activity already exist in literature (Fan & Gordon, 2014; Fisher, 2009). The focal point of this research is the context within which it will be taking place (Namibia), and the audience intended to be explored (small businesses).

Our primary research question is thus:

- How can social media analytics be applied by Namibian businesses to enhance their BI and brand-building?

This was supported by the following sub research questions:

- What are the SMA and BI strategies known to (and applied by) Namibian SMEs owners?
- What is the relationship between SMA and BI?
- What metrics are used to determine the relationship between SMA and BI?

- How does BI combine with cultural context and visual design to improve SME marketing initiatives?
- What are the current SMA best practices that are applicable for use by small businesses?

With these questions in mind, the basic form of the main research objective began to take shape:

- To design a formalized SMM and analytics framework to improve BI and brand building for Namibian SMEs

The sub-objectives of the research were thus to:

- Evaluate current knowledge on social media analytics strategies and its link to BI among Namibian SMEs;
- Define the relationship between SMA and BI
- Analyze targeted social media strategies and their effectiveness with regards to business objectives
- Evaluate the effectiveness of various social media analytics metrics and tools on BI
- Design a locally contextualized social media analytics framework related to BI

These research questions and objectives were used as a guiding point throughout the research.

The next section presents a brief background of social media.

## 1.4 Research Context

Within the domain of social media applications, Namibia boasts a relatively higher Facebook adoption rate compared to other African nations (Peters, Winschiers-Theophilus, & Mennecke, 2015). The demographics and geographic diversity of the user base have both evolved over the years, and applications of these social media platforms have expanded to different arenas. These include, but are not limited to, a need for familial and non-familial relationship-building and maintenance; academic endeavours (as seen by classrooms incorporating collaboration on social media into their modes of teaching and learning); as well as commercial activities evidenced by the proliferation of business activities on localized online trading groups. Social media modes of

access have increasingly followed continental trends in the form of mobile phones and other handheld devices.

Research by Peters et al. (2015) shows that while Namibians are active on several different social media platforms, Facebook emerges as the clear winner in terms of active engagement among the country's users. Seen as the gateway platform to other social media apps, Facebook also presents itself as a highly trusted source of locally trending news among the country's users. Motivations for the platform's use range widely, from a desire to maintain relationships with old and new friends, to its cheaper rates of messaging compared to traditional SMSes, as well as the content sharing, gaming opportunities, intra- and inter-cultural socialization and learning aspects. Interestingly, peer pressure (i.e. the need to join Facebook because one's friends are also on it) turned up frequently as a reason for why Namibian users found themselves on the social networking site. Tellingly, "economic gain" was listed as the third most important reason why Namibians use Facebook, and as per the research, 36% of Namibians use Facebook to find gainful employment. This is an indicator of the latent, albeit under-explored knowledge of the role that social media marketing plays in transforming both business and personal finances.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp have become ubiquitous centres of entertainment, education and commerce in Namibia over the last few years (Tyson, 2015). With a wide reach in key sectors such as tourism and retail, the use of social media marketing as a viable means of generating leads and making profits has been explored by various institutional players both private and public (Mare, 2016; Vesikko, 2013). Third-party agencies offering specialized social media marketing services have cropped up as well, such as Space Dimensions, InTouch Interactive Marketing, AdForce and StarTech, among others. Research on social media usage has tended to focus on Western users, places and uses (Peters et al., 2015). This dearth of academic reference presents a challenge for literature review in derivative research such as this one. The presence of these phenomena justifies the relevance of a study such as this, which aims to decentralize the ability to market oneself by educating the general public on the core tenets of social media analytics.

## 1.5 Research Significance & Contribution

This research brings together social media usage and an advanced analysis of social media marketing investments. It further fills a void in the empirical research on SMA in Namibian SMEs. Besides establishing a baseline on the knowledge and usage of SMA in SMEs, a framework is derived from a collaborative SMA research intervention with a group of Namibian businesses, as well as through case studies and an online questionnaire. The resulting framework of this research is contrasted against the D&M IS Success Model to further justify and bolster its relevance, while being expected to improve current applications of social media analytics in Namibian SMEs. This would see them rise to a level where they fully integrate social media marketing strategies into their day-to-day activities, as per the tenets of the social media maturity model that is explored in later chapters. Achieving the end-goal begins with concerted efforts to educate SME owners and managers on the benefits of incorporating the social media marketing ecosystem as a profit driver into their business models through. This would be accomplished through workforce re-education, appropriate budgetary planning and co-opting analytics tools as part of their marketing activities.

## 1.6 Research Methodology

This research was grounded in the pragmatist paradigm of information science research. Key features of this paradigm include the use of interventions, empirical research carried out within contextual environments, the formation of partnerships between researchers and practitioners, as well as the design and development of theoretical principles or frameworks (Anderson, 2013). Its ontological and epistemological bases lie in the emphasis of practical solutions to real, fast-evolving problems. As such, its relevance to a study about a rapidly changing phenomenon like social media strategy cannot be overstated. A mixed method approach to data collection was employed, leveraging both quantitative and qualitative methods of garnering data from both users and brands. This included workshops, brand interventions, online surveys and dashboard analysis. The data was then thematically analysed to draw inferences and derive deeper meaning

that could influence the creation of a social media marketing and analytics framework for Namibian SMEs.

## 1.7 Assumptions

This study assumed that workshop attendees would have a basic understanding of social media platforms and at least some computer literacy. It also assumed that they would have consistent internet access in order to work on their businesses' online profiles on social media as well as to optimize them and log their assessments on an ongoing basis.

## 1.8 Summary of Dissertation

Table 1 presents an overview of the dissertation's research questions, objectives, and methods.

Table 1: Summary of objectives

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Methods
<p><b>Our primary research question is:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can social media analytics be applied by Namibian businesses to enhance their BI and brand-building?</li> </ul> <p><b>This was supported by the following sub research questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the SMA and BI strategies known to (and applied by) Namibian SMEs owners?</li> <li>What is the relationship between SMA and BI?</li> <li>What metrics are used to determine the relationship between SMA and BI?</li> <li>What are the current SMA best practices that are applicable for use by small businesses?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our main research objective is:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design a formalized SMM and analytics framework to improve BI and brand building for Namibian SMEs</li> </ul> <p>The sub-objectives of the research are thus to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate current knowledge on social media analytics strategies and its link to BI among Namibian SMEs;</li> <li>Define the relationship between SMA and BI</li> <li>Analyse targeted social media strategies and their effectiveness with regards to business objectives</li> <li>Evaluate the effectiveness of various social media analytics metrics and tools on BI</li> <li>Design a locally contextualized social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative + quantitative</li> <li>Quantitative: Questionnaires</li> <li>Qualitative: Workshops</li> <li>Workshops &amp; literature review</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How does BI combine with cultural context and visual design to improve SME marketing initiatives?</b></li> </ul>	<p>analytics framework related to BI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;M IS Success Model (adapted for social media)</li> </ul>
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## 1.9 Chapter Outline

The structure of this document is as follows:

**Chapter One:** Introduction

**Chapter Two:** Literature Review

**Chapter Three:** Methodology

**Chapter Four:** Findings

**Chapter Five:** Discussion

**Chapter Six:** SMA Framework

**Chapter Seven:** Conclusions, recommendations and future works

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The first section of this literature review explains the crucial role that the gathering, processing and analysis of data plays in BI. It further describes data research methods (collection and analysis) as well as business analytics. The second part of the literature review will more closely look at social media platforms, their potential for data gathering and analytics and how this data can be collected and processed for use in making business decisions. It will consider the impact that modern social media platforms have had on the marketing efforts of businesses, their branding message, their bottom lines and more.

## 2.2 The role of data in BI

The impact of IT has driven large and small organizations to seek new ways of increasing operational productivity and throughput. This has been undertaken with the aim of staying competitive in a global market ruled by discerning consumer tastes and ever-increasing options for audiences. Data is crucial to gathering effective BI.

There are several ways that data and its analytical component can be applied to business activities, as listed below (Chen et al., 2012):

- **Empower management to make better decisions** – Data analytics processes assist in strategic planning by sharpening the analytical abilities of top management staff, thereby improving their overall decision-making skills. The insights garnered from analyzing available data also improves the day-to-day efficiency of lower-level staff. Moreover, new goals can be decisively set through measuring, recording and tracking key performance metrics.
- **Identify trends to stay competitive** - Data analytics involves determining patterns within large data sets. This helps with identifying new and emerging market trends, which could provide a competitive advantage in introducing new products and services. This

identification of patterns can also apply to business processes, helping to unearth inconsistencies and inefficiencies which can then be empirically improved.

- **Promote low risk, data-driven action plans** – Quantifiable evidence makes all the difference when it comes to performing cost/benefit and risk analyses on proposed business decisions.
- **Validate decisions** – Making data-based decisions helps to justify the allocation of valuable resources to proposed business decisions, as well as to quantify the returns on investment (ROI) that these decisions yield – based on pre-determined KPIs and organizational goals.
- **New target audience identification** – Data reveals new customer segments that can be served by an organization's current offerings or through new, innovative combinations of the same. This can be achieved by shaping customer data to reveal valuable insights.
- **Facilitate recruitment** – Assessing available demographical data pertaining to certain geographic locations can significantly cut down on the recruitment processes of both large and small organizations. By tracking certain variables such as educational levels, urbanization and age variances in populations, organizations can hone in on certain segments of the population that would most contribute to their human resource pool. This potentially cuts down on recruitment costs, reduces onboarding time and increases employee retention.

The effective exploitation of data is not without its challenges, however. Three of the biggest challenges facing marketers and decision-makers are as follows (Chen et al., 2012; Gartz, 2004):

- **Determining which pieces of data to gather:** Not all data is relevant, and filtering for the right insights is a process that requires time and planning.
- **Picking between analytics tools and platforms:** A significant increase in data generally corresponds to the need for an upgrade in analytical infrastructure which may compete with time, personnel and budget constraints.

- **Turning data into action:** raw data in itself offers little in the way of insights. The conversion of that raw data into actionable information requires considerable investments of time, money, effort and skill.

These challenges are exacerbated by the sheer number of methods by which data itself can be processed and analysed. In the next section, the role that analytics plays in BI is explored.

### 2.2.1 Analytics

Business analytics serves one key purpose: that of helping people and organisations make better decisions (Power & Sharda, 2015). Different facets of an organization can benefit from the implementation of BI strategies. These include finance, operational departments, logistical divisions, human resources, and legal units (Mcafee & Brynjolfsson, 2012). The ever-expanding analytics multiverse consists of several different fields, including BI, big data, machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), natural language processing, cognitive computing and so called “deep learning” algorithms (Biesboer, 2017). These different aspects of the analytics world are deployed in healthcare, government planning, financial markets, technology and urban architecture planning. For the purpose of this research, the focus was on BI/analytics (to be used interchangeably). As shown in Figure 1, this includes aspects of descriptive, prescriptive and predictive analytics, which all form part of the analytics lifecycle (Bedeley, Ghoshal, Iyer, & Bhadury, 2018; Kunc & O’Brien, 2018).

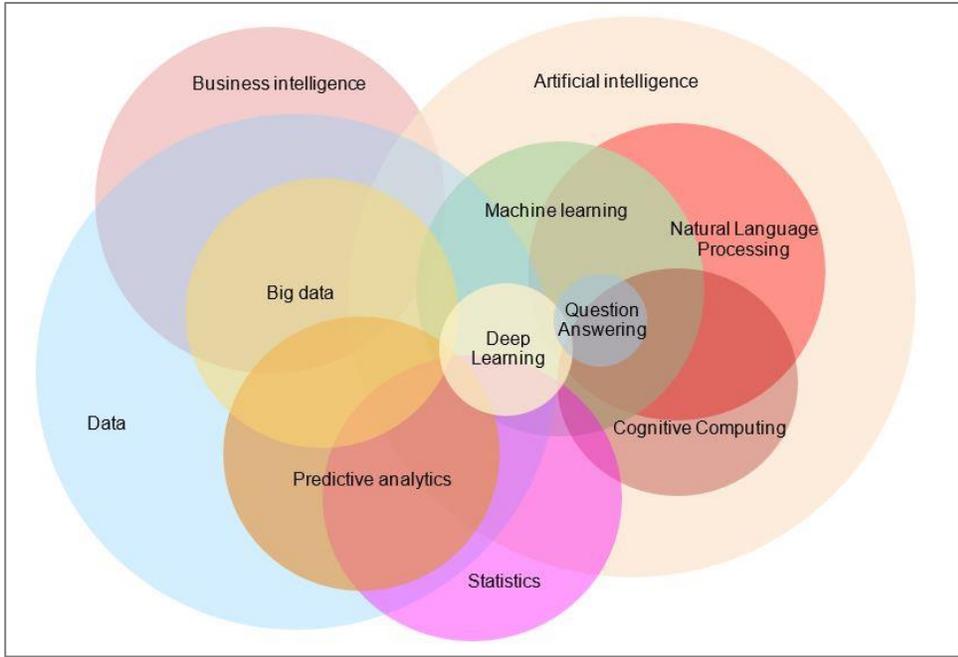


Figure 1: The Analytics Multiverse (Biesboer, 2017)

The BI value chain encompasses several aspects. These include identifying factors and causes, understanding patterns through data visualizations, and ensuring data quality. Pursuant to this, businesses can utilize these earlier insights to make forecasts, optimize business processes and systems, and understand their role and value within a wider social context.

Data quality is an important consideration when venturing into business analytics, as the quality of data that goes into planning can affect the quality of decisions made, processes instituted or predictions forecasted. Jugulum (2014) defines 4 key aspects of data quality, namely completeness, conformity, validity and accuracy, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Data quality dimensions (Jugulum, 2014)

Dimension	Definition
<b>Completeness</b>	Completeness is defined as a measure of the presence of core source data elements that, exclusive of derived fields, must be present in order to complete a given business process
<b>Conformity</b>	Conformity is defined as a measure of a data element’s adherence to required formats (data types, field lengths, value masks, field composition, etc.) as specified in either metadata documentation or external or internal data standards

<b>Validity</b>	Validity is defined as the extent to which data corresponds to reference tables, lists of values from golden sources documented in metadata, value ranges, etc.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Accuracy is defined as a measure of whether the value of a given data element is correct and reflects the real world as viewed by a valid real-world source (e.g., SME, customer, hard-copy record, etc.)

Steps that can be taken towards “cleaning up” data include de-duplication of data, synchronization of data across multiple departments, contextual enrichment of data in order to improve meaning, as well as periodical data refreshment in order to stay up-to-date (LaValle, Lesser, Shockley, Hopkins, & Kruschwitz, 2011).

Data visualisation is simply the presentation of abstract or statistical information in graphical form, allowing for the identification of trends, patterns and correlations. Visual data storytelling makes it easier for decision-makers to understand what is going on, as well as how long it has been going on, thus boosting data literacy across the organization. These visual insights aid in charting future courses in terms of business processes and optimizations (Otten, Cheng, & Drewnowski, 2015).

Descriptive analytics, as the name implies, looks at “what has happened”. This type of analytics considers and analyses real-time data, as well as historical data, in order to form a contextual picture of the current state of affairs. This insight will directly impact business decisions made on future processes. Social listening, as sentiment analysis is called on social media, falls under this umbrella – and considers metrics such as likes, comments, followers/fans, engagement rates and more. Social media analytics tools, as well as web analytics tools (e.g. Google Analytics, Microsoft BI) and enterprise analytics tools (e.g. HubSpot, Salesforce) mainly fall under the purview of descriptive analytics (Bedeley et al., 2018).

Predictive analytics attempts to form a link between historical data and future events. This historical data is often considered in a wider context with other types of data in order to forecast the future within a minimized margin of error. Statistical methods are employed here in order to

add empirical grounding to the data extrapolated. Predictive analytics can be further broken down into the following steps (Bedeley et al., 2018; Waller & Fawcett, 2013):

- **Predictive Modelling** – What will happen next, if...?
- **Root Cause Analysis** – Why did this actually happen?
- **Data Mining** – What correlated data can be identified?
- **Forecasting** – What if the existing trends continue?
- **Monte-Carlo Simulation** – What could happen?
- **Pattern Identification and Alerts** – When should an action be invoked to correct a process?

Prescriptive analytics attempts to provide clarity and guidance on actions that will maximize key business metrics or KPIs. In other words, it attempts to answer the question: “what should a business do?”, with a key focus towards optimization as an end-goal. It combines data (both internal and external), mathematical/statistical models, as well as existing business rules in order to “manage the future” in terms of profit growth and risk reduction by considering possible outcomes. While this brand of analytics is generally the domain of large corporations, increasing amounts of data are making the prospect of prescriptive analytics more viable for lesser-sized organizations (Bedeley et al., 2018; Vahn, 2014). Figure 2 shows this distribution on a graph.

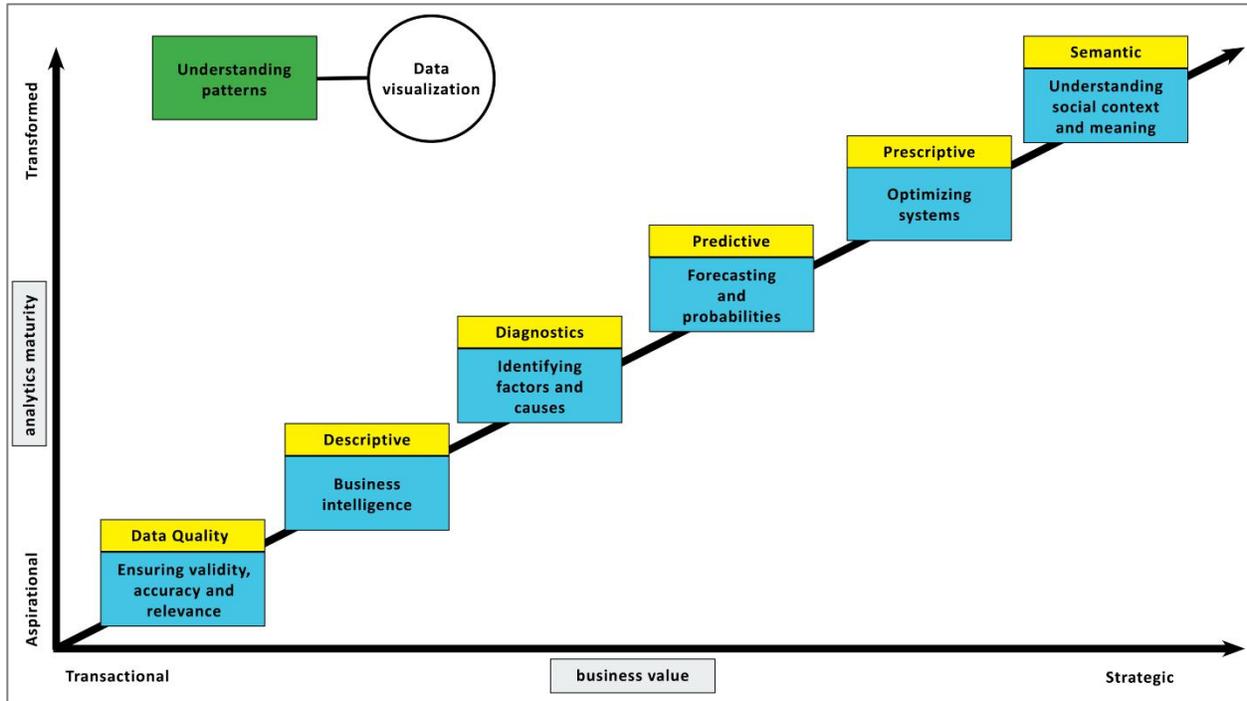


Figure 2: The business analytics value-chain

Business analytics itself has been categorized under several different maturity models, all of which aim to track the progress of organizations toward the efficient collection and processing of their data. One of these, delineated by Lavallo et al. (2010), divides the progression of business analytics into 3 stages, namely: *Aspirational*, *Experienced* and *Transformed*.

*Aspirational*-level organizations use analytics to justify actions where cost-cutting, efficiency and process automation are the main focus. At the other end of that spectrum, *Transformed* companies use analytical insights to automate decisions throughout the whole organization. Table 3 categorises each aspect of the maturity model.

Table 3: Analytics maturity model (Gudfinnsson, Strand, & Berndtsson, 2015)

	Aspirational	Experienced	Transformed
Motive	Use analytics to justify actions	Use analytics to guide actions	Use analytics to prescribe actions
Functional proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Financial management and budgeting</li> <li>* Operations and production</li> <li>Sales and marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* All Aspirational functions</li> <li>* Strategy/business development</li> <li>Customer service</li> <li>* Product research/development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* All Aspirational and Experienced functions</li> <li>* Risk management</li> <li>* Customer experience</li> <li>* Work force planning/allocation</li> <li>* General management</li> <li>* Brand and market management</li> </ul>

Business challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Competitive differentiation through innovation</li> <li>* Cost efficiency (primary)</li> <li>Revenue growth (secondary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Competitive differentiation through innovation</li> <li>* Revenue growth (primary)</li> <li>* Cost efficiency (secondary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Competitive differentiation through innovation</li> <li>* Revenue growth (primary)</li> <li>* Profitability acquiring/retaining customers (targeted focus)</li> </ul>
Key obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of understanding how to leverage analytics for business value</li> <li>* Executive sponsorship</li> <li>* Culture does not encourage sharing information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of understanding how to leverage analytics for business value</li> <li>* Skills within line of business</li> <li>* Ownership of data is unclear or governance is ineffective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of understanding how to leverage analytics for business value</li> <li>* Management bandwidth due to competing priorities</li> <li>* Accessibility of the data</li> </ul>
Data management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited ability to capture, aggregate, analyze or share information and insights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Moderate ability to capture, aggregate and analyze data</li> <li>* Limited ability to share information and insights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Strong ability to capture, aggregate and analyze data</li> <li>* Effective at sharing information and insights</li> </ul>
Analytics in action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Rarely use rigorous approaches to make decisions</li> <li>* Limited use of insights to guide future strategies or guide day-to-day operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Some use of rigorous approaches to make decisions</li> <li>* Growing use of insights to guide future strategies, but still limited use of insights to guide day-to-day operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Most use rigorous approaches to make decisions</li> <li>* Almost all use insights to guide future strategies, and most use insights to guide day-to-day operations</li> </ul>

The wide, well-defined spectrum of business analytics maturity presents an annotated roadmap for companies that wish to catapult their internal processes from a place of making business decisions with limited foresight into a more omniscient perspective. In the next section, social media platforms and advertising features are explored, as well as how this analytical maturity plays into managing the online presence of an organization.

### 2.3 Social Media for Business Marketing

#### 2.3.1 Social Media Overview

Social media is a phenomenon that has transformed the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world (Edosomwan et al., 2011). The phrase itself can be defined as forms of electronic communication through which users create and/or participate in online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (such as photographic and videographic media). While “social media” may sometimes be used interchangeably with the term “social networking”, the latter can actually be expressed as the underlying activity or engagement framework for the former, which is simply the electronic manifestation of the activity of social networking. Social networking itself can be defined as “the

exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business” (Edosomwan et al., 2011).

The underlying thread tying together the vast majority of the well-known online services since the turn of the century has been the enhancement of business (and social) activities for brands and individuals. LinkedIn was launched specifically with the aim of connecting networks of professionals. MySpace was meant to allow musicians and bands to get discovered by record labels and the public in general. Facebook allows businesses to advertise their goods and services, as do Twitter and Instagram. A lot of official business, in the form of meetings and job interviews, is conducted over Skype. Flickr allows the social and commercial showcase of photos taken by photographers, both professional and amateur.

YouTube has launched many products and services into the public domain since its inception, as well as allowing product reviews to thrive on the platform. Pinterest allows for creatives to share photos of their products and designs, with an announcement in 2015 of "Buyable Pins", a feature that allows users to buy products directly on Pinterest itself. Instagram has become a veritable platform for all sorts of professionals to advertise themselves to their fans and followers. More and more of these social media networking platforms are tapping into the power of advertising and taking steps towards making it easier for brands to push out their offerings to their audiences on each respective platform, while benefitting from advertising fees.

### 2.3.2 Social Media Marketing Strategy

Because the online landscape has changed so drastically, consumers are no longer passive participants in the marketing exchange process (Kang, Tang, & Fiore, 2014). Companies and brands have made and continue to make efforts to reach consumers where they are, as they recognize the increasingly active roles that consumers play in co-creating brand narratives on these platforms. While these brands understand the inherent value of being more active on social media in order to reach existing and potential consumers, a deeper understanding of pertinent factors like performance metrics and how to measure them still eludes entrants new to the world of social media strategy (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011).

Traditional media generally involves a trade-off between consumer reach and consumer engagement (Acar & Puntoni, 2016). While this compromise is mitigated by the potentially large audience that can be reached through such channels, the generality of such audience types suggests the need for a more targeted method of advertising that is perhaps predicated on a different kind of context. Hanna et al. (2011) point out that while traditional marketing is more about "messages", social media leans more towards "conversations" (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). It essentially sets a scene where billions of individuals create and maintain trillions of connections each day, and these connections are built upon engaging in conversations that hold no place for traditional marketers. Metcalfe's Law further posits that the value of a communications network increases in proportion to the square of its connections (Tongia & Wilson, 2011); although this law has come under controversy in recent times (Briscoe, Odlyzko, & Tilly, 2006). This valuation tenet however, coupled with changing shifts in audience impact by traditional marketing channels versus digital marketing channels, means that brands can no longer afford to remain silent on social media (Levine, van der Berg, & Yu, 2009).

Despite the various types of channels that comprise the universe of "social media", the concept itself is less about web sites or channels and more about "experiences" (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Yoshimura & Hu, 2010). In tandem with other researchers, Hanna et al. (2011) advise that these experiences are enhanced when brands are able to integrate opportunities for increased reach, intimacy and engagement into their general marketing strategies (Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011). The integration of these facets should not be conducted under a paradigm of siloed implementation in terms of the different channels operated upon, but rather approached with the holistic understanding that experiences across social media by nature transcend different devices and platforms. Internet-based mediums have the capacity to foster and nourish consumer awareness, engagement, consideration, and subsequent loyalty and advocacy (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012). This helps to contribute to a brand's overall BI efforts.

A relatively significant amount of data is generated in both structured and unstructured forms by the Internet, social media platforms and electronic transactions. This data necessitates the development of a business's ability to understand and subsequently interpret the expanding

volume of raw data in order to make use of the opportunities it provides in terms of business decision-making (Chiang, Goes, & Stohr, 2012). Challenges in data analysis require new approaches to obtain insights from highly detailed, contextualised content generated on online platforms. Analytics is thus essential for turning data into actionable intelligence by using this data to elicit trends, design predictive models for future forecasts and optimising business processes for increased performance. It is thus descriptive ("what is happening?"), predictive ("what will happen?") and prescriptive ("what can we do about it?") (Chiang et al., 2012).

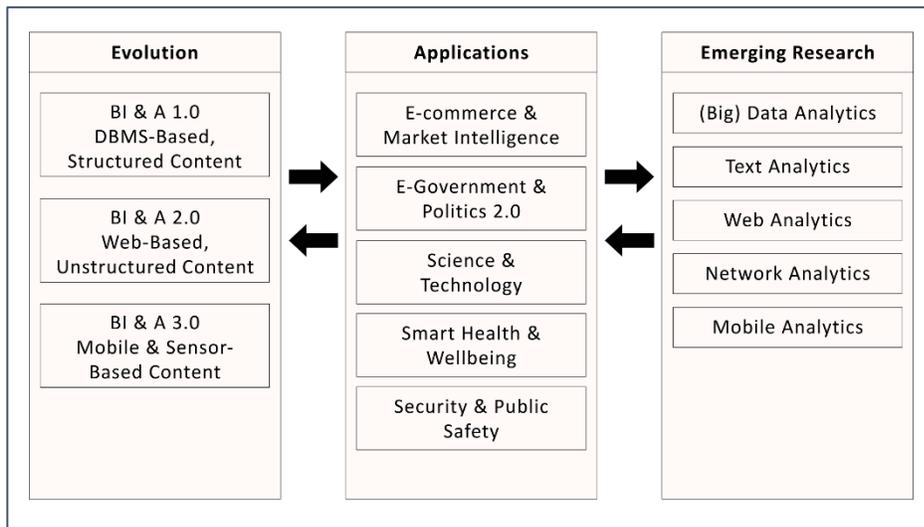


Figure 3: BI & Analytics: An Overview (Chen et al., 2012)

Business performance management is one of the relevant developments of BI, with this actionable data having helped businesses to make better decisions (Watson & Wixom, 2007). There is thus a clear link between BI garnered through social media analytics and the improvement of a business' standing in the social media maturity model. For this research, marketing performance will be used as a proxy indicator of BI maturity in an organisation.

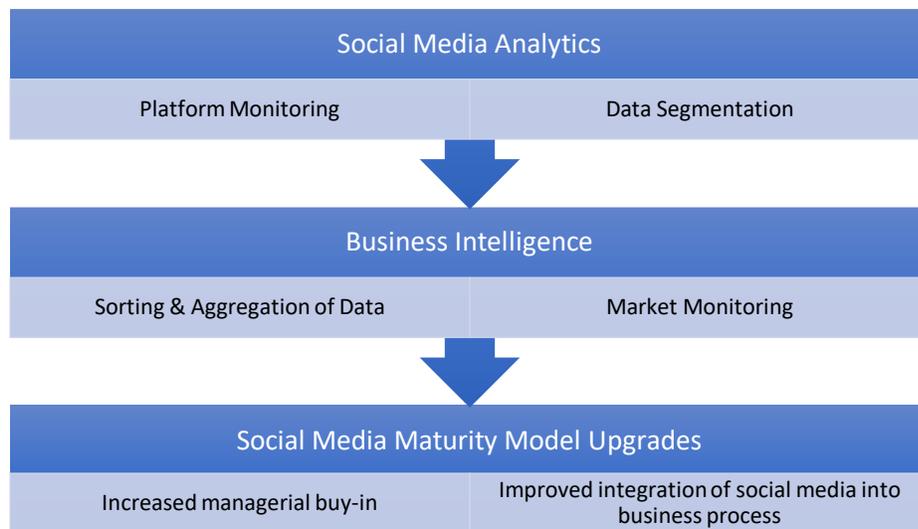


Figure 4: Linking Social Media Analytics to BI

Several insights into effective marketing communications strategy can be gleaned from all this (Hanna et al., 2011). The first involves a necessary big-picture visualisation of the social media ecosystem in which a brand finds itself. This involves the categorisation of platforms that a brand has a strong following on as well as audiences that it appeals to. The second involves the identification and tracking of key performance indicators, many of which overlap with those in traditional marketing. In this case, however, a focus should be made on conversion tracking of downstream metrics such as sales, together with other platform-specific metrics that measure brand engagement. Returns from social media investments will not always be quantified in dollars (Sterne, 2010); but sometimes in consumer actions (or “consumer investments”) tied to particular social media platforms. These include traditional measures such as the number of visits, impressions and on-page engagements, as well as more active investments such as the cumulative amount of generated comments and the number of Facebook updates and Twitter hashtags about the brand (Armellini & Villanueva, 2011; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). These consumer investments can then be used to quantify key marketing outcomes such as changes in brand cognizance levels or word-of-mouth increases over time.

Hanna et al. (2011) strongly advise that a brand should be clear about the story it wants to share with its audience, a sentiment echoed in other studies (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus, & van Riel, 2013; Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). Whether this "story" is about a new service, a new

product, a new relationship or the overall brand theme, any finalized social media strategy must by necessity rest upon a consistent story. The elimination of the need for a hefty advertising budget for social media may help with this. As they point out in their next insight, a cultural shift in media consumption, particularly among younger consumers, means that the relatively higher budgets needed for traditional channels of advertising (such as television and billboards) can be comfortably eschewed for the comparably cheaper costs, all else being equal, of advertising on social media (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar, & Shuib, 2015). Finally, being unique gives consumers a reason for engaging with a brand electronically and offers a buffer against online ennui (Habibi, Laroche, & Richard, 2014).

### 2.3.3 Quantifying Social Media Usage

The ever-increasing ranks of social media platforms make them a veritable force to reckon with, in terms of reaching a large number of people at a relatively affordable cost. As of this writing, Facebook boasts 2.2 billion monthly users, while micro-blogging site Twitter has 330 million monthly users (Josh Constone, 2017b). The professional networking site LinkedIn has 112 million monthly users (Yeung, 2016), and is generally inhabited by corporate entities and individuals whose main focus is to build their professional networks to land new jobs and follow up on new leads.

Visual pinning site Pinterest has 175 million monthly users and is frequented by creatives and design lovers who “pin” content they find on the web in ‘mood boards’ (Lynley, 2018). Snapchat features ‘ephemeral photo uploads’ (i.e. users can upload photos that disappear after 24 hours). It has over 173 million daily users and is frequented by a younger crowd, with celebrities, retail, lifestyle and luxury brands carving out audiences on the platform (Molla, 2017). Lastly, Instagram, a photo-sharing platform, boasts approximately 800 million monthly users (Etherington, 2017). Figure 5 illustrates these differences in current monthly user sizes.

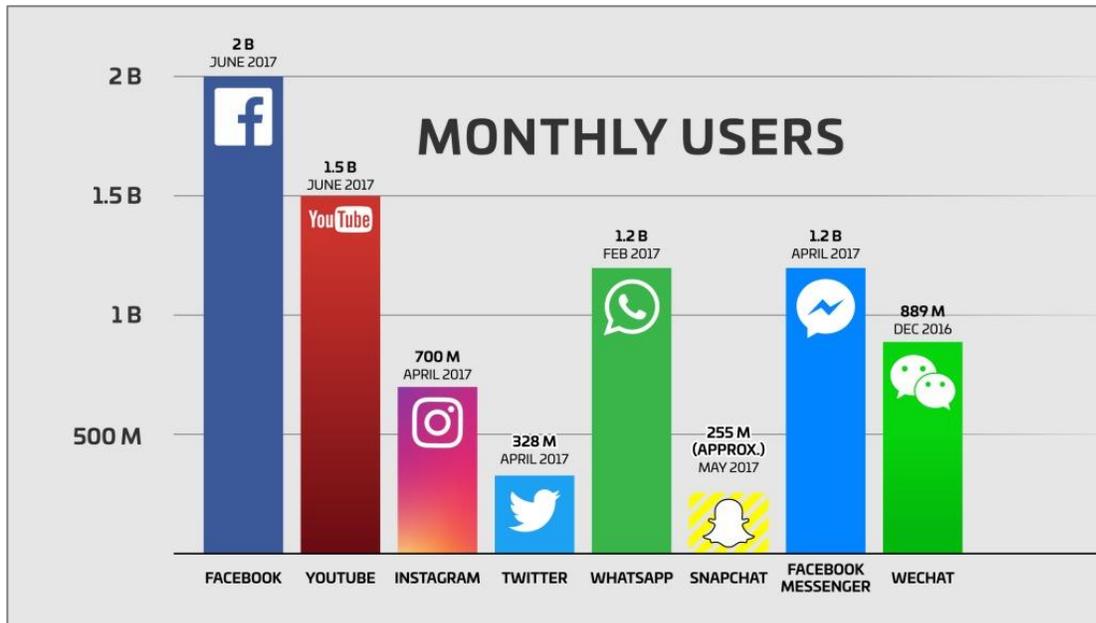


Figure 5: Monthly users by platform (Constine, 2017)

These staggering figures represent a huge global marketplace of diverse segments which can be tapped by both local and international brands of all types. Advertisers can reach social media users through a myriad of ways, channels and formats, depending on goals, budgets and expected outcomes. Advertising on social media can thus:

- Grow a brand’s sales and fanbase
- Use customer generated content for ads
- Re-target new and returning customers, thus reducing ad-spend overall
- Allow for split testing and optimization of ads and results
- Allow for exponential scaling in terms of ad-spend, target audiences and more

However, in order to ensure optimal results, the offer must be compelling enough, delivered to the right audience at the right time, and on the right platform for whichever specific engagement type is being aimed for.

### 2.3.4 Advertiser Access to Audiences

Advertisers access audiences across these different segments in several ways. The first of these is from information that users share on social media platforms. This includes personally identifiable information such as age, gender, hometown, or friends. Similarly, when users click or like posts, Pages, or articles either on the platform or on third party websites, sites such as Facebook use this information to understand what a user might be interested in and to serve ads and other content that are relevant to the user (Bach, 2018; Singer, 2018). To give an example, if a crockery department store opens a page on Facebook wanting to reach mothers in Windhoek, the platform may show their ads to women in Windhoek who liked an article about *“5 Types of Pots You Need In Your Kitchen”*. In this way, advertising is directly correlated to user activity to maximize relevance for the user and effectiveness for the advertising brand. With some platforms such as Facebook, one can see all the “interests” assigned to them and opt out of them if so wished.

The second way that advertisers may reach audiences on social media platforms is through information provided directly by the advertiser to the platform. These advertisers may have user email addresses from previous purchases, subscriber lists, or from other data sources (Ahluwalia, 2018). Platforms like Facebook then match that data with existing Facebook accounts, without informing the advertiser which accounts were successfully matched. Again, this option can be reviewed and turned off if so desired.

A third way is through information that third-party websites send to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Certain websites and apps may use tools known as “pixels” to keep track of user activity on their platforms, which they then use to serve more relevant ads when the user is back on a social media website (Bach, 2018; Singer, 2018). For example, a user may have visited a retail website and added a pair of shoes into their shopping cart, and then abandoned the purchase for any number of various reasons (such as boredom, distraction, lack of available funds, etc.). If there was a pixel on the site, it would feed this information back to whichever social media platform the pixel was configured for. The next time the user gets on the social media platform, they would see an ad for the same pair of shoes (or similar) which they were

shopping for. This is also known as “re-targeting” and allows advertisers to better close sales with high-intent customers.

Most social media platforms are primarily ad-supported, and so it is generally not possible to opt-out of ads altogether (Nair, Subramanian, & Wierman, 2018). However, ongoing debate aims to strike a balance between the number of ads shown and the overall user experience of platform users. This brings into play the relevance of social media advertising, as advertisers and platforms seek to make ads more and more relevant, warranted, non-intrusive and compelling.

### 2.3.5 Social Media Platforms: An Overview

Any website or app that brings people together for the purpose of networking and/or socializing can effectively be classified as a social media platform. However, going by this definition would require the categorization and classification of each and every single platform that falls under that banner, which is not our main goal. For this research, only the “big 6” are considered; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Snapchat. These platforms are briefly described below and their ad formats, effectiveness, target audiences and more will be fleshed out in subsequent sections.

#### 2.3.5.1 Facebook

The Facebook platform was born in 2004 out of a Harvard dorm room when Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard computer science student, teamed up with classmates Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. It allowed users to create a profile where they could upload photos, share interests, and connect with other students in the college network (Boyd, 2018). The end of 2004 saw membership open to nearly all universities in the US and Canada, with interest growing steadily. August of 2006 saw the name get truncated to just ‘Facebook’, with the facebook.com domain costing US\$200,000 (Parr, 2011). The following month (September 2006) saw the general public being admitted onto the platform, along with employees of Microsoft and Apple.

The Facebook Marketplace was launched in the latter half 2007, letting users post classifieds to sell products and services. It was also around this time that the Facebook Application Developer

platform was launched, allowing developers to create their own applications and games that integrated with Facebook (Arrington, 2007). By November of 2010, Facebook was valued as high as \$41bn, becoming the third largest web company in the US behind Google and Amazon (Carr, 2010). August of 2011 saw the release of Facebook Messenger as a standalone app, which today allows its own specialized version of ads to be run on it. As of this writing, the Messenger app boasts 1.3 billion monthly active users (Molla, 2018). The years leading up to the present saw the addition of several more features to improve the user experience, increase security and privacy, augment their ad platform and engagement offerings, as well as gain new audience segments both locally and internationally. In April 2012, Facebook acquired Instagram for US\$1bn, with Facebook's IPO following the next month (Hill, 2012; Rusli, 2012). The first quarter of 2014 saw 1bn users log into the platform using a mobile device, as well as the acquisition of WhatsApp for US\$19bn (Constine, 2018). This commitment to the mobile ecosystem ensured them access to a younger, more international user base. That quarter also saw the acquisition of Oculus VR, a platform for virtual reality experiences (Heath, 2017). Another development was the release of Facebook "reactions" (Figure 6), allowing for more nuanced responses to user posts such as 'love', 'hate', 'haha', 'disgust', 'sad', or 'wow' reactions (Krug, 2016). The rise of "hate speech" and requests for moderation of posts by the media, advocacy groups and users alike also took place, ultimately culminating in the culturally popular concept of 'fake news' and bringing us into the era of 'alternative truths' (Blue, 2018; Ghosh & Scott, 2018).

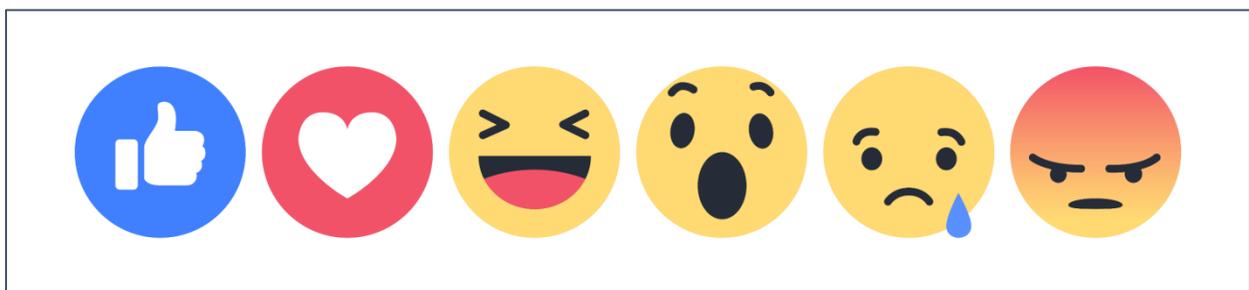


Figure 6: Facebook Reactions (Source: Facebook)

The introduction of Instant Articles meant publishers could set up versions of their articles that would be hosted directly by Facebook, thus cutting down dramatically on loading speeds and increasing publisher revenue through advertising (Reckhow, 2015). The release of video calling

in Messenger, the introduction of Facebook Live, and the launch of 360-degree video were other developments that aimed to improve user experience on the platform (Wallaroo, 2018).

The announcement of Facebook Workplace, a platform where employees could communicate with each other, entered a market that now has incumbents like Yammer, Skype and Slack. Facebook Spaces was launched as a VR app that allowed you to hang out with your friends ‘in person’; an augmentation of the more immersive 360-degree photos and videos (Gotter, 2018).

Changes to the newsfeed algorithm saw posts from friends and family taking precedence over posts from news outlets, retail brands, companies, charities, and other organizations (Wallaroo, 2018). This was touted as a way to improve and increase meaningful interactions on the social network, but indirectly meant that brands would have to pay more through Facebook ads in order to have any meaningful reach. Initial results showed a drop-off in the amount of time spent on the platform (Huddleston, 2018). Despite this, Facebook’s earning continued to show a strong increase year-on-year (Constine, 2017a), as shown in Figure 7.

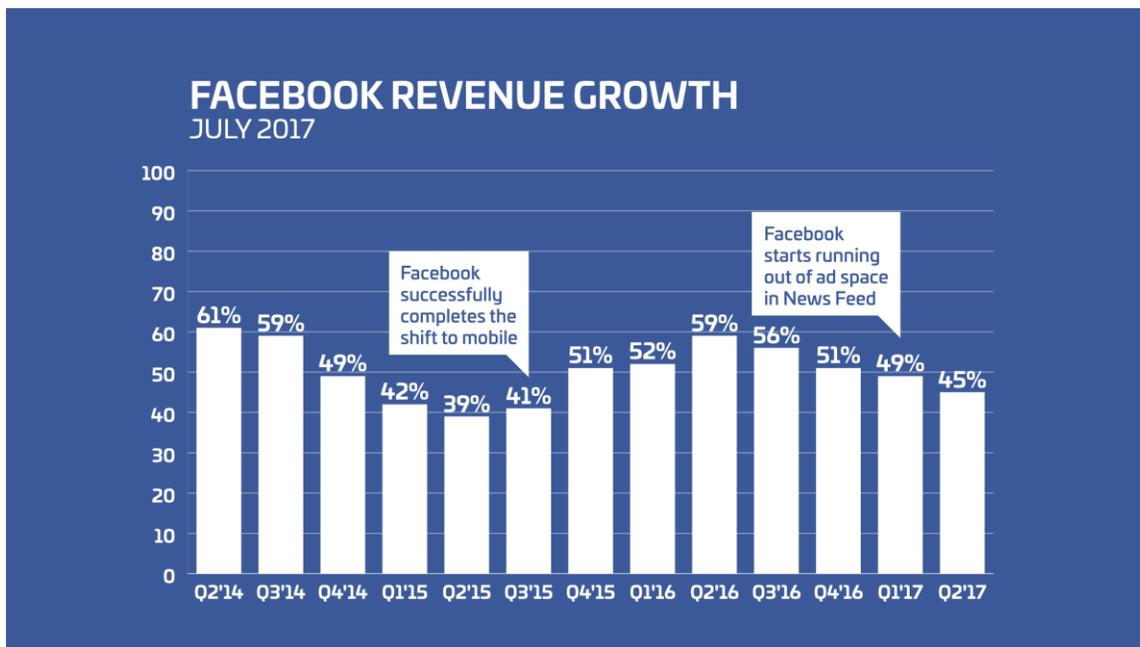


Figure 7: Facebook YoY Growth up to Q2 2017 (Constine, 2017)

## Facebook advertising

Facebook offers 15 different campaign objectives, broken down into the three broad categories of awareness (you can choose to “boost posts” or “increase brand awareness”), consideration (“app installs” or “lead collection”), and conversion (“website conversions” or “visits to your offline store”). Figure 8 illustrates this plethora of available options.

<b>Auction</b> ⓘ Bid to reach your audience for the lowest possible price		<b>Reach and Frequency</b> ⓘ Pay a fixed price to predictably reach your brand's audience	
<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Conversion</b>	
 Boost your posts	 Send people to your website	 Increase conversions on your website	
 Promote your Page	 Get installs of your app	 Increase engagement in your app	
 Reach people near your business	 Raise attendance at your event	 Get people to claim your offer	
 Increase brand awareness	 Get video views	 Promote a product catalog	
 Increase your reach	 Collect leads for your business	 Get people to visit your stores	

Figure 8: Facebook's campaign goal selection dashboard (Facebook)

The platform offers several different ad formats, which are explained below. The following information has been adapted from a compendium of social media advertising information by (Newberry, 2016).

### Photo ads

Photo ads vary according to technical specifications depending on the ad objectives. Photo ads for website clicks, for example, offer a headline of 25 characters, 90 characters of text, and a link description of up to 30 characters. Depending on the ad objective, you may also be able to add a call to action button with actions like Shop Now, Learn More, and See Menu, the latter being geared towards restaurants and other similar establishments.

### *Video ads*

Video ads generally have the same call-to-action options and character counts as photo ads. A 16:9 or 1:1 aspect ratio is the suggested format.

### *Carousel*

A carousel ad lets you include up to 10 images and links in one ad, and all images should be optimized for a 1:1 aspect ratio.

### *Slideshow*

Slideshow ads are essentially videos compiled from up to 10 static images. All images should have the same size and aspect ratio.

### *Canvas*

Canvas is a full-screen mobile ad type that combines videos, photos, and call-to-action buttons, allowing users to tilt and zoom to interact with the imagery.

### *Audience and targeting*

Facebook offers extensive targeting options for different campaign goals. Basic ad targeting involves the location, age, gender, and language of your target audience. Detailed targeting options include:

- **Demographics:** this allows filters by education, household composition, life events, parenting, politics (U.S. only), relationship, and work.
- **Interests:** this breaks down the many interests Facebook users indicate through their social media activity into nine general categories (each with several subcategories): *business and industry, entertainment, family and relationships, fitness and wellness, food and drink, hobbies and activities, shopping and fashion, sports and outdoors, and technology.*
- **Behaviours:** this allows you to filter users based on their behaviours on Facebook and information Facebook gathers from its ad partners.

Facebook also allows the creation of custom audiences by uploading a list of email addresses, phone numbers, Facebook user IDs, or app user IDs. Advertisers can then use lookalike audiences to find other people on Facebook that are similar to that audience. Ads can be further restricted to certain audiences based on the type of device used, the proximity of upcoming birthdays (useful for retail or gift-based brands), and even whether the Facebook user is connecting to the platform via mobile data or Wi-Fi.

### *Pricing*

Facebook ad pricing varies based on the time of year, the targeted geographic location, and the quality of the ad, among other factors. The cost per click (CPC) varies by placement, with ads in the desktop newsfeed costing more per click compared to mobile (Newberry, 2016). Instagram, Messenger and the Audience Network are further placement options that can be selected when creating ads. The duration of the advert will also affect how much is spent in total, with longer campaigns naturally costing more. Advanced budget control options allow advertisers to optimize ad delivery for engagement, impressions, or unique daily reach, as well as whether you get charged by impression or engagement.

### 2.3.5.2 Twitter

Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey had originally imagined Twitter as an SMS-based communications platform, being referred to as "*twtr*" initially (MacArthur, 2018). An explosion in the growth of its user base saw frequent platform outages during major events and natural disasters as it tried to adjust to its popularity as a real-time communications tool (Luckerson, 2013). The character limit was kept to a maximum of 140 characters per post as a nod to the early days of SMSing, but later as a branding element. It was later increased to 280 characters in 2017 (Perez, 2017). Other integral elements of the Twitter platform include the use of the '@' character to specifically call someone out or reply to them, the hashtag symbol ('#') to identify and delineate trending topics, and the retweet functionality as a way of reposting a message from a Twitter user while referencing the user who originally tweeted it (Walker, 2017). As of Q4 of 2017, Twitter's user

base had grown to over 330 million active monthly users, but still lagged behind other major social networks (Cakebread, 2017; Spangler, 2018). Figure 9 illustrates these current differences.

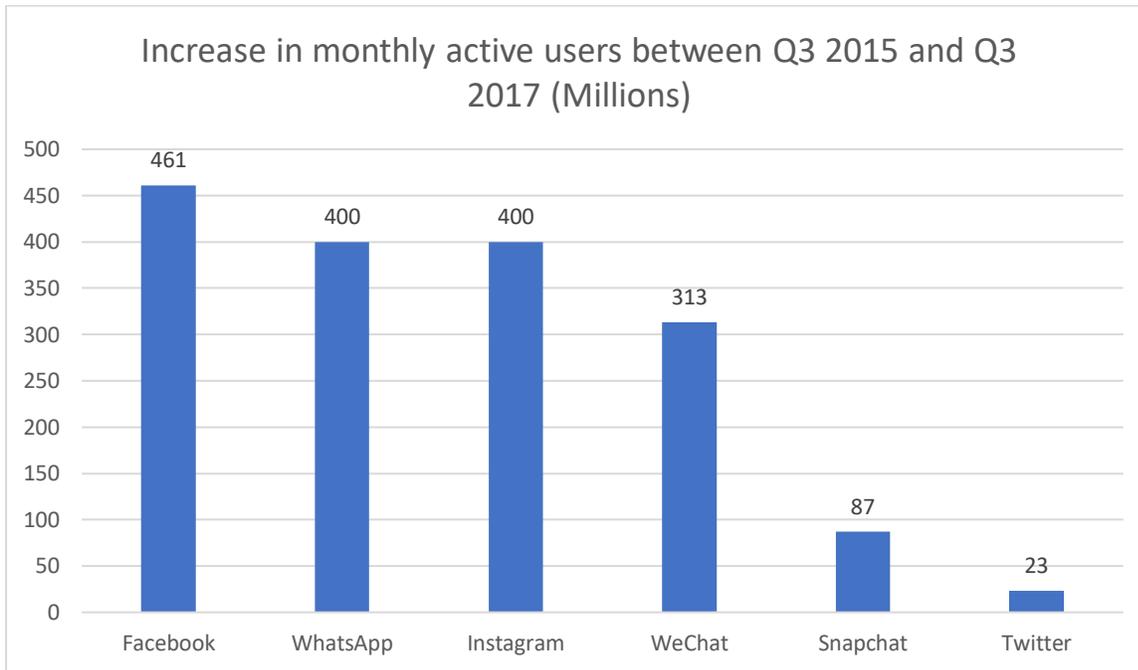


Figure 9: Twitter's user growth lag, Q4 2017 (Cakebread, 2017)

April of 2010 saw Twitter's advertising platform, Promoted Tweets, go live (Barnett, 2010). It further started offering personalized suggestions of users to follow with a feature called "Suggestions for You." Around the same time period, the platform launched its "Tweet Button," an official option for web publishers to let their readers easily share content, as well as to count the number of post retweets (Beck, 2015).

### *Twitter advertising*

There are three different kinds of Twitter Ads: Promoted Accounts, Promoted Trends, and Promoted Tweets (Newberry, 2017).

- Promoted Tweets are messages that target Twitter users on their timelines at a specific time
- A Promoted Account ad invites targeted Twitter users to follow a brand

- The Trending Topics section of Twitter displays the most talked about subjects on the social network, and Promoted Trends ads place a brand's message at the top of this list

Twitter ads are further categorized by campaign objective:

- Website clicks or conversions campaigns encourage people to visit and take action on a specific website, with the advertiser getting charged per click.
- Tweet engagements campaigns promote Tweets with the goal of starting conversations about a brand (i.e. optimizing for likes and retweets).
- Followers campaigns promote a selected Twitter account and charge per follower gained.
- Awareness campaigns promote Tweets to a broad audience and charge for impressions (CPM).
- Video views campaigns promote videos to a targeted audience and charge per video view.
- App installs or re-engagement campaigns promote Tweets and charge per app install.
- Lead generation campaigns promote Tweets and charge per lead collected.

### *Audience and targeting*

Twitter allows high-level targeting based on location (country, state, region, metro area, or postal code), gender, languages, device, platform, and even carrier. It further allows targeting by keywords, interests, behaviour and specific events. Lastly, advertisers are afforded the opportunity to upload lists of specific people they would like to target, such as through a curated email list.

### *Pricing*

As with Facebook, pricing varies according to the type of promotion and ad being run on the platform, and is dependent on pertinent factors such as location, time of year, and event.

### 2.3.5.3 Instagram

Instagram was developed in San Francisco by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, who came together to focus solely on communication through images on an already existing app, *Burbn*. It was renamed 'Instagram' after they stripped down all functionality and only left photo uploads, commenting and liking (Lagorio-Chafkin, 2012). Shortly after launch, its growth was nearly instantaneous. From a handful of users, it soon became the number one photography app on the app store, gathering 100,000 users in one week and 1 million in two months (Desreumaux, 2014). It was acquired by Facebook for US\$1bn in 2012 (Rusli, 2012). It now has approximately 500 million daily users and claims that 60 percent of those users discover new products and services on the platform, while 75 percent of them take action after being inspired by posts (Etherington, 2017; Mathison, 2018). And unlike other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, organic Instagram posts are just as effective as paid posts at reaching audiences, and in some instances even more effective than sponsored posts (Fractl, 2016).

Hashtags are added to shared photos in order to make their posts searchable and noticeable. Because of this, it is possible for brands to track the volume of photos associated with different hashtags, in order to gauge approximate popularity and help with campaign planning. Brands are able to contextualize their campaigns by creating their own hashtags and running different photo campaigns. However, content is king on Instagram, and users are loath to engage with poor quality content.

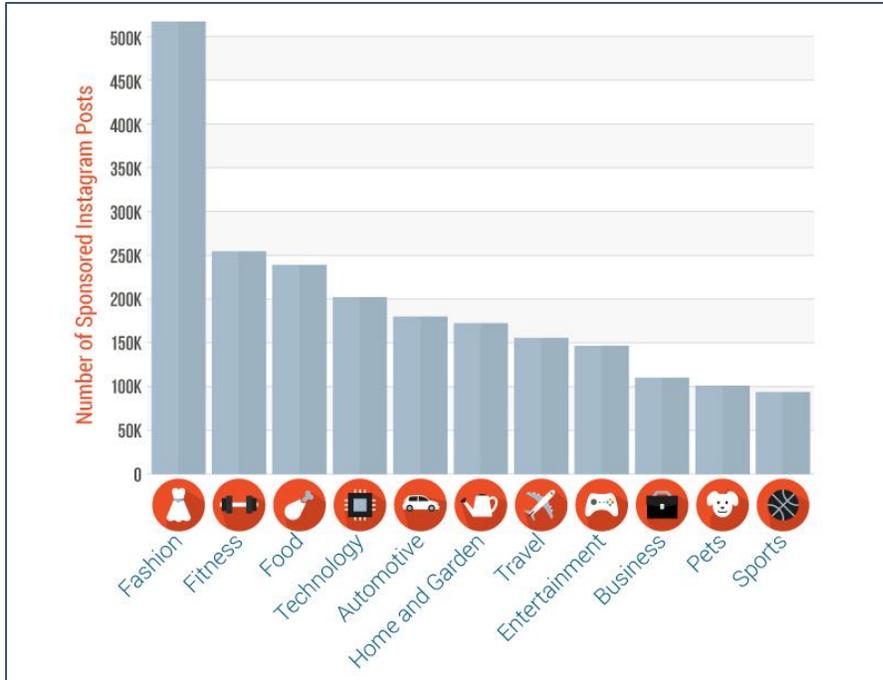


Figure 10: Top Verticals for Instagram content (Fractl, 2016)

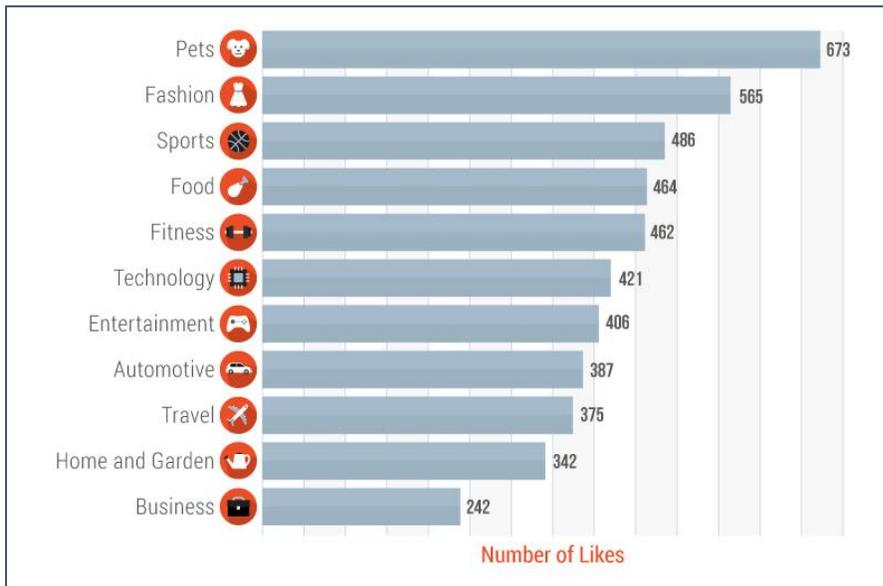


Figure 11: Most engaging type of sponsored content on Instagram (Fractl, 2016)

The introduction of Stories was widely believed to be the cloning of a key Snapchat feature. Debuting in August 2016, the Snapchat Stories equivalent features ephemeral content uploads and lets users mash up still images and video snippets with overlaid filters, text annotations and doodles (Constine, 2016). The Instagram Stories feature had also let users rewind a story in

progress to catch a missed moment, an improvement Snapchat found interesting enough to copy (Layton, 2016). The rapid embrace of Instagram Stories has altered the conversation around Snapchat, with the latter platform recognizing the former's negative impact to its user growth and future market share. Snap is further hampered by the perception of difficulty when it comes to building an audience on the platform, its focus on only the biggest international advertising markets (compared to Instagram's courting of all international audiences); as well as Instagram's advantage in using Facebook's already large and robust ad platform to serve advertisers (Francisco, 2017). Another major feature rollout on the platform was the worldwide availability of Instagram Live, a video-broadcasting feature inside Instagram Stories that is reminiscent of the Facebook and Twitter versions. In the end, however, the guiding ethos of the company's executives is to keep the platform simple, direct and bloat-free, compared to parent company Facebook's platform (McCracken, 2017).

The ease of purchasing ad space has seen the platform garner over two million monthly advertisers and more than 25 million business accounts, with such a diverse pool of buyers expected to contribute to a better ad experience for end-users in terms of relevance (Instagram, 2017; Richter, 2017). The visual nature of the platform, combined with the screen real-estate that ads within Instagram Stories commandeer, have both led to relative advertiser satisfaction with the platform (Chaykowski, 2017; Ingram, 2017).

#### *Instagram advertising: ad types*

Instagram ad types mirror three of the Facebook ads types: photo, video, and carousel; and these ads support a number of different objectives. For Instagram, the available objectives are: website clicks, website conversions, mobile app installs, mobile app engagement, video views, reach and frequency, page post engagement, mass awareness, and local awareness (Cyca, 2018; Newberry, 2016). Instagram ads feature similar audience targeting and pricing structures as Facebook ads.

#### 2.3.5.4 Pinterest

Similar to Instagram, Pinterest is a visually-based platform. Unlike Instagram, however, users collect images from all over the web in the form of "pins", which they use to gather information

about potential purchases. The platform features an audience base of primarily mothers and young millennials with high purchase intent and a higher average income compared to other social media platforms. As of this writing, the platform features 200 million users (Figure 12), 61% of whom have discovered new brands or products from the platform’s “Promoted Pins”, and half of whom have already made a purchase after seeing a Promoted Pin (Gotter, 2017; Newberry, 2018).

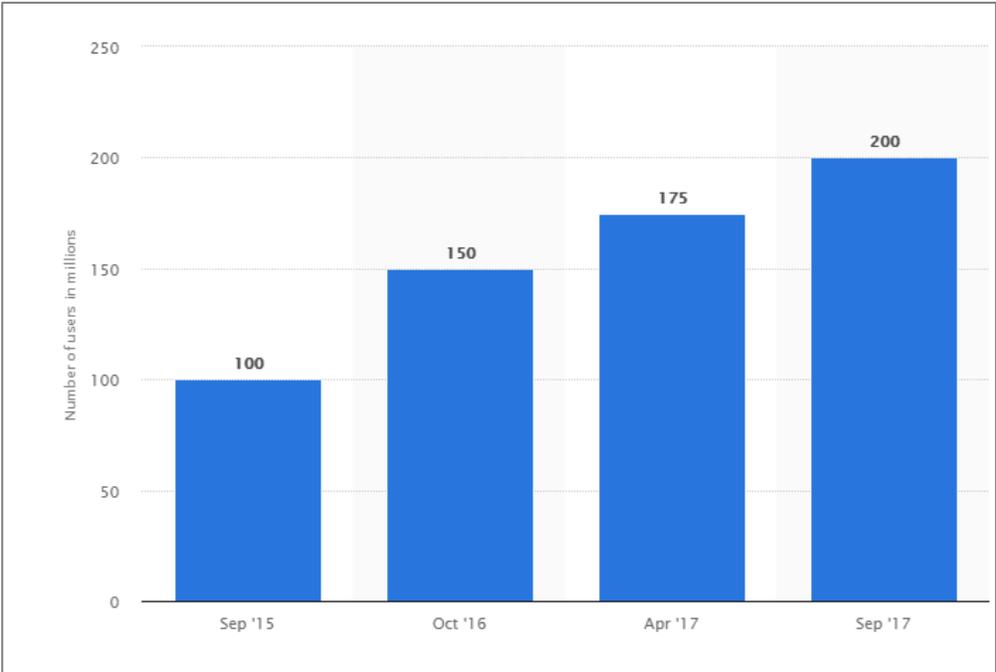


Figure 12: Number of Pinterest monthly active users, 2015 – 2017 (Source: Statista)

However, as of 2018, Pinterest ads are only available to businesses in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand, with more international markets expected soon (Cohen, 2018).

*Pinterest ad types*

Ads on Pinterest are called ‘Promoted Pins’ and are essentially the same as regular Pins that are promoted to a wider audience. There are three main types of campaigns (Cario, 2013; Carr, 2012):

- Awareness campaigns aim to get a brand’s Pins in front of new audiences

- Engagement campaigns encourage Pinners to engage with branded content by re-pinning or clicking on Promoted Pins
- Traffic campaigns funnel visitors from Promoted Pins directly to a specified website

### *Audience and targeting*

Pinterest allows brands to target audiences in a few different ways (Cario, 2013; Carr, 2012):

- Interest targeting allows targeting based on 420 different interests including, for example, street style and sustainable architecture
- Keyword targeting targets Pinners based on search terms.
- Business data targeting targets existing customers, Pinners who have visited a specific site, or a “lookalike” audience that looks and acts similar to an existing audience

Audiences can also be targeted by location, language, type of device, and gender.

### *Pinterest Pricing*

Pinterest ad charges depend on the type of campaign being run. Awareness campaigns are charged by CPM, engagement campaigns by engagement, and traffic campaigns by click. Pinterest uses a “second-price auction model” for ad bids, which involves setting a maximum bid during campaign creation, but only being charged the amount needed to top the next-highest bidder (Devumi, 2018).

### 2.3.5.5 LinkedIn

By most standards, LinkedIn is the oldest social media platform of the ‘Big 6’, having been officially launched in 2003 by Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly and Jean-Luc Vaillant with the aim of connecting professionals globally (Clemm, 2015; Dodaro, 2014). Earlier innovations to the platform included the ability to upload one’s address book to the site in order to invite their friends and colleagues, as well as the introduction of LinkedIn Groups, which are community forums for people with like-minded interests. The addition of public profiles with one’s career history, in addition to “recommendations” and the “People You May Know” tool, all

helped in boosting the platform's user base to more than 17 million members at the start of 2007 (Potter, 2014).

It listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 2011, with the site seeing more than 135 million users at the start of the year. The site was simplified through several user interface changes in the following year, and as it celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2013 the age of entry was lowered, with a focused target on graduates and early career professionals. As of this writing, the site has topped 500 million users globally (Darrow, 2017; Elder & Gallagher, 2017), with its core demographic lying between the ages of 18 and 29 (Barnhart, 2017).

Being a business-focused network, B2B marketing strategies are thought to be more effective on the platform (Brennan & Croft, 2012). Significant feature and usability upgrades that have been introduced to streamline the user experience include a better mobile app experience, better spam management, and the introduction of video uploads (Lunden, 2017). Because of the platform's collection of user data such as location, educational history, professional history and interests, marketers are able to leverage this data through:

- Advanced targeting features, including job title, function, and industry
- A broad range of ad options, including self-serve ads
- Campaign budget controls
- Lead generation tools
- Tracking and analytics tools to measure performance; and
- Multiple language options

#### *LinkedIn advertising: Ad types*

There are five main types of LinkedIn ads (Barnhart, 2017):

- Display ads: These ads share content with a targeted audience
- Sponsored InMail: These ads deliver sponsored content directly to LinkedIn user inboxes

- Sponsored content: This content appears in the LinkedIn timelines of the targeted audience
- Text ads: These are text-based ads that appear in the right column of the desktop
- Dynamic ads: These ads also appear in the right column but incorporate display ad unit formats

### *Audience and targeting*

LinkedIn targeting yields positive results for employee- and company-specific targeting due to its predominantly B2B nature. Ads can be targeted to audiences based on the industry they work in, their position and seniority, where they work, the size of their employer, and more (Brennan & Croft, 2012). Pricing is based on a selection of charging methods, either on the cost-per-click (CPC) model or per 1,000 impressions (CPM). The platform mandates a minimum budget of US\$10 per day per campaign, with further minimum bids for CPC text ads (US\$2 per click) and CPM text ads (US\$2 per 1,000 impressions) (Newberry, 2016).

### 2.3.5.6 Snapchat

Young millennials aged 13 to 34 are especially partial to Snapchat, a platform whose 170+ million daily active users (Figure 13) collectively watch more than 10 billion videos per day (Dogtiev, 2018). This high level of engagement has attracted advertisers who wish to leverage the fact that Snapchat video ads deliver more than twice the lift in purchase intent compared to traditional TV and other social media platforms. These ads are placed in a section of the app called 'Discover' (where users can check out what's going on in the Snapchat community) or in between Snapchat Stories. Interactive options like Sponsored Lenses and Geofilters have encouraged users to share branded content with their friends, and even across other social channels. Moreover, 60% of video ads watched on the platform are watched with the sound on, which stands in stark contrast to the same statistics on Facebook: around 85% of ads watched on Facebook are muted.

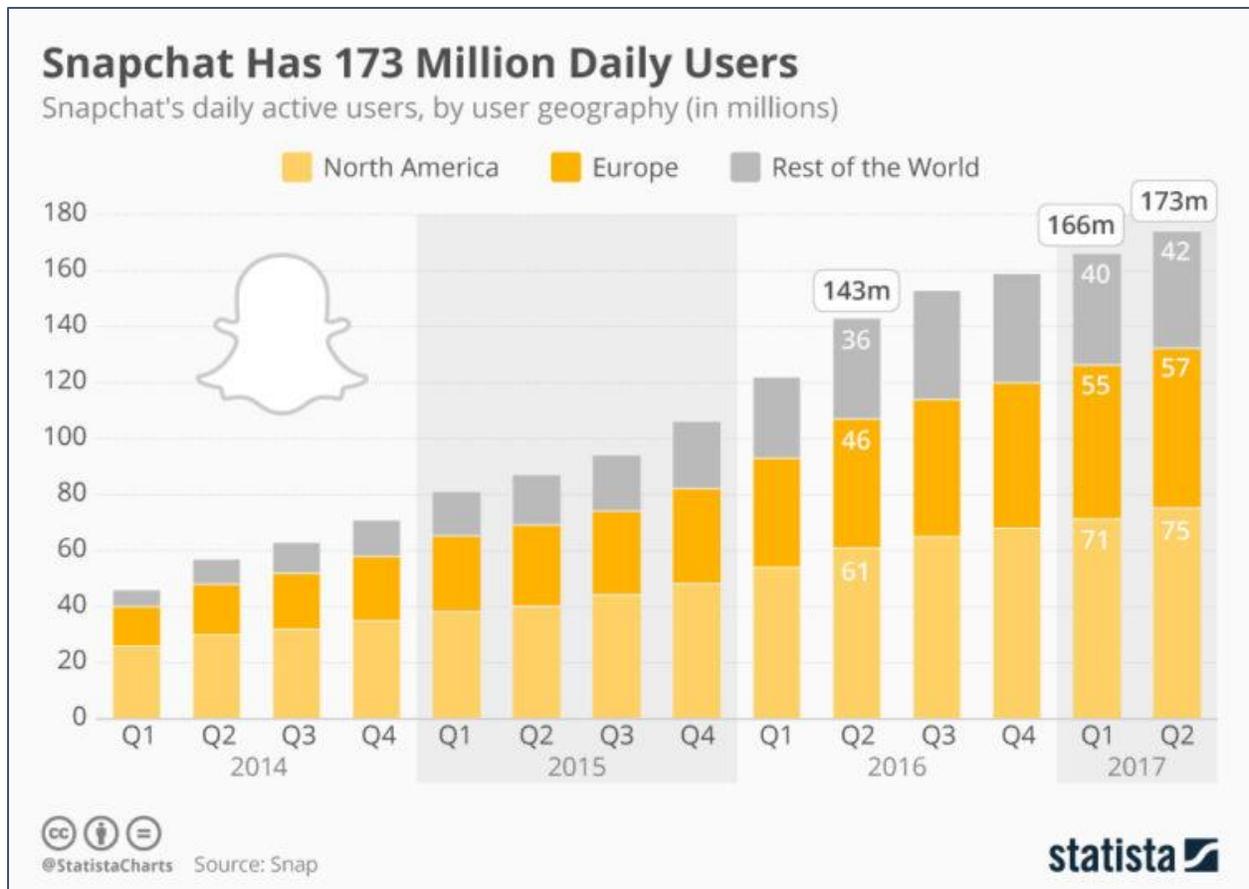


Figure 13: Snapchat's daily active user (DAU) growth over time. (BOA, 2017 – via Statista)

#### Snapchat advertising: Snap Ads

Snap Ads are (up to) 10-second videos that can further provide more info by swiping up. This added info can be a longer video (up to 10 minutes) or an article with more in-depth content. The Snap Ad can also funnel users to a landing page where a purchase or app install can be finalized, all within the app. These dynamic Snap Ads can appear between the Stories of a user's friends, or within premium content that appears within 'Discover', including 'Our Stories', 'Publisher Stories' and 'Shows'. These ads can be bundled into video segments known as 'Sequenced Messaging', which run back-to-back within Discover to mimic a longer video (Newberry, 2016).

### *Sponsored Lenses & Geofilters*

Lenses are a big part of what drives engagement on Snapchat, showing up alongside all the other Lenses in the menu and making it easy for users to share and post with. A Geofilter is a graphic overlay that Snapchat users can place on their Snaps. Geofilters are usually tied to a specific geographic location, ranging from an individual store to an entire country.

On-Demand Geofilters are the entry-level Snapchat ad option, allowing businesses to launch Snapchat advertising campaigns for as little as US\$5. They are similar to Sponsored Geofilters, but available for areas as small as half a city block and for time commitments as short as an hour.

### *Snap to Unlock*

This type of Snapchat ad unit uses ‘SnapCodes’ on physical media such as receipts, coffee cups and billboards to entice users to interact with brands, by accessing “hidden” features within the app. For instance, taking a photo of a SnapCode or scanning it with the Snapchat app unlocks a Sponsored Geofilter or Lens for a specific period of time.

### 2.3.6 Ad metrics explained

Metrics allow us to collect, measure and analyse data about brands, campaigns, target audiences and results. These are all ostensibly carried out towards the main goal of optimizing efficacy and maximizing ROI. For a proper grasp of the role that ad metrics play in the marketing process, it helps to understand the overall sales and marketing funnel that guides this process. This funnel describes the consumer journey with a brand or product, from initial reach to long-lasting advocacy. Figure 14 presents a diagrammatic overview of the social media sales funnel (Smiciklas, 2010).

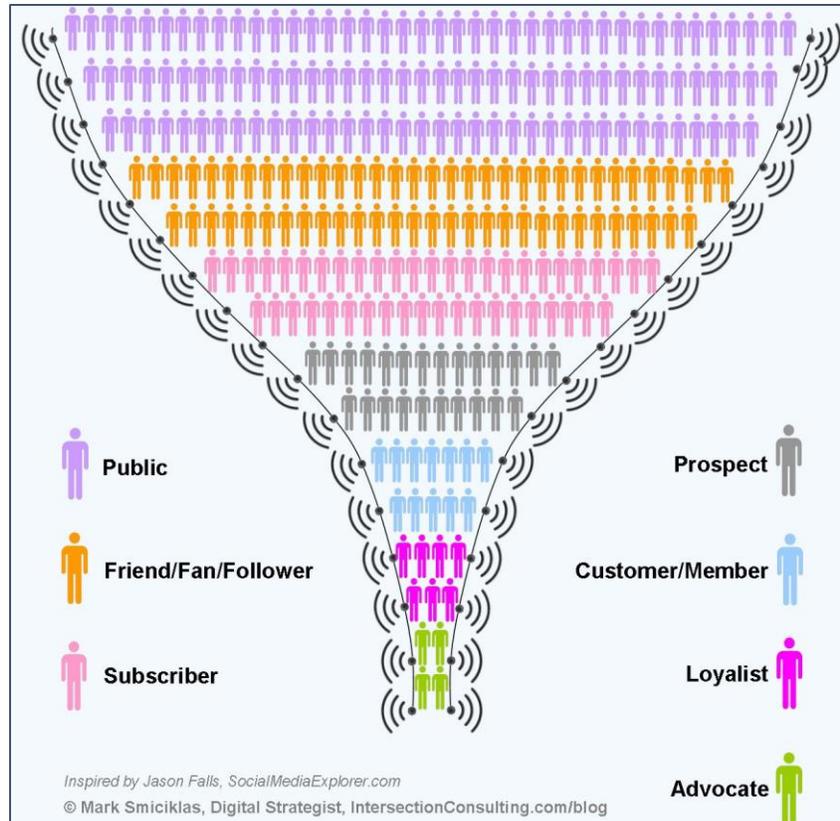


Figure 14: The social media sales funnel (Smiciklas, 2010)

There are several steps involved in the average customer journey, as follows:

- **Activity** – This represents the output of the marketing team on social media
- **Reach** – This represents the current and potential audience
- **Engagement** – This represents the interest in, and interactions with the brand
- **Acquisition** – This refers to creating a relationship with a potential customer
- **Conversion** – This includes any actions, sales or other tangible results
- **Retention and advocacy** – This refers to customer advocacy and brand evangelism

These metrics represent a unified collection of metrics spanning different goals, methods (quantitative vs. qualitative) and networks (Agius, 2016; Blair, 2016; Jackson, 2018). Table 4 offers a diagrammatic overview of the various different metrics that can be employed for analytical purposes.

Table 4: Ad metrics

Activity	Reach	Engagement	Acquisition	Traffic	Conversion	Retention and advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average response time</li> <li>• Content rate</li> <li>• Post rate</li> <li>• Post topic mix</li> <li>• Post type mix</li> <li>• Response rate</li> <li>• Social media marketing budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience growth rate</li> <li>• Brand awareness</li> <li>• Fans/followers</li> <li>• Influence score</li> <li>• Keyword frequency</li> <li>• Post reach</li> <li>• Share of audience</li> <li>• Share of engagement</li> <li>• Share of voice</li> <li>• Sentiment</li> <li>• Video views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplification rate</li> <li>• Applause rate</li> <li>• Average engagement rate</li> <li>• Comment rate</li> <li>• Conversation rate</li> <li>• Engagement as a percentage of audience</li> <li>• Virality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blog subscribers</li> <li>• Bounce rate</li> <li>• Click-throughs</li> <li>• Click-through rate</li> <li>• CPC (Cost-per-click)</li> <li>• Email subscriptions</li> <li>• Leads</li> <li>• Links/Backlinks</li> <li>• Pageviews</li> <li>• Percentage of social visits</li> <li>• Rank per keyword</li> <li>• Sessions</li> <li>• Session duration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct visitors</li> <li>• Search visitors</li> <li>• Referral visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average purchase value/average order value</li> <li>• Average revenue per customer</li> <li>• Conversions</li> <li>• Conversion rate</li> <li>• CPA (cost per acquisition or cost per action)</li> <li>• Cost per conversion</li> <li>• New visitor conversions</li> <li>• Return visitor conversions</li> <li>• RPC (revenue per click)</li> <li>• Social media conversion rate</li> <li>• ROI or return on investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand evangelists</li> <li>• Customer annual or lifetime value</li> <li>• Customer retention rate</li> <li>• Customer reviews/ratings</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction rate</li> <li>• Customer turnover rate/churn</li> <li>• Customer testimonials</li> <li>• K-factor</li> <li>• Net Promoter Score</li> <li>• Support cost per ticket</li> </ul>

These metrics and many more can be used to gauge the performance of a brand, its products/services, its staff, its audience base, its content, and more. While these metrics provide a broad overview of the measurement and effectiveness of a brand’s effort on social and web platforms, they should be used as guides, rather than as hard and fast rules of what is important to the brand on digital platforms.

Priorities will also need to be determined about where to invest time, resources and manpower, depending on which stage a brand finds itself in. For instance, a brand may be looking to lower its support cost per ticket in order to boost marginal profits. However, the reduced investment in after-sales customer service may result in a poor experience for the brand’s highest-paying customers, which may in turn damage customer advocacy of the product and thus future revenue from referrals. It thus behoves brand marketers to carefully consider the most important metrics that matter to the brand, and invest the necessary support and resources into improving those brand metrics.

Social media metrics are leveraged to achieve tangible business objectives. In the next sections, social media analytical strategies are explored.

### 2.3.7 Social media analytics

Social media analytics can be described as a focus on developing and evaluating informatics tools and frameworks for the collection, monitoring, analysis, summarization and visualization of social media data (Zeng, Chen, Lusch, & Li, 2010). These activities are generally necessitated by specific requirements; in the case of this research, the goal is improved efficacy in the social media marketing of the goods and services of SMEs. The extraction of useful patterns – for instance in the form of repeated complaints and comments – as well as possible avenues for improvement in gathered consumer intelligence both help to create positive change in business activities over time (Lawrence et al., 2010). The results of this extraction of actionable information aids greatly in business decision-making. This is counterbalanced by the fact that, for such information to be efficacious in a practical setting, it requires well-articulated and clearly defined performance measures.

### 2.3.8 Challenges with social media analytics

Zeng et al. (2010) enumerate a few major challenges with social media analytics research. The first of these is that social media contains an enriched set of data and/or metadata which have not been comprehensively tackled in text- and data-mining literature. These include tags (and hashtags), subjective user opinions and insights, ratings and user profiles, among others. A second challenge noted is the fact that social media applications are a noted example of human-centred computing and come with their own distinctive emphasis on social interactions among users, necessitating the re-examination of context-dependent user-profiling and needs elicitation, among other factors.

The third challenge is present in the form of a disconnect between the promises to tackle noise versus the information-overload that social media makes. The presence of issues such as inaccuracies, conflicting evidence, semantic inconsistency, lack of structure, and difficulty in amalgamating the different kinds of signals in social media exacerbates this issue. A further challenge is seen in the dynamism and rapidly burgeoning nature of social media data streams, posing significant challenges to computing research.

### 2.3.9 Summary of research on social media analytics

Daniels & Friberg (2016), in a thesis on the factors affecting business and IT alignment in social media analytics (SMA) in organizations, compile a table of studies on previous SMA research. They found that SMA was not being discussed as one coherent artefact, but rather amongst other buzz words within the field of information systems (IS). They further found that the majority of research on SMA is done through literature reviews or quantitative research, with little qualitative research being carried out. In addition, the articles reviewed by the researchers did not focus on alignment in any sense, save for one that develops a framework for aligning social media analytics to business goals, which closely mirrors the aim of this very research. They concluded that there is limited empirical research linking business and IT alignment. Booker, Barnett & Cribbin (2016) eschew the typical focus on sampling, data validity, ethics, etc. and take a visual analytic approach to analysing Twitter data, in a treatise that attempts to analyse Twitter data as a socio-technical assemblage. Their emphasis is on navigating around and unpicking key factors that construct and constrain the data (Brooker, Barnett, & Cribbin, 2016). Fuchs (2017) argues that the shallow nature of predominantly positivist approaches to social media research results in missed opportunities for contextual understanding. Highlighted within the study are the still relevant methods of data collection and analysis from social research, including critical case studies, focus groups and participatory action research (Fuchs, 2017). Other researchers emphasize on the need for generating value from big data analytics, in addition to the other values of data such as volume, velocity, variety, and veracity (Chiang, Grover, Liang, & Zhang, 2018). Table 5 offers a tabular overview of these results.

*Table 5: Summary of literature review on social media analytics (Daniels & Friberg, 2016)*

Author	Title	Concept	Method
<b>Chiang, Grover, Liang, Zhang, 2018</b>	Special Issue: Strategic Value of Big Data and Business Analytics	Value creation for organizations through big data analytics	Literature review
<b>Fuchs, 2017</b>	From digital positivism and administrative big data analytics towards critical digital and social media research!	Combines critical social media theory, critical digital methods and critical-realist social media research ethics towards social media research	Literature review

<b>Brooker, Barnett &amp; Cribbin, 2016</b>	Doing social media analytics	Analysing Twitter data using a visual analytic approach	Mixed method approach
<b>Hong, Hu &amp; Burtch, 2015</b>	How does Social Media Affect Contributing to Public versus Private Goods in Crowdfunding Campaigns	Presents an investigation of crowdfunding campaigns social media and gathered capital using one of the main crowdfunding platforms, IndieGoGo	Quantitative
<b>Carlsson et al., 2015</b>	What's Trending in Social Media Analytics Area? A Retrospective	Presents an analysis of SMA trends in research and practice	Leading academic, practitioners and crossover outlets
<b>Chung et al., 2015</b>	eMood: Modeling Emotions for Social Media Analytics on Ebola Disease Outbreak	Presents an SMA analysis of user's network relationships and patterns on Twitter during the Ebola Disease Outbreak	Quantitative
<b>Oh, Sasser &amp; Almahoud, 2015</b>	Social Media Analytics Framework: The Case of Twitter and Super Bowl Ads	Presents a SMA methodological framework with the intention to examine the correlation between Twitter message volume, sentiment analysis and the ratings of super bowl advertisement	Quantitative
<b>Chinnov, Kerschke, Meske, 2015</b>	An Overview of Topic Discovery in Twitter Communication through Social Media Analytics	Presents an overview of faced challenges, methods and expected usefulness of SMA	Literature review
<b>Holsapple et al., 2014</b>	Business Social Media Analytics: Definition, Benefits, and Challenges	Presents the definition of Business SMA, identify several benefits of Business SMA, also challenges of SMA	Literature review of 27 research papers related to social media analytics (SMA)
<b>Chung, Zeng &amp; O'Hanlon, 2014</b>	Identifying Influential Users in Social Media: A Study of U.S. Immigration Reform	Presents the empirical findings of the usage of SMA to identify influential Twitter users regarding the U.S. immigration reform.	Quantitative
<b>Alfaro, Bhattacharyya, Watson-Mainheim 2013</b>	Organizational adoption of Social media in the USA; a Mixed Method Approach	Presents a mixed method approach in regards to organizational adoption of data mining and content analysis techniques in regards to social media	Mixed method approach

<b>Kurniawati et al., 2013</b>	The Business Impact of Social Media Analytics	Presents a framework based on organizational motivation theory and resource-based view which explains how organizations can obtain value from SMA.	40 success stories published by SMA vendors
<b>Dinter &amp; Lorenz 2012</b>	Social Business Intelligence: A literature review and Research Agenda	Presents a literature review of the research agenda for social BI and the impact on social media on BI systems	Literature review

Their findings on the paucity of empirical research relating to BI and social media analytics aligns with our own justification for carrying out this research. We postulate that an actionable framework for social media maturity will improve the efficacy of business activities in Namibia.

**2.3.10 Social Media Maturity Model**

To remain competitive in a fast-changing business environment that has seen increased usage of social media in organisational marketing efforts, it is imperative for corporations to make gradually significant changes and improvements to the resources, manpower, processes and money spent on their social media strategy (Bosomworth, 2012). Maturity models help to distinguish the different levels a company finds itself in with regards to a given problem, issue or set challenge, and to provide insight for necessary improvement plans (Camiade & Claisse, 2011). The social media maturity level as designed by Camiade & Claisse (2011) defines four stages of maturity; namely the *Observer*, *Reactive*, *Proactive* and *Influencer* stages. Bosomworth (2012) includes a pre-Observer stage known as the *Dormant* stage, in which an organisation has not yet begun to utilize social media in its marketing efforts.

These stages and their attendant successes and evaluations are predicated upon several criteria. These can be categorised as experience, resources (or tools), processes, measurement, commitment (or support) and culture (Bosomworth, 2012). Experience refers to the implementation of requisite technologies (for example, social media analytics) and the attendant documentation of overall strategy and knowledge-sharing. Resources here refer to the skills and responsibilities needed amongst employees in order to effectively realize social media marketing

goals. The process is the planned workflow for how to manage the given resources and technologies, while measurement includes basic data collection, usage of quantitative and qualitative instruments and the tendency towards cultivating social intelligence and deepening its relationship to business objectives. Commitment in this regard refers to the company-wide, long-term strategy and vision towards integrating social media into all aspects of business operations, and is reliant upon upper management echelons within a given company. This ties into the concept of culture, wherein priorities are set at upper levels of management to be followed, as employees begin to realize the value of using social technologies in their daily activities (Bosomworth, 2012; Camiade & Claisse, 2011).

The *Observer (or Testing)* stage involves exploration in general. This consists of isolated instances of basic brand listening and monitoring on various social media platforms, and is not backed by managerial support or resources. At this stage, there are no consolidated plans, strategies or efforts across the organizational chart, and the monitoring activities are usually carried out by isolated departments within a company. The subsequent *Reactive (or Coordinating)* stage sees the start of concerted efforts across the board to participate in social media and integrate it into business activities. Raw data measurement is substituted for more qualitative measures like sentiment analysis while analytics tools are tested for efficacy and efficiency. At this level, mid-management participation can be counted on as organizational objectives with regards to social media are outlined and tentative budgets are set aside for training, personnel hires and investment in necessary tools.

The *Proactive* stage involves a significant change in processes, commitment, and resources. The retaining of at least one full-time resource or personnel member can be witnessed at this stage, as can the full commitment of upper management through specific strategies and dedicated budgets, improved usage workflows by employees and the move towards the brand's overall social intelligence. Key performance indicator (KPI) measurements become considered during planning stages of new marketing efforts and more social media platforms may be added to existing options for marketing purposes. At the *Influencer* level, the company has transformed itself into a social company, one that incorporates social media into every aspect of its business activities. An integrated strategy and a dedicated budget are coupled with training plans on a

mission to innovate organizational offerings in terms of goods and/or services. Figures 15 and 16 presents a graphical overview of the social media maturity model.

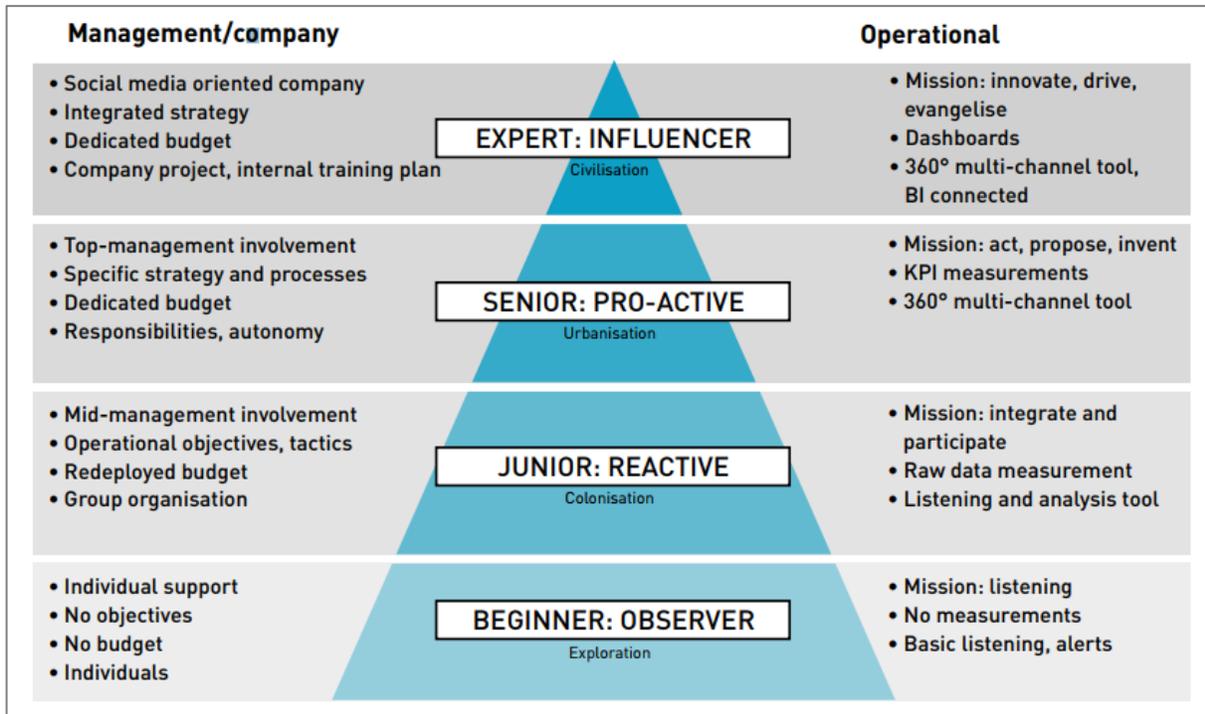


Figure 15: Social Media Maturity Model (Camiade & Claisse, 2011)

	Dormant	Testing	Coordinating	Scaling and optimizing	Empowering
Defining characteristic	Resistant to any use of social technologies due to unwillingness to participate or analysis paralysis	Individuals or departments test in isolated pockets.	Management begins to coordinate across teams and departments.	Organization shift toward growing and improving social applications.	Organization empowers all relevant employees by fostering and rewarding "HEROes."
Experience	None	In customer applications (e.g., Facebook) or employee applications limited to collaboration (e.g., Yammer)	Use of customer applications expands; employee applications still mainly for collaboration	Established customer and employee applications in place with continuous testing	Core business applications have social features; customer and employee applications begin to blur.
Resources	None	Individuals use applications part-time to help with current jobs.	"Shepherds" bring teams together and form governance council.	Social media organization in place with at least one full-time resource	All employees encouraged, enabled, and rewarded for using social technologies
Processes	None	Strictly task-oriented (e.g., community management or listening)	Move from strictly task-oriented to cross-team as departments work together	Organization takes action in social conversations (i.e., product or service changes).	Social elements incorporated into key corporate business processes (e.g., CRM)
Measurement	None	Limited to "collecting" activities (e.g., tracking number of followers)	Includes qualitative measures like "sentiment"	Evolving into Social Intelligence by integrating with other measurements	Social Intelligence takes hold.
Commitment	None	Limited managerial support and no long-term plan or philosophy	Management commits to long-term plan and governance.	Full managerial support culminates into companywide philosophy.	Empowering employees is a business imperative.
Culture	None	Social makes little impact on most employees' day-to-day business.	Employees have guidelines but social not integral in daily work	Social activity becomes more common in everyday work processes but not fully ingrained.	Social plays key role in day-to-day jobs of all relevant employees.

59690 Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 16: Social Media Maturity Model (Forrester Research, as cited in Bosomworth, 2012)

Evidence of knowledge of complex analytics strategies in Namibia is lacking in literature, thus leaving most local organisations and particularly SMEs in the *Dormant* or *Observer* stages of the social media maturity model. This lack of a formalised analysis of tailored social media marketing strategies presents an opportunity for academic research to provide a framework that improves the maturity level of SMEs. In the next section, the social media multiverse is explored from an abridged perspective, with an aim towards understanding how social networks fit into the wider context of web communications, content management and brand building.

## 2.4 The Social Media Ecosystem

The social media universe is a dense ecosystem of platforms and services, all designed to enhance, augment and ultimately evolve the social media experience. This multiverse is underpinned by the major social media networks that define it. These are currently Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

These core platforms are further expanded by third party software, services and apps that incorporate a social element to them. Examples of these from the music sphere would be Spotify, which allows you to curate and share music playlists with your friends on social media; and SoundCloud, which is essentially a music discovery platform with a social community built around it (Moazed, 2016). There are many other music streaming platforms that feature a social element, such as Apply Music, Pandora, Last.fm and MySpace, which used to be the biggest social media platform in the world until it was usurped by Facebook (Hartung, 2011).

These platforms are managed by a growing host of services that purport to streamline the social media content management process. Examples of these are Buffer, Hootsuite, SocialEye, Planoly and more. These services (and their attendant apps) let one get a bird's eye view of content that has been posted, schedule future content, track engagement, perform social listening and more (Kley et al., 2017).

The image sharing section of the ecosystem also heavily features a social aspect. Instagram and Flickr are good examples of this, as are Pinterest, GIPHY and Imgur. The latter two are often used to share "memes", a small minority of which go viral and tend to wax and wane in popularity over time (Oswald, 2018; Tiffany, 2016). These memes are used to convey emotion and reactions and are sometimes more effective as mediums of expression than normal words.

The world of dating involves social interaction by definition. Apps like Tinder, Bumble and OkCupid all involve the creation of profiles, the uploading of photos and communication over in-app messengers towards a desired goal. As of this writing, Tinder and OkCupid allow you to connect your dating profile to your Facebook and Instagram profiles, letting you pull information and the latest images into your digital dating journal (Stolyar, 2018).

Direct messaging is another core aspect of social communication, and popular apps like WhatsApp, Kik, WeChat, Telegram and Facebook Messenger have overtaken conventional SMS in recent years as the preferred modes of communications among mobile users. Being cheaper, faster and more secure, these apps collectively gross billions of users on a daily basis and even allow for group conversations and video chats (Bucher, 2018).

The world of travel has also grafted on to the idea of social networking in innovative ways. Platforms like Airbnb allow people to sign up either on the website or in-app, and then browse for available residential vacancies in different cities around the globe. This has fostered new relationships, deepened cultural ties and proven profitable for certain enterprising individuals who take advantage of vacant rooms in their homes by renting them out online (Lott, 2014).

Sharing videos has been a favourite pastime since the invention of the VCR in the 1980s. This behaviour took off online with the launch of YouTube in 2005, allowing content to be created, spread and consumed more easily by a global audience (Dickey, 2013). Competitor sites like Vimeo and Vevo were launched in 2004 and 2009 respectively (Marshall, 2013; Sweney, 2012). It is estimated that several billion hours of video are watched on a daily basis, and this creation and consumption will only increase in the near future with the proliferation of devices like the GoPro, which make the video capturing process much easier for content creators (Bergman, 2017). Video platforms are augmented by livestreaming capabilities in apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, among others.

Payments of goods and services have increasingly taken on a mantle of social interaction, with platforms like the Facebook Marketplace being established in the US and apps like Splitwise, Venmo and Divvy being inherently built to enhance social experiences. Within the messenger realm, Apple's iMessage service allows for payments via text, while China's WeChat is a messenger app that also allows peer-to-peer payments (Cheng, 2017; Ku, 2016; Potuck, 2017; Rowe, 2017; Sicard, 2013).

Gaming has almost always been a social phenomenon, starting from the days of Pong to the modern world of Xbox, PlayStation and Nintendo, among others. Massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) boast players that span dozens of countries, languages and socio-economic

backgrounds. This has proven to be a highly profitable field for the developers of these games (Cole & Griffiths, 2007; Sourmelis, Ioannou, & Zaphiris, 2017).

The digital journalism landscape of today has also been built with social in mind. Articles are optimized for maximum virality, and the platforms that host these headlines are socially enabled to facilitate easier sharing to social media platforms (Kumar, 2012). Entire online publications exist which are supported by advertising and predicated on a constant stream of online traffic. Platforms like Reddit have spawned several offshoots (known as “subreddits”) which are essentially specialized message-boards for people who have the same interests (Bergström & Belfrage, 2018; Humprecht & Esser, 2018).

Social media circles tend to spawn “influencers”; individuals who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media. These influencers provide a cachet of credibility that brands can leverage to push their messages across to targeted audiences. The acquisition, management, payment and relationship cultivation of these influencers has in itself spawned new branches of the social media ecosystem, specifically designed to cater to these online rockstars. Examples of these influencer management platforms include Hypr, RhythmOne, Expercify and Mavrck (Booth & Matic, 2011; Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011).

Human networking has been a staple of civilization since the earliest ages, and it is only fairly recently that this phenomenon has been digitalized by platforms such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and UpWork. LinkedIn assists professionals in finding other like-minded individuals within similar fields, while Glassdoor provides a platform where salary comparisons can be made and company reviews can be scoured to determine the best places to work within a given locale or industry. UpWork, on the other hand, provides a platform where freelancers can list their skills and prices, and get hired by clients who need different types of work done. Other websites in its ilk include Fiverr, which has a similar value proposition, and Behance, which is more geared toward those in the creative fields (Melián-González & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016; Sharone, 2017).

Last but not least, crowdfunding is another area where many people come together to support a specific goal. Several sites have spawned in this area, including the currently best-known kickstarter.com and its closest competitor, gofundme.com. This aspect of the social media

universe is not limited to websites, however, as different apps like PayPal have been used to facilitate crowdfunding initiatives, while other specialized platforms like Patreon exist for the sole purpose of allowing content creators to get patrons for their creative works who sponsor them on a periodic basis (Hobbs, Grigore, & Molesworth, 2016; Steigenberger, 2017).

These examples are non-exhaustive of the final tally of elements in the social media ecosystem. While the Occidental world has been the main focus thus far, the Oriental world has its fair share of social media juggernauts such as Weibo (the Chinese version of Twitter), Baidu (the Chinese version of Facebook) and VKontakte (the Russian version of Facebook). Each of these platforms commands the attention and rabid loyalty of millions of users on a daily basis, and have become the staples of their geographic locations in their own right (Baran & Stock, 2015; Duvanova, Semenov, & Nikolaev, 2015; Gao, Abel, Houben, & Yu, 2012).

## 2.5 Advertising and privacy

Social media has changed and evolved the discussion around privacy, a shorthand tag that gets used to reference a constellation of public attitudes, technical affordances and legal arguments regarding collected user data (Madden, 2012). The split in opinion presents two opposing factions. One side of the debate advocates for acceptance of the wholesale commodification of user data, presented as a side effect of benefitting from the connectivity advantages of social media. The other side advocates for stronger controls, reined-in advertiser access to consumer data, and increased regulation of platforms, their third-party partnership agreements and the technical ability of users to access, download and delete their own data.

Recent research has revealed an increasing distrust of the ad-supported model of social media networks with regards to user privacy and data collection (Oremus, 2018). This distrust stems from a lack of understanding of how one's data is collected and used by these platforms, perpetuated by obfuscation of privacy policies and terms of use presented in overly legal language (Hackett, 2014; Rainie, 2018). It is further magnified by fears of virus-spreading, email hacking and phishing through unsavoury sites, and amplified by perceptions of manipulation

through data collection and biased news information, as public furore over the 2018 Cambridge Analytica saga indicated (Gurung & Raja, 2016; Oremus, 2018).

Furthermore, the application of social identity data towards the increased serving of advertisements has led to user backlash in the form of ad program opt-outs, significantly increased ad blocker usage and calls for tighter regulation on digital media companies (Escritt, 2018; Mughees, Qian, & Shafiq, 2017; Shubber, Khan, & Thompson, 2018). The current conversation centres on how a balance can be sought between the need to provide a safe, secure platform for users to be able to share their private data, versus the need to provide advertisers with enough user data to justify buying and serving ads to users in order to gain new leads and profits (Meece, 2018; Tucker, 2010). Underlying all of this is the singular need for relevance in the served ads and general content that users receive, which has been cited again and again as the key differentiator in gaining user trust and consent with regards to data collection (Lawrence et al., 2010). Figure 17 shows the different types of organizations people trust to protect their data.

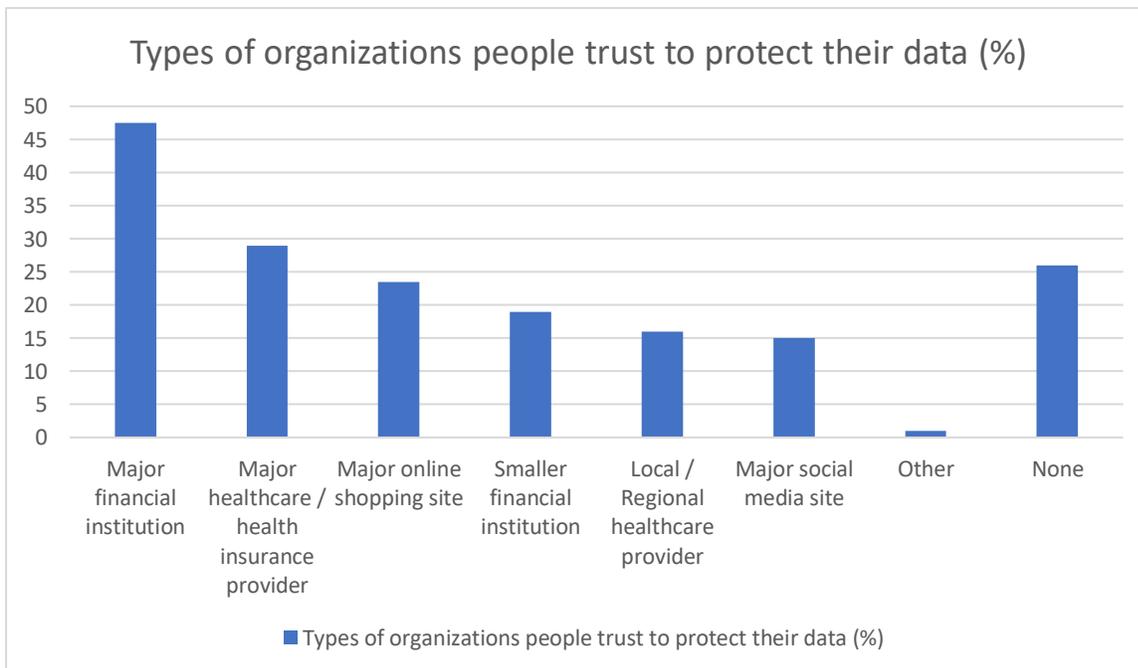


Figure 17: Types of organizations people trust to protect their data, by degree (Meece, 2018)

### 2.5.1 Social Identity Data: Definition & Applications

Social identity can be defined as the explicitly and implicitly shared data relating to an individual's personal brand, as reflected in his or her social media relationships, profile data, interests and ongoing activity (Orihuela, 2017; Zajmi & Rugova, 2015). This social identity may involve spill-over from the original platform itself onto other third-party sites such as news outlets and gaming platforms, where data is further collected and used to profile the user and their friend network (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013; Mayer & Mitchell, 2012). The commodification of this information has proven advantageous for marketers, spawning an entire ecosystem of data analytics service providers, media buyers and dedicated digital marketing agencies. The primary purpose of these agencies is to target users better, sell more products and ultimately reduce the costs of making a sale; all while increasing the relevance of served ads to the end user. Identity marketing thus helps to:

- Piece together consumer journeys across various social channels
- Personalize the messages, offerings and content received by the consumer to individual affinities
- Enrich the segmentation of subscriber lists with personalized data, instead of just transaction history, basic demographics, or customer surveys
- Discover new opportunities by viewing a customer's personal network, sentiments, and everyday behaviours

A significant concern of identity marketing involves the implicit and explicit acquisition of user trust by advertisers and the conferment of authenticity upon them. User trust ultimately leads to increased engagement and proffering of user data on a more regular basis, with the underlying assumption that their data will be safely stored and used ethically by the advertisers in question (Koene, 2015; White, 2018). A decline in user trust leads to increased privacy-strengthening activities on the part of consumers, decreased brand loyalty and ultimately decreased sales and profits. With this in mind, it behoves advertisers to take certain measures in strengthening the consumer trust placed in them through better handling of user data. Some of these include the re-evaluation of privacy policies, a reduction in overly-personalized advertising, explicit

attainment of user consent with regards to messaging and serving ads, as well as offering options for users to manage their personal data (Anthony & Stark, 2018; Quesenberry, 2018).

## 2.6 Theoretical approaches

Previous social media research has invoked a myriad of theoretical underpinnings, and these were collectively reviewed in a study by Ngai, Tao & Moon (2015) as shown in Table 6. The paper outlines the frequency of these theoretical underpinnings, drawn from a pool of 46 peer-reviewed articles on social media research. The results show that the most used theoretical underpinning for social media research is the *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)*, which has been used to study the perceived usefulness and ease of use of new technologies in relation to people's existing attitudes toward adoption (Turner, Kitchenham, Brereton, Charters, & Budgen, 2010). This was followed by *social capital theory*, *social identity theory* and *social influence theory*, collectively encapsulated under the *Social Aspects Theory*. This is further explained by the fact that social factors have been widely utilized to study users' intentions, attitudes and actions in connection with social media adoption or usage (Ngai, Tao, & Moon, 2015). In this case, the users in question refers to the small business owners who are faced with the decision to adopt best-practice social media marketing and analytics strategies to drive business growth and long-term success.

Table 6: Frequency analysis: SM research theoretical frameworks (Ngai, Tao & Moon, 2015)

Theories and models	References	N
<b>Personal Behaviour Theories</b>		
<i>Technology acceptance model (TAM)</i>	Casaló et al., 2010, Casaló et al., 2011, Hossain and de Silva (2009), Hsu and Lin (2008), Kwon and Wen (2010) and Steyn et al. (2010)	6
Personality traits	Correa et al. (2010), Labrecque et al. (2010), Lu and Hsiao (2010) and Zhong et al. (2011)	4
Expectation and disconfirmation paradigm	Chiu et al. (2011) and Hsieh et al. (2010)	2
Social cognitive theory	Chiu et al. (2006) and Lin et al. (2009)	2
Theory of planned behaviour (TPB)	Casaló et al. (2010) and Chang and Zhu (2011)	2
Attribution theory	Porter and Donthu (2008)	1
Elaboration likelihood model	Zhong et al. (2011)	1

Existence, relatedness, growth theory	Hau and Kim (2011)	1
Goal-directed behaviour model	Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002)	1
Hofstede's theory of cultural difference	Lewis and George (2008)	1
Psychological choice model	Zhu and Zhang (2010)	1
Risk perception theory	Shiue et al. (2010)	1
Switching behaviour	Zhang et al. (2009)	1
Task-technology fit model	Ip and Wagner (2008)	1
Theory of reasoned action (TRA)	Hsu and Lin (2008)	1

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### **Social Behaviour Theories**

<i>Social capital theory</i>	<i>Chai and Kim (2010), Chiu et al. (2006), Hau and Kim (2011), Lu, Zhao, and Wang (2010) and Porter and Donthu (2008)</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Social identity theory</i>	<i>Blanchard (2008) and Casaló et al. (2010), Cheung and Lee (2010), Dholakia et al. (2004) and Kwon and Wen (2010)</i>	<b>5</b>
Social influence theory	Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002), Cheung and Lee (2010), Dholakia et al. (2004), Koo et al. (2011) and Wang and Lin (2011)	5
Social Exchange theory	Blanchard (2008) and Lin et al., 2009	2
Social network analysis	Hossain and de Silva (2009), Hsiao et al. (2010)	2
Cognitive map	Kang et al. (2007)	1
Effectuation process	Fischer and Reuber (2011)	1
Involvement theory	Huang et al. (2010)	1
Justice theory	Chiu et al., 2011	1
Social interaction theory	Fischer and Reuber (2011)	1
Social loafing	Shiue et al. (2010)	1
Social power	Wei (2009)	1
Social ties	Shiue et al. (2010)	1

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### **Mass Communication Theories**

Uses and gratifications theory	Chen (2010), Dholakia et al. (2004) and Porter and Donthu (2008)	3
Media richness theory	Koo et al. (2011) and Shiue et al., 2010	2
Para-social interaction	Colliander and Dahlén (2011)	1

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## 2.7 Framework Comparisons in Literature

Several framework manifestations exist in academic literature with regards to the overarching themes of social media marketing (Berthon et al., 2012; Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, & Jembere, 2013; Dawson, 2009; Hanna et al., 2011). These similarities play out across different fields, from luxury brands to tourism and the world of fashion. In Table 7, a brief analysis is presented for each study reviewed.

Table 7: Framework comparisons in literature

Author	Title	Concept
<b>Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, &amp; Shapiro, 2012</b>	Marketing meets Web2.0, social media, and creative consumers: Implications for international marketing strategy	Five main axioms of social media, including: social media as a function of a country's technology, culture, and government; the inevitability of global reach for seemingly local events; the tendency towards specificity of seemingly general issues, and the historical context of social media innovations within a specific country. At the heart of the research is the recommendation to continually stay up to date on technology, customers, and social media.
<b>Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, &amp; Jembere, 2013</b>	The adoption of social media marketing in South African banks	The sensitive nature of the banking industry requires explicit trust in technical systems and governance structures to elicit consumer loyalty. The central premise of the study lies in the need for customer engagement on social media channels in order to bolster the presence, perceptions and, ultimately, profits of players in the banking sector through strategic social media adoption and implementation methods.
<b>Davis, 2017</b>	How to plan your digital strategy with the PROSPER framework	The PROSPER framework of Davis (2007) emphasizes a return to fundamentals with regard to social media marketing strategy. It focuses on eliciting answers to the basics; such as organizational vision, setting measurable goals, channel planning and execution, and the review of implemented strategies to determine areas of success and improvement.
<b>Dawson, 2009</b>	Social Media Strategy Framework	The PEDDMELL framework emphasizes a holistic overhaul of the social media activities within organizations. It positions social media as an avenue to both broadcast a brand's positioning as well as elicit feedback from its customer base. It further entrenches the idea of developing capacity within organizational hierarchies when it comes to social media, including obtaining managerial buy-in, investing in the right staff and tools, as well as integrating social media into organizational goal-setting.
<b>Hanna &amp; Crittenden, 2017</b>	We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem	Hanna & Crittenden (2017) employ a case study analysis to derive key lessons for organizational forays into social media. These include an ethos of accountability through the establishment and tracking of KPIs, a need for cognizance of the organization's role within the larger ecosystem, a debunking of perceptions relating to the costs of running social media campaigns and an emphasis on uniqueness when it comes to campaign execution.

An amalgamation of these frameworks, models and strategies yields the following top-line items to consider when embarking upon social media marketing initiatives, as consolidated in Figure 18:

### 2.7.1 Establishment of Business Goals

Determining the relevant organizational goals being sought after on social media channels plays the first part of the planning process. This could include a desire to increase sales, build brand equity, attain consumer mind-share or quickly grow a subscriber base in a new market.

### 2.7.2 Audience Analysis

Understanding the key demographic being marketed to is an important aspect of the social media marketing chain of operations. This generally involves breakdowns via certain metrics such as age, occupation, location, affinities, levels of disposable income and more. Campaigns are generally more effective when targeted to the right audience.

### 2.7.3 Establishing Metrics

A focus on the right metrics can mean the difference between sharply increased ROI and a bloated advertising budget. Establishing the right metrics matrix early on serves to guide business decisions, creative execution and monitoring efforts.

### 2.7.4 Content Strategy

Upon establishment of organizational goals and audience segmentation, developing a content strategy serves to align these two spheres into a coherent messaging execution. The implementation or dissemination of this content takes on different forms but remains guided by an underlying ethos of maintaining uniqueness and creativity across all executions. This aspect is explored in further sections.

### 2.7.5 Monitoring & Evaluation

Social media marketing does not end after a successful upload of the campaign creative. It necessitates constant vigilance to track what's working and what isn't, who's listening and who's not, and how much each and every action on the various platforms costs the advertisers.

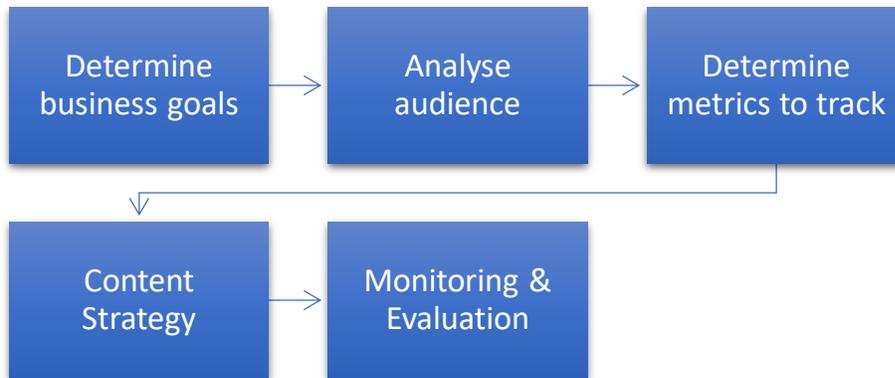


Figure 18: A consolidation of social media marketing frameworks from academic literature

While this consolidated framework maintains its form throughout different segments of the literature, some studies go an extra step further by defining the salient components of “creativity” when it comes to crafting campaigns. The work of Ashley & Tuten (2015) delves deeper into this, defining these strategies as the tactical manifestations of brand messaging which are used to narrow the gap between brand and consumer. Creative messaging boosts consumer motivation, intent, and ability to extract meaningful information from an advert (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). These creative strategies tug on perennial human emotions such as love, lust, fear, guilt, and joy/humour. They also aim to match a brand’s core message to consumer aspirations, insights and resonant experiences. Ashley & Tuten (2015) present a framework of message strategies that can be adopted and applied to brand marketing on social media channels, as seen in Table 8. Adopting and implementing these creative strategies provides a measurable increase in cross-channel advertising efficacy, social media platforms included.

Table 8: Creative Messaging Strategies

Message Strategies	
Integrated content	Leveraging a traditional media campaign vs creating unique content for social media
Interactivity	In terms of the overall campaign, this refers to its overall level of “interactivity” — the extent to which consumers can participate and engage and be active with the campaign.
Functional appeal	Utility or functionality of the product/service
Emotional appeal	Psychological/social needs—how it will make them feel
Experiential appeal	How they will experience sight, sound, taste, touch and smells
Unique selling proposition	How the product/service is different from others

Comparative	Do they compare their products to a competitor(s)? If so, is it a direct comparison (e.g., Tylenol vs. Excedrin) or indirect (us vs. the leading pain reliever)?
Resonance	An echoing between the image and words (e.g., buried treasure)
Social cause	An association with a socially relevant issue. Example: Avon aligning with breast cancer awareness
Exclusivity	The target demographic's level of access to what's being marketed
Animation	Motion; often from a cartoon or graphic image
Spokesperson / character	An individual or character associated with the campaign
<b>Sales Promotions</b>	
Discounts or price offs	Offering deals or discounts in exchange for something
Contest	Offering prizes in exchange for some sort of proof of ability
<b>User-Generated Content</b>	
Invitation to submit content	This can be comments, captions, videos, and/or pictures.
Incentives to submit content	Offering reward or some kind of recognition in exchange for sharing content
Ability to rank/vote on content from others	Other people helping to select the content or comment on content generated by other users

## 2.8 Critical Analysis

These frameworks provide a veritable starting guide for marketers and SME owners looking to plan their marketing strategy. There are some gaps in these frameworks, however, and closing these gaps is one of the aims of this research. The first is that there is no consideration given to cultural context. While advertising principles are generalizable across locales and platforms, there are nuances present in the messaging that need to align with the cultural expectations, norms and realities of the locales being targeted (Akaka, Vargo, & Lusch, 2013; Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016; Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014). To put this into perspective, consider the multi-cultural nature of Namibia's population. Advertising in multi-ethnic locales becomes hampered to some extent by adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach to marketing communications.

The second consideration that isn't explicitly touched on in academic literature on social media marketing are the principles of crafting a coherent visual design aesthetic for content being disseminated. The majority of social media platforms are either inherently visual or cater for visual communications in the form of photos, animations/GIFs, videos and more. There is strong evidence from literature that the visual layout of marketing communications is important in

enhancing the message consumption experience for the consumer, and ignoring this aspect of the communications crafting process can hamper all other efforts of the social media marketing mix (Campelo, Aitken, & Gnoth, 2010; Lester, 2014; Malmelin, 2010).

The third consideration is the socio-economic realities and perceptions of the business landscape where local SMEs are concerned. Being a developing country, traditional marketing has for decades consumed the lion's share of marketing budgets from advertisers (Baporikar & Fotlela, 2018). The Namibian SME community is still just getting involved in the game-changing world of social media and digital marketing, but this is being done on top of other capital- and time-intensive aspects of running a business (such as stocking, human resources, production processes, etc.). As such, the perception that social media marketing is an "expensive" or extraneous expense needs to be addressed if the tide of perception with regards to financial investments into online channels of brand marketing is to be changed. Figure 19 graphically encapsulates these three considerations.



Figure 19: Addressing social media marketing in Namibia: considerations

## 2.9 Conclusion: Literature Review

In this chapter, the role of data in BI and the analytical facet that seeks to derive meaning out of raw data has been explored. This was done in tandem with the platforms that make up the social media universe, the elements of its wider ecosystem, and the implications of social media ubiquity on user privacy and data collection. Key facets have been espoused that need to be considered when crafting an overarching social media marketing framework. Ongoing debate in the wider sphere aims to find a balance between the conflicting interests of platforms and their

advertisers against users, their right to privacy, and a pleasing user experience. However, through public education on end-user privacy rights, global privacy regulations seek to bridge this gap of knowledge, and hopefully put the power back into the hands of users. In the next section, the methodological underpinnings of this research are explored.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

Academic research aims to push the boundaries of knowledge in a pre-defined direction. It takes on different forms, deals with different variables and subjects, and can have different goals. Vitality, academic research is less about following a pre-defined path to garnering insights, and more about removing all possible inhibitions to effective and efficacious research processes, in order to arrive at the most unbiased, truthful results. Rigour and methodological vigilance are thus essential, as is the testing, disproving and/or validation of initially advanced hypotheses.

Research design encompasses the overarching strategy that integrates different components of a study in a coherent, unified and logical manner. It comprises the framework of data collection, analysis and interpretation, and helps in answering research questions and achieving study objectives through evidence and/or data collected (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2014; Wahyuni, 2012).

## 3.2 Defining research approaches

Academic research can be broken down into three main approaches: exploratory research, descriptive research and explanatory research (Agee, 2009; Tetnowski, 2015).

Exploratory research is often conducted in new areas of inquiry, with the main goals being to scope out the magnitude of a problem, phenomenon or behaviour; to generate initial ideas or hypotheses about those phenomena; and to determine the feasibility of further undertaking research in that area of inquiry (Barratt, Choi, & Li, 2011). Such research carries with it the potential limitation that conclusive answers to, or a definitive understanding of the phenomenon may not be arrived at, but it is helpful in assisting to determine the tentative scope of such a problem. Such scoping helps in the undertaking of subsequent research (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Descriptive research preoccupies itself with detailed observation and documentation of a phenomenon, based on the scientific method. This means that the observations and insights

thereof must be precise, replicable, verifiable and disprovable, among other requirements (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2009). Explanatory research seeks explanations of observed phenomena and problems of behaviours (Bhattacharjee, 2012). While descriptive research aims to answer the 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'when' of an occurrence, explanatory research aims to answer the 'why' and 'how' questions, ultimately seeking to connect the dots in academic research. It achieves this by identifying causal factors and outcomes of the prescribed phenomenon, and thus requires strong theoretical and interpretation skills together with intuition, insights and the researcher's own personal experience (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

This research falls under the descriptive camp, as it seeks to understand what practises local SMEs are currently employing on social media, what their perceptions are on certain SM-related topics, what some of the best practices are for social media strategy and analytics, as well as how all of these factors can be amalgamated into a coherent framework. The unit of analysis is the small to medium business enterprise (SME). The research is inductive in nature, where conclusions are drawn based on facts or observed evidence (Fischer & Reuber, 2011). This is in contrast to deductive research, where conclusions are drawn based on theoretical or logical reasons coupled with an initial set of premises (Soiferman, 2010). The research also employs a pragmatic approach. The ontological and epistemological roots of pragmatism can best be summarized as "the best method that works". The nature of this research, involving the data collection and analysis dashboards of several social media platforms and participating brands in order to determine the best marketing and analytics strategy, lends itself neatly to this particular paradigm.

### 3.2.1 Qualitative Research and Data Analysis

Qualitative research implies a focus on entity "qualities", processes and meanings that are not measured by quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative research stresses the relationship between the researcher and the subject(s), as well as the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Jabar et al., 2014; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

Three key elements define a qualitative research study, as well as the applied forms each element can take in the investigation of a research problem (Grove, 2011; Lewis, 2015). These are the design, the collection of data and the analysis. The design determines the form or general direction that the research will take. The collection determines the techniques that will be used to gather and organize the data, while the analysis determines the methods that will be used to process, filter and distil the data down to its core insights. In this research, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods were used.

### 3.2.1.1 The Design

- **Naturalistic design** – This refers to studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally, involving a nonmanipulative and noncontrolling process of research. Naturalistic design features a lack of predetermined constraints on the findings, and so the researcher is open to whatever findings emerge (Hoepfl, 1997).
- **Emergent design** – This involves accepting that the original research enquiry is subject to change as understanding deepens and/or situations change. It also necessitates researchers avoiding rigid designs that eliminate responding to opportunities to pursue new paths of discovery as they emerge (Hatch, 2002; Hoepfl, 1997). Elements of emergent design were present in this research, particularly during the workshop phase of data collection.
- **Purposeful design** – In this scenario, cases for study (e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidences) are selected because they are “information rich” and potentially offer insights. In other words, they present as useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest, with sampling thus aimed at garnering insight about the phenomenon, as opposed to empirical generalization derived from a sample and applied to a given population (Hatch, 2002; Hoepfl, 1997). Elements of purposeful design were present in this research, particularly during the workshop and case study phase of data collection.

### 3.2.1.2 Common Data Collection Approaches

Qualitative data collection presents several facets for consideration in order to limit bias and improve data accuracy and relevance (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Maxwell, 2013):

- **Data** – observations yield a detailed, "thick description" (i.e. in-depth understanding) while interviews capture people's personal perspectives and lived experiences as direct quotations. The data in either case is often derived from carefully conducted case studies and review of contextual culture.
- **Personal experience and engagement** – in this case, the researcher gets into close, direct contact with the people, situation, and phenomenon under investigation. The researcher's personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon. During the workshop phase of data collection, the researcher came into close contact with SME owners, who collectively provided rich insight into how social media was integrated (or not) into their daily business activities.
- **Empathic neutrality** – an empathic stance in working with study respondents seeks vicarious understanding without judgment (neutrality) by showing openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness. In an observational format, it necessitates being fully present (i.e. mindfulness).
- **Dynamic systems** – with this type of data collection, there is attention to process and an underlying assumption that change is ongoing, whether the focus is on an individual, an organization, a community, or an entire culture. The researcher is therefore mindful of and attentive to system and situational dynamics.

### 3.2.1.3 The Analysis

As with the collection phase, data analysis in qualitative research consists of several steps, considerations and perspectives to take into account, as follows (Chenail, 2011; Silverman, 2016):

- **Unique case orientation** – This assumes that each case is unique, and so the first level of analysis is being true to, respecting, and capturing the details of the individual cases being studied. Cross-case analysis is thus derived from and depends upon the quality of individual case studies.

- **Inductive analysis** – This is defined by immersion in the details and specifics of the data in order to discover important patterns, themes, and inter-relationships. It begins by exploring and then confirming findings, guided by analytical principles rather than hard-and-fast rules. The online questionnaire phase of this research provided ample opportunity to put inductive analysis into practice due to the varied backgrounds and self-reported abilities of the respondents.
- **Holistic perspective** – Here, the whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts. The focus is on complex interdependencies and system dynamics that cannot be reduced in any meaningful way to linear, causative relationships and/or a few discrete variables.
- **Context sensitive** – This type of analysis places findings in a social, historical, and/or temporal context. Care must be taken regarding the possibility or meaningfulness of generalizations across time and space. Context-sensitive analysis emphasizes careful comparative case analyses and pattern extrapolation. The data collected in this research was done within the context of Namibia as a distinct cultural, socio-economic and technological environment.
- **Voice, perspective, and reflexivity** – During this mode of analysis, the researcher recognizes that complete objectivity is impossible and pure subjectivity undermines credibility. The researcher thus owns and is reflective about their own voice and perspective in the research. A balance is thus sought between understanding and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity, and also being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness.

### 3.2.2 Quantitative Research and Data Analysis

Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. Quantitative research

focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of subjects to explain a particular phenomenon. The main characteristics of quantitative research are briefly detailed below (Alversia, 2011; Hodis & Hancock, 2016):

- The data is usually gathered using structured research instruments
- The results are based on large sample sizes that are representative of the population
- The research study can usually be replicated or repeated, given its high reliability
- The researcher has a clearly defined research question to which objective answers are sought
- All aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected
- Data is in the form of numbers and statistics, often arranged in tables, charts, figures, or other non-textual forms
- The project can be used to generalize concepts more widely, predict future results, or investigate causal relationships
- The researcher uses tools, such as questionnaires or computer software, to collect, store and process numerical data

When it comes to quantitative research designs, there are four main types to consider: descriptive, correlational, quasi-experimental and experimental. The differences between them primarily relate to the degree to which the researcher designs for control of the variables in the experiment. A brief description of each type of quantitative research design follows, with Table 9 comparing and contrasting the approaches (Babbie, 2016; Williams & Monge, 2001).

- **Descriptive design** seeks to describe the current status of a variable or phenomenon. The researcher does not begin with a hypothesis, but typically develops one after the data is collected, with data collection being mostly observational in nature (Christensen et al., 2014; Hopkins, 2002).
- **Correlational design** explores the relationship between variables using different types of statistical analysis. It does not look for cause and effect however and is therefore also mostly observational in nature (Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008; Sousa, Driessnack, & Mendes, 2007).

- **Quasi-Experimental Design** (also referred to as causal-comparative design) seeks to establish a cause-effect relationship between two or more variables. The researcher does not assign groups and does not manipulate the independent variable. Control groups are identified and exposed to the variable. Results are compared with other results from groups not exposed to the variable (Christensen et al., 2014).
- **Experimental designs**, often called true experimentation, use the scientific method to establish cause-effect relationships amongst a group of variables in a research study. Researchers try to control for all variables except the one being manipulated (the independent variable). The effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable(s) are collected and analysed for a relationship (Neuman, 2007).

Table 9: Types of quantitative research designs

Type of Design	Key Focus & Control of Variables	Intervention Applied?	Example	Common Study Designs
<b>Descriptive</b>	Observational, i.e. “what is”. Variables are not controlled.	No	A description of teenagers’ attitudes towards social media	Comparative descriptive design; Cross-sectional designs; Longitudinal designs
<b>Correlational</b>	Explores relationships among given variables. Variables are not controlled.	No	A study of the relationship between IQ and happiness levels	Descriptive correlation designs; predictive designs; model-testing designs
<b>Quasi-Experimental</b>	Tests for causality with suboptimal variable control. Independent variable not manipulated.	Yes	A study of the effect of summer camping programs on childhood obesity rates	Pre- and Post-test designs; Post-test only designs; Interrupted time-series designs
<b>Experimental</b>	Tests causality with optimal variable control. Independent variable is manipulated.	Yes	A study of the effects of a new diet plan on insulin levels in diabetics	Classic experimental designs; randomized designs; Crossover designs; Nested designs

Reporting the results of a quantitative study is guided by several “rules”, the most pertinent of which are detailed below (Christensen et al., 2014):

1. Data collected, as well as its statistical treatment, both need to be explained. This is in addition to all relevant results in relation to the research problem being investigated

2. Unanticipated events that occurred during data collection should be duly reported, as should any differences between actual analysis and the initially planned analysis. Should there be any missing data, this should be spelled out, with rationales as to why it does not undermine the validity of the analysis
3. Techniques used to "clean" the data set should be clearly detailed
4. It is prudent to choose a minimally sufficient statistical procedure, providing a rationale for its use and a reference for it
5. Working assumptions for each procedure should be laid out
6. When using inferential statistics, it behooves the researcher to provide the descriptive statistics, confidence intervals, and sample sizes for each variable as well as the value of the test statistic, its direction, the degrees of freedom, and the significance level
7. Researchers should avoid inferring causality, especially in nonrandomized designs or without further experimentation
8. Graphic representations of collected data aid in getting the message out to relevant stakeholders
9. The reader should always be guided as to what to look for in tables and figures

With these tips in mind, quantitative research can produce meaningful results from carefully designed research design processes.

### 3.3 Selecting a research design

The goal of effective academic research should be to collect as much diverse data as possible in order to garner the best possible insights about a phenomenon. As such, an overlap of research designs may happen, as is the case with this study. This leads to the usage of several different types of data collection methods, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to cover as many data touchpoints as possible. In this study, the approach was guided by the DeLone & McLean IS Success Model ("D&M IS Success Model") and this manifested in the employment of methods such as secondary data analysis (quantitative), case studies and focus group research (both qualitative) (Christensen et al., 2014). A brief description of each approach follows below.

### 3.3.1 Theoretical Framework: D&M IS Success Model

This research was theoretically framed within the DeLone & McLean IS Success model. The D&M model is an IS research framework that was first conceptualized in 1992, with the intention to amalgamate the best tenets of existing IS research frameworks (Delone & Mclean, 2004). The framework (Figure 20) emphasizes 6 key pillars of optimized information systems, namely system quality, information quality, use, user satisfaction, individual and organizational impacts.

In its first iteration, the authors proffer a dual-pronged pathway of approaching the challenges of setting up sustainable information systems. The first of these is the temporal, process model that emphasizes a linear progression from system and information quality to organizational impact (Delone & Mclean, 2004). This model suggests the starting point of an information system as exhibiting various degrees of system and information quality. Use of this system by end-users and managers leads to either user satisfaction or dissatisfaction, either of which has a direct impact on the individual and their work. The collective influence of these individual impacts then results in organizational impacts. The temporal, process model thus suggests and justifies a need for incremental progress in the design and deployment of the different variables of information systems (Delone & Mclean, 2004).

The second pathway is the causal or variance model, which underlines the multiplier effect on certain variables that can be caused by increasing or decreasing the presence and relevance of earlier independence variables (Delone & Mclean, 2004). This model studies the covariance of the success dimensions to determine if there exists a causal relationship between them. For example, an organization might undertake to understand the effect of information quality on user satisfaction, or the impact of reduced system use on organizational impact. This emphasis on causality thus examines the success of information systems in totality based on the cause and effect of independent and dependent variables, and argues for holistic importance to be placed on the different tenets of the system as a whole. This is in contrast to the temporal, process model that places emphasis on precedence (Delone & Mclean, 2004).

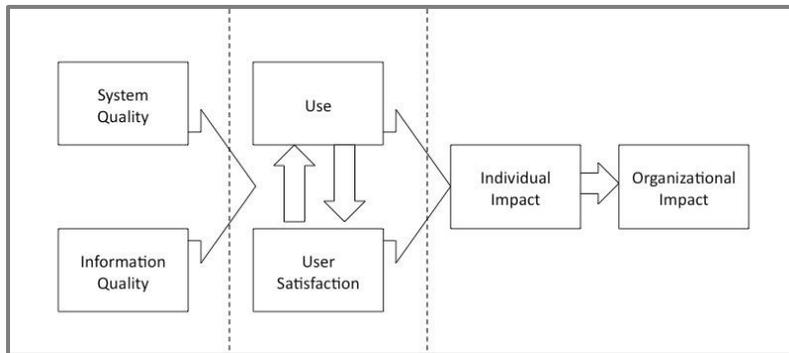


Figure 20: The original D&M IS Success Model (DeLone & McLean, 2004)

### 3.3.1.1 System quality

The model defines system quality as the characteristics an organisation envisions for its information system (Chang et al., 2018). Examples of these characteristics include flexibility, reliability and ease of use. Within the first iteration of the D&M IS Success Model, system quality formed one of two core tenets whose presence was necessitated within the temporal, process approach to the model (Delone & Mclean, 2004). A causal approach, however, positioned system quality as a variable that could be related to other aspects of the mode, such as intent to use and user satisfaction.

### 3.3.1.2 Information quality

Desired characteristics of the system's outputs with regard to the organisation's informational needs included the qualities of relevance, accuracy, conciseness, completeness, timeliness and usability (Delone & Mclean, 2004). An information system with poor information quality could experience ripple effects down the line (within the temporal, process model) and across the board (within the causal model). This could affect user satisfaction, individual impact and organizational impact.

### 3.3.1.3 Use

Within the context of the IS Success Model, use referred to the manner, frequency and reason for using a given information system by the end-users and managers of the organization (Delone & Mclean, 2004). It is directly influenced by both system and information quality, and limited or wrongful use of a system could have adverse impacts on user satisfaction and both individual and organizational impacts.

### 3.3.1.4 User satisfaction

The interplay of system quality, information quality and correct use leads to an effect on user satisfaction. Adverse inputs in either one of those areas can lead to a less than stellar user satisfaction rating, both within the temporal, process model and the causal model (Delone & Mclean, 2004). Within the latter, poor user satisfaction can negatively affect the rating of system quality, individual impact and the collective organizational impact.

### 3.3.1.5 Individual impact

The preceding tenets of the D&M IS Success model are procedurally related to and correlatively influence the final impact on the individual. Poor user satisfaction leads to decreased impact, while poor system or information quality reduces the perceived relevance rating of the information system as a whole (Delone & Mclean, 2004).

### 3.3.1.6 Organizational impact

The overall impact of an information system on an organization is resultant on the procedural effectiveness and causal relationships between all the other tenets of the IS Success model. Organizational impact is directly tied to organizational goals, and low or negative organisational impact can manifest in a myriad of ways. These include impacts on profit margins, human resource management, operational efficiency, financial viability and market dominance.

The authors argue that while both approaches to IS success are valid as separate schools of thoughts, the IS model can and should be understood as an integration of both models that is

contextually dependent on the system(s) in question (Delone & Mclean, 2004). In other words, it is both possible to design, deploy and evaluate the effectiveness of any given IS system based on the needs of the organization, the needs of the users and the relative weight of each aspect of the system (based on the pillars espoused above). This stance is best reflected in the updated depiction of the D&M IS Success Model. The updated (2002) version was formalized after a rigorous literature review carried out by the authors on other derivative studies, which had been released in the immediate decade after the model's first introduction (Delone & Mclean, 2004).

Firstly, a new element of the model, service quality, was added which addressed issues of reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy for the end user. This was drawn from the SERVQUAL metric of marketing literature, and was found by DeLone & McLean to fit in well with information systems. The new model further included intention to use as a companion to use itself, reasoning that increased user satisfaction led to a stronger intention to use, which would then lead to more use (Delone & Mclean, 2004). Another change was the grouping of both individual and organizational impacts into collective net benefits. Lastly, it visually denoted the covariance of the model and the different relationships that could be explored within it, as shown in Figure 21.

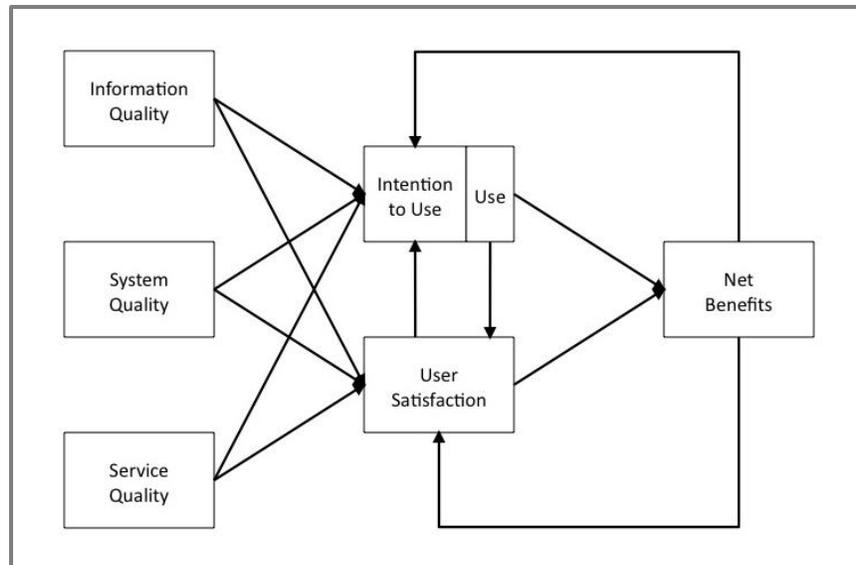


Figure 21: The updated D&M IS Success Model of 2002 (DeLone & McLean, 2004)

### 3.3.2 Adopting the IS Success Model for Social Media Success

The D&M IS Success model espouses a high correlation between system quality, information quality and use in order to influence user satisfaction and net benefits (DeLone & Mclean, 2004). The opportunities to port these correlations to the field of social media marketing and analytics are salient and warrant discussion. Prior to this study, limited evidence exists of a successful port of the D&M IS Success Model to the field of social media marketing in particular (Chang et al., 2018); and one of the major contributions of this study will be an extension of the updated DeLone & McLean Information System Success Model. Where appropriate, the model's tenets are explained two-fold; from a brand perspective, and from a user (or audience) perspective. While the motivations for both parties are similar, it is shown that the actual procedural and causal relationships between the tenets of the model are applied and experienced differently.

#### 3.3.2.1 System Quality as Channel Relevance

In the ported version of the IS Success Model, system quality can be regarded as the channel relevance rating that determines whether or not a brand will benefit from a specific social media platform. This is generally tied to the inherent characteristics of the platform; such as its geographical coverage, its audience demographic and its distinguishing features. Channel

relevance in this regard is also closely tied to brand goals. A B2B company, for instance, would rate the channel relevance of LinkedIn as higher than that of, say, Snapchat when it comes to achieving its organisational goals of lead generation, thought leadership establishment and sales-driven campaigns (Brennan & Croft, 2012). On the other hand, channel relevance for the individual is also closely tied to their explicit and implicit needs and wants. A young career professional may, to extend the example above, derive greater channel relevance from LinkedIn as a means of boosting their career prospects and connecting with other like-minded individuals in the industry. Put simply, channel relevance within the realm of social media marketing needs to see a match between brand and individual goals in order to achieve strong synchronicity.

#### 3.3.2.2 Information Quality as Messaging

The earlier-stated qualities of relevance, accuracy, conciseness, completeness, timeliness and usability still apply from a social media perspective. In short, brands need to put out relevant and valuable information on their selected channels of communication, and their audiences expect consistency with the same. Messaging from a brand perspective will determine the full extraction of channel relevance for the organisation, while an audience's use and user satisfaction will be directly impacted by the relevance of the messaging received.

#### 3.3.2.3 Service Quality

Service quality within the IS model relates to the manner in which brands render quality customer service to their customers and potential audiences. As has been explored in the literature review section, social media is increasingly being used to serve customers across temporal and geographical divides that bridge the gap between brand and consumer. The quality of this service with regards to empathy, reliability and responsiveness as manifested in the messaging, is of utmost importance to brands seeking to improve their presence on social media.

#### 3.3.2.4 Use: Platform Engagement & Analytics

Social media platforms offer a plethora of features, and the way these features are leveraged constitutes the use factor for both brands and audiences. The content or 'messaging' formats,

execution options and engagement affordances all constitute the permissible use cases of the platforms selected. Continuing with our example, a brand may ‘use’ the live video capabilities of LinkedIn to disseminate valuable information on a new offering to their audience, who would join in the conversation on their devices with relevant questions about onboarding and pricing (Safko & Brake, 2009). From a brand perspective, brands can leverage the power of analytics and social media dashboards to understand their user more, and directly improve the quality of their messaging. Use limitations can refer to image dimensions, text density, maximum numbers of followers, unicast or broadcast engagement capabilities, and more.

#### 3.3.2.5 User Satisfaction

Upon a matching of channel relevance for both brands and audiences, the tenet of user satisfaction in the realm of social media directly relates to messaging relevance and use. Relevant, timely and valuable content delivered in an engaging and interactive manner drives up user satisfaction for both parties, both procedurally and causally. Conversely, any combination of low channel relevance, non-engaging content, poor service quality and sub-optimum platform use invariably leads to low user satisfaction.

#### 3.3.2.6 Net Benefits

The net benefits of social media accrue when all pillars of the success model are taking into consideration both procedurally, where channel relevance, messaging and service quality are synchronized for maximum use and user satisfaction; and causally, where improving the messaging on an otherwise relevant channel to boost service quality can greatly improve engagement rates (use) and individual impact. For the individual, a greater brand affinity and likelihood of recommendation both count as desirable individual impacts. The impact for the brand comes in the form of more streamlined advertising workflows, greater audience growth and overall better ROI. It also leads to an improvement of the organization’s standing within the social media maturity level. Figure 22 showcases this adaptation in graphical format.

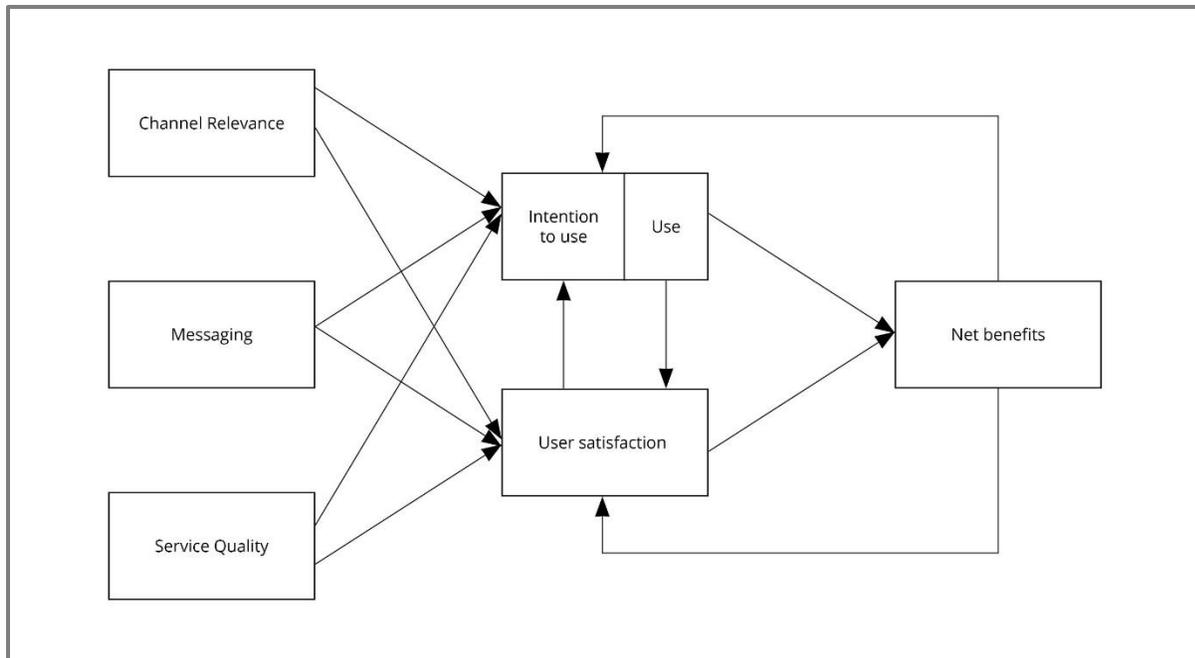


Figure 22: Adaptation of D&S IS SM to social media

### 3.3.3 Research Paradigm

This study was grounded in the pragmatist paradigm of information science research. Being a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research, it skirts round the contentious issues of truth and reality that plague positivist research and focuses instead on “what works best” from an ontological and epistemological point of view (Anderson, 2013). This is particularly well-suited to industries that require practical solutions to real, fast-evolving problems.

Key features of this paradigm include the use of interventions, empirical research carried out within contextual environments, the formation of partnerships between researchers and practitioners to derive practical solutions to real-world problems, as well as the design and development of theoretical principles or frameworks (Anderson, 2013). As such, its relevance to a study about a rapidly changing phenomenon like social media strategy cannot be overstated.

A mixed method approach to data collection was employed, leveraging both quantitative and qualitative methods of garnering data from both users and brands. The data was then

thematically analysed to draw inferences and derive deeper meaning that could influence the creation of a social media marketing and analytics framework for Namibian SMEs.

### 3.3.4 Secondary data analysis

Secondary data analysis is the process of analysing previously collected third party data (Clarke & Cossette, 2000; Doolan & Froelicher, 2009). This could be data from previous researchers, public records, or real-time data displayed in specialized dashboards or outlets. It is an effective means of data collection where primary data collection might be too costly or infeasible to obtain (McArt & McDougal, 2007; Rew, Koniak-Griffin, Lewis, Miles, & O'Sullivan, 2000). Data integrity is paramount when sourcing secondary data, as the original data might not have been collected in a systematic or rigorous manner; might not have been collected for the currently intended purpose; may not address the research questions of the researcher's current study; and/or may not clearly reveal any definitive cause and effect (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Clarke & Cossette, 2000). From a pragmatist point of view, secondary data analysis in social media allows for immediate, contextual feedback on social media strategy, highlights on what is working, and course correction on what needs improvement. In this study, descriptive data analysis was applied to secondary data collected from both the workshops and the brand interventions carried out with entities from different industries.

### 3.3.5 Focus group research

Focus group research involves bringing in a small group of participants into one location and having an open discussion on a phenomenon for a set period of time (Grønkjær, Curtis, de Crespigny, & Delmar, 2011). This discussion is moderated and led by the research facilitator, who sets a given agenda, initiates the group discussion and ensures full coverage and representation of all views. Through this, it is hoped that a holistic comprehension of the problem at hand can be formulated, based on the comments and experiences of the group participants. As with the case study approach, a lack of controls means that internal validity cannot be established, and the findings may not be generalizable to other settings due to the limited nature of the sample size (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In this research, this was executed through workshops that were held

on a weekly basis involving SME and brand owners from different fields. From a pragmatist point of view, the establishment of these relationships between researcher and practitioner are necessary to attain the goal of unearthing best-practice strategies within social media marketing and analytics.

### 3.4 Methodology Approach

Armed with this mixed-method approach, this study aimed to use different data touchpoints to garner information on achieving the key element of our main objective: designing a formalized social media marketing and analytics framework to improve BI and brand building for Namibian SMEs. The brand intervention aspect allowed us to gain a deeper look in how these strategies played out on a larger scale by studying the social media management efforts of larger organizations with more resources and complex business goals. The analytics dashboards of these case studies provided secondary data upon which the different strategies deployed over the course of the case studies could be observed, tracked, tweaked, tested and reported on. And finally, the focus group approach gave us insights into what small businesses want, who the decision makers are in these businesses, how the frameworks were working for them as well as where in their businesses they were deploying specific aspects of these frameworks.

### 3.5 Sampling

The first stage of data collection was the eliciting of participants' views on social media marketing, brand-building, challenges faced and strategies theretofore implemented. This took the form of a workshop that ran for several weeks on a regular basis (twice a week). The participants for the workshop were gathered through non-probabilistic convenience and snowball sampling in the form of a public call for participants on social media channels (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Emerson, 2015). This led to applications by 51 interested parties (some referred by early respondents) who had varying knowledge of social media marketing and who were facing different marketing-related challenges within their business entities. The workshops ran for 5 weeks and were conducted twice a week, with an average attendance of 20 to 25 business owners per session. An audit form was given to the participants in the first workshop session to

gauge several metrics, including their business mission and vision, their self-reported competitor following and their social media goals. The participants hailed from several different fields, as below:

- Fashion design (2 participants)
- Makeup (2 participants)
- Modelling (2 participants)
- Nail care (2 participants)
- Photography (3 participants)
- Event management (2 participants)
- Music (3 participants)
- Jewelry (1 participant)
- Hair care (2 participants)
- Childcare (1 participant)
- Videography (1 participant)

The workshops made use of surveys, interviews, open discussion and observation of the learnings being implemented on the participants' social media channels, through secondary data analysis of their channel insights.

The second stage involved a brand intervention of several large and established organizations: a local financial services provider, a payment app, a telecoms provider, a health insurance provider, an annual event and a food conglomerate with 3 FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) brands. This phase involved close daily, weekly and monthly involvement in the social media management of the brands, in comparison to their respective competitors. Data was collected and monitored on a daily basis through various social media dashboards, with new campaigns being launched, tested and gauged for effectiveness throughout the study. Quantitative metrics were relied on to ascertain the effectiveness of different strategies, and there were regular

interviews and open discussions with the client-side custodians of the social channels, whose insights were sought as to what challenges were being faced and what solutions were to be trialled. Lastly, older analytics data was considered during analysis to track trends and determine the consistency of campaign concepts and executions in driving engagement and generating valuable leads.

The third leg of the research involved an online survey that was disseminated via various social media and messaging platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. Sampling was randomized for that phase of the research.

The primary goal of this research was to determine the effects and efficacy of specific marketing and advertising campaign executions on the overall BI of the entities involved. An adapted structural cycle was settled on (Murdough, 2009) that would aid in the research, as shown in Figure 23. To test the results of this cycle, several metrics were established that would serve as benchmarks of campaign results, as shown in Figure 24.



Figure 23: Campaign design and data collection structure

The data collection metric matrix looked as follows:

Goal	Age Range & Gender	Duration of campaign	Placements & Devices
Impressions	Engagement Rate	Cost per metric/action	Total spend

Figure 24: Data collection matrix

A client-side goal was first defined in the form of a brief, which would guide strategy and execution. This brief would provide direction on the age ranges and demographics to target, as well as the platforms they were to be targeted on. The campaign would then be launched on the

respective platform with certain placements, with metrics such as the number of impressions being tracked over the lifetime of the campaign. The engagement rate was then calculated as a percentage of actions taken by the intended audience with respect to the total number of impressions, and the cost per action was obtained from the analytics dashboard in relation to the total amount spent on the campaign.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of data from social media research is made easier thanks to certain facets that characterize it. These included the easy access to vast amounts of data, the date-categorized nature of this data (allowing for longitudinal observations), and the ability to set parameters within the data in order to determine causation and correlation between specific variables (Batrinca & Treleaven, 2015). Furthermore, the inbuilt analytics dashboards of most social media platforms often provide pre-analysed, segmented and categorized data visualization, making it easier to draw insights from collected user data (Geho, 2012; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). This data can be subdivided into historic (previously stored) data sets and real-time feeds, which can further be downloaded files containing comma-separated values (CSVs).

Social media analytics requires collected data to be cleaned in order to ensure accuracy, relevance and ease of communication to relevant stakeholders. This involves finding and eliminating duplicates, correcting spelling errors, finding and replacing text, fixing table labels, fixing date and time parameters, transforming and rearranging columns, rows and table data, and more. This is all done so as to identify and correct missing, incorrect and/or inconsistent data. This cleaned data then needs to be “tagged” with labels pertaining to identified patterns within the data, in order to imbue the raw information with meaning.

Data analysis in this research was guided by latent thematic analysis. This method allows for data collected to be analysed for inferences and deeper meaning that could influence the creation of a social media marketing and analytics framework for Namibian SMEs (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). In analysing the interview data for this research, thematic summaries from small- to large-scale participating entities were noted down and categorised accordingly so that main ideas and

themes could emerge. These summaries allowed for broad differences and similarities in challenges being faced by the various entities to be revealed (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). In light of the pragmatist nature of the study, all of this afforded the researcher a near real-time opportunity to gauge what worked and what didn't, what could be improved and what could be replaced. It also delivered incisive insights into the brand-moulding and brand-breaking strategies employed by local institutions to increase their overall audience size, maintain visibility and ultimately boost sales. Table 10 presents a summary of the applied research methods and outputs in this study.

Table 10: Summary of applied research methods and outputs

Step	Theory/Paradigm	Method	Results/Output	
1	Literature review	-	Secondary Data analysis	Overview of social media methods Better understanding of Namibian social media landscape
2	Workshop	Pragmatist	Observation	Classification and categorization of SMEs Collation of social media goals from participants
3	Review of larger brands' social media campaigns	Pragmatist	Secondary Data Analysis	Analysis of demographical information and brand identity  Implementation of demographical information and brand identity into subsequent campaigns to gauge engagement and audience response  Analysis of engagement patterns to determine ROI and attainment rate of set KPIs
4	Public access questionnaire	Thematic Analysis	Questionnaire	Litmus test of public perception on SMA and self-reported general social media competence

### 3.7 Risk/Feasibility Analysis and Ethical Considerations

Reliable internet access on the part of the participants was required to ensure consistent and regular assessment of social media strategies in time for the periodic assessments (i.e. weekly, monthly and quarterly). As for posterity and reference purposes, documents related to this research were to be kept by the researcher for a period of two years from the date of the research conclusion, and any participant information has been kept confidential except where otherwise permitted. Participation in the study could be withdrawn at any time due to its voluntary nature. This however hampered research efforts by not only reducing the overall sample size as time

progressed, but also negating the possibility of periodical analytics collection from the participants.

In the next section and chapter, the results of the data collection are shown and subsequently discussed.

### 3.8 Data Collection: Workshops

The first phase of the data collection process involved bi-weekly workshops that hosted SME owners from different industries. The sampling process was through non-probabilistic convenience and snowball sampling in the form of a public call for participants on social media channels (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Cleary et al., 2014). There was a total of 50 participants, with class attendance averaging above 20 participants a session.

A sign-up questionnaire was administered to each participant to determine a number of factors. These included:

- Field of practice
- Active social media platforms being utilized
- Knowledge of competitors
- Current size of social media following
- Expected follower growth rate

The workshops were held over a number of weeks in the months of November and December 2017, and the content was determined by the researcher's observations on certain lacking facets of typical social media campaigns in the country over the years. Open dialogue with other practitioners in the field yielded further avenues of exploration that were built into the workshop structure. A breakdown of the sessions is presented below.

### 3.8.1 First session (audits)

The first session involved getting the participants to familiarize themselves with each other and with each of their respective businesses. During this session, a social media audit was also completed by each participant. This audit form contained sections pertaining to the nature of the business, the current number of followers, their perceived competitors' following as well as future expectations of growth on their pages.

### 3.8.2 Second session (story)

The second workshop session explored the concept of storytelling in social media. Storytelling has a powerful impact on building brand affinity among consumers. Understanding this concept is paramount in order for SMEs to effectively compete in a crowded market (Forman, 2013; Lundqvist et al., 2013). Humanizing a brand allows it to better engage its customers, leading to a more personalized experience and reducing the risk of being viewed as an impassionate corporate entity. The session set out to elicit the "story" that each brand was built on – a set of missions, visions and values that they operated with.

### 3.8.3 Third session (analytics)

The third workshop explored the concept of analytics, which involves using data to understand a brand's audience and tracking the performance of campaigns through the in-built dashboards of various social media platforms. Understanding the demographical makeup of a brand's consumer audience is key to crafting effective and efficient campaign concepts, and participants were guided through a process of determining who it is they were actually speaking to with their products, the services they offered and ultimately the brand messaging they were putting out (Chen & Nath, 2017; Kunc & O'Brien, 2018).

At the end of the session, participants were tasked with setting up weekly analytics reports for review, although submissions were sporadic and thus a full picture of the progress of their respective campaigns could not be formed.

### 3.8.4 Fourth session (photography)

Startups face an important challenge during the early marketing stages. Bringing a new product or service into the consciousness of the target consumer necessitates compelling visuals (in the form of photography, product packaging, and graphic design) in order to effectively sell the product's unique value proposition (Krishna, Cian, & Sokolova, 2016; Pieters & Batra, 2010). During the fourth session of the social media marketing workshops, participants were introduced to the basic tenets of effective photography. Topics included lighting, framing, composition and editing, with the latter aspect being taught through powerful mobile apps that eschewed the need for PCs and improved the social media content creation workflow of small business owners.

Participants were also given a brief primer on the types and features of modern DSLRs, including their features and price-points. At the end of the session, participants were assigned the task of capturing stills of their products or services in use, for deployment on their respective social media platforms.

### 3.8.5 Fifth session (graphic design)

Following on the general theme of crafting effective visuals, the fifth workshop focused on perfecting the visual aesthetics of a brand's marketing communications through graphic design. Previous research has shown that a customer's reaction to the graphic design output of a brand affects their overall perception of that brand (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Barnard, 2013). The tenets of good graphic design espoused to the participants included the use of negative space, element composition and layout, as well as the selection of appropriate fonts and colours.

Furthermore, good design should answer the 7 W's: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How and How Much. As much as possible, participants were instructed to avoid leaving "information gaps" in their graphical communications that might prompt customers to (unnecessarily) seek more information. The amalgamation of these best practices would thus result in increased engagement with customers. At the end of the session, participants were assigned the task of creating rate cards and product catalogues using Canva, an online graphic design tool with a shallow learning curve and pre-made templates.

### 3.8.6 Sixth session (ad creation and placement)

The ability to reach a lot of targeted people at the same time, at an affordable price, has always been a primary goal for brands and marketers. One powerful tool that lets fledgling brands take advantage of an already large and engaged network is social media advertising. As already seen in previous chapters, social media platforms come with in-built dashboards that allow for more accurate targeting of brand campaigns to appropriate audiences. In this session, participants were introduced to the Facebook advertising tool. Further explored was how to segment audiences, how to select the right budgets, how to include (or exclude) certain interests from the audience and how to specify the exact geographical locations that the participating brands wanted to run their adverts in.

Compared to traditional marketing channels, social media advertising offers low rates and the ability to cross-advertise on different channels, such as with Facebook and Instagram (Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). At the end of the session, participants were tasked with creating and running adverts on Facebook, allocating a budget to the campaign and tracking the reach and engagement on those campaigns. In the next chapter, the findings from the data collection are presented.

# Chapter 4: Findings

The previous chapter explored how the data was collected from participants as well as which channels and instruments were used to garner that data. In this chapter, the findings are methodically presented and discussed.

## 4.1 Workshops

The first session involved getting the participants to familiarize themselves with each other and with each of their respective businesses. The breakdown of attendees was as follows:

*Table 11: Social media workshop participant breakdown*

Business Name	Industry	Gender(s) of owner	Message / Mission / Vision / Values	Target audience
<b>Vaultz Magazine</b>	Digital Journalism	m	Promote young male creatives by embodying authenticity, creativity and humanity	Young black male readers, creatives, entrepreneurs, advertisers, employers and university students
<b>DannyK</b>	Radio & Fashion	m	To gain a strong listenership and skills in radio presenting, and to become the brand ambassador for large brands	Radio stations & photographers, retail brands, fashion designers
<b>Flawless Photography</b>	Photography	f	To capture memorable moments that make clients more comfortable	Families, teenagers, event organizers
<b>Ubuntu Modelling Agency</b>	Fashion, Entertainment, Lifestyle	m	To offer representation for local models and build a professional support base	Designers, Brands, Ad Agencies
<b>Fiddy The Rapper</b>	Music, Arts, Culture	m	Using music to speak out on challenging issues on behalf of those who can't	Ages 15-25, Music lovers, Rap enthusiasts
<b>Brown Sugar Parties</b>	Events Management	f	Providing fun-filled, colourful and child-friendly environments for little ones to enjoy an exciting and memorable birthday party, through experience, excellent coordination and planning	Busy parents aged 20 - 70 and children aged 0 - 12
<b>Rubinstein Chess Academy</b>	Sport/Gaming, Retail	m	To use chess as a life-changing tool, become Namibia's leading chess merchandiser and use our audience to market other brands	School going children, working class professionals, corporates and NGOs

<b>Namibian Goddess Image Consultancy</b>	Beauty & Image Consulting	f	Empowering women and teenage girls by establishing an environment that allows women to regain their self-confidence and live past trauma.	Women and teenage girls with self-esteem issues and abusive backgrounds (13 - 60)
<b>X-Eminence</b>	Entertainment	f	To create the biggest and most memorable events, and to learn and grow through passion, professionalism and excitement	Working professionals 18+
<b>Tenya Mobile Nail Tech</b>	Beauty	f	To provide the highest level of customer service in order to establish a long-lasting relationship of trust and commitment with each client	Young adults
<b>Fluffy Mallows</b>	Confections	f	To become a sustainable business that offers products loved by clients.	Kiddie party planners, kids, teens, and adults who enjoy sweet treats
<b>Pamwe Travel and Tours</b>	Travel	f	To create awareness for the need to travel and to be the leading travel management company with a recognized and sought-after service offering, by recruiting dedicated professionals and equipping them with the best technology and training to provide high-quality service through the values of integrity, care, hard work and honesty	Government officials, corporate companies, holiday makers, business people, students and families
<b>Global Poetry</b>	Poetry	f	To create and expand awareness of poetry	Everyone above reading age
<b>Ann Singer</b>	Music	f	Get more people to listen to my music	M/F 16 - 45
<b>Maggy's Bakery</b>	Pastries	m	-	Individuals, corporates, parents and couples in Ongwediva
<b>K. Mwatange Photography</b>	Photography	m	Giving clients unique memories to cherish for a lifetime	Private clients as well as people in the media, fashion, events management industries.
<b>Lexious</b>	B2B Training	f	To inspire quality and purposeful exchanges through good service quality, business integrity, efficiency, friendliness and simplicity	Businesses and individuals
<b>Gosto Caro Boutique</b>	Fashion	f	To be the top seller in workplace clothing for women	Females 18-45

<b>Cum Laude Photography</b>	Photography	m	To give the best shoots as professionally as possible.	Wedding, birthday and event-throwing clients
<b>Construction &amp; Mining Magazine</b>	Media	f	Ensure expansion of clients' businesses through reportage of significant events and developments in the world of construction and mining	Audiences in the mining, construction, architecture, energy, rail/road, finance, research, insurance, environmental and health & safety industries.
<b>Crowd Chaos</b>	Music	m	To be the best live singer in Namibia with a magnificent stage appearance and captivating character	18 - 35
<b>Römi</b>	Entertainment	f	To promote positivity and optimism, to explore my lyrical skill and create relatable music	Youth 13 - 30

During this session, a social media audit was also completed by each participant. This audit form contained sections pertaining to the nature of the business, the current number of followers, their perceived competitors' following as well as future expectations of growth on their pages. Out of a total of 22 submitted self-audits:

- 10 of them (45%) had followings of up to 1000 followers
- 3 of them (13.6%) had between 1001 and 2000 followers
- 2 of them (9%) had between 2001 and 3000 followers
- 2 brands (9%) had between 4001 and 5000 followers, and
- 2 brands (9%) had more than 5000 followers

Three participating brands did not submit any audits. Figure 25 and Table 12 both showcase the results of this distribution in graphical and tabular format, respectively.

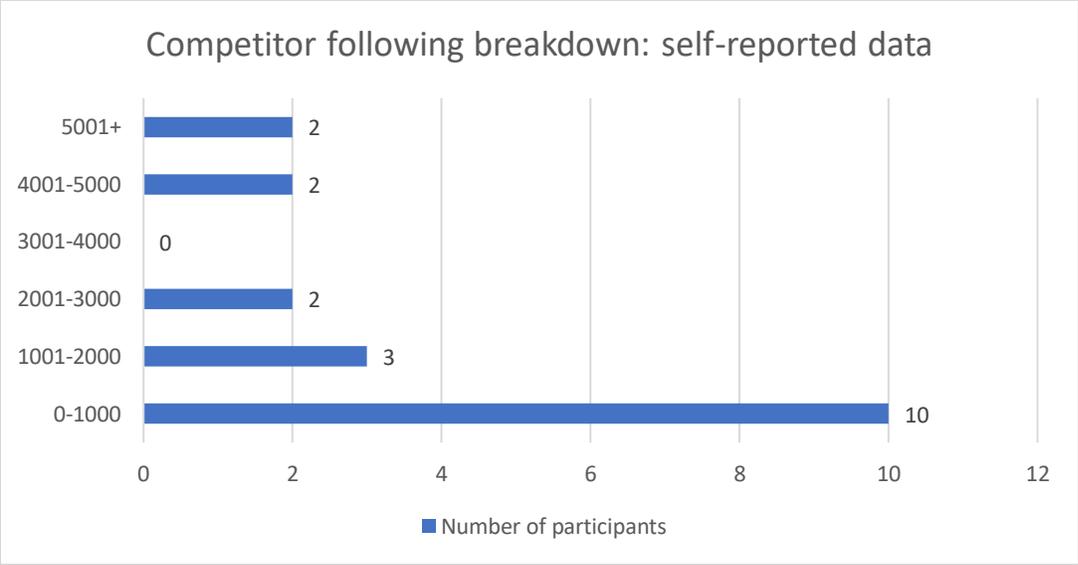


Figure 25: Competitor following breakdown: self-reported data

Table 12: Self-reported brand audits

Business Name	Self-Reported Brand Audit					TOTAL	Branded?	Automated?
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Snapchat	YouTube/ Other			
Vaultz Magazine	28	105	120	0	0	253	y	n
DannyK	0	1,602	95	0	0	1,697	y	n
Flawless Photography	808	0	0	0	0	808	n	n
Ubuntu Modelling Agency	224	650	-	0	0	874	y	n
Fiddy The Rapper	2,603	3,781	300	300	0	6,984	n	n
Brown Sugar Parties	1,400	535	0	0	0	1,935	y	n
Rubinstein Chess Academy	391	353	0	0	0	744	y	n
Namibian Goddess Image Consultancy	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
X-Eminence	737	1,287	0	0	0	2,024	y	n
Tenya Mobile Nail Tech	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
Fluffy Mallows	181	254	11	0	0	446	y	n
Pamwe Travel and Tours	140	0	0	0	0	140	y	n
Global Poetry	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
Ann Singer	19,200	11,200	275	0	420	31,095	n	n
Maggy's Bakery	21	184	0	0	0	205	y	n
K. Mwatange Photography	652	453	0	0	0	1,105	y	n
Lexious	23	0	0	0	0	23	y	n
Gosto Caro Boutique	116	60	0	0	0	176	n	n
Cum Laude Photography	0	450	0	0	0	450	y	n
Construction & Mining Magazine	2,682	20	57	0	0	2,759	y	n
Crowd Chaos	200	4,487	0	0	0	4,687	y	n
Römi	809	1,547	1,904	0	46	4,306	y	n

The participants further carried out basic market research on their competitors. 82% had competitors who had more followers, while 18% had more followers than their current competition. This is shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Self-reported competitor audit

Self-Reported Competitor Audit								
Business Name	Competitor 1	Competitor or 1 Total Following	Competitor 2	Competitor or 2 Total Following	Competitor 3	Competitor or 3 Total Following	Total competitor or following	Participant's following (compared to competitor's) is:
Vaultz Magazine	Monochrome	4,430	-	0	-	0	4,430	SMALLER
DannyK	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	BIGGER
Flawless Photography	Legit Rocks Photography	1,260	V-Classic Photography	5,000	0	0	6,260	SMALLER
Ubuntu Modelling Agency	Space Models	1,750	Pro Models Africa	58,600	Graphic Space	1,200	61,550	SMALLER
Fiddy The Rapper	Römi	2,357	KP Illest	10,389	Lioness	2,688	15,434	SMALLER
Brown Sugar Parties	Wakandume Trading	5,800	LMTE Kiddies	3,000	Fairy Wishes	1,362	10,162	SMALLER
Rubinstein Chess Academy	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	BIGGER
Namibian Goddess Image Consultancy	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	SMALLER
X-Eminence	Spix Productions	4,137	-	0	-	0	4,137	SMALLER
Tenya Mobile Nail Tech	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	SMALLER

Fluffy Mallows	Mallow & Marsh (UK)	13,635	Snackapade Smashmallow (USA)	14,100	Madysen's Marshmallows (USA)	2,870	30,605	SMALLER
Pamwe Travel and Tours	Independent agents and agencies	0	-	0	-	0	0	BIGGER
Global Poetry	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	SMALLER
Ann Singer	Amanda Black	690,300	Lira	1,371,000	-	0	2,061,300	SMALLER
Maggy's Bakery	Lili's Cakes	1,244	Phil's Cakes	54	-	0	1,298	SMALLER
K. Mwatange Photography	Lorraine Alberto Photography	19,900	Christian Stiebahl Photography	4,700	Black Pearl Worldwide	4,717	29,317	SMALLER
Lexious	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	BIGGER
Gosto Caro Boutique	Uluchi Boutique	1,000	Jchristiality	20,000	-	0	21,000	SMALLER
Cum Laude Photography	Mo Shé Media	2,921	Kashi Mwatange Photography	1,150	-	0	4,071	SMALLER
Construction & Mining Magazine	Launch Magazine	3,700	House Finder Namibia	7,600	-	0	11,300	SMALLER
Crowd Chaos	Reggie Films	15,000	-	0	-	0	15,000	SMALLER
Römi	Lioness	4,371	KP Illest	11,800	Angel Haze	561,000	577,171	SMALLER

## 4.2 Brand Interventions

The second phase involved brand interventions of several large brands over a one-year period. These included a financial services provider, a payment app, a telecoms provider, a health insurance provider, an annual event and a food conglomerate that owned three FMCG (Fast

Moving Consumer Goods) brands specializing in fresh chicken, frozen chicken and pasta. All the brands were locally based and had dedicated marketing budgets with digital components, thus providing an invaluable lens through which the campaign planning process could be observed. As an active member of the campaign planning process, an element of researcher bias possibly played a part in influencing the data collection process (Maestrini, Luzzini, Shani, & Canterino, 2016; Mills, 2000) and this was partially minimized by triangulation through literature review, elicitation of alternative explanations for observed phenomena, and solicitation of client and participant input in reviewing the results.

The following framework was used to guide data collection during these brand interventions. The effect of BI on campaign planning for each enterprise was studied, and the results then measured through dashboard and financial analytics to gauge effectiveness. A base set of metrics were thus collected before each campaign began, with a different set of metrics collected after the campaign ended and sorted against the base set. This process is illustrated in Figure 26 below.

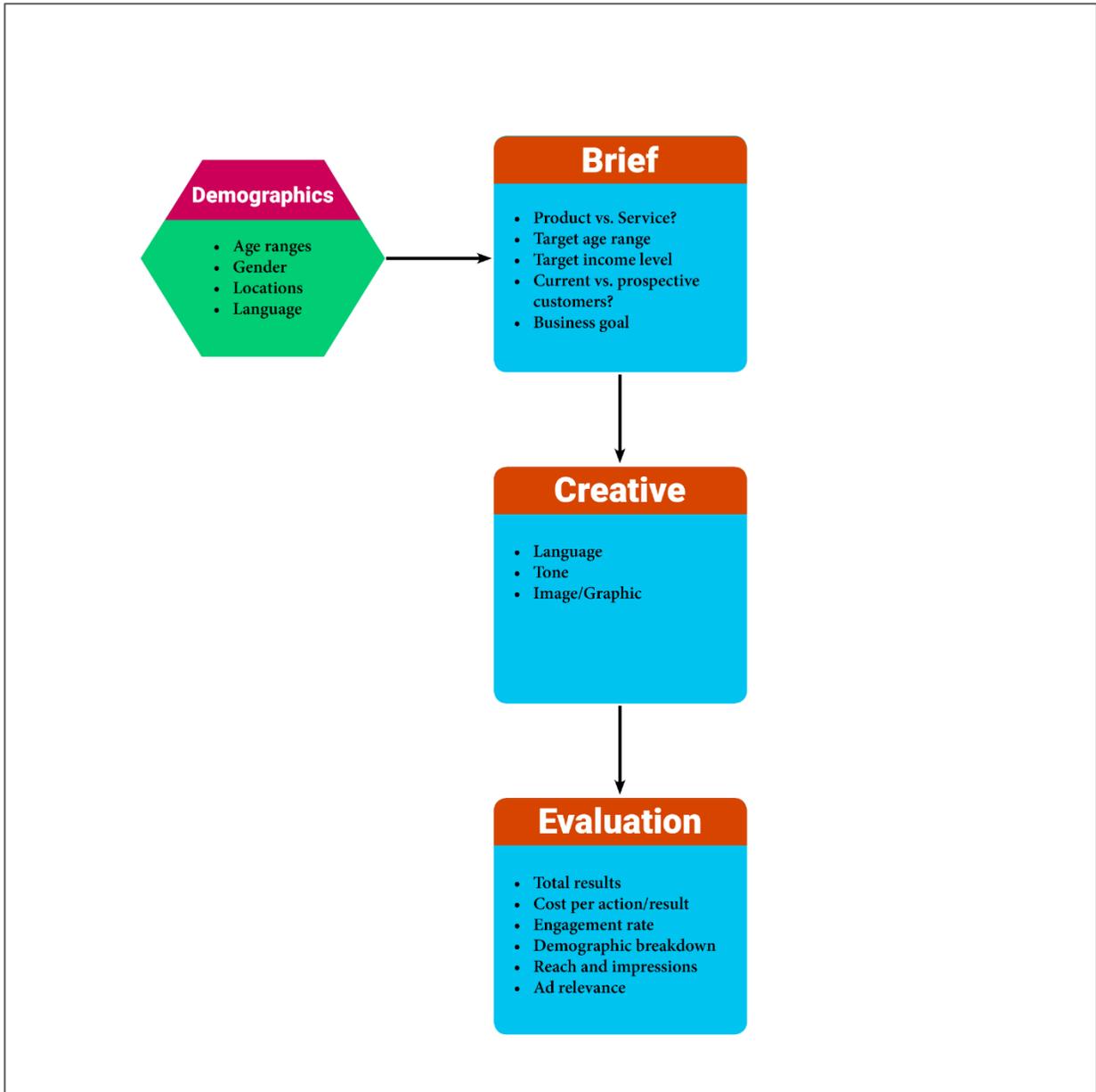


Figure 26: Campaign evaluation framework

Based on this framework, the estimated effectiveness of each campaign was able to be gauged against business metrics and determine areas for improvement. In the following section, a summarized breakdown of the data is provided.

#### 4.2.1 Number of campaigns per Page

In terms of industry variety, the social media campaigns of 8 different types of brands were explored. Three of them were food brands, one a telecommunications provider, another a bank, yet another a mobile payment app, one of them a health insurance provider and the last one an annual event. A total of 117 campaigns were analysed, spread out among the 8 brands (Figure 27). The most active brand was the bank, with a total of 78 different campaigns run on the Page across the lifetime period (Feb 1, 2017 to Sep 3, 2018). This was followed by the payment app, the health insurance provider and the chicken component of the FMCG brand, with the other brands trailing behind with only one or two ads over the lifetime period.

It is important to note that these were campaigns that were directly deployed by the ad agency through which the researcher collected the data. The reduced activity of some of the brands (most notably the food and event brands) is explained by the fact that these brands were managed by other corporate entities.

It is also important at this point to differentiate between campaigns and ads. A campaign is defined as an overall communications plan targeted towards a group of people, and may consist of several ads. An example of this would be a campaign that aims to sell toothpaste. Such a campaign may be broadly targeted towards males and females living in Namibia aged between 18 and 65. Separate ads may then be created under that campaign, with the first ad targeting males, the second ad targeting females, the third ad targeting those who live specifically in the Oshakati region, etc. As such, the number of campaigns may be less than the total number of ads, and the distinction will be made clear throughout the data analysis.

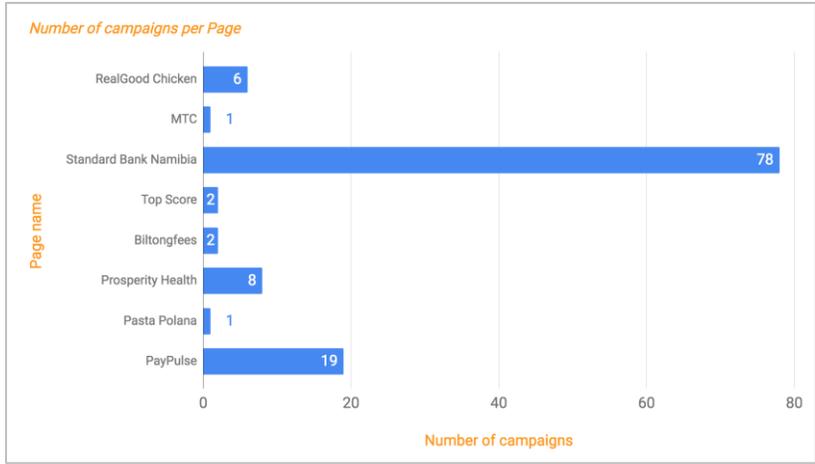


Figure 27: Number of Campaigns per Page

#### 4.2.2 Number of campaigns per objective

In terms of campaign goal distribution, the most frequently observed campaign goal was post engagement, where a brand aims to garner as many likes, comments and shares as possible for a specific post (Figure 28). This process is known as “boosting a post”, and allows for granular audience targeting, setting of the ad’s duration, and budget management. The next most-observed objectives were lead generation and video views, followed by link traffic and event RSVPs.

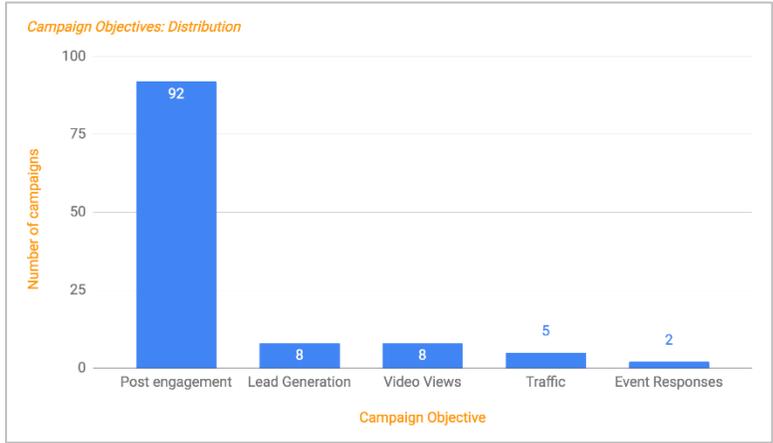


Figure 28: Campaign objectives distribution

### 4.2.3 Average Relevance Score by Creative Type

The relevance score is an estimated metric ranging from 1 to 10 that estimates how well an ad is resonating with its target audience, and is calculated after the ad receives more than 500 impressions. The higher the score, the more relevant the ad is deemed to be, and the more likely it becomes that the ad is shown to the target audience compared to other competing ads. Moreover, as the relevance score of an ad climbs up, the cost of delivering that ad to its set audience goes down. The relevance score of an ad is determined based on several factors, such as positive feedback (e.g. app installs, clicks and video views) or negative feedback (e.g. Someone clicking “I don't want to see this” on the ad) (Facebook Business, 2015; Finn, 2018). The highest relevance scores were attained by photo and link-based posts, as shown in Figure 29.

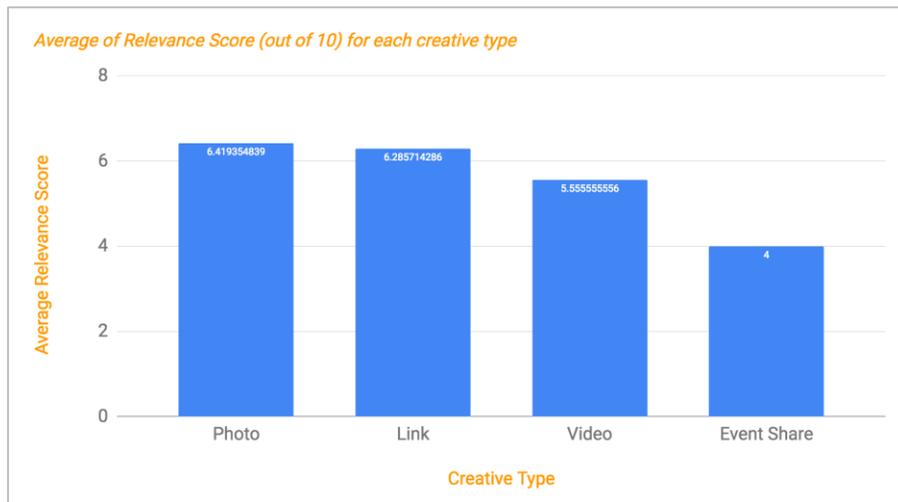


Figure 29: Average Relevance Score (out of 10) by creative type

### 4.2.4 Lifetime spend per campaign goal

In terms of lifetime spend, the most money was spent on driving traffic from social media to assorted websites belonging to the different brands (i.e. link clicks), as shown in Figure 30. This was followed by post engagement ads (i.e. boosting a specific post to get more engagement), Page Likes (boosting the Page itself to gain more followers) and lead generation (collecting contact information from potential leads). The least money was spent on video views.

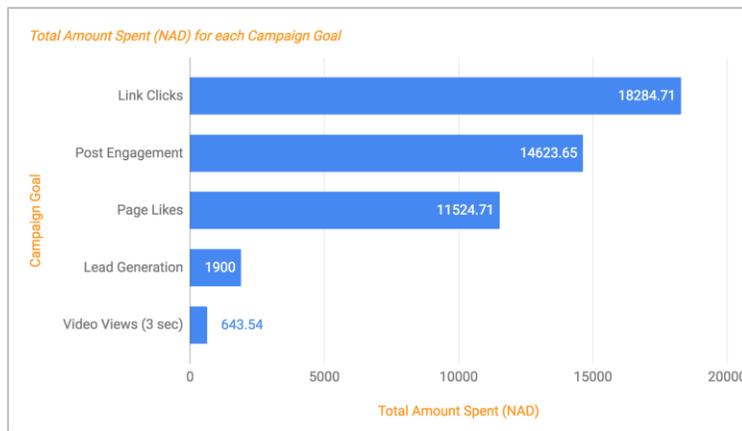


Figure 30: Lifetime spend per campaign goal

#### 4.2.5 Avg. cost per result per campaign goal

Depending on the campaign goal (e.g. link clicks or video views), the cost per result (CPR) is an averaged metric that determines the mean cost to achieve an instance of that goal. For example, if a web traffic campaign spent a total of NAD 10,000 over its lifetime and managed to drive 1,000 clicks to the designated website, then the average CPR is calculated by dividing the amount spent by the results achieved. In this example:

$$\text{NAD } 10,000 / 1,000 \text{ clicks} = \text{NAD } 10 \text{ per click}$$

Breaking down the lifetime spend of the campaigns in our sample set, it can be observed from Figure 31 that event RSVP collection drives cost the most money to advertise, followed by link clicks, Page likes and lead generations drives, in that order. On the other hand, the cheapest ads or campaigns to run were post engagement ads and video view campaigns.

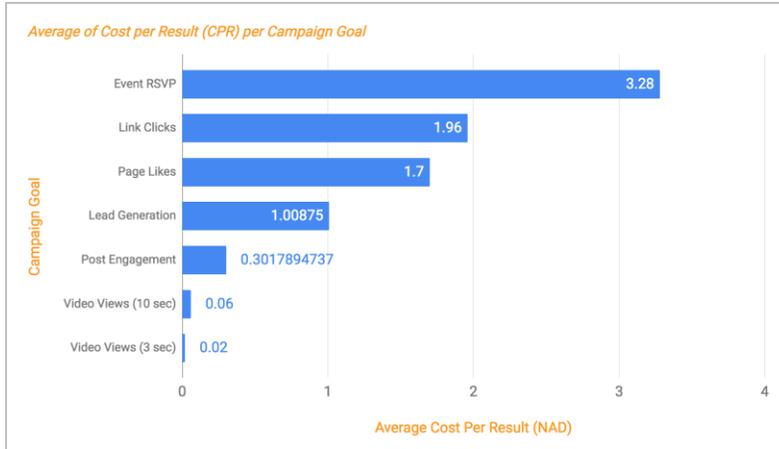


Figure 31: Average Cost Per Result per campaign goal

#### 4.2.6 Average Estimated Ad Recall Lift Rate (%)

As a measure of advertising effectiveness, ad recall refers to when respondents are exposed to an ad and then asked if they remember the ad at a later stage. With Facebook, the estimated ad recall lift rate (in terms of number of people) refers to the estimated number of people who would remember the ad after 2 days. The estimated ad recall rate is calculated based off of this figure and while this figure may be imprecise, it gives a good indicator of brand awareness efforts through Facebook ads (Facebook Business, 2016; McGaff, 2016). As can be seen from Figure 32, video ads achieved the highest estimated ad recall rate at 16.64%, followed by boosted posts.

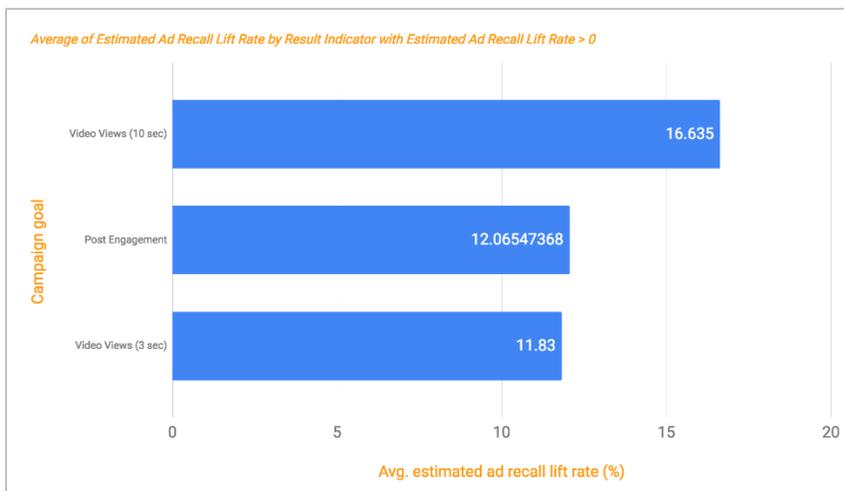


Figure 32: Average estimated ad recall lift rate (%)

#### 4.2.7 Average relevance score (out of 10) per campaign goal

In terms of campaign goals, the relevance score was highest for lead generation, video views and boosted posts at approximately 6.5 to 7 out of 10 for those three campaign goals (Figure 33).

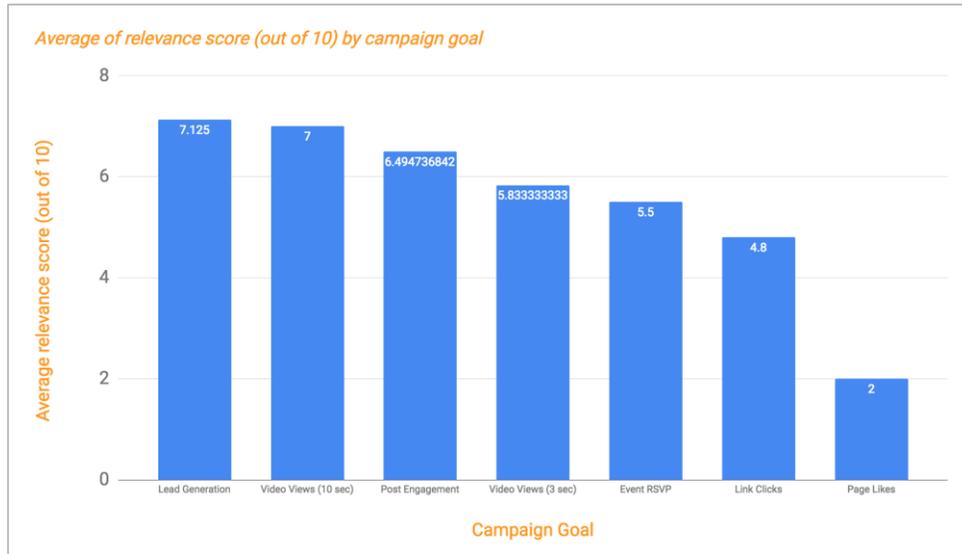


Figure 33: Average relevance score (out of 10) for each campaign goal

#### 4.2.8 Average of Cost per Page Like (NAD) per Page

In terms of average costs per Page like (i.e. the average cost of acquiring a new follower on a Facebook Page), Figure 34 shows that the annual event recorded the highest Cost Per Like (CPL) out of all the surveyed brands, at 68.46 cents (currency: NAD). This was followed by the payment app at 47.99 cents. By contrast, the average CPL across all Pages was 22.2 cents. The high CPLs for the top two results can be explained by the fact that they were still in their initial growth phases, and both of them targeted relatively niche audiences: the annual event targeted predominantly Afrikaans-speaking audiences, while the payment app attempted to attract the mobile payments crowd. At the other end of the graph, the telecoms brand came in with the lowest CPL at just 2.14 cents on the dollar. This can be attributed to the fact that it is a long-running, well-established brand with over 100,000 Facebook followers and over a million daily users (i.e. making calls, sending texts, browsing the net with mobile data, etc.).

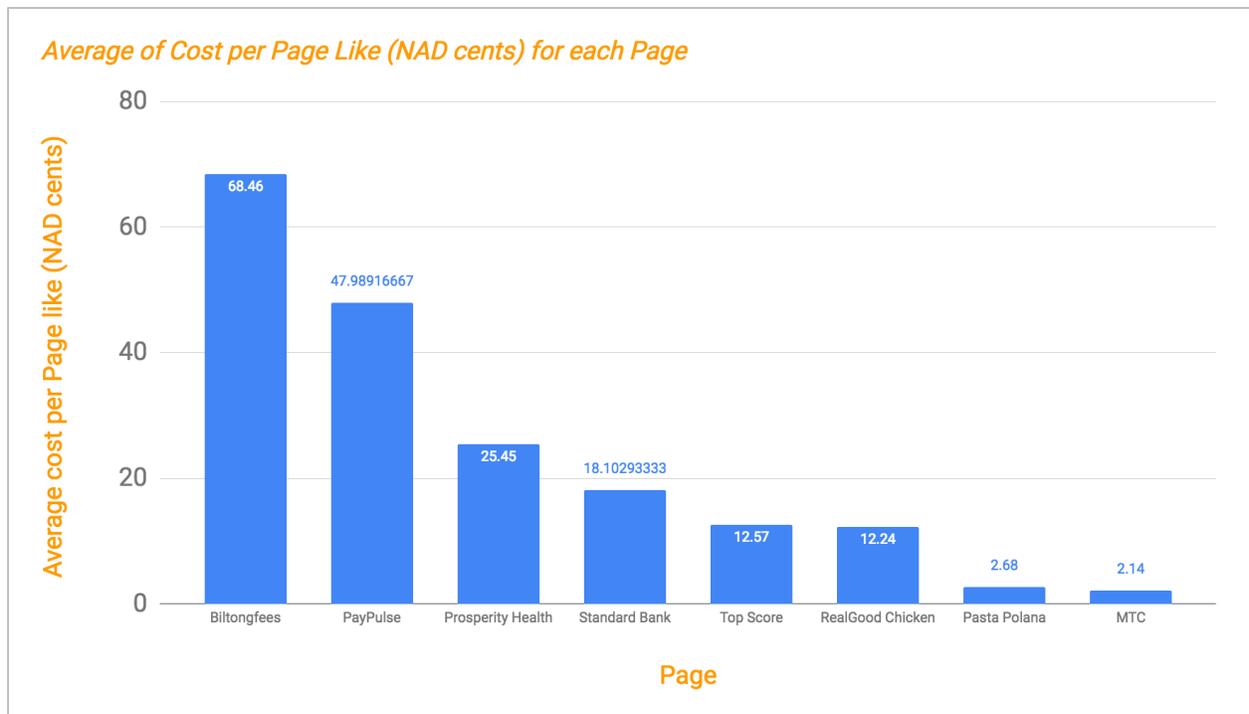


Figure 34: Average Cost-Per-Like (CPL) per Page

#### 4.2.9 Diminishing performance on long-term campaigns

One commonly observed phenomenon was the diminishing effectiveness of long-term ads being run on the Facebook platform. This was generally characterized by an initially high performance spike, followed by fluctuations in ad performance that inevitably ended with a lower performance rate than during commencement, as shown in Figures 35 - 38. Moreover, the cost per result rose parallel to the dropping ad effectiveness. By way of illustration, the longest running campaign in the set was that of the payment app, whose campaign goal was to garner more Page likes and, in the process, increase brand awareness. Over the period of March 02, 2018 to end of June 2018, the campaign performance sagged, likely due to audience saturation and/or frequency of impressions having being maximized; a phenomenon known as ad fatigue (Karlson, 2016; Parker, 2016). This effect was encountered with other campaigns as well from the sample Pages. Countering this phenomenon may involve periodic rotation of ad creatives used within a long-term campaign in order to maintain novelty, as well as the use of multiple ad sets within a campaign that are optimized through the split-testing feature of social media platforms.

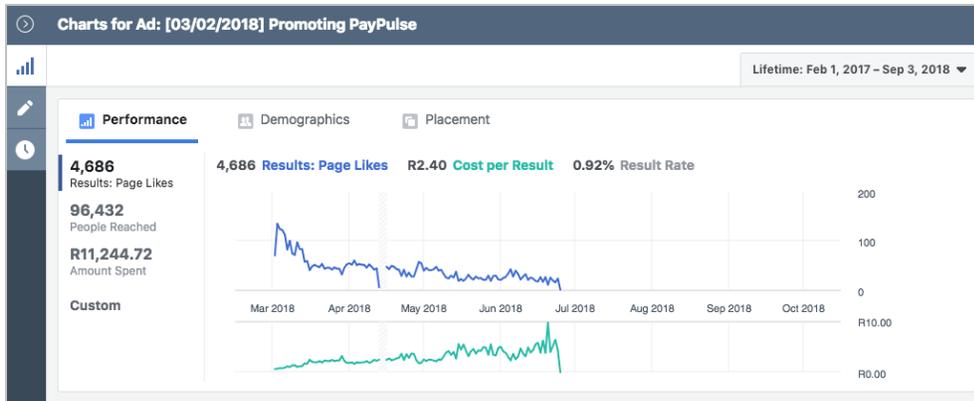


Figure 35: Diminishing ad performance – Page likes campaign



Figure 36: Diminishing ad performance – Link traffic campaign

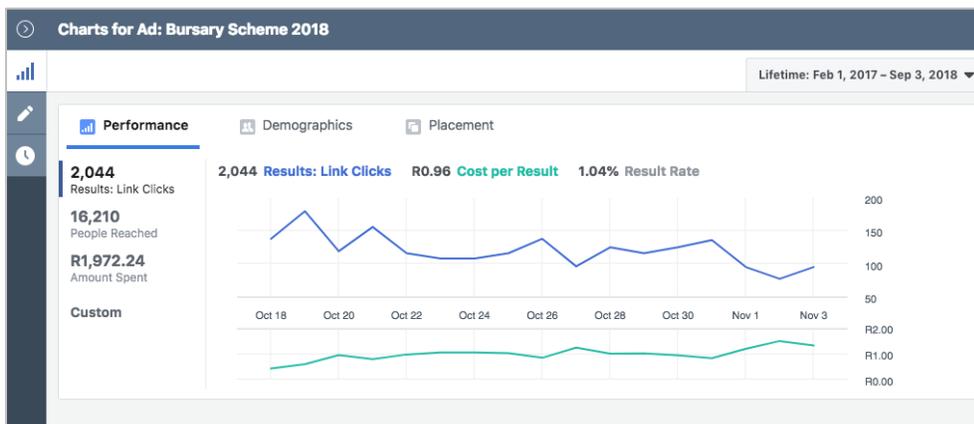


Figure 37: Diminishing ad performance – Bursary scheme link traffic campaign

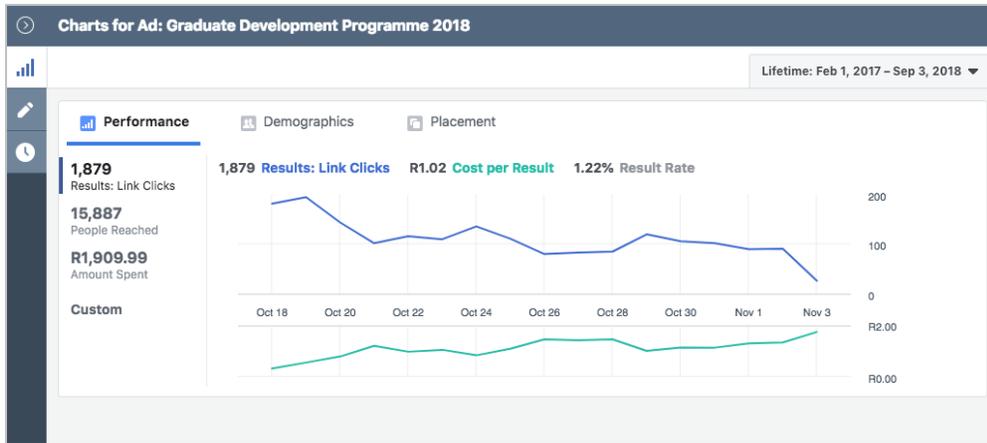


Figure 38: Diminishing ad performance – Graduate Development campaign

#### 4.2.10 Aggregated reach by gender over lifetime period

In terms of demographic reach effectiveness, a common thread running through the campaigns was that more females were reached through paid ads on Facebook, with the cost to reach females being lower than the cost to reach males. Naturally, there were some exceptions to this rule. Aggregating 200 campaigns over the lifetime period, it can be seen that approximately 49% of the total spend went towards reaching females, with males using up the remaining 51%. These figures are reversed when it comes to the total reach, with 51% of the reach being attributed to females and 49% of the reach to males. Greater campaign and results were further observed in the 25 – 34 age group, closely followed by the 18 – 24 age group. Figure 39 encapsulates these disparities in graphical format.

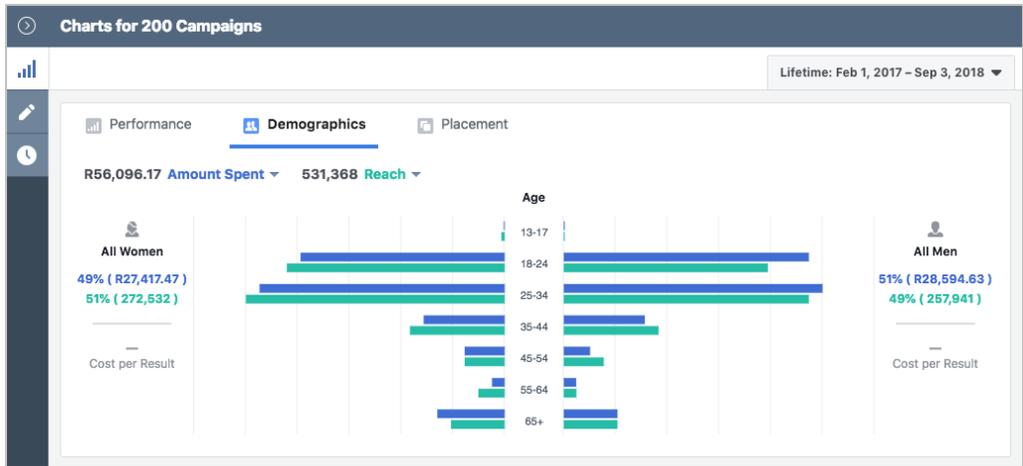


Figure 39: Demographic reach distribution by gender

#### 4.2.11 Performance distribution by gender for Page Likes objective

A total of 5 campaigns out of 200 (0.025%) were dedicated to garnering Page Likes, and of these, the results told a similar story as above: the most ad reach was attributed to female users, with females delivering the most results (i.e. more Page likes). Furthermore, it cost less money per result to reach females, with female users delivering Page likes at NAD 1.35 per Page like versus NAD 1.80 for males. In terms of age group performance, more reach and results were observed in the female 25 – 34 age group, as shown in Figure 40 below.

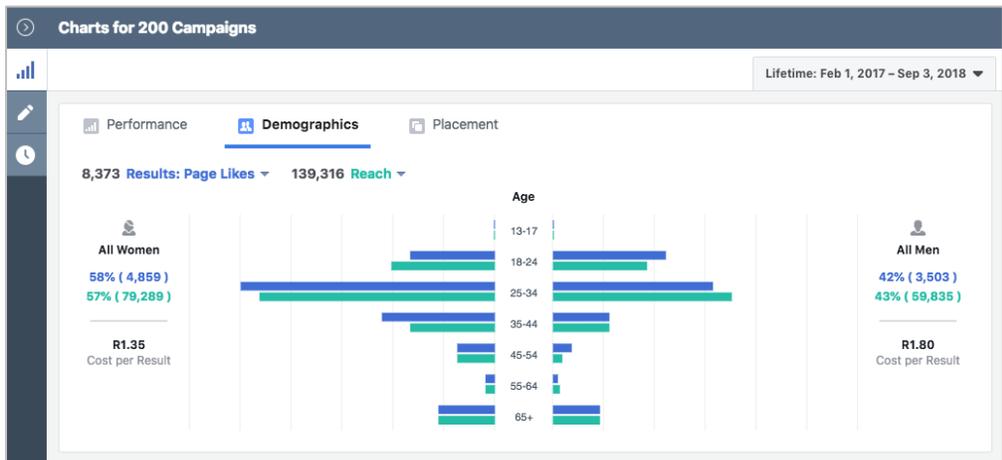


Figure 40: Performance distribution by gender: Page Likes objective

#### 4.2.12 Average cost and performance analysis: lead generation campaigns

When it came to lead generation campaigns, similar characteristics could be observed with regards to diminishing performance over time. A total of 3 campaigns (consisting of 8 individual ads across the board) were run between December 4, 2017 and August 29, 2018. More than 56,000 people were reached at an average cost of NAD 1.03 per lead and with a 0.51% result rate, as shown in Figure 41. The result rate is the percentage of results received out of all the views of an ad, and is calculated by dividing the results received by the total number of impressions for that ad (Facebook Business, 2018).



Figure 41: Average cost & performance analysis: lead generation campaigns

#### 4.2.13 Demographic reach analysis of lead generation campaigns

In terms of demographic reach, however, an opposite effect was observed compared to the overall trend for ad performance between male and female audiences. When it came to lead ads, it was actually cheaper to target males (at NAD 0.94 per lead) than females (at NAD 1.20 per lead). Furthermore, male audiences returned the most results (at 64% of the total leads garnered) and observed the highest reach rates. In terms of age group performance, more reach and results were observed in the male 25 – 34 age group, as shown in Figure 42.

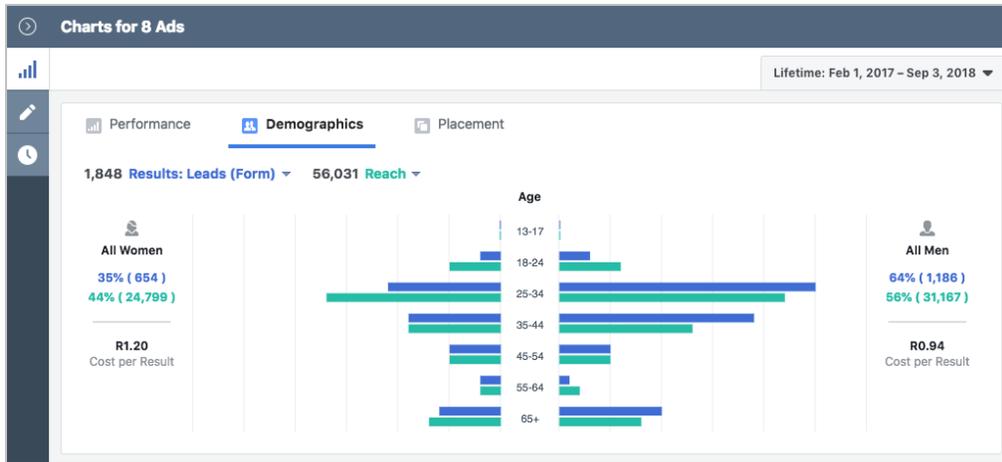


Figure 42: Demographic reach analysis of lead generation campaigns over lifetime period

#### 4.2.14 Average cost and performance analysis of web traffic campaigns

There were 6 ads out of the total sample that focused on link clicks as a campaign goal, and the aggregated result rate for these was 1.24%. The average cost per result (i.e. for each link click) was NAD 0.55, and the 6 ads cumulatively netted a total of 35,310 link clicks. As before, the campaign performance suffered from diminished ad returns after a high initial spike, as shown in Figure 43 below.

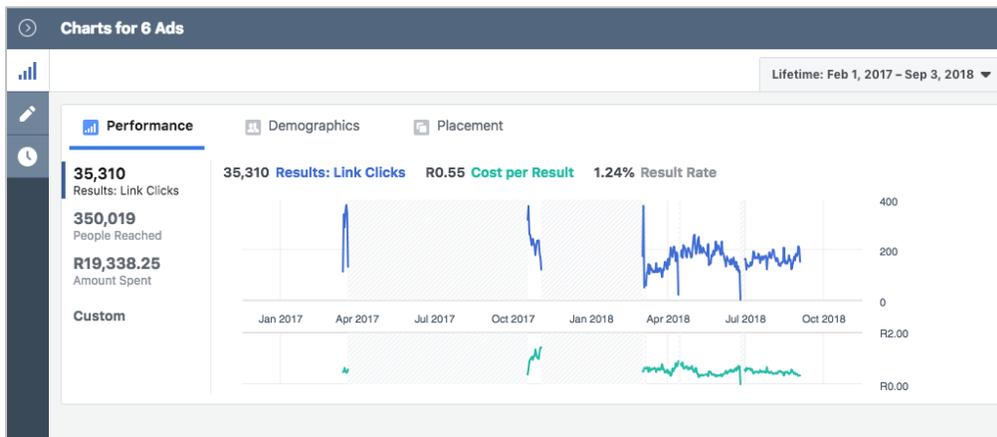


Figure 43: Average cost & performance analysis: web traffic campaigns

#### 4.2.15 Demographic reach analysis of web traffic campaigns

In terms of demographic reach, more males clicked on web traffic campaigns, but the campaign reached a level number of both male and female audiences. Younger females (aged 18 – 24) were

more likely to click on links than their older counterparts (aged 25 – 34), but males from both age groups clicked on links with the same frequency, as shown by Figure 44 below.

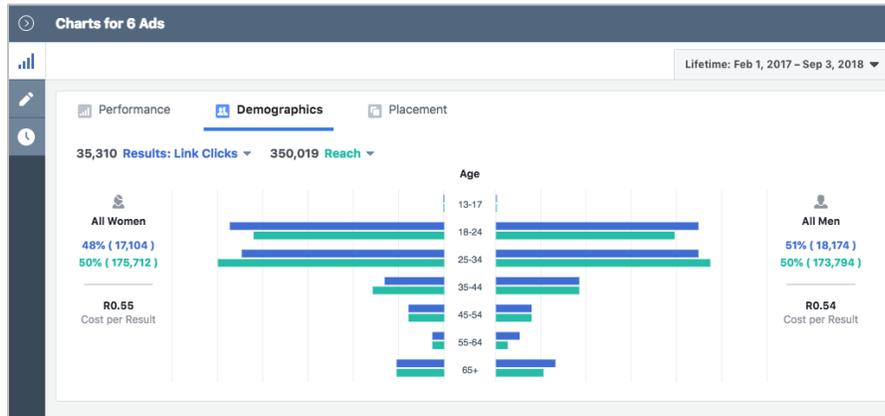


Figure 44: Demographic reach analysis of web traffic campaigns

#### 4.2.16 Average cost and performance analysis of video views campaigns

Based on Figure 45 below, video-based campaigns and ads attained some of the highest aggregated result rates across the total campaign sample, clocking in at 13.85% and with an extremely low cost per result of just NAD 0.02. This confirms recent efforts by large social media platforms to give video content more reach and prominence in the newsfeeds of users (Nelson, 2017; Patel, 2017).

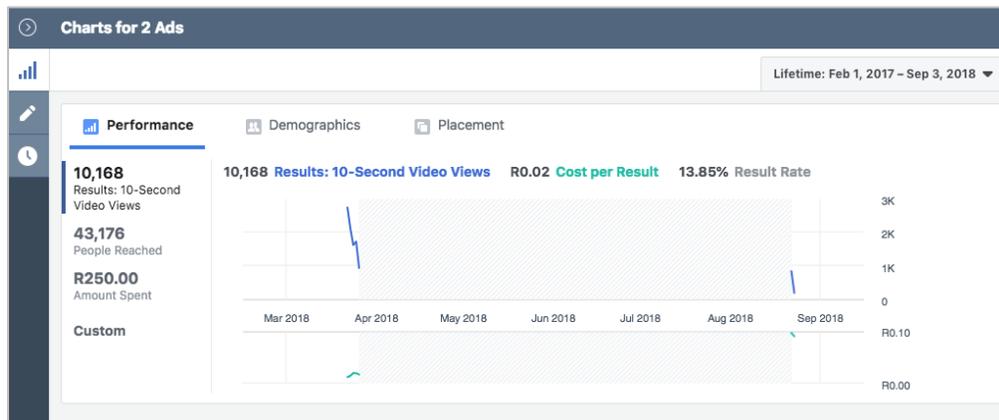


Figure 45: Average cost & performance analysis: video views campaigns

#### 4.2.17 Demographic reach analysis of video view campaigns

In terms of demographic reach, more males aged 25 – 34 watched video ads, with that cohort garnering the highest amount of results and reach as shown by Figure 46 below. This was followed by female viewers in the same age group. Interestingly, both males and females within the 18 – 24 age group clocked in less viewership times on video ads than those within the 35 – 44 age group.

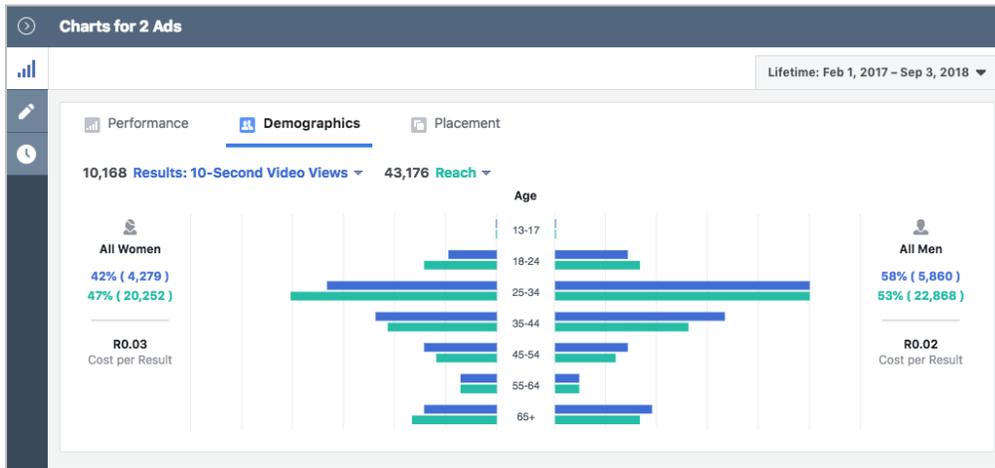


Figure 46: Demographic reach analysis of video views campaigns

#### 4.2.18 Average cost and performance analysis of brand awareness campaigns

In terms of explicit Brand Awareness campaigns, the sole campaign within the set was run by the ad agency itself over a 5-day period in March 2017, coinciding with the country's Independence Day celebrations. It netted a 5.71% result rate overall, with an estimated ad recall lift (people) of 4,300, as shown by Figure 47. This means that approximately 4,300 people were expected to have remembered the brand's ad within 2 days of seeing the ad, if asked. As with previous campaigns, it experienced a similar spiking and peaking of ad performance over the campaign duration. It is important to note that as a sole sample within the set, these findings could not be generalized as a rule, and would require further research to ascertain any sort of commonalities across campaigns.



Figure 47: Average cost and performance analysis: brand awareness campaigns

#### 4.2.19 Demographic reach analysis of brand awareness campaigns

In terms of demographic reach, the brand awareness campaign was far more effective on female audiences, who netted the largest share of reach and results. These results were consistent across the 18 – 24 and 25 – 34 age ranges, as shown by Figure 48 below.

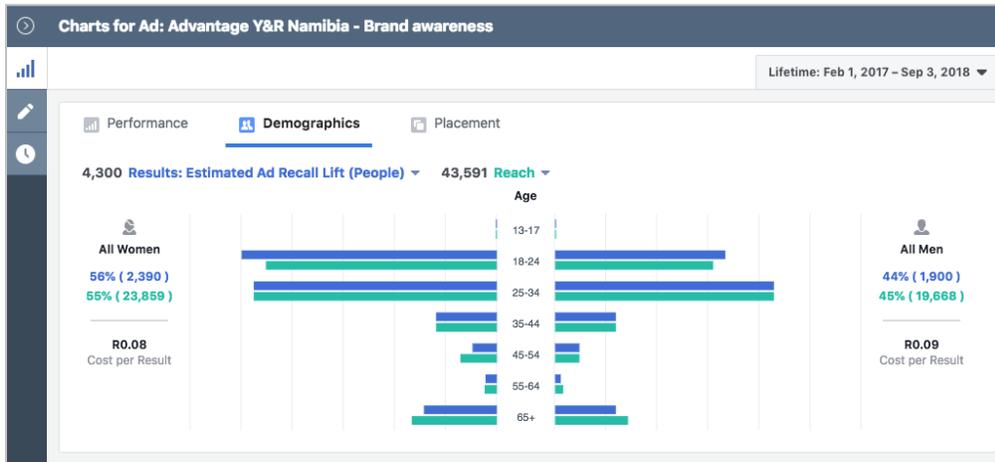


Figure 48: Demographic reach analysis of brand awareness campaigns over lifetime period

#### 4.3 Online Questionnaire

For the third phase of this research, an online questionnaire was administered to elicit (voluntary) responses from the wider public on how they utilized social media with regards to their private lives, as well as their perceptions on the marketing of goods and services on social media platforms. This was relevant to the research due to the SMA aspect of the study, and

understanding how the general public felt about SMA activities would help SMEs to inform and formulate SMA strategies going forward. The questionnaire was disseminated via social media channels, specifically Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Links were also disseminated via WhatsApp. The Facebook advert was boosted, which is a form of advertising whereby posts on a Page are given extra visibility for a set amount of money. The Facebook posts were targeted to people 18 – 65+ and were open to anyone who currently resided in the country. A total of approximately 200 responses were received, albeit with pockets of missing information within the responses. The questionnaire breakdown of the responses follows in the segments below.

### 4.3.1 Biographical data

The first section asked questions relating to gender, age ranges, locations and occupations of respondents, among other questions.

#### 4.3.1.1 Age

55.4% of the total number of respondents fell within the 18 – 25 age range, with 40.1% being between 26 and 35 years old. 4% of the respondents were within the ages of 36 – 49, with the remainder being under 18 years of age.

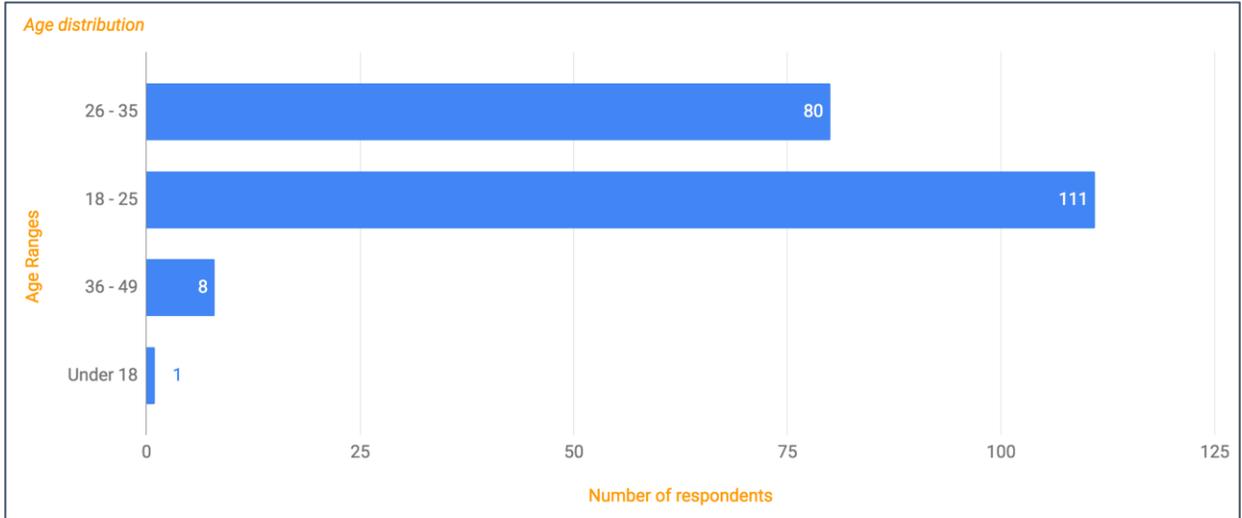


Figure 49: Age distribution

#### 4.3.1.2 Gender

The majority of the respondents were female (62.4%), with males coming in second at 36.6% of the total sample.

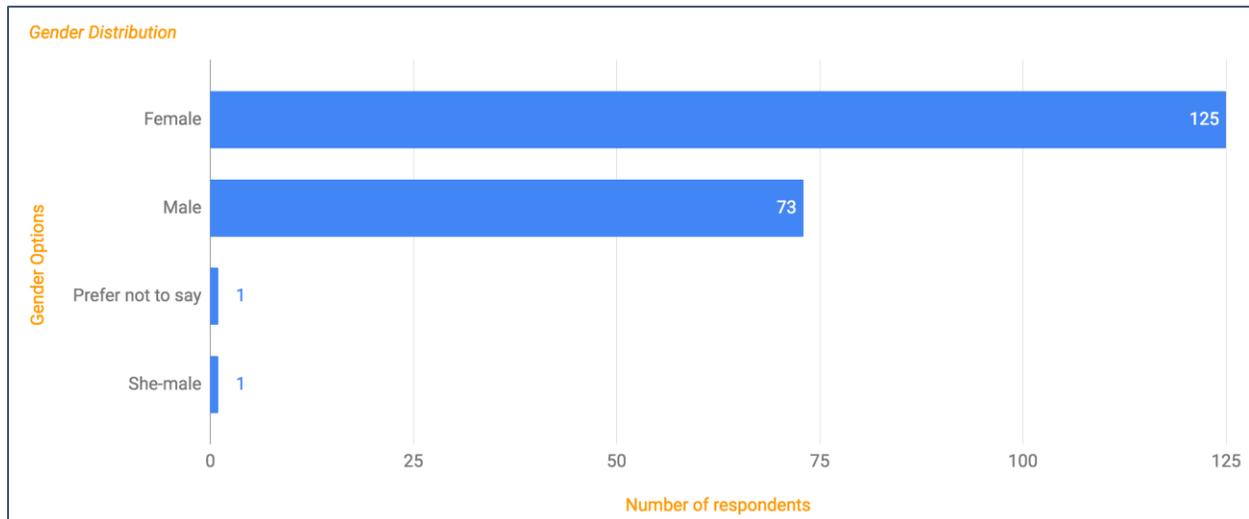


Figure 50: Gender breakdown

#### 4.3.1.3 Location

Out of 202 responses received, the vast majority (193, or 96.5%) of the participant pool indicated that they resided in Namibia at the time of the survey. The remainder were from Botswana, Tanzania, the Ukraine and Italy, among others.

#### 4.3.1.4 Profession

This section allowed for combinations of responses and logged a total of 219 responses. In terms of singular counts of each option, the majority (36.9%) indicated that they were still students at an educational institution, followed by working professionals (34.7%). Close to one-fifth of the respondents (18.26%) further indicated that they were SME owners, with self-described freelancers comprising 5.48% and unemployed individuals comprising 4.57% of the total sample. Figure 51 presents this profession distribution in graphical format.

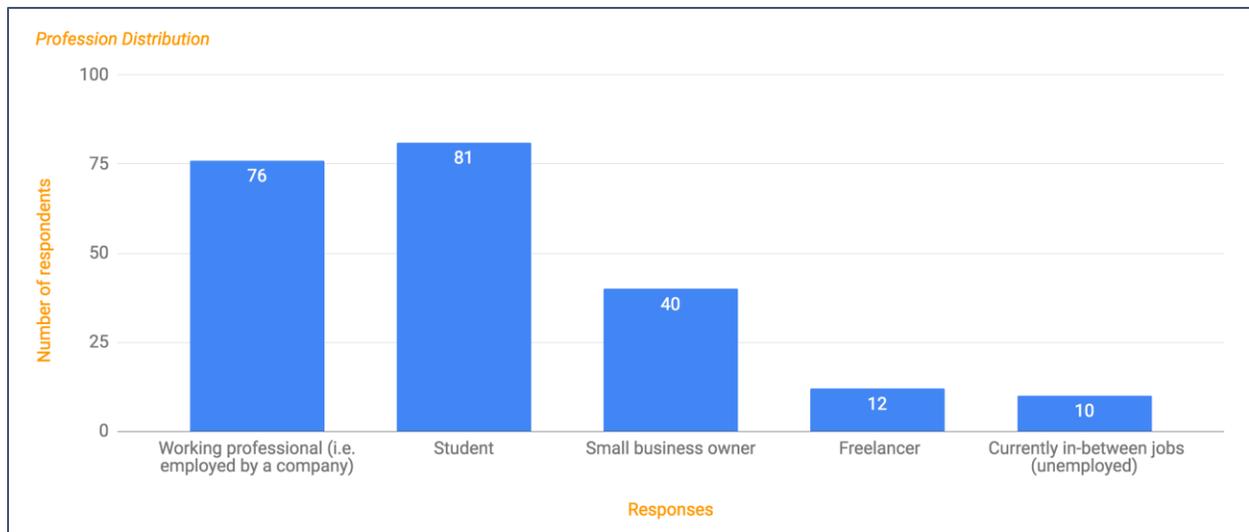


Figure 51: Profession distribution

### 4.3.2 Social Media Usage

The next section of the online questionnaire aimed to elicit self-reported values related to the social media usage patterns of the respondents. Below is a breakdown of these responses.

#### 4.3.2.1 Platform registration

With this question, the aim was to determine which platforms were most popular among the participants. Facebook emerged as the clear winner among 204 responses with 92.2% popularity, followed by Instagram with 79.9% popularity, YouTube with 61.8% popularity and Twitter with 45.6% popularity. LinkedIn rounds out the top-five list with 41.2% popularity, as shown by Figure 52.

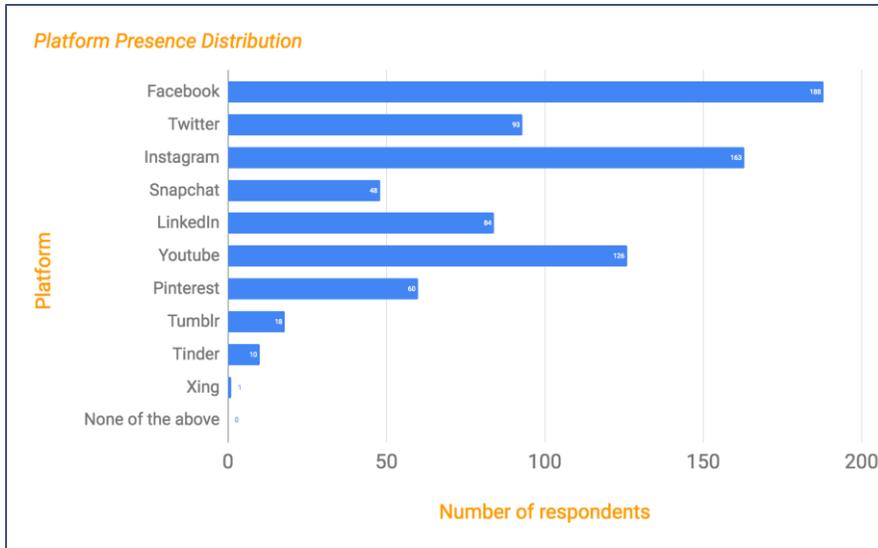


Figure 52: Platform presence distribution

#### 4.3.2.2 “Stories” usage

Besides the main platforms mentioned above, we set out to understand participants’ usage of the Stories feature present on many of those platforms. The results from 188 received entries are presented in Figure 53 below, with WhatsApp stories being a firm favourite at 89.36% popularity, followed by Instagram Stories at 58.51% and Facebook Stories at 45.21%.

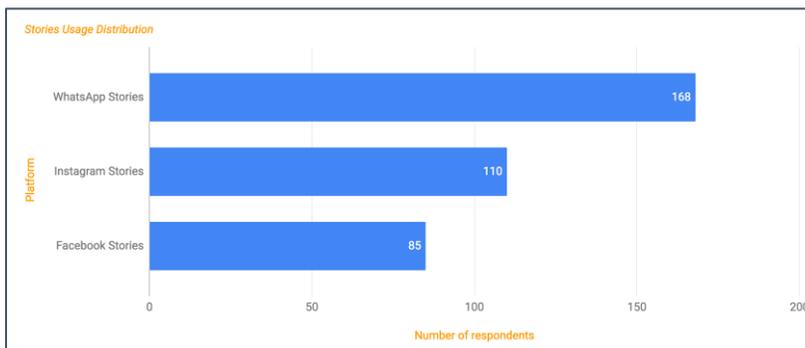


Figure 53: Stories usage breakdown - uniques

In terms of usage combinations, Figure 54 shows that the most popular combo involved regular usage of all three platforms at 29.79% of total responses.

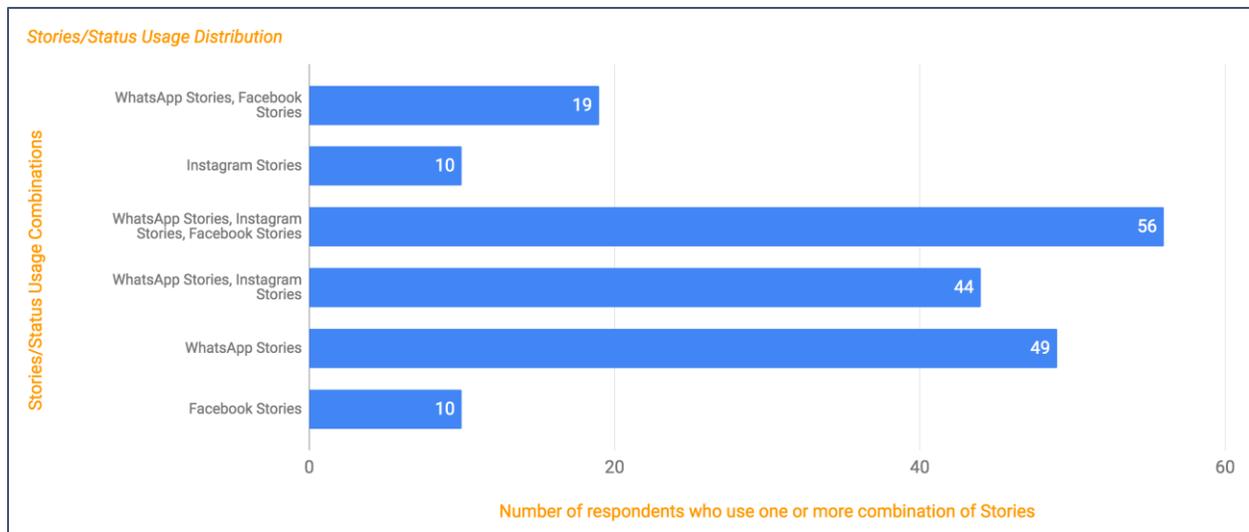


Figure 54: Stories usage breakdown - combinations

#### 4.3.2.3 Social media use

Social media is used for a variety of tasks and goals, and this questioned aimed to solicit which uses were more common among the general population. Looking at Figure 55, the most popular responses out of 200 submissions were “Keeping in touch with friends and family”, as well as “Selling my goods and/or services to potential customers”. This highlights the significant role of social media platforms in powering many SMEs in Namibia. A further interesting insight comes from the popular use of social media to find employment or to support an existing one.

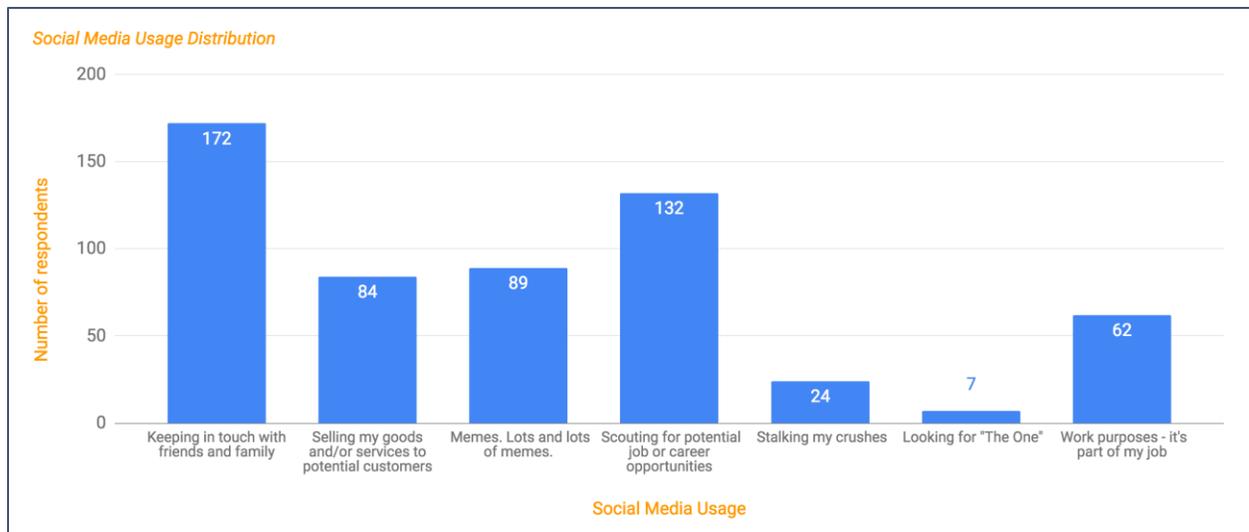


Figure 55: Uses of social media among respondents

#### 4.3.2.4 Social Media addiction breakdown

Establishing the (self-reported) social media addiction levels of the respondents allowed us to determine if there existed a correlation between increased time spent on social media platforms and increased proficiency in social media marketing. Further to this, a baseline knowledge of social media affinity levels provides a springboard for future research in that area. Some key themes could include individual control over self-reported addiction levels, ethical design considerations of app developers in reducing screen time and the efficacy of ad impressions vis-à-vis long-term usage. Looking at the data from 200 responses in Figure 56 below, the majority (48.8%) reported that they had control over their social media usage, with the next largest cohort (34.1%) reporting a moderate amount of addiction to social media platforms. A small percentage (10.7%) reported high levels of addiction to social media platforms.

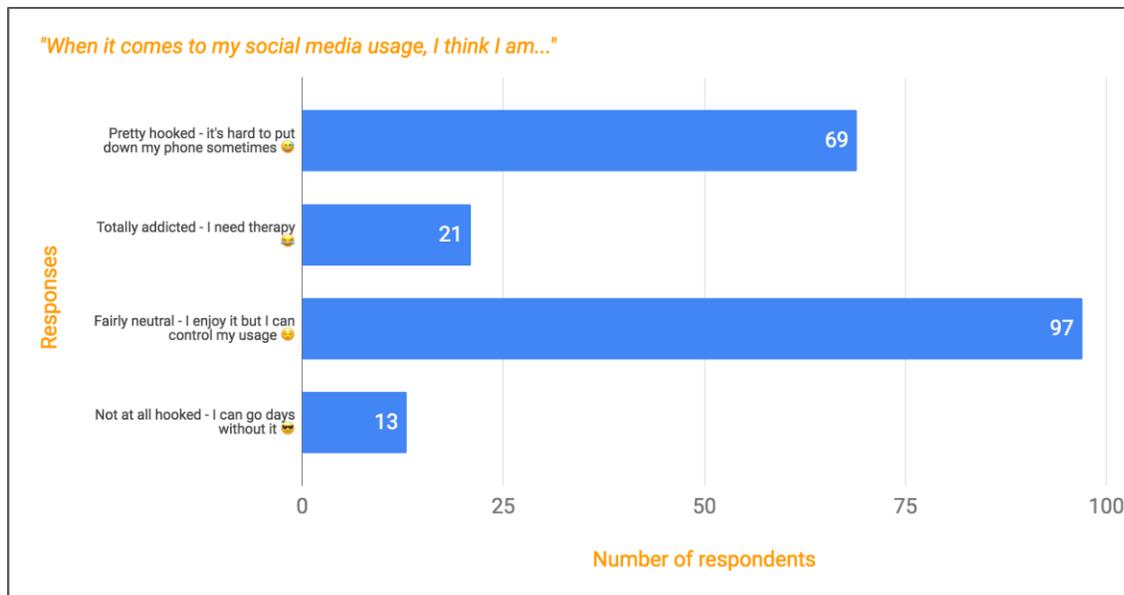


Figure 56: Social media addiction breakdown

### 4.3.3 Attitudes to ads

In this section, the survey attempted to elicit self-reported perceptions about ads on their newsfeeds, as well as their perceptions on the learning curves of creating ads in general. A breakdown follows below.

#### 4.3.3.1 Ad curiosity

Out of 201 responses, only a quarter of the respondent sample (25.87%) indicated their curiosity towards checking out adverts that appeared on their social media feeds. As shown in Figure 57 below, the majority (41.79%) indicated that they were neutral about clicking on ads. The rest indicated that they experienced no curiosity towards checking out adverts displayed on their newsfeeds.

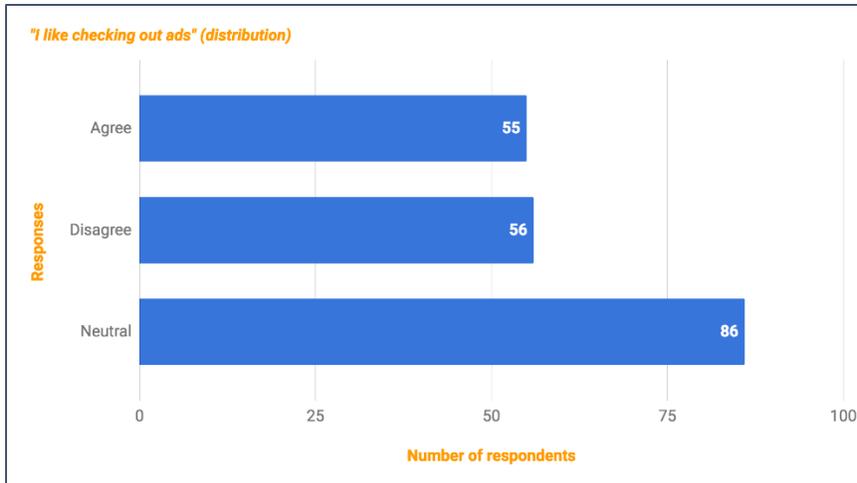


Figure 57: Social media advertising curiosity

#### 4.3.3.2 Accidental clicks

Out of 180 responses, the majority (41.67%) indicated that they clicked ads on their newsfeeds by accident, compared to only 31.67% who consciously clicked on newsfeed ads.

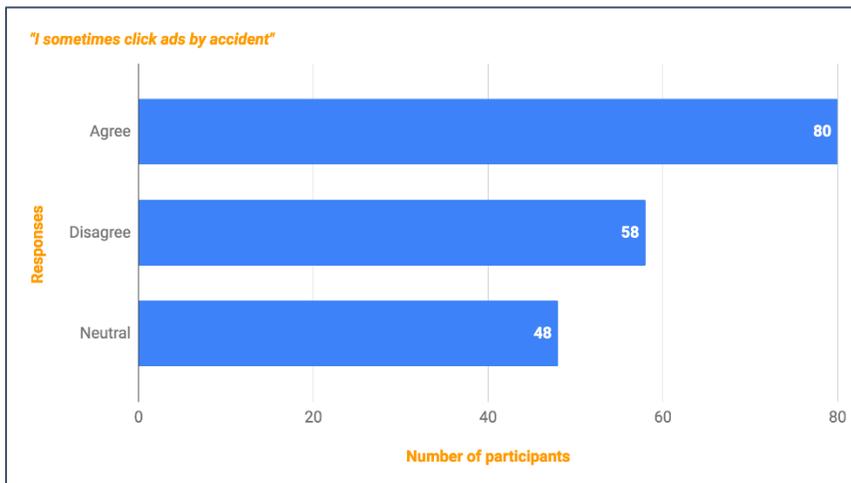


Figure 58: Accidental clicks distribution

#### 4.3.3.3 Video viewing ad disruptions

Out of 187 responses, the majority (42.78%) indicated that video viewing being interrupted by interstitial adverts did not cause them to abandon the content, suggesting that video ads were being watched from start to finish when placed on video and/or episodic content. By contrast,

approximately 23% of the respondents abandoned video content the moment they came across an interstitial ad, as shown in Figure 59.

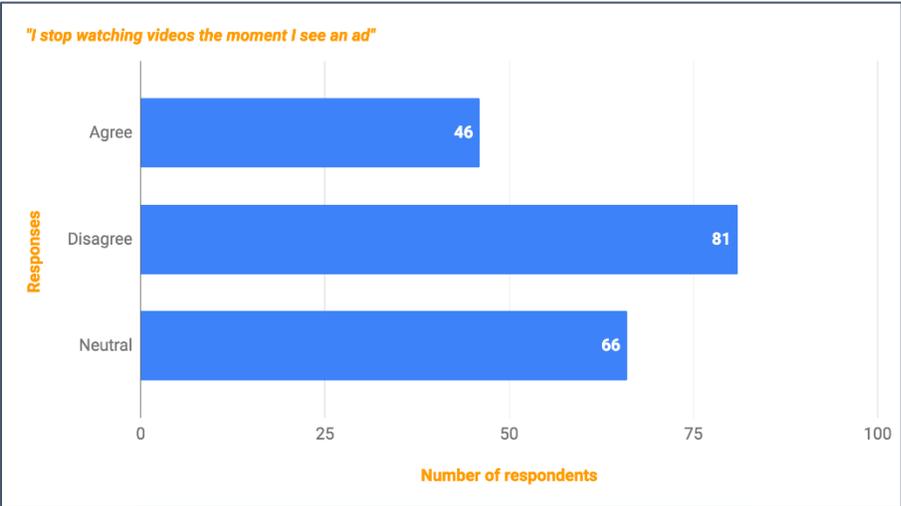


Figure 59: Video viewing ad disruptions

#### 4.3.3.4 Attitudes toward ad elimination by choice

This question aimed to elicit how respondents felt about ad elimination from their newsfeeds. Based on the responses received, 30.53% were keen on the ability to turn off all ads in their newsfeeds. By contrast, a significant size of the sample (69.47%) either disagreed or were neutral about the topic. The next question then aimed at soliciting responses towards a subscription-based model of revenue generation for social media platforms. As shown by Figure 60, the majority (59.56%) were against the idea, with only 15.3% willing to consider paying a small monthly fee to avoid ads.

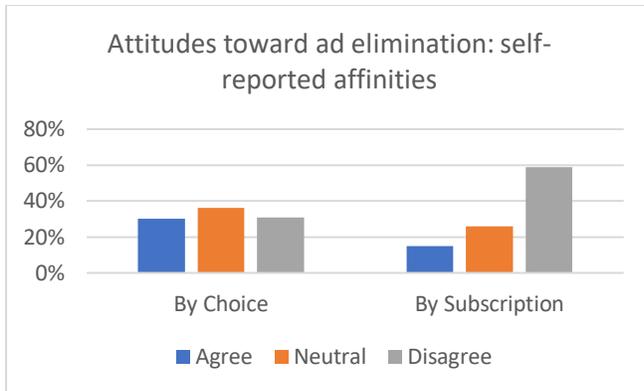


Figure 60: Attitudes toward ad elimination by subscription

#### 4.3.3.5 Distribution of ad-blocker usage

Consistent with the previous questions posed, Figure 61 below shows that 82 out of 183 respondents (44.8%) did not use ad-blockers on their browsers. By contrast, 30.6% of respondents were consistent users of ad-blockers on their browsers.

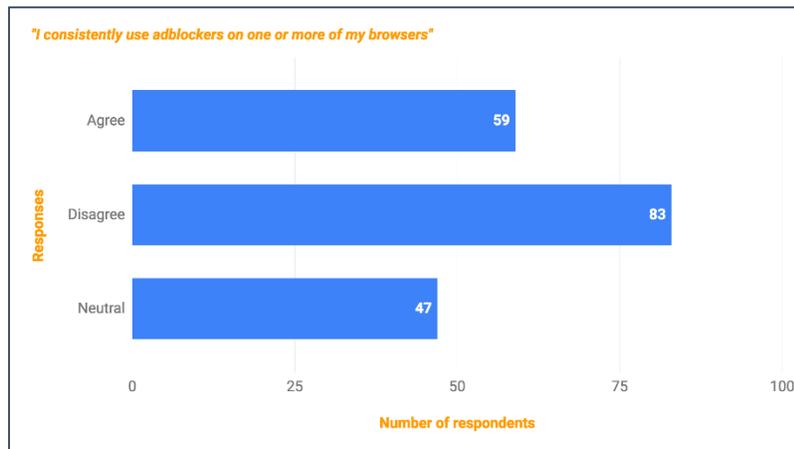


Figure 61: Distribution of ad-blocker usage

#### 4.3.3.6 Attitudes towards ad relevancy

Out of 187 respondents, the majority (58.82%) felt positively about seeing ads on their newsfeeds, provided that the ads were relevant to them. This is reflected in Figure 62 below.

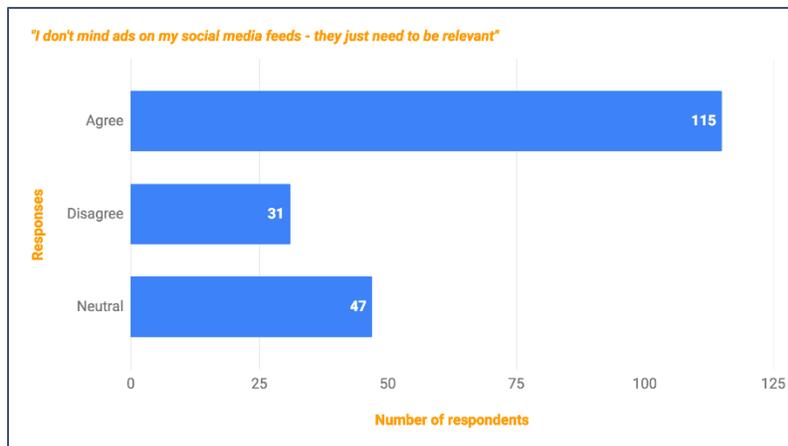


Figure 62: Attitudes towards ad relevancy

Non-parametric tests using the asymptotic chi-square tests were done to infer respondents' views on ads using self-constructed constructs which they responded to in the questionnaire. The 3-point Likert scale (Disagree = D, Neutral = N, Agree = A) was used. A chi-square test for equal proportions was then opted for to compare the responses to each question. The given p-values are for these comparisons.

#### 4.3.3.7 Feelings about ads in feed

Table 14 below shows the summary of the findings on perceptions of respondents regarding ads. There was a strong indication from the data gathered in the study that individuals sometime click ads by accident, ( $p = 0.013$ ) and also that individuals don't mind ads on their social media feeds and advocate that they just need to be relevant ( $p = <0.0001$ ).

Table 14: Chi-square tests for understanding of respondents regarding ads

How do you feel about ads in your feed?	D	N	A	Statistic	p-Value
I like checking out ads on social media	28.4%	43.7%	27.9%	9.452	0.009*
I sometimes click ads by accident	31.2%	25.8%	43.0%	8.645	0.013*
I stop watching videos the moment I see an ad	42.0%	34.2%	23.8%	9.585	0.008*
I wish I could turn off all ads on my social media feeds	30.3%	35.4%	34.4%	0.862	0.650
I would honestly pay a small fee every month just to ensure I never see ads on my feeds	58.7%	25.4%	15.9%	57.429	0.000*
I consistently use adblockers on one or more of my browsers	43.9%	24.9%	31.2%	10.667	0.005*
I don't mind ads on my social media feeds - they just need to be relevant	16.1%	24.4%	59.6%	61.845	0.000*

**N = 197**, Statistically significant differences (\*  $p < .05$ ).

#### 4.3.4 Attitudes to business advertising on social media

This section aimed to elicit participants' responses to businesses advertising their products and services on social media. The breakdown follows below.

##### 4.3.4.1 Attitudes towards ad targeting by businesses

In keeping with the responses solicited from previous questions, an 83.76% majority of respondents (165 out of 197) expressed their consent with ad targeting by businesses. As per Figure 63, only a very minor segment (2.54%) expressed their disagreement with this proposition.

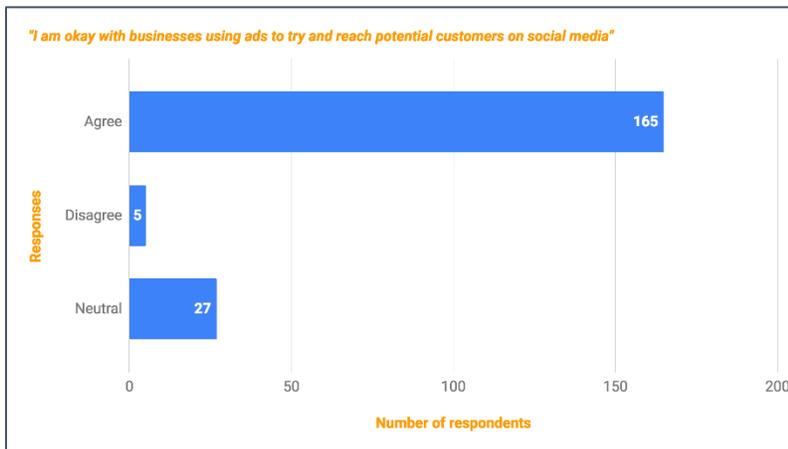


Figure 63: Attitudes towards ad targeting by businesses

##### 4.3.4.2 Self-reported attitudes towards targeting other users with ads

Conversely, the majority of 190 respondents (82.63%) would themselves utilize social media marketing to target other users with messages about their own products, services and/or social causes (Figure 64).

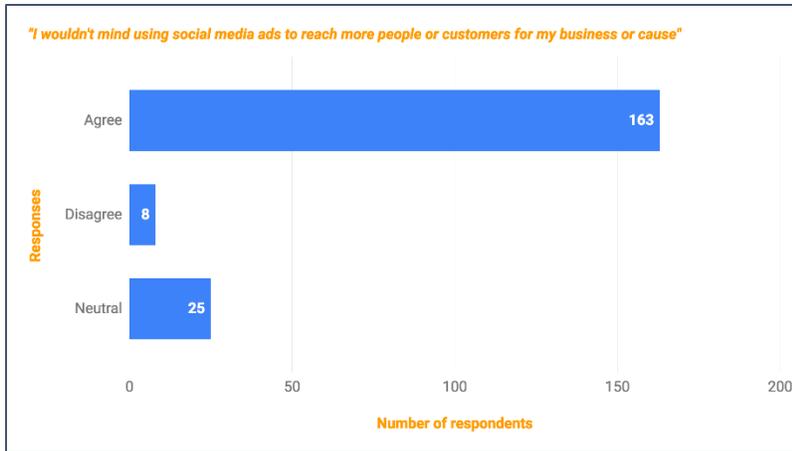


Figure 64: Self-reported attitudes towards ad targeting other users

#### 4.3.4.3 Self-reported preferences for vernacular ads

Literature suggests that ads are much more effective when the messaging is targeted towards a user. To test a different angle of this hypothesis, a question was posed to the respondents related to the viewing of native language ads in their newsfeeds. Looking at Figure 65 below, the vast majority of 182 respondents (46.7%) reported a neutral stance towards the use of vernacular in social media ads, while 21.98% indicated that they would prefer ads with vernacular messaging. This suggests that a total of approximately 69% of the social media population in Namibia were open to the idea of demographically and linguistically targeted advertising. By contrast, 31.3% of the total sample did not wish to see ads in vernacular.

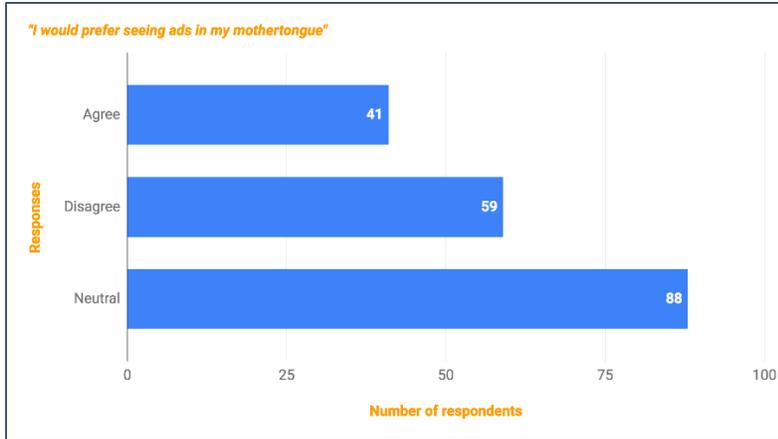


Figure 65: Self-reported preferences for vernacular ads

#### 4.3.4.4 Visual appeal of newsfeed ads

On the question of the visual appeal of newsfeed ads, 58 out of 181 respondents (46.4%) were neutral about the rating of ads they came across, while 32.04% agreed that these ads could use some improvement. By contrast, only about a fifth (21.5%) of the total sample were happy with the visual appeal of newsfeed ads they came across, as shown in Figure 66 below.

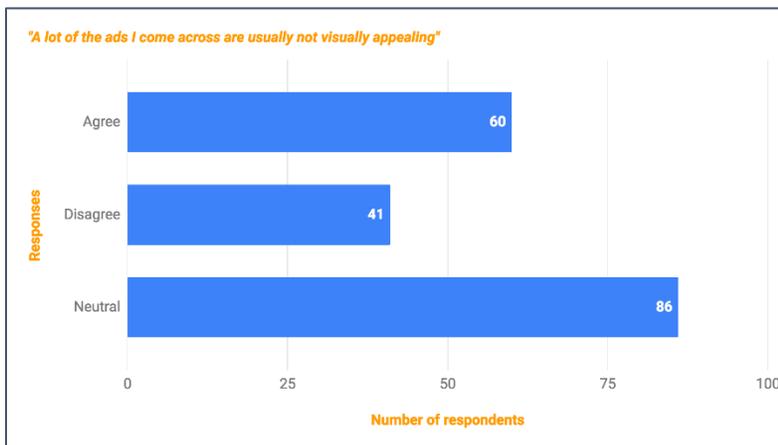


Figure 66: Visual appeal of newsfeed ads

#### 4.3.4.5 Social media marketing learning curve: self-reported perceptions

Out of 182 respondents, more than half (56.04%) did not feel that learning the ropes of social media marketing was difficult, compared to 10.4% of the sample who felt otherwise. The rest of

the respondents were neutral on the topic, as shown in Figure 67 below. All of this somewhat correlates with the high levels of social media use reported in an earlier section.

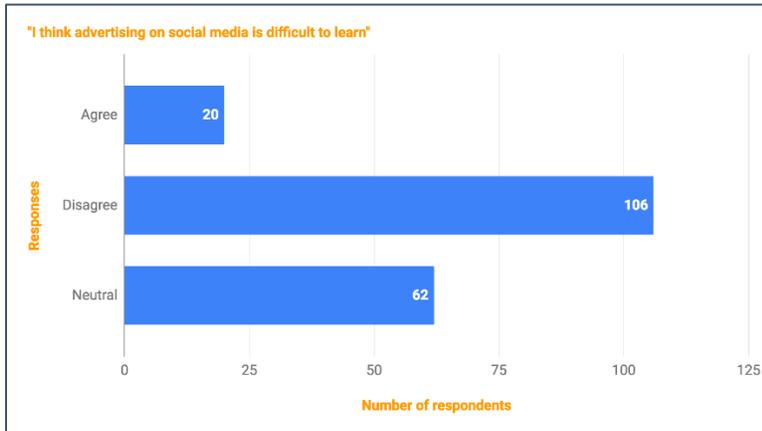


Figure 67: Social media marketing learning curve: self-reported perceptions

#### 4.3.4.6 Social media expenses: self-reported perceptions

Similar to the above proposition, over half of the 182 respondents to this question (approximately 55%) did not think that social media marketing was expensive, suggesting a sentiment backed by prior experience. A further 34% were neutral about the cost, while only about 11% felt that social media marketing was an expensive endeavour, as shown in Figure 68 below.

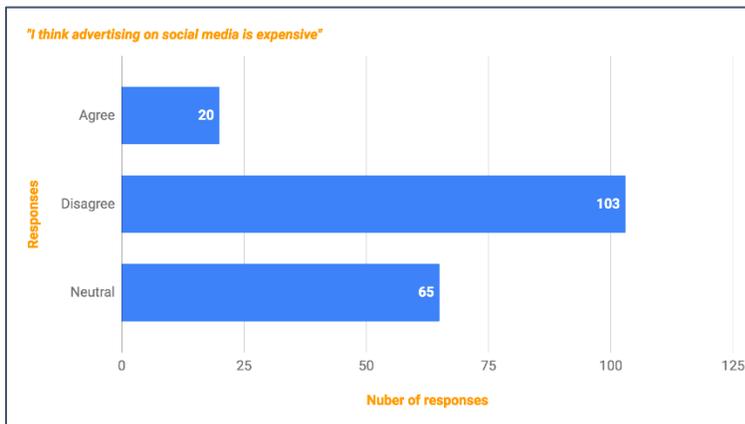


Figure 68: Social media expense: self-reported perceptions

### 4.3.5 Attitudes to creating ads on social media

In this section of the questionnaire, the aim was to elicit self-reported attitudes towards creating ads on various social media platforms. The data shows that a vast majority of respondents have, or would use, many of the major platforms at high rates. These include WhatsApp Stories, Instagram Stories and Facebook Stories, with the rates for these three platforms hovering between 70 - 80% as shown in Figure 69.

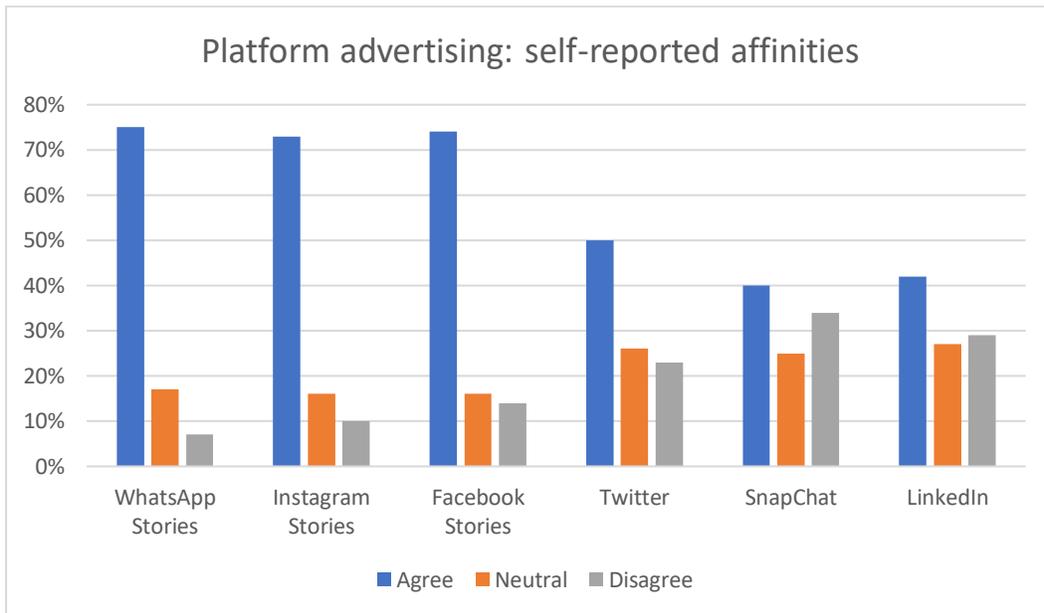


Figure 69: Platform advertising - self-reported affinities

#### 4.3.5.1 Social media ad creation proficiency

In determining the social media advertising proficiency among respondents, 42.46% (76 out of 179) were confident in their ability to craft ads for deployment on social media platforms. Looking at Figure 70, however, we see that 35.75% expressed an inability to craft social media ads, while another 21.79% were on the fence about their self-assessment of social media advertising proficiency.

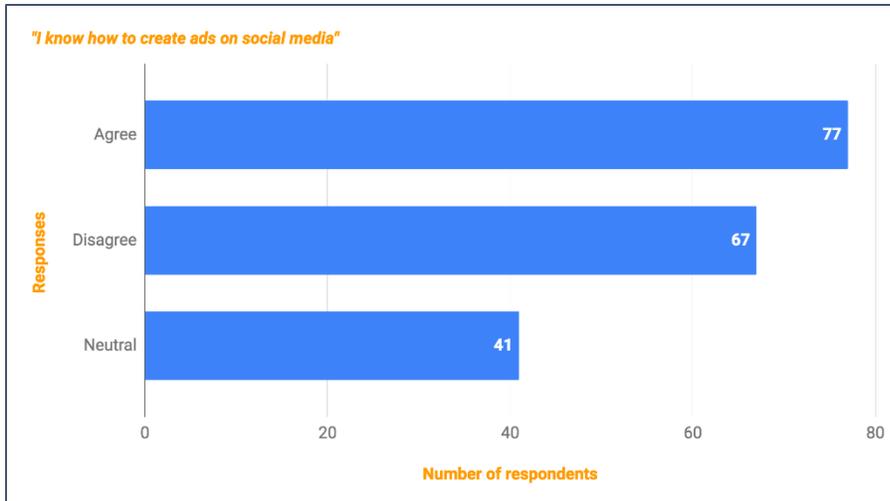


Figure 70: Social media ad creation proficiency

#### 4.3.5.2 Self-reported interest in further training on social media advertising

As if to corroborate the findings from the previous question, a vast 80.77% majority (147 out of 182) were eager to improve their proficiency in crafting social media ads, while 15.38% were still undecided. A tiny minority (3.85%) expressed no interest in the prospect, as shown in Figure 71 below.

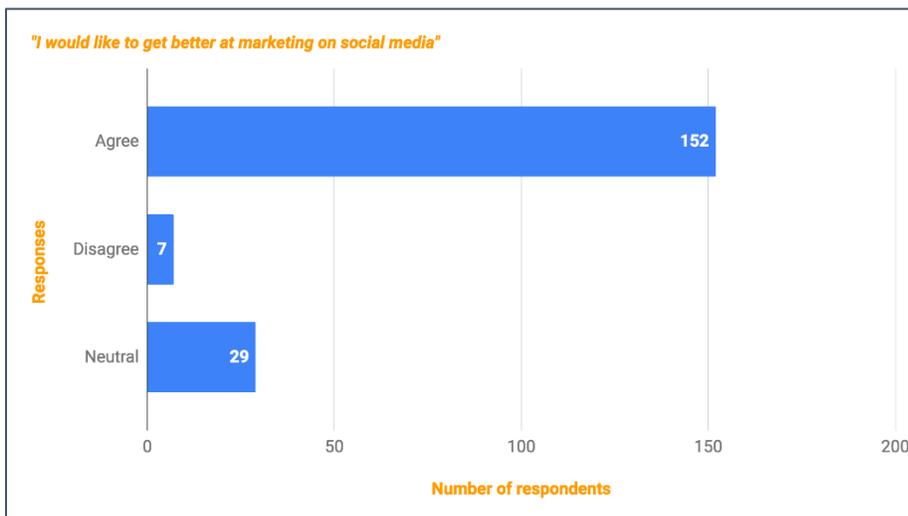


Figure 71: Self-reported interest in further training on social media advertising

The analysed data in this chapter was collected over several months of observation, both actively and from secondary sources that consisted of the social media dashboards of the various Pages.

In this next chapter, these findings are discussed, and use them to craft a framework of best practices that can be adopted and adapted by brands in different spheres of business.

# Chapter 5: Discussion

## 5.1 Summary of findings

A few high-level findings that can be derived from the study. The first of these pertains to the general distribution of SMEs in the study, with the majority of them falling within the arts, events and media industry. Secondly, the lack of a brand story for most of the brands meant that there was no guiding ethos that governed product offerings, marketing, customer service or pricing strategy. This is borne out on a global scale as espoused in literature (Newman, 2016; Olenski, 2018). A poor understanding of analytics further meant that most SMEs were launching campaigns without monitoring, tracking or reporting on the results in order to better understand their ROI. This was further compounded by limited knowledge of the power of graphics and visuals to change consumer perceptions about their respective products and services.

Looking at the case studies, it is clear (and perhaps unsurprising) that larger brands were more consistent in the frequency of their social media advertising, likely due to larger budgets and more experienced marketing teams. Moreover, posts with photos were rated as more 'relevant' by social media algorithms, as compared to other creative types like links and videos. More money was spent on link clicks than on any other campaign goal, but event RSVPs cost more per result than other campaign goals such as Page Likes or Lead Generation. Video ads and posts netted a higher estimated ad recall lift rate than other post types, while lead generation ads were prioritised in user newsfeed as evidenced by a higher average relevance score.

A key finding was the diminishing performance of ads on long-term campaigns, owing to ad fatigue. This could potentially be avoided by periodically rotating the ads within a campaign's ad set, a measure that may enjoy some effectiveness due to the limited usage of ad-blockers. As per the data, two key requirements of social media users when it comes to brand advertising were relevance and visual appeal, and the combination of these two may help to somewhat mitigate the effects of ad fatigue (Donaton, 2016; Finn, 2018). Breaking into alternative platforms such as WhatsApp Stories and its ilk on Facebook and Instagram could further do wonders for brand visibility and lead generation, a perspective echoed by literature (Katai, 2017). Finally, the

majority of ad reach on social media (Facebook in particular) would reach more females in Namibia than males, with both genders differing in their total reach cost depending on the campaign goal in question.

Social media marketing has gained some traction in Namibia, but efficient and effective use of social media analytics to feed into BI remains a sticking point for many SMEs. The attempts that have been made towards plugging this gap in SME education have involved the introduction of concepts such as the social media maturity model, sporadic workshops to enlighten business owners on the benefits of social media branding as well as high level talks on enterprise social media governance. However, there have been many overlooked aspects of this re-engineering process, as shown by the results of the data collected. Looking at the collected data, the findings can be juxtaposed with our original research questions and objectives to derive some key themes. These can be summarized as *perceptions*, *presentations* and *placements*, and these shall be explored in turn in the following sections.

## 5.2 Perceptions

One of the overlooked aspects of bridging the gap between SME owners and efficient social media marketing is the basket of perceptions that are carried by the target audience, especially from a Namibian perspective. The first of these is the not insignificant negative perception surrounding the cost of social media marketing, which literature has proven time and again to be cheaper than traditional means of advertising, on a cost per result basis (Hanna et al., 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Another overlooked facet was the lingering perception among some respondents about the learning curve associated with mastering social media marketing, with the collected data showing that a combined 57.54% either definitively doubted their social media marketing capabilities or were still on the fence about it. This could be overcome by providing practice-based, widely accessible and easily digestible consumer education about the benefits of social media and the means through which it can be effectively executed. As a fairly young field within the country, Namibian SME owners could greatly benefit from such a public education drive undertaken at local hotbeds of entrepreneurial activity. Although there is evidence of research that supports this strategy of changing perceptions, it does not directly address the

marketing aspect of social media management, and thus presents a gap in literature that could be filled by further research (Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2011; Diga & Kelleher, 2009).

### 5.3 Presentation

The second overlooked facet involves the presentation of brand messaging on social media. SME owners need to be guided through such key aspects of social media marketing such as creating and polishing their brand stories, defining their brand voice and tone, and formalizing their brand identities for both online and offline use. An insight that stood out from the data involved attitudes of Namibian SME owners towards the use of vernacular in online brand messaging. As per the data, 69% of the surveyed participants were potentially open to the idea of linguistically targeted advertising, and this presents an opportunity for demographically targeted brands to reach more people in a more meaningful way. This, however, would likely necessitate more publicly accessible courses and educational material on vernacular copywriting, especially considering the diversity of culture and language within Namibia. This was not currently offered as a specialized course at local institutions of learning as of this writing, but this gap in the market presented a business opportunity for qualified service providers or professionals in the linguistics, PR, literary and marketing sectors, among others.

Further closing out the presentation aspect, it was discovered from the research that graphic design competencies were strongly needed in the Namibian small to medium business sector. Establishing unique visuals and brand identities across several consumer touchpoints helps to maintain a consistent experience for customers, but the lack of knowledge around this area hampered progress in crafting effective social media marketing campaigns. Once again, this gap presented a business opportunity for professional practitioners in the graphic design and data visualization field.

### 5.4 Placement

In the arena of consumer education regarding effective social media marketing, placement is a multifaceted gap that needs to be addressed. The first aspect of it concerns knowledge of

available social media platforms and their effectiveness in reaching different audiences. The data showed that the most used platforms in Namibia were Facebook, followed by Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and then LinkedIn, in that order. It also showed a high ad relevance and engagement rate for photos and videos, which spoke to a need for compelling visuals across platforms that are predicated on visuals. Available executions for this include the use of Stories platforms to push marketing messages out effectively (Katai, 2017). This is supported by the high interest and prior usage of various existing Stories platforms by study respondents.

The overall sales strategy of a brand is another aspect of placement that needs consideration. Garnering sales on social media is a delicate balance between hard selling, defined as an aggressive effort to push sales on customers who may or may not be in need of a product or service, and content marketing, wherein valuable content is published on a periodic basis and brands endeavour to develop an understanding of the audience's information needs and their position in the purchase consideration cycle (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Social media offers both options to SME owners and brand managers, with platforms such as LinkedIn primed for content marketing tactics and lead generation (Bodnar & Cohen, 2012; Lieb, 2011).

In terms of formats, a clear winner in this regard based on the data was the use of video content to reach more people. Looking at average costs per result and ad relevance, video content scored highly compared to other content formats and this, combined with the espoused focus of most major social media platforms to rank video higher in the newsfeed, presented an obvious choice with regard to desired content (Lunden, 2017; Nelson, 2017). This heavy use of visuals, however, should be rotated on a periodical basis in order to counter ad fatigue. As per the data, attitudes towards ads on the newsfeed remained fairly positive but observations of long-term data show that high impression frequencies hampered the effectiveness of ads by reducing novelty and introducing negative engagement, thus increasing the average cost of ad delivery.

As encapsulated in Figure 72, perceptions, presentation and placements all provide a valuable backdrop against which the challenges at hand can be understood. This allowed for a data-driven approach to forming a solution.

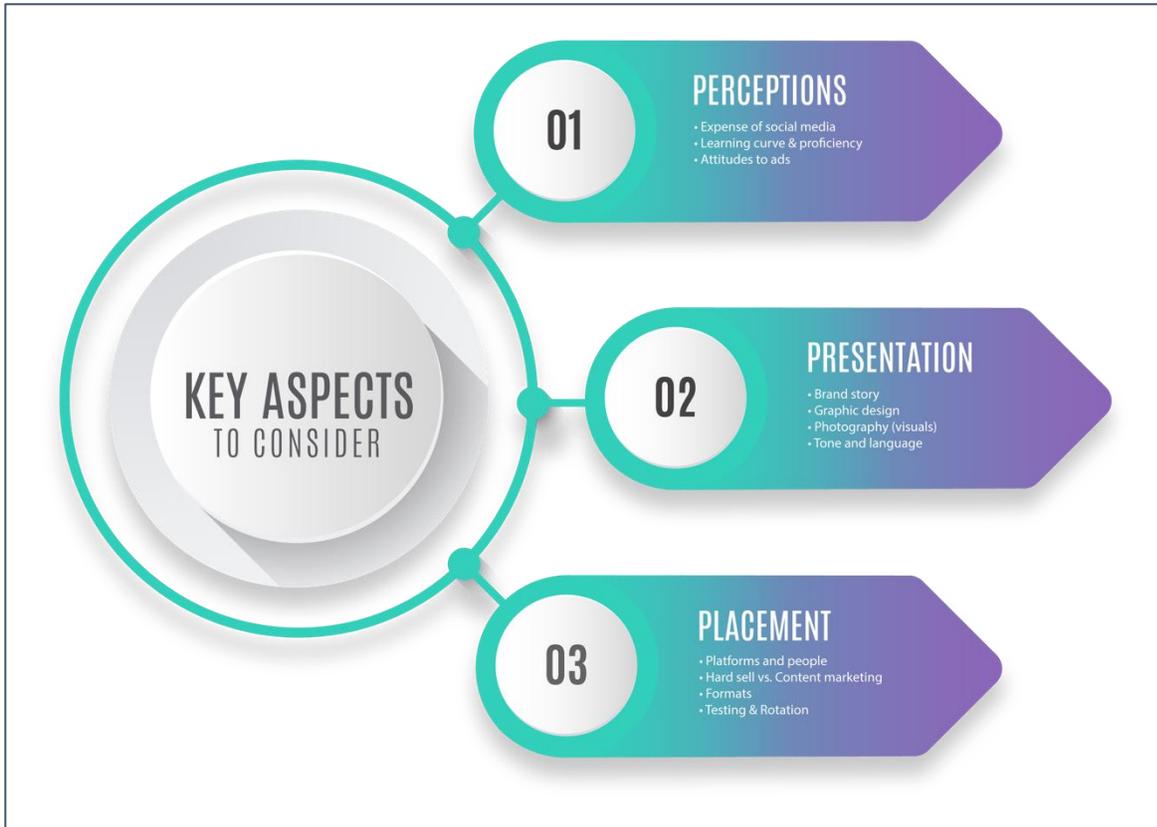


Figure 72: Perceptions, Presentation and Placement – 3 key things to consider

# Chapter 6: Social Media Analytics Framework

In crafting the Namibian framework for social media marketing and analytics, it was important to understand the landscape of frameworks that currently existed in literature. A select few of these frameworks are presented here and briefly explored, with their strengths and shortcomings laid bare and a Namibian version thereafter introduced.

## 6.1 Enterprise-Level Frameworks

Literature abounds with enterprise-level social media frameworks that take a holistic view of the social media marketing aspect of an organization. They consider all the moving parts of an organization, from the C-suite to middle management to rank and file employees. They take a long-term view to improving the social media maturity of enterprise organizations, and focus on achieving high-level business goals using social media as but one touchpoint. However, they come with their own flaws. Firstly, they are defined based on a few implicit assumptions, not least being the requirement of increased resources, financial ability, manpower and knowledge far beyond what the average small business owner would have access to. They further make reference to elements like social media governance, which requires a significant enough amount of human resources and employee education to justify implementation; something small business owners in Namibia are not likely to have. Due to their high-level nature, these frameworks do not focus in detail on the marketing aspect of social media, but rather on an overview of the role that social media could play in an organization's daily activities and long-term goals. While the latter part is important, it should be tempered with the realization that young start-ups require far greater market visibility in the early stages of business, in excess of what larger enterprises will likely have already acquired.

Aral, Dellarocas & Godes (2013) also present a high-level social media research framework for social media and business transformation, which focuses on 4 key activities namely design and features, strategy and tactics, management and organization, as well as measurement and value. As shown in Table 15, these are further broken down into 3 levels of analysis, including the users

and society point of view, the perspective of platforms and intermediaries and at the level of firms and industries.

Design and features describe the ways firms, organizations and consumers use specific social media features, as well as how organizations, the platforms themselves and governments around the world design, execute and regulate these features for collective good. Strategy and tactics describe how these key players actually use social media at a high-level perspective, be it to form relationships, curate information or promote products and services. The management and organization aspect describes the allocation of resources and assets needed to deploy, use and interact with social media platforms (Aral, Dellarocas, & Godes, 2013).

Table 15: Organizing framework for social media research

		Activities				
		Design & Features	Strategy & Tactics	Management & Organization	Measurement & Value	
Levels of Analysis	<b>Users &amp; Society</b>		How do users interact with social media features? How does feature design affect their use, interaction with one another, satisfaction, and ability to derive value from social media?	How can users optimize their use of social media? Which objectives do users pursue in using social media? How can they create relationships, curate information, broaden their reach, and maximize their influence?	How do users organize within communities and social media? How does community organization emerge? What are the effects of community organization and management on user contribution, participation, satisfaction, etc.	What are the benefits and costs of social media? How can we measure consumer surplus generated by social media? What is the nonmonetary value that social media create (e.g., equality, health, violence, civic engagement)?
	<b>Platforms &amp; Intermediaries</b>		How do platforms and intermediaries design social media features? How do specific features and designs help platforms attract users, create engagement, enable and constrain user behaviour, and increase revenue?	How can platforms maximize their influence and revenue? What are the product development, pricing, partnership, marketing, and acquisition strategies that achieve the best results? Should platforms be open or closed, standardized or ad hoc?	How should platform operators organize internally? How should platforms create, manage, and instil culture within their ecosystems? Which skills, talent, or human resources should platform operators develop? How should platforms create incentives to guide social media activities?	What is the value added by platforms? What are sensible valuations for platforms? How can we measure the value of platform ecosystem partners and ecosystems? How can value be allocated across the ecosystem to optimize incentives?
	<b>Firms &amp; Industries</b>		How should firms interact with specific platform features to	What types of social media initiatives work best for what firms? How should	How should companies organize, govern, fund, and evolve their social	How do we measure the short- and long-term bottom line and intermediate

maximize their benefit? What features should firm design into their home-grown social media initiatives?	firms interact with public social media? What combinations of home-grown and public social media initiatives should firms pursue? How should firms respond to social media crises?	media capabilities? What skill and culture changes are needed to best adapt to a social world? Which skills, talent, or human resources should firms develop? How should firms create incentives to guide social media activities?	outcomes of social media for firms? How do social media add value to firms? What industry-wide efficiencies have been (can be) attained via social media?
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As shown in Figure 73, the RENL framework for social media marketing strategy (SMMS) from Ananda, Hernández-García & Lamberti (2014) similarly tackles the topic from an enterprise perspective. Their framework, which stands for *Representation, Engagement, Networking and Listening-In* (RENL) breaks down social media into two different perspectives, namely content-specific strategic actions and platform-level strategic actions. Content-specific strategic actions are further broken down into representation and engagement actions, while platform-level strategic actions are broken down into activities related to networking and listening-in (Ananda, Hernández-García, & Lamberti, 2014). A key critique of this framework lies in the inclusion of external entities and third-parties to the social media planning process, such as PR agencies and market intelligence firms. These would require resources that the average small business owner would likely not have access to, as budget constraints would restrict the inclusion of such firms from the conversation until enterprise-level profitability or size had been achieved.

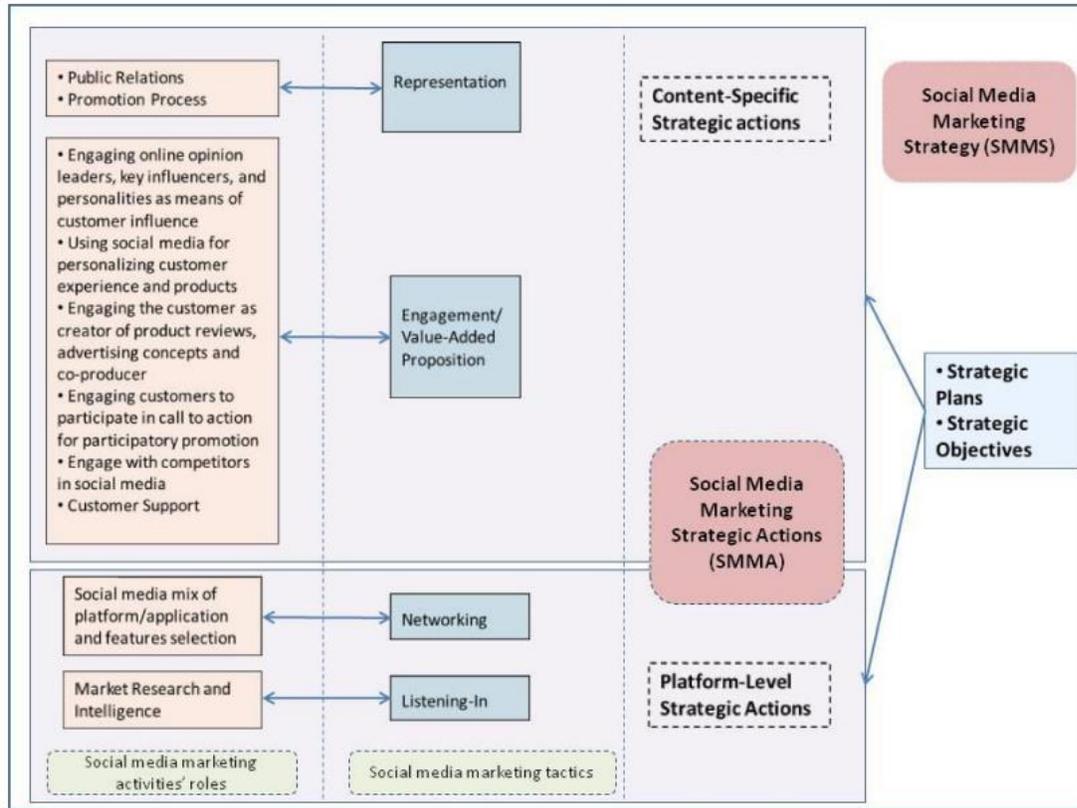


Figure 73: RENL Framework (Ananda, Hernández-García & Lamberti, 2014)

Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch (2017) present yet another comprehensive, holistic framework that looks at social media from a multi-disciplinary perspective. Their framework breaks down social media marketing into four core dimensions namely culture, scope, structure, and governance. Scope determines the extent of social media communication and collaboration within an organization, either with few internal stakeholders or with extensive internal and external audiences. Within this paradigm, Defenders use social media marketing primarily as a one-way communication tool to inform consumers or stakeholders, while explorers focus more on authentic social media marketing collaboration with many different stakeholders such as clients, employees, suppliers, and government agents (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). Culture distinguishes between whether an organization is conservative or modernised in their approach to company-wide social media attitudes. Structure addresses the organization of reporting lines and disbursement of social media marketing tasks within the firm, with hierarchies standing for a centralized approach and networks representing a more laissez-faire approach to the

delegation of social media tasks. Finally, governance refers to the establishment of guidelines on how social media marketing responsibilities are undertaken within the organization. Autocracy describes a stricter situation with precise regulations on accountability and processes to be followed with regards to social media, compared to anarchy which represents a situation without any such rules or guidelines.

Once again, the dimensions of this framework (as shown in Figure 74) presume access to a large enough workforce such that terms like “governance” become relevant. It fails to address the immediate needs of small business owners who primarily need early market visibility and leaner processes to execute in terms of getting their social media deliverables onto appropriate platforms.

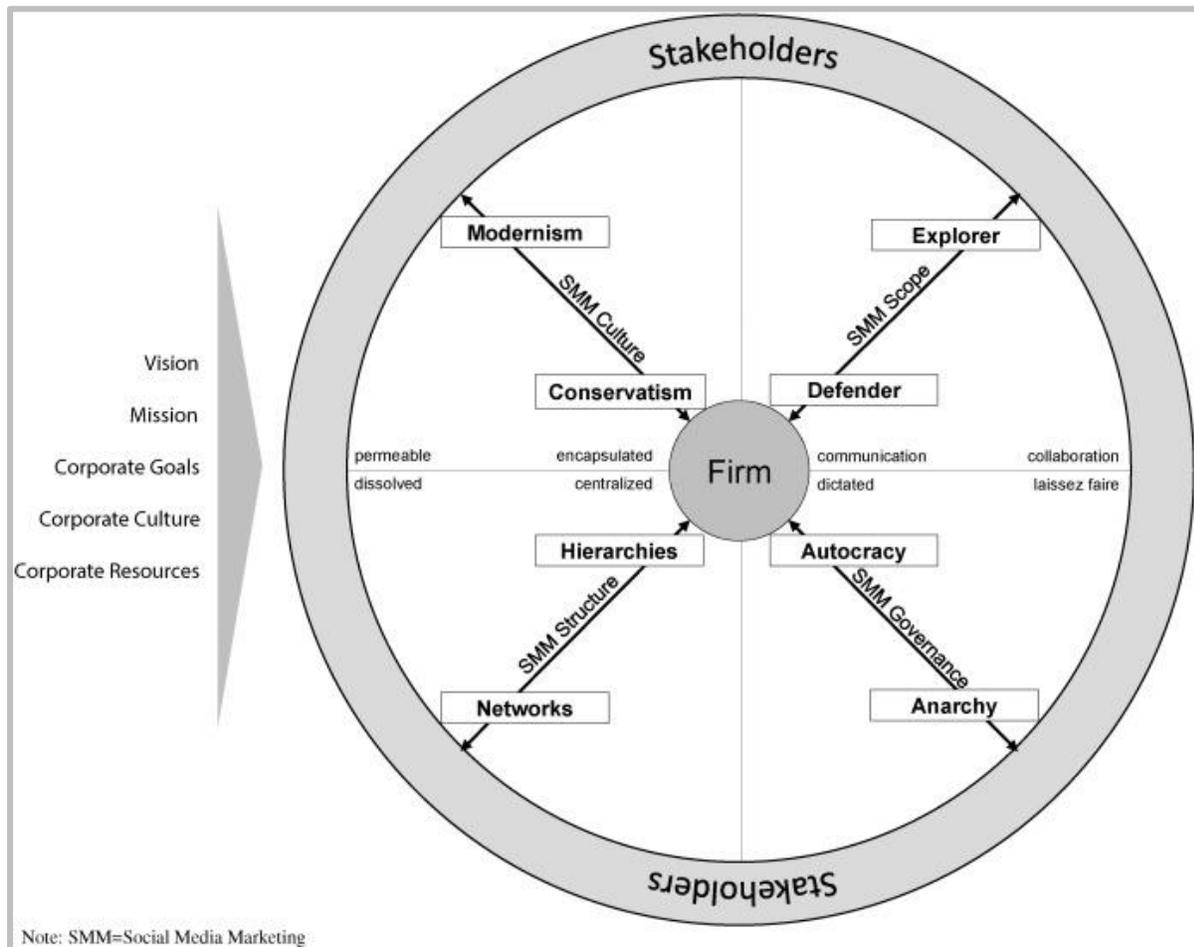


Figure 74: Social media marketing strategy framework (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017)

## 6.2 Formulating a Namibian framework

Looking at the existing frameworks, it is clear that a locally contextualized version is needed to meet the needs of small business owners who require greater agility and speed-to-market to drive growth through social media. It must however begin by a careful analysis of the themes presented in the data collected and the literature reviewed. As espoused in the previous chapter, some high-level findings from the data collection phase of this study touched on several aspects. These included the general distribution of SMEs in Namibia, with the majority of them falling within the arts, events and media industry. They further revealed the lack of a brand story for most of the brands, leading to incoherent and inconsistent brand marketing on social media. This was compounded by the findings of diminished performance of ads on long-term campaigns owing to ad fatigue, as well the importance and relevance of visual creatives to capturing and holding consumer attention. Summing up the above, the crucial question can thus be asked: what are some of the current best practices in social media marketing and analytics that are applicable for use by small businesses in Namibia? The incorporation of all this data and its attendant insights is captured in Figure 75, and bears out the result of applying a pragmatist approach. This involves the creation of solutions to real-world problems based on careful analysis of a specific problem, its pertaining data and in this case, the collective input of the study's participants. The social media analytics framework features 3 main aspects, and each is described below.

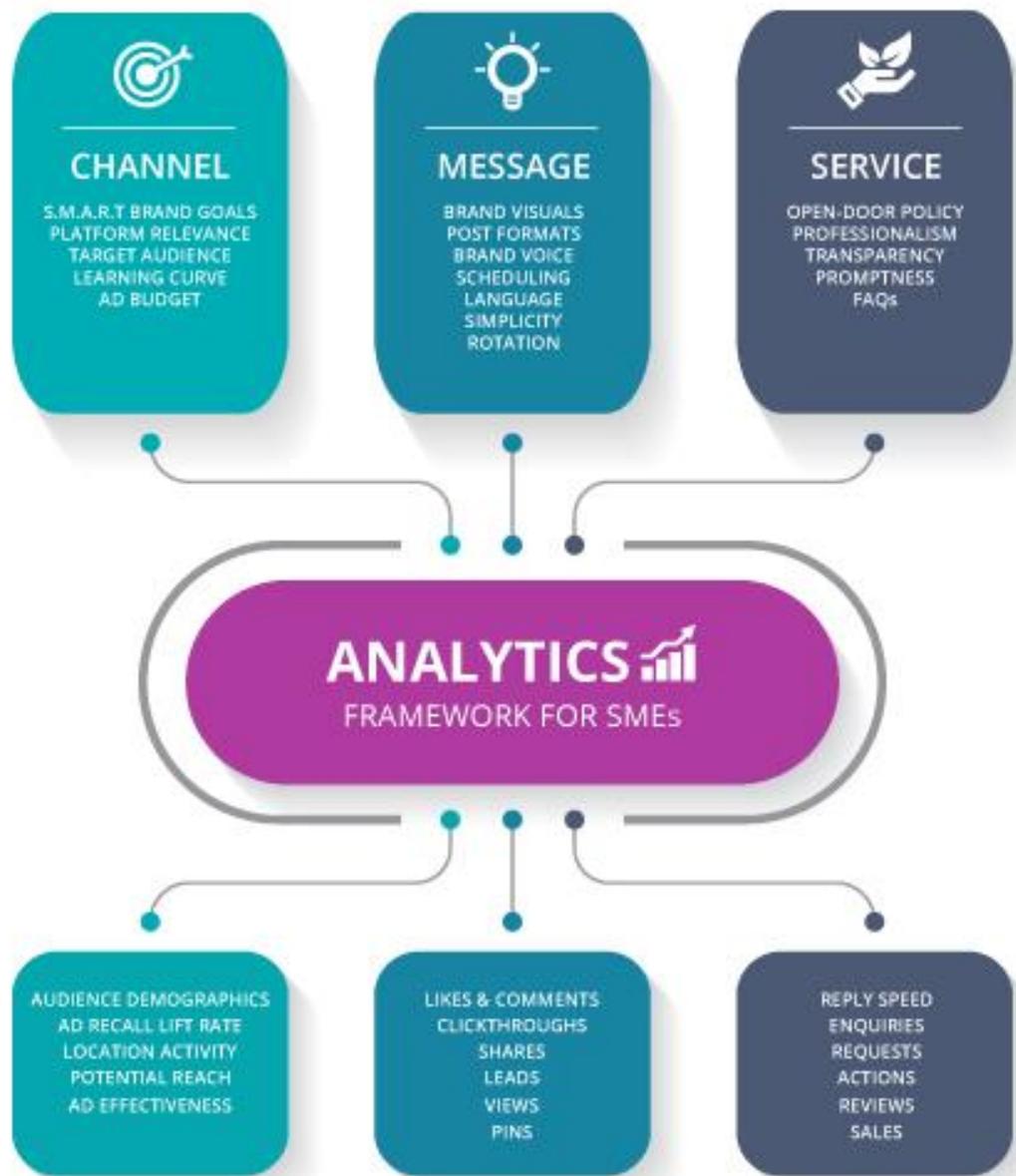


Figure 75: Social Media Marketing Framework for Namibian SMEs

### 6.2.1 Channel

The first pillar of the social media analytics framework for SMEs is the channel selection. In keeping with our adaptation of the D&M IS Success Model, channel relevance is what determines in large part the success of all the other pillars of the framework. This is due both to the procedural and causal effect that the choice of channel can have on the effectiveness of the message, the service and the use. The first attribute of this pillar is the establishment of S.M.A.R.T

goals pertaining to the brand's mission and vision. The acronym stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely, and represents guidelines for decision makers to follow when defining short and/or long-term objectives (Lawlor & Hornyak, 2012). Specific goals have clearly defined deliverables, measurable goals have benchmarks against which they can be assessed, attainable goals are grounded in reality, realistic goals take into consideration risks, strengths and available resources; while timely goals have clearly defined schedules.

Literature is clear on the need for guiding goals when it comes to allocating money to social media efforts (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Murdough, 2009). Due to the holistic nature of brand marketing, it is paramount that all touchpoints and communications channels are synergized in terms of the messaging that reaches customers. By adhering to this framework of goal-setting, SMEs can leverage good decision making to paint a picture of where they want their brands to be in the future. With S.M.A.R.T goals in mind, social media marketing becomes an easier endeavour with a defined outcome.

Platform relevance refers to the match between the brand's goals and the channel(s) chosen. A poor match has cascading effects on all the other pillars of the framework. As an example, a fashion-based retailer may find low channel relevance in setting up a LinkedIn profile for the company, especially if its brand goals are greater brand affinity and sales. This is because the target audience in large part determines the channel relevance of the platform to the brand. Using that example, the fashion-based retailer may find higher channel relevance on Instagram or Pinterest.

Defining a brand's target audience helps to delineate who it is talking to, how it will talk to them, when and where it will reach them, and how it should communicate with them. Literature places audience segmentation as an important aspect of marketing, and this is all the more important in the arena of social media where ad relevance plays a huge role in market reception, overall effectiveness and ultimately, ROI on marketing dollars (Foster, West, & Francescucci, 2011).

In addition to the platform relevance and target audience, brands have to take into consideration the learning curve of the platform in question. While most platforms aim for ease of use in terms of user experience and user interface, some platforms are demonstrably harder to learn how to

use. Success at besting the learning curve of a platform depends on several factors, including the expertise of the human capital behind the brand's social media channels, the amount of time they have to spend on social media efforts, the buy-in or support from its management team, and the presence and size of an ad budget for social media advertising purposes. In different combinations, these factors can determine the long-term success or failure of an SMEs social media efforts.

### 6.2.2 Channel metrics

Several metrics exist to track efforts on the channel front, and these can be extracted through secondary data analysis on the respective social media dashboards. Audience demographics are one way of ascertaining the actual makeup of a brand's social media following, broken down by various factors such as age and gender. The ad recall lift rate measures the estimated number of people who were expected to have remembered the brand's ad within 2 days of seeing the ad, if asked. This plays directly into the overall goal of brand awareness and, while only an estimate, provides a relatively reliable measure of a brand's impact on its social media audience.

Location activity refers to how active audiences from different locations are with regards to a brand's content. A brand operating in a specific country may find that its audience is most active in the capital, with downward-cascading levels of activity in the rural areas. Having this knowledge helps brands with market-planning and resource allocation, as well as with identifying areas of growing interest within the geographical locales they operate in. Defining a brand's audience within a geographical location as diverse as Namibia may prove challenging for brands whose audiences span several demographics, cultures, locations, tastes and age ranges. To give but one example, a brand campaign targeting Oshiwambo-speaking residents may geofence its social media delivery to the northern regions of the country, where the tribe is most concentrated. However, due to a natural flux of migration within regions, Otjiherero and Damara residents may be shown an ad written in Oshiwambo, which would lower the ad relevance for them and, as has already been seen from earlier chapters, increase the ad's cost per action for the brand. While this is an isolated example, it presents a point of consideration for SMEs who may wish to avert this issue by creating multiple ads within clearly defined ad sets.

This is complemented by the potential reach metric of a platform, providing an estimate of the total number of people that a brand could expect to reach within a certain locale; be it a town, major city or country. And finally, the ad effectiveness of a brand's campaign is expressed a number on certain platforms (like Facebook) and shows the relevance of the ad sets within the campaign to the target audience.

In this way, a brand can attempt to marry its short and long-term goals to the channels it chooses to engage on, and gauge the ROI of its overall efforts.

### 6.2.3 Message

The D&M IS Success Model defines information quality as a crucial aspect of the success of information systems, and this is no less relevant in the social media sphere. One of the most important aspects of a brand's messaging are its visuals, and this constitutes both its visual identity and the visual layout of its communications on social media. Quite a number of the currently popular global platforms are visually based, and literature provides firm evidence of visuals contributing to higher reach and engagement of social media audiences. The inclusion of this component in the social media framework is backed up by the perception of poor visual design in social media advertising by end users, and it can thus be reasonably inferred that better visual design should lead to better engagement rates.

Social media platforms offer a plethora of different post or "messaging" formats. These can range from text and photos, to video, sound and poll-based formats. Participants within the study initially showcased a lack of understanding of the different ad formats available on social media apart from the main ones, which included simple photo ads, video ads and link clicks. Ad formats like *Offers* and *Canvas* ads were not familiar to them, which presents a disadvantage as these two ad formats can contribute significantly to sales increases and ad visibility, respectively. By considering the formats of the marketing message, the platforms they will flight on and the budget that will carry the campaign throughout, SMEs can be confident of making sound marketing decisions that best meet their business goals.

It is important, however, to maintain a consistent brand "voice" across these formats for consistency. Furthermore, automation in the form of post scheduling and auto-responses can assist with workflow management, and lead to a more consistent experience for the end user in terms of content and assistance, respectively.

Namibia constitutes of several languages and cultures, and exploring these cultural and demographic differences may yield higher results for a brand's social media efforts to reach a diverse group of people. The messaging, however, should have a simple and clear focus in order to drive meaningful action. Finally, ad formats and executions should be rotated in order to reduce ad fatigue and maintain both novelty and engagement.

#### 6.2.4 Message metrics

The metrics used to measure the efficacy of a brand's message on social media are varied and depend on the goals in question. The basic benchmarks are likes, comments and upvotes; clickthroughs to web links; shares and retweets to feeds and external audiences; leads captured from lead generation ads; video views from pre-recorded and live videos; and post pins on sites like Pinterest. While this doesn't not represent an exhaustive list of the metrics that can be used to measure messaging effectiveness, they provide immediate feedback as to how well a brand's posts and ads are doing on their social media channels, and thus allow brands to tweak their strategy in the short, medium and long-term.

#### 6.2.5 Service

One of the enduring aspects of social media is its capacity for two-way dialogue between brands and their audiences. While social media platforms allow brands to disseminate their messages across a wide range of formats and locales, it can also be used to solicit feedback from the audiences in order to improve brand offerings and services. Social media platforms can be used as veritable "helplines" through which customers can seek out and receive help on various topics pertaining to a brand, including its goods and services. For this reason, brands looking to strengthen their open-door policies with regards to audience interaction can expect to leverage the power of social media platforms for candid engagement and problem resolution.

A key attribute of this goal is professionalism, wherein brands must maintain ethics and netiquette (net etiquette) when dealing with queries, complaints and compliments. Another vital attribute is transparency, which can refer to either of two things. The first is transparency of information, wherein pertinent information about the brand is displayed prominently and openly on its social media channels, using appropriate real estate such as the bio, the About section, and even the cover and/or header to convey information about its operating hours, the location of its premises, the services offered and any applicable prices. The second is transparency of resolution, wherein issues that are brought up in public areas such comment sections and reply threads are solved as best as possible on the same platforms, for the benefit of other audience members who may be watching or reading. This latter aspect has the added benefit of reducing the number of repeated or similar enquiries about the same issues.

Responding promptly to queries, complaints and compliments shows expediency and reassures customers that service delivery is a top priority for the brand. Finally, a section on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) could be set up on a brand's social media platforms (using the Notes feature on Facebook, for example) in order to cover common queries and provide a ready resource to direct consumers to.

#### 6.2.6 Service metrics

Promptness in responding to queries and complaints can be directly measured on certain social media platforms like Facebook, which calculates and displays the average expected response time of a brand towards its customers. In order to improve the perception of service quality, it is in a brand's best interests to respond to queries as quickly as possible. Features like auto-responders can serve to inform customers that their queries have been received and will be attended to at a later stage by an appropriate brand representative.

Expediency in query responses encourages further enquiries, which can also be a direct result of increased interest in a brand's offerings either through posts or ads on the platform. The flipside of this manifests as increased requests for new features or ways to improve the brand's service, which can provide important clues as to how their customers perceive the quality of their

offerings in relation to competitors. Actions are classified differently on each social media platform, and may range from a "follow" or "Page like" to clicking on the "Call Now", "Book Now" and "Learn More" call-to-action buttons.

Recommendations and reviews are displayed in the form of star ratings on sites such as Yelp and Facebook, and can help to draw in more customers. Word of mouth and peer reviews are arguably two of the strongest marketing tools in a brand's arsenal, and a high number of positive reviews is a metric that can be tracked and worked towards. Finally, the most important metric of service is an increase in sales. This is the biggest driver of profitability for a business, and the most obvious indicator of ROI for social media advertising efforts. While this cannot currently be empirically tracked across all social media platforms, other web and digital platforms (such as Google Analytics) can provide accurate estimates of earned sales through clickthrough analytics. In other locales such as the United State and the United Kingdom, it is possible to track sales on Facebook and Instagram due to new marketplace capabilities being trialled in select countries and with select brands.

### 6.3 Framework analysis: strengths and weaknesses

While not meant to be an exhaustive list of all possible KPIs and metrics that Namibian SMEs could aspire to, it provides a guide that fledgling startups can follow to reach a decent level of social media success. The framework shows robustness within the context of serving the marketing needs of Namibian SMEs. It puts an emphasis on holistic brand planning, which has been shown through the data to be a lacking component of the business success of local brands. It further delineates clear guidelines on audience segmentation, an aspect of marketing that helps to target the right market for a product or service. This is bolstered by campaign and creative planning, an aspect of the framework that encourages the use of different ad formats, graphics and copy to boost engagement and results. Finally, it emphasizes evaluation of campaign performance through relevant metrics related to the overall business goals of the SME in question. These strengths are aimed towards improving the marketing efforts of local brands when it comes to social media advertising and analytics.

The weaknesses of the framework lie in the lack of a clear strategy on components such as vernacular advertising. As a relatively new area of focus or research in terms of local social media campaigns, this is something that would need to be built up externally through educational institutions, public lectures, and free or paid courses by skilled practitioners. The framework is also built on collected data that mostly focused on a younger demographic, and is thus largely untested on older customers. Lastly, an evaluation of the framework itself will need to be carried out by subsequent SME owners in order to ascertain the efficacy and relevance of its components. Furthermore, while the framework has been crafted specifically for the Namibian context, an attempt to port it to different locales will first require extensive preliminary research on the needs and wants of the SMEs in that region, followed by an alignment of the results to any potential redesign of the framework.

The guidelines within the framework were meant to provide a clear strategy to follow when taking brand communications from the boardroom to the newsfeed. The framework contains some similarities to existing guidelines but takes into account the local context within which SME owners and brand managers find themselves. It also touches more on the creative aspect of social media marketing design that is generally left to the discretion of brand managers. However, certain aspects of this framework warrant further exploration in future research, and these will be touched upon in the next and final chapter.

# Chapter 7: Conclusion

Literature has shown time and again the value of leveraging social media platforms to reach new audiences, improve brand awareness, drive tangible results and provide value for small to medium enterprises. These benefits, while beneficial at a top level, still require a deeper understanding of how the technicalities of the platforms, strategies for deployment and evaluation of results work. The relatively busy schedules, strained resources and general lack of knowledge that SMEs face tends to hamper efforts towards this, and having a guiding framework within which to plan, deploy and monitor results can be helpful for them. Within the context of Namibia as a developing country with a fairly limited grasp of the intricacies of social media, such frameworks are expected to prove extremely useful and contextualized.

Our research findings unearthed several insights with regards to the social media marketing strength of SMEs, their self-reported perceptions on the marketing channels and their most common patterns when it came to campaign planning. These insights have been employed in creating a framework that is localized, easy to follow, and easy to track in terms of returns on investments. The framework further allows for creative freedom guided by general principles to ensure a high quality, cognitively and visually pleasing outcome. Lastly, it takes into consideration the local context within which SMEs find themselves, inviting players in the social media space to take full advantage of the myriad cultural approaches available to them.

## 7.1 Achievements

The aim of research is to clearly link the results of collected data to initially set-out research questions, and show how these have been answered. At the beginning of this study, there were a number of research questions and objectives related to social media marketing and BI that were posed, and these are tackled individually below.

The first research question posed was how social media analytics relates to BI. Review of the literature as well as in-field data showed us that gaining a firmer understanding of a brand's

potential client base helped it to craft better, more relevant and more targeted marketing communications to help it achieve its business goals.

Secondly, what metrics can be used to determine the relationship between social media analytics and BI? The answer to this question varies depending on the primary business goals of the brand. New brands might be more interested in initial market penetration, and would thus draw more value from tracking their brand recall lift rates, ad reach, and impressions, for example. Sales-oriented brands might benefit more from optimizing their costs per result and ad relevance scores. Companies driving short term promotions might be more interested in link traffic and video views, while brands of all types would need to keep an eye on post engagement rates and demographic breakdowns.

How, then, could social media analytics be applied by Namibian businesses to enhance their BI and brand-building? This could be achieved by being cognizant of the three Ps fleshed out in Chapter 5: the perceptions of SME owners (our target audience for consumer education), the presentation of their brands on social media, and the placement of their consumer-facing communications on the various available platforms.

How much knowledge do local SMEs possess regarding social media analytics strategies and BI? Field evidence showed that knowledge was still limited across the board. This was further hampered by negative perceptions about the costs and learning curve of advertising on social media learning, both of which could be alleviated by better public education. Consistency was key in this regard, as the current frequency of public social media marketing education was sporadic at best.

How, then, does BI combine with cultural context and visual design to improve SME marketing initiatives? Taking stock of the local context within which a business finds itself helps it to incorporate salient aspects of the culture into its brand messaging. Different age and cultural segments of the population respond more readily to different messaging tones, visual styles and language choices in ads, and these should be explored through split testing and ad rotation to determine what works for each particular brand or campaign (Kohavi & Longbotham, 2017).

Improving this aspect will lead to increased intent to use the platforms and consume more brand messaging, enriching the process of gathering analytics and thus BI.

To recap, here was our main research objective:

- To design a formalized SMM and analytics framework to improve BI and brand building for Namibian SMEs

The sub-objectives of the research were furthermore to:

- Evaluate current knowledge on social media analytics strategies and its link to BI among Namibian SMEs;
- Define the relationship between SMA and BI
- Analyse targeted social media strategies and their effectiveness with regards to business objectives
- Evaluate the effectiveness of various social media analytics metrics and tools on BI
- Design a locally contextualized social media analytics framework related to BI

Based on these objectives, it can be confidently concluded that the main objective has been achieved. Furthermore, the current knowledge that SME owners have with regards to social media and analytics strategies has been evaluated, with the findings showing a need for improvement. Social media strategies from literature were further analysed, and their strengths and shortcomings critically explored, eventually finding a need for a Namibian version that can cater to local SMEs. Different social media evaluation metrics were explored and evaluated, and all these findings from literature and the data collection process were amalgamated to design a locally contextualized social media analytics framework. By successfully achieving all the objectives set forth at the beginning of the research, a groundwork has been laid for future studies in the area that subsequent researchers can base their research on.

## 7.2 Limitations of the research

This research was limited in scope by several factors. The first of these was the irregular attendance patterns of the focus group participants. A lack of consistent data meant that only a

limited amount of data could be inferred (most notably the audit data), and no long-term analytics data could be collected. The second factor lay in the non-randomized nature of the case study participant selection process. Since there was no way of selecting random SMEs to work with, care needs to be taken about generalizing the findings to other similarly-sized entities. The third factor was the relatively limited local literature on the topic, which somewhat hampered efforts in drawing parallels and making comparisons to previous research.

### 7.3 Relevance of the research

This research plugs a significant gap in the literature on local social media marketing strategies for SMEs. It features a relatively thorough coverage on existing social media platforms, their histories, their strengths and weaknesses, their most beneficial uses, their currently existing ad formats and the best practises for advertising on each platform. It further gives an overview of self-reported perceptions about social media from end-users, providing a springboard for future research into social media usage, addiction and regulation. Moreover, it provides a bird's eye view of the types of campaigns that corporate entities plan, run and derive the most value from. From an organizational perspective, this provides an edge in campaign planning, competitor analysis and best practises for improving ROI. Theoretically speaking, this research adapts the popular D&M IS Success Model successfully to the realm of social media and contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of IS research. Most importantly, this research provides a comprehensive starting point for future researchers who wish to study the impact of social media within the local landscape. Recommendations in this regard are explored next.

### 7.4 Recommendations for future research

The social media landscape is vast and provides ample opportunities within which significant research strides can be made. Looking at the limitations of this research, a few recommendations for future research can be provided, which are detailed below.

#### 7.4.1 Niche marketing

The commercial landscape consists of businesses in several different niches and verticals, all of which need market visibility in order to maintain consumer market share and drive profits. Research into social media marketing for local niche markets such as healthcare, capital investment, agriculture, tailoring and others would help to make significant strides in overall understanding of local marketing strategies.

#### 7.4.2 Vernacular Messaging

The vast geographical breadth and cultural variety of Namibia provides many opportunities to experiment with culturally-contextual brand messaging. This could manifest in visual, textual, aural or graphical formats, each tailored to reach a specific audience, community, locale or generational cohort. Research into this would help close a gap in our understanding of how to market more effectively in the languages that local consumers speak.

#### 7.4.3 E-Commerce

While this research provides a good starting point for learning about social media strategy, it doesn't go into detail on the coupling of social media marketing with e-commerce. The e-commerce space in Namibia is still relatively nascent, while major brands all over the globe have already heavily integrated social media into their e-commerce growth strategies. Research into this area would help to further stimulate the growth of local e-commerce ventures and drive tangible results for entrepreneurs.

#### 7.4.4 Cross-platform engagement strategies

Certain social media platforms come with advertising limitations when it comes to some countries. For example, Pinterest advertising is not yet available in a lot of African countries, Namibia included. Cross-platform engagement strategies would thus seek to answer the question of how engagement can be driven on Pinterest from existing social media platforms that do allow advertising. For instance, ads could be run on Facebook inviting customers and Page fans to check

out new developments, content or promotions on the brand's Pinterest page. As another example, teen-focused brands could use Twitter to drive traffic to their Snapchat feeds, since both channels feature significant teen and young adult presences. Understanding and formulating best practices in this arena could improve the ROI of marketing efforts and grow communities on diverse platforms.

#### 7.4.5 Mobile social media marketing optimization

The digital world is slowly moving from a "responsive design" approach, where apps and sites were creating for PC first and then ported to mobile, to a "mobile first" approach where features and capabilities are designed with the mobile user in mind. Social media platforms provide lots of new experiences and opportunities for these mobile users, from Instant Canvas on Facebook to IGTV (Instagram TV) where videos are meant to be shot with the phone upright, specifically to take advantage of the way cell phones are naturally held. Adapting to these new offerings requires a rethinking of marketing strategy, media production approaches and overall consumer journey mapping. Research into this area would go a long way in cementing general knowledge of these vital facets of the mobile marketing experience.

#### 7.4.6 Media production strategy

Following on the previous recommendation, the marketers of the future will need to adapt their media production workflows to the new features and affordances of social platforms. This will mean shooting video for mobile, creating content for mobile consumption, and improving overall user experience and user interfaces to best suit use on mobile devices. Research into this area would provide a good starting point for future content creators and designers.

#### 7.4.7 Social media safety, security and privacy

With increasing rates of social media adoption, it is imperative that users be educated on how to stay safe on social media. This applies not only to media consumption, but touches on advertising ethics and user control over how much data is to be handed over to developers, advertisers and

other third parties. Research in this area would help to inform policy, improve advertising methods and reduce the risk of spam, phishing, and the spread of “fake news”.

#### 7.4.8 Social media use

With increasing usage and addiction rates, users will need to be educated on how to regulate their time spent online. More research into this within a Namibian context could help reduce health problems associated with prolonged social media use, increase productivity in the workplace and provide a healthier balance for end users.

#### 7.4.9 Pedagogical methods

Practising social media marketing strategies is distinct from teaching about social media strategies, and these teaching and learning methods provide an avenue for fresh research to be undertaken. Being able to convey the core principles of social media management to groups of non-socially savvy participants helps to improve overall social media maturity in academia, business and personal lives.

#### 7.4.10 Social media curriculum integrations

As of this writing, social media is still generally taught in Namibia as a last-minute addition to marketing courses without taking into account the full impact that social media can have on an organization’s processes. Researching and devising new curricula structures that lend more weight to social media would create new specialists in the field locally, improve the overall research output of marketing and digital programs, and cement social media as a viable career path for curious enthusiasts.

These recommendations form part of a non-exhaustive list of research directions that academics within local institutions could take to increase knowledge within the social media space. Social media is a diverse field that touches on several different aspects, from business processes, to HR and employer branding, to thought leadership, product design, customer service and much more. Future researchers are thus invited to find the gaps within knowledge and plug these with

research that seeks to discover existing opportunities, explain current challenges and define new solutions.

## Appendix A: Poster Sample

# Free **Social Media Marketing** Classes

Learn how to establish yourself on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube. Master the art of content creation, analytics and audience engagement to boost sales and profits. Classes held weekly.

## What you will learn:

- ✓ How to better reach your audience
- ✓ Audience segmentation
- ✓ Social media advertising tools
- ✓ Understanding and tracking analytics
- ✓ Basic graphic design for posters
- ✓ Basics of photography and imagery
- ✓ Email marketing, and much more!

## How it works:

- Get in touch with us and give us your name, contact details and a few basics about your business.
- A full audit of your brand will be done in the first week to determine what you're doing wrong (and right).
- Each week, you will submit a progress report on how your Page(s) are doing on each platform. We will give you a template to complete.
- Best of all, it's **absolutely free!** Classes will take place once a week, after working hours.

**CLASSES HELD WEEKLY!**  
**CALL 081 692 7707 TO JOIN**  
**EMAIL: mo@mohammedshehu.com**

Hosted by: IMO SHE MEDIA

Appendix B: Audit Form Sample

# AUDIT SHEET

**Entrepreneur's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. BRAND AUDIT - What is your brand message all about?

**Name:** .....

**Industry:** .....

**Message, mission, vision, values:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Target audiences:**

.....  
.....  
.....

## 2. SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE AUDIT - How big is your current social media following?

Platform	Brand Name on Platform	Followers	Branded? (Y/N)	Automated? (Y/N)

## Appendix C: Questionnaire Sample

### 14. How do you feel about ads in your feed?

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I like checking out ads on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes click ads by accident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I stop watching videos the moment I see an ad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could turn off all ads on my social media feeds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would honestly pay a small fee every month just to ensure I never see ads on my feeds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consistently use adblockers on one or more of my browsers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind ads on my social media feeds - they just need to be relevant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendix D: Questionnaire Sample 2



### 16. How do you feel about creating ads on social media?

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I would use (or have used) WhatsApp Stories to advertise my product, service or cause	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use (or have used) Instagram Stories to advertise my product, service or cause	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use (or have used) Facebook Stories to advertise my product, service or cause	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use (or have used) Twitter to advertise my product, service or cause	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use (or have used) Snapchat to advertise my product, service or cause	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use (or have used) LinkedIn to advertise my product, service or cause	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to create ads on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to get better at marketing on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix E: Non-Parametric Correlations

			Adsfeed	Adsbusiness	Adscreate	Usage	Average_Posts	Age
Spearman's rho	Adsfeed	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.105	-.037	-.005	-.078	-.043
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.164	.627	.950	.296	.564
		N	182	176	173	182	182	182
	Adsbusiness	Correlation Coefficient	.105	1.000	.045	.015	.159*	-.150*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.164	.	.557	.840	.032	.042
		N	176	183	173	183	183	183
	Adscreate	Correlation Coefficient	-.037	.045	1.000	-.050	-.007	.033
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.627	.557	.	.510	.921	.665
		N	173	173	179	179	179	179
	Usage	Correlation Coefficient	-.005	.015	-.050	1.000	-.001	-.012
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.950	.840	.510	.	.984	.869
		N	182	183	179	206	206	206
	Average_Posts	Correlation Coefficient	-.078	.159*	-.007	-.001	1.000	.028
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.296	.032	.921	.984	.	.688
		N	182	183	179	206	206	206
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	-.043	-.150*	.033	-.012	.028	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.564	.042	.665	.869	.688	.
		N	182	183	179	206	206	206

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix F: Social media marketing tips for businesses

Social media presents infinite options of reaching new audiences in novel ways. However, a lack of understanding of some core concepts can lead to ineffective campaigns, wastage of ad dollars, lost fans and possible brand damage. These core concepts are briefly detailed below, and can be applied across networks, industries and content types (Evans, 2008; G. Taylor, 2012).

- Use free social media to beta-test paid social ads

Before delving into the world of paid ads, it is easy to pre-qualify the types of content that best resonates with an audience. By simply tracking which types of posts get engagement on users' newsfeeds, this information can then be applied to paid advertising campaigns, at scale.

- Take advantage of targeting features

While traditional mass media platforms can only offer up limited demographical information on audiences, digital marketing allows for far more granular targeting based on interests, behaviours, travel patterns, social circles, devices used, and more. Taking full advantage of these highly targeted filters will lend a boost to ad effectiveness on social media platforms.

- Rotate ads frequently

It takes a certain number of impressions to establish a brand's message in the minds of consumers. However, due to the fast-paced and ever-changing nature of digital media, fresh content remains vital to keeping audiences engaged and maintaining or improving mindshare.

- Test frequently

Instant feedback is one of the greater virtues of social media advertising. Testing different creative executions (by altering text, image, tone, etc.) on different audience samples helps to determine what works and what doesn't, in order to maximize effectiveness.

- Design for mobile first

Social media platforms are increasingly being accessed from mobile devices, and thus the philosophy of "mobile-first" should remain firmly entrenched in all digital marketing initiatives.

Content, especially visual, should be optimized for mobile screen sizes and data consumption capabilities.

While not an exhaustive list by any means, these tips on content, platform and audience optimization hopefully present a guide toward more optimized digital advertising.

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