CHAPTER 1
Orientation and background

1.1   INTRODUCTION

1.1.1   The influence of media through its omnipresence

In modern society media is ubiquitous. Through its pervasiveness it plays an inextricable role in society, impacting on culture, economy, politics, education and communication (Fourie, 2001a:xix, McQuail:2010:23). The media reflects and depicts different forms of culture and practices; be they historic, contemporary or futuristic (Lemon, 2001:354). There is a dynamic relationship between media and societal norms that is driven by positive feedback, with the media, particularly information communication technology media, simultaneously effecting change in society and being affected by it (Dimmick, Feaster, & Hoplamazian, 2010:2; McQuail: 2010:81). Societies are exposed to a plethora of media on a daily basis: ranging from mass to personal, international to local, traditional formats to newer digital types such as social media and mobile phones. The acceptance rate of different media formats is seemingly influenced by demographics; for example, the youth have exhibited a greater preference for digital media than older generations (Stald, 2008:145). The media ecology is changing constantly.

1.1.2   The role of information communication technology in globalisation

Increasingly global influences are affecting local societies introducing a degree of homogeneity, but equally the tools of globalisation also allow local cultures to be shared globally (Fourie, 2001d:593). It is important to note that the marketing and communication sector is just one of many industries experiencing the effects of globalisation (Fourie, 2001d:595). According to Giddens (1999) the four antecedents contributing to globalisation are: a) administrative power, b) industrialisation, c) capitalism, and d) militarism. Relating these characteristics of globalisation to marketing and/or marketing communication, the

characteristics of industrialisation with the development of technology and capitalism to generate profit stand out as significant motivators.

Industrialisation as a driving force

In terms of industrialisation, the formation of global culture is in part driven by the development of information communication technology (ICT), especially telecommunications and computer technologies in media, which a) facilitates instant access to constantly changing knowledge and information (Fourie & Oosthuizen, 2001:415; Fourie, 2001d:593), b) greater connectivity between people and organisations globally c) new media formats, such as social media platforms like *Twitter*, and d) new media types, for example tablets (Apple's *ipad* and Research In Motion's *Playbook*).

ICT developments do not just offer new communication media but also provide transactional platforms. New media have introduced new characteristics such as increased interactivity, more sociability, more autonomy over content, and greater opportunity for personalised communication (Fourie, 2001c:252). Telecommunications have changed and will continue to change the way the world operates, promoting greater global connectivity. Based on this connectivity, a distinguishing feature of present civilization, Fourie (2001c:253) refers to this era as the "network society" to distinguish it from the "information society" of other earlier periods, following the industrialisation period. Topical examples of the impact of social media have been witnessed by the recent *Arab Spring* uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, as well as mobilising mobs to riot in the United Kingdom in 2011. Social media networks accessed through mobile phones and computers allowed information to spread virally, in real-time, which enabled groups to mobilise and accelerate these events exponentially (Ingram, 2011; Miladi, 2011).

Capitalism as a driving force

Capitalism, the second influencer identified as a proponent of the globalisation of media and communication, has been a key driver in the profitability of media organisations, who largely derive their profits from licensing, subscriptions, direct sales and commercialisation

through advertising (Hackley, 2010:108). Media institutions operate in a highly competitive profit driven environment (Schultz & Schultz, 2004:8).

Some operational elements particular to the media sector can be highlighted as:

- Firstly, the media usually involves high fixed costs to support it, in addition to typical overhead expenses, licensing fees, maintenance of specialised equipment, and production and distribution costs.

- Secondly, most crucially, media owners require suitable content to attract and sustain audiences. Therefore there is a need to commission and produce content that is appealing to audiences (Oosthuizen, 2001:183). If a media owner does not have a viable audience and suitable content to uphold its audience it risks redundancy. Maintaining public interest in the media is paramount to the success of media houses.

- Thirdly, there is a tendency towards concentration. Entities with a vested interest in media are inclined to monopolise this interest through the acquisition of other media enterprises. For instance print publishers seek broadcasting rights and *vice versa* increasing concentration of ownership (Fourie, 2001b:107). Consider for example, Rupert Murdoch's wide range of global media interests. Concentration provides a competitive advantage. Following this reasoning, media houses that lack digital media offerings and want to remain competitive could consider buying competitive advantage through the purchase of existing commercially viable digital entities. One of the challenges of new media has been to formulate profitable business models, especially with digital media consumers having grown used to accessing content on the Internet for free as well as the practice of sharing copyrighted material using peer-to-peer technology.

In the media field there is direct competition for advertisers and consumers between the same media types and indirect competition among different media (Fourie, 2001b:110). New media is competing with older forms. For older media to remain relevant they have to adapt; identify new consumer needs, change formats and improve accessibility. Some of the threats new media pose to older media are fewer barriers to entry, notably cost, it

promotes consumer-generated content and is highly interactive. These threats may contest power dynamics between traditional media owners and the public.

Convergence of information and communication technology facilitates not only the development of new media forms but also changes traditional media by infusing traditional media with digital media to present innovative media offerings (Fourie, 2001b:114). Many media owners offer content across media types, for example, radio station broadcasts are audio streamed via the Internet. These same radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and television stations post content on their websites, which provides an interactive platform for their audiences, moving away from the traditional one-way communication model to offer a more participatory experience amongst stakeholders (Fourie, 2001c:216). Media owners have also begun to set up mobile and social sites as alternative platforms for audiences to access and interact with content. There is a marked effort for increased flexibility in marketing and marketing communication practices. Sense and response strategies have become apparent, whereby marketers adjust their marketing activities in response to consumer reactions.

The media channels and vehicles that media institutions serve to the public, such as print, television, radio and Internet broadcasts, act as conduits between marketers and consumers, enabling marketers to reach their target audiences through advertising and featured content in their target markets' preferred mediums. Advertising is a tool in marketers' arsenals to help turn profit for marketers, by promoting their products to consumers and competing against rivals for a share of the consumer wallet. Media, or in more popular terms touchpoints, are instruments of marketing communication.

1.1.3 Disruptive society

The universe operates as an open system interacting chaotically with elements from its internal and external environments (Brown, 1995:89; Stapleton, 2008:19). The scale and scope of digital media influences on society have exceeded the effects of any preceding medium innovation (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, Sey, 2004). Digital media has been integrated into most levels of contemporary society to varying degrees, albeit less

prevalent in developing markets; for instance in South Africa, 75% of the adult population use mobile phones, but only 25% have a laptop or computer in their home, and in the past seven days just 16% accessed the Internet (All media products survey 2010A6). Prominent contributing factors to digital integration include: the rapid and widespread penetration of digital devices; improved accessibility to the Internet from multiple gadgets; the versatility and ongoing advancement of digital media properties; and the continual development of new applications. Whilst discontinuous innovation may be prominent in the information communication technology (ICT) sector it is not limited to this sector, it permeates all areas of society, and consequently introduces change.

One effect of the speed and frequency of change is the generation of a disruptive society, which has contributed to diversity, in that individuals are in different stages of acceptance or rejection of the various innovations they encounter. Diversity in society is also evident through the co-existence of multiple cultures and sub-cultures, which add further to the complexity of societal systems.

These rapid and continual societal changes present real challenges to the marketing discipline, both from an academic and practitioner perspective. These changes have not gone unnoticed. Academics consider *postmodernism* to provide an explanation of these cultural transformations (Brown, 1994:28; Firat & Dholakia, 2006:123; Jameson, 2006:484; Poster, 2006:533; Samuels, 2008:221) to distinguish these cultural changes from the *modernism* movement. Postmodernism will be addressed in detail in Chapter 2, however the fundamental cultural features of postmodernism are:

- Globalisation and capitalism have accelerated production and consumption, consequently the world runs around the clock (Brown, 2006:213).
- The world consists of multiple and diverse cultures (Firat & Dholakia, 2006:126; Firat, Dholakia & Venkatesh, 1995:41; Samuels, 2008:221).
- Despite a toleration of differences, this does not mean the abolishment of preference (Firat & Dholakia, 2006:127; Samuels, 2008:221).
- Truths and values are socially constructed (Firat *et al.*, 1995:40; Samuels, 2008:221).

- Individuals' interpretations of a single text or sign will not necessarily be the same. Their interpretation is subject to their unique perspectives, which is a product of Poststructuralism (Firat & Dholakia, 2006:126; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:110; Samuels, 2008:222).

- The mixing together and fusion of components from different cultures, which is termed *pastiche* (Brown, 2006:213; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:113; Samuels, 2008:222).

- A focus on the here and now (Firat & Dholakia, 2006:128).

- A disregard of modernism's grand narratives (Brown 2006:214; Firat & Dholakia, 2006:126; Kumar, 2005:107; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:113). Modernism, as a cultural movement directly contrasts postmodernism. In brief modernism is characterised by order, objectivity, rational and linear thinking in pursuit of universal beliefs. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is characterised by complexity, disorder, subjectivity and a belief in pluralism which allows for the co-existence of multiple beliefs.

Although the aforementioned features form the basis for postmodernism in a cultural context, the various disciplines applying postmodernism assign different meanings to the term (Brown, 2006:212; Brown, 1994:28; Firat *et al.*, 1995:41). One consideration is that the concept of postmodernism has evolved within each of the disciplines that embraced it, so naturally its meaning has morphed over time. For instance, *minimalism* in art and design could be thought of as postmodernism. Nonetheless, ambiguity exists in the interpretation of postmodernism depending on the context and this in itself is characteristic of the postmodern phenomenon.

Postmodernism is not exempt from criticism. Some argue that it is *passé* (Kirby, 2009; Vermeulen & Van den Akker, 2010). But the question of what replaces postmodernism remains. Kirby (2009) suggests *digimodernism*, Vermeulen and Van den Akker (2010) propose *metamodernism*, and Samuels (2008) puts forward *automodernism*. As yet none of these propositions have attained sufficient support to firmly replace postmodernism as the dominant cultural movement. This is not to say that postmodernism is the definitive movement, to say so would be uncharacteristically postmodern, however in the absence of

a suitable successor, postmodernism remains a relevant paradigm for a) its wide applicability, b) its capability to provide reasonable explanation for cultural shifts in contemporary society, and c) the fact that postmodernism does not prescribe an absolute beginning or end, rather it is a process through which one is able derive potential solutions.

1.1.4 From modern to postmodern society

According to Firat and Dholakia (2006:123), the shift from modernism to postmodernism is a result of a dramatic cultural change and accelerated development in technology, especially in the domain of digital communication and electronic transactions, which collectively have driven change and continue to transform culture. Table 1.1 summarises some philosophical shifts that have occurred in the transition from modern to postmodern society encompassing domains of reality, human, consumption, consumers, organisation and marketing communication. Furthermore, Table 1.1 shows that most of the postmodern philosophies are polar opposites of their modern counterparts.

Table 1.1: Transitions from modern to postmodern philosophies

MODERN ORIENTATION	POSTMODERN ORIENTATION
• There is reality/truth 'out there', independent of human agency.	• The reality/truth 'out there' has been constructed through cultural processes of hype, simulation, imaginary.
• Structures are given and can only be changed through 'laws' inherent in these structures.	• Structures are constructed and they transform with changes in culturally constructed conventions and perspectives.
• The subject and object are distinct and separable.	• The subject and object are often indistinguishable and exchangeable.
• The subject controls and acts upon the object.	• The subject and object act upon each other
• The individual and the social are distinct and separable.	• The individual and social are overlapping and inseparable.
• Consumption is the opposite of production, it is depletion of value created in production.	• Consumption is a moment in the continuous cycle of production.
• Consumption is the end.	• Consumption is a means for creation of meaning and substance in life.
• Purpose of the consumer is to replenish energies and amass material possessions.	• Purpose of the post-consumer/performer is to produce life experiences and meanings.
• The consumer is a chooser among alternatives that are available in the market.	• The post-consumer /performer is a constructor of alternatives.
• The consumer is a 'customer'.	• The post-consumer/performer is a 'marketer'.
• Organisation has boundaries that distinguish it from its customers.	• Organisation and post-consumers/performers relate without boundaries.
• Organisation is an entity distinct from 'others'.	• Organisation is a network of relationships indistinct from 'others'.

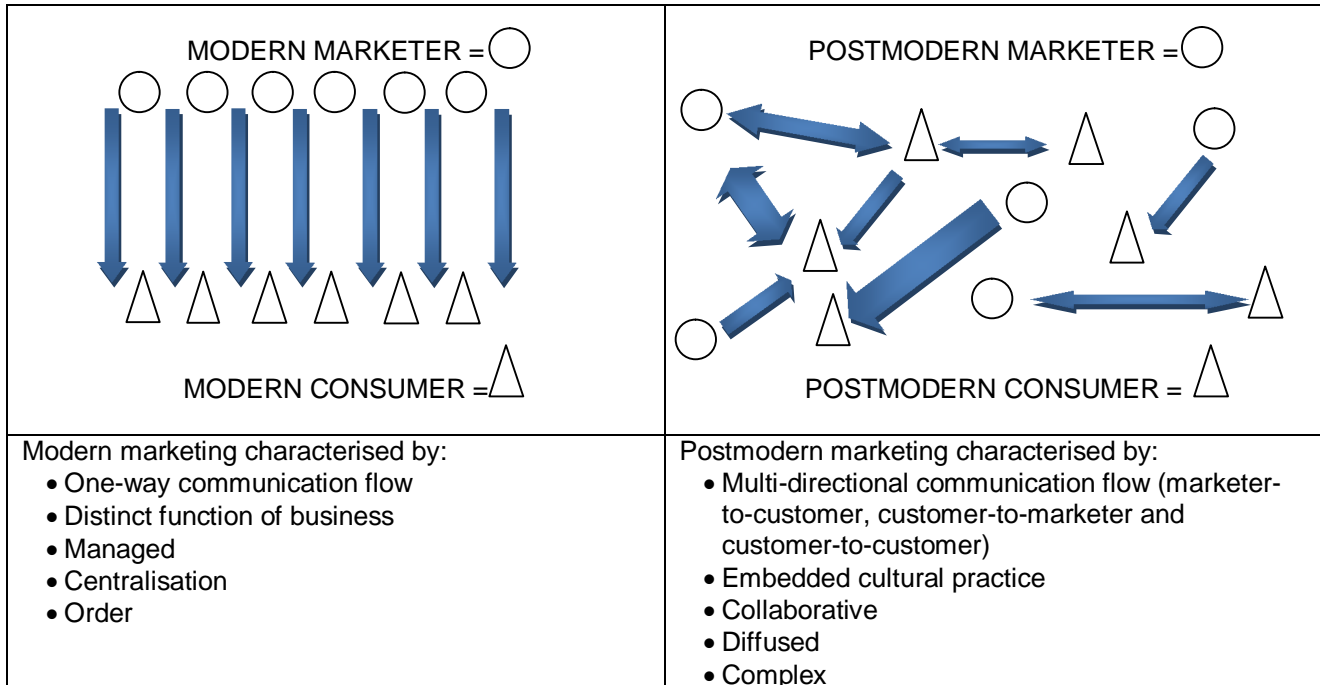|	
• Organisation exists to provide for society's' needs.	• Organisation is a network of/for society's desires.
• Communication is a composed set of signs to be transmitted to others.	• Communication is a process of co-producing symbolic meanings.
• The author (encoder) determines the meaning of the message.	• The author (encoder) and the receiver (decoder) of the message co-construct its meaning.
• Communication is an act separable from other acts.	• Communication is inseparable from other acts; all acts communicate.

Source: Adapted from Firat and Dholakia (2006:154,155)

These philosophical changes provide evidence of a postmodern society that is radically different from a modern society. Rheingold (2002:xii) acknowledges that today people are performing activities that previously were not possible, they have come about through the effects of various combinations of today's technologies, societies and economies. Brown (1995:107) and Firat and Dholakia (2006:124) reflect that culture influences developments in marketing. Therefore, one has to question the relevance of applying modern marketing and/or marketing communication principles and theories to a postmodern society. This presents a problem to both academics and practitioners.

The development of technology, specifically digital communications coupled to a loss of organisational power in favour of the customer, challenges the computational abilities of established marketing and/or marketing communication models which were designed prior to the existence of these variables. Consequently the models were not engineered with the capabilities to process these new variables (Schultz & Schultz, 2004:161).

Firat and Dholakia (2006:147-151) suggest that marketing practices have evolved from a specific business function grounded in an organisation to a participatory activity that involves the organisation's customers; which consequently calls for a less centralised and co-ordinated approach; that ultimately leads from ordered to complex marketing. This notion has been depicted in Figure 1.1, where the modern marketing approach is clearly distanced from the consumer as a distinct function of business; marketing is centralised and managed through order. Conversely, postmodern marketing positions marketing as an embedded integrated cultural practice, bringing marketers and consumers closer together (demonstrating consumer-to-consumer exchanges in addition to marketer-to-consumer as well as consumer-to-marketer exchanges); this approach is characteristically collaborative and complex and more diffused than the modern approach. The properties and capabilities

of digital media are simultaneously responsible for driving postmodern marketing as well as providing suitable tools to facilitate postmodern marketing.

Figure 1.1: Modern marketing compared to postmodern marketing

MODERN MARKETER = ○	POSTMODERN MARKETER = ○
MODERN CONSUMER = △	POSTMODERN CONSUMER = △
Modern marketing characterised by: • One-way communication flow • Distinct function of business • Managed • Centralisation • Order	Postmodern marketing characterised by: • Multi-directional communication flow (marketer-to-customer, customer-to-marketer and customer-to-customer) • Embedded cultural practice • Collaborative • Diffused • Complex

Source: Conceptualised and adapted from Firat and Dholakia (2006:147-151)

The intention to transition theories is confirmed through the adjustment of models like expansions to the *technology acceptance model* (Davis, 1985), and inversion of the 4Ps model to 4Cs model (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006:51), and the introduction of concepts such as *service-dominant logic* (Vargo & Lusch, 2004b). These specific examples will be addressed in detail in the relevant chapters of this thesis. However the influence of postmodernism is tangible in the concepts of service-dominant logic, which include the following: service; experiences; solution; co-creation of value; financial feedback or learning; value proposition; complex adaptive systems; value-creation network or constellation; dialogue; market with; and service orientation (Lusch & Vargo, 2006:286).

1.1.5 The marketing mix is changing

Increasingly marketers have a wider media mix at their disposal produced by a continuously evolving media landscape. New media formats are being introduced, and

existing media has been enhanced. Media genres have expanded, such as social media served on social network platforms like *Twitter* and *Facebook* (McPherson, 2008:1). Whilst the ever broadening media arsenal offers new opportunities, it poses challenges in the choices marketers are required to make to reach their customers, who have an abundance of media to select from.

An individual's media consumption habits and patterns are built according to the individual's preferences and fulfilment of specific needs by using appropriate media (traditional or digital media formats). Digital media formats possess different attributes to traditional formats, noticeably interactive properties, which have, for example, enabled individuals to create and publish content (Choi, Hwang & McMillan, 2008:759). Digital media provides possibilities for amplification of the consumer voice, empowering consumers to interact with brands as well as express and share their opinions in media spaces with high reaching potential. Consumer-generated content adds another aspect to marketing complexity. Marketers are no longer in full control over their brands. Properties of new media allow consumers to interact with brands and use and manipulate brand assets according to their preferences. This could be considered a demonstration of the postmodern attributes of de-differentiation and hyperrealism.

The interactive properties of new media are challenging established marketing paradigms, inviting change to existing communication practices to take these properties into account (Wigston, 2001:5). The difference between traditional media and new media properties questions the relevance of applying dated marketing communication models to new media. In fact changes to the cultural and media ecology potentially warrant development of new communication models that take specific properties of digital media into account (McQuail, 2010:137, 157). One school of thought that recognises and appreciates difference is that of postmodernism (Firat & Dholakia, 2006:127). Postmodernism acknowledges that different communities will have various preferences, which gives rise to segmentation (Brown, 1995:106; Firat & Dholakia, 2006:127).

The implications of digital media are particularly pertinent to communication theory, for example the cybernetics and sociopsychological categories, which respectively study the

interactions and effects of complex systems, and individuals as social beings. Cybernetics encompasses communicator theories of a) information integration, b) cognitive dissonance, and c) beliefs, attitudes and values. Sociopsychological communicator theories include: a) trait theory, b) attribution theory, and c) social judgment theory. These theories will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

1.1.6 Mobile phones are becoming the highest penetrating medium worldwide

According to the International Telecommunications Union (2010) in 2005 there were approximately two billion mobile handset subscriptions worldwide. By the end of 2010 the same source estimates subscriptions would have swelled in excess of five billion. With the world's population approaching seven billion (US Census Bureau, 2010) this represents a global subscription of 71%. This data does not take into account the number of mobile phones that have been produced, which already exceeds the global population.

South Africa has not escaped this international trend; in fact its mobile handset ownership or rental has grown similarly from 46% to 75% across the same period, representing a mean growth rate of 6% per annum (All media products surveys 2005A6 and 2010A6). The phenomenal uptake of mobile devices amongst the population is testament to technology acceptance and the importance people place on these devices.

In conjunction with this widespread penetration of mobile phone devices, advances in technology have improved the communication capacity of these instruments. Mobile phones have become convergence devices mopping up multiple technologies, transforming the apparatus from simple voice-only products to systems that expand applications of fixed-line telephony. They have the ability to access the Internet, to tune into radio broadcasts, to function as cameras and to view television (Sandvig, 2008:80). The associated technology is persistently expanding, driving further sophistication of devices and supporting networks to meet consumer demand (Dimmick *et al.*, 2010:2). The potential of mobile phones to provide communication and media access anytime and anywhere has implications to modern society, as well as marketing and marketing communication practices.

The immediacy offered by mobile phones for media access infers a high likelihood for people to fulfil specific needs when required. Mobile media has the potential to be consumed in alternative times to traditional media, such as the times when traditional media is either unavailable or inconvenient to access (Dimmick *et al.*, 2010:2).

The body of previous research into mobile marketing is growing, however the more significant studies have been conducted in technologically advanced countries, such as South Korea (Hjorth, 2008), Taiwan (Wei & Lo, 2006), Japan (Ito, 2005), and Finland (Battarbee & Koskinen, 2005) where individuals are more predisposed to technology acceptance and adoption and are not restricted by limited access or financial constraints.

Findings from a study by Dimmick *et al.* (2010:1), refuted the hypothesis of media displacement, whereby the successful introduction of a new medium is thought to displace consumption of other media, in other words substituting one medium for another. If one considers the limitations of time available to an individual to consume media one tends to think of most media consumption being time and space-bound (Dimmick *et al.*, 2010:2); as something slotted into daily routines and generally consumed in leisure periods, which for the working person is typically evenings and weekends, therefore time-binding. Space-binding considers where the medium is accessed, for example television in the home, radio in the car. The concept of interstices is the space between scheduled events, such as, lunch periods, time between lectures, social catch ups, planning events and posting comments on social networks. Dimmick *et al.* (2010:12) showed that traditional media was still consumed in traditional times but new media, mobile media, was being used in other periods, in the interstices between habitual media consumption and day-to-day activities, for example, commuting. This study recognised a growing trend of simultaneous multiple media consumption.

Dimmick *et al.* (2010:5) applied the theory of niche to media from an ecological perspective considering niche as an area of occupancy. Dimmick *et al.* (2010:5) posit that for different media offering similar content in the same domain (for example, news or entertainment content) to co-exist there needs to be clear differences to the mediums'

niches. If there are insufficient differences between two similar media, there is little reason for the two media to co-exist and consumers would likely choose one medium over the other, with the popular medium prevailing and the less popular medium being displaced in favour of the more popular medium. However in functional displacement, when functions of an older medium are displaced by a new medium, the older medium finds new functions (Baran & Davis, 2003:44). Dimmick *et al.* (2010:10) found that different media have different superiority over other media during the course of a day, depending on time and location. For example, radio dominance is strongest in drive-time periods when people are in vehicles, mobile media has superiority in transit periods, television in homes, and computers in the work-place. Dimmick *et al.* (2010:12) concluded that "no two channels may occupy the same niche and both survive", if they are not sufficiently different. Their study demonstrated that different media forms occupy different niches, with mobile media tending to be used in interstices, in periods when traditional media are not available or suitable to use.

Choi *et al.* (2008:756) addresses the effectiveness of mobile advertising from the practitioner perspective considering elements that contribute to the effectiveness of mobile messaging in different cultures, comparing Korean and American populations. Choi *et al.* (2008) found that the importance of different antecedents of mobile marketing such as a) advertising value, b) entertainment, c) informativeness, d) credibility, and e) interactivity differed by market. Informativeness ranked highest in an American sample, whilst advertising value was perceived to be more important in a Korean sample.

Cultural differences aside, when comparing developed markets to South Africa their populations are likely to have access to a variety of technologically advanced products and mobile phones are just one among many digital media options available. In South Africa where only 17% of the adult population accessed the Internet in the past year (All media product survey 2010A6) compared to 75% renting or owning a mobile phone, mobile phones rank as the predominant source of digital media. This highlights the relative importance of mobile phones as a digital media communication platform amongst South Africans.

1.1.7 Social media

Social media is broadly considered to be the generation and sharing of user generated content (Correa, Hinsley & Zúñiga, 2010:247; Kaplan & Haenlin, 2010:61; Multisilta & Milrad, 2009; Zhao, 2011:87). Generally speaking there are six main genres of social media: blogs, social networking sites (for example, *Facebook*), virtual social worlds (for example, *Second Life*), collaborative projects (for example, *Wikipedia*), content communities (for example, *YouTube*), and virtual game worlds (for example, *World of Warcraft*) (Kaplan & Haenlin, 2010:62).

Social networking sites have proved to be especially popular. *Facebook,* for instance, has shown meteoric gains in its subscriber base. Since its launch in 2004 it has now amassed more than 750 million active users (*Facebook*, 2011). Social networks have been embraced by youth in particular.

- According to *socialbakers* (2011) 61% of the 4.6 million South Africans who subscribe to *Facebook* are between the ages of 18-34, which approximates to 15% of South African 18-34 year olds (Statistics South Africa, 2011:9).
- *MXit* a mobile phone-based social network, which originated in South Africa, has amassed over 40 million users, of which 25% are South African. It is estimated that 80% of the registered South African users are between the ages of 18-34 (Strauss, 2011). If one applies this information to South African population data (Statistics South Africa, 2011:9) as above, *MXit* penetration amongst South Africans aged 18-34 is in the region of 40%.

The following benefits, by no means exhaustive, intend to provide some insight into what makes social network systems so attractive amongst youth. Social network systems provide communication platforms that are extremely affordable (if not free); highly accessible (accessed from a range of devices); convenient to use; facilitate real-time conversing; simple to operate; support multi-media content; and allow multiple user exchanges.

The volume of subscribers flocking to social networks has consequentially raised the value of these communication platforms from a marketing perspective. One anticipates that in the future the domain of social network systems will play host to as yet undefined marketing and/or marketing communication opportunities.

1.1.8 Communicating with young adults

Sixty-eight percent of the South African population is under the age of 34 (Statistics South Africa, 2011:9). At a count of 34.5 million, this segment represents a sizeable proportion of consumers. Marketing to youth has presented challenges to marketers. This segment does not necessarily consume the same media or in the same way as other segments. Considering this point, in conjunction with youth's mobile lifestyle, makes youth a difficult segment for marketers to reach. Yet despite these obstacles youth represent a valuable segment because this group is in the process of establishing brand preferences and forging relationships with brands that will presumably benefit them in the near future (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009:xii).

Young adults, in the context of this study have been classified as Generation Y, individuals born between the period 1978 to 2000 (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:98; Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009:xi). Generation Y, apart from its size, represents a significant population group from a marketing perspective. Not only has this segment influenced their parents' or guardians' purchases but increasingly as this generation becomes economically independent, and directly responsible for their own acquisitions, they will place greater demands on marketers. This generation is not content to be dictated to, they want to be recognised and respected (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009:xii), in either their real or virtual environments. Generation Y have demonstrated a particular affinity for new media, through their tech savvy aptitudes (Stald, 2008:145; Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009:xiii). Generation Y will be elaborated on in Chapter 5.

In developed countries, where digital media is an everyday occurrence, it becomes taken for granted because it forms such an integral part of youths' lives to the extent that they can no longer separate analogue from digital (Ito, 2008:vi). Youths' online activities appear

to be an extension of their offline activities, where they maintain their offline relationships in an online space (Buckingham, 2008:14). Popular activities are visiting chat rooms, instant messaging, social networks, downloading music, search, sending and receiving emails, (Livingstone, 2008:105). Stald (2008:148) noticed in a Danish study that youth were dependent on their mobile phones to link into their social networks for updates, to stay in touch and to maintain their status in society. Buckingham (2008:15) notes that youth mostly use digital platforms for ordinary purposes, such as communication and searching for information, which arguably supports the point that digital media has become integrated into youths' everyday lives.

The preceding discourse has revealed the symbiotic relationship between media and culture and the notion that they are both sensitive to change and transform in response to environmental influences (such as social, technological or economical pressures). This begs the question then that if in the context of an assumed postmodern culture, South African youth display behaviour that manifests the tenets of postmodernism culture in their reactions to contemporary marketing and/or marketing communication (apparent through their attitudes towards shopping and brands), and their use of information communication technology? Answers in this area of enquiry might be able to offer appropriate suggestions as to the effective use of digital media as marketing communication tools to communicate with youth.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

In postmodern society technological advances have had a profound impact on the development of media, most notably digital media. The unique properties and interactive capabilities of digital media have altered the dynamics of communication and have given rise to new applications that were not previously possible. This poses challenges for marketing academics and practitioners in terms of theories and practical applications.

South Africa has low rates of laptop or computer ownership and Internet connectivity, which is partly attributed to affordability, penetration and lack of access. However based

on the high penetration of mobile handsets into the South African market, mobile phones represent the leading digital medium in South Africa.

Therefore, it is anticipated that by obtaining an improved understanding of young South African adults' (Generation Y) behaviour in relation to observed postmodern characteristics, it will be possible to a) assess the relevance of applying existing theoretical principles and models to market offerings to this segment and b) to formulate guidelines for marketers to effectively communicate with this segment via digital media.

The research question is twofold.

Firstly, from a theoretical perspective:

- How relevant are modern marketing and/or marketing communication theories in a postmodern society?

Secondly, from a practitioner perspective, marketers do not know:

- Whether young South African adults (Generation Y) exhibit postmodern behaviour, in the context of today's postmodern culture.
- How young South African adults (Generation Y) use digital media?
- How to leverage the unique properties of digital media in marketing communication efforts to young South African adults (Generation Y)?

1.3   PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this research is correspondingly twofold. Firstly, from a theoretical point of view it seeks to contemplate the applicability of modern marketing and/or marketing communication theories, in their current form, in the context of a postmodern society, with specific reference to the use of digital media. The study intends to reconsider the relevance of modern marketing and/or marketing communication principles and where possible propose alternatives that would perhaps be more suited to postmodern conditions. Secondly, the research proposes to investigate the influence of postmodern variables on young South African adults (Generation Y) and the perspectives of this population segment towards digital media and its role in marketing communication. The

research process will consist of the identification and the investigation of the relative importance of various behavioural and attitudinal aspects of social media usage and platforms used for accessing the media and how these aspects influence individuals' marketing behaviours and interactions with marketers as well as other individuals in a market exchange context. A tertiary purpose of the study is to explore the various inter-relationships between these variables, and how they differ across fixed demographic variables (such as gender and ethnicity) and changeable structural variables (such as types of devices used to access the Internet and levels of expenditure on cell phone data plans).

1.4   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific research objectives emanating from the purpose of the study, within a South African context, were:

- To review the literature to interpret and reflect on the key characteristics of postmodern society in the context of marketing and/or marketing communication and how people respond to digital media in postmodern conditions.
- To evaluate Generation Y's perceptions and use of digital media (social media and mobile phones).
- To determine the unique properties of digital media applicable to marketing communication efforts directed at Generation Y according to the literature and empirical study.
- To assess Generation Y's attitudes towards retail shopping and brands according to the literature and empirical study.

The following objectives pertain to the empirical research phase of the investigation in chronological order:

- To develop a quantitative questionnaire to investigate the latent traits of postmodernism observed in respondents towards digital media as well as respondents' behaviours and attitudes in the context of marketing and marketing communication through the measurement of indicator variables. To construct the questionnaire on the basis of a combination of literature and researcher experience.

- To subject the questionnaire to the scrutiny of an expert panel to validate its measurement of respondents' behaviours and attitudes and tendency to manifest traits of postmodernism through specified indicator variables in the context of marketing and/or marketing communication.

- To conduct a pilot study a) to investigate the suitability of the questionnaire to measure individuals' behaviours and attitudes and tendency to manifest traits of postmodernism in the context of marketing and/or marketing communication and b) to test the questionnaire in a cross-sectional study against an appropriate sample, namely Generation Y students in tertiary education registered for full time study with the Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria.

- To identify key behavioural and attitudinal factors as deduced from participants' responses towards digital media in the quantitative questionnaire in the context of marketing and/or marketing communication in a postmodern society with an exploratory perspective.

- To measure the relative importance of key behavioural and attitudinal factors identified in the previous objective according to the respondents.

- To explore differences between demographic groups (such as gender and ethnicity) and structural enabling aspects (such as types of devices used to access the Internet and levels of expenditure spent on cell phone data plans) that may explain respondents' behaviour towards digital media in the context of marketing and/or marketing communication in a postmodern society.

- To explore the relationships between independent factors which were identified as important to the respondents, with a view to explain the dependent behavioural factors obtained in the study.

1.5   CONCEPTUALISATION AND META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research philosophy is central to the conceptualisation of a study. The research philosophy links and positions both the type of knowledge and the development of the knowledge within a specific context (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:101). Research philosophies are multi-dimensional. The three significant dimensions that will be

addressed in due course are epistemology, ontology, and axiology (refer to Table 1.2). The research philosophy employed by a study influences the study's methodological approach. The bridge between these two frames (philosophies and methodologies) is illustrated in a three-tiered organisational framework (conceived by Mouton, 2001:137) that differentiates three different levels of social science research, namely:

- World 3: the world of *meta-science* (research philosophical paradigms).
- World 2: the world of *science* and *scientific research* (methodological approaches).
- World 1: is the world of *everyday life* and lay knowledge (real-life problems).

The logic behind this proposition is that different research perspectives are required depending on which "world" a research investigation is situated in. According to the three-world research classification, this thesis's research is primarily anchored in World 2. World 2 addresses the body of knowledge through investigation of theories, models, concepts, data interrogation, and the development of research instruments, amongst others.

Figure 1.2 shows the relationships between the worlds and the specific methodological approaches (World 2) that typify particular philosophical paradigms (World 3) and their real-life perspectives (World 1).

Figure 1.2: The relationship between philosophical paradigms, methodological approaches and the real world
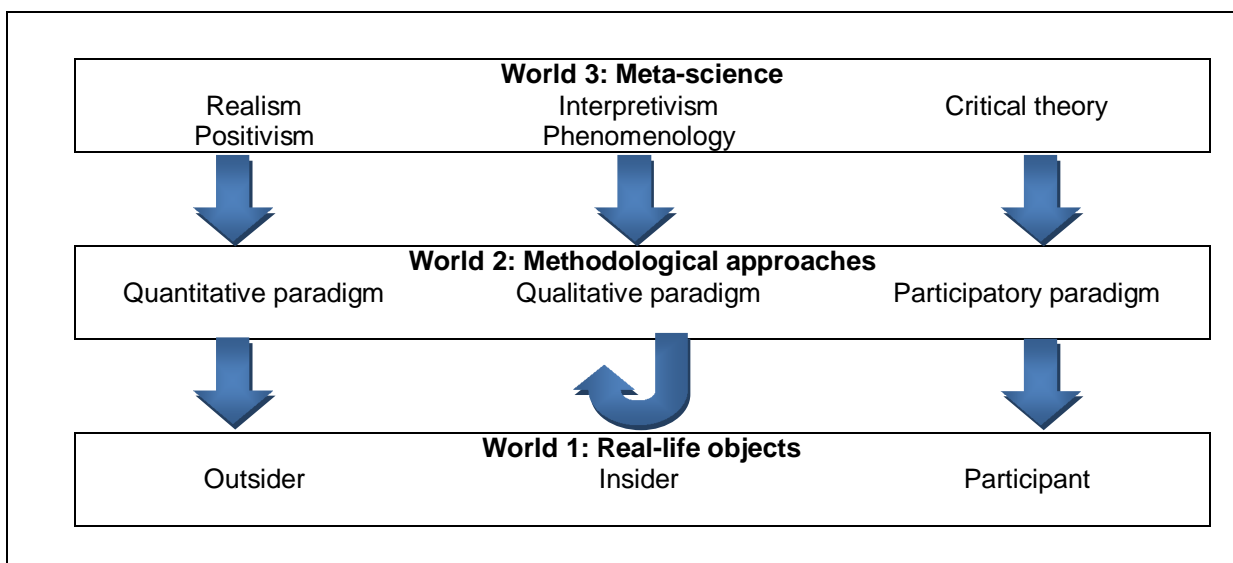
Source: Mouton (2001:141)

1.5.1 Consideration of philosophical research paradigms

Different philosophical paradigms dominate different eras and for that reason influence the research of specific periods (Kuhn, 1970:111). A paradigm shift forces researchers to abandon one viewpoint for another, which is likely to have consequences to the approach of the research. Research paradigms are sets of belief systems that guide researchers on theoretical assumptions, choice of strategy, research instruments and methods applied to particular investigations (Ponterotto, 2005:128).

Literature on paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105-117; Plack, 2005:223-245; Ponterotto, 2005:126-136) indicates there are several different research paradigms that researchers subscribe to. The four principle ones being: positivism, postpositivism, constructivism (interpretivism) and critical theory. Despite the distinctions between paradigms Teddlie and Tashakkori (2008) as well as Creswell (2008) raise the point that boundaries between paradigms should not be thought of as absolute and they consider multi-paradigm strategies could be applied to research studies where mixed method approaches are used to take into account complexities of the research.

The paradigm or combination of paradigms adopted by a researcher also takes into account his or her personal preference as well as objectives and requirements of the study at hand (Guba & Lincoln 1994:107; Ponterotto, 2005:128, Saunders *et al.*, 2007:110). Some of the characteristics of these paradigms are summarised in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Key traits of positivism, postpositivism, constructivism (interpretivism) and critical theory research paradigms

	POSITIVISM	**POSTPOSITIVISM**	**CONSTRUCTIVISM**	**CRITICAL THEORY**
OBJECTIVE	Seeks knowledge to determine cause and effect relationships.	Evolved from positivism. Recognises that an objective reality cannot be perfectly measured.	Aim to understand phenomenon from participants' points of view.	Use knowledge to enhance the quality of life of minority groups.

| ONTOLOGY (PERSPECTIVE OF SITUATION TO BE INVESTIGATED)	One true reality, that is stable, consistent over time and generalised.	One true reality that cannot be perfectly measured.	Multiple realities exist. People experience different realities.	Grasp realities that are formed by influences exerted on the minority groups such as gender, social and economic factors.
EPISTEMOLOGY (HOW THE INVESTIGATION WILL TAKE PLACE)	Researcher objectivity. Participant responses are not influenced by the researcher.	Objectivity is important but, the researcher may exert influence on participants.	Interaction between researcher and participants. Obtain insights into participants' experience of phenomenon.	Researcher seeks empowerment.
AXIOLOGY	Researcher values cannot have any influence on the research.	Researcher values must not influence the study.	A by-product of the researcher participant interface is researcher bias.	Researcher values are important to the study.
METHOD	Quantitative data only. Research conducted under controlled experimental situation.	Mainly quantitative and some qualitative methods. Experimental and quasi-experimental.	Interactive. Mainly qualitative methods.	Highly interactive. Mainly qualitative methods.
ROLE OF RESEARCHER	Impartial observer.	Impartial observer.	Interactive. Researcher is a co-creator of interpretation and incorporates his subjective experience to the research.	Researcher involves participants in the study with the intention of empowering them to change their status quo.

Source: Kotzé (2009:9-11)

The post-positivist research paradigm was applied to this study. This research paradigm resonates with the objectives of the study. From an ontological point of view post-positivism recognises that a singular objective reality is flawed. Reality is not absolute, different realties are possible because of the different perspectives of the respondents participating in the research (Ponterotto, 2005:129). An individual's reality is constructed according to personal influences, such as age, gender, ethnicity, culture and experiences.

It was the intention of this exploratory research to obtain an improved understanding of respondents' behaviour through the collection of quantitative data. Therefore it sought the

perspectives of respondents and in doing so recognises that individuals experience different realities that are relative to their perspective at the specific point in time of the investigation. In terms of epistemology the post-positivist approach acknowledges researcher bias in investigations (Crossan, 2003:54). Thus the researcher is not entirely objective from the study, and in this instance the researcher was responsible for the construction of the questionnaire that was distributed in this study as well as the analysis of the data, and thus these tasks were perhaps influenced by the researcher's relative perspectives. In terms of the data collection the researcher functioned as an impartial observer. The questionnaire was distributed electronically and completed by participants at their convenience.

Therefore, taking the above approaches into consideration, in conjunction with Mouton's (2001) three-world framework, the research and research relationships between the three worlds for this study are depicted in Figure 1.1. This arrangement pertains to the empirical investigation of the presence of postmodern traits as exemplified through the behaviour of Generation Y.

Figure 1.3: The philosophical paradigm, methodological approach and the real world framework for this thesis
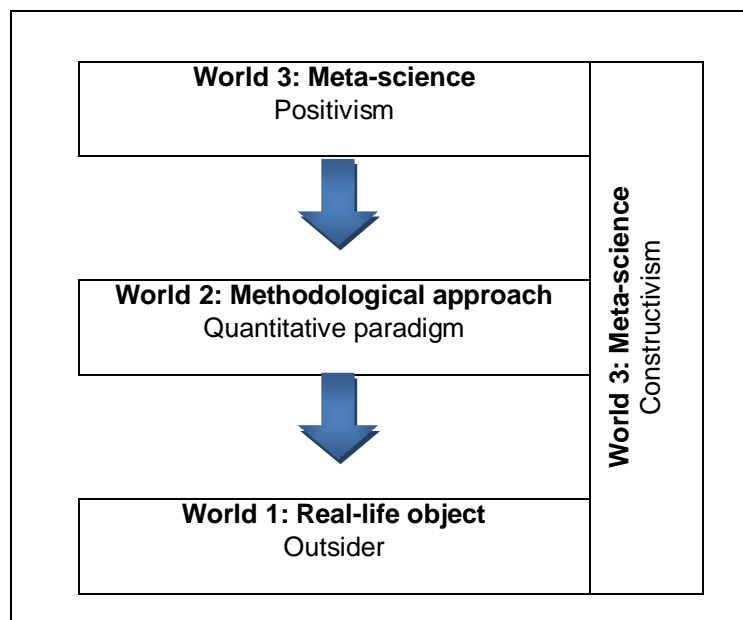
Source: Conceptualised and adapted from Mouton (2001:141)

1.5.2 Components of theory

The previous discussion provided an overall position of the study within an investigative framework. The theoretical part of the problem raised in section 1.2, questioned the validity of applying modern theories to postmodern society. To address this issue, from a structural perspective it would be pertinent to examine the construction of theory with the application of perceived modern and postmodern lenses to emphasise the contrast between these orientations. According to Woods (2000), theory related to human behaviour is developed from four components: ontology, epistemology, purpose of theory and focus of theory. This structure resonates with the aforementioned dimensions of research paradigms. Fourie (2001c:232-241) suggests two viewpoints for each component of theory. For the purposes of applying Woods (2000) proposition of building blocks of theory to this study, this author has interpreted Fourie's (2001c:232-241) viewpoints as either belonging to the modern or postmodern persuasion. This interpretation is reflected in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Building blocks of human behaviour theory compared through perceived modern and postmodern lenses

	MODERN LENS	POSTMODERN LENS
ONTOLOGY (PERSPECTIVE OF SITUATION TO BE INVESTIGATED)	Determinism: People's actions are shaped by external forces.	Humanism: People consciously choose to behave in a certain way.
EPISTEMOLOGY (HOW THE INVESTIGATION WILL TAKE PLACE)	Objective investigation: There is a universal reality for all.	Subjective investigation: Multiple views exist.
PURPOSE OF THEORY	Universalism : Universal laws are generated governing human behaviour.	Situationalism : It is impossible to create universal laws of human behaviour; theory can only offer rules that explain patterns of human behaviour.
FOCUS OF THEORY	Behaviourism: Concerns directly observable behaviour.	Humanism: Directly observable behaviour is an outcome. Humanism addresses the meaning behind observable behaviour, so the latent effects.

Source: Conceptualised and adapted from Fourie (2001c:232-241)

1.6   MAIN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In any period in time a specific paradigm exists and this organisational theoretical perspective dominates the thinking and influences the research of that particular era. This study will be positioned within a postmodern paradigm.

The central tenet of postmodernism is that modern social orders are not sustainable and will collapse (Baran & Davis, 2003:367). Whilst postmodernists agree on this principle they have not come to a consensus on how modern social orders will demise. Some believe that it will materialise with the development of new social movements that are more micro rather than macro orientated. This is because of their focus on personal identity and local culture, rather than bigger picture concerns such as political governance (Baran & Davis, 2003:367). Others are of the opinion that prevailing modern social orders will block these new movements, and in the ensuing conflict modernity will end. Theorists of this ilk believe that there will be a catastrophic end such as a nuclear war or a biological event (Baran & Davis, 2003:367). Still other social theorists favour a less dramatic end to modernism and argue that this transition is already taking place, through evidence of constructive social change, where *status quos* regarding social order have been challenged and replaced. Baran and Davis (2003:368) reflect that although humanity's general perspective is that continued scientific development will improve mankind's way of life, however if this progress is left unchecked without considering long-term effects of these developments on humankind and the earth itself, there is the potential for negative, even dangerous outcomes.

The postmodernism paradigm emphasises individualism and recognises that individuals have free thought and are therefore able to contemplate their lives and the lives of others within their social order. To an extent individuals will have personal agendas independent of their communities which may complement or contradict the collective's position. Difference of opinion could cause individuals to feel like they do not belong to their society. This raises issues of uncertainty, which could lead to isolation and alienation from their community. Giddens (1991) believes that reflective thinking is positive. However, Baran

and Davis (2003:368), suggest that some postmodernists have a negative outlook concerning the value of individualism and reflective thought.

According to Baran and Davis (2002:369) under the postmodernism paradigm media theorists should consider several questions. Firstly, regarding new media technology, if theorists consider it to be highly useful, how can theorists be sure that its power will not be used against people? Secondly, postmodernists consider mass media to be catalysts in the fall of modernism. People are susceptible to the influence of mass media because it forms an integral part of their lives. If one applies these questions to the recent *Arab Spring* uprisings; in the first instance, governments' response was to attempt to deny people access to digital media; in the second instance use of digital media accelerated communication amongst people (Ingram, 2011; Miladi, 2011), so could be considered a catalyst in the revolution efforts.

Strengths of postmodernism are that it: contests assumptions of modernism; challenges overtly positive perspectives of technology's impact on society; and allows critical assessment of technology and audiences. On the other hand its weaknesses include: the fact that it does not acknowledge the power of modern social institutions; it debates ideas that are central to the thinking of media researchers and technophiles; and it does not present a stable alternative to modernism (Baran & Davis 2003:370).

1.7   THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology applied to this study may appear to be at odds with the study's orientation towards postmodernism. A defence of this seemingly contradictory approach is offered. Firstly, although this research investigates characteristics of postmodernism it is not strictly a postmodern study, it seeks empirical evidence to confirm or refute assumptions that Generation Y demonstrate behavioural outcomes that are characteristic of a postmodern society. Secondly, one of postmodernism's philosophies concerns relativism (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:110). Relativism eschews objective universal truths (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:116). Under the relativism perspective individuals subjectively construct different realities based on their

own interpretations of circumstances that are relative to, amongst other things, the individual's existing knowledge, context and time frame (Brown, 1995:143; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:119). A relativism approach cannot hold the weight of validity, because relative beliefs are not universally applicable across time or society. Validity is confined to the individuals that hold the beliefs and, or, possibly to a particular period in time (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002:119). This premise implies that without a point of reference it is difficult to measure and compare beliefs, thus challenging the ability to quantify and empirically test assumptions. Therefore a more quantifiable approach was needed to address the problem of testing for behavioural outcomes as a result of postmodern influences.

Given the theoretical and practitioner dimensions to the problem, the research design consisted of a dual methodology to investigate both issues. For the purpose of the current research, and considering the anti-foundationalism aspects of postmodernism, as a worldview, the theoretical design followed a reflective quasi-proposition non-empirical approach by phrasing questions and propositions under the umbrella term of quasi-propositions; and the practitioner design employed exploratory descriptive-empirical research. The descriptive-empirical research phase is addressed in more detail in Chapter 6.

1.7.1 Quasi-proposition non-empirical approach

The basis of the theoretical aspect of the problem under investigation is questioning the relevance of applying modern marketing and/or marketing communication principles to a postmodern society. This matter will be addressed throughout this thesis by means of reflection through questions or formulating propositions for the purpose of interrogating the limitations of current knowledge and available tools with respect to potential problems in the foreseeable future, as borne out by postmodern society. Where possible, quasi-propositions (in the form of questions or statements) have been offered as potential practical suggestions to address these concerns. At a conceptual level propositions denote the relationships between concepts and therefore provide the foundation for theory development (Bagozzi, 1974:77). The research approach has been described as "quasi-

proposition", because the propositions suggested are hypothesised, as such they lack empirical substantiation.

Quasi-propositions are distinguished in the text by means of text contained in a box, as per the example in Figure 1.4, taken from Chapter 2.

Figure 1.4: Example of quasi-proposition statements

Consumer conundrums Should consumers continue purchasing the brand they have always used, or try a new variant, or switch brands? How do they decide; is it through advertising, sampling, promotions, testimonials, word-of-mouth, brand loyalty, a combination of these or on a whim? Is it any wonder that consumer buying behaviour has become unpredictable?

In Chapter 8 these questions and quasi-propositions will be presented chronologically as research findings to support the theoretical contribution of this study.

1.7.2 Exploratory descriptive empirical phase

A literature review provided the foundational information necessary to identify key constructs of postmodernism and thereafter derive items that are indicative of these postmodern tenets in the context of marketing and/or marketing communication. Exploratory factor analysis was applied for its capability to measure latent variables of postmodernism by measuring indicators of these variables (Everitt, 2010:235; Field, 2005:619; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010:99). In the absence of a pre-existing measuring instrument, indicator variables were formulated and sourced from the literature review. A detailed account of this phase is provided in Chapter 6, however salient points are summarised here for ease of reference under the following headings: target population, sample, sampling method, data collection, data analysis and ethical procedures.

Target population

The target population is Generation Y, which consists of individuals born between 1978 and 2000. The sub-segment of the population targeted is young adults, between the ages of 18-34, attending tertiary education institutions.

Sample

The sample base for this study was students between the ages of 18-34, who were enrolled with the department of Marketing and Communication Management, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, at the University of Pretoria during the 2011 academic year. Respondents consented to participate in the study voluntarily. A total of 333 useful responses were used for analysis.

Sampling method

Non-probability convenience sampling was used as the sampling method. Convenience sampling was considered the most appropriate sampling method to apply to this exploratory survey based research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206; Saunders *et al.*, 2007:594). Sampling continued until the required number of respondents had been achieved. Since it was not feasible to obtain access to all students from all tertiary institutions outside the department in which the author was registered, it was decided to limit the target population for inclusion in the study to students registered with the department of Marketing and Communication Management, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, at the University of Pretoria. Since a web-based survey was used, and students could choose whether they wanted to participate in the study, self-selection bias may have been introduced. This type of sample could also be viewed to have the same limitations as a convenience sample, and it would therefore not be appropriate to generalise the findings beyond the sample.

Data collection

Quantitative data was collected by means of an Internet survey, for the following reasons:

- Items in the survey were straightforward and did not require further interpretation from a field worker.
- Internet surveys are easily distributed and at low cost.
- Respondents have the flexibility to complete the survey at their convenience.
- The survey host, in this instance, *Survey Monkey*, has the functionality to automatically collect and begin processing data, and allows the monitoring of response rates.
- Given the nature of the research it was pertinent to reach digitally savvy individuals, thus distributing the survey electronically helped to eliminate ineligible candidates. The use of a web-based survey may preclude certain students from accessing the survey, for economic reasons, and therefore the overall views expressed by respondents may be biased towards respondents from more affluent segments of society.

Data analysis

Principle component exploratory factor analysis was applied as a statistical technique to analyse the data. This method was applied for a) its prominent use in social sciences, b) its capability to infer the presence of latent variables through the measurement of indicators, and c) its ability to reduce large sets of complex data into more manageable clusters without losing data integrity.

Ethical procedures

Ethics concerns the researcher's application of appropriate moral behaviour in relation to respondents participating in the research and towards others that may be affected by the research (Mouton, 1996:10; Saunders *et al.,* 2007:610). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) recognise four common categories of ethical concerns: protection from harm, informed consent, the right to privacy and integrity of reporting. Ethical issues within these

categories have been taken into account in the execution of this research and are addressed in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Ethical considerations

ETHICAL ISSUE	RESEARCHER CONSIDERATION
PROTECTION FROM HARM	The type and scope of this research posed no foreseeable physical or psychological harm to respondents.
INFORMED CONSENT	Respondents were given the choice to participate or not to participate in the study and at any time had an opportunity to withdraw from the study. Participation was strictly voluntary and only applicable to this particular research undertaking. Each respondent received an informed consent form that outlined the study and in signing this form the respondent agreed to the terms and requirements of participating in the study. It was assumed that respondents were both mentally and legally competent to understand the terms and requirements of participating in the survey, based on the fact that they are students enrolled at the University of Pretoria.
RIGHT TO CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY	This study respected respondents' rights to privacy. Respondents were requested to anonymously complete a self-administered questionnaire administered by the Internet. The researcher had no direct contact with any of the respondents. Respondents cannot be identified through the answers they provided and these answers were treated as strictly confidential.
PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY	The researcher reported full disclosure of the findings and limitations of the research.

Source: conceptualised and adapted from Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101)

In fulfilling ethical concerns outlined in Table 1.4, this study is fully compliant with the ethical procedures of the University of Pretoria and has received ethical clearance from the committee for research ethics to conduct research.

1.8   DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF STUDY

In order to make a justifiable contribution to an area of investigation, it is necessary to demarcate parameters to meet the obligations of the study. Therefore, the following delimitations have been applied to this study.

- This study takes the perspective that marketing is the umbrella discipline within which marketing communication resides. Therefore in the context of this study, when the term *marketing* is used, this term applies to the overall marketing discipline and when the term *marketing communication* is used this pertains to advertising communication specifically.

- The study will be limited to marketing, primarily within the retail sector.

- The study will focus on digital media accessible through mobile phones as well as social network systems irrespective of access point.

- The study will be limited to Generation Y (individuals between the ages of 18-34) enrolled in tertiary education, at one specific campus in the Gauteng region.

- The study only focuses on students from a particular department, which may impact on the results. Students were sourced from the Marketing and Communication Management department and may perhaps be more suited to address the questions presented in the survey, than students from other disciplines such as Arts and Physical Sciences.

- The study will be limited to postmodern characteristics in the context of postmodern society as identified in the literature.

- Due to rapid progression in information communication technology the empirical findings from this study will be contingent upon media technologies available in the period of investigation, and therefore may not necessarily be relevant to future eras, as a result of further development in information communication technologies.

The study excludes:

- Older generations and the school-going generation.

- Generation Y segments not attending tertiary institutions, because of differences in educational disparity between their counterparts attending university; although this will limit the generalisability of the study's applicability to the Generation Y segment.

- Younger generations have also been excluded on the grounds that they are still in the early stages of determining media consumption choices, have limited disposable income and there are fewer products marketed directly to them.

- Other mobile media platforms like ipods, tablets, dvds, cds, and pc based media.

In terms of assumptions:

- Generation Y is assumed to be the first generation to be born into a wholly postmodern society (Best & Kellner, 2003:76).

- Young adults are assumed to be early adopters (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:183).

- It is assumed that young adults attending tertiary education institutions are more likely to have access to digital media and thus be more media technologically literate than their counterparts experiencing less privileged socio-economic circumstances.

1.9   IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

Media studies are considered an important area of academic interest, because of the impact media has on society, culture, economy, politics and education (Dimmick *et al.*, 210:2; Fourie, 2001a:xix; McQuail, 2010:81). The marketing discipline is challenged by disruptive changes in society; as such this necessitates the reassessment of existing theories in terms of their relevance in postmodern society. Therefore the study aims to contribute to the theoretical body of knowledge as follows:

- To question the application of modern marketing and/or marketing communication theories in postmodern society. In so doing, it suggests that in any given era marketing theories should be representative of the target society, therefore inferring the need to adjust existing theories and their application or formulate new ones that are representative of the specific era. For instance the adoption of alternative marketing paradigms, such as service-dominant logic as a structure to implement postmodern marketing.

- To develop a conceptual framework to guide marketing transformation in a postmodern society.

- To empirically determine if Generation Y are exhibiting characteristics indicative of postmodern society.

- To improve understanding of the dimensions of interactivity, as a property of digital media, in the context of digital marketing communication.

- To identify important digital media behavioural outcomes and investigate explanatory factors associated with this behaviour.

- To consider new business opportunities in the domain of mobile marketing communication that might arise from an improved understanding of consumer behaviour and preference. For instance, concerning integration of various stakeholders; such as mobile network operators, device manufacturers, marketers,

customers, advertising agencies and content providers (O'Reilly & Duane, 2010:188).

Furthermore, the study intends to add value from a practitioner perspective by contributing to new knowledge in the study of Generation Y and digital media. It is anticipated that an improved understanding of Generation Y's attitudes towards marketing and digital media will serve to a) improve knowledge of how Generation Y will react in the future as they mature (Shore, 2011) and b) provides an indication of forthcoming generations' attitudes towards marketing (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009:xii).

Today, Generation Y may not necessarily be every marketer's target audience; but tomorrow they will be the future generation of every market.

1.10   DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Table 1.5 outlines definitions of some of the key terms as sources from the literature or as formulated for the purpose of the current study.

Table 1.5: Definition of terms

Advertising	In the context of this study will encompass mass and personal communication, promotions, competitions, content and product placement or integration (Hackley, 2006:9)
Brand touchpoint	Brand contacts are the touchpoints at which the customer or prospect comes in contact with the brand (Schultz & Schultz, 2004:168).
Communication	Sending, receiving and sharing of messages or content between participants. The message exchange may be uni-directional or interactive (McQuail, 2010:552).
Digital platforms	As defined by www.pcmag.com and www.businessdictionary.com includes any device that holds digital data. This data includes voice, video and text. In the context of this study digital media will be restricted to digital data accessed on mobile phone devices.
Generation Y	Generation Y consists of individuals born between 1978 to 2000 (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:98; Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009:xi). In the context of this study young adults will fall into the age group of 18 to 34.
Instant messaging (IM)	Sending messages and chatting with individuals in real-time when both parties are connected to a network through a specific application, e.g., *MXit* is a mobile instant messenger and social networking software application that allows you to chat anywhere on earth from your mobile or PC for free (Strauss, 2011).

Internet	The Internet, "is a network of networks. It is a global set of connections of computers that enables the exchange of data, news and opinion. Aside from being a communication medium, the Internet has become a platform for new ways of doing business, a better way for governments to deliver public services and an enabler of lifelong learning" (Lallana, 2003:9).
Interpersonal communication	According to Baran & Davis (2003:10), is communication between two or more people. This is usually face-to-face.
Machine-assisted interpersonal communication	According to Dominick (2009:9), is when one or more people communicate to one or more receivers by means of a mechanical device. In this type of communication the source and receiver may be separated by time and space.
Mass communication	Is defined by Baran & Davis (2003:10), as when a source uses a technology, such as a medium, to communicate with large audiences.
Meditated communication	According to Baran & Davis (2003:10), is the communication between a few or many individuals using a technology, such as a medium to effect the communication.
Mobile applications	Software designed to function on hand held wireless devices (www.pcmag.com).
Mobile phone or cell phone	Hand held wireless device capable of integrated multi-media communication functions (www.pcmag.com)
Social networks	"A Web site that provides a virtual community for people to share their daily activities with family and friends, or to share their interest in a particular topic, or to increase their circle of acquaintances" (www.pcmag.com)

1.11   DEMARCATION OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is presented in nine chapters:

- Chapter 1: *Introduction*, the introductory chapter introduces the problem and contextualises it. This chapter summaries the thesis. It states the research objectives, the research methodology applied to investigate these targets and the intended contribution of the study.

- Chapter 2: *Postmodernism*. Chapter 2 motivates postmodernism as a worldview for this study; on the basis that postmodernism is today's dominant societal movement that directly affects cultural practices and behaviour.

- Chapter 3: *Marketing Communication*, addresses transformations in marketing that have developed in response to changes in stakeholder saliency and discusses interventions in association with postmodern marketing and/or marketing communication tactics.

- Chapter 4: *Information Communication Technology (ICT)*, examines information communication technology, with specific emphasis on interactivity as a unique

property of digital media that has the capabilities to implement postmodern marketing and/or marketing communication.

- Chapter 5: *Generation Y, a significant generation.* This chapter rationalises the importance of Generation Y by examining their attitudes towards digital media and retail brands to improve understanding of their behaviour from a marketing perspective. As such this chapter reflects aspects of the preceding chapters.

The framework for the theoretical chapters of this study is depicted in Figure 1.5. The assumption is that the study is encased within the context of a postmodern worldview of society that encompasses all cultural phenomena. Chapters 3 and 4 are represented as concentric circles to emphasise that the specific subject matter of each chapter is a constituent of the preceding chapter. Thus in the context of this study: marketing is perceived as a constituent of culture; information communication technology is considered a tool within the marketing discipline; and interactivity is portrayed as a property of information communication technology to implement marketing communication. Chapter 5 is represented by a reflective ellipse since it reapplies elements of the preceding chapters in the context of Generation Y. The bridge between the theoretical and practical aspects is represented by a bi-directional arrow linking World 2 - Theoretical (the world of science and scientific research) with World 1 - Applied (the world of everyday life).

Figure 1.5 Framework of theoretical chapters
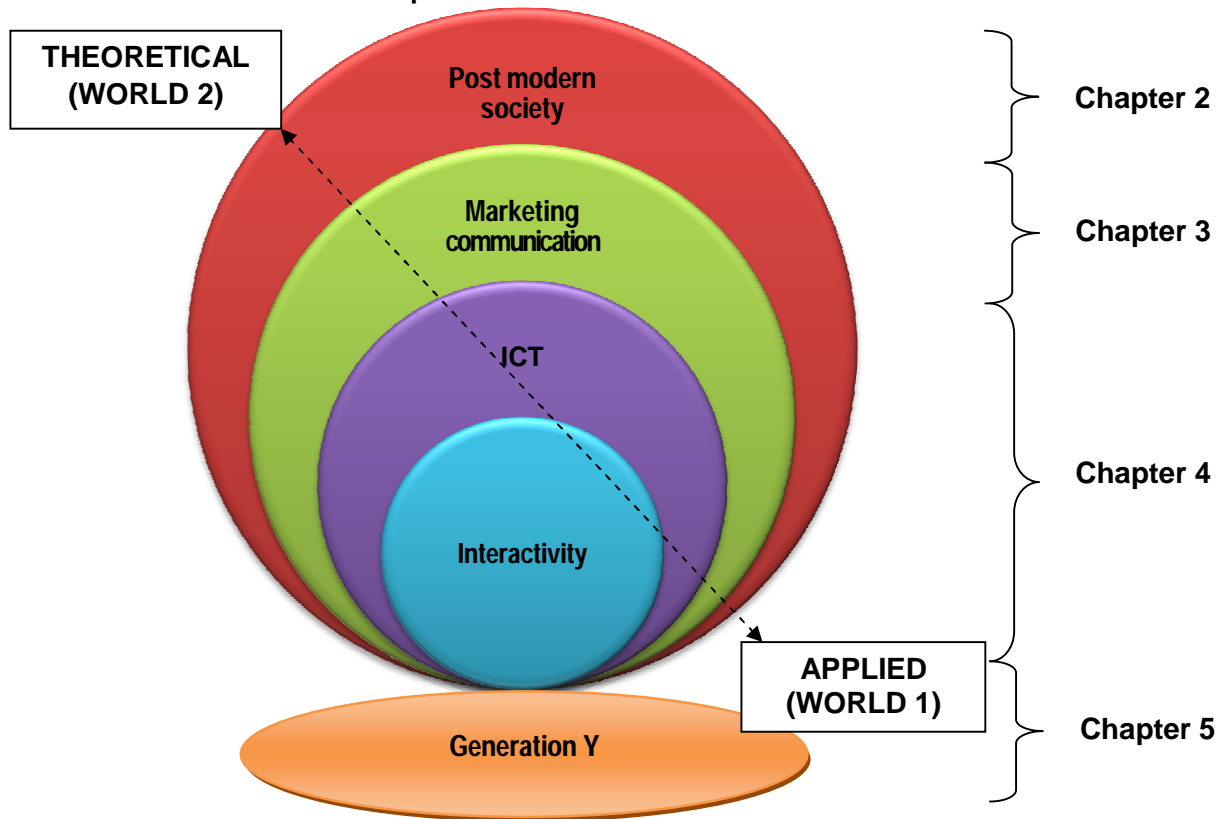
- Chapter 6: *Methodology,* describes the research methodology deployed for the empirical research component of the study.

- Chapter 7: *Empirical research results*, reports on the results from the empirical research.

- Chapter 8: *Theoretical research results*, collates reflected questions and quasi-propositions from the theoretical chapters and concentrates them into one section.

- Chapter 9: *Discussion, conclusion and recommendation*. This chapter discusses the research findings, presents conclusions and recommendations.