

**THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED BRAND PERSONALITY OF  
SOCIAL MEDIA ON USERS' ATTITUDE, MOTIVATION,  
BEHAVIOURAL INTENT, AND BEHAVIOUR**

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by

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The study examines the effect of the users' perceived brand personality (PBP) of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube) on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. The study applies Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale (BPS) to social media brands to test the extent to which it is applicable to social media brands, to examine the underlying structure of the PBP of social media brands and tests the hypothesised model for the interrelationship between the PBP of social media and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

A quantitative approach was employed, where data was collected using an online survey. A sample of 380 respondents per platform was used, giving a total of 1140 respondents for the study. Exploratory factor analyses were done to examine the underlying structure of the PBP of social media brands. Structural equation modelling was used to assess the fit of the hypothesised model and subsequent relationships between the constructs.

A two-factor solution for the brand personality of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube) was extracted. The brand personality of Facebook is represented by two traits: excitement and sincerity. The Facebook model fit indices are as follows:  $\chi^2 = 1298.658$ ;  $d.f = 510$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $NFI = .846$ ;  $IFI = .901$ ;  $TLI = .890$ ;  $CFI = .900$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.066$  PCLOSE (.000)

The brand personality of LinkedIn is represented by two traits: competence and sincerity. The LinkedIn model fit indices were attained at:  $\chi^2 = 1124.7067$ ;  $d.f = 478$ ;  $p = .000$ ; RMSEA = 0.0601; NFI = .872; IFI = .922; TLI = .914; CFI = .922; RMSEA = 0.0601 PCLOSE (.000).

The brand personality of YouTube is represented by two traits: excitement and sincerity. The YouTube model fit indices were attained at:  $\chi^2 = 1133.485$ ,  $d.f = 510$ ;  $p$ -value = .000, NFI = .844, IFI = .908, TLI = .898, CFI = .907, and RMSEA = .060 (PCLOSE = 0.000).

The results of the hypothesis tests revealed that  $H_1$ : which states that there is a significant positive relationship between PBP of social media and users' attitude and  $H_2$ : which indicates a significant positive relationship between PBP of social media and motivation were partially supported for the three social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube).  $H_3$ : which states that there is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent was supported for Facebook and LinkedIn and was not supported for YouTube.  $H_4$ : which states that there is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour was not supported for the three social media platforms.  $H_5$ : which states that there is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behaviour was partially supported for Facebook and was supported for LinkedIn and YouTube.  $H_6$ : which states that there is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour was partially supported for Facebook and not supported for LinkedIn and YouTube. The last hypothesis  $H_7$ : which states that there is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour was not supported for the three platforms.

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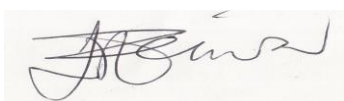
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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an outline of this study. It begins by describing the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, and hypotheses. This is followed by an outline of the research design and a presentation of the conceptual framework. The chapter then discusses the contribution and delimitations of the study. Thereafter, the chapter defines the key terms and gives a synopsis of the limitations of the study. At the end, the chapter outlines the content of the study chapter-by-chapter, up to Chapter 7.

The focus of the study is to establish the applicability of Aaker's 1997 brand personality scale to the context of social media brands where it has not been applied. The study also examines the relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The growth of social media in recent years has been phenomenal (Clark, Algoe & Green, 2017:2; Lee, Ho & Lwin, 2017:3). Their use is fast increasing, and they are very popular vehicles for establishing relationships between people (Chiu, Cheng, Huang & Chen, 2013; Sosik & Bazarova, 2014:1290). By nature, people have a basic need to stay together in a community; and social media permit virtual community members to interact with each other. The exponential growth of social media users demonstrates that social media are indispensable to the social well-being of the community, and it could be supposed that the experiential, emotional, and symbolic benefits could be substantial to users. Lin and Liu (2011:1152) testify that social media have penetrated the day-to-day lives of people as a vehicle for communication. In

specific terms, there has been a dramatic change in the internet ecosystem as a result of hundreds of millions of people using social media for various purposes.

Kemp (2017:3) points out that the growth of social media users rose by more than 20 per cent in 2017; the total number of social media users has reached 2.8 billion, and is expected to reach three billion by 2020 (Clark *et al.*, 2017:2). This implies that the rate at which social media are infiltrating individuals' lives could be a result of the various uses of social media. This new paradigm of communication has generated a great deal of interest from academics and practitioners because of its spread to various sectors (See-To & Ho, 2014:182).

### **1.2.1 Social media**

Social media have drawn attention from organisations because they create business opportunities (Xu, Ryan, Prybutok & Wen, 2012:210). In business, social media are employed as powerful vehicles to promote brands and to establish and manage long-term relationships with customers (Robertson, Vatrappu & Medina, 2010:183). Social media are used by marketing practitioners to reach a wide spectrum of consumers and to perform various marketing activities, such as increasing brand awareness, acquiring new customers, managing reputation, and conduct market research (Ismail, 2017:130; Yazdanparast, Joseph & Muniz, 2016:244). Indeed, social media are gradually replacing traditional media as sources of information about products, services, and brands (Yazdanparast *et al.*, 2016:243) for both consumers and business stakeholders (Hanaysha, 2017:134).

Social media are defined as “new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organisations and individuals” (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Agarabat, 2017:1179). Social media platforms permit users to interact with their peers and to share experiences with any individual anywhere in the world (Ismail, 2017:129). Social media offer two-way communication between firms and customers, and facilitate the presentation of user-generated content in visual, verbal, or textual forms – or in a mixture of the three (Alalwan *et al.*, 2017:1179). Social media also support social

activities that range from blogging to photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking (Cawsey & Rowley, 2016:754). Notably, as the use of social media proliferates, they have the potential to transform the social lives of their members at the individual and the community level.

Mansour (2012:12) indicated that, because of the great potential that social media have in their capacity to support interaction among virtual community members, they have drawn considerable attention from academics, researchers, business people, students, and the community at large. Academic research on social media has been conducted in various countries and contexts, and in a variety of focal areas. For example, research has been carried out on the adoption and use of social media (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Akarcon-del-Amo, 2011:172); the effect of social media on the well-being of society and the economy in Europe (Cuchia, 2008); the relationships between advertisements on online social networks and users' perceptions of the platforms; and the understanding of the contribution of social media as marketing media for firms (Correira, Medina & Romo, 2014:295).

In a study conducted in Egypt, Mansour (2012:129) explored how social media were used by Egyptians to communicate information about the January 2011 revolution. The research results revealed that social media played a significant role as communication tools to distribute information as Egyptians struggled to achieve democracy. Chaputula and Majawa (2013:537) also studied the extent to which social media were employed by mass media organisations in Malawi, and results have indicated that most of the mass media organisations were using social media in order to communicate with their clients. Ndavula and Mberia (2012:302; 305) assessed the use of social media in the democratic participation of people in Kenya. They found that there is a proliferation of social media use in politics.

In South Africa, several studies on social media have been conducted, showing that there is a growing research interest on the part of academics and practitioners. In one study, Rambe (2011:271) investigated the effects of social media on academic relationships between first-year students and lecturers in medium-sized universities; the results revealed that social media mediated the relationships between the two groups. Botha, Farshid and Pitt (2011:41) examined the visibility of university brands

in most popular media (Facebook, Google, and Twitter, among others), and the results revealed that South African universities were not visible in these social media. In another study, Lekhanya and Mason (2013:39) investigated the influence of social media on the development and sustenance of rural small, medium, and micro-enterprises in Kwa-Zulu Natal, where the results showed that there is limited use of social media because of the cost implications associated with their use.

A review of the few studies that were done reveals that there are a limited number of studies on the effects of social media brand personality.

### **1.2.2 Brand personality**

According to Klabi and Debabi (2011:245), marketing practitioners have tried to transfer human traits to brands through advertisements. A typical example is given by Freling, Crosno & Hernard (2011:392), who noted that “marketers and consumers are familiar with the rugged persona of Marlboro and Harley Davidson, the sophistication of the Mercedes Benz and the excitement of Pepsi Cola”. These personality characteristics result from marketers who have successfully worked hard to imbue brands with human traits. Besides this, brand personality may be created as a consequence of direct contact with a brand (Sung & Kim, 2010:639). Notably, Klabi and Debabi (2011:247) and Sung and Kim (2010:643) have indicated that brand personality is an abstract construct that is formed in the mind of a consumer as a result of how the consumer perceives the brand. Brands that have attractive personalities have the potential to develop robust long-term relationships with consumers (Carlson & Donovan, 2013:195).

Brand personality is a multidimensional construct, which consists of five dimensions namely, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness, competence and sincerity, 15 facets and 42 personality traits. These dimensions emerged from a factor analysis of data obtained from a series of studies conducted across the United States of America (USA). The dimensions refer to how consumers perceive the brands (Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016:45). Since the genesis of Aaker’s (1997) brand personality, it has been the most applied scale in studies across cultures, countries and product categories (Conejo, Wooliscraft & Insch, 2017:1; Vahdati & Nejad, 2016:4), despite

the existence of ad-hoc scales, scales deduced from personality (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014:9) and scales suggested by Hieronimus in 2003 and the “new” brand personality scale by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf in 2009.

Although several studies have been conducted on social media, there is limited evidence to show that research has been done on the effects of the perceived brand personality of social media. Previous research on brand personality dwelt on other issues, such as the brand personality of business media (Kumar & Kumar, 2014), a university (Rauschnabel, Krey, Babin & Ivens, 2016) and advergaming (Lee & Cho, 2017). In a further example, Moller and Hem (2013:448) applied the construct of brand personality to the retail sector; the results of their study revealed that brand personality is positively correlated to attitude toward the brand, and that it increases both sales and profitability. They also suggested that brand personality helps to enhance retail image and customer loyalty, and greatly assists in the positioning of retail stores. In another study by Kim, Magnini and Singal (2010:453), it was discovered that brand personality has a positive effect on both brand preference and attitudinal loyalty.

Rojas-Mendez, Murphy and Papadopoulos (2013:1029) have applied the concept of brand personality to the study of nations, where they investigated the effects of people’s attitude towards China and the United States (US) as if they were personified. The assumptions were that, if a country could be viewed as a person, it would help to develop a unique positioning strategy that could enhance competitive advantage. The findings demonstrated that a country’s brand personality has both positive and negative elements (Rojas-Mendez *et al.*, 2013:1032). Country brand personality was found to be a significant predictor of people’s intentions to visit a country, to purchase products and services from the country, to develop relationships with the country, and of their overall attitude towards the nation.

In another study where brand personality was applied to place branding, Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri and Kurtulus (2008:1296) revealed that not all personality traits make a positive contribution to a favourable attitude towards tourism destinations. However, it was confirmed that brand personality characteristics are a powerful tool that could be employed to differentiate place brands. A recent study by Huang, Zhang and Hu (2017:1203) examined the applicability of Aaker’s brand personality scale to a Chinese

tourist-destination and its effect on tourists' emotional attachment. The results revealed that the tourist-destination brand personality had two dimensions (excitement and competence) from Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale. Of the two dimensions, 'excitement' had a positive influence on emotional attachment, whereas 'competence' did not.

Braunstein and Ross (2010:13) suggest that sports brand personality is a topic that has drawn interest from researchers, who have revealed that the brand personality construct is fundamental in positioning and differentiating sports teams from their competitors. In another study, Mustamil, Chung and Ariff (2014:135) examined the applicability of Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale to Nike sports shoes among university students; the results revealed that all five dimensions (sincerity, sophistication, excitement, ruggedness, and competence) were applicable to Nike shoes.

Although online brand personalities are significant to various stakeholders (Chen, 2013:1291), very little research has been carried out in this domain (Haarhoff & Klein, 2012:106; Lin, 2009:221; Pal & Arnot, 2013:1039). In recent studies, the focus has been on substantiating the applicability of Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale (BPS). For example, in one of the studies that compared offline and online brand personalities, it was concluded that brand personality can be applied to online brands (Chung & Ahn, 2013:171). Chung and Ahn (2013:171) acknowledged that a number of researchers have applied Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions to online brands. For example, Okazaki (2006), Chung, Marcketti and Fiore (2014) and Chung and Ahn (2007) applied the dimensions of brand personality to multinational companies' websites, employing content analysis instead of using data from actual consumers. Chung and Ahn (2013:171) note that because they did not collect data from consumers in their earlier study, this could have attributed to why the application of Aaker's model to online brands failed (Chung & Ahn, 2007:171).

Furthermore, a previous study explored the influence of website personality on behaviour, and revealed that it has a significant correlation with consumers' purchase intentions (Poddar, Donthu & Wei, 2009:449). In a study on the impact of perceived brand personality of online games on users' satisfaction, Lin (2009:231) noted that

research has shown that online brand personalities have an influence on gamers' satisfaction. In another study by Chen and Rodgers (2006:40) where five dimensions – intelligent, fun, organised, candid, and sincere – were used to develop an instrument to measure web personality, results indicated that, because websites are endowed with human characteristics, users will react to them like they do to advertisements and salespeople.

Research results across various brands have testified that brands have 'personalities'; on this basis, therefore, it is suggested that online brand personality can exist in the same way that offline brands exist (Chung & Ahn, 2013:172). This means that social media have brand personalities, and that these can affect consumer perceptions in varying ways.

A review of the few studies that were done reveals that there are a limited number of studies on the effects of social media brand personality (Haarhoff & Klein, 2012:106; Xu, Liu, Gou, Akkirajau, Mahmud, Sinha, Hu & Qiao, 2016:436). Despite social media offering platforms to customers in order for them to interact, and opportunities for marketers and brand managers to promote the visibility of their products, it is unfortunate that empirical research has not provided a clear explanation of how the perceived brand personality of has an impact on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. Research attempts on online brand personality have not yet focused on this area. Thus, this research intends to investigate the effect that the perceived brand personality of social media has on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

This study has been motivated by the tremendous growth of the three social media platforms and the effect that they have on the business community and society. The platforms have marked influences on the way marketing practitioners develop marketing strategies. The results of the study may offer social media brand managers the much-needed information to create a distinctive brand personality and to formulate sustainable differentiation strategies in the minds of social media brand users. The results might be useful to the development of a proper social media brand position in the market, in the designing of promotional strategies and in the targeting of a market segment based on the brand personality dimensions.



The next sections briefly discuss attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

### **1.2.3 Attitude**

According to Fazio and Olson (2003:140), attitudes are unobservable psychological constructs that manifest themselves in beliefs, feelings, and behavioural components. They guide the behaviour of individual consumers. An individual's overall attitude toward an entity affects the pattern of response to it (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977:888). Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2013:293) indicate that attitudes have a number of functions in individuals who hold those attitudes. These functions are: adaptations (enable individuals to achieve desired goals and avoid undesirable ones); knowledge (help individuals to understand the world); value-expressive (enable a person to express values that relate to the individual's self-concept); and ego-defensive (attitudes may serve to protect the individual who holds them). Attitudes facilitate easy decision-making and predict behaviour, in most cases (Fazio & Olson, 2003:150).

Iranmanesh and Najafabadi (2013:629) indicated that the study of attitude makes a significant contribution to analysing consumer behaviour. Despite the importance of attitude in predicting behaviour, several studies have produced both inconsistent and inconclusive results on the effect that attitude has on behaviour. Regardless of this, attitude plays an important role in an individual's judgement and evaluation of a given attitude object; attitudes thus help individuals to behave in a certain way with respect to attitude objects. Alam and Sayuti (2011:12) revealed that the more that an individual has either a favourable or an unfavourable attitude towards a brand, the more likely it is that the individual will perform, or not perform, the behaviour under consideration.

### **1.2.4 Motivation**

People have many motives for using social media. Kim, Jeong and Lee (2010:230) cited a number of uses that include the use of social media as new avenues of entertainment in which individuals spend time. Individuals also use social media as vehicles for self-presentation, because they can post and update their status.



Businesses and individuals have taken advantage of social media as a cheap way to keep company and individual profiles (Nikou & Bouwman, 2013:422). Social media provide a platform on which businesses have two-way communication with their customers and, for that reason, the businesses are able to make products that meet customer specifications (Haarhoff & Klein, 2012:106).

Xu *et al.* (2012:211) pointed out that there are a number of motivational gratifications for using social media. They include entertainment, self-status, socialisation, and information-seeking (Park, Kee & Venenzuela, 2009:730; Xu *et al.*, 2012:211). Hicks, Comp, Horovitz, Hovarter, Miki and Beaven (2012:2277) also suggested four motives relating to social media use. These include recognition, social, cognitive, and entertainment motivations. According to Lee, Ahn & Kim (2014:162), social media such as Facebook have also provided a platform for self-presentation that permits users to upload pictures, update their status, and display associates. In fact, most previous research on users' motives for using social media have mainly focused on Facebook because of its popularity (Heidemann, Klier & Probst, 2012:3868).

### **1.2.5 Behavioural intent**

Narteh (2016:93) notes that the concept of behavioural intention (BI) is grounded in the theory of planned behaviour which was developed by Ajzen (1991), who indicated that intention is determined by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control. BI refers to the "conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a particular behaviour with the intentions being formed from both personal evaluative and normative construct" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). According to Amin and Nasharuddin (2018:498), BI consists of favourable and unfavourable intentions. Favourable BI is described as good behavioural beliefs about the possibility to show positive behaviour and unfavourable BI refers to incorrect behavioural beliefs about the possibility of performing negative behaviour (Najib, Yusef, & Tabasa, 2015:498).

BI is regarded as one of the most important factors that is used to explain actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1985:1; Virabhakul & Huang, 2018: 1000). According to Ajzen (1991), an individual with a strong intention to perform a certain behaviour is likely to result in the performance of the behaviour. Thus, an individual's behaviour can be

predicted on the basis of one's intentions. Many researchers have examined the effect of behavioural intentions on purchasing behaviour (Han, Hsu & Sheu, 2010:326). In this study behavioural intent is applied to examine its influence on the behaviour of social media users and it was regarded as a unidimensional construct that was then measured using a four-item scale adapted from previous scales (refer to section 5.6.2.4 for detail).

### **1.2.6 Behaviour**

Khan (2006:4) defined consumer behaviour as “the decision-making process and physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluating, using and disposing of goods and services”. It is essential for the long-term success of a business venture, since marketers are able to understand how consumers feel about, and select from, alternative products and services. Sommer (2011:91) indicated that behaviour is influenced by attitude, norms, and perceived behavioural control, and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) has been applied to understand the different types of behaviours. In this study behaviour was measured using the respondents' usage pattern that was computed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Usage pattern was measured in time (hours and minutes) that respondents spent on the platform. The total usage time was averaged in order to give a behaviour value.

This study applies brand personality to social media, just as it has also been applied to consumer goods and travel destinations (Dolnicar, Laesser, & Randle, 2010:455), to restaurants (Kim, *et al*, 2011:448), to retail sector (Moller & Herm, 2013), to hotel industry (Li, Yen & Uysal, 2014), to media industry (Kumar & Kumar, 2014), to sport management (Giroux, Pons & Maltese, 2017) and to sport shoe industry (Pool, Arabzad, Asian, Fahimi, & Kazemi, 2018).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Extant literature has revealed that, in recent years, there have been an increasing number of brand personality studies across various industries, products (Kim, Vaidyanathan, Chang & Stoel, 2017:424), and services (Xu, Liu, Gou, Akkiraju, Mahmud, Sinha, Hu, & Qiao, 2016:436). Sung and Kim (2010:640) also posit that,

given the significance of brand personality in the marketing domain, research has proliferated with the intention of testing the applicability of brand personality in the product and service markets. Yet another stream of previous research has focused on the re-examination of the generalisability of Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale (henceforth 'BPS') to restaurant brands (Austin, Sigauw & Mattila, 2003), and the development of new scales to measure the brand personality of news media brands (Kim, Baek & Martin, 2010) and website personality (Chen & Rodgers, 2005).

Another stream of research has concentrated on the predictive effect of brand personality on a number of outcomes such as consumer-brand relationships (Carlson & Donovan, 2013:193); and self-image congruity and functional congruity (Su & Reynolds, 2017).

Online brand personality studies are still limited and, and in their infancy (Haarhoff & Kleyn, 2012:106; Ong, Nguyen & Alwi, 2017:371). Despite the widespread use of Aaker's brand personality framework, researchers have not yet "examined the brand characteristics associated with social media platforms" (Langstedt & Hunt, 2017:315, 323). Previous research has focused on the effect of website personality on purchase intentions, customer-brand relationships, and website quality (Poddar *et al.*, 2009:441). Opoku and Hinson (2006) applied Aaker's BPS to explore whether African countries employed websites to communicate their unique online brand personalities. Lin (2009:220) examined the relationship between the perceived brand personality of online games and users' satisfaction.

Okazaki (2006) explored the online brand personality of American multinational corporations (MNCs) using Aaker's BPS. The study found that the scale could be applied as two dimensions – excitement and sophistication – and that both were associated with MNCs' online brands. In another study, Paschen, Pitt, Kietzmann, Dabirian and Farshid (2017) explored the brand personality dimensions that online brand community websites exhibit. The results revealed that excitement was the most common dimension found in all the brand community websites, followed by sincerity, with the least common dimension being sophistication. In their study, Ong *et al.* (2017:391) determined the dimensions of consumer-based virtual brand personality.

Their results replicated four of Aaker's original BPS dimensions; excitement, sophistication, competence, and sincerity.

Despite the widespread use of Aaker's BPS across various domains, there is no evidence in the current literature to demonstrate that research on the influence of the perceived brand personality on consumer attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour has been carried out. This research issue has remained underexposed, despite the fact that social media are increasingly prevalent, as indicated by the proliferation of web-based users (Nikou & Bouwman, 2014:422). Therefore, the fundamental problem that this research intends to examine is how the perceived brand personality of three specific social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube) influences consumer attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which the perceived brand personality of social media affects users' attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour towards social media.

### **1.4.1 Secondary objectives**

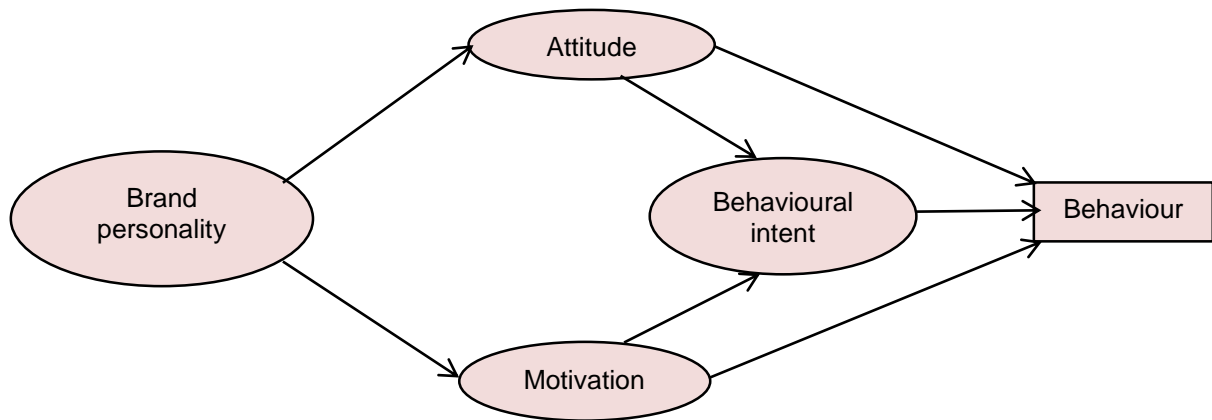
The specific objectives of this study are to:

- ❖ examine the underlying structure of the brand personality scale in the context of social media brands
- ❖ determine the relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitudes
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' attitude and behaviour
- ❖ determine the relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' motivation and behaviour
- ❖ determine the relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour

- ❖ propose and test a model for the interrelationship between perceived brand personality, attitudes, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour on the three social media platforms.

The proposed conceptual framework follows in Figure 1.1. The conceptual framework represents the proposed relationships that exist between the constructs of the study. The depicted relationships are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

**Figure 1.1 The proposed conceptual framework**



## 1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

A hypothesis is an unproven proposition about a phenomenon in which a researcher is interested. In other words, it is a tentative statement about the existing relationship between at least two variables (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:54). This study traced the following hypotheses (shown in Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1 Research hypotheses**

Hypotheses
H <sub>1</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitude.
H <sub>2</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation.
H <sub>3</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent.
H <sub>4</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour
H <sub>5</sub> : There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent.
H <sub>6</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour.
H <sub>7</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour.

## 1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

This section describes the research design, sampling strategy, data collection method, and data analysis procedures that were used in this study.

A research design is the blueprint that is used to gather, measure, and analyse data (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:138). In this research, a descriptive design was employed because the researcher crafted research questionnaires prior to data collection (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:149). This research aimed to describe the relationships between marketing phenomena; thus the design was feasible, as it permitted the researcher to establish the predictive effects of the perceived brand personality of social media on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

The researcher applied a single cross-sectional approach to collecting data from respondents. This entailed collecting data once from a sample (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:22), using an online self-administered and structured questionnaire. This research used Qualtrics, web-based software that allowed the researcher to create and distribute surveys through Qualtrics Panels, which distributed the surveys through a link to prospective respondents. All the constructs were measured using adapted questions from previous studies. Data was collected from a total sample of 1140 respondents; each platform had 380 respondents.

The researcher adhered to the guidelines of the University of Pretoria's Ethical Committee in executing the research. Before pre-testing and data collection, ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Committee. In order to ensure that the research process remained ethical, informed consent was secured from the respondents, and they were free to withdraw from participation at any point. The informed consent advised respondents on the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation.

Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. In order to compile sample profiles for demographic data and research constructs, the researcher employed descriptive statistics. Exploratory factor analysis was

conducted in order to assess the suitability of data for factor analysis and to determine the number of factors to retain, especially for multidimensional constructs (brand personality and motivation). The SPSS Amos package version 24 was used to conduct structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the hypotheses. The hypothesised models for Facebook and LinkedIn attained fit without any modifications, and the one for YouTube was estimated until it attained acceptable fit indices.

## **1.7 PROPOSED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

Regardless of the growth of research on brand personality (Seimiene & Kamarauskaite, 2014:429; Sophonsiri & Polyorat, 2009:52), limited work has been conducted on online brand personality, despite the fact that social media have brought about dramatic changes in society and business (Simons, 2007:546). Furthermore, research on online brand personality is emerging, implying that little is known about the predictive effects of the perceived brand personality of social media. In specific terms, this is pioneering research in this domain both in South Africa and elsewhere, because it contributes considerably to this domain. Its contribution is two-fold: it makes a scholarly contribution, and a managerial contribution.

From an academic perspective, this study extends brand personality research to social media. The research extends Aaker's brand personality model to social media brands in order to examine the underlying structure of the three social media platforms and the resultant effects the perceived brand personality on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour. This study differs from the other studies carried out prior to this research because of the different domains and socio-economic contexts in which they were undertaken. Most of the studies on brand personality were done on products and services (Ghantous, 2016); consumer-brand relationships (Becheur, Bayarassou, & Ghrib, 2017); sports (Giroux, Pons, & Maltese, 2017), and tourism destinations (Huang, Zhang, & Hu, 2017; Jovanovic, Bozic, Dinic & Majstorovic, 2017). Despite the contention that social media have a far-reaching impact on today's society, research in this domain is still scarce (Chen, 2013:1220). This study thus fills this gap by applying brand personality to social media brands. The research results for this thesis, therefore, contribute to the body of knowledge in this vital research domain.



This study tests the applicability of Aaker's BPS to online brands, in a new domain and a new setting – those of social media and South Africa respectively. In fact, previous research has produced conflicting results on the applicability of this model in different cultures, and using different products, services, and ideas. Some scholars have revealed that not all studies have replicated Aaker's BPS (Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera, 2001; Ahmed, 2014:11), since the BPS is affected by different socio-economic variables pertaining in each context. For example, studies by Sung and Kim (2004), Chu and Sung (2011), and Smit, Den Berge and Franzen (2003) reproduced only three dimensions from the original BPS. The majority of these studies were conducted in Western and Asian countries, and there is limited application of Aaker's model in a developing country like South Africa. Therefore, the application of this model to both the South African context and the social media context has contributed to the extant literature in this domain.

The present study examined the effect that the perceived brand personality of social media has on customer attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. By so doing, the study substantiated that social media brand personality has mixed effects on consumer attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. The study thus contributes to the extant literature of brand personality theory, uses and gratification theory, and the theory of planned behaviour by focusing on the determinant role of the perceived brand personality of social media on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

The study lends additional support to the fact that brand personality can not only be applied to product categories, destinations, and services, but can also be applied to social media brands. The relationship between brand personality and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour are significant outcomes that no other study had explored and the results may enlighten brand managers on the degree of influence that that perceived brand personality dimensions have on the outcome variables of this study.

Another contribution relates to the development of a model that explains the relationships between brand personality, attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. In specific terms, this study is the first to integrate brand personality,



attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. It is anticipated that the model will offer a framework within which future research studies can be conducted.

There is a methodological variance between most of the methods used in previous research on online branding and the approach that this research employed. Prior research seems to have repeatedly used content analysis (Haarhoff & Kleyn, 2012:107; Lin, 2009:226; Okazaki, 2006:285; Opoku, Abratt, Bendixen & Pitt, 2007:365). Chapleo, Duran and Diaz (2010) combined both content and multivariate analysis to assess the efficacy of universities' websites in communicating the universities' brands. This study took a different approach by using an online survey to collect data through Qualtrics Panels. Unlike previous studies, that mostly tended to focus on one platform, the proposed model was tested on three different platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube).

From a management perspective, it was necessary to look at the brand personality of social media, as they have become part of social and business life. Social media affect business performance because they have become vehicles of communication (Paniagua & Sapina, 2014:721). Through social media, businesses can establish relationships with society; many have made websites part of their marketing mix, and those that do so have managed to reach diverse potential customers. Understanding brand personality dimensions helps marketing practitioners to come up with a variety of e-marketing strategies that capture the attention of a large pool of customers and enhance brand appeal.

In light of the increasing role of social media in brand marketing communication, it is important for brand managers to consider the users' perceptions of social media platforms, as this would guide them on how best to leverage the popularity of a platform to market their products, services, or ideas. The results should encourage brand managers to consider the perceived brand personality of social media platforms when developing marketing strategies for their brands hosted on social media.

The brand personality dimensions of the platforms identified in this study may help social media brand managers to understand how users perceive their social media brands and based on that knowledge they can come up with a number of marketing

strategies that are particular to each platform. Brand managers may use this information to develop effective advertising and promotional campaigns. Advertising campaigns could be tailor-made to appeal to the rightful users of social media, by the use of the identified brand personality dimensions.

The brand personality dimensions identified in this study are important as they may inform brand and marketing practitioners on how the brand dimensions affect the attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour of social media users in the South African context. Thus when developing marketing strategies practitioners would be aware of which dimensions they can emphasise in order to produce the best results with regard to attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour.

With adequate knowledge on the brand personality dimensions of each social media platform brand managers may properly market and position the platforms in the minds of users. The brand dimensions so identified can provide a platform upon which brand managers of the three social media platforms may position the platform in the South African market.

## **1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study was confined to the examination of the influence of the perceived brand personality of social media on users' attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. Only three social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube) were used in the study, and any other social media platform was excluded. The researcher decided to include Facebook in this study because it is the most popular platform with over 2.2 billion active users (Statista, 2018) and it has received overwhelming acceptance across the world by the business community, society and academics. YouTube is also a popular and a rapidly growing video sharing platform with over 1.9 billion subscribers (Statista, 2018) which is indispensable for businesses, society and academics. LinkedIn was selected for this study because it also the most popular and number one platform used for professional purposes (Goldstuck, 2018). More reasons for the choice of the three platforms are discussed in chapter 4.

From a theoretical viewpoint, this study was limited to brand personality theory, and specifically to the theory of anthropomorphism, attitude theory, uses and gratification theory, and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). These theories are used to explain the relationships that exist between the research constructs. For instance, the anthropomorphism theory helps to explain the construct of brand personality, while uses and gratification theory is used to explain the construct of motivation, and the tripartite theory of attitudes and the multi-attribute model explain the construct of attitude in this study. Finally, the theory of planned behaviour is used to explain attitude, behavioural intent, and behaviour. These theories are expanded on in Chapters 2 and 3.

However, some motivation theories like the self-determination theory and the McClelland theory of needs were excluded from this study because the researcher realised that the uses and gratification theory explains the motivation for social media use in a precise and best-fitting manner. In addition to that, most researchers who investigated the motivation for social media use have employed the UGT in their studies (Bonbaker & Haigh, 2017; Kim, Lee & Contractor, 2019; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

It is important to comprehend the key terms of this study. Consequently, they are defined within the context of this study. Although definitions of key terms abound in the literature review, it was important that the best-fitting definitions – those that would help one to understand the research constructs – were adapted. The key terms of the current study – brand, brand personality, social media, attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour – are defined next.

### **1.9.1 Brand**

“A brand is not a product. It is the product’s essence, its meaning, and its direction, and it defines its identity in time and space. Too often brands are examined through their component parts: the brand name, its logo, design, or packaging, advertising or

sponsorship, or image or name recognition, or very recently, in terms of financial brand valuation” (Doyle 1998, 172; Kapferer, 1992:12).

### **1.9.2 Brand personality**

Brand personality is defined as a set of relatively enduring human characteristics that are appropriate and applicable to the description of social media (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003).

### **1.9.3 Social media**

‘Social Media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content’ (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61).

### **1.9.4 Attitude**

Attitudes are defined as "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way" (Fishbein, 1967:257).

### **1.9.5 Motivation**

Motivation is conceptualised as the force either within, or external to, an individual that arouses enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain goal of action (Nam, 2014:263).

### **1.9.6 Behavioural intent**

Behavioural intent is an indication of a person’s willingness to perform a given behaviour (Turhan & Özbek 2013:7).

### **1.9.7 Behaviour**

Behaviour is the way an individual acts towards people, society, or objects (Lazzeri, 2014:65).

## **1.10 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

The first chapter has introduced the study. It described the background of the study, outlined the statement of the problem, and spelt out the research objectives that the study sought to attain and the hypotheses that the study sought to test. A brief discussion of the research design, contribution of the study, and delimitations of the study was offered. The rest of the chapters in the thesis are organised as follows:

Chapter 2 describes the theoretical foundation of the brand personality construct. Brand personality theory is first discussed, followed by a description of Aaker's brand personality model and scale. This is followed by a critique of the brand personality scale (BPS) and a justification of its relevance to this study. Next, the hypotheses that pertain to brand personality are developed.

Chapter 3 looks at the theories that describe attitude, motivation, and behaviour. First, theories relating to attitude are discussed. Second, theories that relate to motivation are discussed. Finally, theories that explain behavioural intent and behaviour are presented.

Chapter 4 describes social media and social network sites and their history. Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube are discussed, together with findings from previous studies.

Chapter 5 focuses on the research methodology, design, and procedures employed to execute this study. The chapter begins by describing the research problem and the objectives of the study. The research design and the research philosophy are discussed next. Thereafter, the chapter describes how data was collected and prepared. Finally, the data collection procedures and analyses that were used are presented.

Chapter 6 focuses on the presentation and results of the analysis of the data. The chapter describes the demographic profiles and reports the factor structure of the constructs. Exploratory factor analysis results are presented, as well as an evaluation of the models and the testing of the hypotheses using structural equation modelling (SEM).

Chapter 7 focuses on summarising, concluding, and giving recommendations. The chapter discusses the research findings, and compares them with previous findings. The chapter also outlines the study's contribution, the implication that the study has for managers, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### BRAND PERSONALITY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to acknowledge that any academic research that is undertaken has to be rooted in universally accepted theories that have been tested and proven beyond doubt by reputable researchers and practitioners. In fact, theories form the foundation for predicting and explaining the research phenomena under study, and they provide the research with the platform to order ideas about the problem at hand in a systematic way. Theories give structure and boundaries within which to operate (Ennis, 1999:132). The significance of theories lies in the contention that they provide a framework for analysis and simplify explanations about the relationships that exist between research constructs (Leedy & Ormord, 2005:4; Walker, 1998:362).

Walker (1998:362) noted that a good theory forms the basis on which a theoretical framework is constructed. A theoretical framework identifies and describes the major constructs of the scholarship. Ennis (1999:132) indicated that a theoretical framework can be employed to hypothesise and understand the relationships that exist between the independent and dependent constructs. In real terms, the theoretical framework contextualises and serves as a foundation for the research constructs. What is important here is to note that a foundation implies that there is a history behind the study, or a solid platform on which further research work can be developed.

The purpose of this chapter is to put brand personality into theoretical context. The chapter will explore the existing body of literature to describe the theoretical viewpoints, and use previous research findings to make sure that the theories related to brand personality are contextualised. The chapter is organised as follows: the first section discusses the theoretical paradigm related to brand personality, while the second part outlines the proposed research model and appraises the research hypotheses that are grounded in brand personality theories. Only those theories and empirical research that best fit this research are discussed.

## 2.2 BRAND PERSONALITY THEORY

The tendency to perceive brands as people has some influence in the branding domain. Brand managers have encouraged this by using marketing communications that focus on ensuring that consumers view brands as human beings (Aggarwal & McGall, 2012:308; Puzakova, Kwak & Rocereto, 2009:413). In practice, brand managers have humanised brands using characters and spokespersons. The propensity for consumers to view brands as having human-like characteristics and features is discussed next under the theory of anthropomorphism.

### 2.2.1 The theory of anthropomorphism

Connell (2013:462) and Lanier, Rader and Fowler (2013:38) indicate that anthropomorphism is derived from two words, *anthropos* and *morphe*. The word *anthropos* means 'human', and *morphe* means 'form'. Anthropomorphism was originally concerned with the physical form of human beings, not their cognitive nature. Human beings are the only living organisms on earth who can walk on two legs, and have an upright spine and hands that can handle objects; thus they have a unique physical appearance (Connell, 2013:462).

According to Conell (2013:462), anthropomorphism is the process of "assigning real or imagined human characteristics, intentions, motivations or emotions to non-human objects often motivated by explaining and understanding the behaviour of those non-human agents". Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo (2007:864) state that the essence of anthropomorphism lies in people's tendency to "imbue real or imagined human behaviour of non-human agents with human-like characteristics, motivations or emotions". This means that individuals have a tendency to see non-human agents as human-like. A non-human agent denotes anything that can act with some degree of independence, be it animals, religious entities, or technological devices. Thus the theory of anthropomorphism can be employed to explain the rationale behind humanising non-human entities, such as products and brands.



Epley, Waytz, Akalis and Cacioppo (2008:146) indicate three motivations that determine anthropomorphism: sociality motivation, effectance motivation, and cognitive motivation or elicited agent knowledge.

- ❖ Sociality motivation entails the need for social connections with people. However, when lacking social connections, people have a tendency to compensate by creating relations with non-human entities through anthropomorphism. Puzakova *et al.* (2009:416) point out that social connection or belonging is one of the most significant motivations, and that it affects an individual's success and psychological well-being. Previous research indicates that people may satisfy their need for belonging by establishing close relationships with religious entities and with pets.
- ❖ Effectance motivation suggests that people anthropomorphise in order to explain and understand the behaviour of non-human entities. Epley *et al.* (2008:149) indicate that, when individuals anthropomorphise, they satisfy the effectance motivation by "providing a detailed knowledge structure that can be used to understand a novel non-human agent". In this scenario, anthropomorphism may be employed to predict and comprehend uncertainties in the world. This denotes that anthropomorphism is influenced by the individual's motivation to resolve uncertain issues, find relevant meaning, and interact with the environment in an effective way (Epley *et al.* 2007:872). Thus effectance motivation seeks to minimise uncertain and ambiguous environments and to control the social context. For example, some users of social network sites (SNS) may control and influence other users through comments they post on the platforms.
- ❖ The cognitive motivation of anthropomorphism describes a situation where anthropomorphism is the result of cognitive factors. This is when knowledge about humans is used as the basis for understanding non-human entities (Epley *et al.*, 2007:865). It represents an inductive approach in which an individual's reasoning about an unknown non-human agent is based on a well-known representation (Waytz & Morewedge, 2010:411). Knowledge about humans is used for inductive reasons because humans have the experience of being human, and do not have the experiences of being a non-human entity (Epley

*et al.*, 2007:868). For example, individuals may use human knowledge to make inferences about the behaviour of their pets.

According to Puzakova *et al.* (2009:413) and Brown (2010:213), the concept of anthropomorphism has been studied and applied in many domains, such as religion, biology, sociology, economics, anthropology, and consumer behaviour. The concept was first used in theology as a way to depict the character of God being likened to a human being with supernatural powers (Fisher, 1991:51). Thereafter it extended to various disciplines. According to Kim and McGill (2011:95), initial research on anthropomorphism examined the capacities of non-human entities by studying the level at which anthropomorphism can represent accurate insights into non-human entities. In the social sciences, research into anthropomorphism focused on investigating the reasons that people anthropomorphise non-human entities (Disalvo & Gemberle, 2003:2; Kim & McGill, 2011:94). Another stream of research in this domain examines the effects of anthropomorphism on the individual's evaluation of brands and behaviour (Kim & McGill, 2011:95).

The theory of anthropomorphism has received a lot of interest from researchers and practitioners (Guido & Peluso, 2015:1). There is consensus that consumers tend to perceive branded products and services as if they were human agents. Marketing practitioners have encouraged managers to endow brands with personalities and values with which consumers are able to associate, and to build long-term loyalty and commitment (Cayla, 2013:1). Marketing efforts have been generally successful in ascribing human attributes to brands. Kim and McGill (2010:2) indicate that anthropomorphising a brand has a positive influence on the consumer's brand evaluation and behaviour. This is because the practice of anthropomorphising brands has the potential to enhance emotional bonding between the brand and the consumer, thus establishing strong consumer-brand relationships.

Anthropomorphism has also been applied in engineering and product designs. For example, Guido and Peluso (2015:1) note that car designers have come up with external appearances that lead consumers to perceive cars as if they were in fact human. Disalvo and Gemperle (2003:26) indicate that anthropomorphism has been

applied to the frontal view of most cars, where the two headlights represent the eyes and a grill represents the mouth.

Disalvo and Gemperle (2003:26) further indicate that anthropomorphic product forms can be used to explain the purpose and function of a brand, to reflect product attributes, and to express the socio-cultural values related to the product. Marketers have used anthropomorphic containers to create shapes for liquid products. Human-like forms are dominant in domestic products such as radios, lamps, and kitchen and food products (Disalvo & Gemberle, 2003:1). Guido and Peluso (2015:2) indicate that, in some cases, marketers name their products as if they were humans – for example, ‘Mr Clean’.

Even in some promotional campaigns, products are humanised as a way to evoke a positive response from consumers (Puzakova *et al.*, 2009:413). This humanisation helps brands to act as relationship partners to consumers. Waytz, Cacioppo, and Epley (2010:227) confirm that marketers have continued to anthropomorphise products and services because anthropomorphism provides an effective and efficient way to increase consumer attention to advertisements.

Previous research has shown that anthropomorphising products increases the chances of interaction with the anthropomorphised agent. The imitation of human appearance affects how consumers perceive a brand, how they associate with it, and how they build long-term relationships with it (Fink 2012:200). Consumers are likely to increase their approval of the brand when there is an existing congruency between the human schema and the major characteristics of the brand in question (Kim & McGill, 2010:2-6). This implies that anthropomorphic brands and characters have the power to produce positive reactions in consumers and thus increase product sales. In practice, there is a belief that consumers feel more positive towards anthropomorphised products.

The anthropomorphising of non-human agents facilitates the development of social interaction between the consumer and the agent (Epley *et al.*, 2007:879). For example, research has confirmed that anthropomorphising computers enhances human-computer interaction and increases users’ engagement (Waytz *et al.*, 2010:226). Fink

(2012:200) notes that anthropomorphising a technical agent promotes the creation of social relationships, facilitates the user's use of the technical agent such as a computer, and enhances their pleasure in using it. Anthropomorphism causes the humanising of brands, and creates human-like personalities for objects (such as brands).

The next section looks at personality theory, which is one theory that has been used to anthropomorphise non-human agents. For example, Banerjee (2016) indicates that marketers have imposed human personality traits on brands and, as a consequence, consumers establish relationships with brands as if they were partners.

### **2.2.2 Personality theory**

Personality is “the enduring, emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal and motivational style that explains an individual's behaviour in different situations” (Rose, Ramalu, Uli & Kumar, 2010:105). Personality is a combination of distinctive characteristics that make up an individual's unique character.

While many theories are used in psychology to group personalities, the ‘big five’ personality structure of Norman (1963) has been widely used. Several researchers (Digman & Takemoto-Chock, 1981; Fiske, 1949; Smith, 1967 among others) have indicated that there is consensus about personality traits being grouped according to the ‘big five’ factor model. It is made up of the following dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (Heding, Knudtzen and Bjerre, 2011:123).

According to Rothman and Coetzer (2003:69), extraversion entails traits such as “sociability, assertiveness, activity and talkativeness”. Past research has established that extraverts are characterised by energy, optimism, and positive feelings. Agreeableness refers to an individual's propensity to trust, conform, accept, and sympathise, and their readiness to help others (Rothman & Coetzer, 2003:69). Conscientiousness is regarded as the degree to which an individual is organised, responsible, and decisive in nature. Vogt and Laher (2009:40) state that it also entails being a hard worker and having self-discipline. A conscientious individual is

achievement-oriented (Rothman & Coetzer, 2003:68). Neuroticism is conceptualised as a general tendency to be “anxious, hostile, depressed, vulnerable, and insecure” (Vogt & Laher, 2009:40). Openness refers to an individual’s propensity to be “curious, creative, insightful, and informed” (Vogt & Laher, 2009:40).

Ekinci and Hosany (2006:127) argue that, for a considerable time, research had suffered from the absence of a common theory and nomenclature of personality traits that could best describe products and brands. Early scales that were employed to measure products and brands were based on human personality scales, yet many questioned their applicability, since human beings and products have distinct antecedents. Although people could assign human personality traits to non-human agents, only a few human traits were mirrored in brands.

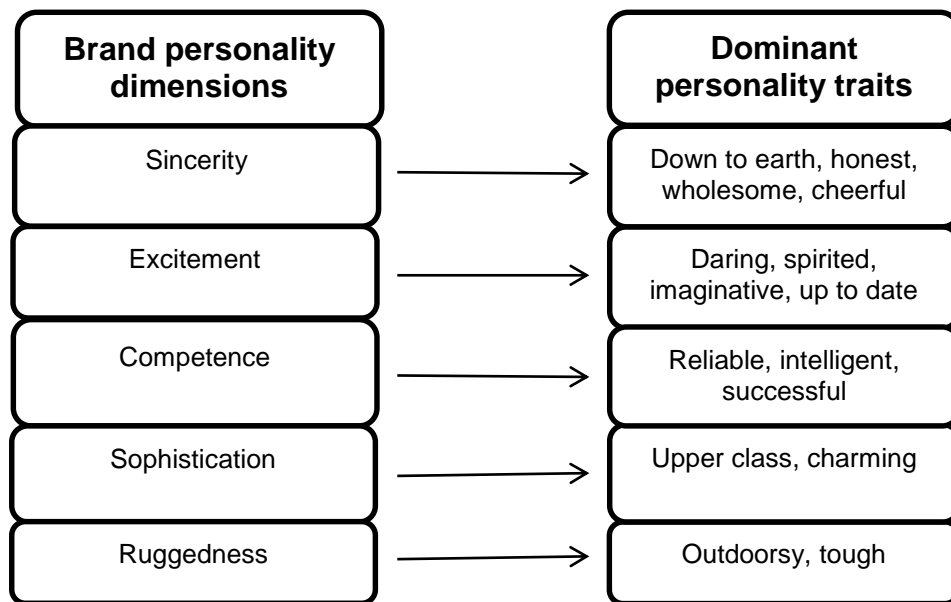
Heding, Knudtzen and Bjerre (2011:128) argue that brand personality is a product of three supporting themes: personality, consumer-self, and brand self-congruence. The personality perspective stems from psychology, and provides the background against which brands are personified. The consumer-self view posits that brands may be employed by consumers to attain a desired self-image; and brand self-congruence implies that consumers would normally want to be associated with certain brand personalities that are likened to their own self-image.

Although the ‘big five’ theory relates to human personality, it forms the premise from which Aaker’s (1997) dimensions of brand personality were derived. Bishnoi and Kumar (2014:909) point out that Aaker’s brand personality has theoretical roots in the ‘big five’ personality structure. Aaker argued that brands are likened to humans who have traits and that, therefore, human traits can be applied to brands. Bishnoi and Kumar (2014:909) further explain that the traits that Aaker used in her brand personality model were borrowed from the extant personality literature and that this explains why there are similarities between the human personality and brand personality.

### 2.3 THE BRAND PERSONALITY MODEL

According to Taulet and Schlesinger (2013:445), Aaker first suggested the concept of brand personality after adapting the ‘big five’ model. Aaker (1997:347) posited that lack of research to develop a “systematically reliable, valid and generalisable scale to measure brand personality” kindled her interest in developing one. She noted that human and brand personalities were developed from two unique sources. Human personality traits were based on the behaviour of the individual, yet brand personality was based on either direct or indirect experience with the brand. Therefore, it was imperative that consumer-behaviour researchers develop their own scale to measure brand personality variables. The proposed brand personality dimensions are depicted in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 Dimensions of brand personality**



Source: Adapted from Aaker (1997)

Aaker’s model has three dimensions that are related to the ‘big five’ human dimensions. According to Aaker (1997:353), sincerity, excitement, and competence tapped into human personality because they were found to be correlated with agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness, which are elements of the ‘big five’ model (Mulyanegra & Tsaranko, 2009:237). The other two dimensions, sophistication and ruggedness, did not correlate with personality traits, but they “tap a dimension that individuals desire but do not necessarily have” (Aaker 1997:353). The

fact that new dimensions were discovered from three main sources (personality scales from psychology, marketing, and quantitative research) confirms that brand personality and human personality are different constructs (Aaker, 1997:349).

### **2.3.1 Brand personality dimensions**

As indicated in Figure 2.1, brand personality comprises five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Avis, 2012:90; Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2011:130). The five are multidimensional constructs that also form a significant cornerstone from which the brand measurement scale is developed (Okazaki, 2006:280).

Naresh (2012:32) and Ramaseshan (2007:459) define 'sincerity' as the degree to which the brand personality is friendly, honest, and cheerful. 'Excitement' is defined as the measure of how talkative, open, joyful, and lively a brand personality is (Lin, 2010:9). According to Ramaseshan (2007:459) and Aaker (1997:351), it also entails characteristics such as being modern, daring, and imaginative. 'Competence' entails how responsible, reliable, dependable, efficient, and intelligent a brand personality is (Aaker, 1997:351). Lin (2010:9) defines the term 'sophistication' as the degree of stylishness and appeal with which a brand is endowed. 'Ruggedness' is referred to as how tough, strong, outdoorsy, and rugged a brand personality is perceived to be (Aaker, 1997:351). These brand personality dimensions are used in this study as independent variables.

### **2.3.2 The brand personality scale (BPS)**

Aaker's brand personality scale (BPS) has been applied across various industries, products, and services, and has produced varying results. Table 2.1 shows a number of studies in which Aaker's BPS was applied.



**Table 2.1 Previous studies in which Aaker's BPS was applied**

Author(s)	Study description	Dimensions found in the study that are linked to BPS
Rojas-Mendez, Erenchun-Podlech & Silva-Olave (2004)	The main objective is to measure the Ford brand personality in Chile, using Aaker's (1997) scale	The results indicate that excitement, sincerity, competence & sophistication were evident in the study. However, ruggedness was not found to be valid or reliable. Thus, results indicate that Aaker's (1997) scale is not totally applicable.
Freling & Forbes (2005)	Investigating the influence of brand personality on a variety of consumer-driven outcomes	Brand personality has a positive influence on product evaluations. A positive brand personality is related to more favourable product evaluation and brand associations.
Okazaki (2006)	Identifying brand personalities that American firms create using online communications	The results revealed that only three dimensions – excitement, sophistication, and competence – were evident. Sophistication was the most dominant dimension, with excitement the second.
Kaplan, Yurt & Guneri (2008)	Investigating the applicability of Aaker's BPS to place (city) branding	The study revealed that excitement, competence, and ruggedness are applicable to place branding. The study also identified new dimensions – peacefulness, malignancy, and conservatism – as dimensions of brand personality.
Opuku, Hultman & Sahel-Sangari (2008)	The study extends Aaker's (1997) work by evaluating the online brand personalities of Swedish universities and investigating the extent to which respondents believe the universities possess the five brand personality dimensions	The findings of the study revealed that the following dimensions were evident in all universities: competence, sincerity, and excitement. Sophistication and ruggedness were weakly represented. The results also indicated that some Swedish universities appeared to create strong online brand personalities by occupying unique positions.
Purkayastha (2009)	Measuring the brand personality of Motorola, Raymonds, Samsung, and 7 Up in India	The results of the study reveal that Aaker's scale is not totally acceptable. Each brand had different brand personality dimensions, indicating that each brand should be treated separately and that the scale is not generalisable. The following dimensions were identified for each brand: Motorola and Samsung did not have any dimension from the Aaker's scale; Raymonds replicated excitement and sincerity; 7 Up also had only sincerity and excitement.
Chu & Sung (2011)	The aim of the study was to examine how	The results revealed that only three dimensions are shared between China



Author(s)	Study description	Dimensions found in the study that are linked to BPS
	commercial brands are associated with brand personality in China	and the USA: competence, excitement, and sophistication. Other dimensions not related to Aaker's scale were specific to the Chinese culture.
Lin & Huang (2012)	The study investigated the effect of brand personality dimensions on repurchase intentions with reference to Starbucks and 85 Degrees.	The results revealed that brand dimensions had a significant effect on repurchase intentions. The findings also revealed that excitement, sophistication, and sincerity were the dominant brand personality dimensions that influenced repurchase intentions for Starbucks; and 85 Degrees had excitement and sophistication as the most influential dimensions affecting repurchase intentions.
Kim, Shim & Dinnie (2013)	The aim of the search was to explore the dimensions of nation-brand personality of nine countries, using Aaker's BPS.	The results revealed that excitement was associated with countries as tourist destinations; sophistication was dominant in countries that were attractive to reside in. New dimensions that are not related to Aaker's scale were generated, including leadership, tradition, and peacefulness.
Kumar & Kumar (2014)	Examining the criticality of BPS for the media industry	Sincerity, sophistication, and ruggedness.
Rutter, Hanretty & Lettice (2015)	Application of Aaker's BPS to English political parties.	Each party has a different personality.
Shobeiri, Mazaheri & Laroche (2015)	The study investigated the relationship between website personality, site involvement, and web attitudes.	Results indicated that customers' perception of website personality significantly affects site involvement and site attitudes.
Khandai, Agrawal & Gulla (2015)	The study tested the applicability of Aaker's brand personality scale in the Indian context to four brands (Levi's, Samsung, Coke, & McDonalds)	The results revealed that the scale cannot be totally generalised in the Indian context. Levi's is sophisticated and sincere, Samsung is sophisticated and exciting, Coke is sophisticated and sincere, and McDonalds is sincere, exciting, and sophisticated.
Guiry & Vequist (2015)	To investigate the perceived medical tourism destination brand personality of South Korea	The results revealed that the medical tourism destination personality comprised only three dimensions: sincerity, competence, and ruggedness.
Glynn & Widjaja (2015)	The study investigated how Aaker's brand personality applies to private label brands	The results confirmed the applicability of the brand personality scale to private label brands. Results revealed that excitement, competence, and sincerity were common dimensions, but sophistication was not evident.

Author(s)	Study description	Dimensions found in the study that are linked to BPS
Srrvastava & Sharma (2016)	To measure empirically the Airtel brand personality in India using Aaker's brand personality framework	After measuring the brand personality of the telecom brand Airtel, the results revealed that Airtel is characterised by four dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, and ruggedness. Sophistication was not replicated in the Indian context.
Giroux, Pons, & Maltese (2017)	Investigating the effect of brand personality on consumers' evaluation and reaction to marketing promotional activities	The results revealed that brand personality has a positive effect on the evaluation of promotional activities.
Bairrada, Coelho, & Lizananets (2018)	Examining the effect of brand personality on brand love	The results revealed that brand personality is positively related to brand love.

Ahmed and Jan (2015:389) note that, since the development of Aaker's (1997) scale, researchers have employed it in three main directions: the first one is the applicability of the scale across countries, the second is the predictive effects of brand personality, and the third is the antecedents of brand personality.

According to the results shown in Table 2.1, Aaker's BPS was applied with success in many studies, and most of the research produced results that are consistent with brand personality dimensions linked to Aaker's BPS. Most of the studies that applied Aaker's BPS, found at least three dimensions that are linked the scale, save for a study by Purkayastha (2009), which produced results that are inconsistent with the scale. That study applied Aaker's brand personality to four brands: 7 Up, Samsung, Motorola, and Raymond. The results show different brand personality dimensions for each brand, except for 7 Up and Raymond, which had only two dimensions (excitement and sincerity) consistent with Aaker's; and this showed that each brand needs a different scale (Purkaystha, 2009:16). Most studies revealed that, although Aaker's brand personality scale has been used extensively by researchers, it does not replicate well in other countries. Some of the reasons for its partial application are discussed next.

Aaker's brand personality has also been studied in various media by several authors (Kim, 2018; Kim, Baek & Martin, 2010; Sung & Park, 2011; Valette-Florence, 2011). Kim (2017:4) examined a unified measure of brand personality scale that can be

applied to the personality of movies, TV shows, pop songs, news, and video game brands. The results of the study revealed a three factor-structure, which consists of these dimensions: aggression, heroism, and warmth. In another study, Kim *et al.* (2010:117) explored the structure of news media brand personality for television network sites, newspapers, and news magazines. The results indicate that the different news media are characterised by dimensions such as trustworthiness, dynamism, sincerity, sophistication and toughness. Kim and Park (2011:100) examined the structure of cable network personality. The study found five dimensions namely excitement, controversy, ruggedness, warmth and intelligence. In a study that seeks to create a brand personality scale for business media brands, Kumar and Venkatesakumar (2015:57) identified 14 dimensions: integrity, widely analytical, visionary, discriminating, professional, responsive decisive, stature, engaging, strategic, focused, young and vibrant, sensitive and richness. These studies show that in most instances Aaker's brand personality is not reproduced.

### **2.3.3 Critique of the brand personality scale (BPS)**

Although this model forms the foundation of this study, previous studies have pointed to its flaws. The first limitation of Aaker's 1997 model is its lack of cultural generalisability. Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2014:9) indicate that many researchers have not authenticated the generalisability and validity of the framework. Austin, Sigauw and Mattila, (2003:80) posit that efforts to come up with a generalisable framework were hindered by the lack of a clear and precise difference between differentiation and generalisation.

In the previous studies that questioned the generalisability of brand personality dimensions across cultures, it was discovered that not all five dimensions suggested by Aaker were not consistently applicable in countries other than the USA<sup>1</sup>. In fact, Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2014:10) note that brands reflect the beliefs, values, and behaviour of an individual and, because of the differences across cultural contexts, there is likely to be a difference in brand personality dimensions. They further argue that some dimensions are endemic to a specific culture, while others are universal in nature. Therefore, Aaker's brand personality dimensions are not constant throughout

all cultures; each particular market offers unique variations (Arora & Stoner, 2009:273).

Many researchers and practitioners have applied Aaker's brand personality scale in an attempt to authenticate its applicability across different product categories, and many studies did not fully approve of Aaker's BPS. For example, in a study that investigated Aaker's dimensions of brand personality in relation to sunglasses, it was discovered that the five dimensions could not be reproduced (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014:14). Siguaw *et al.* (1999) applied BPS to restaurants, but they too did not validate the scale. The results show that, when the BPS theory is applied across product categories, it has to undergo modifications that are tailor-made for each product category.

Aaker is also criticised for her failure to come up with a precise definition. She defines brand personality as "a set of human characteristics associated with a brand". This definition is loose, and embraces demographic characteristics, or everything that is human. The adoption of an all-inclusive concept poses a construct validity problem (Anandkumar & George, 2011:34). It leaves researchers and practitioners uncertain about what they would actually measure – whether it would be brand personality or perceived user characteristics (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009:3; Kumar & Kumar, 2014:2).

Because of the inadequacies of Aaker's definition of brand personality, Azoulay and Kapferer (2003:151) defined brand personality as "the set of human personality traits that are both applicable to and relevant for brands". In this study Azoulay and Kapferer (2003)'s definition was adapted to a set of relatively enduring human characteristics that are appropriate and applicable to the description of social media brands. This definition is stricter as it delineates what is supposed to be included and excluded from the definition (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003:151). Although some researchers recommended the development of a new scale (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003:153; Geuens *et al.*, 2009; Malik & Naeem, 2013:897), it was not feasible to carry out a study of such a magnitude. However, the researcher included a statement on the questionnaire that required respondents to think of the social media platform as if it were a person and think of the set of human characteristics associated to the platform.

### 2.3.4 Justification for using Aaker's BPS

Despite the fact that researchers have mixed opinions about Aaker's BPS, it is an important tool that can be employed to measure the symbolic values of brands. The BPS has been used extensively in empirical research (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015; Chung & Park, 2015; Sung & Kim, 2010) to substantiate the effects of brand personality on consumer behaviour. In the context of this study, it is important to note that the BPS will be employed because it is still the most up-to-date and notable brand personality framework for brand management (Rutter *et al.*, 2015:7).

Other theoretical frameworks and bases for personifying brands have been employed, such as the 'ten item personality inventory' (Gosling, Rentfrow & Swanan, 2003), the Spanish (Castilian) brand personality scale (Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera, 2001), and Hieronimus' (2003) German-based personality item inventory scale, but none of these is as effective as Aaker's (1997).

According to Rutter *et al.* (2015:7), Aaker's scale "has been rigorously tested and validated resulting in known limitations". Some researchers attempted to develop substitute brand personality frameworks with the aim of addressing the flaws of Aaker's BPS, but their frameworks have not been extensively applied. For example, Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009) came up with a framework that they call 'a new measure of brand personality'. They claimed that it could be reliably used across brands and brand categories, yet it has not been widely used by researchers. Asadollahi, Hanzee and Abdolvand and Reshadatjoob (2015) proposed a new brand personality framework for Iranian brands. Sweeny and Brandon (2006) responded to the limitations of Aaker's (1997) model by proposing a new model called the circumplex model, which they derived from social and personality psychology. However, these models have not received as wide acceptance as has Aaker's (1997).

In practice, Aaker's framework is supported by extensive research across industries, product categories, and cultures (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2009:131). Bashnoi and Kumar (2014:908) acknowledge that Aaker's work has the highest record of use, as it is the most applied and cited work in brand personality studies. De Chernatony (2010:285) points out that Aaker's (1997) work has given researchers and practitioners

confidence to use the measurement scale, since it has advanced their abilities to assess the brand personalities of various products, services, and ideas.

Since the majority of brand personality studies have their theory rooted in Aaker's (1997) work (Avis, 2009:4), this research also used the BPS to assess the brand personality of Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Aaker's (1997) brand personality measurement scale has allowed researchers to extend their studies into new areas such as retail personality, destination personality, country personality, and charity personality (Avis, 2009:4). In fact, many studies that were done using Aaker's model serve as proof that it could work for the current study, although extreme care is needed in its implementation. As with any measurement tool, researchers must be cautious whenever they use the BPS in research (Austin *et al.*, 2003:90; Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012). It is important to note that one of the contributions of this study relates to testing the applicability of the model to online social media brands (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube).

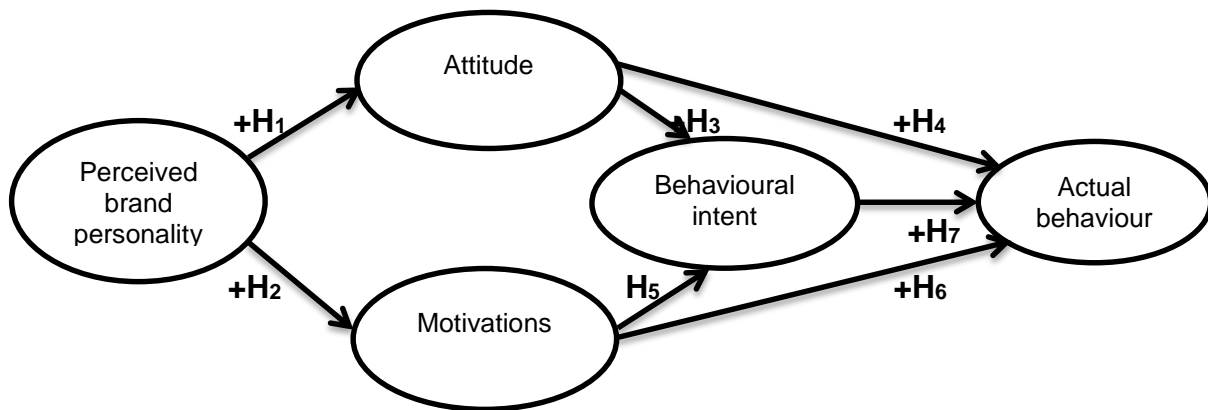
## **2.4 CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

The model used in this study is developed from Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions, and also examines users' attitude, motivations, behavioural intent, and behaviour. Aaker's model has been applied in different studies, and has proved to be reliable in identifying the personality of brands (Kaplan & Yurt, 2010:1288). According to Glynn and Widjaja (2015), Aaker's scale is the only one that has been subject to extensive and academic scrutiny; and it has been replicated in some brand categories, socio-cultural environments, and industry settings. It can be expected that the same scale could be applied to brand personality of social media.

In this study, an attempt is made to establish the relationships between the various constructs of the model. It is assumed that, in an attempt to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent constructs, three kinds of relationships may be established: positive, negative, or no relationship at all. The model for this study is shown in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2 Conceptual model and constructs**



The next part of this chapter develops the hypotheses of this research. Previous research findings are employed to propose the possible relationships between the independent and dependent constructs. The model will be the basis for testing the relationships between brand personality, attitude, motivation, and behaviour. However, in this chapter, only hypotheses  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  will be developed; hypotheses  $H_3$ ,  $H_4$ ,  $H_5$ ,  $H_6$ , and  $H_7$  will be developed in the next chapter.

The construct of brand personality was originally prescribed for product branding, but it has now cut across most industries (Rojas-Mendez, Murphy & Papadopoulos, 2013a:1028). The extant literature proposes that brand personality studies have spread to retail shops, business-to-business (Veloutsou and Tailor, 2012), sports teams (Giroux, Pons & Maltese, 2016; Kang, Bennet & Peachey, 2016:441), destinations (Lehto & Kim, 2013:111), relationship marketing (Becheur, Bayarasson & Ghrib, 2017), and even to countries (Chiang & Yang, 2018). Freling *et al.* (2011:393) also note that brand personality has extended to the financial sector, to biotechnology, and to the airline sector.

There is a growing consensus that a favourable brand personality has a positive association with attitude. Moller and Herm (2013:448) applied the construct of brand personality to the retail sector, and their results revealed that brand personality is positively correlated with attitude toward the brand, and that it increases both sales and profitability. They also suggested that brand personality helps to enhance retail image and customer loyalty, and greatly assists in the positioning of retail stores. In

another study, Kim, *et al.* (2011:453) discovered that brand personality has a positive effect on both brand preference and attitudinal loyalty.

Rojas-Mendez, Murphy and Papadopoulos (2013b:48) applied the concept of brand personality to the study of nations, where they investigated the effects of people's attitude to China and the US as if they were personified. The assumptions were that, if a country could be viewed as a person, it would assist in developing a unique positioning strategy that could enhance competitive advantage. The results of the study indicated that brand personality has both positive and negative effects. The results revealed that country brand personality had an effect on people's intention to visit a country, to buy products and services of a country and to establish relationships with a country and develop an overall attitude to the country.

Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri and Kurtulus (2008:1296) conducted a study where they applied Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale to place branding. The results of the study revealed that although some personality traits contribute to a favourable attitude to tourism destinations some of the personality traits did not. In the same study, it was found that brand personality characteristics can be used to differentiate places.

A number of studies have looked at the effect of brand personality on consumer behaviour, with regard to brand attitude. Results have revealed that, if a brand has a favourable brand personality, it has a chance of enhancing positive attitude and brand relationships (Freling, Crosno & Hernad, 2013; Glynn & Wadjaja, 2015:374; Moons & Pelsmacker, 2015:12335).

In a study to examine the influence of brand personality on brand attitude (among others), Lee and Kang (2013:94) indicated that a favourable brand personality is positively correlated with brand attitude. Ambroise, Sliman, Bourgeat, De Barnier, Ferrandi, Merunka, Roehrich and Valente-Florence (2006:75) and Shobeiri, Laroche and Mazaheri (2013:100) examined how the brand personality of Coke and Pepsi, and of Nike and Adidas respectively affect attitude. The results of these studies indicate that brand personality has a strong positive impact on attitude towards the brands. Folse, Netemeyer and Burton (2012:21) investigated the role of personality traits (excitement, sincerity, and competence) evoked by the appearance of a spokesperson



on brand attitude. The results revealed that the spokesperson's characteristics of sincerity and excitement have a positive association with brand attitude.

In a study by Poddar, Donthu and Wei (2011:441) that adapted the brand personality model to website personality, the results revealed that website personality has a positive impact on customers' attitudes towards the website. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitude

After an extensive search on extant literature, the researcher realised that there is a paucity of studies that were conducted to determine the relationship between brand personality and motivation. Only one study by Murphy, Benckendorff and Moscardo (2007:58) explored the relationship between the perceived brand personality of a tourist destination and the motivations of tourists. The results of the study revealed that perceived brand personality has positive effects on the motivations of tourists. Based on the limited support from literature, the following exploratory hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation.

## **2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the theoretical foundation that underpins brand personality. The proposed research model of the study was also presented, and the first two hypotheses were appraised. The next chapter will continue with the discussion of the theoretical foundation, focusing mainly on the theories of motivation, attitude, and behaviour. The remaining hypotheses of the study will also be explained.

## CHAPTER 3

### ATTITUDE, MOTIVATIONS, AND BEHAVIOUR

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter continues to provide the theoretical foundation of this study. It discusses the relevant theories that relate to attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. These theories form the foundation upon which the hypotheses have been developed. The chapter discusses previous studies that explain the relationship between the constructs under investigation. Many theories in the literature seek to explain the study variables; but only those that best explain these variables are considered here.

The chapter unfolds in the following way: it begins by discussing the theories relating to attitudes, then discusses the theories of motivation and the theories of behavioural intent and behaviour. The chapter ends by developing the remaining research hypotheses that are explained by the theories (and supporting literature) discussed in this chapter.

#### 3.2 THE THEORIES OF ATTITUDE

Attitude is a latent psychological construct that manifests itself through an individual's beliefs, feelings, and behavioural intentions. The concept of attitude has proven to be essential in consumer behaviour, as it allows us to comprehend why we behave, feel, and think the way we do (Fazio & Olson, 2003:139). Attitude exists in the mind of a consumer and cannot be observed. Miller and Peterson (2004:847) indicate that "attitudes determine for each individual what he will see and hear, what he will think and he will do...". This means that attitudes determine our decisions, guide the way we behave, and affect our perceptions with regard to the attitude object (Ajzen, 2001:42).

Attitudes are defined as "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way" (Fishbein, 1967:257). Malhotra (2005:477) defines an attitude as an abstract evaluation of an attitude object. This entails that individual consumers can form either a positive or a negative attitude towards products, services, ideas, people, and organisations. There is consensus that attitudes are responsible for generating an individual's behavioural change (Wang & Chen, 2012:1596). Thus, whatever the kind of behaviour users of social media may display depends on the attitudes they have towards the platforms.

Since this study partly focuses on the effect that perceived brand personality has on the consumer attitude of social media users, it is prudent to discuss theories related to consumer attitude – namely, the tripartite theory of attitudes and the multi-attribute model.

### **3.2.1 The tripartite theory of attitudes**

The concept of attitude comprises three major components: cognition, affect, and behaviour (Insko & Schoplar, 1967; Spooner, 1992).

According to Kwon and Vogt (2009:424), cognitions are formed when a consumer processes information that is related to the attitude object (such as a brand), and this usually results in the formation of beliefs. By definition, the cognitive component denotes the beliefs that an individual holds about the attitude object (Fazio & Olson, 2004:139; Solomon *et al.*, 2006:140). From a marketing point of view, the beliefs that consumers have about the attributes of a brand have a significant effect on how they behave towards the brand as an attitude object.

Affect is defined as the feelings, emotions and moods that a consumer has towards an attitude object (Solomon *et al.*, 2006:140; Walley, Custance, Orton, Parsons, Lindgreen & Hugley, 2009:262). It has largely been agreed that the affective component is founded on emotional experiences. This presupposes that affection can be influenced by either a positive or a negative experience with the attitude object (Kwon and Vogt, 2009:424). Affect may also stem from emotional reactions to the stimulus object.

Behaviour (conation) is conceptualised as the propensity of an individual to act towards or against the attitude object (Solomon *et al.*, 2006:140). This suggests that the behavioural component is an action-oriented activity that is derived from previous behaviour and is shaped as a result of both direct and indirect experience with a brand. Behavioural intentions refer to either the attitudes or the motivations that an individual has when intending to take a specific action (Wang *et al.*, 2007:297). Behavioural usage entails the patterns of exposure of use – for example, amount, duration, and types of use (Luo, Chea & Chen, 2011). In the context of this research, behaviour entails the actual use of Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

It is important to acknowledge that the three components of attitude are interrelated. A change in one of the components will have ripple effects on the other components. For example, an advertisement that flights on television with the purpose of improving consumers' perception of brand quality (cognitive) may influence affect in a positive way, and may ultimately increase the likelihood of a purchase decision (behaviour). Therefore, marketing strategies that are targeted towards changing one component of an attitude will probably end up affecting all three components.

### **3.2.2 The multi-attribute models**

The concept of the multi attribute model originated in social psychology and it emphasised that individuals make rational decisions before they engage in a given behaviour. The theory has its origin from the work of Fishbein and Rosenberg (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein, 1963; Rosenberg, 1956). The models are used to predict the behaviour of individuals based on the attitude that they might have with regard to an attitude object such as a brand or product.

According to Fishbein (1963:233), the multi-attribute attitude models posit that an individual's attitude towards a brand is a function of the beliefs about the object and the evaluative aspect of those beliefs. Attitudes are also formed because of the beliefs that consumers have about the various attributes of an attitude object (Solomon, 2006:151). The multi-attribute models include: a) the attitude-toward-object model, b) the attitude-toward-behaviour model, and c) the theory-of-reasoned-action model.

These models are employed to predict the behaviour of consumers, based on the attitudes that consumers have towards an attitude object.

#### **a) Attitude-toward-object model**

Schiffman *et al.* (2012:237-238) indicate that the attitude-toward-object model is used effectively to measure attitudes toward an attitude object such as a service, product, organisation, or brand. The attitude-toward-object model states that a consumer's overall attitude toward a given brand is a product of the existence, or the absence, of favourable or unfavourable attributes or beliefs. Consumers have a propensity to like those brands that are endowed with a significant level of positive attributes rather than those that have unfavourable attributes (Schiffman *et al.*, 2012:253; Ramadhani, Alamanda & Sudrajat, 2012:36). This signifies that consumers have a tendency to like or purchase those products or brands that have the necessary attributes, and to reject those that do not.

#### **b) Attitude-toward-behaviour model**

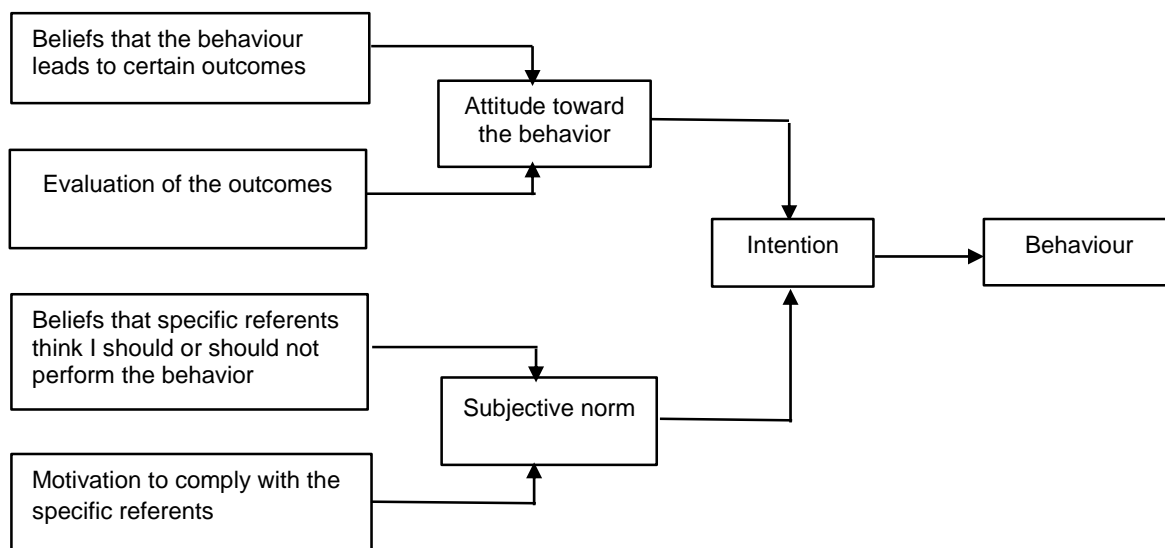
According to Schiffman (2012:238), "the attitude-toward-behaviour is the individual's attitudes towards behaving or acting with respect to an object rather than the attitude towards the object itself". This model of attitudes looks at the actual behaviour of consumers, and not at their attitude towards the brand (Ramadhani *et al.*, 2012:36). In the context of this study, it looks at consumers' use of social media. It implies that when social media managers know consumers' attitude-toward-behaviour, they can anticipate the kind of behaviour consumers will display towards social media brands.

#### **c) Theory-of-reasoned-action model**

The theory-of-reasoned-action (TRA) model was developed by Fishbein in 1967 in order to examine the relationships between attitudes, intentions, and behaviour (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008:68). It originated from the social psychology literature (Petrovici, Ritson & Ness, 2004:64). The TRA has been employed to examine individual behaviour with respect to a given attitude object; and it has been found that it can predict many social behaviours (Mishra, Akman & Mishra, 2014:30). The TRA

states that two things determine an individual's behaviour: the attitude towards the behaviour, and the subjective norms – that is, the social pressures emanating from peer groups to perform the behaviour (Belleau & Summers, 2007:245). Schiffman *et al.* (2012:240) also indicate that the TRA integrates the three components of the tripartite attitude theory – that is, the cognitive, the affective, and the conative. This model is used to assess the intention of the consumer with regard to the purchase of a brand through the evaluation of the feelings of the various social groups. Figure 3.1 represents the TRA model.

**Figure 3.1 Theory-of-reasoned-action model**



Source: Adapted from Ajzen and Fishbein (1980:100)

Guo, Johnson, Unger, Lee, Xie, Chou, Palmer, Sun, Gallaher, and Pentz (2007:1068) indicate that the TRA has been used extensively to explain behaviour. They noted that consumers' attitudes towards a given behaviour would regulate their behavioural intentions to perform a certain behaviour or not. Thus this theory will partially explain the intentions and behaviour of users of social media platforms. For example, the belief that using Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn leads to beneficial outcomes such as establishing relationships with other users may entice one to intend to use, or in fact use, the brand.

Langdridge, Sheeran and Connolly (2007:1886) indicate that the TRA was developed to predict volitional (or intentional) human behaviour. The success of the TRA in explaining behaviour depends on the level at which an individual's volition is under control. When volitional control is high, the TRA is best-fitting to explain behaviour. In cases where behaviour lacks volitional control, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) becomes more appropriate (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008:71). The TPB is an extension of the TRA. The TPB was developed because the TRA had some limitations in explaining behaviour over which people do not have volitional control (Ajzen, 1991:181; Langdridge *et al.*, 2007:1886).

Both theories – the TRA and the TPB – assume that people are rational and that they use available information to make decisions. The two theories further assume that intentions motivate an individual to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen 1991:181; Wang *et al.*, 2007:297). The major difference between the two theories is that the TPB added another construct, perceived behavioural control, as one of the determinants of behavioural intention (Langdridge, 2007:1886). The TPB will be discussed later in this chapter.

The tripartite theory and the multi-attribute models have been used to explain attitude-behaviour relationships. Ramadhani *et al.* (2012:35) acknowledge that an individual consumer's attitude towards an attitude object has either a positive or a negative effect on behaviour. It is important for marketers to know the attitudes of consumers towards a brand, since this will allow them to come up with best-fitting strategies in order to market their brands effectively. Knox and Chernatony (1989:6) suggest that consumers' attitudes guide marketers as to the most likely behaviour that consumers might manifest. In practice, knowing the feelings that consumers have towards purchasing a brand is more important than knowing how users evaluate the brand (Solomon *et al.*, 2006:156). This is because, even if a consumer has a positive attitude towards a brand, this does not necessarily mean that he/she will purchase it.

However, people do not always behave in the expected manner because of the various intervening factors that can encourage or discourage behaviour (Friedkin, 2010:199). This means that, even when attitudes have proved to be good predictors

of behaviour, certain circumstances may hinder the occurrence of an expected behaviour.

In relation to this study, both the tri-component and multi-attribute theories help to explain the effects of social media consumers' attitudes on behaviour. Mullan and Westwood (2010:254) indicate that the components of attitudes may facilitate an explanation and prediction of behaviour. Ajzen, Joyce, Sheikh and Cote (2011:103) posit that there is a positive association between attitude and consumer behaviour in cases where consumers have favourable affect towards and knowledge about a brand, and vice-versa. Thus, in this research, it is anticipated that, when social media users have a favourable attitude towards the brand, they are likely to behave in a positive way, such as repeated use of the social media platforms.

The next section examines the motivation theories that are related to the study at hand.

### **3.3 THE THEORIES OF MOTIVATION**

Motivation is defined as “the forces either within or external to a person that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action” (Nam, 2014:263). Daft and Marcic (2004:102) define motivation as the external or internal forces that compel an individual to behave in a specific and goal-oriented manner, and Guay *et al.* (2010:712) state that it is the “reasons underlying behaviour”.

Motivation strongly affects the behaviour of customers in various ways (Kim, 2006:20). Motivation explains why individuals behave differently. People use social media because they have certain motivations or needs they want to fulfil. These needs are either social or psychological (Chua *et al.*, 2012:14). In the context of this study, motivations entail the reasons behind using Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Although theories of motivation abound, in this section, the uses and gratification theory is discussed as it is deemed to be best-fitting for the purpose of this study.



### 3.3.1 Uses and gratification theory (UGT)

UGT is a paradigm that stems from mass communication research. It is based on five assumptions:

- ❖ Media audiences are active participants who select and use media in order to gratify their needs;
- ❖ Individuals actively seek out media or media content in order to satisfy needs;
- ❖ The choice of media to use is a product of the individual's motivations, and it is goal-oriented;
- ❖ Media is always in competition with other forms of communication; and
- ❖ People are more influential than media in the relationship, but not always.

According to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974:20-21), the main objectives of UGT are to explain how audiences employ media to satisfy their needs; to comprehend the motivations for media behaviour; and “to detect the functions that follow from needs, motivations and behaviours”. Thus UGT focuses on both “1) the social and psychological origins of audience 2) needs, which generate 3) expectations of 4) mass media in other sources, which lead to 5) differential patterns of media exposure for engagement in other activities, resulting in 6) need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones” (Katz *et al.*, 1974:20; Rubin, 2003:166).

UGT has developed in stages since its origin in the 1940s (Katz & Folkes, 1962:378; Ruggiero, 2000:5; O'Donohoe, 1994:52). The early stage, which is regarded as the classical approach to UGT research, focused on the effect of mass media (e.g., radio, television, and electronic bulletins) on consumers. The later paradigm, the use approach, focused on the gratifications sought by consumers (Katz, 1959:1). It was in 1974 that UGT was formally introduced (Eddie, 2009:7).

Rubin (1983:168) noted that, in the early stages, the research into uses and gratification was criticised for being largely descriptive and unsystematic. The research was also criticised for a) failing to have a clear framework or b) a precise concept or c) a clear explanatory apparatus, and d) failing to consider audiences' perceptions of media. Consequently, researchers failed to establish that media gratification has a

latent structure, and thus early research did not result in the formulation of a theory (Katz, Blumler and Gurevich, 1974:509).

During the 1980s and 1990s, scholars started to respond to critics by refining the conceptual foundation of the UGT (Chen, 2008:9; Ruggiero, 2000:12). UGT research began to generate valid responses to the earlier criticisms (Ruggiero, 2000:7). Chen (2008:9) posits that researchers began to carry out modified or extended studies based on past research, to improve research methodology, to compare the research findings, and to regard media use as both an integrated communication and a social occurrence.

Katz and Foulkes (1962:378) noted that the uses and gratifications research has a long history in mass communication research, and that its strength is that it is applicable in a variety of media contexts. Early research mainly focused on uses and gratifications such as the reasons behind women listening to soap operas, the gratifications provided by the different types of print media like newspapers and magazines, and the motivations behind participating in quiz programmes (Katz & Foulkes, 1962:378). UGT was originally confined to the study of terrestrial radio, but it has spread to the study of new technologies such as the internet and satellite radio (Albarran, *et al.*, 2007:93). Table 3.1 shows a number of studies in which UGT has been applied with success in recent years.

**Table 3.1 Previous studies in which UGT was applied**

Source	Main objective	Methodology	Motivations for use found
Stafford & Stafford (2004)	To investigate the uses and gratifications of the internet	Survey	Content, process and social gratifications
Roy (2009)	To identify the uses and gratifications structure of internet users	Survey	Self-development, wide exposure, user-friendly, relaxation, career opportunities and global exchange
Ancu & Cozma (2009)	To examine the uses and gratifications fulfilled by social network sites (SNS)	Online survey	Social interaction, information seeking, entertainment
Dunne, Lawler & Rowley (2010)	To explore why young people use SNS	Qualitative focus groups	Sharing photos and videos, escape, entertainment,

Source	Main objective	Methodology	Motivations for use found
			Maintaining relationships, Communication, information seeking
Kaye (2010)	To investigate the uses and motivations for connecting to blogs	Survey	Information seeking, avoid traditional media, affiliation/expression opinion seeking, political debate, variety of opinion, personal fulfilment
Quan-Haase & Young (2010)	To compare gratifications obtained from Facebook with those of instant messaging	Survey	Pastime, affection, share problems, sociability, social information, fashion
Jere and Davis (2011)	To compare the motivations for using magazines and the internet among magazine readers	Web-based survey	Information, diversion, status, surveillance, self-development, carrier opportunities, interpersonal utility
Zeng (2011)	To explore the uses and gratifications involved in individuals' uses of MP3 players	Web-based survey	Control, companionship, entertainment, status, concentration
Khan & Manzoor (2013)	To investigate the gratifications that school girls obtain from watching television	Survey	Pass time, social interaction, escape, information, entertainment, relaxation
Ha, Kim, Libaque-Saenz, Chang & Park (2014)	To identify the gratifications of mobile SNS use.	Survey	Integrative gratification, social interaction, cognitive and hedonic gratifications, convenience
Xiao, Zhuang & Hsu (2014)	To investigate the factors that lead SNS users to have a compelling experience	Online survey	Competence, identification, satisfaction, playfulness
Chuang, Lin, Liu & Wei (2015)	To determine why users stick to SNS	Online survey	Social needs, information needs, human-human interaction, human and message interaction
Krishnatray <i>et al.</i> (2015)	To identify the motivations for using the internet for male and female respondents	Content analysis	Growth & development, global bonding, educational opportunity, relaxation, wide exposure
Khan (2017)	To examine the motivations for participating on YouTube	Survey	Seeking information, giving information, self-status seeking, social interaction and relaxing entertainment
Ho & See-To (2018)	Examining how entertainment, informativeness and socialising gratifications	Online survey	The results revealed that entertainment, informativeness and socialising gratifications

Source	Main objective	Methodology	Motivations for use found
	affect user's attitude towards tourist attraction fan page		have a significant effect on users' attitude towards tourist attraction fan page.

Table 3.1 reveals that UGT has been employed in various studies as an appropriate paradigm to explain the motivations for using diverse media such as TV, mobile phones, magazines, SNS, and the internet (Ha, Kim, Libaque-Saenz, Chang & Park, 2014:42; Krishnatray, Singh, Raghvan & Varma, 2009:19; Shin, 2007:46; Whiting & Williams, 2013:362).

In practice, many researchers have concurred that this theory is best suited to examine the motivations behind using social media (Garcia-Martin & Garcia-Sanchez, 2015:686; Krishnatray, Singh, Raghavan & Varma. 2009:19; Smock *et al.*, 2011:2323; Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004:261; Zeng, 2011:98). Since it has been applied in many studies on social media a decision was made to use the same theory in this study, within the context of a developing country.

UGT is specifically suitable for studying the motivation for using social media, since it makes room for mass and interpersonal communication. This study allows the researcher to apply the principles of UGT because it solicits the reasons that consumers use social media. Specifically, UGT explains how social media gratify intrinsic motivations such as the formation of relationships with other social media users. It gratifies not only the need to establish relationships, but also other needs such as entertainment, information-seeking, and escapism. UGT also elucidates how active virtual members seek out social media in order to gratify their psychological needs.

The fact that UGT has been employed on many occasions as the principal paradigm to investigate the motivations for social media use (Garcia-Martin & Garcia-Sanchez, 2015:686; Giannakos, Chorianopoulos, Giotopoulos & Vlamos, 2013:594; Kim, Kim & Nam, 2010:1078) serves to support its use in this study. In other studies, Park and Lee (2014:602) examine the effects of motivation on the use of Facebook; Chen (2014:1208) examines the continuous use of Facebook in Taiwan; and Basilico and Jin (2015:182) explore the effects of Facebook use on social capital and life

satisfaction. In this study UGT is applied to examine the effect of the perceived brand personality of social media on the motivations of the users, across the three social media platforms under investigation.

Smock *et al.* (2011:2325) indicate that there are many motivations for using social media, ranging from entertainment, information-seeking, and escapism to companionship, professional advancement, social interaction, habitual pastime, and meeting new people. This research will focus on four prominent gratifications: socialising, entertainment, self-status, and information-seeking. This choice is based on the premise that these constructs have tried and tested measurement tools that have been developed over the years and that have been shown to be reliable.

- ❖ **Socialising:** an example of socialisation is when social media users interact with each other in order to attain a sense of belonging through establishing social ties. Diehl (2016:1878) state that socialising refers to the use of social media in order to “keep in touch with family and friends, and reach out to more distant contacts”.
- ❖ **Entertainment:** Luo, Chea and Chen (2011:23) and Lampe, Wash, Velasquez and Ozkaya (2010:5) explain that the term ‘entertainment’ stems from the “fun and relaxation of playing or otherwise interacting with others”. Luo (2010:35) defines the entertainment construct as the level at which online web-based platforms are fun and entertaining for the consumers. Lee and Ma (2012:333) acknowledge that social media serve the purpose of entertaining and escaping pressure.
- ❖ **Self-status.** ‘Status’ refers the feeling of importance and admiration that users of social media enjoy by sharing news and content. Anderson, Hildreth, and Howland (2015:1) define status as “the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference individuals are afforded by others”. It is thus an opportunity to enhance an individual’s status, reputation, and popularity among social media users.

- ❖ Information: the information dimension refers to the extent to which online web-based platforms provide consumers with ingenious and valuable information (Luo, 2010:35). Chua, Goh and Lee (2012:15) indicate that the goal of information motivations rests on the ability of the social media to provide quality and relevant information on a given topic. Lee and Ma (2012:333) state that information-seeking denotes the extent to which information shared on social media provides users with timely information.

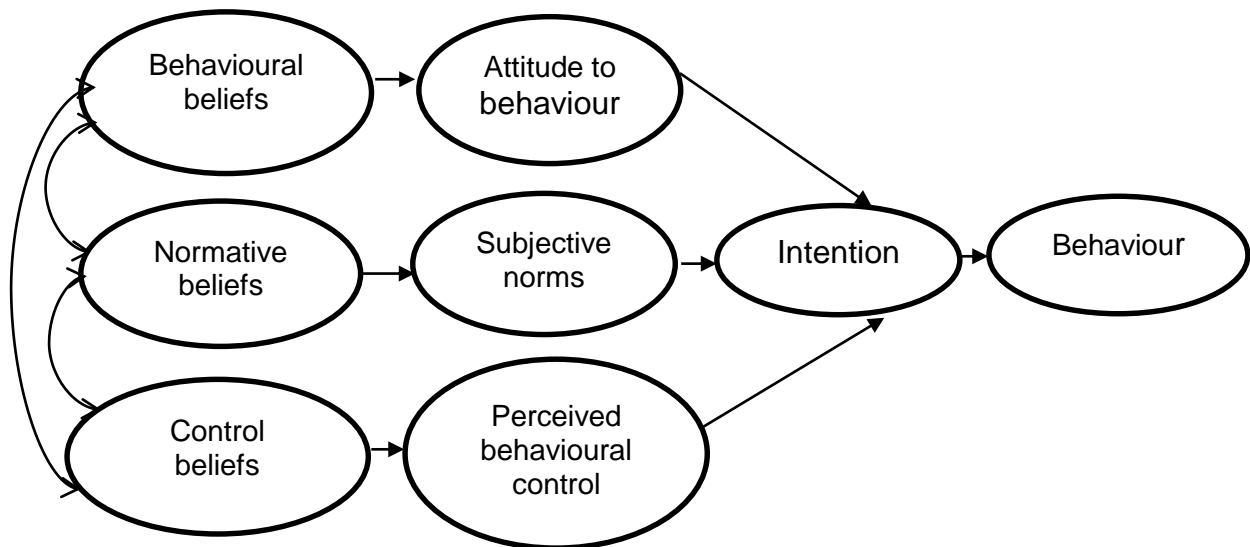
The next section discusses the theory of planned behaviour.

### **3.4 THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (TPB)**

Wang *et al.* (2007:296) and Sommer (2011:296) acknowledge that the theory of planned behaviour stems from the theory-of-reasoned-action (TRA). It is regarded as a cognitive social psychology theory that has been employed to explain human decision processes (Wang *et al.*, 2007:296). It was developed as a result of the inability of the TRA to explain the behaviours over which individuals have no control (Alan & Sayati, 2011:11) because the TRA focused on voluntary behaviour only. The fundamental issue that the TPB therefore adds to the TRA is that behavioural decision-making by people is not totally controlled (Wang *et al.*, 2007:297).

The TPB explains that intentions are the proximal determinants of an individual's actual behaviour (Gheorghiu & Felonneau, 2012:782). An individual's intention is regarded as the motivation or willingness to engage in the behaviour (Terry, Hogg & White, 1999:226). According to Pickett, Ginsburg, Mendez, Blankenshup, Foster, Lewis, Ramon, Saltes and Sheffield (2012:339), the behaviour of an individual is a product of a reasoned process that is influenced by three fundamental components: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. A model of the TPB is shown in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2 Theory of planned behaviour**



Source: Ajzen (1991:182)

According to Sommer (2011:92), human behaviour is a consequence of beliefs that are based on a number of background factors that are personal, social, and informational. These background factors create the conditions for the formation of behavioural, normative, and control beliefs. It is suggested that behavioural beliefs are the antecedents of the formation of attitude towards behaviour, while normative beliefs lead to the formation of subjective norms, and control beliefs lead to the formation of perceived behavioural control.

An attitude towards behaviour is conceptualised as either a positive or a negative evaluation of performing a specific behaviour (Sentosa & Mat, 2012:64). If an individual holds a positive attitude towards a specific behaviour and believes that, if the behaviour is performed, a positive outcome will result, then the propensity to engage in the behaviour is high. A subjective norm is defined as the social pressure to participate in a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:192; Sentosa & Mat, 2012:65). Subjective norms are concerned with the tendency that referent groups would either approve or disapprove of engaging in a specific behaviour. Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perceptions of his/her ability to perform a specific behaviour (Sentosa & Mat, 2012:65). It is formed as a product of the individual's belief that the resources required to perform the given behaviour are available.



At this stage, it is important to note that this study focuses on the use of attitude as the only influencing factor from the TPB and excludes subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, which are outside the focus of this study.

Since the inception of the TPB some three decades ago, it has played an influential role in predicting human social behaviour (Ajzen, 2011:1113). Various researchers and academics have applied the TPB in health-related studies that managed to explain behaviour (Lapkin, Levett & Gilligan, 2015:935; McEachan, Conner, Taylor & Lawton, 2011:98; Sommer, 2011:91). It was successfully applied to predict sports training in different contexts (Ho, Tsai & Day, 2011:772; Palmer, Burwitz, Dyer & Spray, 2005:277). A number of researchers validated the TPB as a good predictor of business start-up intentions (Gelderen, Brand, Praag, Bodewes, Poutsma & Van Gils, 2008:538; Kautonen, Van Gelderen & Fink, 2015:655; Kautonen, Van Gelderen & Tornikoski, 2013:697).

The TPB has received extensive and successful applications to internet related studies. Gopi and Ramayah (2007:349) examine the factors that affect investors' intentions to employ online trading. In a different study, Bidin, Hashim, Sharif and Shamsudin (2011:129) used the TPB to investigate students' intentions to use internet for learning purposes; and the results revealed that indeed attitude and perceived behavioural control had a significant influence on users' intentions to use the internet. In another study, the TPB has been used to test its applicability to predicting users' acceptance of online video and television services. The results showed that perceived behavioural control has a strong influence on online video acceptance and television services whereas attitude had a moderate influence (Truong, 2009:177, 183). Picazo-Vela, Chou, Melcher and Pearson (2010:692) and Cheng *et al.*, (2005:482) also show that the TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) have a significant positive correlation with behavioural intentions.

In the context of this study, the TPB may thus play a significant role in explaining the intended and actual behaviour of the users of the platforms under study. This is substantiated by the fact that the TPB is one of the most frequently employed theoretical models to determine human behaviour (Gheorghiu & Felonneau, 2012: 782; Kelly, Deane, McCarthy & Crowe, 2011:276). Some examples of social media



studies in which the TPB was used include Saeri, Ogilvie, La Macchia, Smith and Louis (2014:352), who researched Facebook users' online privacy, protection; and Darvell, Walsh & White (2011:717,720), who investigated the predictive effects of TPB on partner monitoring behaviour. The results of both studies supported the view that the TPB is useful for predicting behaviour. In another study, Sanne and Wiese (2018:8) investigated the effect of attitude, social norms and perceived behavioural control on behavioural intent and actual engagement with Facebook advertising. Results of the study revealed that the TPB (specifically attitude and subjective norms) predicted behavioural intent and actual behaviour to engage with Facebook advertising.

### **3.4.1 Critique of the theory planned behaviour**

Though this study applies the TPB, there is an ongoing debate on the applicability of the theory in order to predict behaviour. Sniehotta, Presseau and Araujo-Soares (2014:4) indicate that the TPB has lost its utility because of the following flaws. First, the theory has been criticised for focusing on the reasoning and it excludes unconscious influences on behaviour. Second, the TPB has limited predictive validity. The theory does not fully account for the variability in observed behaviour. The theory does not explain a situation whereby an individual has an intention and subsequently fail to act. Ajzen (2014:2) also confirms that the theory does not fully account for the variance in intentions. Third, the TPB fails to provide an adequate basis for behaviour change interventions. The TPB fails to specify how cognitions change; this makes it difficult to come up with effective interventions to modify attitudes, subjective norms and perceptions of behavioural control.

One of the most repeatedly raised criticism of the TPB is that the theory is purely rational, it does not take into account cognitive and affective factors that are known to prejudice human judgments and behaviour (Hegner, Fenko & Terravest, 2017:28). Thus, in the end critics cast doubt that the TPB provides an acceptable explanation for human behaviour. Nevertheless, to date the TPB remains a popular framework for any contemporary researcher seeking to examine and understand aspects of human social behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2010).

The next section discusses the development of hypotheses that relate to the constructs of attitude, motivation, behavioural intention, and behaviour. Both the supporting theory and past research findings are employed here to explain the relationships between the independent constructs of this study.

### 3.5 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

According to Ajzen (1991:188), the TPB postulates that the more favourable the attitude with respect to behaviour, the stronger the individual's intention becomes to perform the behaviour in a given context. The TPB provides a strong theoretical support for testing if attitudes are associated with the intent to participate in a given behaviour (George, 2004:99). In relevant research, Ladorfos, Trosterud and Whitworth (2006:88) revealed that there is adequate evidence to support the association between attitude and behaviour intention. In their study of e-consumers' attitude and behaviour, they found a strong correlation between consumer attitude and intention. Elliot and Speck (2005:41) indicated that a number of studies suggest that a positive attitude towards a brand is positively associated with behavioural intent. In another study on brand attachment and attitude strength, Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich and Lacobucci (2010:4) and Ambroise *et al.* (2006:71) suggest that attitude strength is good at predicting consumer behaviour. In their study of the effect of brand personality on purchase intentions (among others), Lee and Kang (2013:94) discovered that a favourable brand personality enhances purchase intentions. There is a strong association between brand attitude and behaviour intentions (Hernandez & Kuster, 2012:4). In a study that investigated the relationships between attitude and behaviour, it was discovered that attitude had a significant effect on behavioural intent (Li *et al.*, 2008:238). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitudes and behavioural intention.

In this study, the TPB is a valid theory to explain the behaviour of users of Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The TPB indicates that human behaviour is influenced by how favourable or unfavourable the evaluation of the attitude towards the behaviour is

(Ajzen & Cote, 2008:292). When contextualised to this research, behaviour on social media is triggered by attitude. This theoretical statement is also substantiated by empirical research results. Ambroise *et al.* (2006:71), in their study of the impact of brand personality on attitude towards brand, revealed that attitude has an influence on consumer behaviour. An individual's overall attitude toward an object influences the way they behave. The strength of an attitude is good at predicting behaviour (Park, MacInnis, Priester & Lacobucci, 2010:4). Juvan and Dolnicar (2014:77) confirmed that positive attitudes may lead to actual behaviour. The ability of an attitude to predict actual behaviour is dependent on its strength (Wallace, Paulson & Lord, 2005:214). Flavian and Gurrea (2009:165) indicated that the concept of attitude is significant to the understanding of behaviour, and justifies those behaviours. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitudes and behaviour.

In this study UGT is employed to explain the effect of motivation on behavioural intent of Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube users. Kim (2006:21) suggested that motivation is regarded as a good predictor of intention to use. Some studies have discovered that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are predictors of behavioural intention (Nam, 2014:264). Furthermore, motivations are now regarded as explanatory variables for the behavioural intention to use websites (Nam, 2014:270). Mason, Gos and Moretti (2016:191) explored the relationship between motivation and behavioural intentions in adventure tourism. The results of the study revealed that motivation had a significant relationship with behavioural intentions. In another study where Alhabash and McAlister (2015:1331) explored the influence of motivations of Facebook and Twitter on predicting viral behavioural intentions, the results of the study revealed that indeed motivation had a significant influence on behavioural intentions for Facebook. Li and Cai (2012:483) examined the effect of travel motivation on behavioural intentions. Their findings revealed that motivation has a significant effect on behavioural intentions. Jiang, Li, Liu and Chang (2017:534) examined the effects of travel motivation on behavioural intent and the results of the study indicated that there is a positive relationship between motivation and behavioural intent. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between users' motivations and behavioural intent.

In order to comprehend the motivations of the user that encourage the behaviour to use the platforms under study, UGT is used. The theory has been applied with success as an appropriate theory to understand the motivations behind using internet and e-consumer behaviour (Kaye, 2010:195; Lee & Ma, 2012:332). The studies reviewed herein give evidence for the UGT's proposition that motivation affects the behaviour of the individuals. Specifically, the following studies support the veracity of the theory's ability to predict behaviour. Kim (2006:21) suggested that motivation has something to do with one's behaviour, and highlighted that motivation is related to web portal use. Luo, Chea, and Chen (2011:22) acknowledged that motivations are significant predictors of behavioural usage. Nam (2014:264) has also pointed out that the UGT as a motivation theory has been used to explain an individual's behaviour. Kim (2006:21) echoes the same idea by suggesting that the concept of motivation has something to do with a person's behaviour. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour.

The TPB stipulates that an individual's intentions are presumed to capture the motivational factors that influence behaviour. This implies that there is a strong relationship between an individual's intention and behaviour – that is, if there is strong intention to engage in a given behaviour, the chances are high that the behaviour will be performed (Ajzen, 1991:181). Lutz (2011:91) indicates that the relationship between intention and behaviour is summarised in this statement: "People do what they intend to do and do not do what they do not intend". Previous research reviewed herein supports the idea put forward by the TPB. An individual with positive intention has a high propensity to behave in a positive way with regard to the attitude object (Tikir & Lehmann, 2011:406). Ajzen and Cote (2005:303) have indicated that many studies have substantiated the predictive role of behavioural intentions on actual behaviour. Cho and Ha (2004:14) suggested that an individual's behaviour is determined by their intention to perform that behaviour. Wang, Chen, Chang and Yang

(2007:297), in their study of the effects of online shopping attitudes on shopping intentions, found out that behaviour intention is fundamental in influencing actual behaviour. In fact, they elaborated their findings by stating that there is a close connection between intentions and behaviour; and thus behaviour intentions are best in forecasting actual behaviour. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intention and behaviour.

### **3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter has expanded the theoretical foundations of this research. A number of theories that explain the research constructs of this study have been discussed – specifically, attitude theories, motivation theories, and behaviour-related theories. The next chapter looks at the social media that this study will deal with, focusing mainly on social media and social network sites. Particular emphasis will be given to Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

## CHAPTER 4

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter looked at the theories of attitude, motivation and behaviour. This chapter discusses and treats Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube as social media brands. This implies that social media platforms have a perceived brand personality that users can use in order to select which social media platform they can use. This perceived brand personality of the social media brands will be assessed using Aaker's model.

Social media have become an integral part of the world. They have drastically affected how people and business communicate. Before this kind of technological innovation, communication was done with a landline telephone, by mail, or in person. Today it is not possible to imagine people and business communicating without the use of online methods. The interactive nature of online social media has transformed the relationship between the producers and the consumers of media content. Consumers have changed from being passive recipients to being active participants, as social media platforms facilitate customer-led content generation and the exchange of product ideas.

With the ubiquity of internet services at a global level, social media and social networking sites have significantly transformed the communication landscape (Dipietro, Crews, Gustafson & Strick, 2012:266; Mir, 2014:42). They are increasingly changing the way organisations and brands interact with their customers. Social media facilitate organisations to reach and interact with customers across society and any where in the world. (Mills, 2012:162). During the past decade, the sharing of news among users (Loicano, 2015:66) has been promoted by the pervasive use of social media, rendering them indispensable communication media.

Since their advent, social media have become part of society, and have contributed to many changes for individuals (Sander, Teh & Biruta, 2015:114). They have reshaped and improved the way people and organisations communicate, for different reasons (Wang, 2015:18). According to Csordas and Gate (2014:22), in social network sites (SNS), individuals and organisations have access to two-way communication platforms that enable them to communicate across different socio-cultural contexts. SNS are becoming the dominant way in which individuals communicate with friends, family, and colleagues about the politics of the day (Loicano, 2015:66; Valenzuela, Arriagada & Sherman, 2012:308) and sporting activities (Vann, 2014:440), and sharing information on their private and professional lives (Midyette, Youngkin & Snow-Croft, 2014:41).

This paradigm shift in communication has profoundly changed and redefined how business interacts with its customers across various channels and cultures (Pechrova, Lohr & Havlicek, 2015:42). In terms of business purpose, Wang, Segev and Liu (2015:86) assert that both social media and SNS provide a new method of product communication. Organisations use these media to reach their existing customers, attract new customers, and create long-term relationships and commitment. Social media and SNS offer opportunities to marketing practitioners to come up with new approaches to segmenting, targeting, and promoting brands (Wang *et al.*, 2015:86). They are regarded as new marketing tools that promote an interactive and dynamic association between organisations and their customers (Briggs, 2011:34; Lan, Lan & Tserendondog, 2011:9890). Many organisations have shifted from using traditional marketing approaches to using social media for that purpose (Lan *et al.*, 2015:9890).

Above all, SNS are platforms where customers share their brand-related experiences and preferences (Araujo & Neijens, 2012:626). Briggs (2011:22) indicates that SNS have created a borderless world where the information that is generated can be circulated in a multidirectional way. This allows customers to discuss and exchange information about brands (Picard, 2015:34). Consumers take advantage of this shared experience and information to evaluate a brand before they commit themselves to making purchase decisions. Because of this, social media have affected the pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviour of users. This emanates from the fact that SNS



enable easy and quick sharing of realistic viewpoints on products and/or services (Jothinani, Bhadhani & Shankar, 2015:118; Wang *et al.*, 2015:86).

This chapter will unfold in the following way: the first section deals with social media, the second part deals with SNS, and this is followed by discussions on Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

## 4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

The concept of social media evolved from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when people started to interact on telephone devices. Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson & Jeymour, (2011:2) indicate that social media originated in 1792 when people began to use telegraphs to transfer and receive messages across long distances. Two sociologists, Emile Durkheim (German) and Ferdinand Tonnies (French) are regarded as the pioneers of social media, for they were the first to believe that social groups may have existed ever since members of society shared beliefs and values. It was in the late 1800s that members of social groups began to use the telephone and radio for social interaction, such as sharing beliefs and values (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:2).

Table 4.1 shows the evolution of social media from their inception to the 1990s.

**Table 4.1 The history and evolution of social media**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Social media</b>
BCE	Postal service
1700s	Telegraph
1800s	Radio Telephone
1960s	ARPANET (1969)
1970s	Email (1971) Multi-User Domain (MUD) (1978) Bulletin Board System (BBS) (1979) Usenet (1979)
1980s	Genie (1985) The Well (1985) Listserv (1986)
	Six Degrees.com (1997) Blogger (1999) Epinions (1999)



1990s	Live Journal (1999) Napster (1999) Third voice (1999)
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Source: Boyd & Ellison (2007:212)

Table 4.1 shows that, in the 1960s, social media witnessed the introduction of e-mail. At that point, e-mail was a way to exchange messages between two online computers. In 1969, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) was responsible for the development of ARPANET, which was “an early network of time sharing computers that formed the basis of the internet” (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:2).

During the 1970s, the social media domain developed further, with new media coming into being. According to Riholtz (2010:1), Multi-User Dungeon or Multi-User Domain (MUD) was created in 1978. MUD was an online and interactive medium that permitted users to chat online and play games. In the following year, the Bulletin Board System (BBS) was developed. Users of the BBS could log into the system, read news, and share messages among themselves. BBS was a predecessor to the World Wide Web. In 1979, Usenet was established, permitting users to post articles in news groups.

A number of social media were established during the 1980s. These included (among others) The Well (1985), Genie (1985), and Listserv (1986). These online social media allowed users to perform a number of activities such as messaging, chatting, e-mailing, and data transferring. The 1990s saw marked improvements in social media. Most of the newer establishments shown in Table 4.1 are interactive in nature; consumers can review products, read news, share information, and post comments (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:2).

According to McIntyre (2014:16), the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw the launch of a number of social network sites (SNS). Many SNS started to spring up in 2000, and this generally transformed the way that individuals and organisations communicate. McIntyre (2014:6) indicates that SNS are a newer form of social media that “are structured as personal networks with the individual at the centre”.

The pervasiveness of the internet has boosted the growth of social media and its components, such as SNS, blogs and microblogs, virtual world content, media-sharing

sites, and wikis, among others (Sajithra & Patil, 2013:73). Dewing (2012:2) indicates that the growth of social media is a result of its widespread acceptance due to the number of services they offer.

#### **4.2.1 Definition of social media**

Despite the ever-increasing number of studies of social media and social network sites in the past decade, scholars have not reached consensus on what social media is. A number of scholars have come up with various definitions in the communication domain and other related disciplines (Carr & Hayes, 2015; Howard & Park, 2012:362; Osborne-Corney, 2014:55), and each of the definitions works well within a given context. For the purpose of this study, the definition provided by Carr and Hayes (2015:50) will be used: social media are “internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-represent either in real-time or asynchronously with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others”.

The definition spells out that social media are web-based platforms that are essentially social in nature because they facilitate the creation and maintenance of social connections among users. They are also characterised as mass-personal, which implies that they facilitate interpersonal communication among many people. Recipients of information may respond to the message either to an individual or to a group (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Users of social media also get value from the interactions they have with others.

Dao (2015:89) indicates that there are six different types of social media:

- ❖ Blogs: represent the preliminary form of social media. Blogs are personal web diaries that describe an author’s life and other related information. Although blogs are managed by users, they offer room for interaction through the addition of comments.
- ❖ Collaborative projects: allow users to work together in the creation of content. They permit users to “add, remove and change text-based content” (Kaplan &

Haenlin, 2010:62). The main reason for collaboration is that joint effort produces a better outcome than individual effort.

- ❖ Content communities: the primary objective of content communities is to share media content such as videos among users. Members of content communities are not required to create personal profile pages; where they do, only limited information – such as the date of joining the community and the number of videos shared – is provided.
- ❖ Virtual game worlds: according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:64), virtual game worlds “are platforms that replicate a three dimensional environment in which users can appear in the form of personalised avatars and interact with each other as they would in real life”. Dao (2015:86) indicates that they are web-based platforms where users can participate virtually in online games through personalised avatars.
- ❖ Virtual social worlds: they allow social media users to choose “personalised avatars, their behaviours, their lives and their acts in their virtual lives are similar to their real lives” (Dao, 2015:86).
- ❖ Social networking sites (SNS): these applications allow users to connect by generating personal profiles and inviting friends and colleagues to access their profiles. The personal profiles contain any type of information such as blogs, videos, and photos, among others. Members can send e-mails and messages between themselves. Facebook is currently the largest SNS (Statista, 2018).

The next table depicts the different types of social media.

**Table 4.2 The different types of social media**

Types of social media	Platforms	Year launched	Uses of the platform
Social network sites	Club Penguin	2000	Socialising for young children
	Friendstar	2002	Social networking
	LinkedIn	2003	Business networking
	MySpace	2003	Social networking
	Facebook	2004	Social networking
	Bebo	2005	Social networking
	VKotakte	2006	Russian socialising
	PerfSpot	2007	Business networking
	Fotolog	2002	Photoblog sharing social navigation
	Flickr	2004	Photo sharing social navigation

Types of social media	Platforms	Year launched	Uses of the platform
Content communities	YouTube	2005	Video sharing social navigation
	Slideshare	2006	Presentation sharing
	Instagram	2010	Photo/video sharing, social networking
Collaborative projects	Wikipedia	2001	Referencing website
Blogs/Microblogs	LiveJournal	1999	Blogsharing social navigation
	Yahoo!group.com	2001	Online discussions
	Word Press	2003	Content management
	Twitter	2006	Microblogging
Virtual game worlds	World of WarCraft	2004	Virtual gaming
Virtual social worlds	Second Life	2003	Virtual world

Source: Adapted from Dao (2015), Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), and Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich (2014).

Table 4.2 gives examples of the six different types of social media according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). The types of social media entail social network sites, content communities, collaboration projects, blogs, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds.

### 4.3 SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

The proliferation of mobile devices and internet services has prompted the growth of SNS at a global level. SNS are a widespread phenomenon, attracting millions of users who have integrated these platforms into their daily activities. Exposure to SNS has increased the time users spend online in maintaining relationships and doing business. This section looks at SNS as social media, their history, and use, for both business and society.

Since the introduction of SNS, they have become one of the most indispensable and most popular communication platforms for both the individual user and companies (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2010:515; Jothinani, Bhadani & Shankar, 2015:117). The global proliferation of SNS has affected and reshaped the way consumers communicate and manage their social relationships (Pradiptarini 2011:11). Ellison, Gibbs and Weber (2015:103) indicate that SNS are employed by individuals to accomplish a number of

social and business goals, such as getting support after the loss of a job and sharing knowledge. SNS are platforms that companies have employed to advertise and market their products (Jothimani *et al.*, 2015:117). In fact, SNS have increasingly facilitated the creation, growth, development, and maintenance of relationships among millions of users. This shows that SNS are increasingly being employed by a wide range of users for either social or business purposes.

#### **4.3.1 Definition of social network sites**

SNS are computer-mediated communication platforms that emerged as part of Web 2.0 technology (Ellison & Boyd, 2013:159). The concept 'Web 2.0' is defined as websites that "a) rely on the participation of mass groups of users rather than centrally controlled content providers b) aggregate and remix content from multiple sources and c) more intensely network users and content together" (Ahn, 2011:1435). This means that Web 2.0 technology offers a social and collaborative platform for users to network and interact among themselves, without charges or geographic boundaries.

SNS have proliferated and evolved since their genesis, and it has become difficult to come up with the best-fitting definition (Ellison & Boyd, 2013:152). Despite the many definitions in the literature, the definition below is given, as it best describes the SNS this study will consider.

Ellison and Boyd (2013:157) define SNS as: "a networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content by other users and/or system provided data 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others and 3) can consume, produce and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connection side". This definition denotes that SNS have the following main features: the profile, the connection list, and the ability to traverse connections and shared content.

- ❖ First, the profile is the central point of SNS (Dunne & Lawlor, 2010:48). As soon as a member joins an SNS, he/she is required to complete a form that contains a number of questions from which the profile is generated (Liu & Ying, 2010:749). The questions require a number of descriptors such as gender, age,

general interests, and an “about me” section (Boyd & Ellison, 2007:211). SNS members can upload photographs, music, videos, and personal information (Mouakket, 2015:102).

- ❖ Second, the list of connections or friends reveals the number of users who have established some kind of relationship among themselves. These relationships can be either unidirectional or bidirectional. The former refers to relationships established by one of the SNS users without receiving reciprocal agreement from the other party; this relationship is termed ‘follower’. It reveals that one party is interested in the activity of the other member. ‘Bidirectional’ refers to relationships that are established when the two parties involved are in agreement (Tapiador & Carrera, 2012:46). Thus the ‘friending’ practice is at the centre of SNS activity.
- ❖ Third, SNS provide visibility into the user’s social network, reflecting both real world and virtual world connections. Boyd and Ellison (2007:213) indicate that SNS can display the connections of the members. On most platforms, the friends list is visible and accessible to all users who have permission to view the profiles. For example, users of Facebook can view one another’s profile, except in cases where the user denies permission to other members. However, there are some exceptions: LinkedIn, for example, controls what the viewer can access, depending on whether a member has paid for a premium account. It also has an option for users to decide not to have a public display of their profiles.
- ❖ Lastly, SNS have provision for users to create and share content with a given audience. The users of SNS also control the content that they decide to share (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2016:413).

#### **4.3.2 History of social network sites**

According to Boyd and Ellison (2008:214), a significant number of SNS were launched in 1997, and since then they have increased in number and developed in terms of what they allow users to do. From 1997 onwards, many platforms allowed users to create profiles, list friends, publicly articulate friends, and surf them. SixDegrees.com was the first SNS to be launched in 1997, but it stopped operating in 2000. As a

platform, it allowed users to establish connections among themselves. Since then, a number of SNS have been introduced for business and dating purposes, among others. Table 4.3 shows some of the major SNS that were launched between 1997 and 2018. The list of these SNS is not exhaustive, but it identifies some of the dominant platforms in different parts of the world.

**Table 4.3 Launch dates for some of the social network sites**

Year	Social network sites
1997	Six Degrees.com
1998	Fotki, Xangu
1999	Live Journal, Asian Avenue, Black planet
2000	Migente
2001	Cyworld, Ryze
2002	Fotolog, Friendstar
2003	Couchsurfing, LinkedIn, Myspace, Last FM, Flickr
2004	Facebook, Multiply, aSmallWorld, Mixit
2005	Yahoo 360, Cyworld (China), YouTube, Bebo, AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet
2006	Cyworld (US), Windows LiveSpaces, Muchurch, Twitter
2007	Daily Strength, Google+
2008	Cross.tv, Govloop, Yammer
2009	Dailybooth, Dreamwith
2010	Friendica, Goodwizz, Influenstar, Instagram, Jiepang
2011	Gentlemint, Google+
2012	Clusterflunk, Stage 32
2013	Smartican, Springme
2014	Ello, Poolwo
2015	Wanelo, Hypur, Curofy
2016	Mastodon
2017	InfieldChatter
2018	IGTV

Source: Boyd and Ellison (2008:212) and Mumford (2015), Infield Chatter (2017) Instagram (2018)

Table 4.3 reveals several launch dates for social network sites. Since the launch of the early social network sites, organisations have continued launching new sites, as shown in Table 4.3. In every year since 1997 up to 2018, users of SNS across the globe have witnessed the launch of new platforms. This kind of growth in the number of SNS testifies that they play a significant role in people's lives.



### **4.3.3 Uses of social network sites**

The use of SNS has grown exponentially, infiltrating business and social strata. SNS have allowed people across the world to connect, interact, and share ideas in a borderless world (Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich, 2014:99). According to Riese, Pennisi and Major (2011:1), social media have created a new paradigm of marketing communications, where business can reach its customers faster and at a lower cost than with traditional approaches. It has real-time dialogue possible between the organisation and its customers.

This section discusses the common uses of SNS for both business and society.

#### **4.3.3.1 Uses of SNS for business purposes**

According to Park and Oh (2012:95) and Correia, Medina, Romo and Contreras (2014:297), SNS have revolutionised traditional marketing approaches. Traditionally, marketing communications involved a unidirectional exchange of information; but since the advent of these platforms, both businesses and customers enjoy bidirectional and interactive communication. Customers who use SNS are no longer passive recipients of marketing information; they now actively contribute and disseminate information related to products and services.

Mills and Plungger (2015:522) indicate that SNS offer great opportunities for organisations to create and establish long-term relationships with both prospective and current customers. Organisations also use these platforms to acquire new customers and to retain those with positive and beneficial relationships through constant interaction with them.

According to Wang, Seger and Liu (2015:85), SNS act as convergence zones of information from many sources where consumers share their views on, and experiences with, various brands. Many consumers have a propensity to make purchase decisions based on other people's experiences as shared on SNS. Jothimani, Bhadhani and Shankari (2015:118) indicate that the sharing of information is not limited to product- or brand-related information; even personal and professional



information is shared through texts, images, and videos that are uploaded on SNS. These platforms have empowered consumers, because they can communicate with many people quickly and at an affordable cost.

According to Ellison, Gibbs and Weber (2015:100), many business organisations have increasingly adopted SNS as a way to enhance their performance through knowledge- and information-sharing, where knowledge-sharing is regarded as “the process of providing and receiving information, advice and feedback“. Large organisations use SNS to share information between individual employees, work teams, and business units that are dispersed in different geographic areas. Information- and knowledge-sharing are the premises on which trust and lasting relationships are formed. With strong relationships in place, it becomes easier to coordinate the various business activities in different locations.

Marketing practitioners have increasingly used SNS as marketing tools that allow organisations to link with customers. Argyris and Monu (2015:140) point out that corporations use SNS to communicate with various stakeholders, such as customers, financiers, and the public. Because of their significance to business, SNS are now part of many organisations’ integrated marketing communications (Anjum, More & Ghouri, 2012:96; Mikalef, Giannakos & Pateli, 2013:20). Correia *et al.* (2014:298) note that SNS offer platforms for advertising and promotions and, because of this, organisations have developed electronic messages to reach consumers online.

Furthermore, Riese, Pennisi and Major (2010:2) posit that the use of SNS allows organisations to create brand awareness and brand image through advertising. Todi (2008:5) outlines three reasons why SNS are significant to organisational advertising. First, SNS can reach large numbers of users at a global level who spend an increasing amount of time on social interactions; second, advertising has become very affordable on SNS, and companies can reach many people at a lower cost; and third, organisations can design customised advertisements, since they have information about users’ preferences and interests.

Okazaki and Taylor (2013:56) affirm that the use of SNS as advertising platforms has been embraced by reputable companies, such as the Fortune 500 companies in

America, in order to reach their international markets. These firms use SNS as part of their brand-building exercises. SNS facilitate the development of a dialogue between the company and the customer, and of a triologue in which consumers establish relationships among themselves and with the company (Tsimonis & Dimitriadou, 2013:328). This creates opportunities for companies to share information with customers.

#### **4.3.3.2 Uses of SNS by society**

Besides the use of SNS by the business community, society uses the platforms for countless activities. According to Collin, Rahilly, Richardson and Third (2011:18), SNS are used by people to express their self-identity: they provide users with a platform to work out their identity and status. Ellison (2013:4) adds that social media grant opportunities to share self-presentational content, or to self-brand online. Self-presentation is “an emerging online practice that involves creating a persona, sharing personal information about oneself with others, performing intimate connections to create the illusion of friendship or closeness, acknowledging an audience and viewing them as fans, and using strategic reveal of information to increase or maintain this audience” (Marwick, 2010). This entails the management of an online personal brand, or one’s identity, through social media.

Collin *et al.* (2011:16) note that SNS play an important role in the development, strengthening, and maintenance of both offline and online relationships. Giannakos, Chorianopoulos, Giotopoulos and Vlamos (2013:594) indicate that SNS are used to maintain contact with old and new connections. For example, marginalised people (such as those suffering from chronic ailments) are given the opportunity to develop relationships. By doing so they share their values, opinions, and experiences, and thus get support from their communities. The platforms also play a significant role in the initiation and development of intimate relationships (Collin *et al.*, 2011:16).

A number of studies were carried out to investigate the uses of social network sites, as shown in Table 4.4. Generally, the results of many of the studies have revealed similar findings. The table reveals only studies that date from 2012; it is intended to present recent studies and to observe the kind of trends that have been discovered in

the domain. Furthermore, it supports that no prior studies have focused exactly on the area that is the focus of this study.

**Table 4.4 Studies of the uses of social network sites**

Author(s)	Study description	Methodology	Uses of social network sites
DiPietro, Crews & Gustafson (2012)	Determine the use of SNS in the restaurant industry	Survey	To advertise, find employees, obtain customer feedback, encourage customers to buy, encourage repeat purchases, build customer relationships, get new customers, communicate internally
Soares, Pinto & Nobre (2012)	Examine the use of SNS from a marketing perspective	Survey	Information disclosure, advertising, used for e-word-of-mouth, social interaction
Madhusadhen (2012)	Explore the use of SNS by research scholars of the University of Delhi	Survey	Academic communication, virtual meeting with co-researchers, collation of resources, developing an e-portfolio, help in research and learning, source of information
Jung & Ineson (2012)	Examine the role and potential use of SNS as relationship marketing	Survey Online and offline	Sales and marketing strategy
Tsimonis & Dimitriadou (2013)	Why firms create brand pages and how they use them	Qualitative exploratory	Brand awareness, to counteract competitors, introduce new products, create relationships, interact with customers, reach new customers, customer engagement, promotions
Shen & Bissell (2013)	Analyse how beauty companies use social media to interact with customers	Content analysis	Entertainment, beauty poll, carry promotional information, posting event calendar
Al-jabhiri, Sohail & Ndubisi, (2013)	Uses of social network sites through the lens of uses and gratification theory	Survey	Self-presentation, social interaction, freedom of expression, enjoyment
Chung, Marcketti & Fiore (2014)	Explore the use of SNS services by art museums as marketing tools	Quantitative and in-depth interviews	Building awareness, engaging with the community, networking

Author(s)	Study description	Methodology	Uses of social network sites
Chen (2015)	A review of social media use in social work	Content analysis	To engage service users, to extend social network of practitioners or service users, to evaluate the quality of service
Howison, Finger & Hauschka (2015)	Examine the use of SNS by tourism operators	Mixed methods; online and offline surveys	Sell products online, interact with customers, establish relationships, promote products, get feedback from customers, distribute information, gain new customers, increase awareness, maintain a profile
Maresova, Klimova & Tucek (2015)	Analyse the use of SNS in the banking sector	Content analysis	Attract current and potential customers, customer care and services, record advertisements and videos, inform customers about current news
Argyris & Monu (2015)	Examine the use of social media for external communication by firms	Content analysis	Perform communication acts, monitor effectiveness of campaigns, create relational ties, store information
Wickramanayake & Jika (2017)	To investigate social media use at by university students	Survey	The results revealed that students used social media for education, entertainment and communication
Bailey, Bonifield, & Arias (2018)	Explore the use of social media by young Latin American consumers	Off and online survey	The results reveal that social influence, social facilitation experience, perceived ease of use, and perceived enjoyment affect the use of social media by young users

Table 4.4 reveals that many studies of social network sites have been carried out, and that they covered a broad spectrum of areas. These include studies of the use of SNS for marketing purposes (Chung, Marketti & Fione, 2014; DiPietro, Crews & Gustafson, 2013; Jung & Ineson, 2012; Soares, Pinto & Nobre, 2012); academic purposes (Madhusedhen, 2012); branding purposes (Tsimonis & Dimitriadou, 2013); marketing communication (Argyris & Monu, 2015; Shen & Bissell, 2013); tourism (Howison, Finger & Hauschka, 2015); social work (Chen, 2015); social media use by university students (Wickramanayake & Jika, 2017); and use by consumers (Bailey, Bonifield & Arias, 2018). After an broader search of past studies that have examined the uses of

SNS to users, the literature does not reveal any study that has examined how the brand personality of social media affects users' attitude, behaviour, and motives. From the extant literature there is also a paucity of research that examines at least three platforms that deal with the same constructs that are under investigation.

## **4.4 FACEBOOK**

Facebook, which is one of the focal platforms of this study, is the most frequently used social media platform (Ye & Cheong, 2017:442). According to Statista (2018), Facebook is the largest social media platform, with over 2.2 billion active users monthly. The next section discusses its history and evolution, previous studies, and its application to marketing.

### **4.4.1 History of Facebook**

Facebook originated in the United States, and is one of the most popular and fastest growing SNS (Naslund, Aschbrenner, Marsch, & Bartels, 2016:2; Theocharis & Quintelier, 2016:821). According to Croft (2007:1) and McCallig (2014:109), Mark Zuckerberg first created Facebook at Harvard University on 4 February 2004, with the aid of his friends Andrew McCollum and Edward Saverin. Its initial name was 'The Facebook', but 'The' was removed in August 2005, and Facebook was then officially registered as Facebook.com for US\$200,000 (Croft, 2007:2). It was launched as a forum for Harvard students, and its major objective was to facilitate communication among them. For this reason, its membership was limited to Harvard students (Blachnio, Przepiorka & Rudnicka, 2013:773); within a day, 1,200 Harvard students had registered on the platform. Although it still has a large subscription base of students, it now encompasses users from diverse backgrounds, geographical origins, age groups, and affiliations (Tafesse, 2015:928).

According to Caers, De Feyter, De Couk, Stough and Vigna (2013:984), for an individual to use Facebook, he/she has to generate an account on the website [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). An account is created by filling in personal information such as name, sex, date of birth, and email address, among others; and a password must be created to access the personal account. Facebook has important pages: the home

page, and the profile where users post their information (Wilson, Gosling & Graham (2012:214)).

According to Wilson *et al.* (2012:214), a Facebook user can upload information on his/her profile page, compile a list of friends, and associate with other members. The main features of Facebook entail a) a message system that allows for private communication among members; b) a 'wall' that facilitates public communication, and c) a home page that is frequently called a 'news feed', which displays new contributions from friends (De Feyler *et al.*, 2013:984; Wilson *et al.*, 2012:214).

Facebook has a number of applications such as: messenger – which permits people to send private messages, chat with groups, and make free calls; groups – which facilitates communication between small groups and groups can share photos and files and organise events; video – people can share videos on anything; photos – allows people to upload and share photos; search – permits people to search across information shared on Facebook; and Facebook lite – which facilitates easy access to Facebook in places that have slow networks that do not support all functions on Facebook (Facebook, 2018).

Blachinio, Przepiorka and Rudnicka (2013:775) point out that Facebook permits its members to communicate with each other. It also functions as an online application that allows users to upload photographs and videos, display personal information, and make comments on topics. It is also a major platform where companies market their products and services (Farooq & Jan, 2012:627), and is regarded as a research tool where researchers can mine data from its database (Asghar, 2015:259; Yazdanparast, Joseph & Qureshi, 2015:468).

#### **4.4.2 Evolution of Facebook**

Since the creation of Facebook in 2004, it has evolved to become the most appealing global platform (Yazdanparast *et al.*, 2015:468). According to Blachnio, Przepiorka & Rudnicka (2013:775), since Facebook was opened to the public in September 2006, its subscription base has grown exponentially to over a billion active users. Wilson *et al.* (2012:206) indicate that there has been an extensive international expansion of the



platform, and it is currently accessible in seventy languages around the globe. Choudhury (2019:79) notes that in its expansion, Facebook employed the McDonaldisation process. First, it emphasises on efficiency - where users have a quick and efficient connection with friends and family. Second, calculability - in this case users of Facebook are continuously adding friends. Third, predictability - it has maintained same features across the world, except in countries where it is banned or partially banned. Fourth, control – new features are added on the platform so that its users may continuously engaged with the social medium platform and create more online content. This has resulted in 80% of its active users residing outside the US. The evolution of Facebook is summarised in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 The evolution of Facebook since 2004**

<b>Year and theme</b>	<b>Key activities carried out as Facebook has evolved</b>
2004 Facebook is launched	Facebook is launched at Harvard University from Mark Zuckerberg's dormitory room. It opens its doors to a few schools in 2004.
2005 Open its doors to high school students	In 2005 Facebook continues to open its doors to selected high school students.
2006 Facebook adds new features	The status box is added. Facebook opens to users above 13 years old with a valid e-mail address. Introduction of multiple photos. A 'share' button is added to encourage users to share links to third party sites.
2007 New features increase	Facebook adds a number of features such as video and player; Facebook pages for business are launched.
2008 A new wall	Facebook adds a new wall to publish content. Facebook chat is launched.
2009 Redesigns	The news feed is redesigned to have a new look.
2010 A new profile	Facebook gives its profile a big makeover. A video is made to walk users through the new profile.
2011 Timeline is added	It's the biggest aesthetic change to Facebook, and the biggest adjustment to the profile.
2012 Timeline for pages	The company makes a timeline for pages.
2013 Revamping of timeline and news feed	Facebook revamps the timeline and the news feed, with much larger pictures and an improved aesthetic influenced by Instagram.
2014 Facebook celebrates its 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	Facebook celebrates 10 years. It acquires Pryte (a Finnish mobile data plan company) and LiveRail (an online video advertising company).

Year and theme	Key activities carried out as Facebook has evolved
2015 Business on Messenger platform	Facebook transforms the way people interact with businesses. It moves the online purchase process into Messenger inbox. Receipts, e-mails, shopping notifications and customer service-related issues can be deposited into the Messenger inbox.
2016 Facebook reactions are added	Facebook launches Facebook reactions, which permit users to respond to posts with multiple reactions, in addition to liking it.
2017 Facebook updates	Facebook rolls out several changes to its iconic News Feed and the Facebook camera interface undergoes a few enhancements.
2018 Facebook adds a dating feature	Facebook has launched a dating feature with privacy features where users can build dating profiles.

Source: Knibbs, 2014; Researcher's own, Facebook, 2018

According to Table 4.5, Facebook has continued to evolve since its inception in 2004. From its launch by Zuckerberg in his dormitory room at Harvard University, it spread to schools, colleges, and anyone who owns an e-mail address. As it has evolved over time, new features and facilities have been added – for example, the video, the player, and the wall used to publish content. In its evolution it has also acquired related companies such as LiveRail and Instagram.

#### 4.4.3 Previous studies of Facebook

A number of previous studies have been carried out; this section discusses some of them and their results, focusing on research that is relevant to this study. Table 4.6 includes selected studies and the findings that relate to this study's variables.

**Table 4.6 Previous studies of Facebook**

Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
Cheung, Chiu & Lee (2011)	Factors that drive students to use Facebook	Online survey	Drivers to use Facebook included we-intention, subjective norms, group norms, social identity, purposive value, self-discovery, social presence, social enhancement, entertainment, interconnectivity
Sachs, Eckel & Langan (2011)	Measuring the effectiveness of Facebook as a marketing,	Online survey	Facebook is used to promote events and services, improve communication and awareness, and seek



Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
	reference, and instruction tool		research assistance from the librarian.
Al-Debei, Al-lozi & Papazafeirpoulou (2012)	To predict users' intentions to continue participating on Facebook	Survey	Results show that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived value have a significant effect on continuance participation behaviour.
Eren (2012)	Investigates student attitude towards the use of Facebook	Survey	Students had a positive attitude towards the use of Facebook for language learning.
Giannakos <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Investigating the uses and gratifications of Facebook	Survey	Results revealed that users use Facebook for social connections, social surfing, wasting time, and for using applications.
Prescott, Wilson & Becket (2013)	Investigate the attitudes towards the use of Facebook and online professionalism	Online survey	Professional students have different attitudes to the use of Facebook.
Orzan, Boboc, Burguelea & Stupu (2014)	Examine online behaviour with regard to future intention to use Facebook	Online survey	Results show that most users use Facebook daily, and report that they will continue using Facebook.
Acilar & Mersin (2015)	Investigating the attitudes of undergraduate studies to Facebook use	Survey	Students who used Facebook had a more positive attitude to Facebook use than those who did not use it.
Akpan & Nwankpa (2015)	Investigate the influence of Facebook advertisements on young people's buying behaviour	Survey	Results show that there was limited influence by Facebook on the buying behaviour of students who patronised the products advertised on Facebook.
Erlin, Fitri & Susandri, (2015)	Exploration of the use of Facebook among students	Online survey	Results indicate that Facebook is used to share information, grade students, share homework, ideas, resources, and materials.
Low & Warawudhi (2016)	Investigating undergraduate students' attitudes to Facebook	Survey	Facebook can encourage the students' motivation and attitude to learning.
Phua, Jin, & Kim (2017)	Explain why people use Facebook and elucidate the motivations for use.	Online survey	Results show that Facebook is used for passing time, affection, sharing problems, socialising and improving social knowledge.

Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
Thoo, Ho, & Muharam (2018)	Examine the factors that influence the attitudes of millennials' towards Facebook advertising	Survey	Results reveal that perceived interactivity, credibility, and level of privacy affect attitude.

With reference to the previous studies of Facebook, it can be summarised that studies have covered a wide array of topics. The extant literature reveals that some of the areas that have been done include the attitude of users to Facebook use, motives for using Facebook, and the effect of Facebook on relationships among individuals and groups.

The next section summarises the findings of previous research on Facebook, with particular emphasis on the variables that this study is examining – that is, attitude, motivation, and behaviour.

- ❖ **Attitudes of users towards Facebook:** A number of research studies have looked at the attitude of users towards Facebook (Eren, 2012; Wilson & Becket, 2013; Low & Warawudhi; 2016). The results of such studies are consistent throughout. For example, Eren (2012:292), in a study to examine the attitudes of students to Facebook use for language learning, reveals that students had a positive attitude. In another study, Acilar and Mersin (2015:986) investigated the attitudes of students to Facebook use, and the results revealed that they had a positive attitude.
- ❖ **Reasons (motivations) for using Facebook:** A number of studies have revealed that many people use the Facebook platform in order to link and communicate with other users (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Tosun, 2012:1511; Wilson *et al.*, 2012:214). Facebook gratifies different communication needs, such as creating and maintaining relationships, creating and terminating romantic relationships, and keeping in touch with peers (Kim, *et al.*, 2010:1079). Blachnio, Przepiorka and Rudnicka (2013:776) note that even organisations have used the Facebook platform to communicate and present their brands to the virtual community of customers. Thus it is a platform used to communicate information and promote new products.

- ❖ **Facebook usage behaviour:** In a study to examine the frequency of use of Facebook, Orzan, Boboc, Burghilea and Stupic (2014:258) revealed that most users use the platform daily. Al-Debei, Al-Lozi and Papazafeiropoulou (2013:51) examined the behavioural intentions of users with regard to Facebook. The results of the study revealed that users have the intention to continue using Facebook.

#### 4.4.4 Uses of Facebook for marketing practitioners and brand managers

Organisations use Facebook in their marketing activities for many reasons. For most organisations, the platform has transformed the way they communicate with their clientele base. The shift of communication from a dyad to a triad has led to improved relationships between organisations and their customers. Facebook has empowered both the organisation and its customer in unique ways, as both can get immediate feedback from their interaction. Customers have the opportunity to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and questions in a quick and public way. From a marketing perspective, marketing practitioners use Facebook for the following purposes:

- ❖ **Brand building:** According to Shao and Ross (2014:239), brand managers employ Facebook as a marketing tool to “engage and mobilise consumers around their brands”. It has facilitated consumer-to-consumer interaction in real time, regardless of the distance and geographical boundaries between users. The interaction between consumers affects the products and services they consider buying. Customers engage in the co-creation of brand value by 1) increasing social networking among brand community members; 2) creating positive impressions for the brand; and 3) encouraging the use of the brand by community members.
- ❖ **Building brand reputation:** Edosomwan *et al.* (2011:7) indicate that, with the advent of social media such as Facebook, companies are more attached and attractive to their customers and employees. This is because the platform allows brand managers to build reputable brands in the minds of consumers. Consumers can experience both the brand and the company by using the brand and with constant interaction with the brand on Facebook. In fact, reputation may be built on a Facebook wall where brand attributes and values are communicated.
- ❖ **Promotion:** Correia *et al.* (2014:300) point out that Facebook is an appropriate platform for the promotion of products and services. Facebook has offered a new

paradigm for companies to reach their customers through various promotional materials that they upload on their wall. Brand managers place promotional content on Facebook to generate prospects and encourage consumers to engage with the company for business. If the promotion is done properly, it has the potential to generate sales.

- ❖ **Public relations:** Bushelow (2012:5, 7) indicates that Facebook is the most popular tool for public relations and advertising, since it reaches mass audiences. It permits companies to publicise information through press releases, videos, and photographs. This information is accessed by brand communities that, in turn, will share it among their members. Consumers use online brand communities as sources of brand-related information. Companies use Facebook to create strong brand communities, which are key to the development of a relationship marketing strategy.
- ❖ **Market research:** Market researchers are now employing social network sites as tools to collect research data. Facebook started to offer facilities for conducting market research in 2008 (Engelbrecht, 2011:67). Facebook users (both individuals and companies) can create their own surveys and collect online data. According to Beninger, Fry, Jago, Lepps, Nass and Silvester (2014:1), SNS offer rich data, and marketing practitioners and researchers are using them to support their work by searching through data from archives, recruiting respondents, and administering online surveys. For example, SNS like Facebook and LinkedIn are effective at recruiting research participants because those SNS are cheap and quick to use (Bhutta, 2012:1).
- ❖ **Tag-based marketing:** Farooq and Jan (2012:629) note that tag-based marketing is “the extension of Facebook pages”, and it assists companies to market their products and services. Companies can take the feedback of their products from customers and, with their consent, the feedback is tagged on the customer’s profile. The tag is visible to the consumer’s friends list in the news feed. Farooq and Jan (2012:629) also note that, since the tag is visible to users, this helps to market the products of a company and increases consumers’ trust in the products.

#### 4.4.5 Rationale for using Facebook in this study

Facebook is the most popular SNS (Gonzalez-Ramirez, Gasco & Taverner, 2015:67; Milosevic, Zivkovic, Arsic & Manasijevi 2015:576), with over 2.2 billion active users (Statista, 2018). Since its inception, it has grown, developed, and received global appeal across cultures, regions, and languages. The widespread acceptance of this platform means that it makes a unique contribution to the wellbeing of individual users, business practitioners, and academics. According to Gonzalez-Ramirez *et al.* (2015:67), Facebook is different from many platforms because, unlike other platforms, users own their pages. Facebook has attracted the attention of academics and writers because of its exponential growth and appeal.

Ryan, Chester, Reece and Xenos (2014:135) indicate that empirical studies of Facebook outnumber studies of any other platform. According to Wilson *et al.* (2012:204), the various activities performed on Facebook, such as the users' expression of their preferences, sharing information, and exchanging photos, create a lot of data that can be accessed by researchers. The platform provides a rare opportunity to study human behaviour that, in the past, was difficult to examine. Facebook now acts as an on-going database for social activities related to SNS usage. It is therefore logical to investigate Facebook with regard to users' attitude, motivation, and behaviour.

Facebook is the most important platform for B2C communications, such that even the top 100 Fortune companies have opened web pages where they communicate with Facebook users (Kwok & Yu, 2016:311). Facebook is an interactive tool which offers marketing practitioners many communication options (Baglione, Harcar, & Spillan, 2017:126) for companies to market and brand goods at low cost (Hanson & Wrangmo, 2013:113). Despite its significance to business and community, most scholarship on Facebook has been done in developed countries and little research has been done in emerging regions with fast growing millennial populations where the determinants of social media use differ considerably (Duffet, 2015). For all the reasons mentioned as well as the prominence of Facebook in South Africa (Goldstuck, 2018) a decision was made to include the platform in this study.

## 4.5 YOUTUBE

YouTube, a video-sharing platform, features a wide variety of user-generated content that is free to view. It has become one of the most frequently visited websites at a global level (Statista, 2018). This section discusses its history, previous studies of it, and its uses in marketing.

### 4.5.1 History of YouTube

According to Abedin, Ahmed, Al Mamun, Ahmed, Newaz, Rumana and Turin (2015:1), YouTube is the most popular web-based video community, and overall the third most popular internet service, where millions of users interact to share and watch videos. The history of YouTube can be traced back to motion picture technology, through which video was created using moving pictures or moving images, irrespective of whether they were stored online or on reels of film (Snelson & Perkins, 2009:19).

Three former PayPal employees (Chad Herley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim) founded YouTube in 2005 as an online video-sharing website (Abedin *et al.*, 2015); it was acquired by Google in 2006 (Lukkanen & Salovaara, 2015:109). According to Cherif, Suinda, Movahedzadeh, Martyn, Cannon and Ayesha (2014:335), users' access to uploading, sharing, and viewing videos depends on whether or not they are registered. At its genesis, it only allowed its users to publish their videos, but it has since been transformed into a professional media platform that mixes free and subscribed content. Gonnering (2010:320) describes YouTube as an online collaborative technology that allows users to creatively produce and upload video content and make comments on it.

According to Prensky (2010:2), YouTube is a two-way communication platform that allows users to communicate and give feedback in the form of view counts and ratings on posted video clips. In some instances, users post their ideas and opinions expecting to get feedback and, in most cases, they receive many responses from viewers. Soukup (2014:4) describes YouTube as a social network site, a video sharing site, and a marketing site. Because it contains a number of features, it has become a



platform for countless virtual communities that focus on the various interests of users. YouTube has a total number of 1.9 billion active users (Statista, 2018).

According to Lukkanen and Salovaara (2015:109), the viewing experience of the video centres on the user interface and the video player page. The user interface of YouTube is depicted in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Screenshot of a YouTube page**

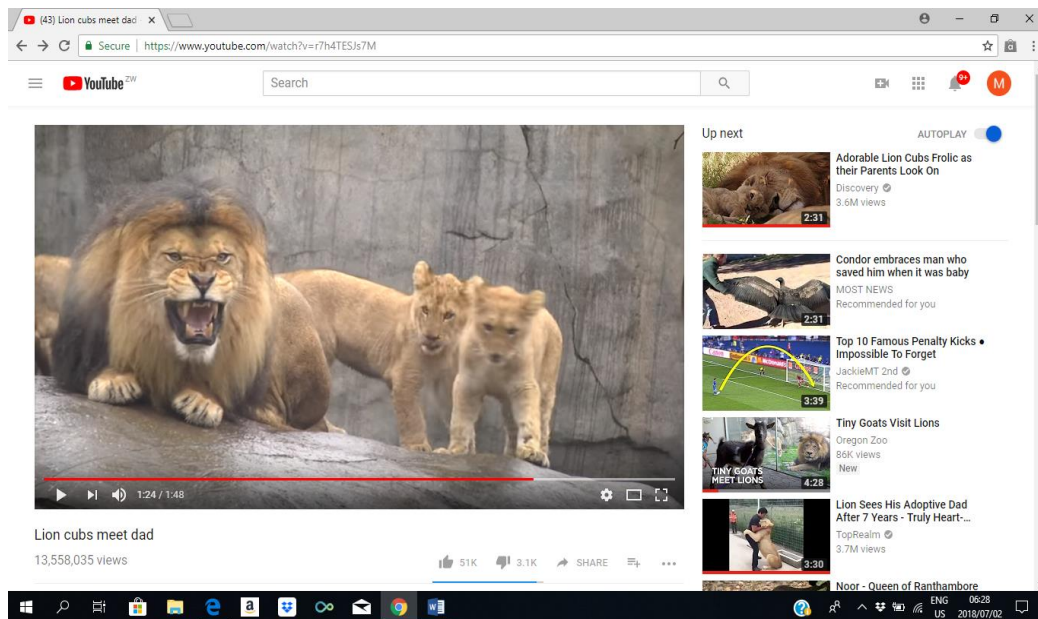


Figure 4.1 indicates that YouTube's user interface comprises four components:

- ❖ **Search bar:** It permits the user to perform search-related activities; the results are displayed in a search result window.
- ❖ **Suggested content bar:** It is found to the right of the other components, and lists videos and advertisements that are recommended for viewing.
- ❖ **Metadata and voting controls:** These components are found below the search bar; they entail the description that is given by the users who upload the content, and the statistics pertaining to viewing.
- ❖ **The player:** This component is used to play and watch content. Users can pause the play, choose a resolution, adjust the volume, and jump to certain parts of the video. A registered user can save playlists that allow them to play back many videos. It should be noted that rated content cannot be accessed by unregistered



users. The total number of views is the basis on which a video's popularity is measured.

It is important to note that YouTube offers a facility - a TrueView video ads format - for businesses to advertise. The TrueView ads format offers viewers with skippable video advertisements, permitting them to skip the advertisements after five seconds, in case they choose to do so. The format also offers non-skippable video advertisements which have to be watched before the video. The advertisements build awareness for brands and products while viewers are watching the video.

#### 4.5.2 Previous research on YouTube

Table 4.7 reveals some of previous studies of YouTube. Not even one among them has looked at the predictive effects of the brand personality of YouTube on attitude, motivation, and behaviour. Thus this study has a chance to contribute new knowledge.

**Table 4.7 Previous studies of YouTube**

Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
Hagerty (2008)	Exploring the uses and gratifications of YouTube	Survey	Mediated interaction, control choice, pastime, social interaction
Haridakis & Hanson (2009)	Examining the motives that predict the viewing of videos in YouTube	Exploratory research	Entertainment, information seeking, social interaction, co-viewing, sharing content, locus of control.
Chen (2013)	Examining the use of YouTube in personal branding	Qualitative research In-depth interviews Content analysis	YouTube empowers consumers to become international personal brands through different strategies designed to create a unique personal brand personality.
Tan (2013)	Exploring the use of YouTube in the classroom	Focus groups	Support independent learning, source of information, student-to-student interaction, entertainment, sharing resources.
Whitaker, Orman & Yarbrough (2014)	Determining information related to users uploading videos	Content analysis	Most videos were performance, teaching, public relations, and industry.

Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
Cherif <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Gauging the use of YouTube as an educational paradigm	Survey	Develop critical thinking, clarify misconceptions, reinforce understanding, see relationship between concepts.
Checchinato, Disegra & Gazda (2015)	Examining consumers' preferences towards sports-brand related content generated by supporters and clubs	Content analysis	User-generated content competes with market-generated content, as both receive views and comments Users prefer watching videos created by their favourite football clubs.
Park & Gonnering (2016)	Examining the motives for using YouTube for Health Related reasons.	Off and Online survey	The results revealed the motives for YouTube use include social utility, information seeking, passing time and entertainment.
Khan (2017)	Examining the motives of user participation and consumption on YouTube	Survey	The motives include seeking information, giving information, self-status seeking, social interaction, and relaxing entertainment.
Gupta, Lam, Pettigrew & Tait (2018)	Examining alcohol promotion on YouTube in India and Australia	Content analysis	The results revealed that sexually suggestive content is used in India and Australia uses content related to their heritage and generic strategic such as brand sponsorship at music and sport events.

According to Table 4.7, a number of studies have examined how YouTube may be used in a number of fields. Studies of YouTube have looked at the motives for using YouTube (Hagerty, 2008; Hardakis & Harison, 2009); the use of YouTube in politics (Hanson *et al.*, 2010; Tower, 2011); the use of YouTube as an advertising medium (Muncy, Lyer & Eastman, 2014); and the use of YouTube as an educational paradigm (Cherif *et al.*, 2014; Tan, 2013). The results of the studies have revealed that the motives vary from across the domains where YouTube is employed

#### 4.5.3 The uses of YouTube for marketing practitioners and brand managers

Since its launch, YouTube has transformed into a dominant medium for social interaction and for marketing. Marketing practitioners are using YouTube to enhance their marketing efforts because of its free worldwide access. In fact, YouTube provides a forum for users to link, inform, persuade, and inspire consumers to purchase their brands (Reino & Hay, 2011:2). This section briefly outlines how marketing practitioners and brand managers have employed YouTube in their marketing endeavours.

- ❖ **Self-branding:** According to Chen (2013:333), YouTube has been used for self-branding or self-marketing by companies, politicians, celebrities, and entertainers. YouTube offers a forum for users to share videos and present themselves; by doing so they build their personal brands. With the exponential growth of YouTube, user-to-user driven information is a significant way to create personal awareness, to enhance differentiation, and to establish a personal brand identity. Thus providing information to other consumers is an effective way to market a personal brand.
- ❖ **Tourism marketing:** According to Sook (2014:5), the increased use of YouTube as a forum to market tourist destinations is evident in the extant literature. Reino and Hay (2011:3) confirm that user-generated content that is shared through YouTube plays an effective role in building the image of tourist destinations, and in taking a proactive and reactive role to minimise negative perceptions. As opposed to traditional marketing methods, YouTube allows for both bidirectional and tri-directional communication, meaning that consumers are afforded the opportunity to speak both to the business and to other consumers. YouTube offers users a forum to share experiences, watch videos of the destinations they intend to visit, and read comments about the destinations. This means that tourists can get “an immediate and a very real sense of where they want to go by viewing videos that other tourists have uploaded” (Reino & Hay, 2011:3).
- ❖ **YouTube as a forum of communication:** Sook (2014:5) indicates that YouTube acts as a medium that facilitates the distribution of information among users across the globe. Advertisers from both large and small companies, and content creators, use this platform for communication. Reputable brands are even investing their time and resources in order to build, expand, and improve the profiles they upload on YouTube. YouTube has managed to create a hyperactive audience that is also

involved in the creation, dissemination, and consumption of content. The days when consumers were passive recipients of content are over because of the interactive nature of this platform.

- ❖ **Brand-building:** Edosomwan *et al.* (2011: 7, 8) argue that a company strengthens its brand when it engages with social media such as YouTube. Companies that engage with YouTube become more appealing to their customers, employees, and stakeholders. This, in turn, helps to build a reputable brand. YouTube is 'best-fitting' for building brand awareness and reinforcing brands in the mental maps of consumers (Miller, 2011:12). If companies upload appropriate videos, they are likely to enhance their reputation, and customers may become advocates of the company and its brands. Therefore, companies should be proactive in being part of existing platforms such as YouTube.

#### **4.5.4 Rationale for using YouTube in this study**

The popularity and broad reach of YouTube (Konijn, Veldhuis, and Plaisier, 2013:1) are contributing factors that have stimulated the selection of this platform as one of the SNS to include in this study. According to Statista (2018), YouTube has than 1.9 billion subscribers the world over, and subscriptions are still growing. It is the largest free online video sharing platform: it has overtaken Yahoo, and is now second only to Google. YouTube has over 7.2 million active users in South Africa alone. This rapid growth and popularity, and the influence of the platform on social interaction (Khan & Vong, 2014:631), supports its role in this research.

The second reason for selecting YouTube for this study is that it has attracted the attention of companies and individuals to such an extent that it is being used as an efficient advertising tool. YouTube has become indispensable for businesses that intend to reach a great number of viewers. Business people can also disseminate any kind of information on YouTube, thus reaching a large audience.

The third reason arises from the fact that YouTube's growth increased exponentially. It is now the second platform after Facebook, with over 8.74 million users (Goldstuck, 2018). It occupies this position after outpacing Twitter, which has 7.7 million users. YouTube has attracted the interest of both companies and consumers who use the

platform for a number of purposes. In the business world, the platform is a forum for building brands and creating brand awareness, among other things.

The fourth reason is the fact that scholarship on YouTube has focused on the experience of users and on the uses of YouTube in areas such as politics, teaching, and the medical field (Buzzetto-More, 2015:57). However, there is limited evidence of studies being done to examine the brand personality of YouTube, or how brand personality affects the attitude, motivation, and behaviour of users.

## **4.6 LINKEDIN**

LinkedIn is the largest and fastest-growing professional platform that permits members to “create, manage, and share professional identity online and build and engage with their professional network” (Bonson & Bednarova, 2013:970). This section discusses the history of LinkedIn, its evolution, previous research on it, and its uses in marketing.

### **4.6.1 History of LinkedIn**

According to Bela (2015:17) and Zide, Elman and Shahani-Denning (2014:584), LinkedIn was launched in 2003 as a social network site that was meant exclusively for constructing professional relationships. Zide *et al.* (2014:584) and Ezumah (2013:28) describe LinkedIn as a social network site that focuses on business and professional relationships. Its mission statement is summarised as being to “connect the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful”. At its creation, LinkedIn’s vision was to facilitate professional networking; and it still has this same vision, although it has accommodated new uses (LinkedIn, 2018).

Carmark and Heiss (2018:1) note that LinkedIn has become the largest professional social network in the world. LinkedIn is similar to Facebook, in that it allows users to create a web-based profile, to construct a network of connections, and to communicate with their contacts (Bela, 2015:17). To meet the needs of professionals, LinkedIn allows them to search for employment opportunities and insert resumé data in their

profiles; it also permits researchers to carry out research on organisations and receive recommendations from users (Stone & Gaffney, 2016:207).

According to Hands (2013:232), professionals in a range of industries converge on LinkedIn to link with business partners. Because of this, employers have used LinkedIn to identify potential job incumbents, and users seeking jobs have used the platform to look for suitable positions. Thus it has increasingly become a meeting place for recruiters and professional job-seekers, as shown by the rate at which new members join the platform. It is estimated that two new members join the platform every second at a global level (Zide *et al.*, 2014:584).

In addition to this, Hands (2013:233) notes that LinkedIn has a “jobs” section where many job postings are uploaded. LinkedIn has a system that connects users to the jobs they are interested in, based on their profiles and previous work experience. Job seekers search for job opportunities using the job title, a keyword, or the name of an organisation. The platform offers valuable information related to each job posting, and reveals the number of users who have connections with the organisation. Rapanta and Cantoni (2017:443) note that LinkedIn is the only social media platform that allows its members to endorse other members with regard to skills.

According to Hands (2013:233), LinkedIn has a news section called LinkedIn Today. Users of LinkedIn usually tailor LinkedIn to fit their areas of interest; these cover more than 40 industries from which to select and view news from over 400 sources. LinkedIn Today allows users to see news and current trends that are shared by connected members. “News items may be shared as status updates and in groups, saved, liked or shared with non-LinkedIn connections via e-mail” (Hands, 2013:233).

LinkedIn (2018) notes that LinkedIn has a job section that contains company pages and profiles that are created by individual companies. Subscribed users can access useful information on a company’s page, such as “recent blogs posts” and “hiring information”, information on recent employee turnover, and the skills and experience of employees. The page also shows information about where employees have worked previously. A subscribed member can follow a company in order to receive updates directly on the LinkedIn homepage.

According to LinkedIn (2018), new features have been added to the platform. These features include: trending topics – these help users to follow the current trends in news; calendar chat bot – it sets times when two connections meet directly on LinkedIn messenger platform; smart replies – it gives room for LinkedIn to suggest responses on the bases of the ongoing conversation; mine analytics – give room for users to see how other users interact with information shared, users can see those who like the content and their location; and native videos – users can now upload videos to LinkedIn through a mobile app. More features include that organisations and users of LinkedIn can now follow their brands; new search features – the search feature has been improved to allow users to use keywords to search information on LinkedIn; chat like messaging – this permits users to send a direct chat using in-mail instead of e-mail; and LinkedIn recruiter – permits companies to connect and manage candidates. It also helps to find quality job candidates.

#### 4.6.2 Evolution of LinkedIn

The table below summarises how LinkedIn has evolved since it was launched in 2003.

**Table 4.8 The evolution of LinkedIn since 2003**

<b>Year and theme</b>	<b>Key activities carried out each year as LinkedIn evolves</b>
2003 LinkedIn is launched	Hoffman, together with his friends from Social Net and PayPal, work for six months to create LinkedIn. Growth is slow, with only 20 new users per day. Its potential for growth attracts investment from Sequela Capital.
2004 Experimentation	LinkedIn introduces the address book, and adds a number of features, resulting in its membership swelling to over a million. They enter into partnership with American Express to promote its offerings to small businesses.
2005 Revenue	LinkedIn starts to introduce its core business activity; it assists subscribed members to search for jobs, and the subscriptions become a source of revenue.
2006 Foundations	LinkedIn launches a public profile where members upload their online resumés. New features that allow users to recommend and link to people they know are added.
2007 Growing up	Hoffman leaves CEO post, and Dan Nije takes over to lead the organisation. LinkedIn opens a customer service centre
2008 Going global	LinkedIn opens its first international office in London. It launches the French and Spanish language sites.
2009 New leadership	Jeff Neims comes on board as president before becoming CEO. Neims brings focus and clarity to LinkedIn’s mission, core values, and strategic priorities.
2010 Acceleration	LinkedIn experiences exponential growth, reaching a subscription base of 90 million users and about a thousand employees.



Year and theme	Key activities carried out each year as LinkedIn evolves
2011 Next play	LinkedIn becomes a public company and starts trading on the New York Stock Exchange.
2012 Transformation	LinkedIn comes up with a new business strategy that allows the company to emphasise innovation and continual improvement. It now focuses on three concepts: simplicity, growth, and everyday.
2013 LinkedIn turns 10	LinkedIn unveils a new mobile application, and reaches 225 million users; the growth rate is two members per second.
2014 Economic graph	The economic graph's goal is to "create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce" of over three billion people and 780 million "professionals, knowledge workers and students" by capturing broad economic information including workers, companies, universities, jobs, skills (Levi, 2015:1).
2015 Acquisitions	LinkedIn acquires Lynda.com, an e-learning platform; Careerify, a web application that businesses can employ to hire people; and Refresh.io, a web application providing insights into people in one's network.
2016 Acquisitions	Microsoft acquires LinkedIn for \$26.2 billion, and LinkedIn acquires PointDrive, a web application allowing salespeople to share virtual content. Launches LinkedIn learning. LinkedIn banned in Russia.
2017 New product	LinkedIn produces a new desktop website design.
2018 Carousel Ads	LinkedIn introduces carousel ads that permit companies to communicate brand news to professionals, raising brand awareness and consideration.

Sources: Zeevi (2013), Jensen & Smolczynski (2013), LinkedIn (2018), Lunden (2017)

Table 4.8 summarises how LinkedIn has evolved since its launch in 2003. At its genesis, LinkedIn experienced slow growth; but its growth was catapulted later by new features such as the addition of an address book in 2004; and the subscription base started to grow rapidly. Later it added a public profile that also promoted rapid growth and expansion into international markets. LinkedIn has now managed to appeal to a clientéle base of most professionals in the world, and is now seeking to create opportunities for the global workforce.

#### 4.6.3 Previous research on LinkedIn

The table that follows summarises some of the research studies conducted on LinkedIn. Only those studies that relate to the current study are included in the table.

**Table 4.9 Previous studies of LinkedIn**

Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
Hagerty (2008)	Examining the uses and gratifications	Survey	Mediated interaction, control choice, social interaction, pass time
Hansen <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Exploring the influence of social media user background	Survey	Influence of family and friends, interpersonal communication, sharing information, social motivation, elaboration
McCorkle & McCorkle (2012)	Examining the use of LinkedIn in the marketing classroom		Self-promotion, social networking, job search, career knowledge development
Osborne & LoFrisco (2012)	Providing an exploratory look at the use of SNS by career centres	Survey	Career centres use SNS to deliver services, connect with students, promote centres, provide career information
Savio & Raroque (2012)	Understanding the role that LinkedIn plays in financial decisions	Survey	An invaluable tool to help investors with their financial decisions Improves brand perceptions, critical for developing high-value business relationships
Bonson & Bednarova (2014)	Analysing how Eurozone companies use LinkedIn, and who their audiences are	Survey	Focus is on current employees and professional purposes, like providing information about employees and career opportunities. Focuses on current employees
Saxena & Khanna (2013)	Examining the value of advertisements being displayed on SNS	Online survey	When advertisements provide entertainment and informational content, they increase the worth of the advertisement
Zide, Elman & Shehani-Denning (2014)	Examining how expert recruiters use LinkedIn	Exploratory study Interviews	LinkedIn is used for professional networking and hiring
Nikolaou (2014)	Exploring the use of SNS by job seekers and human resources professionals during recruitment	Online survey	SNS offer job-seekers a search tool beyond traditional methods, offer HR professionals a means of attracting, recruiting, and background checking on candidates.
Bela (2015)	Exploring what motivates college students to use LinkedIn	Qualitative approach	Interpersonal communication, online

Source(s)	Study theme	Methodology	Results
		Online survey and face-to-face interview	identity, information, and career development
Utz (2016)	Examine whether using publicly available social media is related to professional benefits	Online survey	The results revealed that the use of LinkedIn significantly increased professional informational benefits.
Baruffaldi, Maio, & Landoni (2017)	Examine the factors that induce PhD holders to register on LinkedIn	Content analysis	The results showed that PhD holders moving to the industry and those that have co-authors abroad have LinkedIn accounts.
Carmack & Heiss (2018)	Examine how attitude affects students' intention to use LinkedIn	Online survey	Results revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between attitude and intention to use LinkedIn.

Table 4.9 reveals some of the studies that have been done on LinkedIn. They include those about the use of LinkedIn for job searches and recruitment (Caers & Castelyns, 2011; Nikoloau, 2014; Zide *et al.*, 2014) motivations for using LinkedIn (Bela, 2015); the uses and gratifications of LinkedIn (Hagerty, 2008); the use of LinkedIn in marketing (McCorkle & McCorkle, 2012); and the use of LinkedIn by career centres (Osborn & Lofrisco, 2012).

#### 4.6.4 The uses of LinkedIn for marketing practitioners and brand managers

According to Fawley (2013:1), LinkedIn is a professional network that offers opportunities for members to interact with other professionals in their respective disciplines, discover potential employers, and actively participate in professional forums. It also allows an individual to assess a job incumbent's professional record. The functions of LinkedIn are discussed next.

- ❖ **Relationship-building:** Cooper and Naatus (2014:303) state that LinkedIn, as a social medium, has a significant role in building and promoting relationships among its users. It allows every user to construct a network that is based on professional associations. LinkedIn suggests those who have similar professional and educational backgrounds as possible connections.
- ❖ **Branding:** LinkedIn has the capacity to brand both the individual user and the company. Job seekers use the platform to work on their personal brands so that

they appeal to prospective employers. It permits job seekers to highlight key background information, such as their educational qualifications, contact information, and previous job experience. They also search for information about companies they wish to apply to and work for. Businesses also use this platform to build their brands. They do so by uploading important information about their products and services, and through advertisements they place on LinkedIn (Cooper & Naatus, 2014:304). In the same way, individuals too can build their personal brands.

- ❖ **Brand awareness:** Cooper and Naatus (2014:302) reveal that SNS such as LinkedIn have become vital tools for developing brand awareness, because they serve as settings where members discuss their lives, their interests, and their purchases. In cases where a customer likes an organisation's product, he/she may communicate with many people about the product or service, thus increasing brand awareness. Furthermore, if employees of the organisation are active on LinkedIn, it may help to build and strengthen the image of the organisation.
- ❖ **Business communications:** According to Gerard (2012:868), LinkedIn provides a communication and information-sharing platform for members who share common interests. LinkedIn concerns itself with the provision of a social network platform that benefits members in a professional sense. Van Dijck (2013:207) notes that LinkedIn profiles resemble CVs, and each profile stands for an idealised representation of an individual's professional identity.
- ❖ **Boosting sales of the brands of a company:** Mihalcea and Savulescu (2014:40) indicate that the use of LinkedIn has had a strong impact on the sales of many organisations. Salespeople have access to potential buyers and customers who are subscribed to LinkedIn. The information displayed in the profiles of users may permit salespeople to pitch their advertisements and promotions to the needs of their clients. In fact, salespeople can use information on LinkedIn to search for consumers who might use their companies' products.
- ❖ **Market research:** Brown (2011:165) and David (2011:39) point out that LinkedIn is a database of business professionals that market researchers can quickly access. The platform permits them to reach a large pool of business professionals such as managers, directors, and executives of companies. These professionals can support research as key participants, and the expectation is that they may give relevant responses to business-related problems. For example, in a study to

examine the careers of engineering graduates from the University of Cape Town, Heydenrych and Case (2017) used LinkedIn data to track the graduates.

- ❖ **Product development:** LinkedIn is a very important tool for generating ideas about product/service development. Mihalcea and Savulescu (2013:44) indicate that LinkedIn offers important insights into the behaviour of consumers, and facilitates consumer engagement through what is referred to as a ‘crowdsourcing’ procedure – a term that refers to “creating actual partnerships with consumers who collaborate in developing or improving ideas for business” (Mihalcea & Savulescu, 2013:44). Companies have started to take advantage of the power of crowdsourcing and consumer-generated content to improve their existing products in line with consumer needs, or to develop new products.

#### **4.6.5 Rationale for using LinkedIn in this study**

LinkedIn was chosen for this study because it is the most popular social network site that is employed for professional purposes (Bela, 2015:21). Since its launch, it has risen to become the world’s number one professional network. According to Goldstuck (2018), LinkedIn has grown from 5.5 million to 6.1 million active users in South Africa. It has spread quickly to various areas such as finance, manufacturing, high-tech, and corporate business. This kind of growth provides good reasons for selecting platform for this study.

Besides being the most popular social network site for professionals to self-promote themselves at global scale, LinkedIn has created an avenue where business ideas, knowledge and opportunities are exchanged (Matei, Rughinis & Rosner, 2017:465). Dash and Sharma (2012:28) indicate that LinkedIn is more effective for leads generation and is used to create business relationships with new prospects as it complements direct marketing. Because of its global reach, its application to business and size LinkedIn is worth examining. For example, LinkedIn is used by companies to advertise (Ma & Leung, 2018:2).

Despite its popularity at both global level, including South Africa, with regards to scholarship few studies that examine LinkedIn have been done (Blank & Lutz, 2017:749), but even those that have looked at the platform, none have looked at its

perceived brand personality and its resultant effect on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour. Therefore, in terms of research LinkedIn deserves attention.

#### **4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter commenced with an overview of social media and social network sites followed by the discussion of the history and evolution of Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. It has also looked at how marketing practitioners have applied the three platforms to their marketing activities. The chapter has also given reasons for selecting the three platforms for this study.

Chapter 5 will detail the research methodology.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter looked at social media and social network sites. This chapter focuses on the research methodology, design, and procedures employed to execute this study. The chapter unfolds in the following way: first, it describes the research paradigm that guides how the research design was selected to make sure that the results of the study would be acceptable in the domain area. Second, the chapter outlines the research problem and the objectives of the study to be achieved by the end of the study. Third, the chapter looks at the research design and approach that this study has employed. Fourth, the chapter describes the sources of data and the sampling criteria. Fifth, the chapter describes research instrument design, the data collection procedures and analyses, and the last section presents the conceptual framework.

#### 5.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In order to conduct sound research, it is essential that the researcher consider some philosophical underpinnings that help to clarify and choose the appropriate research design (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014:16). A research philosophy guides the way in which data about a phenomenon being studied are collected, analysed, and used. It is important to comprehend these aspects, so that relevant approaches that are congruent with the nature and purpose of the study are adopted, and to ensure that researcher biases are minimised. If the research paradigm is not properly chosen, the researcher may end up using incompatible methods, and the results may be undermined.

McGregor and Murname (2010:419) define a paradigm as a “set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline like consumer



studies”. It is essential to choose a research paradigm that applies to a study because it affects how a researcher undertakes a study. Research paradigms influence the view of what is acceptable knowledge and the understanding of social phenomena. Wahyuni (2012:69) indicates that ontology, epistemology, and axiology are the three main research philosophies that affect the research strategy.

### **5.2.1 Ontology**

Levers (2013:2) indicates that ontology focuses on the study of being and the nature of reality and perceptions about the world. From an ontological perspective, one has to think of the world as a reality that exists independently of human perceptions, or as a reality that is based on social or individual human conception. There are two contrasting ontological perspectives: critical realism and relativism. Critical realism entails the idea that reality exists independently of the individual’s mind (Levers, 2013:2). Thus an individual’s perception and thoughts have no influence on the existence of reality (Bahari, 2010:25). Conversely, relativism subscribes to the idea that reality is a subjective experience (Levers, 2013:2) and that reality is created from the perceptions and interactions of social actors (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:108). This means that reality is a projection of the human imagination (Bahari, 2010:23).

According to Jackson (2013:52), the researcher’s ontological position shapes the methodological decision-making, and this is dependent on whether the researcher views the world as an independent reality or as a constructed reality that is based on human conception. In fact, the perspective that the researcher takes determines whether a quantitative or qualitative approach best fits the study. In this study, the researcher assumes that knowledge is objective and exists in reality out there in the world, regardless of the human observer. Therefore, this position affects the choice of methods, the research design, and the procedures that was employed in this study. The objective ontology that the researcher used informs the choice of research methods through epistemology.

### **5.2.2 Epistemology**

Johnson and Duberley (2011:3) and Krauss (2005:758) indicate that epistemology originates from two Greek words: 'episteme', which denotes scientific knowledge, and 'logos', which signifies information, theory, or account. Epistemology is thus conceptualised as the philosophy of knowledge and the study of how one acquires knowledge (Hardy, 2016:11). According to Bhawuk (2010:159), epistemology is about the "nature, origin, scope and variety of knowledge, how it is acquired, what its relationship to truth is, its relationship to belief and its relationship with justification".

Eriksson and Kovatainen (2008:14) indicate that there are two contrasting epistemological perspectives: objectivism and subjectivism. Levers (2013:3) defines objectivism as the belief that "truth and meaning reside within an object and is independent of human subjectivity". The proponents of this view examine and observe phenomena as they exist, independent of the human mind, and the researcher does not influence the observed in any way, and vice versa.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:21) point out that subjectivism is the "belief that knowledge is filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity". Subjectivism does not reject the existence of an external reality, but believes it is impossible to obtain knowledge that is unaffected by individual reflections and interpretations. Levers (2013:3) notes that the main aim of subjective research is to comprehend and be sensitive to the social context, including ethical and moral issues.

In this study, objectivism is the epistemological position that is taken as it informs choices made about the methodology. The chosen epistemological position assisted the research to select the appropriate research strategy and data collection methods as detailed later in this chapter.

### **5.2.3 Axiology**

According to Wahyuni (2012:69), axiology is concerned with the role of values and ethics in research and thus the researcher's position with regard to the subject under investigation. In fact, values and ethics influence the way research is undertaken. In the context of this study, the researcher's values guide the decision-making in all the stages of the research process. Thus, the researcher demonstrates the axiological

stance by articulating values to make choices about the topic, the methods and even the objects.

Mertens (2010:10) notes that research ethics are affected by three principles: respect, beneficence, and justice. Respect refers to the act of treating people from diverse backgrounds and cultures with courtesy, and making sure that vulnerable groups receive extra protection. Beneficence ensures that respondents are not harmed by participating in a study. Justice ensures that respondents benefit from the study and that procedures are properly prepared and followed. Ruona and Lynham (2004:153) have indicated that axiology determines how a researcher should act in a given study, and that the actions have to be congruent with the ontological and epistemological aims.

Thus axiology in this study puts in place the standards, proper methodology, and methods that are employed. The axiological perspective informs the researcher on how to select the research area, how to trace research objectives, how to formulate hypotheses, how to conduct the literature review and assists in the choice of data collection and analyses methods.

### **5.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES**

Since the development of Aaker's model in 1997, studies of brand personality have gained momentum and proliferated across domains (Lee & Cho, 2017:236). Toldos-Romero and Orozco-Gomez (2015:463) note that the model has a profound influence on most academic studies of brand personality. Furthermore, great interest in brand personality has increased among marketing practitioners (Kang, Bennett & Peachey, 2016:442). According to Ahmed and Jan (2015:389), previous studies on brand personality have taken three major directions: the first has focused on studies related to brand personalities across countries and cultures; the second has focused on the antecedents of brand personality; and the third has related to the consequences of brand personality.

There is evidence that there has recently been an increasing number of brand personality studies across various industries, products, and services (Naresh, 2012:32); places (Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri and Kurtulus, 2008:1296); nations (Rojas-Mendez, Murphy and Papadoupoulos, 2013a:1029); tourism destinations (Ekinici & Hosany, 2006:128); sporting events (Lee & Cho, 2012:46); toys and video games (Lin, 2010:4); and cultures (Ahmed & Jan, 2015:389). Sung and Kim (2010:640) also posit that, given the significance of brand personality to the marketing domain, research has proliferated with the intention of testing the applicability of brand personality in product and service markets. Most research has concentrated on the predictive effect of brand personality.

Several studies reproduced only some of Aaker's brand personality dimensions. Sigauw and Mattilla (1999:50) conducted a study in which they applied Aaker's brand personality scale to identify points of difference in the restaurant sector. The results of the study revealed that participants perceived the restaurants to be exciting, competent, and sophisticated; thus only three dimensions (competence, excitement and sophistication) of the original scale were replicated. In a study by Yasin, Jamontaite, Ahmedova and Akin (2017:27) that examined the relationship between the brand personality of a five-star hotel and customer loyalty, only three of Aaker's brand personality dimensions (excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) were produced.

Despite the growth of brand personality studies, there is limited evidence in the current literature to show that conclusive research has been carried out in the domain of social media. Generally studies on brand personality in this realm are scarce and most are focused on brands featured on social media, rather than social media as brands. Previous online brand personality studies have attempted to explore the various types of social network sites (SNS) and, to a limited extent, they have examined users' behaviour (Chen, 2013:1219). Poddar, Donthu and Wei (2009:449) explored the influence of web site personality on behaviour.

In a study of the impact of perceived brand personality of online brands on users' satisfaction, Lin (2009:231) noted that research has shown that online brand personalities have an influence on satisfaction. In another study by Chen and Rodgers

(2006:49;59), where five dimensions – intelligent, fun, organised, candid, and sincere – were used to develop an instrument to measure web personality, results indicated that, because web sites are endowed with human characteristics, users will react to them in a way that is similar to how they react to advertisements and salespeople.

A comprehensive literature review provides no evidence that research on the effect of perceived brand personality of social media on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour has been conducted either in South Africa or elsewhere in the world. In fact, this research issue has remained underexposed; and yet social media are an increasingly prevalent phenomenon, as indicated by the proliferation of web-based users (Nikou & Bouwman, 2014:422). Therefore, this study addresses this lack of research, and also assesses different social media platforms.

### **5.3.1 Research objectives**

Thomas and Hodges (2010:39) define research objectives as specific statements that focus on the key issues that the research intends to investigate. Research objectives build on the main theme stated in the research problem. McGivern (2013:84) notes that research objectives have the main goal of clarifying the kind of information that needs to be obtained in the research, and should be specific and precise. In order to investigate the problem at hand, the following objectives were crafted:

#### **The main objective of this study is:**

To examine the effect of the perceived brand personality of social media on users' attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

#### **The secondary objectives of this study are to:**

- ❖ examine the underlying structure of the brand personality scale in the context of social media brands
- ❖ determine the relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitudes
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' attitude and behaviour

- ❖ determine the relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent
- ❖ determine the relationship between users' motivation and behaviour
- ❖ determine the relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour
- ❖ propose and test a model for the interrelationships between perceived brand personality, attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour on the three social media platforms.

#### **5.4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH**

A research design is defined as the blueprint that is employed to gather, measure, and analyse research data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:125). Malhotra (2010:102) defines research design as the necessary procedures that are employed to obtain research data and solve the marketing problem at hand. What is most important is making sure that the research design will facilitate an effective and efficient way of conducting the marketing research. Cooper and Schindler (2014:125) note that a research design facilitates the definition of information needed to solve the problem at hand, and it helps the researcher to choose the overall design of the study.

In this study, a descriptive research design was used. It aims to describe the relationships between marketing phenomena (Malhotra, 2010:106). In fact, it is a formalised research design in which the researcher is required to craft research questions and hypotheses prior to fieldwork (Schindler & Cooper, 2011:149). This implies that the research is pre-planned and structured in nature. Malhotra (2010:106) also notes that descriptive design is based on large samples, which makes it appropriate to this study, with its large sample of 1140. In light of the current study, this design made it feasible to establish the influence that perceived brand personality constructs have on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. The design allowed the researcher to describe the relationships between the variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:97).

The researcher applied a cross-sectional approach in order to collect data from respondents. According to Malhotra (2010:108), a cross-sectional design entails a scenario in which research respondents complete the questionnaire once. It could be refined further to a single cross-sectional approach, where one sample is drawn from the target population and data are collected once per platform. This implies that the predominant relationships existing between the constructs at that particular point will be established. The cross-sectional design was used because it is relatively inexpensive, quick and easy to conduct, as was necessary for practical reasons.

Because of the nature of the problem at hand, this research employed quantitative research techniques. Cooper and Schindler (2014:146) indicate that quantitative research is good at measuring consumer behaviour and attitudes. These types of constructs are latent in nature, and thus the approach is seen as best-fitting to measure them. Malhotra (2010:171) defines quantitative research methods as a precise measurement of a phenomenon by collecting numerical data that are analysed using statistically-based methods. This approach afforded the researcher the opportunity to establish the relationships between the independent and dependent variables being studied. Asif (2013:27) suggests that quantitative research is appropriate for this kind of study because the researcher can test and validate existing theories. In the context of this study, this research would want to test the applicability of Aaker's brand personality model to social media.

Furthermore, the quantitative approach facilitated the opportunity to measure the effects of the perceived brand personality of social media on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. A quantitative approach obliges the researcher to construct hypotheses before data collection; these hypotheses are then tested (Asif, 2013:27). The approach usually produces results that are relatively independent of the researcher. Heding and Knudtzen (2009:134) indicate that the quantitative approach to studying brand personality has been used extensively, and has been validated in many studies. They also explain that this approach reduces ambiguity, as it can transform perceptions into structured and quantifiable categories.

Based on the research design outlined above, this research adopted a positivist approach. According to Tronvoll, Brown, Gremler and Edvardsson (2011:568),



research is regarded as positivist if it employs “formal propositions, quantifiable measures of variables, hypotheses testing and inferences about phenomena drawn from a representative sample of the stated population”. McGregor and Murname (2010:423) explain that people can be positive that the knowledge is true if it is created using scientific methods. The positivist approach requires that researchers take an empirical approach to carrying out research. In fact, the scientific approach to conducting research requires that a researcher propose hypotheses to explain phenomena and to test them. Tronvoll *et al.* (2011:568) indicate that a positivist approach employs existing theories in order to develop the hypotheses that will be tested. The hypotheses can be either refuted or accepted, leading to a development of theory that can later be tested in further research.

One of the significant components of positivism is that the researcher undertakes the study in a value-free way. This denotes that the researcher makes sure that he/she does not affect the subject of the study, and vice versa. The positivist approach uses a highly structured methodology with a major emphasis on quantifiable observations that can be analysed using statistical analysis (Trovoll *et al.*, 2011:258; William, 2007:66). The positivist approach is ideal for this study, because it follows most of the outlined characteristics of positivism. For example, this study has hypotheses that were developed using existing theories such as theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and uses and gratification theory (UGT), which were tested. Furthermore, data collected in this study are quantifiable, and were analysed using statistical analysis.

#### **5.4.1 Sources of data**

In order to carry out this study, both secondary and primary data were used. The two sources of data were used to clarify the research problem and the development of the research approach.

##### **5.4.1.1 Secondary data**

Malhotra and Birks (2007:94) conceptualise secondary data as data that have been collected for purposes not directly related to the current research. The examination of secondary data precedes the collection of primary data. The sources of secondary

included books, journal articles, social media websites and research studies. In this study, secondary data assisted the researcher to collect information in order to:

- ❖ identify the problem at hand
- ❖ decide on the best approach to solve the research
- ❖ decide on the research design
- ❖ develop an appropriate sampling plan
- ❖ identify research constructs, theories, and literature that explain the research hypotheses
- ❖ specify relationships that exist between the independent and dependent variables
- ❖ build the research's conceptual framework

Secondary data were an essential component of this study, as it guided the formulation of a topic, the definition of the problem, and the collection of data up to the presentation of the research findings. Grounding the research in theory required the researcher to access secondary sources of data. During the interpretation of the research results, the researcher also used secondary data, for example in order to be guided on the acceptable fit indices.

#### **5.4.1.2 Primary data**

Malhotra and Birks (2007:94) define primary data as data collected by the researcher from study participants in order to address a specific question or hypothesis, using procedures that best-fit the research problem. Primary data can be collected through varying methods, such as interviews, surveys, and observations. This research employed an online survey to solicit data from respondents. All research objectives were met using the primary data collected from the respondents.

### **5.5 SAMPLE DESIGN**

A sample design is the framework that provides the basis and methodology for the selection of a survey sample (Lavrakas, 2008:12). The sample design process consists of the following steps: define the target population, determine the sample

frame, select the sampling techniques, determine the sample size, execute the sampling process, and validate the sample size (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:406-410). Only those steps relevant to this study are discussed next.

### **5.5.1 The target population**

A population is defined as the total number of all the elements that are identified by a common set of features, and that encompass the universe for the purpose of the research problem under study (Malhotra & Birks 2007:405). It is the total number of elements that possess relevant information from which the researcher intends to make inferences (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:338). The target population of this research entailed users of Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn who reside in South Africa, who are aged at least 18 years, who have used the particular platforms for at least three months. Only those respondents who met the above criteria were permitted to complete the online survey.

### **5.5.2 Sampling frame**

Malhotra (2010:341) defines a sampling frame as a list of all the elements of a study population. As there is no specific list of all population members available, a sampling frame for this research could not be used.

### **5.5.3 Sampling technique**

In empirical research, information about population parameters can be collected using a census or a sample. A census entails a total count of all the elements that constitute a population (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:338). It was not feasible to obtain data for this study using a census because of the magnitude of the tasks that are involved in doing so, the time factor, and the cost implications. The advisable option was the use of a sample.

### **5.5.3.1 Non-probability sampling**

A non-probability sampling method was applied to select the sample elements. By definition, non-probability sampling denotes that the researcher employs his/her personal judgement to choose participants, as opposed to using the probability approach (Malhotra, 2010:376). Non-probability sampling takes a subjective approach to selecting population elements. It relies on the personal judgement of the investigator, instead of the use of chance to choose elements that are included in the sample. In this study, non-probability was best-fitting because of the lack of a sampling frame.

### **5.5.3.2 Quota sampling**

Sekeran and Bougie (2013:253) define quota sampling as a type of purposive sampling that ensures that the groups in which the researcher is interested have adequate representation in a study through the assignment of a quota. It is a kind of proportionate stratified sampling, where a predetermined number of people are sampled from different types of groups. It is a way of making sure that all sub-groups in the target population have adequate representation in the sample.

Malhotra (2010:380) points out that quota sampling is a two-staged sampling strategy. The first stage involves determining the control characteristics and/or quotas of the population elements. For example, a researcher may use population characteristics such as age, gender, and occupation. In this study, the researcher aimed for an equal gender distribution of 50% for both male and female respondents. This kind of quota ensures that the composition of the sample is representative of the characteristics of the population of interest.

The second stage entails the selection of sample elements based on convenience. Once the quotas had been assigned, there was considerable freedom in selecting the elements to be included in the sample. The only requirement was that the selected elements fit the control characteristics without specifying particular individuals (McGivern, 2013:258). In this study, pre-recruited consumer panels were employed

(sourced from Qualtrics Panels), therefore groups of individuals who had agreed to participate in online surveys as panel members were used as respondents.

#### **5.5.4 Sample size determination**

McGivern (2013:238) defines sample size as the total number of elements that are included in a study. The determination of sample size is dependent on a number of issues. Cooper and Schindler (2014:348) suggest that the ultimate sample size is a result of the necessity to have a large sample that is representative of the population from which it is drawn. A sample should be proportionate to the size of population it represents. For this to happen, researchers must be careful when they draw samples from the target population.

Wolf, Harrington, Clark and Miller (2013:2) indicate that researchers should aim for a sample size that achieves a desired level of statistical power with a given model, so that true relationships in the data are established. Schumacker and Lomax (2010:41) note that researchers need large sample sizes to obtain stable parameter estimates and standard errors. In the context of this study, the sample size was determined by the need to have a large sample size for SEM (Hair *et al.*, 2014:100). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007:613) specify that the sample size should be at least 300 participants to permit factor analysis.

In choosing the size of a sample, one also has to consider the time that is available to complete the study, the budget, the nature of the study, the number of variables, and the size of the samples used in similar studies (Malhotra and Birks, 2007:409). McGivern (2013:238) notes that the researcher must consider how the data will be analysed. For the purpose of this study, the data was analysed using factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM), which are best-fitting for large samples. This implies that the sample size of this study had to be large. Thus, to meet this criteria, each platform had a sample of 380 participants, which then amount to 1140 participants for the three platforms.

### **5.5.5 Sample elements**

An element is an individual participant in a target population who possesses the data sought by the researcher and from which conclusions are drawn. It is also considered a unit of study (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:406; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:241). In this study, an element comprised a registered user of social media (Facebook, YouTube, or LinkedIn), aged 18 years or above, a South African resident, and one who has used the particular platform for at least three months. Please note that each sample contained sample elements for that particular platform, thus respondents were unique to each platform.

### **5.5.6 Errors in survey research**

Despite the efforts that researchers make to avoid errors, it is impossible to carry out a study that is error-free and, even under the best conditions, the potential for survey error is always present (Biemer 2010:821). In fact, the main thrust of the researcher should be to control errors to the extent that they do not affect the quality, validity, or reliability of the results. All errors that arise in a survey are known as total survey errors (TSE). Biemer (2010:817) defines TSE as the accrual of all errors that arise from the design, the collection of the data, the processing, and the analysis of the data. Survey error refers to the deviation of the survey response from its true value. The danger of survey error is that it reduces the accuracy of inferences drawn from the survey data.

The sources of potential errors arise from the design and realisation of a survey. Malhotra and Birks (2007:83) outline a number of sources of errors that are common in any marketing research, including sampling and non-sampling errors.

#### **5.5.6.1 Sampling errors**

Sampling errors arise in a data collection process because of variable estimates that are based on a sample, instead of on a full enumeration of the target population. Makvandi *et al.* (2013:55) define sampling error as an “error that arises from estimating a population characteristic by measuring only a portion of rather than the entire population”. It is the difference between the estimated sample and the true population.

In order to reduce sampling error and increase the accuracy and precision of estimates, it is recommended that the sample size should be large. To minimise and control the effect of sampling errors, this study had a large sample size of 1140 respondents. Sampling errors can only vanish when a census takes place, but it was not practically feasible for this study to attempt a complete enumeration of the target population involved.

#### **5.5.6.2 Non-sampling errors**

A non-sampling error is conceptualised as an error that emanates from non-random sampling, or from other sources of error other than those of sampling. In practice, they emanate from both the researcher and the respondent. Examples of these include the failure to come up with a clear and precise definition of the problem, administering a poorly designed questionnaire, defective data presentation and analysis, ‘inability’ errors on the part of the respondents, and refusal to participate in a study (Walman, Kugler & Mitchell, 2012:74).

Malhotra and Birks (2007:83) suggest two types of non-sampling errors: non-response and response errors. A non-response error is the product of the participant’s refusal to respond because of non-availability during the survey. The implication of this error is that it will affect the size and composition of the sample. A response error occurs because of respondents who may give inaccurate answers, or it may arise from the incorrect recording of responses. In the context of this study, extreme values were given for the use of social media platforms, and the values were replaced with median values (please refer to Chapter 6 for a full discussion).

### **5.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT DESIGN**

Malhotra (2010:335) defines a questionnaire as a structured procedure for data-gathering that comprises a series of questions, in written or verbal form, that participants are required to answer. According to Krosnick and Presser (2010:263), “the heart of a survey is its questionnaire”. The results of any survey depend on the questionnaire that scripts the conversation between the researcher and the respondents. A questionnaire should motivate and encourage the respondents to be



committed until the completion of the task. To reduce errors, the questionnaire must be developed according to prescribed best practices.

In line with the need to make sure that a questionnaire meets the best practices and is best-fitting to solicit the required data, Giesen, Meertens, Vis-Visschers and Beuken (2012:5) suggest that it meet three fundamental objectives. The first objective is that it must facilitate the gathering of data to answer the research problem at hand. The second entails the fact that the collected data should be valid, reliable, accurate, and relevant. Third, the questionnaire should be user-friendly to both the interviewer and respondents. In the context of this study, the researcher tried to make sure that the questionnaire met these specifications by adapting previously tried and tested measures, and attempting to keep the questionnaire as concise as possible to avoid respondent fatigue.

### **5.6.1 Layout of research instrument**

McGivern (2013:268) notes that a questionnaire has an important role to play in helping the respondent to provide precise, complete, and reliable data. A questionnaire must be user-friendly to the researcher, the participants, and the data analyst. According to McGivern (2013:275), a good questionnaire makes a good contribution to:

- ❖ collecting valid and reliable data;
- ❖ minimising response error;
- ❖ maintaining the interest of the participant in completing the survey;
- ❖ making data processing and analysis easier and accurate; and
- ❖ promoting the professionalism and credibility of the research.

The questionnaire for this study had the sections that follow. Appendix A presents the questionnaire (note for the three platforms, the questionnaire was the same except for the name of the platform).

## **Section 1: Screening question**

A screening question is used to determine whether a potential respondent qualifies to participate in a survey, based on set criteria (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:339). With regard to the study's questionnaire, the question, 'Please indicate your current age', was employed as a filter question to ensure that those younger than 18 years were not permitted to continue with the survey. Only those participants who were at least 18 years old and have used the platforms for at least three months were deemed to have the relevant knowledge about the platforms.

## **Section 2: Length of use/frequency of use**

Respondents who qualified to participate in the study were asked questions about their length of use (Q1: How long have you been using Facebook? Q2: Please describe your average usage pattern on Facebook (options: daily, weekly or monthly) and Q4: When you access Facebook, approximately how much time do you spend on average per session?) and about their frequency of use: (Q3:1-3.3: Approximately how many times do you access Facebook per day/week/monthly?) The questions were asked to gauge the experience of respondents in using the platforms and to assess their rate of use.

## **Section 3: The measurement of constructs**

This section contained questions relating to each construct that was measured in this study. The constructs that were measured are brand personality (Q5), motivation and behavioural intent (Q6), and attitude (Q7). However, it must be noted that, due to the non-availability of existing scales to measure behaviour, the researcher decided instead to use frequency of use (Q3 and Q4). Refer to Section 6.6.5 of the thesis, where the calculation of the behaviour variable is explained.

## **Section 4: Demographics**

The last section of the measurement instrument comprises questions about gender (Q8) and educational qualifications (Q9).

## 5.6.2 Constructs and measurement scales

All the items used to construct the measurement scales were adapted from empirically validated scales drawn from the literature. The rationale to adapt previously used scales was to ensure that the research would use scales that were proven to be reliable and valid. Furthermore, the research had a key objective of testing the applicability of Aaker's brand personality to social media brands, and testing its predictive validity with regard to attitude and motivation. Since the model had been applied in a business-to-consumer context (Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012), place branding (Kaplan *et al.*, 2008:1296), and cultures and product categories (Ahmed & Thyagaraj, 2014), it was the aim of this study to assess its applicability in a novel context - social media brands.

In this study, the following constructs were measured using a Likert-type scale: brand personality, motivation, and behavioural intent. In order to measure these constructs, respondents were required to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the item statement (shown in Tables 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4) on a five-point Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree, 5=strongly agree. Attitude was measured using a five-point semantic differential scale (refer to Table 5.2).

### 5.6.2.1 Brand personality

According to Aaker (1997:357), brand personality is conceptualised as “a set of human characteristics associated with a brand”. In order to measure the perceived brand personality of Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn, 15 brand personality facets identified by Aaker (1997:351) were used. The facet level was used so that participants did not tire of filling out surveys – a condition referred to as panel fatigue. These facets are an expansion of the five brand personality dimensions of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. The respondents were required to imagine social media (Facebook, YouTube, or LinkedIn) as if they were a person with human characteristics. The respondents were further required to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the item statement (shown in Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 Measurement scale for brand personality**

Sub-dimensions	Item statement	Original Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	Developed by
Sincerity	Platform is down-to earth	$\alpha = 0.93$	Aaker (1997)
	Platform is honest		
	Platform is original		
	Platform is cheerful		
Excitement	Platform is daring	$\alpha = 0.95$	
	Platform is spirited		
	Platform is imaginative		
	Platform is up-to-date		
Competence	Platform is reliable	$\alpha = 0.93$	
	Platform is intelligent		
	Platform is successful		
Sophistication	Platform is upper-class	$\alpha = 0.91$	
	Platform is charming		
Ruggedness	Platform is outdoorsy	$\alpha = 0.90$	
	Platform is tough		

### 5.6.2.2 Attitude

Attitude is conceptualised as the evaluative disposition towards an attitude object that is based on an individual's cognitions, affective reactions, and behavioural intent (Petty, Ostrom & Brock, 2014:284). It is a psychological propensity to view an attitude object with a certain degree of favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007:582). Cooper and Schindler (2014:280) define a differential scale as an approach that consists of a set of bipolar rating scales, usually with seven points, where respondents are required to describe their attitude towards something.

In this study, to assess users' attitude towards Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube, a five-item, unidimensional scale adapted from Spears and Singh (2004:60), was used. Respondents' attitude towards Facebook, YouTube, or LinkedIn was assessed using the following pairs of adjectives: unappealing-appealing, bad-good, unpleasant-pleasant, unfavourable-favourable, and unlikable-likable. All respondents were required to give their overall impression of the corresponding platform on a five-point semantic differential scale, as depicted in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 Measurement scale for attitude towards platform**

Item statement	Original Cronbach's alpha	Source
Unappealing/appealing	$\alpha = 0.97$	Spears & Singh (2004:55)
Bad/good		
Unpleasant/pleasant		
Unfavourable/favourable		
Unlikable/likable		

### 5.6.2.3 Motivations

Motivation is conceptualised as the force that is either within or without an individual that compels him/her to pursue a given course of action (Nam, 2014:263). In order to assess motivations, 15 statements about Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn use were presented to the respondents. Respondents were required to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the specific motivations behind using Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube on a Likert scale. A number of items were adapted from the literature to measure the four motivations. Please refer to Table 5.3 for the details.

**Table 5.3 Measurement scale for motivation**

Sub-dimensions	Item statement	Original Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	Adapted from
Information	I use the platform to learn new things	$\alpha = 0.67$	Ko, Cho & Roberts (2005:63)
	I use the platform to do research		
	The platform helps me acquire cheap information	$\alpha = 0.92$ $\alpha = 0.88$	Nam (2014:266) Ku. Che & Tseng (2013:230)
Entertainment	Using the platform helps me pass the time	$\alpha = 0.88$	Lee & Ma (2012:336)
	I use the platform to relax		
	Using the platform helps me combat boredom		
	I enjoy the cool character of the platform.		
Socialisation	I use the platform to interact with people	$\alpha = 0.87$	Lee & Ma (2012:336)
	I share news and ideas using social media		
	The platform lets me connect to the virtual community	$\alpha = 0.87$	Park <i>et al.</i> (2009:730)
	I use the platform to seek relationships	$\alpha = 0.85$	Chua, Go & Lee (2012:18)

Sub-dimensions	Item statement	Original Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	Adapted from
Information	I use the platform to learn new things	$\alpha = 0.67$	Ko, Cho & Roberts (2005:63)
	I use the platform to do research		
	The platform helps me acquire cheap information	$\alpha = 0.92$ $\alpha = 0.88$	Nam (2014:266) Ku, Che & Tseng (2013:230)
Self-status seeking	The platform allows me to gain status	$\alpha = 0.80$	Jere & Davis (2011:19)
	The platform helps me to appear modern		
	The platform helps me feel important.	$\alpha = 0.85$	Chua et al. (2011:18)
	I use the platform to help me establish my identity	$\alpha = 0.81$	Leung (2013:1001)

Table 5.3 shows that each of the studies carried out had a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 for the particular scale used. Note that, in this study, the scale used to measure motivation was a combination of these and reliability for the combined scale was tested (reported in Chapter 6).

#### 5.6.2.4 Behavioural intent

To measure behavioural intent, this study employed a four-item scale that was adapted from Luo and Remus (2014:298) and Lee and Ma (2012:336). Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert scale. Refer to Table 5.4 for details.

**Table 5.4 Measurement scale for behavioural intent**

Item statement	Original Cronbach's alpha	Source
I plan to use the platform in the future	$\alpha = 0.75$	Luo & Remus (2014:293) Lee & Ma (2012:336)
I expect to continue using the platform in the future	$\alpha = 0.92$	
I am not likely to use the platform in the future*	$\alpha = 0.75$	Luo & Remus (2014:293)
I intend to recommend to my friends that they use the platform in the future		

\*Item to be reverse scored.

### **5.6.2.5 Behaviour**

To assess behaviour, first, respondents' average usage pattern was measured on a daily/weekly/monthly basis, second, the number of sessions per day/week/month was measured and third, the use per session was measured in hours and minutes. These in combination were then used to calculate a behaviour value, as detailed in Chapter 6, section 6.6.5.

### **5.6.3 Reliability and validity of a measurement scale**

The principal indicators of any quality measurement instrument are the reliability and validity of the measures (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2010:2276). Any measurement scale that is developed to produce scientific results should be assessed for its accuracy and precision, its practicality, and its ability to measure what it is designed to measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:257). The rationale for assessing the reliability and validity of a measurement instrument is that scales are not perfect, and they will always have errors (Thatcher, 2010:5). Therefore, researchers attempt to reduce the magnitude of error by ensuring that the scale is both reliable and valid.

In this study, it is imperative to determine reliability and validity, as the measurements used were adapted from international studies and non-social media contexts, which could produce varying results.

#### **5.6.3.1 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the degree to which a measure is free from error and yields consistent results across time and across all the items in the instrument (Cooper and Schindler, 2014:260; McGivern. 2013:228). The reliability of a measurement instrument indicates the consistency and stability with which the instrument measures the construct. Cooper and Schindler (2014:260) note that reliability concerns itself with the level at which a measurement scale is free of error. A reliable instrument works under varying circumstances and times.



Any credible study should have a scale that has a high degree of internal consistency. Tang, Cui and Babenko (2014:206) note that the internal consistency of a scale indicates whether the items on a scale that are intended to measure the same construct produce the same results; and it has a connection with the inter-relatedness of the items within the scale (Tavakol & Dennik, 2011:53). Thus, according to McGivern (2013:229), the internal consistency of an instrument indicates how homogeneous the measures are that tap a construct. Internal consistency reliability can be estimated in a number of ways. According to Malhotra and Birks (2007:358), the split-half reliability and Cronbach's alpha are most frequently used. This study used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency reliability.

Cronbach's alpha was developed by Cronbach in 1951 to measure the internal consistency of a scale (Tavakol and Dennik, 2011:53). It is the most extensively used index of internal consistency (Bindak, 2013:14; Bonet & Wright, 2015:3; Javali, Gudaganavar & Raj, 2011:1). Javali *et al.* (2011:2) indicate that it is good at estimating the internal consistency reliability of instruments such as multi-item tests, scales, and questionnaires in most fields. Cronbach's alpha is expressed by a numerical value between 0 and 1; but a negative value can occur when the items on a scale are not positively correlated among themselves. At the lower end, the inter-item correlations are zero and, at the upper end, there is a perfect correlation among items (Javali *et al.*, 2011:2). By convention, researchers accept a measure with an alpha value of at least 0.7 as reliable (Manerikar & Manerikar, 2015:1).

### **5.6.3.2 Validity**

Thatcher (2010:5) defines validity as the degree to which any measuring instrument measures what it claims to measure. The validity of a test can be considered as the level at which the observed scale scores reveal the real differences among objects on the characteristics that are being measured (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:358). This means that, when a measure has perfect validity, it does not lead to a measurement error. In real terms, the instrument used will be accurate, clear, and unambiguous (McGivern, 2013:61). Cooper and Schindler (2014:257) note that the widely used classifications of validity three forms: content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity. However, to determine measurement scale validity for this study, only content and

construct validity are discussed. These two types of validity ensure that the measurement scales measure constructs as defined by the theory, and responses to items are considered to represent the total population.

### **i) Content validity**

Content validity is also called face validity (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:358). It is defined as a systematic and subjective assessment of how well the content of a scale adequately covers what it is supposed to measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:257; Malhotra & Birks, 2007:358). To ensure that the measurement tool has content validity, the researcher examines whether the scale includes all the items of the construct that is being measured. Content validity considers whether a test precisely reflects the theoretical domain of the construct it claims to measure. Cooper and Schindler (2014:257) indicate that, in order to evaluate the content validity of an instrument, a researcher must know the elements that constitute an adequate coverage. In the context of this study, the researcher extensively researched how the constructs being studied had been measured in previous studies. This assisted the researcher to construct comprehensive items to measure each construct being studied.

### **ii) Construct validity**

Construct validity is concerned with the construct or the question that the scale is measuring. It is concerned with the degree to which a particular measure correlates with other measures (Malhotra and Birks, 2007:359). In order for a construct to be valid, it has to testify how well the test results attained from the use of a measure correspond with the theory on which the test was designed (McGivern, 2013:227).

Construct validity entails three types: convergent, discriminant, and nomological. Cooper and Schindler (2014:259) define convergent validity as the extent to which scores on one scale associate with the scores of another scale designed to measure the same construct. This validity can be established if the scores obtained from two different instruments that measure the same concept have a high level of correlation. McGivern (2013:227) indicates that discriminant validity occurs when scores reveal that constructs are uncorrelated, as previously predicted, based on existing theory.

This entails the extent to which scores on a scale do not correlate with scores that are designed to measure different constructs.

According to Malhotra & Birks (2007:259), nomological validity evaluates the association between constructs. It aims to authenticate the correlations between constructs as predicted by a theory. For example, as part of this study, the researcher looked at the relationship between attitude and behaviour, which is supported by the theory of planned behaviour.

In order to measure construct validity, the researcher went through a multifaceted process which entailed three steps, as suggested by O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka (1998:389). First, the researcher identified a group of measurement items which were proven in previous studies to measure the constructs under study. Second, the researcher assessed the adequacy of the measure by establishing the dimensionality and reliability of the constructs and third, the researcher then determined the extent to which constructs relate to each other by testing the hypothesis.

## **5.7 LEVELS OF MEASUREMENT**

The term 'measurement' in research refers to the assigning of numbers to empirical events, objects or properties, and/or characteristics of objects according to set rules (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:246). The assigning of numbers by marketing researchers is meant to permit statistical computations of the collected data, and to allow a common communication of measurement rules and results (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:336). It is important to note that measurement is a three-step process that requires the researcher to choose observable objects. This is followed by developing a scheme used to assign numbers that represent the characteristics being measured and the application of specified rules to the observed events (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:246).

Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010:7) note that the choice of a measurement scale is important for two reasons. First, the researcher has to identify the measurement scale for each construct so that numeric data are not mistaken for metric data. If a

researcher incorrectly defines the measure as metric, it will be used inappropriately. Second, the measurement scale determines the multivariate approaches that can be employed for data analysis.

The classification of a measurement scale is important, as it affects the kind of numerical analysis one will perform. All measurement can be classified into four levels of scale: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. These scales are discussed next. For details of the questions, measurement scales, response type, and level of measurement, please refer to Table 5.5.

### **5.7.1 Nominal scales**

Nominal scales are employed to collect categorical information on a construct that can be grouped into two or more groups that are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:250). Hair *et al.* (2014:5) indicate that nominal scales assign numbers that serve as tags or labels to identify and classify objects. The labels assigned to the objects have no quantitative connotation, except that they indicate the absence or presence of a characteristic being studied. They also indicate the number of occurrences of an attribute in each group. Regardless of the fact that nominal scales are weak, they are quite useful in marketing research, as they can be used to reveal relationships in exploratory research and to collect and classify respondents according to marital status, gender, and religious and political orientation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:252).

### **5.7.2 Ordinal scales**

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007:338), an ordinal scale is a ranking scale with a numerical assignment to objects in order to show the relative degree to which the objects own some characteristic. An ordinal scale permits the researcher to determine whether an object possesses more or less of a characteristic than do other objects. According to Hair *et al.* (2014:5), ordinal scales do not indicate the degree of magnitude of variances between the objects; they only indicate the order of values.

### 5.7.3 Interval scales

Hair *et al.* (2014:6) indicate that interval scales are able to “provide the highest level of measurement precision”, and any mathematical computations can be performed on the collected data. McGivern (2013:214) notes that interval scales allow the researcher to measure the distance between two points in a scale – that is, one can calculate the mean, standard deviation, and variance, among others. Interval scales contain the characteristics of both ordinal and nominal scales and, above all, they incorporate the concept of equality of interval (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:253). They permit the researcher to compare the differences between two objects. The distance between two scale values is the same as the distance between any two adjacent values of an interval scale (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:340). In marketing research, attitude scales are regarded as interval scales (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:253).

### 5.7.4 Ratio scales

These are the highest scales that permit the researcher to detect and categorise objects, rank them, and compare the differences. Ratio scales have all the properties of the earlier scales – the nominal, ordinal, and interval scales (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:341). Cooper and Schindler (2014:253) note that ratio scales are meant to measure the actual amounts of a construct, such as weight, height, and distance.

**Table 5.5 Variable, measurement scale, response type, and corresponding level of measurement**

Question	Variable	Measurement scale	Response type	Level of measurement
Q1	Length of platform use	1 to 3 years, 4 to 6 years, or 7 to more years	Categorical	Ordinal
Q2	Average usage pattern	Daily, weekly or monthly	Categorical	Ordinal
Q3.1	Frequency of use (Daily)	Number of times per day	Ranking	Ratio
Q3.2	Frequency of use (Weekly)	Number of times per week	Ranking	Ratio
Q3.3	Frequency of use (Monthly)	Number of times per month	Ranking	Ratio
Q4	Length of platform use	Hours and minutes	Ranking	Ratio
Q5	Brand personality	Likert scale	Rating	Interval

Q6	Motivations	Likert scale	Rating	Interval
Q6	Behavioural intent	Likert scale	Rating	Interval
Q7	Attitude	Semantic differential scale	Rating	Interval
Q8	Gender	Dichotomous scale	Categorical	Nominal
Q9	Education	11-item, multiple choice, single response scale	Categorical	Nominal

## 5.8 DATA COLLECTION AND PREPARATION

Whatever type of instrument a researcher employs to collect data from respondents, it has to be pre-tested in order to ensure that the questions are understood by the respondents (Sekaran & Bouguez, 2013:158). Even properly designed instruments should be administered properly to make sure that biases are minimised in the process of data collection. Even if a researcher uses sophisticated statistical analyses that will not compensate for information that is biased, ambiguous or full of errors.

### 5.8.1 Pre-testing

It is not easy to evaluate objectively how a questionnaire that is constructed for any given study will work with the target respondents, especially when using scales developed in extra national contexts (such as developed versus developing countries). It is therefore a prerequisite that the questionnaire be pilot tested before a researcher commits resources to full-scale data collection (McGivern, 2013:314). A pre-test is an invaluable way to assess whether the questionnaire is best-fitting for the study. Cooper and Schindler (2014:85) specify that a pre-test is conducted to discover the flaws in both the design and the measurement instrument. Malhotra and Birks (2007:391) describe a pre-test as the testing of a questionnaire on subjects drawn from the target population.

The pre-test that was carried out led to improvements to the questionnaire that was finally administered. The pre-test helped the researcher to know how long it took a respondent to complete the questionnaire, and to assess the content of the questions and the wording of the instructions. In this study, the respondents were social media users who resembled the target population in terms of their background, and they met

the selection criteria that qualified them to complete the questionnaire. The responses of the pre-test results were checked against the research objectives, and revealed that the questionnaire was collecting the required data from the respondents.

In the pre-test, 114 respondents were used to test the measurement instruments. This consisted of 38 respondents for each social media platform (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube). This figure constituted 10% of the total size of the sample, which falls within the acceptable range of 10-20% (Hazzi & Maldaon, 2015:53). The results that were obtained revealed that items in the questionnaire were well understood by the respondents.

### **5.8.2 Ethical considerations**

Ethics refers to norms or moral principles that guide behaviour and relationships with others (Cooper and Schindler, 2014:28; McGivern, 2013:28). The principal aim of ethics is to ensure that respondents are not harmed and do not suffer ill consequences from the various activities of the research. In any research context, ethics is important, for it guides researchers, respondents, users of research, and the community on what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour in the execution of research (McGivern, 2013:28). Despite the fact that researchers are aware of the need to be ethical, sometimes unethical behaviour unfolds in the conduct of research.

The researcher followed the guidelines of the University of Pretoria's Ethical Committee in executing the research. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee (11 March 2016). A number of measures were taken in order to make sure that the research process remained ethical.

First, the researcher secured informed consent from the respondents. In order to seek voluntary participation from the respondents, the questionnaire's introduction clarified the purpose of this study and the use of the data collected. The respondents were informed that they could withdraw from participation at any time, and were not obliged to answer the questions asked. Thus all respondents who completed the questionnaire did that of their own volition.



Second, the informed consent form that accompanied the questionnaire informed respondents that their participation in the survey remained anonymous and confidential. This means that any responses given could not be identified with a particular respondent. Because this study administered data collection through an online survey, it managed to keep the promise that the respondents would be anonymous and confidential, for one cannot identify an online survey participant.

Third, the researcher made sure that respondents would not be overburdened by being asked for too much data, for this could affect the quality of responses. Some consideration was given to the fact that respondents volunteered their time, and might not want to spend a long time completing questionnaires. Respondent fatigue is a common problem in survey research, and can lead to dropping out and non-completion. Consequently, questionnaires were developed using measures that were as concise as possible so as not to be too long. On average, the questionnaires took 5.1 minutes to complete.

Last, the researcher had to make sure that the questionnaire obtained the required information in an unbiased way. This questionnaire did not contain any leading questions; and one of the objectives in pre-testing it was to unearth any possibility of a breach of ethics.

### **5.8.3 Data collection procedure**

Because of the quantitative nature of this study, and its aim to examine the relationships between independent and dependent constructs, data were collected using an online survey. Questionnaires were developed and structured in a way that provided the researcher with numerical data that required statistical computations.

The concept 'online survey' denotes the gathering of survey data through electronic mail, computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), interactive voice response (IVR), or the World Wide Web (WWW) (Park & Khan, 2006:9). This study, used a survey in which participants completed an online questionnaire via the internet.

In order to administer the survey, an online questionnaire was created on Qualtrics, which was linked to a Qualtrics survey panel. Qualtrics has pre-recruited online panels with participants who reside in South Africa.

The sample was recruited by the research firm on the basis of agreed criteria. A hyperlink was sent to online members inviting them to participate in a study about the influence of the perceived brand personality of social media with particular reference to Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. A quota sampling was used first, and participants were selected randomly from the selected quotas.

The introductory page of the survey had screening questions to check the respondents' eligibility. Eligible respondents were permitted to complete the questionnaire, and non-eligible respondents were routed out of the survey. The survey was closed after checking that each platform had 380 fully completed questionnaires. To ensure that each questionnaire was completed in full, the online questionnaire had a forced response option, which would not allow the respondent to go to the next question before completing the current question. The final sample was 1140.

According to Callegaro, Baker, Bethlehem, Goritz, Krosnick and Lavrakas (2014:2), the term 'online panel' is different from the traditional meaning of the word 'panel'. In the traditional connotation, 'panel' entails measuring the same constructs using the same respondents at varying points in time, with the aim of examining changes in behaviour over time. Conversely, in the context of online research, an online panel refers to "a sample database of potential respondents who declare that they will cooperate for future data collection if selected" (Callegaro *et al.*, 2014:2). In this case, a panel is viewed as an online access panel that consists of a pool of candidates recruited to participate in research that is owned by a research agency (McGivern, 2013:209).

The decision to use an online survey has some disadvantages, as noted by Svensson (2014:3). First, self-selection problem – where the sample selected for the online survey is not probabilistic. Second, online surveys are characterised by undercoverage problems, whereby only those with access to internet are selected to participate in a survey. Third, it is difficult to assess the quality of the results since the

approach makes it impossible to estimate sampling error. However, for practical and financial reasons the researcher made a decision to use the approach.

Moreover, Qualtrics employs a number of techniques in order to collect quality data. They use Grand Mean certified sample partners as a way to maintain quality. In order to avoid duplication and ensure validity, Qualtrics checked every IP address and panel partners using deduplication equipment. In addition, Qualtrics ensures quality by replacing respondents who take less than 1/3 of the survey completion time.

#### **5.8.4 Response rate**

Clow and James (2014:9) define the response rate as the total number of people who complete a survey, compared with the number of people who are eligible to participate in a survey. A high survey response rate helps to determine the representativeness of a sample relative to the total population. The intended sample size for each platform was achieved due to forced response and because the Qualtrics system ensures only fully completed questionnaires' data are sent to the client.

#### **5.8.5 Data preparation**

Before the data were subjected to statistical analysis, they were converted to a form suitable for analysis. This is important, because the preparation stage affects the quality of statistical results. The data preparation activities are discussed next.

##### **5.8.5.1 Data capturing**

Cooper and Schindler (2011:417) define data capture as the conversion of information collected in a research for viewing and manipulation. Because this was an online survey, research participants were given survey link information to enter the survey website. Research participants were required to complete the survey online, and on completion, they would click on a submit button. The online survey was configured in such a way that it sent data to a database, automatically eliminating the need for manual data capture. When the required number of participants had completed the survey it was closed, and the data was received in Microsoft Excel format. This

approach protects against the loss of data, and facilitates the transfer of data into a database for analysis. The Excel data were then imported into SPSS version 24 for analysis.

#### **5.8.5.2 Data editing**

Data editing refers to the examination of a research instrument with the main objective of checking its accuracy and precision. The process of editing entails screening the questionnaire in order to identify incomplete responses (Malhotra & Birks, 2017:477). Although Cooper and Schindler (2014:377) note that online surveys and their data entry have eliminated some of the editing problems, it was necessary to edit the completed online questionnaires. The researcher edited the raw data to check for errors of omission and commission. The main purpose of this was to ensure that data were accurate, consistent with the objectives of the study, and properly arranged to facilitate tabulation and subsequent data analysis.

#### **5.8.5.3 Data coding**

Cooper and Schindler (2014:379) define coding as the assignment of numbers to responses to facilitate the categorisation of responses. It is the partitioning of data to a given variable. In this study, for example, gender was divided into male and female, which were coded 1 and 2 respectively. This study mostly employed closed-ended questions that were coded at the design stage; there was no further coding after the administration of the surveys.

#### **5.8.5.4 Reverse coding**

Hair *et al.* (2010:126) define reverse scoring as the process by which data values for a construct are reversed, thus ensuring that its correlations with other constructs are reversed. The rationale behind reverse coding is to avoid the cancelling out between constructs with positive and negative loadings on the same factor. In this study, all reverse coded items were recoded for analysis.

## **5.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

“Data analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques or generate theories. It often involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison and pattern finding” (Hatch 2002, 148). Data analysis allows the researcher to give meaning to the data collected. The following approaches were employed to the data analysis for this study.

### **5.9.1 Descriptive statistics**

McGivern (2013:455) states that descriptive statistics is an analysis that describes variables in a given study. It is a type of analysis that summarises responses using frequency counts and frequency distribution. A frequency count denotes the total number of times a value occurs in the data set. Frequency distribution is a mathematical distribution that aims to get a total number of responses “associated with different values of one variable” (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:506). In this study, frequency tables, percentages, and cumulative percentages of the values associated with the variables were used.

### **5.9.2 Measures of central tendency**

Measures of central tendency help to understand data because they describe the data using numbers. A measure of central tendency is regarded as an average figure, the median and mode, which is used to describe the centre of distribution (McGivern, 2013:462). It describes the midpoint of the distribution (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Schindler and Cooper (2014:400) point out that the mean, mode, and median are three common measures of central tendency. The mean is the average response, and is computed as the sum of all the observed outcomes from the sample divided by the total number of events (McGivern, 2013:462). Sekaran and Bougie (2013:285) note that the mean depicts an overall picture of the data. The mode is the most frequent response, and does not need any computations but a frequency count (McGivern, 2013:462). The mode denotes the highest peak of the distribution, and is a good

indicator of location in cases where a researcher has categorical variables (Malhotra & Birk, 2007:509). The median is referred to as the middle value when observations are arranged in either ascending or descending order (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:285).

### 5.9.3 Measures of variability

Malhotra & Birks (2007:509) indicate that measure of variability is a statistic that indicates the distribution's dispersion. The common measures of dispersion are the range, variance, and standard deviation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:401). The range is defined as the difference between the largest and smallest value in the distribution (McGivern, 2013:463). When the range is bigger, it means the spread in values is also bigger, and vice versa. Variance refers to the measure of score deviation about the average (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:401). When there is a great dispersion of values, it means that the variance is also great. Standard deviation gives an index of how data are spread in the distribution (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:287). It reveals how far the values are away from the mean. Standard deviation is the most frequently used measure of dispersion, and works well for interval- and ratio-scaled data.

### 5.9.4 Hypothesis testing

Bulajic, Stamatovic and Cvetanovic (2012:171) define a hypothesis as a tentative solution to a research problem. It represents a prediction of the relationships among the variables under investigation. Cooper and Schindler (2014:430) point out that the purpose of testing a hypothesis is to examine the veracity of the pre-constructed hypothesis using the research results. The test may either accept or reject the hypothesis. In this study, the hypotheses listed in Table 5.6 below were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM).

**Table 5.6 Proposed research hypotheses and associated research objectives**

Hypotheses and related objectives	Questions
<p><i>H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitudes</i> To determine the relationship that exists between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitudes</p>	Q5 & Q7
<p><i>H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation</i></p>	Q5 & Q6

Hypotheses and related objectives	Questions
To determine the relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation	
<i>H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent</i> To determine the relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent	Q7 & Q6
<i>H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour</i> To determine the relationship between users' attitude and behaviour	Q7, Q3 & Q4
<i>H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent</i> To determine the relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent	Q6
<i>H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour</i> To determine the relationship between users' motivation and behaviour	Q6, Q3 & Q4
<i>H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour</i> To determine the relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour.	Q6, Q3 & Q4

#### 5.9.4.1 Level of significance

According to McGivern (2013:245), significance level refers to the level of probability at which a researcher accepts that a difference is statistically significant; it is often called the 'p' or 'alpha' value. A difference is statistically significant when there is good reason to believe that the difference does not represent a random sampling fluctuation only (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:454). The choice of significance level depends on the degree of risk one is prepared to tolerate in order to draw conclusions (McGivern, 2013:245). Three levels of significance are most often used: the 0.05 ( $p = 0.05$ ) level of probability; the 0.01 ( $p = 0.01$ ) level; and the 0.001 ( $p = 0.001$ ) level. At a 0.05 level, there is a 5% chance that the results have occurred by chance. It is the lowest acceptable level in most marketing research. In this study, a 0.05 level of probability was used.

#### 5.9.4.2 Rejection or non-rejection of hypotheses

In order to support or reject a hypothesis, significance tests have to be run to determine whether associations exist in the population (McGivern, 2013:500). In fact, when testing a hypothesis, the researcher aims to examine whether a null hypothesis can be rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. A researcher can reject or accept a



hypothesis with a certain degree of confidence. Sekeran and Bougier (2013:303) note that there are two types of errors that can occur in the process. The first entails a type I error or alpha ( $\alpha$ ), which is the likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true. The second is a type II error or beta ( $\beta$ ), which is the likelihood of failing to reject the null hypothesis when the alternate hypothesis is true. Another concept in hypothesis testing is that of statistical power, which refers to the likelihood of correctly rejecting the null hypothesis.

## **5.10 MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS**

Hair *et al.* (2010:3) define multivariate analysis as the statistical tools that “simultaneously analyse multiple measurements on objects under investigation”. Multivariate data analysis can be categorised into independent and interdependent techniques. Dependent techniques have sets of dependent variables that are explained by independent variables, whereas independent techniques do not define variables as either independent or dependent, but analyse all variables at once.

### **5.10.1 Factor analysis**

The main objective of factor analysis is to summarise the initial number of variables into a new set of factors so that relationships and patterns are interpreted and understood (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:647; McGivern, 2013:495), or to define the underlying structure among variables under analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010:94). Factor analysis is employed to categorise variables into a limited set of groups, based on shared variance (Yong & Pearce, 2013:79). In the process, relationships among variables are tested, and those variables with a high correlation are presented in a few factors. Factor analysis operates on the view that measurable variables may be reduced to a few latent variables that can share a common variance.

#### **5.10.1.1 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)**

According to Yong and Pearce (2013:79), EFA is concerned with the discovery of complex patterns through an exploration of the data set and the testing of predictions. Researchers use EFA in cases where they want to discover the factors that influence

variables, and analyse those factors that cluster together. The key assumption in EFA is that there are common factors that can be discovered in a dataset. The ultimate goal is to discover a limited number of common factors that will account for correlations. In this research, EFAs were used to examine the underlying factor structure of the constructs, and in order to decide whether they were acceptable for use in the model.

#### **5.10.1.2 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)**

Hair *et al.* (2010:693) note that confirmatory factor analysis is a method of validating the results, and assessing how replicable the results are. CFA thus attempts to confirm or reject preconceived theories, and uses measurement models to represent the variables and factors being studied. CFA was not used, as EFA was deemed more suitable due to the combination of constructs and the unique context of this study.

#### **5.10.4 Structural equation modelling**

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a statistical tool that researchers use to analyse multivariate data and explain relationships among multiple variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010:634). SEM allows the researcher to examine the relationships that exist among several independent and several dependent variables (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:607). SEM goes beyond the regression models, since it incorporates multiple dependent and independent variables. It is most appropriate for testing theory and specified relationships that exist among observed and hypothetical latent constructs. This study applied SEM to test the proposed theoretical framework and its resultant relationships, and the hypotheses of the study. Anderson and Gerbing (1988:411) note that SEM comprises both a measurement and a structural model. The measurement model is used to assess convergent and discriminant validity, whereas the structural model assesses nomological validity.

#### **5.11 Measurement model**

A measurement model represents a schematic representation of the study's conceptual model. Cooper and Schindler (2014:65) define a model as a "representation of a system that is constructed to study some aspect of that system or

the system as a whole”. Edwards (2011:9) indicates that a measurement model provides a visual description of relationships that the researcher assumes hold among the constructs under investigation. Schumacker and Lomex (2010:179) note that models are developed in many academic disciplines to establish the kind of relationships that exist between latent constructs. Models are descriptive in nature because they describe the relationships between the independent and dependent constructs. Figure 5.1 shows the conceptual framework for the study.

**Figure 5.1 A schematic representation of the conceptual framework**

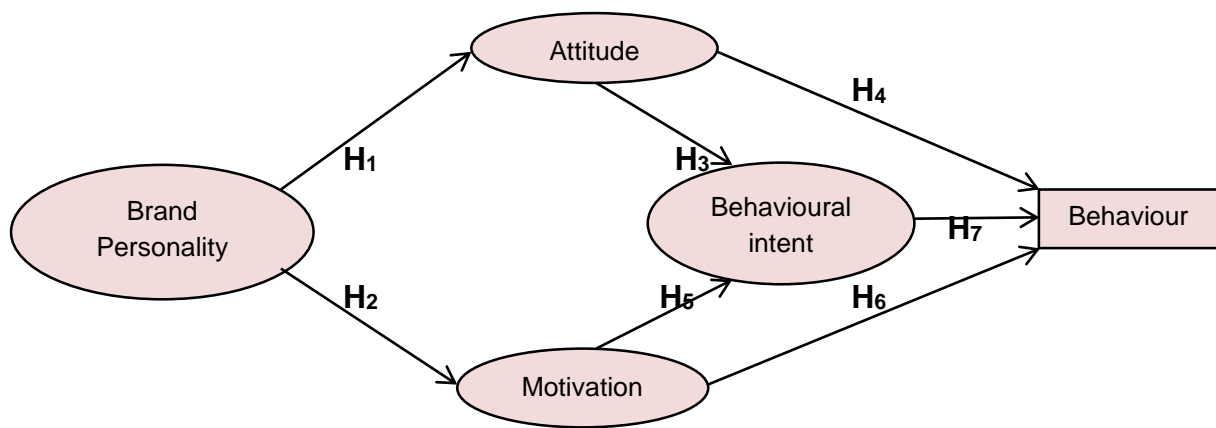


Figure 5.1 specifies the hypothesised linkages between the variables. For example, in the path diagram, an arrow presupposes that there is a relationship between two constructs. The relationship is rooted in theory and past studies (please refer to Chapter 1 for details). For example, in this study,  $H_1$  denotes that brand personality has an influence on attitude; this is supported by both personality and brand personality theory and past research findings.

## 5.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the research paradigm, the research problem and objectives, and the research design that was employed in this study. This was followed by the research instrument design, data collection and preparation, and the data analysis approaches. The next chapter presents the research findings.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the research methodology that was employed to execute this study. This chapter presents and interprets the results of this study. The results are based on the objectives and postulated hypotheses of this study. The chapter begins with the demographic profiles of the respondents for each sample. This is followed by the descriptive results on the usage patterns of the three SNS. The factor structures of the constructs on the three platforms are subsequently reported on (based on exploratory factor analysis), along with their validity and reliability. The proposed framework of the study is then evaluated using structural equation modelling (SEM). All sets of analyses are presented for each platform, together with the associated hypotheses testing the results.

#### 6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

This section describes the demographic profiles of the respondents so that a general picture of the representation of the research participants is given. The profiles included age, gender, and education.

**Table 6.1 Age distribution of respondents**

Statistics	Facebook	LinkedIn	YouTube
n	380	380	380
Mean	35.20	34.91	33.32
Std. deviation	12.75	12.97	11.91
Minimum	18	18	18
Maximum	70	71	70

The ages of Facebook users ranged between 18 and 70 ( $M = 35.2$ ;  $SD = 12.75$ ), for LinkedIn between 18 and 71 ( $M = 34.9$ ;  $SD = 12.97$ ), and for YouTube between 18 and 70 ( $M = 33.2$ ;  $SD = 11.91$ ). Thus, on average, users of the three social media

platforms were young people in their early and mid-thirties. Statista (2018) confirms that young people dominate the use of Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

**Table 6.2 Gender distribution of respondents**

Gender	n	%
<b>FACEBOOK</b>		
Male	217	57.1
Female	163	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>LINKEDIN</b>		
Male	225	59.2
Female	155	40.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>YOUTUBE</b>		
Male	217	57.1
Female	163	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

As observed from Table 6.2, the samples comprised slightly more males than females. Both Facebook and YouTube had the same percentage of male (57.1%) and female (42.9%) respondents. LinkedIn's sample comprised 59.2% male and 40.8% female respondents. Statista (2018) confirms that Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube have more female users than male users.

**Table 6.3 Level of education of the respondents**

Level of education	Facebook		LinkedIn		YouTube	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
No education	0	0	1	.3	1	.3
Some primary schooling	0	0	3	.8	2	.5
Completed primary schooling (passed grade 7/standard 5)	2	.5	3	.8	4	1.1
Some secondary schooling	15	3.9	15	3.9	11	2.9
Complete secondary schooling (passed grade 12/standard 10)	123	32.4	111	29.2	122	32.1
Undergraduate (busy with after-school graduate studies)	54	14.2	56	14.7	63	16.6
Graduate (Degree/Diploma)	141	37.1	144	37.9	138	36.3
Honours graduate	15	3.9	22	5.8	17	4.5
Masters graduate	23	6.1	19	5.0	16	4.2
Doctors graduate	2	.5	3	.8	2	.5
Unclassified	5	1.3	3	.8	4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6.3 shows that the greatest proportion of the respondents across the three platforms were graduates with degrees or diplomas (Facebook, 37.1%, LinkedIn, 37.9%, YouTube, 36.3%). The second-largest group comprised respondents who had completed secondary schooling (Facebook, 32.4%, LinkedIn, 29.2%, YouTube, 32.1%). The third-largest group consisted of undergraduate respondents (Facebook, 14.2%, LinkedIn, 14.7%, YouTube, 16.6%). The results reveal that most of the respondents had high levels of literacy. This concurs with what Perrin (2015:6) found in a study that revealed that young adults with high levels of education dominated the use of social media.

### 6.3 USAGE PATTERNS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The usage patterns of the social media platforms include the overall length of use of the platform, and the average usage pattern – daily, weekly, or monthly.

**Table 6.4 Length of platform use by respondents**

Duration	Facebook			LinkedIn			YouTube		
	n	%	Cumulative %	n	%	Cumulative %	n	%	Cumulative %
Less than a year	16	4.2	4.2	120	31.6	31.6	25	6.6	6.6
1 to 3 years	46	12.1	16.3	130	34.2	65.8	84	22.1	28.7
4 to 6 years	125	32.9	49.9	90	23.7	89.5	129	33.9	62.6
7 or more years	193	50.8	<b>100</b>	40	10.5	<b>100</b>	142	37.4	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	

According to Table 6.4, the majority (50.8%) of the respondents who participated in the survey had used Facebook for at least seven years. The second-largest number of respondents (32.9%) reported that they had used Facebook between four and six years. This indicates that respondents in this sample were experienced Facebook users, as they had used the platform for several years. A relatively small number of respondents had used the platform for three years or less (16.3%). These results coincide with those found by Florenthal (2015:23), which indicated that respondents had owned Facebook accounts for more than four years.

As for LinkedIn, the greatest proportion (34.2%) of the respondents had used LinkedIn for between one and three years, followed by 31.6% of the respondents who had used the platform for less than a year; the third-largest group of respondents had used the platform for between four and six years (23.7%). The smallest group (10.5%) had used LinkedIn for seven or more years. The results suggest that the LinkedIn sample comprised moderately experienced users. Previous studies have indicated that, on average, respondents' membership of LinkedIn ranged from three to four years (Basak & Calisir, 2014:2).

Table 6.4 also reveals that the largest group of respondents (37.4%) had used YouTube for at least seven years. Second, 33.9% of respondents had used the platform for four to six years; third, 22.1% had used the platform for at least one to three years (22.1%); and (6.6%) had used it for less than a year. The results show that most of the respondents were experienced users of YouTube.

**Table 6.5 Average usage pattern**

Usage pattern	Facebook		LinkedIn		YouTube	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily	272	71.6	73	19.2	221	58.2
Weekly	78	20.5	121	31.8	119	31.3
Monthly	30	7.9	186	48.9	40	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 6.5 it can be observed that the majority of the respondents used Facebook daily (71.6%). This is followed by a group of respondents who used Facebook weekly (20.5%), and only 7.9% per cent used Facebook on a monthly basis. The Facebook sample, therefore, mostly comprised frequent users of the platform. The results are consistent with those of Bicen and Cavus (2011:945), who noted that most users of Facebook use the platform daily.

LinkedIn respondents indicated that the greatest proportion (48.9%) used the platform on a monthly basis. The second-largest group of respondents (31.8%) used LinkedIn weekly, and only 19.2% of the respondents used LinkedIn daily. The LinkedIn sample largely comprised the low-frequency users of the platform.



As for YouTube, over half of the respondents (58.2%) indicated that they used the platform daily. This was followed by 31.3% of the respondents who used the platform weekly, and only 10.5% used the platform on a monthly basis. The results show that the YouTube sample primarily comprised frequent users of the platform.

## **6.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTRUCTS**

The descriptive statistics of the constructs: perceived brand personality, attitude, motivation, and behavioural intent are discussed in this section.

### **6.4.1 Brand personality**

The brand personality of the three SNS was measured by a five-point Likert scale based on the brand personality scale (BPS) that was developed by Aaker in 1997. A shorter version (facet level) of the scale was employed to minimise respondent fatigue, as the questionnaire contained many scales. This is in line with other researchers who used a facet level with success (for example Avis & Forbes, 2014). Respondents were required to imagine that the SNS was a person with human characteristics. Respondents were then required to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the given item statements in the scale. However, the researcher excluded one of the dimensions (ruggedness, a two-item dimension) after a transcription error occurred, where 'outgoing' was captured instead of 'outdoorsy'. The scale thus ended up having 13 items instead of the traditional 15 items.

#### **6.4.1.1 Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube**

Table 6.6 depicts the average scores and the standard deviation of each of the items of brand personality for the three SNS. Both the mean (*M*) and the standard deviation (*SD*) were computed from the responses obtained from the online survey. The mean detects the central location of the data, and the standard deviation measures the average distance of the values from the mean. A higher standard deviation means there is a greater variation in the distribution (McGivern, 2013:464).

**Table 6.6 Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for brand personality items**

<i>Item statements</i>		<i>n</i>	Facebook		LinkedIn		YouTube	
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q5.1	Platform is down-to-earth	380	3.33	1.090	3.51	.929	3.65	1.076
Q5.2	Platform is honest	380	2.97	1.106	3.64	.889	3.48	1.044
Q5.3	Platform is original	380	3.82	.963	3.86	.911	4.13	.887
Q5.4	Platform is cheerful	380	3.75	.921	3.38	.900	4.06	.854
Q5.5	Platform is daring	380	3.64	.930	3.31	.927	4.03	.879
Q5.6	Platform is spirited	380	3.63	.914	3.38	.886	3.91	.927
Q5.7	Platform is imaginative	380	3.91	.956	3.55	.966	4.14	.884
Q5.8	Platform is up-to-date	380	4.13	.901	3.98	.919	4.38	.831
Q5.9	Platform is reliable	380	3.41	1.157	3.80	.916	3.85	1.011
Q5.10	Platform is intelligent	380	3.73	1.003	3.83	.882	3.96	.946
Q5.11	Platform is successful	380	4.25	.921	3.99	.859	4.47	.742
Q5.12	Platform is upper-class	380	3.29	1.124	3.70	.945	3.49	1.112
Q5.13	Platform is charming	380	3.52	.959	3.29	.905	3.65	.937

Table 6.6 summarises the extent to which respondents perceived the three social media platforms as if they were persons, with regard to the specified characteristics. The results show that respondents did indeed perceive Facebook as if it had human characteristics. It can be seen from the table that characteristics like ‘Facebook is successful’ ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = .921$ ), ‘Facebook is up to date’ ( $M = 4.13$ ;  $SD = .901$ ), and ‘Facebook is imaginative’ ( $M = 3.91$ ;  $SD = .956$ ) were perceived by respondents to be the most notable characteristics of Facebook. At the lower end, results indicate that the personality traits – honest ( $M = 2.97$ ;  $SD = 1.106$ ), upper class ( $M = 3.29$ ;  $SD = 1.124$ ), and down-to-earth ( $M = 3.33$ ;  $SD = 1.090$ ) – were perceived as least illustrative of the items representing Facebook’s brand personality.

With LinkedIn, the results in Table 6.6 reveal that respondents agreed that LinkedIn can be likened to a person with human characteristics. The results depict that the most dominant LinkedIn characteristics were: it is successful ( $M = 3.99$ ;  $SD = .859$ ), up-to-date ( $M = 3.98$ ;  $SD = .919$ ), and original ( $M = 3.86$ ;  $SD = .911$ ). Conversely, the results reveal that the traits least associated with LinkedIn are charming ( $M = 3.29$ ;  $SD = .905$ ), daring ( $M = 3.31$ ;  $SD = .927$ ), and cheerful ( $M = 3.38$ ;  $SD = .900$ ).

The results in Table 6.6 indicate that the characteristics that most respondents associated with YouTube were: successful ( $M = 4.47$ ;  $SD = .742$ ); up-to-date ( $M = 4.38$ ;  $SD = .831$ ), and imaginative ( $M = 4.14$ ;  $SD = .884$ ). The same table reveals that

the characteristics that were least associated with YouTube were honest ( $M = 3.48$ ;  $SD = 1.044$ ), upper-class ( $M = 3.49$ ;  $SD = 1.112$ ), charming ( $M = 3.65$ ;  $SD = .937$ ) and down to earth ( $M = 3.65$ ;  $SD = 1.076$ ).

#### 6.4.2 Attitude

Attitude was measured using a semantic differential scale adapted from Spears and Singh (2004:60). In this study, a five-item unidimensional scale was employed, and respondents were required to give their rating on the SNS under study.

**Table 6.7 Means and standard deviations for attitude**

			Facebook		LinkedIn		YouTube	
<i>Item statements</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q7.1	Unappealing-appealing	380	4.06	1.040	3.76	1.148	4.42	.823
Q7.2	Bad-good	380	3.97	1.024	3.93	.967	4.31	.912
Q7.3	Unpleasant-pleasant	380	4.08	.997	3.82	.998	4.38	.858
Q7.4	Unfavourable-favourable	380	4.08	1.009	3.80	1.028	4.37	.878
Q7.5	Unlikable-likable	380	4.22	.987	3.87	1.049	4.49	.801

Overall, the results depicted in Table 6.7 reveal that the attitude of the respondents towards the platforms was positive, as all the means exceeded 3. From the table it can be noted that respondents indicated that Facebook is likable ( $M = 4.22$ ;  $SD = .987$ ), pleasant ( $M = 4.08$ ;  $SD = .997$ ), and favourable ( $M = 4.08$ ;  $SD = 1.009$ ).

With regard to the attitude of users towards LinkedIn, the respondents indicated that the platform is good ( $M = 3.93$ ;  $SD = .967$ ), likable ( $M = 3.87$ ;  $SD = 1.049$ ), and pleasant ( $M = 3.82$ ;  $SD = .998$ ).

The respondents for the YouTube sample indicated that YouTube is likable ( $M = 4.49$ ;  $SD = .801$ ), appealing ( $M = 4.42$ ;  $SD = .823$ ), and pleasant ( $M = 4.38$ ;  $SD = .858$ ).

The attitude items for Facebook ranged between 3.97 and 4.22 suggesting very positive attitudes. Similarly, all the attitudes for YouTube exceeded 4 (ranging between

4.31 and 4.49) signifying a highly positive attitudes. For LinkedIn, the means ranged from 3.76 to 3.93, suggesting a moderately positive attitude.

### 6.4.3 Motivation

Motivation was measured using a five-point Likert scale adapted from several researchers (Jere & Davis, 2011:10; Ku *et al.*, 2013:20; Lee & Ma, 2012:336; Leung 2013:1001; Nam, 2014:266; Park *et al.*, 2009:730). Respondents were required to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with specific motives for using the platform.

#### 6.4.3.1 Facebook

Table 6.8 reveals the means and standard deviations for users' motives for using Facebook, ranked from highest to lowest.

**Table 6.8 Means and standard deviations for motivation**

<i>Item statements</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q6.16	Using Facebook helps me pass the time	380	3.79	1.035
Q6.17	I use Facebook to interact with people	380	3.78	1.061
Q6.23	Facebook lets me connect to the virtual community	380	3.76	1.002
Q6.19	Using Facebook lets me combat boredom	380	3.68	1.071
Q6.20	I share news and ideas using Facebook	380	3.66	1.143
Q6.21	I enjoy the cool character of Facebook	380	3.60	1.072
Q6.10	I use Facebook to relax	380	3.58	1.126
Q6.14	I use Facebook to learn new things	380	3.55	1.104
Q6.15	Facebook lets me acquire cheap information	380	3.42	1.107
Q6.12	I use Facebook to do research	380	3.19	1.247
Q6.24	Facebook allows me to gain status	380	3.01	1.169
Q6.26	Using Facebook helps me appear modern	380	2.98	1.153
Q6.29	I use Facebook to establish my identity	380	2.80	1.243
Q6.27	Facebook helps me feel important	380	2.74	1.286
Q6.25	I use Facebook for seeking relationships	380	2.54	1.246

With regard to the motives for using Facebook, it can be observed from Table 6.8 that the statement 'Using Facebook helps me pass the time' received the highest mean ( $M = 3.79$ ;  $SD = 1.035$ ). 'I use Facebook to interact with people' was regarded as the second most important motive for Facebook use ( $M = 3.78$ ;  $SD = 1.061$ ). The third

most prominent motive for using the platform was ‘Facebook lets me connect to the virtual community’ ( $M = 3.76$ ;  $SD = 1.002$ ).

From Table 6.8 it is evident that respondents agreed that they least used Facebook for seeking relationships ( $M = 2.54$ ;  $SD = 1.246$ ), in order to feel important ( $M = 2.74$ ;  $SD = 1.286$ ), and to establish identity ( $M = 2.80$ ;  $SD = 1.243$ ).

### 6.4.3.2 LinkedIn

Table 6.9 presents the descriptive statistics for users’ motivation for using LinkedIn, ranked from highest to lowest.

**Table 6.9 Means and standard deviations for motivation**

<i>Item statements</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q6.23	LinkedIn lets me connect to the virtual community	380	3.44	1.022
Q6.12	I use LinkedIn to do research	380	3.39	1.128
Q6.14	I use LinkedIn to learn new things	380	3.24	1.139
Q6.17	I use LinkedIn to interact with people	380	3.23	1.164
Q6.15	LinkedIn lets me acquire cheap information	380	3.18	1.102
Q6.24	LinkedIn allows me to gain status	380	3.14	1.133
Q6.21	I enjoy the cool character of LinkedIn	380	3.13	1.111
Q6.26	Using LinkedIn helps me appear modern	380	3.12	1.151
Q6.29	I use LinkedIn to establish my identity	380	3.03	1.261
Q6.20	I share news and ideas using LinkedIn	380	2.94	1.192
Q6.27	LinkedIn helps me feel important	380	2.94	1.235
Q6.16	Using LinkedIn helps me pass time	380	2.90	1.065
Q6.19	Using LinkedIn lets me combat boredom	380	2.74	1.127
Q6.10	I use LinkedIn to relax	380	2.53	1.136
Q6.25	I use LinkedIn for seeking relationships	380	2.52	1.216

From Table 6.9 it is evident that respondents generally agreed that they used LinkedIn to gratify some of the motives in the table. However, the most preferred motive was that LinkedIn permits respondents to connect to the virtual community ( $M = 3.44$ ;  $SD = 1.022$ ), followed by the use of the platform to carry out research ( $M = 3.39$ ;  $SD = 1.128$ ). The third most preferred motive was that respondents used LinkedIn to learn new things ( $M = 3.24$ ;  $SD = 1.139$ ). Respondents indicated that LinkedIn is least used to seek relationships ( $M = 2.52$ ;  $SD = 1.216$ ), to relax ( $M = 2.53$ ;  $SD = 1,136$ ), and to combat boredom ( $M = 2.74$ ;  $SD = 1.127$ ).

### 6.4.3.3 YouTube

Table 6.10 reveals the means and standard deviations for users' motivation for using YouTube (highest to lowest).

**Table 6.10 Means and standard deviations for motivation**

<i>Item statements</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q6.14	I use YouTube to learn new things	380	4.22	.814
Q6.12	I use YouTube to do research	380	4.07	1.027
Q6.16	Using YouTube helps me pass the time	380	4.05	.954
Q6.15	YouTube lets me acquire cheap information	380	4.03	.966
Q6.10	I use YouTube to relax	380	3.99	.961
Q6.19	Using YouTube lets me combat boredom	380	3.90	1.049
Q6.21	I enjoy the cool character of YouTube	380	3.83	.965
Q6.23	YouTube lets me connect to the virtual community	380	3.58	1.015
Q6.20	I share news and ideas using YouTube	380	3.18	1.273
Q6.26	Using YouTube helps me appear modern	380	2.97	1.246
Q6.17	I use YouTube to interact with people	380	2.80	1.194
Q6.24	YouTube allows me to gain status	380	2.71	1.212
Q6.29	I use YouTube to establish my identity	380	2.62	1.285
Q6.27	YouTube helps me feel important	380	2.60	1.260
Q6.25	I use YouTube for seeking relationships	380	2.07	1.186

According to Table 6.10, respondents indicated the degree to which they used YouTube for the listed reasons. They most preferred to use YouTube to learn new things ( $M = 4.22$ ;  $SD = .814$ ); second, they preferred to use the platform for research purposes ( $M = 4.07$ ;  $SD = 1.027$ ); and third, respondents used YouTube to pass the time ( $M = 4.05$ ;  $SD = .954$ ). Similar to Facebook results, respondents indicated that they least preferred to use YouTube for seeking relationships ( $M = 2.07$ ;  $SD = 1.186$ ), feeling important ( $M = 2.60$ ;  $SD = 1.260$ ), and for establishing identity ( $M = 2.62$ ;  $SD = 1.285$ ).

Another interesting thing across all three platforms is that the least indicated motivation was for seeking relationships. These social media thus do not seem to be seen as suitable for seeking relationships.

### 6.4.4 Behavioural intent

Behavioural intent was measured by a 5-point Likert scale that was adapted from Luo and Remus (2014:298) and Lee and Ma (2012:336). Respondents were required to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the item statements.

#### 6.4.4.1 Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube

The descriptive statistics for behavioural intent are presented in Table 6.11.

**Table 6.11 Means and standard deviations for behavioural intent**

			Facebook		LinkedIn		YouTube	
<i>Item statements</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q6.11	I plan to use Facebook in future	380	3.89	1.022	3.67	1.055	4.25	.857
Q6.18	I intend to recommend to my friends to use Facebook in the future	380	3.69	1.115	3.44	1.088	3.88	.988
Q6.22	I am not likely to use Facebook in future*	380	3.95	1.161	3.75	1.183	4.05	1.217
Q6.28	I expect to continue to use Facebook in future	380	3.97	1.004	3.69	1.073	4.35	.809

\* *Items was reverse scored*

From Table 6.11, it can be observed that, across the three platforms, the behavioural intent items reflected medium to high levels of intent, as represented by the mean, which was above 3. For Facebook, the mean for behavioural intent items ranged between 3.69 ( $SD = 1.115$ ) and 3.97 ( $SD = 1.004$ ). For LinkedIn, it ranged between 3.44 ( $SD = 1.088$ ) and 3.75 ( $SD = 1.183$ ). The mean for YouTube ranged between 3.88 ( $SD = .988$ ) and 4.35 ( $SD = .809$ ).

### 6.5 MEASUREMENT SCALE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

It is important to ensure that, before the testing of existing relationships in a structural equation model, the researcher must demonstrate that the measurement model employed in the study attains an acceptable level of validity and reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2010:693).

#### 6.5.1 Validity of measurement scales

Despite the fact that previously used scales were employed in this study, it was necessary to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement scales within the context of social media brands (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube), and with regard to social media users in South Africa.



In order to ensure that the measurement scales were valid (they measure what they claim to measure), the researcher assessed the content validity of the scales by ensuring that the scales adequately covered the items that measured the construct. An extensive search was done on how each construct had been measured in previous research; this permitted the researcher to construct comprehensive scale items. More importantly, the researcher employed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate the construct validity (Williams, Onsman & Brown, 2010:2). This study employed the four steps suggested by Pallant (2011) to do an EFA for the constructs (refer to Section 6.6).

### **6.5.2 Reliability of the measurement scales**

This study used Cronbach's alpha, which is the most widely reported type of reliability coefficient (Kline, 2011:69; Lee & Lings, 2008:169). Cronbach's alpha was employed to measure internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha refers to the extent to which responses are consistent across the items within a measure. The general rule, according to Kline (2011:70), is that coefficient values around .70 are acceptable; coefficient values around .80 are very good; and coefficient values around .90 are excellent. All of the Cronbach's alpha values were above the acceptable range, and most can be considered very good. The specific values are reported in Section 6.6.

## **6.6 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Although the measurement scales had been proven to be valid in prior studies, the decision was made to employ exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for several reasons. First, confirmatory factor analyses were run on brand personality, attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour and the values produced were unacceptable or non-satisfactory; second, the measurement scales used were not all derived from a single study; third, they were now being applied to a new context; and fourth, they have never before been tested together in a study. Above all, the scales were not specifically developed to measure these constructs in social media. The (EFA) was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Pallant

(2011:182) suggests four main steps to follow in order to conduct factor analysis. These steps are:

- ❖ Assessing the suitability of the data for factor analysis;
- ❖ Factor extraction;
- ❖ Determining the number of factors to retain; and
- ❖ Factor rotation and interpretation

### 6.6.1 Assessing the suitability of the data for factor analysis

Field (2007:647) indicates that there are many rules of thumb with regard to evaluating the suitability of the data to run factor analysis. The most frequently used rule indicates that a researcher has to ensure that there must be at least 10 to 15 participants per variable. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007:613) suggest that a researcher must have at least 300 participants for the data to be suitable for factor analysis. A sample size of 380 respondents per platform was used to solicit data on social media use. This sample size exceeds the prescribed number of 300 cases. Furthermore, the measurement scales for this study had a total of 37 items (BP=13; ATT=5; MOT=15; BI=4). This produced a ratio of 10:1, which is within the acceptable ratio of 10-15 participants per construct. Both recommendations indicate that the realised sample size was adequate for factor analysis.

In addition to sample size criterion, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy must exceed .6, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ( $p < .05$ ). Table 6.12 depicts the KMO values for the research constructs.

**Table 6.12 KMO values for constructs**

Construct	Facebook	LinkedIn	YouTube
Brand personality	.918	.928	.927
Attitude	.904	.910	.890
Motivation	.912	.939	.907
Behavioural intention	.760	.801	.703

In line with Field (2007:647), the KMO values reported in Table 6.12 may be considered excellent. Furthermore, the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at .000 for all the constructs across the three SNS. Both these measures indicate that the data were suitable for factor analysis.

### **6.6.2 Factor extraction**

The next stage was to determine the number of factors that could be retained in the study to examine the relationships among the research constructs. In this study, the measurement items were subjected to principal axis factoring – the most popular estimation method in exploratory factor analysis (De Winter & Dodou, 2012:695; Ngure, Kihoro & Waititu, 2015:259) – which produced some matrices. The researcher decided to use both the pattern matrix and the structure matrix. The pattern matrix contains factor loadings and is simple and easy to interpret (Field, 2007:668). The pattern matrix for the data could, therefore, easily show the factors that emerged. The structure matrix provides information about the correlation between variables and factors (Pallant, 2011:198).

### **6.6.3 Determining the number of factors to retain**

This step entailed making a decision about the numbers of factors to keep in the model. Brand personality and motivation were the only multidimensional constructs in the conceptual framework that needed such a decision, as attitude and behavioural intent were unidimensional constructs.

Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue) was employed to obtain the number of factors to retain, because it is accurate when applied to factors of less than 30 (Field, 2009:641). It is recommended that a researcher retain all factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 (Field, 2009:640; Pallant, 2011:184). Eigenvalues account for the total amount of variation explained by each factor, and an eigenvalue of 1 signifies a considerable amount of variation.

For all three SNS, only two brand personality factors had to be retained. For Facebook, the eigenvalues were 6.337 and 1.146. These two factors explained 50.3% of the total

variance. For LinkedIn, the two factors had eigenvalues of 6.791 and 1.314, explaining 56% of the variance. The YouTube brand personality revealed eigenvalues of 6.680 and 1.173, which explained 53.2% of the variance.

For motivation, the Facebook data retained three factors. These had eigenvalues of 7.241, 1.956, and 1.094 respectively. The three factors explained 61.5% of the total variance. LinkedIn also retained three factors, with eigenvalues of 7.903, 1.490, and 1.104 respectively, explaining 63.1% of the total variance. Interestingly, YouTube’s EFA on motivation resulted in a two-factor solution, which explained 54.6% of the variance. The two factors reflected eigenvalues of 5.980 and 3.073 respectively.

The EFA for attitude and behavioural intent supported their unidimensional natures. For this reason the two constructs were not rotated. It should be noted that for Facebook and YouTube, one item (the reverse scored item) for behavioural intent was deleted due to low communality values (Pallant, 2013:206). The Cronbach’s alpha values are depicted in Table 6.13.

**Table 6.13 Cronbach’s alpha values for unidimensional constructs**

Construct	Facebook	LinkedIn	YouTube
Attitude	.938	.935	.921
Behavioural intent	.857	.841	.789

Table 6.13 shows that both the attitude and the behavioural intent scales achieved acceptable Cronbach’s alpha values, indicating the reliability (internal consistency) of the measures.

#### **6.6.4 Factor rotation and interpretation**

The rotation method chosen for the two multi-dimensional measures (brand personality and motivations) was Promax with Kaiser normalisation. Promax is a method of oblique rotation that is designed for larger data sets, producing correlated factor solutions (Field, 2009:644). In order to label the resulting factors, the researcher

used the content of the variables and the original labels of the BPS, the underlying theory, and past research as guidelines.

In order to decide which items to retain for each construct and sub-construct that emerged, the criteria for inclusion were the deletion of double-loadings, and a factor loading cut-off point of .5. The choice of this cut-off point was guided by Comrey and Lee (1992), who suggested cut-off points that range from poor (.32), fair (.45), good (.55), very good (.63), to excellent (.71). This study excluded those items that had values below .5 and those that had values above 1 from further analysis.

#### 6.6.4.1 Facebook

The rotated two-factor solution for the perceived brand personality of Facebook is presented in Table 6.14.

**Table 6.14 The pattern and structure matrices for the perceived brand personality of Facebook**

Item statement		Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
		Factors		Factors	
		1 Excitement	2 Sincerity	1 Excitement	2 Sincerity
Q5.1	Facebook is down-to-earth		.597	.490	.642
Q5.2	Facebook is honest		.990	.455	.808
Q5.3	Facebook is original	.492		.637	.554
Q5.4	Facebook is cheerful	.552		.681	.575
Q5.5	Facebook is daring	.686		.734	.558
Q5.6	Facebook is spirited	.689		.743	.569
Q5.7	Facebook is imaginative	.852		.765	.489
Q5.8	Facebook is up-to-date	.649		.640	.451
Q5.9	Facebook is reliable		.574	.571	.689
Q5.10	Facebook is intelligent	.529		.714	.637
Q5.11	Facebook is successful	.682		.592	.363
Q5.12	Facebook is upper-class		.505	.583	.664
Q5.13	Facebook is charming	.420	.404	.709	.705

Item statement	Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
	Factors		Factors	
	1 Excitement	2 Sincerity	1 Excitement	2 Sincerity
Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ )	.879	.787		

Table 6.14 reveals that the matrices contain loadings that exceed a critical value of .298, indicating a significant loading – especially if one considers that the sample size is more than 300 (Field, 2013:681). Furthermore, the structure matrix depicts that the items are highly correlated to the factors. One item, 'Facebook is charming', double-loaded on the two factors and was subsequently deleted. The item 'Facebook is original' was also deleted from further analysis, as it fell below the cut-off point of .5.

The brand personality factors were labelled as *excitement* (factor 1) and *sincerity* (factor 2), since they shared items from the original BPS. A careful assessment of the items revealed that excitement comprises items from Aaker's BPS and additional items like 'cheerful' and 'charming', which may also best-fit the description of an exciting personality. Sincerity also contained two items from the original scale ('upper-class' and 'charming'). Following the EFA, a reliability analysis resulted in acceptable Cronbach's alpha values (.879 and .787 respectively).

The three-factor solution for motivation for Facebook use is shown on the matrices in Table 6.15.

**Table 6.15 The pattern and structure matrices for motivation**

Items	Pattern matrix			Structure matrix		
	Factors			Factors		
	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment
Q6.10			.574	.638	.446	.745
Q6.12	.737			.694	.430	.426
Q6.14	1.009			.850	.421	.498
Q6.15	.773			.739	.386	.506
Q6.16			.852	.545	.342	.818
Q6.17	.504			.733	.537	.626
Q6.19			.909	.535	.368	.844
Q6.20	.621			.740	.462	.589
Q6.21	.748			.822	.512	.606
Q6.23	.569			.675	.387	.555

Items	Pattern matrix			Structure matrix		
	Factors			Factors		
	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment
Q6.24		.608		.562	.734	.459
Q6.25		.701		.349	.664	
Q6.26		.789		.491	.812	.414
Q6.27		.934		.456	.882	.362
Q6.29		.876		.451	.845	.385
<b>α</b>	<b>.875</b>	<b>.889</b>	<b>.843</b>			

Table 6.15 shows that motivation loaded on three factors, which were then labelled ‘information seeking’ (factor 1), ‘status seeking’ (factor 2), and ‘entertainment’ (factor 3). The structure matrix indicates that the items were highly correlated to specific factors in the matrix. Item 14 (‘I use Facebook to learn new things’) was excluded from further analysis because it had a negative residual variance. The Cronbach’s alpha values of .875, .889, and .843 were considered very good.

#### 6.6.4.2 LinkedIn

Table 6.16 depicts the rotated two-factor solution for the perceived brand personality of LinkedIn.

**Table 6.16 The pattern and structure matrices for the perceived brand personality of LinkedIn**

Item statement		Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
		Factors		Factors	
		1 Competence	2 Excitement	1 Competence	2 Excitement
Q5.1	LinkedIn is down-to-earth	.365	.350	.606	.601
Q5.2	LinkedIn is honest	.653		.696	.513
Q5.3	LinkedIn is original	.570		.687	.562
Q5.4	LinkedIn is cheerful		.766	.556	.785
Q5.5	LinkedIn is daring		.828	.485	.768
Q5.6	LinkedIn is spirited		.857	.535	.818
Q5.7	LinkedIn is imaginative		.481	.620	.680
Q5.8	LinkedIn is up-to-date	.848		.787	.497



Item statement		Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
		Factors		Factors	
		1 Competence	2 Excitement	1 Competence	2 Excitement
Q5.9	LinkedIn is reliable	.828		.793	.521
Q5.10	LinkedIn is intelligent	.746		.778	.561
Q5.11	LinkedIn is successful	.801		.799	.549
Q5.12	LinkedIn is upper-class	.583		.635	.477
Q5.13	LinkedIn is charming		.672	.586	.757
<b>Cronbach's alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>		<b>.892</b>	<b>.872</b>		

One double-loaded item, 'LinkedIn is down to earth', was deleted together with 'LinkedIn is imaginative', due to a factor loading below .5. Based on the content of the variables, the brand personality theory, and past studies, the two factors were labelled 'competence' and 'excitement' respectively. The structure matrix indicates that the items were highly correlated to specific factors in the matrix. Reliability was acceptable, as the Cronbach's alpha values were very good at .892 and .872 respectively.

**Table 6.17 The pattern and structure matrices for motivation**

Items	Pattern matrix			Structure matrix		
	Factors			Factors		
	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment
Q6.10			.714	.577	.479	.777
Q6.12	.761			.771	.586	.474
Q6.14	.930			.861	.526	.574
Q6.15	.693			.716	.449	.540
Q6.16			.772	.573	.436	.796
Q6.17	.734			.782	.554	.554
Q6.19			.964	.552	.488	.892
Q6.20	.473		.404	.759	.558	.736
Q6.21	.431		.331	.708	.551	.669
Q6.23	.608			.707	.562	.494
Q6.24		.769		.579	.809	.466
Q6.25		.494		.479	.620	.516
Q6.26		.818		.521	.798	.436
Q6.27		.889		.577	.885	.535
Q6.29		.794		.579	.813	.423

Items	Pattern matrix			Structure matrix		
	Factors			Factors		
	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment	1 Information seeking	2 Status seeking	3 Entertainment
$\alpha$	.877	.895	.862			

A three-factor solution for motivation was found. The factors were labelled ‘information seeking’, ‘status seeking’, and ‘entertainment’ (see Table 6.17). Similar to those for Facebook, the motivation items were highly correlated to specific factors in the structure matrix. Two items (Q4.20 ‘I share news and ideas using LinkedIn’, and Q4.21 ‘I enjoy the cool character of LinkedIn’) were deleted, as they double-loaded; and item Q4.25 ‘I use LinkedIn for seeking relationships’ was deleted due to a factor loading below .5. The reliability scores were acceptable, and had very good values at .877, .895, and .862 respectively.

#### 6.6.4.3 YouTube

For the YouTube data, a two-factor solution was produced, depicted in Table 6.18.

**Table 6.18 The pattern and structure matrices for the perceived brand personality of YouTube**

Item statement		Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
		Factors		Factors	
		1 Excitement	2 Sincerity	1 Excitement	2 Sincerity
Q5.1	YouTube is down-to-earth		.609	.459	.613
Q5.2	YouTube is honest		.853	.456	.719
Q5.3	YouTube is original	.446	.374	.724	.706
Q5.4	YouTube is cheerful	.583		.745	.652
Q5.5	YouTube is daring	.782		.753	.544
Q5.6	YouTube is spirited	.770		.761	.562
Q5.7	YouTube is imaginative	.841		.811	.586
Q5.8	YouTube is up-to-date	.755		.744	.548
Q5.9	YouTube is reliable		.623	.582	.711
Q5.10	YouTube is intelligent	.344	.471	.694	.727

Item statement		Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
		Factors		Factors	
		1 Excitement	2 Sincerity	1 Excitement	2 Sincerity
Q5.11	YouTube is successful	.763		.744	.542
Q5.12	YouTube is upper-class		.545	.418	.554
Q5.13	YouTube is charming		.607	.607	.722
<b>Cronbach's alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>		<b>.890</b>	<b>.793</b>		

On assessing the contents of the items that loaded on the two factors, a decision was made to label the two factors excitement and sincerity. Two items, 'YouTube is original' and 'YouTube is intelligent', double-loaded, and they were subsequently deleted.

Table 6.19 reveals the rotated two-factor solution for YouTube motivation.

**Table 6.19 The pattern and structure matrices for motivation**

Items	Pattern matrix		Structure matrix	
	Factors		Factors	
	1 Status seeking	2 Infotainment seeking	1 Status seeking	2 Infotainment seeking
Q6.10		.708		.669
Q6.12		.683		.693
Q6.14		.770		.741
Q6.15		.679		.673
Q6.16		.786		.771
Q6.17	.648		.705	.389
Q6.19		.706		.699
Q6.20	.516		.605	.435
Q6.21		.567	.387	.633
Q6.23	.385	.421	.528	.552
Q6.24	.843		.841	
Q6.25	.795		.705	
Q6.26	.704		.736	.332
Q6.27	.921		.890	
Q6.29	.873		.849	
<b>Cronbach's alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>.904</b>	<b>.867</b>		

The two factors were labelled 'status seeking' and 'infotainment seeking'. The two-factor solution is inconsistent with the other two platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn), which produced three-factor solutions. The pattern matrix reveals that Q4.23 'YouTube lets me connect to the virtual community' double-loaded on the two factors, and it was

deleted. The measures were deemed reliable, as their Cronbach's alpha values were .904 and .867 respectively.

To summarise the items that were deleted from the rest of the analysis: Tables 6.20 and 6.21 depict the deleted items from brand personality and motivation, with the reasons they were deleted.

**Table 6.20 Brand personality items that were deleted**

Platform	Items deleted	Reasons
Facebook	Q3.3 Facebook is original	Loading < .5
	Q3.13 Facebook is charming	Double loading
LinkedIn	Q3.1 LinkedIn is down to earth	Double loading
	Q3.7 LinkedIn is imaginative	Loading < .5
YouTube	Q3.3 YouTube is original	Double loading
	Q3.10 YouTube is intelligent	Double loading

Table 6.20 indicates that two items were deleted from the brand personality construct for each platform, due either to double-loadings or to factor loadings below the cut-off point of .5.

**Table 6.21 Motivation items that were deleted**

	Item deleted	Reasons
Facebook	Q6.14 I use Facebook to learn new things	Negative residual variance
LinkedIn	Q6.20 I share news and ideas using LinkedIn	Double loading
	Q6.21 I enjoy the cool character of LinkedIn	Double loading
	Q6.25 I use LinkedIn for seeking relationships	Loading < .5
YouTube	Q6.23 YouTube lets me connect to the virtual community	Double loading

Table 6.21 reveals that one motivation item for Facebook was deleted due to negative residual variance; three items were deleted due to double loadings (LinkedIn two items, and YouTube one item); and one YouTube item was deleted for a factor loading below the cut-off point of .5.

### 6.6.5 Behaviour

In order to compile a behaviour measure, the decision was made to use the usage patterns to calculate a comparable measure. Daily, weekly, and monthly use needed to be combined with usage per session, and all then processed to one measure, the average monthly usage, to arrive at a solution for use in the structural equation modelling.

The calculation process was as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- ❖ Firstly, session use was converted to minutes only (thus hours were also converted to minutes).
- ❖ Secondly, the behaviour value for each option (daily, weekly, and monthly) was calculated:
  - To calculate the 'behaviour' value for DAILY users, this formula applies: (times used daily X session use) X 7 X 4.3
  - To calculate the value for WEEKLY users: (times used weekly X session use) X 4.3
  - To calculate the value for MONTHLY users: (times used monthly X session use)
- ❖ The resultant values were then considered representative of behaviour.

It is important to note that, at this point in the data analysis process, extreme values inconsistent with what could be considered normal (or possible) platform use were observed. For example, 20 sessions were reported, with five hours per session, which would equate to  $20 \times 5 = 100$  hours per day. The data were therefore re-examined to manage these extreme values, which were deleted, and extreme outliers (following a data exploration process) were replaced using the median, which was considered to

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<sup>1</sup> Note: as there are 52 weeks in a standard year (consisting of seven days each), and 12 months, it follows that a month is on average 4.3 weeks long (52/12).

be a more valid reflection of the true behaviour in this case. The resultant descriptive statistics for the calculated behaviour are depicted in Table 6.22.

**Table 6.22 Descriptive statistics for behaviour – minutes per month**

Actual behaviour	n	Mean (M)	Hours and minutes per day <sup>2</sup>	Standard deviation (SD)
Facebook	355	4491.84	2 hrs 28 min	4061.33
LinkedIn	375	532.12	0 hrs 18 min	798.37
YouTube	338	3774.03	2 hrs 4 min	3608.5

Table 6.22 indicates that the Facebook respondents averaged about two and a half hours of Facebook use per day. Respondents for LinkedIn reported much lower usage, at an average of 18 minutes per day. For YouTube, the average daily use was just over two hours.

Due to the handling of the extreme values and outliers, the data sets changed, resulting in fewer cases, as is clear from Table 6.22. It should be noted that the samples were still considered large enough (exceeding 300) for the purposes of the study. The EFA of all the constructs was subsequently re-run to ascertain whether the factor structures remained the same and to ensure that the reliabilities were still acceptable. All the factor structures for all the constructs were found to be the same, and the reliabilities still exceeded 0.7. The re-run EFA summaries are provided in Table 6.23.

**Table 6.23 Re-run exploratory factor analysis**

Construct	Factors	Total variance explained	Reliabilities
<b>Facebook</b>			
Brand personality	2	50.67%	Factor 1=.878 Factor 2=.788
Attitude	1 (unidimensional)	75.71%	Factor 1=.939
Motivation	2	62.08%	Factor 1=.876 Factor 2=.892 Factor 3=.852
Behavioural intent	1 (unidimensional)	68.1%	Factor 1=.863

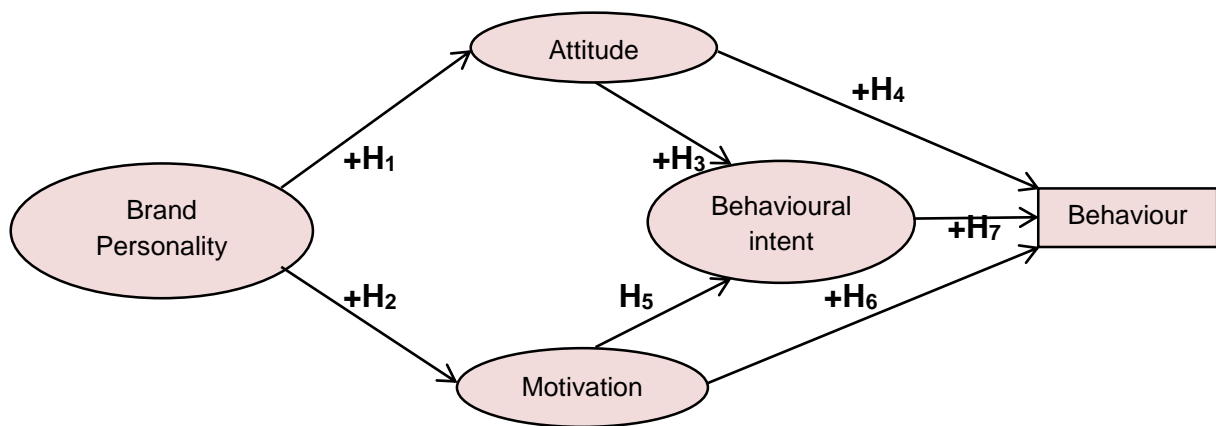
<sup>2</sup> (Minutes per month/30.4)= minutes per day. Minutes per day then converted to hour and minute values, and rounded. A month is considered to consist of 30.4 days when averaged across a year.

Construct	Factors	Total variance explained	Reliabilities
<b>LinkedIn</b>			
Brand personality	2	55.79%	Factor 1=.892 Factor 2=.861
Attitude	1 (unidimensional)	74.63%	Factor 1=.935
Motivation	3	62.72%	Factor 1=.876 Factor 2=.893 Factor 3=.862
Behavioural intent	1 (unidimensional)	60.09%	Factor 1=.844
<b>YouTube</b>			
Brand personality	2	53.04%	Factor 1=.893 Factor 2=.787
Attitude	1 (unidimensional)	71.15%	Factor 1=.924
Motivation	2	51.55%	Factor 1=.898 Factor 2=.846
Behavioural intent	1 (unidimensional)	58.84%	Factor 1=.786

After determining the final factors and labels, and making sure that the reliability of the constructs was acceptable, the next stage entailed evaluating the proposed model with regard to the data collected across the three platforms.

Figure 6.1 shows the conceptual framework that was used to evaluate data fit.

**Figure 6.1 The conceptual framework**



This study examines the relationships between perceived brand personality of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube) and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. Structural equation modelling was used to examine the relationships that are shown in Figure 6.1.



## 6.7 ESTIMATION OF THE HYPOTHESISED RESEARCH MODEL

Kline (2011:93) indicates that this step entails evaluating the model – that is, determining whether the model explains the data. In most cases, initial models do not fit the data very well. Notably, there is no consensus on the acceptable fit indices' threshold that could be used to assess whether the hypothesised model fits well with the collected data (Kline, 2011:206). In this study, the model fit was assessed using  $RMSEA \leq 0.07$  (Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008:58; Steiger, 2007), NFI and TLI values close to .9; all of which reflect a good model fit (Schumacher, 2010:76).  $IFI \geq .9$  (Hooper *et al.*, 2008:55) and CFI values above .9 are also associated with a model that fits well (Hair *et al.*, 2010:668).

### 6.7.1 Facebook model

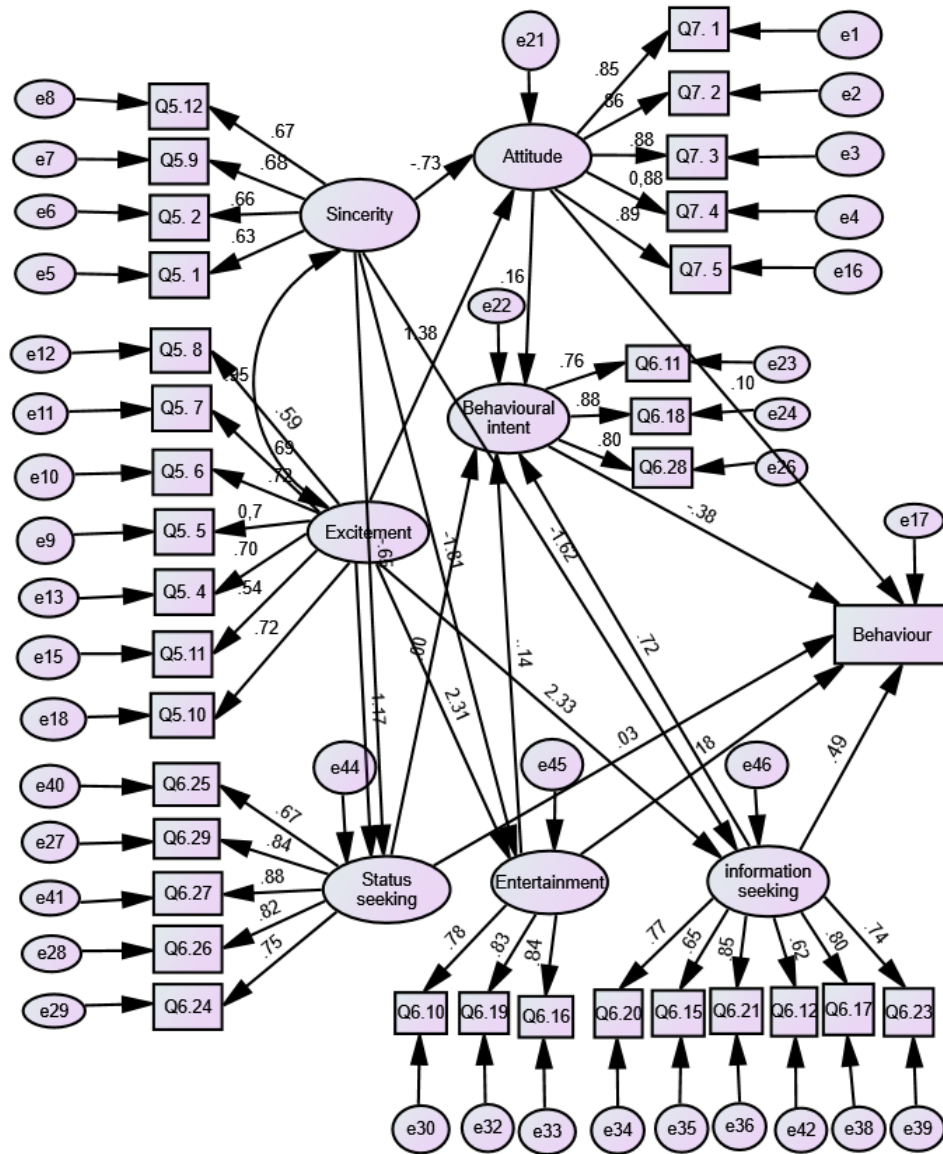
Table 6.24 shows the fit indices for the hypothesised model 1 for Facebook.

**Table 6.24 Fit indices for the hypothesised model**

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>d.f</i>	P	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1	1298.658	510	.000	.846	.901	.890	.900	.066 PCLOSE(0.000)

An assessment of the initial output of the fit indices revealed that the hypothesised model did fit well with the sample data. This model was then employed to test the relationships among the research constructs and to examine the results of the hypotheses testing. The output of the SEM for the hypothesised model is depicted in Figure 6.2.

**Figure 6.2 Facebook model**



It should be noted that the two-factor model had some standard regression coefficients above 1. However, the model is still acceptable, since standard regression coefficients are not bound by +/- 1, as are correlation coefficients (Deegan, 1978:882).

A high correlation (.951) was found between the two brand personality factors. Because of this, a competing model featuring brand personality as one construct was run. The competing model had the following fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 1454.459$ ;  $d.f = 515$ ;  $P = .000$ ;  $NFI = .828$ ;  $IFI = .882$ ;  $TLI = .870$ ;  $CFI = .881$ ;  $RMSEA = .072$  PCLOSE (.000). (Refer to Appendix B: Facebook competing model) Comparatively, the fit indices for the two-factor model show superior fit, and it is thus considered preferable and may be used to test the hypotheses.

## 6.7.2 Hypothesis testing for Facebook

A hypothesis test is a technique to determine whether an assertion about a characteristic of a population is reasonable (Sun, Djouani, Van Wyk, Wang & Siarry, 2014:2014). It is used to make statistical decisions about a given population, based on sample data. This study set the following hypotheses, which were tested at  $\alpha = .05$  using SEM.

### 6.7.2.1 Hypothesis 1

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of Facebook and users' attitudes.*

The hypothesis was partially supported. One of the brand personality dimensions, 'excitement', did have a significant positive relationship with 'attitude' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 1.383$ ). However, the second dimension, 'sincerity', had a significant negative relationship with 'attitude' ( $p = .001$ ;  $\beta = -.731$ ).

### 6.7.2.2 Hypothesis 2

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of Facebook and users' motivation.*

This hypothesis was partially supported by the results, which reveal that 'excitement' had a significant positive relationship with 'status seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 1.170$ ), 'entertainment' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 2.306$ ), and 'information seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 2.325$ ). 'Sincerity' had a significant negative relationship with 'status seeking' ( $p = .006$ ;  $\beta = -.648$ ), 'entertainment' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = -1.808$ ), and 'information seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = -1.617$ ).

### 6.7.2.3 Hypothesis 3

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis is supported because 'attitude' had a significant positive relationship with 'behavioural intent' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .157$ ).

#### **6.7.2.4 Hypothesis 4**

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour.*

This hypothesis was not supported in this study, because 'users' attitude' had no significant relationship with 'behaviour' ( $p = .224$ ).

#### **6.7.2.5 Hypothesis 5**

*H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent.*

This hypothesis was partially supported. There was a significant positive relationship between 'entertainment' and 'behavioural intent' ( $p = .013$ ;  $\beta = .142$ ), and between 'information seeking' and 'behavioural intent' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .716$ ). There was no significant relationship between 'status seeking' and 'behavioural intent' ( $p = .961$ ).

#### **6.7.2.6 Hypothesis 6**

*H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was partially supported. Results reveal that 'information seeking' had a significant positive relationship with 'behaviour' ( $p = .031$ ;  $\beta = .491$ ). There were no significant relationships between 'entertainment' and 'behaviour' ( $p = .070$ ), or between 'status-seeking' and 'behaviour' ( $p = .664$ ).

#### **6.7.2.7 Hypothesis 7**

*H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported. There was no significant relationship between 'behavioural intent' and 'behaviour' ( $p = .131$ ).

### 6.7.3 LinkedIn model

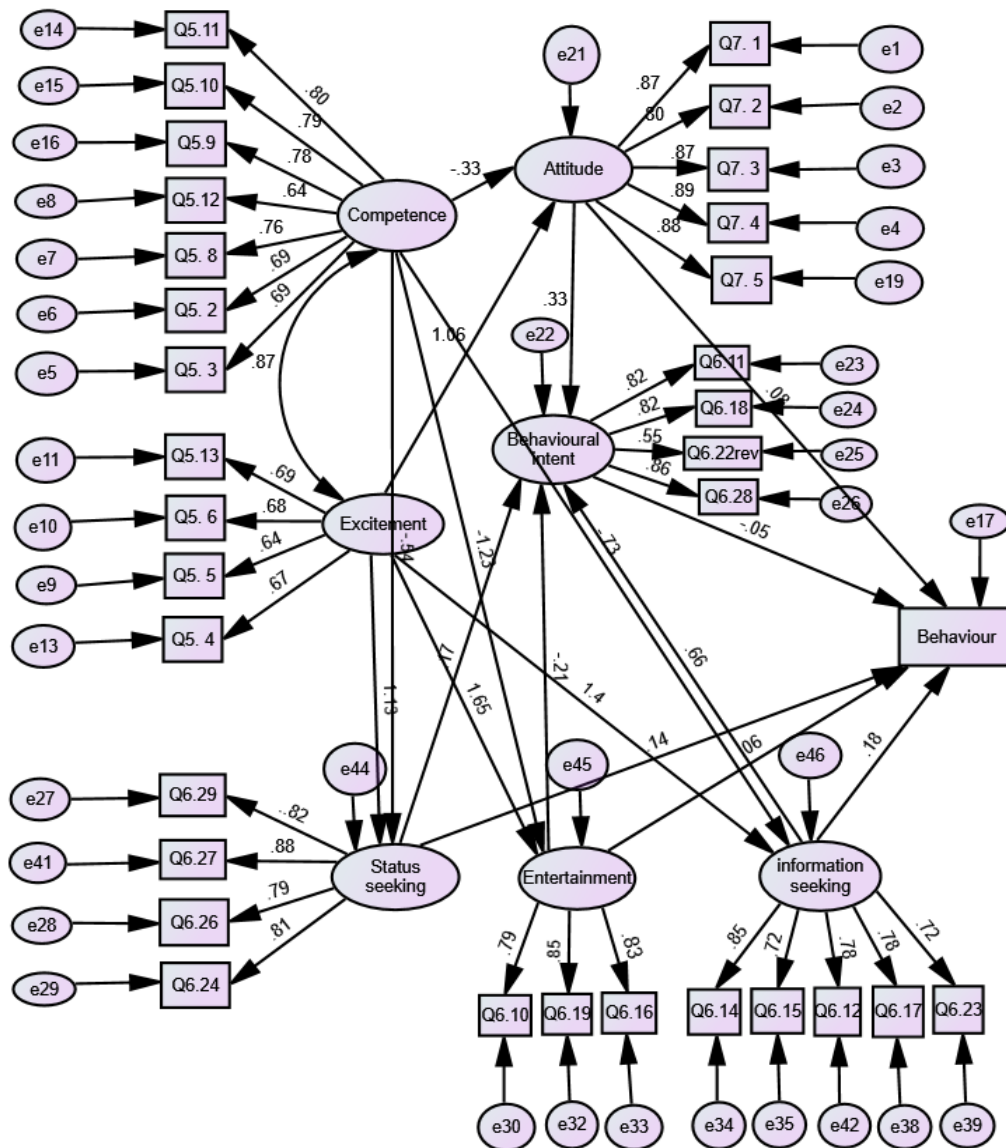
Table 6.25 shows the fit indices for the hypothesised model 1 for LinkedIn.

**Table 6.25 Fit indices for the hypothesised model**

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>d.f</i>	P	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1	1124.7067	478	.000	.872	.922	.914	.922	.0601 PCLOSE(0.000)

An assessment of the output of fit indices revealed that the hypothesised model fits well with the sample data. The output of the SEM for the hypothesised model is depicted in Figure 6.3.

### 6.3 LinkedIn model, with acceptable fit indices



Due to high collinearity between 'competence' and 'excitement', a competing model with one brand personality factor was run, and the following results were produced:  $\chi^2 = 1511, 4205$ ;  $d.f = 483$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $NFI = .829$ ;  $IFI = .877$ ;  $TLI = .864$ ;  $CFI = .876$ ;  $RMSEA = .0755$  PCLOSE (.000). The results of the one-factor brand personality were inferior to the two-factor model. (Refer to Appendix B: LinkedIn competing model). Consequently, the two-factor model was employed to test the relationships between the research constructs. It should be noted that the two-factor model had some standard regression coefficients above 1, as was the case with the Facebook model. However, the LinkedIn model is still acceptable, since standard regression coefficients are not bound by +/-1, as are correlation coefficients (Deegan, 1978:882).

## 6.7.4 Hypotheses testing for LinkedIn

The following seven hypotheses were tested for LinkedIn, and their results are discussed next.

### 6.7.4.1 Hypothesis 1

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of LinkedIn and users' attitudes*

The hypothesis was partially supported. Only one of the brand personality dimensions, 'excitement', had a significant positive relationship with 'attitude' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 1.0605$ ); while 'competence' had a significant negative relationship with 'attitude' ( $p = .0032$ ;  $\beta = -.3316$ ).

### 6.7.4.2 Hypothesis 2

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of LinkedIn and users' motivation.*

The stated hypothesis was partially supported. The 'excitement' dimension had a significant positive relationship with the three motivation factors: 'status seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 1.1271$ ); 'entertainment' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 1.6488$ ); and 'information seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 1.4042$ ). The other dimension, 'competence', had a significant negative relationship with all three motivation factors: 'status seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = -.5438$ ); 'entertainment' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = -1.2313$ ), and 'information seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = -.7300$ ).

### 6.7.4.3 Hypothesis 3

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis was supported. 'Attitude' had a significant positive relationship with 'behavioural intent' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .3313$ ).



#### 6.7.4.4 Hypothesis 4

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported, as 'users' attitude' had a non-significant relationship with 'behaviour' ( $p = .3564$ ).

#### 6.7.4.5 Hypothesis 5

*H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis was supported. Two dimensions of 'motivation' had a significant positive relationship with 'behavioural intent'. They are 'status seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .1749$ ), 'and information seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .6631$ ). 'Entertainment' had a significant negative relationship with 'behavioural intent' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = -.2139$ ).

#### 6.7.4.6 Hypothesis 6

*H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported. None of the three factors – 'information seeking' ( $p = .2422$ ), 'status seeking' ( $p = .0625$ ), and 'entertainment' ( $p = .5088$ ) – had any significant relationship with 'behaviour'.

#### 6.7.4.7 Hypothesis 7

*H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported by the results as 'behavioural intent' had a non-significant ( $p = .7384$ ) relationship with 'behaviour'.

### 6.7.5 YouTube model

Table 6.26 shows the fit indices for the hypothesised model 1 for YouTube.

**Table 6.26 Fit indices for the hypothesised model 1**

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>d.f</i>	P	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1	1340.6818	514	.000	.816	.878	.866	.877	.0691 PCLOSE(0.000)

An assessment of the initial output of the fit indices revealed that the hypothesised model did not fit well with the sample data. It was deemed necessary to examine the modification indices so that an improved fit of data could be attained.

Whittaker (2012:27) notes that the modification index is the most popular index that is employed when indices reveal evidence of misfit in the model. The modification index offers an estimated value in which the model's chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic would decrease if a fixed parameter were added, or if a parameter were deleted from the model. Thus the modification index shows correlations that make the biggest changes or improvements to the model from a mathematical perspective.

However, there is a rule of thumb that states that any modification index (MI) that is at least 10 should be considered for model modification. All paths with large MIs have to be inspected to determine whether removing or keeping them in the model would enhance model fit. In this study, the paths with large MIs were examined, as well as the value of parameter change, in order to decide which covariances between error terms could be correlated. Any modification effected has to be supported by theory (Shreiber, 2008:90). The first two MIs that were affected in model 1 are depicted in Table 6.27.

**Table 6.27 Modification indices**

Covariance	Modification index (MI)	Parameter change	Rank
e28 <--> e32	63.9549	.2494	1
e34 <--> e38	51.1749	.3666	2

From Table 6.27 it is evident that the higher MI was for the covariance between error terms e28 and e32, followed by e34 and e38. The correlation of these error terms with large MIs was effected in anticipation that they would have a significant impact on improving the fit of the model, especially when considering the parameter change. It was justified to correlate e28 and e32, and e34 and e38, because these manifest variables were used to measure the motivation for using social media. It is important to note that the first two items were used to measure the ‘entertainment’ dimension, and the latter items were used to measure the ‘information–seeking’ dimension. After correlating these error terms, a second model was run and it was therefore necessary to re-specify the model to examine whether a better fit could be achieved.

#### 6.7.5.1 Respecification of the model

The respecified model (model 2), reflecting the two covariances pointed out in Table 6.31, produced the fit indices in Table 6.32.

**Table 6.28 Fit indices for the respecified model 2**

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>d.f</i>	P	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 2	1216.2234	512	.000	.833	.896	.885	.895	.0639 PCLOSE(0.000)

There was an improvement in the fit indices, but they still needed further improving so that they could reach the acceptable cut-off values. There was a decrease in the value of RMSEA, which fell within the acceptable range of .05 to .08 (MacCallum *et al.*, 1996:134). However, the other fit indices needed further improvement. With the intention of improving model fit, the next two MIs were investigated – that is, e12 and e15, and e5 and e6.

**Table 6.29 Modification indices for model 2**

Covariance	Modification index (MI)	Parameter change	Rank
e12 <--> e15	63.1684	.1466	1
e5 <--> e6	12.5987	.1422	2

Table 6.29 reveals that the higher modification index was for e12 and e15, implying that correlating the two error terms produced a larger impact on the improvement of the model fit. The correlation of e12 and e15 was theoretically justified because, although the two error terms were mathematically correlated, they measured the same constructs. Both e12 and e15 measured the brand personality dimension, ‘excitement’. Specifically, e12 measured ‘up-to-date’, and e15 measured ‘successful’. The second MI correlated the e5 and e6 error terms. The correlation of e5 and e6 was justified again, since both error terms measured brand personality – ‘sincerity’ (e5 measured ‘honest’, and e6 measured ‘down to earth’).

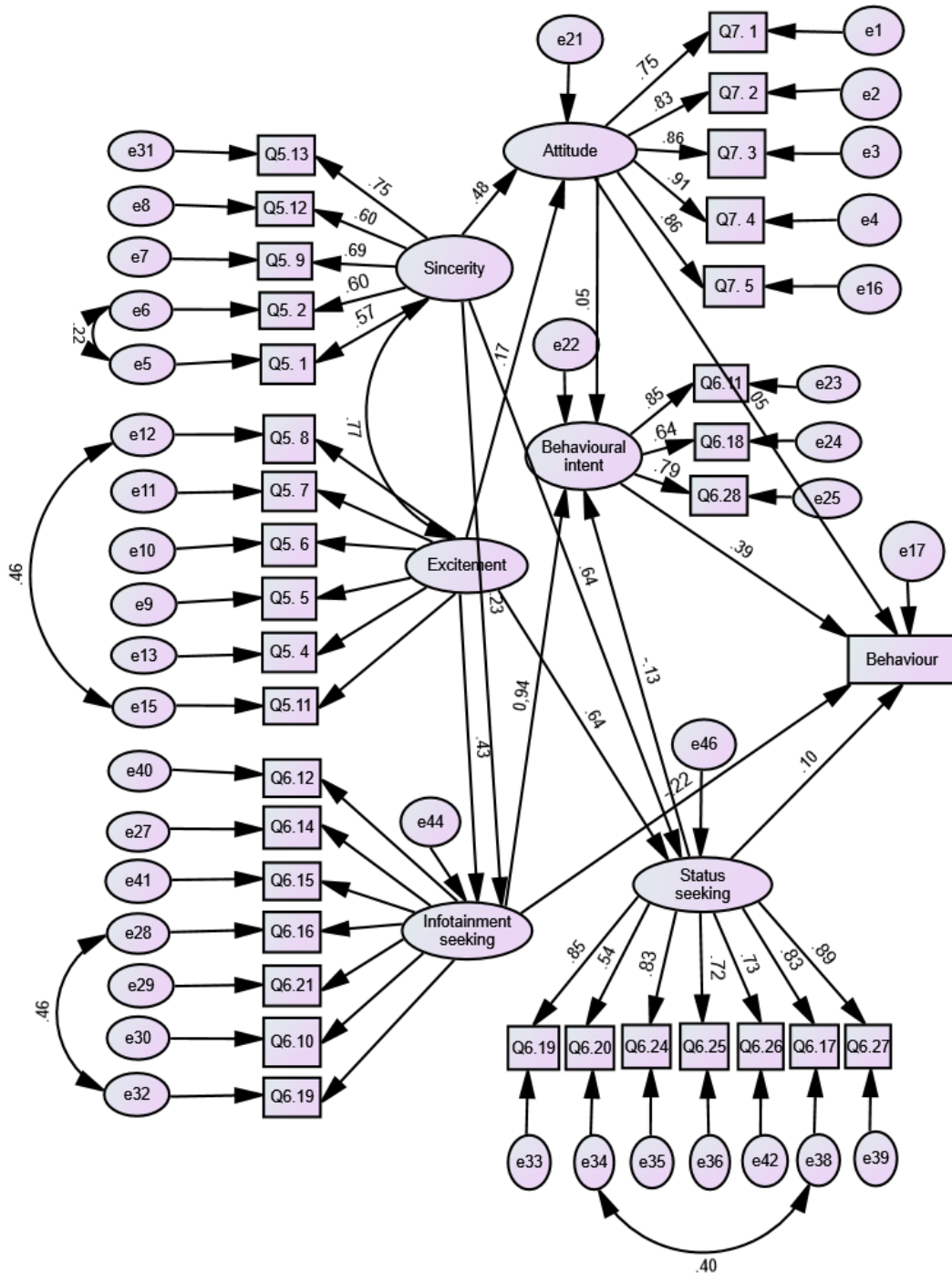
After implementing these modifications, the model emerged with the improved fit indices shown in Table 6.30.

**Table 6.30 Fit indices of the respecified model 3**

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>d.f</i>	P	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 3	1133.485	510	.000	.844	.908	.898	.907	.060 PCLOSE(0.000)

The results in Table 6.30 show that the model emerged with acceptable fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 1133.485$ , *d.f* = 510; p-value = .000, NFI = .844, IFI = .908, TLI = .898, CFI = .907, and RMSEA = .060 (PCLOSE = 0.000).

**Figure 6.4 Final YouTube model (model 3)**



As the final model was deemed most suitable, the hypotheses on which it was based could be tested.

## 6.7.6 Hypotheses testing for YouTube

### 6.7.6.1 Hypothesis 1

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of YouTube and users' attitude.*

The hypothesis was partially supported. 'Sincerity' had a significant positive relationship with 'attitude' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .482$ ), but 'excitement' had no significant relationship with 'attitude' ( $p = .075$ ).

### 6.7.6.2 Hypothesis 2

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of YouTube and users' motivation.*

The hypothesis was partially supported. 'Excitement' had a significant positive relationship with 'infotainment seeking' ( $p = .001$ ;  $\beta = .426$ ), but a significant negative relationship with 'status seeking' ( $p = .003$ ;  $\beta = -.346$ ). 'Sincerity' had a significant positive relationship with both 'status seeking' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .635$ ) and 'infotainment seeking' ( $p = .024$ ;  $\beta = .233$ ).

### 6.7.6.3 Hypothesis 3

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis was not supported. 'Attitude' had a non-significant relationship with 'behavioural intent' ( $p = .235$ ).

### 6.7.6.4 Hypothesis 4

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported, as 'attitude' had a non-significant relationship with 'behaviour' ( $p = .403$ ).

#### **6.7.6.5 Hypothesis 5**

*H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis was supported. One dimension, 'infotainment seeking', had a significant positive relationship with 'behavioural intent' ( $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .942$ ). 'Status seeking' had a significant negative relationship with 'behavioural intent' ( $p = .001$ ;  $\beta = -.128$ ).

#### **6.7.6.6 Hypothesis 6**

*H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported. The results show that both 'infotainment seeking' ( $p = .566$ ) and 'status seeking' ( $p = .182$ ) had no significant relationship with 'behaviour'.

#### **6.7.6.7 Hypothesis 7**

*H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was not supported, since 'behavioural intent' had a non-significant relationship with 'behaviour' ( $p = .320$ ).

Table 6.31 summarises the results of the hypotheses testing for the three platforms.



**Table 6.31 Summary of hypotheses testing results**

Hypothesis	Facebook	LinkedIn	YouTube
H <sub>1</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of YouTube and users' attitude.	Partially supported	Partially supported	Partially supported
H <sub>2</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of YouTube and users' motivation.	Partially supported	Partially supported	Partially supported
H <sub>3</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent	Supported	Supported	Not supported
H <sub>4</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported
H <sub>5</sub> : There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent	Partially supported	Supported	Supported
H <sub>6</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour	Partially supported	Not supported	Not supported
H <sub>7</sub> : There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported

## 6.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the results of the study. The chapter began with a presentation of the demographic profiles – particularly age, gender, and level of education. Next, the constructs' descriptive statistics and interpretation were presented. Thereafter, the exploratory factor analysis was reported, and the SEM analyses for each platform were presented. The hypotheses testing results for each platform were presented.

The next chapter deals with the summary and discussion of the results and provides conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings that were obtained from this empirical study. The chapter unfolds in the following way. First, it presents a synopsis of the research results. Second, a discussion on the research findings is presented, along with a comparison of the research results to existing literature. Third, the chapter discusses the results of the research hypotheses. Fourth, the chapter discusses the study's main contribution and the implications that the study has for managers. Finally, limitations and suggested areas for future study are presented.

#### 7.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

A comprehensive literature search has revealed that no study has been carried out, either in South Africa or elsewhere in the world, on the interrelationship between the perceived brand personalities of social media and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. It was the primary objective of this study to examine the predictive effects of the perceived brand personality of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube) on users' attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. The secondary objectives entailed examining the underlying structure of the brand personality scale within the context of the social media brands, determining the relationships between the perceived brand personality of social media and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour; and finally, proposing a model for the interrelationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

In order to achieve the objectives, data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered using a self-administered online survey. The research data were collected from Qualtrics Panels, which had pre-recruited online panel members. For an individual to participate in the survey, they had

to be at least 18 years of age, be a resident of South Africa, and be a user of one of the platforms. Before the fully-fledged survey was conducted, a pre-test was done online in order to check the comprehensibility of the questionnaire and its ease of use and those aspects that could negatively affect the collection and the quality of the data. Qualtrics Panels staff facilitated the collection of data from 38 respondents (10% of the total sample for each platform). Thereafter, a full online survey was conducted and 380 fully completed questionnaires were completed for each platform (Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube), amounting to 1140 respondents in total. It should be noted that, due to extreme values in the usage patterns at the time when the behaviour variable was calculated, extreme cases were deleted. This resulted in final samples of 355 for Facebook, 375 for LinkedIn, and 338 for YouTube.

In order to examine the factor structures of the constructs, exploratory factor analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. To establish the underlying factor structure of the constructs, the collected data were examined using principal axis factoring with Promax rotation on the assumption that the items were correlated. On the basis of the factor structure that emerged, and considering the origins of the constructs, factors were subsequently assigned names that best described the items.

After establishing the factor structure for the constructs, the subsequent scales and subscales were assessed for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Results revealed that all scores were acceptable, since they exceeded the acceptable cut-off point of .7.

The next step entailed the estimation of the models, where the researcher examined the fit of the models to the collected data. For the Facebook model, model fit was attained at  $\chi^2 = 1298.658$ ;  $d.f = 510$ ;  $P = .000$ ;  $NFI = .846$ ;  $IFI = .901$ ;  $TLI = .890$ ;  $CFI = .900$ ;  $RMSEA = .066$  PCLOSE (.000).

For the LinkedIn model, model fit was attained at  $\chi^2 = 1124.7067$ ;  $d.f = 478$ ;  $P = .000$ ;  $NFI = .872$ ;  $IFI = .922$ ;  $TLI = .914$ ;  $CFI = .922$ ;  $RMSEA = .0601$  PCLOSE (.000).

For YouTube, a model fit with adequate fit indices was attained after four covariances had been added to the model. Two covariances were added to the brand personality

scale, and the other two to the motivation scale. The final fit indices were attained at  $\chi^2 = 1133.485$ ;  $d.f = 510$ ;  $P = .000$ ;  $NFI = .844$ ;  $IFI = .908$ ;  $TLI = .898$ ;  $CFI = .907$ ;  $RMSEA = .060$  PCLOSE (.000).

### **7.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

This section summarises the research findings, and compares the results with previous studies that were mentioned in the literature review chapters. The section begins by discussing the dominant descriptive findings, and thereafter, the findings that relate to the main research objectives are discussed. As the results of the analyses of data from the three platforms shared similarities in many respects, they are discussed together.

#### **7.3.1 Demographics**

The results reveal that the users of the three social media groups are young people in their early and mid-thirties. Statista (2018) confirms the same trends for the three social media brands.

The results for the three social media platforms revealed that there were more male respondents than females. According to Statista (2018), Facebook has 55% male and 45% female users; LinkedIn has 56% male and 44% female users (LinkedIn, 2018); and YouTube has 62% male and 38% female users.

The results revealed that graduate respondents dominated the survey, followed by respondents who had completed secondary schooling. There are similarities with global trends: several studies have found that young adults who are educated dominate the use of social media (Correa, Hinsley & Gil de Zuniga, 2010:248l; Perrin, 2015:3).

#### **7.3.2 Usage patterns**

The results suggested that respondents had used social media for a considerable time. This implies that data for the three social media platforms were collected from

respondents who were mostly experienced and frequent users of the platforms, save for LinkedIn which had less frequent users.

### **7.3.3 Brand personality**

With regard to the brand personality of the three social media platforms, the results revealed that, indeed, respondents viewed the platforms as if they were persons with some of the specified characteristics. Two brand personality dimensions emerged for each platform: excitement and sincerity for Facebook, competence and excitement for LinkedIn, and excitement and sincerity for YouTube.

The final results did not reproduce the original brand personality scale within the social media context. Even though the results did not reproduce the original scale, this is also consistent with the results of many studies in which Aaker's model was applied. A number of studies that were carried out in different contexts have produced some brand personality dimensions that are linked to Aaker's brand personality scale (BPS) (Glynn & Widjaja, 2015; Guiry & Venguist, 2015; Rutter, Hanretty & Lettice, 2015), and some additional dimensions that are not linked to Aaker's BPS.

Of the brand personality dimensions, excitement entails the fact that respondents viewed the platforms as having an exciting personality that is attractive and capable of generating interest, whereas having a sincere personality may be explained by the idea that respondents portray the platforms (Facebook and YouTube) as trustworthy and dependable. Sincerity is seen as fair, fulfilling, and helpful – like a friend (Ahmed & Jan, 2015:397). Competence means that LinkedIn is seen as a reliable and successful social media platform.

The fact that this study produced a two-factor brand personality structure for each of the three social media platforms is consistent with Ahmed and Thygaraj (2014:9), who indicated that Aaker's BPS is not generalisable. In fact, it is notable that the BPS experiences some modification as it is applied to different contexts, brands, and cultures. The current results also confirm that Aaker's BPS seems to be best applicable in American culture, as it has undergone changes where it has been applied across different cultures (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014:14; Arora & Stoner, 2009:273). In

this case, when BPS was applied to South Africa – a different socio-cultural context – and to social media brands, the same results could not be replicated.

### **7.3.4 Attitude**

For all three social media platforms, the results have revealed that respondents had a positive attitude towards the platforms. This positive attitude can be leveraged by social media brand managers to appeal to more users. The attitude of respondents is important, as it could affect their behaviour with regard to social media brands. The results are consistent with a previous study by Al-Shdayfat (2018:41) which investigated the attitude of student nurses towards the use of social media for academic purposes, the results revealed that there is a positive attitude towards the use of social media. In another study, Reuter, Ludwing, Kaufhold and Spielhofer (2016:101), examined the attitude of European emergency service staff towards social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) use, for personal and organisational purposes. The results revealed that female emergency staff have a more positive attitude towards social media than their male counterparts.

### **7.3.5 Motivation**

The results of the study revealed that motivation produced a three-factor structure for Facebook and LinkedIn, and a two-factor structure for YouTube, instead of the anticipated four-factor structure. The respondents indicated that their motives for using Facebook and LinkedIn entail information-seeking, status-seeking, and entertainment. For YouTube, the results indicated that their motives for use were status-seeking and infotainment-seeking. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies that examined a number of motives for social media use. For example, in line with the current results, in a study to examine the factors that influence the sharing of news in a social media context, Lee and Ma (2012:333) found four motivations: entertainment, status-seeking, socialising, and information-seeking, while Smock *et al.* (2011:2325) suggest that users of social media brands have various motives that include entertainment, information-sharing, social interaction, companionship, professional achievement, and meeting people.

### 7.3.6 Behavioural intent

With regard to behavioural intent, the results of the study showed that respondents' intention ranged from medium to high levels of intent. The results suggested that respondents had a high probability that they will use the three platforms, since behavioural intent is assumed to be an antecedent of behaviour.

## 7.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses that this study tested were grounded in theory and previous studies, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The discussion that follows is based on the results of hypotheses testing.

### 7.4.1 Hypothesis 1

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' attitude.*

This hypothesis was based on the foundation that brand personality has a strong influence on attitude (Ambrose *et al.*, 2006:6). This hypothesis was partially supported for all the three platforms: Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Table 7.1 specifies the nature (positive or negative) of the relationships that resulted.

**Table 7.1 Summary of hypothesis 1 results**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Excitement->attitude	Significantly positive
	Sincerity->attitude	Significantly negative
LinkedIn	Competence->attitude	Significantly negative
	Excitement->attitude	Significantly positive
YouTube	Excitement->attitude	No significant relationship
	Sincerity->attitude	Significantly positive

Table 7.1 reveals that, for Facebook, the excitement brand personality dimension was positively related to attitude, which supports the hypothesis. However, sincerity was



negatively related to attitude, which does not support the hypothesis. For LinkedIn, excitement also resulted in a positive relationship with attitude (supporting the hypothesis), whereas for competence the relationship was negative (not supporting the hypothesis). The results for YouTube showed a positive relationship between sincerity and attitude, and no significant relationship between excitement and attitude, in partial support of the hypothesis.

Overall, the results suggest that the brand personality dimensions do affect respondents' attitude towards social media platforms, albeit not always in a positive manner. For example, one of the LinkedIn dimensions - competence had a significant negative relationship with attitude. On the basis of the sample data, the fact that Facebook is seen as sincere, and LinkedIn as competent, did not enhance a positive attitude towards these platforms.

Some of these results are in line with studies conducted by Shobeiri, Laroche and Mazaheri (2013:75) and Lee and Kang (2013:94), who found significant positive relationships between brand personality (sincerity) and attitude. In a study to examine the effect of brand personality on attitude to mobile telephone operators, He (2012:407) revealed that one of the brand personality dimensions, excitement has a significant positive relationship with attitude.

It is important to note that attitude towards the use of social media could also be affected by other factors such as credibility which was proposed by Boateng and Okoe (2015:255) and perceived benefits as indicated by Molinillo, Anaya-Sanchez, Agullar-Illescas and Vallspin-Aran (2018:22). Such aspects may explain why some of the results of this study seem to contradict previous research.

#### **7.4.2 Hypothesis 2**

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between the perceived brand personality of social media and users' motivation.*

The hypothesis was based on the foundation that brand personality has a significant relationship with users' motivation. The hypothesis was partially supported for all three

platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube). The results of the hypothesis testing and the nature of the relationships (positive, negative, or no relationship) that resulted are depicted in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2 Summary of hypothesis 2 results**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Excitement->status-seeking	Significantly positive
	Excitement->entertainment	Significantly positive
	Excitement->information-seeking	Significantly positive
	Sincerity->status-seeking	Significantly negative
	Sincerity->entertainment	Significantly negative
	Sincerity->information-seeking	Significantly negative
LinkedIn	Competence->status-seeking	Significantly negative
	Competence->entertainment	Significantly negative
	Competence->information-seeking	Significantly negative
	Excitement->status-seeking	Significantly positive
	Excitement->entertainment	Significantly positive
	Excitement->information-seeking	Significantly positive
YouTube	Excitement->infotainment-seeking	Significantly positive
	Excitement->status-seeking	Significantly negative
	Sincerity->infotainment-seeking	Significantly positive
	Sincerity->status-seeking	Significantly positive

Table 7.2 reveals that, for Facebook, one of its perceived brand personality dimensions – excitement – was positively related to status-seeking, entertainment, and information-seeking, thus supporting the hypothesis. Sincerity was negatively related to status seeking, entertainment and information-seeking, thus not supporting the hypothesis. As this hypothesis was exploratory in nature due to the very limited availability of previous studies that examined this hypothesis relationship, it is difficult to compare results with previous studies save for the single study that the researcher could find, namely Murphy *et al.* (2007). The results that excitement is positively associated with status-seeking, entertainment, and information are consistent with the results from Murphy *et al.* (2007:58) who examined the relationship between perceived

brand personality of a tourist destination and motivation. Their results revealed that excitement and ruggedness had positive influences on the motivations of tourists

For LinkedIn, competence was negatively related to all three motivation factors: status-seeking, entertainment, and information-seeking (not supporting the hypothesis), whereas excitement was positively related to the three motivations (supporting the hypothesis). The positive relationships between brand personality dimension – excitement – and three motivations – status seeking, entertainment and information are in line with the previous study that suggested that brand personality has a positive influence on motivation (Murphy *et al.*, 2007:58).

For YouTube, excitement was positively related to infotainment-seeking, and sincerity was positively related to infotainment-seeking and status-seeking, and this supported the hypothesis. However, excitement was negatively related to status-seeking, thus not supporting the hypothesis. The positive relationships once again concur with the findings of Murphy *et al.* (2007:58).

### 7.4.3 Hypothesis 3

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis was crafted on the basis that attitude is a primary determinant of consumers' behavioural intentions (Bashir & Madhavaiah, 2015:88). The hypothesis was supported for Facebook and LinkedIn, but was not supported for YouTube. The results of the hypothesis testing and the nature of the relationships (positive or no relationships) that resulted are depicted in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3 Summary of hypothesis 3 results**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Attitude->behavioural intent	Significantly positive
LinkedIn	Attitude->behavioural intent	Significantly positive
YouTube	Attitude->behavioural intent	No significant relationship

The hypothesis testing results depicted in Table 7.3 reveal that attitude was positively related to behavioural intent on Facebook and LinkedIn. These results support the hypothesis. The YouTube results did not support the hypothesis, as attitude was not significantly related to behavioural intent. The positive results are consistent with the TPB, which postulates that the more favourable the attitude with regard to behaviour, the higher the individual's intention to act in any given context (Ajzen, 1991:188). Furthermore, the results are in line with several studies that also confirm that there is a positive relationship between attitude and behavioural intent (Hernandez & Kuster, 2012:4; Li *et al.*, 2008:238; Lodorfos, Trosterud & Witworth, 2006:88).

For YouTube, the hypothesis test results revealed that attitude did not have a significant relationship with behavioural intent. This contrasts with the theory and with several studies. It could be that attitude might not influence all social media platforms in the same way, or it could be that behavioural intent is affected by other predictors, such as perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, as found in a study by Nikou and Economides (2017:91), and as suggested by the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989).

#### 7.4.4 Hypothesis 4

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' attitude and behaviour.*

The hypothesis was based on the foundation that attitude is good at predicting behaviour (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014:77). The hypothesis was not supported for any of the three platforms. The results of the hypothesis testing are depicted in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4 Summary of hypothesis 4 results**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Attitude->behaviour	No significant relationship
LinkedIn	Attitude->behaviour	No significant relationship
YouTube	Attitude->behaviour	No significant relationship

According to the hypothesis test results presented in Table 7.4, for all three platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube – attitude was not significantly related to behaviour. Thus the results did not support the hypothesis, nor did they concur with the TPB upon which the hypothesis was based. The theory stipulates that human behaviour is influenced by the favourable evaluation of the attitude towards the behaviour. The results are also inconsistent with a number of studies that found that attitude had a positive impact on behaviour (Ambrose *et al.*, 2006:71; Flavian & Gurrea, 2009:165; Juvan & Dolcinar, 2014:77).

The results revealed that, although the theory applies to other domains, it seems not to be as applicable to social media brands. Various other influences may also be at play. The behaviour of users could be affected by ease of use (Yang, Hsu & Tan, 2010:146), the interactive nature of social media (Jaafar & Shunib, 2017:574), and social influences (Nikou & Economides, 2017:65; Yang *et al.*, 2010:141), as found in previous studies. In addition to this, a critique to the TPB states that though intentions are hypothesised as predictors of behaviour, in some cases intentions do not always lead to a successful enactment of behaviour (Sniehotta, Presseau & Araújo-Soares, 2014:1).

#### 7.4.5 Hypothesis 5

*H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between users' motivation and behavioural intent.*

The hypothesis was based on the foundation that motivation has the ability to predict behavioural intent (Nam, 2014:264). The hypothesis was partially supported for Facebook and fully supported for both LinkedIn and YouTube. The results of the hypothesis testing and the nature of the relationship are depicted in Table 7.5.

**Table 7.5 Summary of hypothesis 5 results**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Entertainment->behavioural intent	Significantly positive
	Information-seeking->behavioural intent	Significantly positive

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
	Status-seeking->behavioural intent	No significant relationship
LinkedIn	Status-seeking->behavioural intent	Significantly positive
	Information-seeking->behavioural intent	Significantly positive
	Entertainment->behavioural intent	Significantly negative
YouTube	Infotainment-seeking-> behavioural intent	Significantly positive
	Status-seeking->behavioural intent	Significantly negative

Table 7.5 shows that for Facebook, the hypothesis was partially supported as only two dimensions – information-seeking and entertainment - were significantly positively related to behavioural intent. The other dimension – status-seeking – did not support the hypothesis, as it was not significantly related to behavioural intent. The no significant relationship between status seeking and behavioural intention is consistent with the results of a study by Ramkissoon and Uysal (2011:555) which examined the influence of motivation on behavioural intentions of tourists. The results of their study revealed that motivation does not influence behavioural intentions. The significant positive relationships between entertainment and behavioural intentions and information seeking and behavioural intentions concur with the results from a study by Alhabash and McAlister (2015:1331) which revealed that motivations of Facebook and Twitter use predict viral behavioural intentions.

For LinkedIn, both status-seeking and information-seeking were positively related to behavioural intent, whereas entertainment was negatively related to behavioural intent. The hypothesis was fully supported as all results were significant. The results are consistent with the results that Li and Cai (2012:483) found in a study that examined the influence of travel motivation on behavioural intentions. Their results revealed that motivation had a significant effect on behavioural intention.

For YouTube, infotainment-seeking was significantly positively related to behavioural intent, while status-seeking was significantly negatively related to behavioural intent, in support of this non-directional hypothesis. The positive relationships are consistent with the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1974:20; Katz & Foulkes, 1962:378). In addition to this, the positive results are in line with

several studies that also revealed that motivation is good at predicting behavioural intent (Nam, 2014:264). In a study that investigated the influence of travel motivation on behavioural intent of foreign tourists by Jiang, Li, Liu, and Chang (2017:534), results revealed a significant positive relationship between motivation and behavioural intent.

#### 7.4.6 Hypothesis 6

*H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between users' motivation and behaviour.*

This hypothesis has its foundation in motivation theory, which is used to explain the behaviour of an individual (Nam, 2014:264). Research studies by Lin and Liu (2011:1153) and Luo, Chea, and Chen (2011:22) have also revealed that motivation explains behaviour. This hypothesis was partially supported for Facebook, but not supported for the other two platforms.

**Table 7.6 Summary of hypothesis 6 results**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Information-seeking->behaviour	Positive relationship
	Entertainment-> behaviour	No significant relationship
	Status-seeking->behaviour	No significant relationship
LinkedIn	Status-seeking->behaviour	No significant relationship
	Information-seeking->behaviour	No significant relationship
	Entertainment->behaviour	No significant relationship
YouTube	Infotainment-seeking->behaviour	No significant relationship
	Status-seeking->behaviour	No significant relationship

Hypothesis testing revealed that, for Facebook, only one dimension of motivation (information-seeking) had a significant positive relationship with behaviour. This result is consistent with the UGT, which has been used to understand e-consumer behaviour (Kaye, 2010:195; Lee & Ma, 2012:332). The result is also consistent with motivation theory, which has been used to explain an individual's behaviour (Nam, 2014:254).



The results are also in line with some studies that indicate that motivation is good at predicting behaviour (Kim, 2006:21; Luo, Chea & Chen, 2011:2).

Contrary to the theory, none of the remaining dimensions for Facebook, nor any of the dimensions for the other two platforms had significant relationships with behaviour. Whilst motivation theory has worked well to explain an individual's behaviour in other contexts, it seems to have failed to do so in a social media context, as reflected in the mostly non-significant relationships between motivation and behaviour in this research.

There are other factors that affect behaviour, such as those found by Barker (2009) in a study to examine social media use. Those results revealed that group identity and collective self-esteem have a significant positive relationship with behaviour. Some studies have also revealed that the behaviour of social media users is affected by affection and the need to share problems (Quan-Haase & Young, 2013:358), and by the need for belonging and self-presentation (Seidman, 2013:402).

#### 7.4.7 Hypothesis 7

*H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour.*

This hypothesis was based on the theory of planned behaviour, which stipulates that there is a relationship between an individual's intention and their behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:181). Some research studies have also suggested that an individual's behaviour is determined by the intention to perform the behaviour (Ajzen & Cote, 2005:303; Cho & Ha, 2004:14). This hypothesis was not supported for any of the three platforms, as depicted in Table 7.7.

**Table 7.7 Summary of hypothesis 7 tests**

Social media platform	Relationship tested	Outcome
Facebook	Behavioural intent->behaviour	No significant relationship
LinkedIn	Behavioural intent->behaviour	No significant relationship

YouTube	Behavioural intent->behaviour	No significant relationship
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According to the summary of results given in Table 7.7, behavioural intent did not have a significant relationship with behaviour. The results are inconsistent with the TPB, which has been successfully applied in many contexts (Ajzen, 1991:181). The results are also not in line with a number of studies that have found a significant relationship between behavioural intent and behaviour (Lutz, 2011:91; Tikir & Lehmann, 2011:406; Wang *et al.*, 2007:297). The results could be because the behaviour of users is determined by other factors more important than behavioural intent in this context. For example, according to the theory of planned behaviour, perceived behavioural control affects behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:183). Khang, Han and Ki (2014:52; 53) note that habit strength also affects the behaviour of social media users. Ajzen (2011:115) notes that though the intention-behaviour correlation is substantial, intentions can be poor predictors of behaviour if the individual has no control over behaviour. Thus, there could be other intervening factors that affect the relationship between behavioural intentions and behaviour.

## 7.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This section focuses on the main contribution of this study to theory, methodology, and managerial practice.

### 7.5.1 Theoretical contributions

Brand personality studies have been conducted across various domains and in different socio-economic contexts. Most studies have been confined to products and brands (Amatyakul & Polyorat, 2016; Kim, Vaidyanathan, Chang & Stoel, 2017), consumer brand relationships (Heidermann *et al.*, 2012; Japutra & Molinillo, 2017), and business marketing (Banerjee, 2015). There is little evidence that suggests that studies have been conducted on social media brands, whether in South Africa or elsewhere. Despite the contention that social media make far-reaching contributions in today's society, brand personality research in this domain is still scarce (Chen, 2013). Thus this study has attempted to fill this gap by applying the brand personality model to the social media brands of Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Previous studies on brand personality have generally focused on testing the validity and generalisability of Aaker's BPS and on identifying common traits across different cultures (Wang, Wang, Fang & Jiang, 2018:97). This study has tested the applicability of Aaker's (1997) BPS to social media brands in a South African context, which is different from the American context where the model was developed. The results from this study revealed that brand personality dimensions are applicable to social media brands, even though the original structure of the BP model was not replicated in this study.

This study has addressed the question: What effect does the perceived brand personality of social media have on consumer attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour? In seeking a solution to this question, the study has examined effects that the perceived personality of social media brands has on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. Thus the study contributes to the extant literature of the brand personality theory, attitude theory, behavioural theory, and uses and gratification theory.

This study has contributed towards the development of a brand personality model within the context of social media brands that explains the relationships between perceived brand personality, attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. To the researcher's knowledge, it is the first model that has combined these constructs in this manner. Moreover, it is the first to examine the effects of perceived brand personality of social media brands on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

In terms of theoretical contributions, the current study suggests that each dimension of social media brand personality exhibits different levels of influence on attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour.

### **7.5.2 Methodological contributions**

The main methodological contribution of this study is that it is the first empirical study to combine various constructs and examine their interrelationships across three

different platforms; most studies tend to focus on one, particularly on Facebook. This study has also combined the various research instruments that were previously used in previous studies. This study has used them within the context of social media brands and within the South African context. This contributes to the growth and development of brand personality studies, which are in their infancy in the South African context. The instruments adapted here could be used to validate and extend the brand personality model to other social media platforms.

### **7.5.3 Managerial implications**

Brand personality permits marketers to communicate effectively with their consumers and build strong relationships. Thus a well-established social media brand personality can result in users having a stronger emotional attachment to social media brands. Brand personality dimensions could assist brand managers of social media platforms to understand how social media users identify and recognise their brands. Given the significance of brand personality as a marketing tool, social media brand managers and marketers may need to understand their brand's personality in order to attract more users and to retain current users.

The research findings of this study have implications for the understanding of the brand personality of social media and its influence. The study offers an understanding of the link between the brand personality of social media and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. The study also offers new insight into the structure of social media brand personalities. This study gives social media practitioners a new focus on the application of brand personality in the social media context.

The research shows that the dimensions of social media brand personality found in the study have a varying influence on a number of outcomes and across different social media platforms. The results could assist social media brand managers to formulate a differentiation strategy for particular dimensions of social media brand personality that matter so that users realise the desired benefits, such as infotainment-seeking and status-seeking.

The results of the study have implications for the development of social media marketing strategies. The competitive climate that characterises the market arena requires that marketing practitioners create, develop, and manage an appropriate social media brand personality that meets the expectations of its users. More importantly, social media marketing practitioners should develop marketing strategies that are based on the dimensions that were identified in this study. Brand managers may use the dimensions to advertise their social media brands in the market and they can tailor-make their advertising campaigns in order to capture the market that is sensitive to the brand personality dimensions that are attached to the social media brands under study. For example, with regard to sincerity and excitement dimensions of YouTube, brand managers can give more emphasis on these dimensions through their advertising campaigns. Where possible brand managers may select celebrities with sincere and exciting personality to endorse the social media brand.

The brand personality dimensions identified in this study may provide a practical avenue for brand managers to build and enhance brand equity and to better comprehend social media users' attitude, motivation, behavioural intent and behaviour towards social media brands.

It is important for brand managers to know the brand personality dimensions of their social media platforms as this assists them to market and position their social media brands. Brand managers of the three platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube) may use brand personality dimensions in the development of positioning strategies within the context of the South Africa for they now know how social media users perceive their platforms.

## **7.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Although the researcher followed all the necessary procedures to conduct this study meticulously, it is impossible to produce a study without limitations. The following limitations need to be mentioned.

The study sought to use Aaker's brand personality model to test its predictive validity for attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. However, there was a transcription error in the brand personality instrument, such that 'outgoing' was captured instead of 'outdoorsy'. Thus the researcher had to drop one of the dimensions ('ruggedness') from the scale, reducing it to thirteen instead of the traditional fifteen items.

Second, the researcher employed the brand personality scale at a facet level, instead of at the full scale level, which has forty-two items. Although the intention was to ensure that the instrument would be shorter and that respondents would not give up answering the questionnaires, this might have affected the findings. It is, however, important to note that this was also in line with other researchers (Cho, 2012; Kim & Lehto, 2013; Leonard & Katsanis, 2013; Srivastava & Sharma, 2016) who used the facet level in their studies with success.

The third limitation of this study is its exploratory nature. The methodological strategy may need to be refined in future studies. It is important that this method be validated and improved through additional samples in other platforms. The sample of this study was collected using a non-probabilistic method because there was no readily available sample frame; so this renders the results non-generalisable.

## **7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Although the results of this study provide some meaningful implications, the study's limitations offer several directions for future research.

First, the present study examined only three social media platforms in South Africa; yet many platforms can be studied, such as Instagram and Pinterest, which are growing. There is a need to extend Aaker's BPS to the study of other social media platforms in order to build up this severely limited body of literature. As Aaker's BPS has its origin in the American context, it is crucial to extend the study further into the developing world (and other non-US cultures) in order to validate its applicability and its influence on a number of outcomes.

Second, it would be interesting if future research applied the full BPS instead of using the facet level that was employed in this study. It is possible that different results would be achieved, leading to more insight into the brand personalities of social media.

Third, there are certain issues that this research has not covered, and these may stimulate future research. The current research examined the relationship between brand personality and attitude, motivation, behavioural intent, and behaviour. Future research may be required to explore the relationship between the brand personality of social media and other constructs, such as self-presentation, need for belongingness and affection.

Fourth, another avenue for future research is to examine further the antecedents and consequences of the different brand personality dimensions. Some characteristics, such as demographics and individual personality, may be investigated in order to examine the extent to which the same or different brand personality dimensions determine users' attitudes and behaviour, among others. It could also be interesting to investigate how various marketing activities influence the different brand personality dimensions.

Last, another avenue could be to carry out a comparative study of at least two different social media platforms, or in different social contexts, such as conducting a study in both developing and developed countries.



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## APENDICES

**Appendix A**  
**-Data collection instrument-**

**Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent**

**Dept. of Marketing Management**

**Title of the study**

The influence of perceived brand personality of social media on users' attitude, motivations, behavioural intent, and behaviour

Research conducted by:

(Mr. M. Mutsikiwa, u14326028 and Cell: +263773206114)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Munyaradzi Mutsikiwa a Doctoral student from the Department of Marketing Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to solicit your opinions of the platform and learn your use of the platform.

Please note the following:

- This is an anonymous study survey as your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
  - Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
  - Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.
  - The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
  - Please contact my study leader, (Dr T. Maree, +27 12 420 3418, Tania.Maree@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.
- 
- You have read and understand the information provided above.
  - You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### SECTION 1: SCREENING QUESTION

Please indicate your current age in years:

### SECTION 2: MEASURING LENGTH OF USE/FREQUENCY OF USE

Q1 How long have you been using platform?

- Less than a year (1)
- 1 to 3 years (2)
- 4 to 6 years (3)
- 7 to more years (4)

Q2 Please describe your average usage pattern on the platform:

- Daily (1)
- Weekly (2)
- Monthly (3)

Q3.1 Approximately how many times do you access the platform per day?

Q3.2 Approximately how many times do you access the platform per week?

Q3.3 Approximately how many times do you access the platform per month?

Q4 When you access the platform, approximately how much time do you spend on average per session?

- Hours (1)
- and minutes (2)

### SECTION 3: MEASUREMENT CONSTRUCTS

The next few questions are aimed at learning more about your opinions and use of the platform.

Q5 Imagine the platform as if it were a person with human characteristics. Please rate the extent to which you associate the following characteristics with the platform. Options include: 1=Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree or 5=Strongly agree.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)
The platform is down-to-earth (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is honest (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is original(3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is cheerful (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is daring (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is spirited (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is imaginative (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is up-to-date (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is reliable (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is intelligent (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is successful (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is upper-class (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is charming (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is outgoing (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform is tough (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 Please read each of the following statements about your use of the platform carefully and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Options include: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree or 5=Strongly agree.

	1(1)	2(2)	3(3)	4(4)	5(5)
I use the platform to relax (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan to use the platform in future* (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the platform to do research (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the platform to learn new things (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform lets me acquire cheap information (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the platform helps me pass time (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the platform to interact with people (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I intend to recommend my friends to use the platform in the future* (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the platform lets me combat boredom (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I share news and ideas using the platform (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the cool character of the platform (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not likely to use the platform in future* (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform lets me connect to the virtual community (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform allows me to gain status (24)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the platform for seeking relationships (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the platform helps me to appear modern (26)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The platform helps me feel important (27)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect to continue using the platform in future* (28)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the platform to help me establish my identity (29)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Listed below are pairs of descriptive words that could be used to describe your attitude towards the platform. For each pair of descriptive words, please choose the position on the scale that in your view best describes your attitude towards the platform. For me, the platform is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)
Unappealing:Appealing (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpleasant:Pleasant (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfavourable:Favourable (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unlikable:Likable (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### SECTION 4: DEMOGRAPHICS

Q8 Please indicate your gender:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

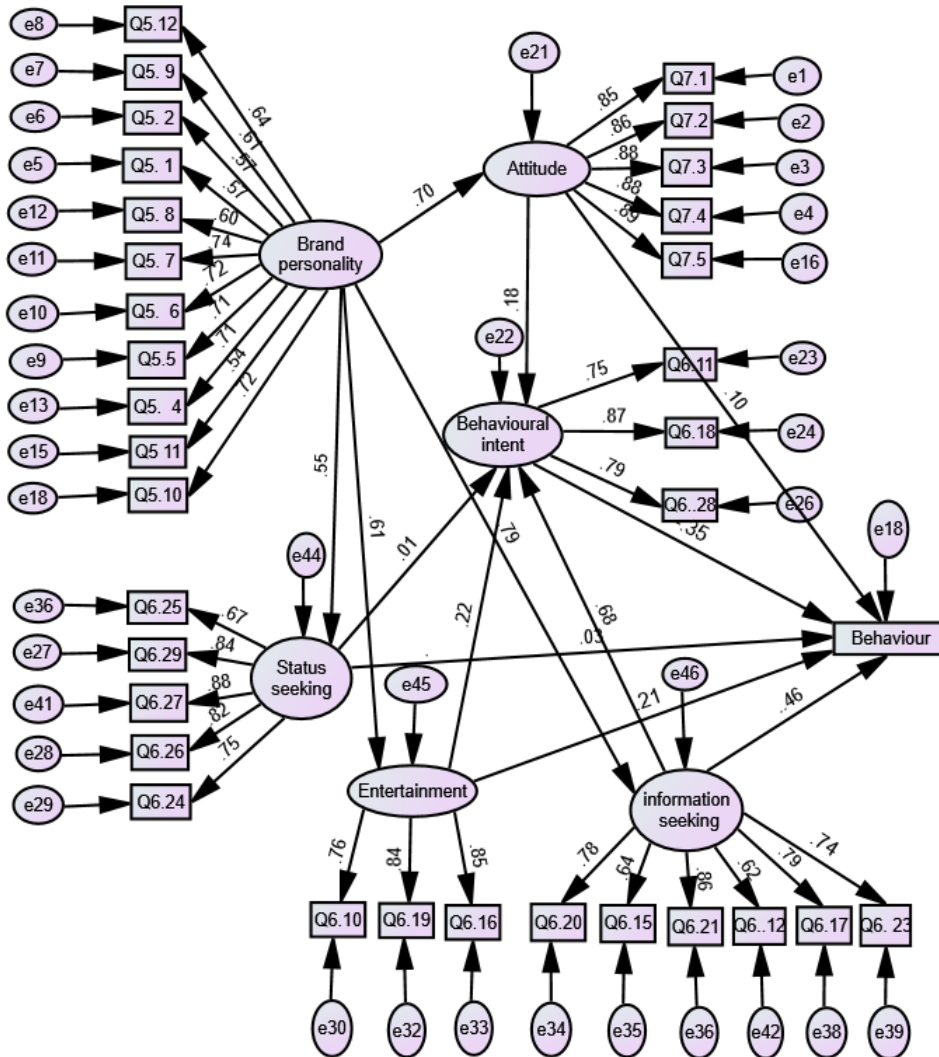
Q9 Please indicate your highest level of education:

- No education (1)
- Some primary schooling (2)
- Complete primary schooling (passed grade 7/standard 5) (3)
- Some secondary schooling (4)
- Complete secondary schooling (passed grade 12/standard 10) (5)
- Undergraduate (currently busy with after school graduate studies) (6)
- Graduate (Degree/Diploma) (7)
- Honors' graduate (8)
- Masters graduate (9)
- Doctors graduate (10)
- Unclassified (11)



**APPENDIX B**  
**Competing models**

## Facebook competing model





## **APPENDIX C: PARAMETER ESTIMATES**

### Parameter estimates for Facebook model

Regressions		Parameter estimates	Standard error	Critical ratio	P-value
Sincerity	<--> Attitude	,366	,048	7,600	***
Sincerity	<--> Behavioural intent	,338	,045	7,475	***
Sincerity	<--> Status seeking	,275	,043	6,426	***
Sincerity	<--> Excitement	,292	,043	6,719	***
Information seeking	<--> Sincerity	,353	,049	7,149	***
Attitude	<--> Behavioural intent	,492	,055	8,960	***
Attitude	<--> Status seeking	,330	,051	6,457	***
Attitude	<--> Entertainment	,401	,053	7,539	***
Information seeking	<--> Attitude	,464	,058	8,016	***
Behavioural intent	<--> Status seeking	,361	,050	7,207	***
Behavioural intent	<--> Entertainment	,505	,056	9,018	***
Information seeking	<--> Behavioural intent	,554	,064	8,657	***
Status seeking	<--> Entertainment	,331	,052	6,402	***
Information seeking	<--> Entertainment	,487	,060	8,138	***
Information seeking	<--> Status seeking	,390	,055	7,153	***
Behaviour	<--> Sincerity	686,932	156,637	4,385	***
Behaviour	<--> Attitude	940,571	206,186	4,562	***
Behaviour	<--> Behavioural intent	921,837	190,645	4,835	***
Behaviour	<--> Status seeking	777,007	203,441	3,819	***
Behaviour	<--> Entertainment	1109,652	211,765	5,240	***
Behaviour	<--> Information seeking	1094,812	198,224	5,523	***

### Correlations for Facebook Model

		Estimate
Sincerity	<--> Attitude	,652
Sincerity	<--> Attitude	,688
Sincerity	<--> Status seeking	,505
Sincerity	<--> Entertainment	,537
Information seeking	<--> Sincerity	,731
Attitude	<--> Behavioural intent	,710
Attitude	<--> Status seeking	,428
Attitude	<--> Entertainment	,523
Information	<--> Attitude	,681
Behavioural intent	<--> Status seeking	,535
Behavioural intent	<--> Entertainment	,753
Information seeking	<--> Behavioural intent	,929
Status seeking	<--> Entertainment	,443
Information seeking	<--> Entertainment	,738
Information seeking	<--> Status seeking	,588
Behaviour	<--> Sincerity	,269
Behaviour	<--> Attitude	,261
Behaviour	<--> Behavioural intent	,292

### Parameter estimates for LinkedIn model

Regressions		Parameter estimates	Standard error	Critical ratio	P-value
Excitement	<---> Status seeking	,282	,040	6,977	***
Excitement	<---> Attitude	,402	,047	8,464	***
Excitement	<---> Behavioural intent	,347	,042	8,193	***
Excitement	<---> Entertainment	,165	,035	4,730	***
Information seeking	<---> Excitement	,304	,041	7,438	***
Attitude	<---> Behavioural intent	,656	,066	9,958	***
Attitude	<---> Status seeking	,497	,062	8,053	***
Attitude	<---> Entertainment	,459	,059	7,787	***
Information seeking	<---> Attitude	,625	,066	9,417	***
Behavioural intent	<---> Status seeking	,534	,060	8,948	***
Behavioural intent	<---> Entertainment	,385	,052	7,342	***
Information seeking	<---> Behavioural intent	,663	,066	10,120	***
Status seeking	<---> Entertainment	,450	,057	7,881	***
Information seeking	<---> status seeking	,566	,063	9,013	***
Information seeking	<---> Entertainment	,522	,059	8,793	***
e9	<---> e10	,230	,032	7,287	***
Behaviour	<---> Excitement	105,903	28,213	3,754	***
Behaviour	<---> Attitude	214,076	44,172	4,846	***
Behaviour	<---> Information seeking	224,668	41,305	5,439	***
Behaviour	<---> Behavioural intent	193,315	39,844	4,852	***
Behaviour	<---> Entertainment	188,251	40,735	4,621	***
Behaviour	<---> Status seeking	218,218	42,278	5,161	***

### Correlations for LinkedIn Model

		Estimate
Excitement	<--> Status seeking	,489
Excitement	<--> Attitude	,643
Excitement	<--> Behavioural intent	,637
Excitement	<--> Entertainment	,298
Information seeking	<--> Excitement	,551
Attitude	<--> Behavioural intent	,761
Attitude	<--> Status seeking	,543
Attitude	<--> Entertainment	,522
Information seeking	<--> Attitude	,712
Behavioural intent	<--> Status	,670
Behavioural intent	<--> Behavioural intent	,503
Information seeking	<--> Entertainment	,868
Status seeking	<--> Entertainment	,554
Information seeking	<--> Status	,698
Information seeking	<--> Entertainment	,669
e9	<--> e10	,437
Behaviour	<--> Excitement	,212

### Parameter estimates for YouTube model

Regressions		Parameter estimates	Standard error	Critical ratio	P-value
Excitement	<---> Status seeking	,331	,045	7,418	***
Excitement	<---> Attitude	,233	,035	6,624	***
Excitement	<---> Behavioural intent	,189	,036	5,315	***
Excitement	<---> Entertainment	,198	,034	5,826	***
Information seeking	<---> Excitement	,201	,041	4,866	***
Attitude	<---> Behavioural intent	,115	,035	3,276	,001
Attitude	<---> Status seeking	,230	,032	7,095	***
Attitude	<---> Entertainment	,287	,038	7,505	***
Information seeking	<---> Attitude	,256	,036	7,137	***
Behavioural intent	<---> Status seeking	,086	,038	2,287	,022
Behavioural intent	<---> Entertainment	,234	,033	7,180	***
Information seeking	<---> Behavioural intent	,092	,034	2,726	,006
Status seeking	<---> Entertainment	,418	,047	8,946	***
Information seeking	<---> status seeking	,044	,040	1,092	,275
Information seeking	<---> Entertainment	,253	,034	7,373	***
e9	<---> e10	,374	,058	6,424	***
Behaviour	<---> Excitement	,266	,038	6,997	***
Behaviour	<---> Attitude	,149	,045	3,344	***
Behaviour	<---> Information seeking	,160	,023	6,843	***
Behaviour	<---> Behavioural intent	35,861	136,435	,263	,793
Behaviour	<---> Entertainment	244,016	145,598	1,676	,094
Behaviour	<---> Status seeking	373,492	130,839	2,855	,004
		555,567	159,980	3,473	***
		312,613	182,713	1,711	,087
		448,857	135,428	3,314	***

### Correlations for YouTube Model

			Estimate
Sincerity	<-->	Excitement	,771
Sincerity	<-->	Attitude	,599
Sincerity	<-->	Behavioural intent	,421
Sincerity	<-->	Infotainment	,530
Status seeking	<-->	Sincerity	,367
Status seeking	<-->	Infotainment	,215
Excitement	<-->	Attitude	,525
Excitement	<-->	Behavioural intent	,568
Excitement	<-->	Infotainment	,607
Status seeking	<-->	Excitement	,140
Attitude	<-->	Infotainment	,614
Status seeking	<-->	Attitude	,165
Behavioural intent	<-->	Infotainment	,948
Status seeking	<-->	Behavioural intent	,068



**APPENDIX D**  
**ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL**



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

**RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Tel: +27 12 420 3395

E-mail: ronel.rensburg@up.ac.za

11 March 2016

Strictly confidential

Dr T Maree

Department of Marketing Management

Dear Doctor Maree

**Project:** The influence of perceived brand personality of social media on users' attitude, motivation and behaviour\*\*

**Researcher:** M Mutsikiwa

**Student No:** 14326028

**Supervisor(s):** Dr T Maree

**Department:** Marketing Management

(\*\* Change of title as approved by Postgraduate Committee on 4 March 2016)

Thank you for the application you submitted to the Committee for Research Ethics, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. I have pleasure in informing you that the above study was approved on an *ad hoc* basis on 11 March 2016. The approval is subject to the candidate abiding by the principles and parameters set out in the application and research proposal in the actual execution of the research.

The approval does not imply that the researcher, student or lecturer is relieved of any accountability in terms of the Codes of Research Ethics of the University of Pretoria if action is taken beyond the approved proposal.

The Committee requests that you convey this approval to the researcher.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

pp PROF RS RENSBURG  
CHAIR: COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS

cc: Prof Y Jordaan  
Student Administration

Members: Prof RS Rensburg (Chair); Prof R van Eyden (Deputy Chair); Dr WM Badenhorst; Prof HE Brand; Prof DJ Fourie; Prof JF Kirsten; Prof BA Lubbe; Prof MC Matthee; Prof SG Nienaber; Ms K Plant; Dr M Reyers; Prof JJ van Vuuren; Prof M Wiese  
Legal adviser: Prof C van Heerden  
Secretariat: Mr M Deysel

Fakulteit Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Disaense tša Ekonomi le Taolo