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A BRAND COMMUNICATION MODEL FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS

by

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Title: A brand communication model for Micro and Small Enterprises in South African townships

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

________ ___________ __2022-10-18____________ **Date**

Ms SSLN Mosupyoe

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DEDICATION

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I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.
Psalm 69:30

ABSTRACT

A BRAND COMMUNICATION MODEL FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS

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Department: Business Management
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Management

Small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs) engage in branding as an afterthought or informally. Brand building and development are the foundations of successful businesses. Brand building establishes awareness about a business using strategies that are aimed at creating a unique image and therefore communicating and creating value for customers through brands. Brand development is important for businesses to create and distinguish establishments from their competitors. This study explored the brand communication practices and activities of micro and small enterprises in South African townships in the Gauteng and North-West Provinces. In addition, the study sought to determine the perceptions of consumers and clients of micro and small enterprises with regard to the brand communication practices and activities of the enterprises. The aim of the study was to develop a cohesive brand communication management model in which micro and small enterprises in townships could be used to manage and leverage the branding of businesses.

A sequential exploratory mixed-method research approach was used to advance an understanding of the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing micro and small enterprises as brands. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owners of the micro and small enterprises, and self-administered questionnaires were used to collect the primary data from the consumers and clients of the enterprises during the qualitative and quantitative phases, respectively. The Atlas.ti Version 8 software programme was used in thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data and to discover the practices and activities of brand building and development by the participants. The qualitative data analysis yielded eight themes that aligned the research questions and objectives. The process satisfied the validity of the qualitative strand of the study. The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis were employed in the development of a research measurement survey instrument in the second phase of the study. The statistical software package SPSS version 28 was used to analyse the quantitative data. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) were used to analyse the quantitative data. The study used the SEM statistical technique with the aid of analysis of moment structures (AMOS) software package. The perceptions of the consumers and clients of the micro and small enterprises could be determined to develop a theoretical brand communication management model. The study empirically tested the causal relationships between the constructs through SEM.

Through the theories and model of ANT, brand building, RBT, SERVQUAL (customer service) and marketing communication mix, the findings indicated the importance of customer service in communicating the enterprises to the consumers and clients. The consumers and clients of the micro and small enterprises had positive perceptions about the practices and activities and, therefore, it confirmed that they influence how they perceive enterprises. Furthermore, the study found that consumers perceive customer service to comprise two core components, that is, customer experience and service reliability. The marketing communication mix was perceived to be inclusive of sales promotion and advertising, as sales promotion and personal branding were merged at the SEM analysis stage. Social media was perceived to encompass social media platforms and social media marketing that provides visibility and accessibility to the enterprise. Brand identity partially and fully explained the conceptual relationships between the practices and activities.

The brand communication management model developed in this study contributes to the body of knowledge in entrepreneurship, communication and management from an emerging market economy context. The model and measurement instrument could be subjected to a different context for future research.

Keywords: brand; branding; brand communication; customer services; marketing communication mix; market resources; brand-related capabilities; multidisciplinary; social media

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MIF	Multilateral investment fund
MSE	Micro Small Enterprises
MSME	Micro small and medium enterprises
NISED	National Integrated Small Enterprise Development
NDP	National development plan
SBD	Department of small business development
SEDA	Small enterprise development agency
SETA	Skills education training authorities
SMME	Small micro and medium enterprises
UNDP	United nations development programme

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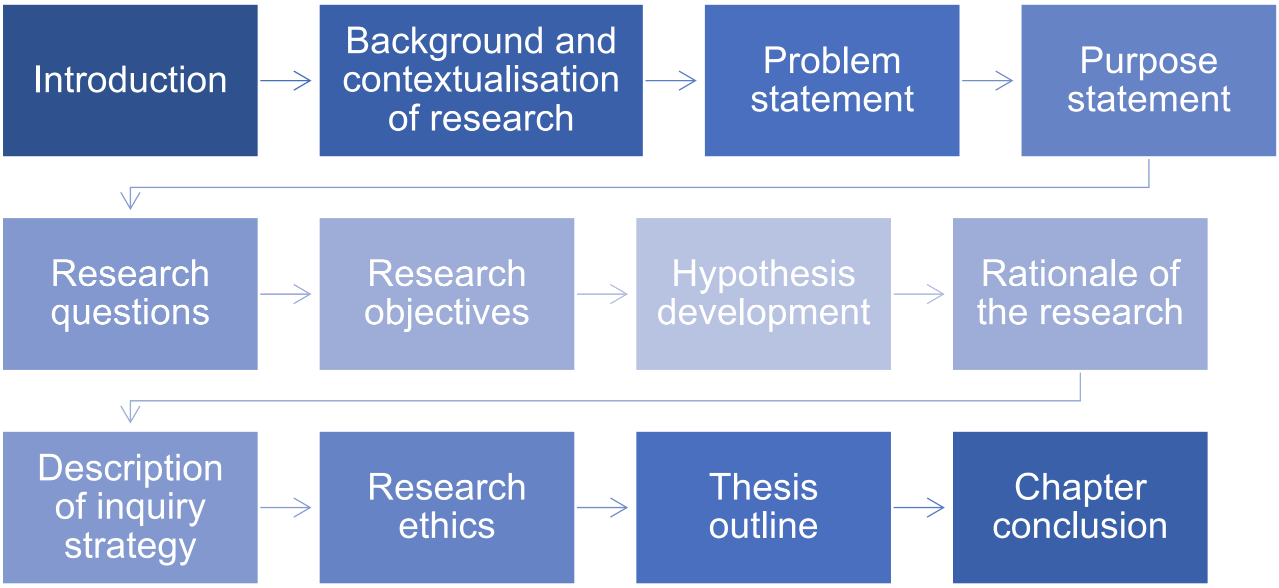
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY



1.1 INTRODUCTION

Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) have been documented to be key in poverty alleviation and employment creation (Al-Haddad, Sial, Ail, Khuong & Khanh, 2019; Makwara, 2019; Nursini, 2020). In the same vein, Bhorat, Asmal, Lilensteain and Van der Zee (2018) concur with Rungani and Potgieter (2018) who assert that in South Africa, which is a developing economy, SMMEs advance inclusive growth and development. The Department of Trade and Industry (2008) (DTI) state that the SMMEs in South Africa employ an estimated 56% of the labour force. In addition, enterprises contribute between 45% and 50% to the gross domestic product (GDP). This can be supported by the SEDA 2020 3rd quarter update on SMMEs, which reported the sector to account for 68% of all employment in South Africa (SEDA, 2020). The National Development Plan (NDP) of South Africa outlined the importance of SMMEs in employment creation, innovation and competitiveness. It is possibly for that reason that the country established a ministry that is specifically dedicated to SMMEs – the Ministry of Small Business Development managed under the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD).

The size of SMMEs limits their market share (Matekenya & Moyo 2022). Therefore, their customers may be more loyal to an established brand. Fetscherin, Guzman, Veloutsou and Cayolla (2019) and Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi and Fetscherin (2018) attribute the cause of the limit to the fact that smaller brands have few consumers who are aware of them as opposed to established, larger brands in the market. The rationale for this could be that established brands strategically and effectively exploit branding, as a brand communicates a business' values and image among other aspects of the business, and assists consumers in identifying an enterprise. Branding is the process of creating meaning for organisations, their products or services, by positioning and influencing a brand in the minds of consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2019; 2022). SMMEs are, therefore, compelled to brand their businesses to remain relevant. The concepts SMME and SME are used interchangeably in this study, to describe the small, medium and micro-enterprises in South Africa (Blose, 2018; Mamorobela, 2021; Tustin, 2015). Some African counterparts use the acronym "MSME" to refer to micro, small and medium enterprises (Khoase, 2015; Taiwo, 2019; Tustin, 2015). This study conceptualised the enterprises as SMMEs and made reference to SMMEs in place of SMEs in particular, the MSMEs. A definition of the SMMEs is provided in section 1.2.2. The empirical part of this study included micro and small enterprises as units of analysis.

In an endeavour to brand the business, enterprises and established companies engage in branding and brand communication (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). Branding is an integral strategic tool that facilitates targeting specific markets (Liu& Atuahene, 2018) and competencies to build, develop and communicate a brand. Moreover, brand communication creates awareness and associations with SMME and the products and services that the enterprise offers (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). *Brand awareness* refers to the level at which consumers are conversant with or have a preference for a particular brand (Bergkvist & Taylor, 2022; Rossiter, Percy & Bergkvist, 2018)**,** while *brand association* is referred to as a representation or action that stimulates consumers to imagine a specific brand or product (A-Qader, Omar & Rubel, 2017; Chow, Ling, Yen & Hwang, 2017). However, the two constructs are not pertinent for this research; as such, this research will not focus on them. Branding allows a business to position itself for competitive advantage through brand communication over a sustainable period, therefore, differentiating and communicating the establishment as a brand (Winzar, Baumann & Chu, 2018).

The competitive advantage that results from branding underscores the critical importance of brand communication in the SMME sector (Ferreira & Coelho, 2020). SMMEs in South African townships have been branding their businesses possibly without realising that it is a strategic decision. Kallier (2017) concurs with Gilmore, Carson and Grant (2001) that the marketing activities done by SMMEs are random and informal owing to the manner in which the owners, who are managers, conduct their business. Furthermore, Gopaul and Rampersad (2020) and Bushe (2019), postulate that the SMME owners deliberate on the majority of the decisions without involving anyone in addressing the opportunities and circumstances presented to the enterprise. This follows a disorganised and seemingly chaotic approach.

SMMEs can use brand communication as a differentiation strategy (Keller, 2020). The effect and significance of a brand and brand management have been acknowledged by scholars (Joshi & Garg, 2021; Keller, 2020; Odoom, Agbemabiese & Mensah, 2017). Brand management is concerned with defining a brand, capturing the market, conveying messages, and persuading and establishing emotional connections with consumers, while creating differentiation (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). Most research has focused very little on brand communication (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020; Cromhout & Duffett, 2022; Dos Santos & Duffett, 2021; Edoun, Mbohwa & Bhila, 2019; Phalatsi & Chipunza, 2019) in SMME subjects, particularly its strategic implications, as well as models and frameworks for SMME owners in building and developing enterprises as brands.

Being born and raised in a South African township, growing up I have used and consumed the products and services of SMMEs, including those offered by fast-foods and beauty and hair salons. Throughout the years, I have observed how these SMME success and growth rates have been rather dissatisfactory considering that the products and services offered are in demand daily. Further, in my professional career, while facilitating SMME skills development workshops, SMME owners raised, among others, the need to learn and improve their marketing and branding skills for the benefit of their enterprises. Brand management was established in the marketing literature (Urde, 2016; Lee, O'Cass & Sok, 2017) and it was advanced that it influences a business' performance.

In profiling the SMMEs in South Africa, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2016) showed that Africa is rated the second highest in terms of age, when considering those who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities. South Africa is also ranked 35th among 60 countries, and the racial profile suggested that the majority of SMMEs are owned by Africans in South Africa. These profiling characteristics and the fact that the majority of Africans reside in townships (Donaldson, 2018) support the need to conduct the current study in townships in South Africa.

This research proposes the development of a brand communication management model, and subsequently, the strategic management of brand communication in building and developing enterprises as brands. This should empower the SMMEs in South African townships to manage their own brands effectively. Furthermore, the research seeks to contribute to the development of a valid and reliable measurement instrument of brand communication management, that embraces a holistic and integrated model for effective brand communication management in the South African SMME context.

The current chapter, therefore, provides an overview, background and contextualisation of the research. Thereafter, the research problem and the research questions and objectives, rationale for this research, description of inquiry strategy and compliance with research ethics standards of the University of Pretoria, are presented. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF RESEARCH

The section below provides a discussion of the background and context of the study. It includes a detailed discussion of small, micro and medium enterprises and their branding practices, with specific reference to SMMEs in emerging economies.

1.2.1 Background

The study of branding, particularly brand communication, in small businesses is still an area that needs development and academic discourse (Odoom & Mensah, 2019). SME branding developed into the subject matter of academic interest when Chandler and Hanks (1994) coined the term “SME Branding”. However, there seems to be a few notable research efforts in the area of “SMME branding”, particularly to build and develop enterprises as brands through brand communication. Despite attracting scholarly and practitioner attention, evidence suggests that studies on branding in the context of small businesses continue to lag in the marketing and communication literature (Chang, Wang & Arnett, 2018; Odoom, 2016; Odoom & Mensah, 2019). Therefore, the state of research in the area appears relatively minimal, even though numerous benefits of branding on firm performance have been heralded in the literature (Centeno, Hair & Dinnie, 2013; Chang *et al*., 2018).

Although theorisation about branding appears to broadly include other perspectives, few empirical works on this topic have been provided in small business settings (Odoom, 2016). Against these foregoing landscapes, it is fair to point out the relevant neglect of branding studies with a focus on SMMEs, therefore, showing inadequacies and inconclusive connections with marketing and management theories. Krake (2005) and Jit Singh Mann and Kaur (2013) suggest that most enterprise owners or managers hardly appreciate brand management and therefore, misunderstand and interpret the concept. Subsequently, Kapferer (2012) theorises that branding should be well planned, organised, implemented and coordinated in a manner that assists in achieving sustainable advantages for enterprises. In the same vein, Reijonen (2010) concurs that small businesses are of interest to research, as they consider marketing not to be ideal for the enterprises. According to Keller (2020), a brand is a mechanism that helps businesses to achieve competitive advantage through differentiation. Brand communication is a practice that facilitates competitive advantage and differentiation. Reality suggests that the majority of SMEs and SMMEs may even fail to recognise that they are a brand (Merrilees, 2007).

Aaker (1996) and Matthiesen and Phau (2005) argue that when a brand is managed effectively in a world that is characterised by ever changing consumer needs and wants that are influenced by changes in values and beliefs (Wen, Qin and Liu, 2019), it communicates a consistent and persistent message that distinguishes a brand from its competitors and creates a competitive advantage (Beig & Nika, 2019). Therefore, brand communication will incorporate marketing and communication management theories, brand theories and models and management theories. This is also the case here, since this research seeks to develop a brand communication management model for SMMEs in South African townships.

1.2.2 SMME definition

The definition of SMMEs is not clear and is argued as part of a global discourse, which also depends on the country the enterprise is operating in. In developing countries such as Lesotho and South Africa, both the academics and government embarked on defining SMME. Consequently, in the National Integrated Small Enterprise Development (NISED) masterplan, Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams (2022) indicates that micro, small and medium (MSME) enterprises are colloquially referred to as SMMEs. The Minister acknowledged the diversity of the MSMEs and is of the view that SMMEs are mistakenly understood to represent only survivalist and emerging enterprises. Subsequently, the Minister noted the definitions for MSMEs as gazetted in 2019 by the then Minister of Small Business Development and the definitions are tabled, in Table 1.1. The Lesotho government, similar to the South Africa, enacted a policy on MSMEs.

Table 1.1: SMME definition schedule 2019

Enterprise size	Number of employees	Annual turnover (in Rands)
Medium	Fewer than 250	R35 million to R220 million, dependent on the industry
Small	Fewer than 50	R15 million to R80 million, dependent on the industry
Micro	Fewer than 10	R5 million to R20 million, dependent on the industry

Source: Ndabeni-Abrahams (2022)

Small enterprise is defined as "a separate and distinct business entity, together with its branches or subsidiaries, if any, including cooperative enterprises, managed by one owner or more predominantly carried on in any sector or subsector of the economy mentioned in column 1 of the Schedule and classified as a micro, a small or a medium enterprise by satisfying the criteria mentioned in columns 3 and 4 of the Schedule" (Government Gazette, 2019, p1). According to the OECD (2019), SMEs operate in sectors that require low costs to entry and resource requirements. These are sectors such as wholesaling, the retail trade and construction, which are heterogenous. In 2016, SEDA defined and profiled the SMME sector according to the number of its employees.

Studies on MSMEs (Tewary & Mehta, 2021) still refer to SMMEs in the review of the literature. Tambuna (2019) refers to MSEs and MSMEs, and indicates that in Indonesian law, the MSME are defined according to net asset value. Bhorat *et al*. (2018) note that the informal sector almost encompasses the SMEs, exclusively so. They further opine that SME refers to the combination of very small, micro and medium businesses. As alluded to in the introduction, this study refers to SMMEs in place of SMEs and MSMEs.

1.2.3 Branding in small, micro and medium enterprises

An understanding of how SMME owners do branding, particularly brand communication with limited resources, is fundamental (Odoom *et al*., 2017). According to Krake (2005), brand management is a fundamental element of the marketing strategy. However, brand management receives little or no attention in the daily run of business in SMMEs. SMMEs seem to go through various phases of trial and error in their branding, building upon experimentation and intuition rather than following formal strategies (Centeno *et al*., 2013; Reijonen, 2010). Some researchers (Berthon, Ewing & Napoli, 2008; Ojasalo, Natti & Olkkonen, 2008; Zainol, Daud, Shamsu, Abuakar & Halim, 2018) argue that SMMEs are able to build strong brands through creativity. On contrast, Roy and Banerjee (2012) posit that the majority of SMMEs in a specific industry operate as commodities with similar if not identical physical looks and performance specifications. The challenge with being identical is that SMMEs have no scope of differentiating their businesses, and as a result, the business becomes vulnerable to competitors. The role of brand and branding in SMMEs must be comprehended and fostered by SMMEs focusing on translating the owner's vision and advancement towards differentiating the enterprise. In support of this notion, Ateke and Nwulu (2017) affirm a view that all businesses are brands, whether strong or weak, and must differentiate themselves from competitors. This notion, therefore, suggests that the majority of SMMEs are engaged in brand activities (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017).

Brands facilitate relationships and enhance brand image and business reputation, thereby increasing consumers' perception of SMMEs' products or services. SMMEs are not prioritising brand management to build strong brands (Ananda, 2022; Opoku, Abratt, Benedixen & Pitt, 2007). Therefore, the role of branding cannot be overlooked by SMMEs. Blakeman (2018) argues that a brand can be considered an integrated marketing notion driving organisations and SMMEs. Brands dominate marketing strategies and involve a more symbolic communication process between the business and its customers (Jin, Yoon & Lee, 2019). Therefore, entrepreneurs must invest in their enterprises as brands.

1.2.4 Contextualisation: SMMEs in emerging economies

Developing countries are said to be experiencing significant growth. According to Bassi (2017) and Shaik, Kumar, Ramesh and Babu (2017), the "micro, small, medium enterprises (MSME) sector has emerged as a highly vibrant and dynamic sector of the Indian economy over the last five decades". Bassi (2017) theorises that enterprises face increasing competition in a global arena, where there is a need for them to improve their management, marketing, product diversification and infrastructural development. If brand communication was not important or contributed to the growth of corporates, they would not be investing or allocating a large budget to the marketing departments towards brand management, which includes brand communication. Odoom, Agbemabiese, Anning-Dorson and Mensah (2016) posit that branding capabilities are a vital driving force for company performance.

The relevance of SMMEs in the South African economy and townships

> Something that truly struck me through this research was how many enterprise owners in our country want to have a positive impact – they want to add value and make a difference. This is an amazing quality that needs to be nurtured and utilised in the growth of South Africa's economy (Thulo, 2019).

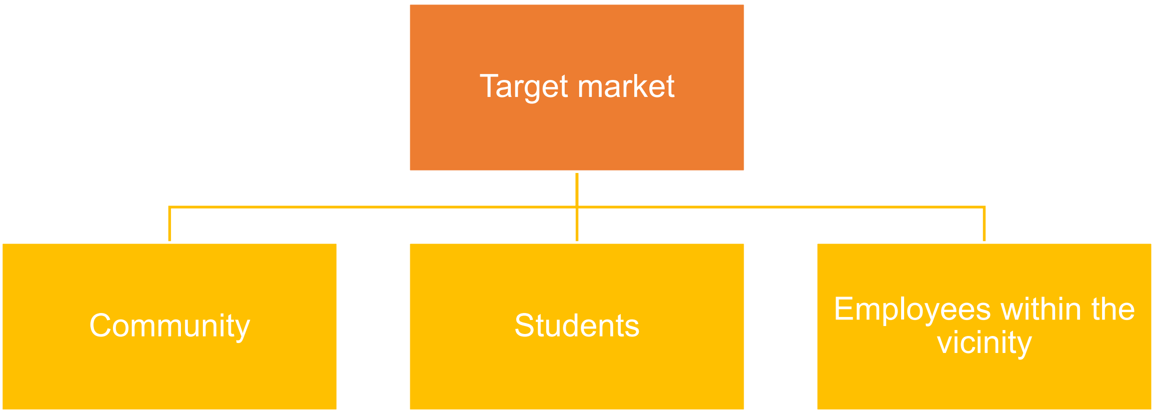
The statement made, asserts the importance of SMMEs in the country and the passion and drive of the owners to see their enterprises succeed. However, entrepreneurship is not always seen as a desirable career choice in South Africa. Many South Africans are either forced to become entrepreneurs owing to retrenchment, job frustration or job losses, while others are driven by the gap in the market towards entrepreneurship (Asah, Fatoki & Rungani, 2015).

The SMME fast food industry in South Africa

The street food vending sector is regarded as informal, as most vendors' businesses are usually not registered. However, in South Africa, there are also formal registered vendors. Petersen and Charman (2018) established that 39% of the microenterprises in townships traded in informal food and drink services. The researchers (Petersen & Charman, 2018) further maintain that food and drink enterprises include spaza shops and informal food service enterprises, of which food is the basis for informal enterprises in the township. This plays a critical role in food affordability, accessibility and employment creation. Fast food enterprises are small in nature and are usually run from homes, street pavements or informal arrangements. Mjoka, Selepe and du Preez (2016) suggest that street foods are a promising option for micronutrient strengthening.

The information that is available on the consumption of street foods shows that they are inexpensive and available when needed, and in many countries, they form an integral part of the population's diet. They are also consumed with regularity and consistency across all income groups, but particularly by the urban poor and in some countries, children. Food vendors usually choose areas to trade in that are very popular, such as in high pedestrian traffic areas, for example taxi ranks, bus stations, train stations, building construction sites, school premises, tertiary institutions, hospitals, the marketplace and busy street corners, to get good business (Mjoka *et al.*, 2016). Figure 1.1 depicts the fast food target market. Globally, there are approximately 2.5 billion consumers who consume street foods (Mohammedsani & Abrar, 2020; Winarno, 2017).

Figure 1.1: Fast food SMME target market



Source: Own compiled (2020).

Street food vending is probably the single largest employer in the informal sector and makes a major contribution to the country's economy (Knox, Bressers, Nonhlakoana & De Groot (2019). Moreover, it offers business opportunities for developing entrepreneurs (Gamieldien & van Niekerk, 2017). Zhang, Groen and Belousova (2018) are of the view that entrepreneurs are recognised for their attitude of innovativeness, experimentation and pro-active pioneering of new markets.

The SMME beauty industry in South Africa

The beauty sector is characterised by both formal and informal salons. The demand for the services from this sector is on a monthly, weekly and daily basis, making it profitable for the entrepreneurs who own the enterprise. Hence, SMMEs in this sector are large in the townships, central business districts and suburbs in South Africa.

The demand for beauty products and services is constant, as men and women alike purchase them regularly. Accordingly, Sagbo and Mbeng (2018) assert that the industry is not only vital to global GDP but also influences the social lives of humans globally. The focus of the current study, however, is on beauty and hair services, as there is a plethora of these services in townships. Murphy (2021), in his article, proposed that the fashion and beauty businesses in South Africa are overlooked, while generating sales of over R5 billion. Murphy

(2021) further highlights that there is a mix of smaller local brands in South Africa, which are concepts of the local entrepreneurs in this sector.

Scholars López-Jáuregui, Martos-Partal and Labeaga, (2019) highlight a scope that is of paramount interest for the study, that is, communication. The hairdressing salon market embraces a business-to-business-to-consumer (B2B2C) model, whose core stakeholders are manufacturers, hairdressers and consumers. The hairdressing salon market is characterised by more than 3.5 million salons globally. In addition, in the early 20s, Machek (2010) indicates that "more than 800 million customers make use of hairdressing services annually, making 6 billion visits to hairdressing salons". Consequently, worldwide, seven out of ten women regularly attend hairdressing salons, visiting them, on average, five times per year (López-Jáuregui *et al*., 2019). Therefore, strategies are critical in keeping customers satisfied with the services. Likewise, López-Jáuregui *et al*. (2019) note that the elements of the marketing strategy of SMMEs seem to be out of the scope of some of the studies that have been conducted, particularly the potential roles of elements such as communications, pricing and assortment of services. Communication is important for the current research, focusing on the brand communication practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships.

From a South African township perspective, salons are considered to be "a thriving informal economy with multiple salons that have unique fingerprints of an entrepreneurial owner" Austin (2016). Furthermore, Austin (2016) reports about the hair salons and barbershops in South African townships (see Figure 1.2). The pictures in Figure 1.2 depicts the typical branding of the majority of the hair salons in the townships, and these speak to some aspects of their brand communication practices and activities.

Figure 1.2: Township SMME's branding

Source: Austin (2016 June 09)

Beauty salons make up 75% of all the microenterprises found in South African townships. In addition, these enterprises contribute 5% of South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). "These hair salons provide more than new looks but also serve as a gathering place for the communities" (Austin, 2016). Valenti (2020) posits that "while not considered essential in many countries, people have suddenly realised how much they rely on their salons as a comforting source of self-care and community".

Township economies in South Africa

Mahajan (2014) proposes that South Africa presents an unconventional challenge that places its spatial sphere in a rather unique structure that is brought about by its character of being rural, township and urban. Townships are what differentiates South Africa from other countries. The World Bank documented South African townships and informal settlement to house half of the country's population and consist of nearly 60% of the unemployed. However, there are economic activities in the townships to sustain lives. According to scholars (Mahajan, 2014; Malefane, 2013; Petersen & Charman, 2018; Petersen, Thorogood, Charman & Du Toit, 2019), township economies refer to enterprises and markets that are geographically located in townships operated by entrepreneurs in townships. These entrepreneurs cater to the needs and wants of the communities in the townships. Premier David Makhura, in his state of the Province address in June 2015, in defining the characteristics of a township, stated that it refers to "old, new, formal and informal human settlements that are predominantly African, Coloured and Indian characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment and low incomes as well as distance from the main centres of economic activities". Petersen and Charman (2018) assert that the majority of township enterprises are informal. Table 1.2 depicts the clusters of township businesses according to their sectors and activities.

Table 1.2: Clusters of township businesses

Sectors	Clusters				
Retail	Butcheries	Spaza shops	Fish and chips	Fruit and vegetable stalls	General dealers
Service industry	Hair salons Sewing and tailoring, and shoemakers	Shebeens Sanitation (plumbers)	Shisanyama Mobile toilets	Security companies Car wash	Gym Burial society
Construction and real estate	Brick laying/manufacturing	Construction business	Property development	Renting	
Tourism	Tourism guide and logistics Water sports and recreation parks	Bed and breakfast Heritage tourism	Restaurants Conferencing	Catering and events Sports tourism	Shisanyama Tour operators
Manufacturing	Clothing and textile Carpentry	Auto body repairs and maintenance Charcoal manufacturing	Furniture manufacturing Welding pipe and fitting	Steel production Plastic recycling	Tar and oil production Banking and confectionary
Transport	Automotive cooperatives	Minibus taxi ownership	Logistics companies	Taxi associations	Tour operators
Agriculture and agro processing	Olive oil for fuel	Biofuel	Milling	Poultry retail	Vegetable production
Finance	Stokvels	Mashonisa money/lending schemes	Burial societies		
Creative industry	Arts and craft cinemas Jewellery designs and manufacturing	Music and entertainment	Fashion design Bead making	Music and video production	Coordination of cultural events
Government and community services	Child care and early development Feeding schemes	Clothes for school and police uniforms	Facilitation of social grants agents	War on drugs	HIV/AIDS and other chronic ailments Hospices

Sectors	Clusters				
		Furniture for office space			
ICTS	Internet solutions in townships	Multimedia service centres	Technology application designs	Electronic repairs	ICT recycling
Green Economy	Waste management	Recycling	Coal and wood making		

Source: Economic Development Department, Gauteng Province (2019).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Traditional branding research has largely been informed by microeconomic and psychological theory (Brodie, Benson-Rea & Medlin, 2017). Developing a successful brand requires resources (Iyer, Davari, Srivastava & Paswan 2021), efforts and a belief in the concept of branding. Therefore, in an endeavour to build and develop brands, organisations and enterprises need to be brand oriented. Brand orientation is a deliberate approach to brand building that is characterised by brands being the focus around which the organisation's processes revolve and whereby brand management is perceived as a core competence; and brand building is intimately associated with business development and financial performance (Gromark & Melin, 2013). Moreover, brand orientation focuses on brand management to build and develop the brand (Oodom & Mensah, 2019). Gromark and Melin (2013) posit that brand building is based on the relationship between internal and external stakeholders, characterised by reciprocal influence and interdependence. A brand, as researchers such as Sinclair and Keller (2017) suggest, is an asset.

Branding provides businesses with competitive means for differentiation that implicitly and explicitly influence the growth of the organisation (Tien, Hung & Tien, 2019). Branding and brand communication have been conventionally viewed as a corporate matter and exercise, therefore, lacking an SMME perspective, although 95% of South African businesses have their place in the SMME group. Entrepreneurs can build strong brands; however, the approach to branding in this case suggests an unconventional one (Boyle, 2003; Eksteen, 2019). Keller (2013) posits that from the various brand conceptualisations and the broader theorisation thereof, organisations do not only select brand elements, but also incorporate marketing mix programmes and communication, and leverage secondary associations when implementing branding efforts. Brand elements such as slogans have been argued to play a role in the brand identity of an enterprise (Rybaczewska, Jirapathomsakul, Liu, Chow, Nguyen & Sparks, 2020). Furthermore, Kohli, Suri and Thakor (2002) earlier theorise a slogan to be an element of brand identity. Moreover, brand elements and brand identity are essential in the current research as they influence consumer perceptions. Similarly, the brand elements and brand identity have a role in the delivery of customer service (Ramya, Kowsalya & Dharanipriya, 2019). In addition, brand identity was found to affect brand performance and play a moderating role in brand experience, in the brand relationships that the consumer have with a brand (Casidy, Prentice & Wymer, 2019). Therefore, customer service is an aspect of interest in the research as it affirms to influence consumer perceptions.

While most of the literature on branding is dedicated to established corporates, only a few scholars have focused on specific branding (Ogunsaya, Molale & Hueva, 2020), particularly practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships, in building and developing their enterprises as brands. Furthermore, existing research has focused on SMMEs in developed economies and markets. In addition, Anees-ur-Rehhman, Wong and Hossain (2016) note that brand orientation studies collected data from Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), Finland, Germany and the USA, among others. From this perspective, Burgess and Steenkamp (2013) posit that developing markets provide noteworthy socioeconomic, cultural and institutional departures from a theoretical perspective, different from those of Western countries. Furthermore, Burgess and Steenkamp (2013) aver that existing models and theories emanating from the Western context, as a result, may not be applicable in all settings, particularly to those of emerging economies. Therefore, the development of new theories, models and methodologies pertinent to the unique contexts of emerging markets must be researched where necessary (Burgess & Steenkamp, 2013).

Other scholars, such as Bresciani and Eppler (2010) and Neuvonen (2016) posit that research on SMMEs and branding has not been documented comprehensively. Therefore, this suggests that there is an opportunity for researchers to focus on SMMEs and branding, therefore, supporting the ambitions of the current study. Branding activities are pivotal in creating differentiation and competitive advantage, customer acquisition and retention, for any business to remain relevant and competitive. Furthermore, scholars state that it is unclear how much SME performance can be attributable to their brand-building efforts. There is concern regarding brand management and communication principles, practices or philosophies that are most agreeable to SMMEs. Moreover, Agostini, Filippini, and Nosella (2015) posit that SMMEs in some economies have a stronger brand investment in current times. Therefore, Odoom *et al*. (2016) suggest that SMMEs in some economies are viable sources of brand marketing information, and as such, a context is worth researching.

Building from Odoom *et al*.'s (2016) suggestion, this study identified that there is a need for the development of a brand communication management model for SMMEs in South African townships. Studies such as that of Krake (2005) developed a funnel model for the role of brand management in SMEs, while Centeno *et al*'s (2013) research sought to examine how brands are built in SMEs. They developed a five-phase conceptual model of SME brand building. Krake (2005) and Centeno *et al*.'s (2013) models are Westernised as they were developed based on the data collected from the Western population. Krake (2005) adopted a case study methodology and conducted in-depth interviews with the enterprise CEOs and communication managers to research their SME branding and did not consider the customers of the SMEs. The proposed brand communication model, therefore, addresses the existing lacuna expanding on the existing model, implementing the mixed-methods approach, gathering data from both the owners and the customers of the enterprises in the townships. The rationale for focusing on South African SMMEs in townships is based on the premise that owners coincidentally or consciously use some brand communication at their establishments. In addition, the model will be conceptualised from a multidisciplinary approach. Ultimately, the model is envisaged to guide the implementation of brand communication management.

Existing South African research on SMMEs has focused on the lack of empirical research on SMME effectiveness in the informal economy in South Africa (Urban & Ndou, 2019), and future growth potential of township SMMEs: an African perspective (Wiid & Cant, 2021). Boukis, Gounaris and Kings (2017) study recognised the importance of linking market orientation and brand-related factors such as brand orientation, brand management capability and brand performance, and understanding mobile marketing adoption intentions by South African enterprises (Maduku, Mpinganjira & Duh, 2016). Mudanganyi, Maziriri, Chuchu and Ndoro's (2020) research examined the impact of brand orientation as a predictor of customer orientation, brand distinctiveness and competitor orientation. These studies suggest that there is a paucity of research that sought to develop a brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships. This addresses the lacuna in the research thus far. In addition, the context of the study, that is, townships, contributes to the study.

Equally important in this study is the mixed-method approach to the research. Aljuhmani, Elrehail, Bayram and Samarah (2022) explored the connection between social media efforts and brand loyalty, and sought to understand the mediating role of social media customer brand management. Furthermore, the researchers Aljuhmani *et al*. (2022) collected data from consumers. Anees-ur-Rehman *et al*. (2016) reviewed the progress of the brand orientation literature and pointed out that of the 76 peer-reviewed articles they considered, only four of them used the mixed-methods approach. Wiid and Cant's (2021) study followed an exploratory and descriptive research design, and collected quantitative data from SMMEs across South African townships, with the use of self-administered questionnaires. Mudangany *et al*.'s (2020) study was quantitative in nature and the researchers collected data from SMEs owners and managers. A mixed-methods study by Charman, Petersen, Piper, Liedeman and Legg (2017) focused on the informal enterprises activities in grocery retailing, liquor trade and traditional medicines sectors in South African townships. To the best of my knowledge, limited mixed-method studies (that include qualitative and quantitative research) in South Africa have specifically focused on developing a model that will assist in empowering SMMEs in townships to effectively use brand communication as a strategic tool to differentiate and create a competitive advantage for their businesses. Therefore, there is limited research in South Africa that considers SMMEs' use of brand communication practices and activities to build and develop enterprises as brands for growth, differentiation and competitiveness, particularly in the context of townships. Based on this information, it is important that a brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships be developed to address the gap. The model is envisaged to empower South African SMMEs in branding communication skills to brand their enterprises and to effectively use and implement brand communication.

The implication is that the model would empower SMME owners in South African townships to strategically use brand communication for differentiation and competitiveness, consequently, also for growth and sustainability. Expanding knowledge on brand orientation in the context of SMMEs in South African townships from a developing economy perspective, focusing on the brand as an asset that must be communicated through branding as a strategic resource, is the research gap and, therefore, problem of this study.

1.4 PURPOSE STATEMENT

Branding personifies a whole set of physical and sociopsychological attributes and beliefs about a business. The main purpose of this study was to explore brand communication practices and activities in relation to the brand building and development of SMMEs as brands, particularly micro and small enterprises in South African townships. In addition, this study sought to determine the perceptions of consumers and clients of SMMEs and the influence of SMME brand practices and activities in building and developing enterprises as brands. Therefore, a brand communication management model of SMMEs was developed, to assist enterprise owners in effectively using brand communication for their business to enhance and improve performance and growth. Furthermore, the model aimed to improve brand communication management and SMMEs' current practices and activities and was conceptualised and operationalised based on the literature. There is limited research in South Africa that considers SMMEs' use of brand communication for building and developing a business as a brand and being relevant in the market, particularly enterprises in townships. The rationale for interest in micro and small enterprises in South African townships was based on the premise that the owners, coincidentally or consciously, use some brand communication methods at their establishments.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that are guided by the problem statement of the study are posed in this section. Primary and secondary research questions are presented. The following research questions guided the study for the collection of qualitative data:

Primary question:

- What are the brand communication management practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships in the Gauteng and North-West Provinces when building and developing enterprises as brands?

Secondary questions:

RQ 1: What are the brand communication practices and activities present in SMME brand management in South African townships?
RQ 2: a) How is brand orientation adopted by SMMEs in South African townships?
RQ 2: b) What are the brand identities of SMMEs in South African townships?
RQ 3: What brand building and development activities do SMMEs in South African townships engage in?
RQ 4: a) What are the brand resources and capabilities that SMMEs in South African townships use?
RQ 4: b) How is customer service rendered at SMMEs in South African townships?
RQ 5: How do SMMES in South African townships create awareness through brand communication management?
RQ 6: a) What technologies do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?
RQ 6: b) What social media tools do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?
RQ 7: Which demographics influence the decision making of SMME owners?

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives for this study are stated to align with the main purpose of the study, whereby, the perceptions of the consumers and clients of the micro and small enterprises are measured. Equally important, the research objectives are stated to measure the relationships between the constructs. The approach is statistically acceptable, within the research and scientific rigour in conducting research, and aid in achieving the objectives of the study. RO1 is an overarching objective that summarises the perceptions of the consumers of micro and small enterprises regarding the brand communication practices and activities. The research objectives (RO1 – RO 10) are aligned with the hypothesised conceptual model, which are illustrated in Figure 1.3.

The research objectives that guided the study for the collection of quantitative data are as follows:

Primary objective:

- To investigate consumers' perceptions of SMMEs' brand communication practices and activities in South African townships in the Gauteng and Northwest Provinces.

Secondary objectives:

RO 1: To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand.

RO 2: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of market-based resources.

RO 3: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of service reliability.

RO 4: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of customer experience.

RO 5: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of market-based resources.

RO 6: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of service reliability.

RO 7: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of customer experience.

RO 8: To determine whether social media influences the perceptions of market-based resources.

RO 9: To determine whether social media influences the perceptions of service reliability.

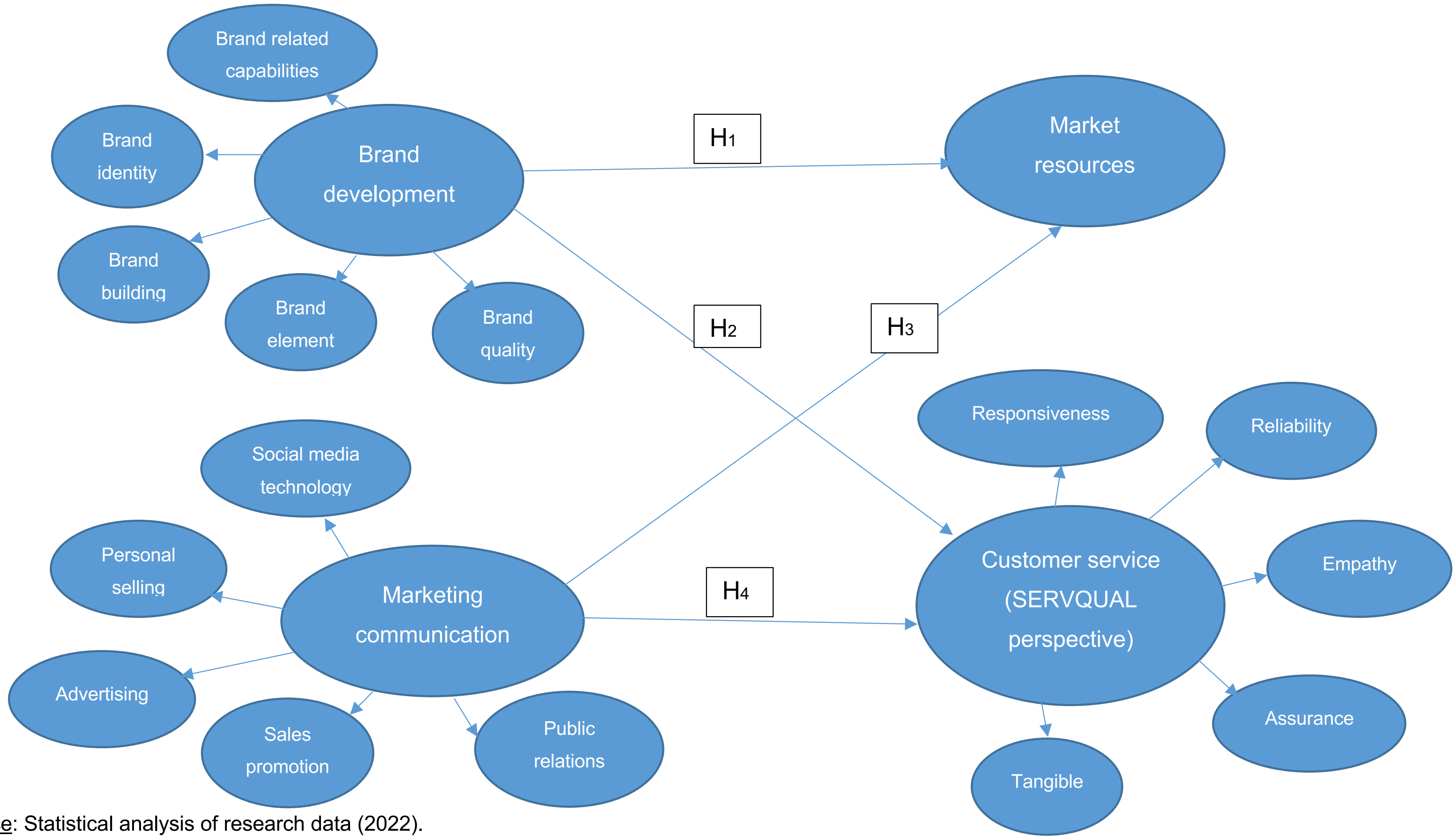
RO 10: To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study.

1.7 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

According to Anupama (2020), a research hypothesis is a cautious assumption or specific statement of prediction about a relationship between the variables of the study. The hypotheses formulated for the purposes of this study are presented in Figure 1.3. The statistical procedures are discussed in detail in Chapters 7 (Factor analysis) and 8 (Structural Equation Modelling).

Figure 1.3 depicts the hypothesised conceptual model of this study

Figure 1.3: Hypothesis conceptual model



Source: Statistical analysis of research data (2022).

Although the hypotheses are exploratory in nature, they are stated in Table 1.3, as relationships, as it is not clear at this stage if the relationships will be positive or negative.

Table 1.3: Hypotheses

HYPOTHESIS	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE
H1: Brand development has a relationship with market resources	RO 1: To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand. RO 5: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of market-based resources. RO 10: To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study.	Huang and Tsai (2013) studied Taiwanese companies to develop a theoretical model explaining the factors that contribute to brand orientation and its impact; The results showed that organisational resources could facilitate the building and development of brand -oriented organisations.
H2: Brand development has a relationship with customer service (SERVQUAL perspective)	RO 1: To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand. RO 6: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building)	A study by Nawarini and Adi (2020) analysed the effect of visual identity, academic reputation and service quality on student satisfaction at Unsoed and how the student's satisfaction can lead to word-of-mouth communication with others. In their research, the researchers found that visual identity, academic reputation and service quality have positive effects on student satisfaction and lead to word-of-mouth marketing. Therefore, it is hypothesised that brand development will have a

HYPOTHESIS	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE
	influences the perceptions of service reliability. RO 7: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of customer experience. RO 10: To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study.	relationship with customer service in this study
H3: Marketing communication has a significant relationship with market resources	RO 1: To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand. RO 2: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of market-based resources. RO 8: To determine whether social media influences the perceptions of market-based resources. RO 10: To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study.	Luxton, Reid and Mavondo (2017), drawing from Resource Based Theory, investigated how IMC capability drives brand performance through influencing the effectiveness of communication campaigns and a brand's market-based performance. The researchers found that IMC plays a significant role as key firm-specific capability which significantly impacts on performance outcomes. Silvia, Rajshekhar and Ciravegna (2020), building from the Resource Based Theory, sought to develop a model of the relationships among marketing capabilities-competitive strategy-export venture performance and found that marketing communication mediates the relationship between marketing capabilities and competitive strategy, and technology strengthened the relationship between marketing capabilities and marketing communication.

HYPOTHESIS	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE
H4: Marketing communication has an effect on customer service (SERVQUAL perspective)	RO 1: To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand. RO 3: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of service reliability. RO 4: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of customer experience. RO 9: To determine whether social media influences the perceptions of service reliability. RO 10: To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study.	Senguo, Xixiang and Kilango (2017) examined the effect of marketing communication based on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, price fairness and customer services. The results suggested that marketing communication plays a critical role in managing customer relationships. Therefore, it is hypothesised that marketing communication will effect customer service in this study.

1.8 RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH

The main rationale for this research is to empower SMMEs in South African townships to brand their businesses effectively and strategically by implementing brand communication management practices for their businesses. This will provide SMMEs with an opportunity to become prominent players in their industries. There is therefore an advantage of charging premium prices for products and services. In addition, SMMEs will be in a position to create more employment, thereby improving the living standards of the communities they serve.

The model developed for the study will also benefit training and development companies that facilitate workshops to empower SMMEs in South Africa. Furthermore, this research sought to advance current knowledge by documenting an overview of the current activities and practices of brand communication by SMMEs in South African townships. Moreover, it provides a model and practical guidelines on brand communication management for SMMEs. In that manner, SMMEs will be empowered with knowledge to effectively and strategically use brand communication for the long-term benefits of their businesses. The challenge that most enterprises face is limited resources, particularly the budget to outsource branding responsibilities (Maduku & Kaseeram, 2021). As a result, enterprises do branding in-house, perhaps because they deem branding and communication strategies unnecessary for business (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). Therefore, developing a model and guidelines for enterprises to understand the role of brand communication is important. Bresciani and Eppler (2010) concur, as they propose in their findings that two frameworks that can direct and support enterprises' branding choices should be considered for further research. Therefore, at a scholarly level, a new theory on brand communication may emerge. Furthermore, the study developed a valid and reliable survey instrument, consisting of dimensions of the brand communication management model, for practical application by micro and small enterprises in South African townships.

1.9 DESCRIPTION OF INQUIRY STRATEGY

A single method of shedding light on a phenomenon is usually not adequate to facilitate a deeper understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since the study aims to understand SMME brand communication practices and activities to enable the researcher to develop a brand communication management model for micro and small enterprises in South African townships, a qualitative or a quantitative method alone would not have been sufficient to understand the brand communication practices and activities of the enterprises in South African townships. Therefore, the strategy of inquiry followed a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach that explored in-depth one or more individual groups or entities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

An exploratory sequential mixed-method design is said to consist of three phases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The current research explored a sample of SMME owners to build a research instrument that meets the requirements of data collected from individuals who purchase and use services and products offered by SMMEs. The social phenomenon in the context of this study is that SMMEs are engaged in brand communication practices and activities.

The detailed discussions pertaining to the research inquiry strategy and design are provided in Chapter 5, the research design and methodology chapter.

1.10 RESEARCH ETHICS

Key ethical considerations pertaining to this study were: ethics approval by the University of Pretoria; permission from SMME owners to interview them; an informed consent form signed by SMME customers and clients to survey them; ethical issues during data collection; and data analysis and reporting.

- Ethics approval

Application for ethical clearance and approval by the institution was submitted and the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee granted ethics approval for the study. The ethics approval was granted for the first phase of the data collection, which was for the qualitative data; and for the second phase, which was for the quantitative data collection. The ethical clearance certificates for the two data collection phases are provided in Appendix I p.487.

- Permission letter

Permission was requested from the owners of the SMMEs to interview them. Since the SMMEs were in townships, the assumption was that some of the enterprises might not have e-mail addresses where the researcher can send the information sheet to, that briefly explains what the research is about. The SMME owners were requested permission to be interviewed about their brand communication practices and activities used in developing and building their enterprises as brands. In addition, the owners of the enterprises were requested to give permission to survey their customers regarding their brand communication practices and activities.

- Informed consent

The current study involves humans; therefore, it was important that participants for this study be given an informed consent form prior to participating in the study. Informed consent forms were given to the participants and respondents before they participated in the interviews and the survey. The researcher and a fieldworker initially approached the participants and respondents by greeting them and introducing themselves. Thereafter, the researcher briefly explained the reason for approaching the participants and respondents. It was explained to the respondents that they may withdraw completing the questionnaire if they feel any discomfort. Then, the researcher distributed the consent form to the participants and respondents to read and sign before being interviewed and completing the questionnaire. The informed consent form served as a guarantee for confidentiality and anonymity as indicated on the form. The design of the interview guide and questionnaire ensured privacy. This was done by assigning pseudo names and a unique number to each questionnaire.

- Ethical issues during data collection

The participants and respondents were reminded of their motivation to withdraw from participating even after they signed the consent form. The participants answered questions during the interviews, and for the survey, respondents completed the questionnaire without the interference or influence of the researcher. The participants and respondents provided their responses independently so that they were true reflections of their practices and activities, and views and perceptions.

- Ethical issues related to analysis and reporting

Objectivity is critical during the analysis phase of research to ensure that the data that are collected are not misconstrued; therefore, it is important that a researcher's conduct reflect such impartiality (Saunders *et al*., 2009). In analysing and reporting data, the statistician and researcher-maintained honesty and objectivity. In maintaining honesty, the statistician and the researcher reported on data honestly by not misrepresenting it; documented the procedures that were undertaken in the analysis; and did not fabricate the findings. Objectivity was addressed in the interpretation of the data to truly reflect the practices and activities of the owners of the enterprises and the perceptions of their customers. In addition, the researcher provided clear and accurate conclusions and recommendations. The researcher analysed and reported data on all interview materials. In addition, the statistician analysed data on all completed questionnaires received and the researcher interpreted and reported the results.

The theoretical lens - the foundation of the study - is explained in Chapter 2; and methodological, and empirical contributions and recommendations are explained in Chapter 8, alongside implications for policy and lawmakers, practitioners and academia.

The next section provides an overview of the chapters in this thesis.

1.11 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis consists of the following nine chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Introduces the study and the contextual setting of emerging economies, and thereafter, focuses on the African context, particularly the South African environment. Township economies are furthermore discussed. Thereafter, a brief discussion of the two main sectors under study, namely the fast-food industry and the hairdresser industry, is presented. The theoretical framework is addressed briefly, and the problem statement, purpose statement and the research questions and objectives that guided the study, are explicated. The academic value and contribution of the study are discussed, followed by an overview of the delimitations and assumptions that underpinned the research. The chapter also includes definitions of key terms, as well as a brief summary of the research design and methods that were used, as well as ethical considerations that were observed in the study. Finally, the structure of the thesis was outlined.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This Chapter provides the theoretical framework and foundation, underpinning the broad concepts of branding, communication and management. The focus is on the multidisciplinary theories that ground the study, advancing the literature on the various disciplines related to this research and that are relevant for this study. The detailed discussions are contained in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively. The Chapter commenced with a discussion of outlining the metatheory. Then, the brand building and development models were discussed, followed by actor network theory (ANT), which examines social media technology theory. Then, resource-based theory was unpacked. Thereafter, integrated marketing communication theory was discussed and the Chapter concluded with the debate on SERVQUAL (customer service) theory.

Chapter 3: Brand building and development management

The Chapter deals with the literature review focusing on the theories discussed in Chapter 2. The discussions pertain to the brand building phases, brand development elements and brand identity. These are followed by discussions on market-based resources and brand-related resources. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of customer service, focusing on service quality.

Chapter 4: Brand communication management

The Chapter deals with the literature discussions focused on brand communication management. The marketing communication mix is discussed. Thereafter, social media is discussed in detail, which concludes the Chapter.

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

The Chapter focuses on describing the study's research methodology, the research paradigm and philosophies. The qualitative and quantitative research approach to the sequential exploratory mixed-method approach is detailed. The Chapter provides a detailed description of the inquiry strategy and broad research design. The data collection approach adopted for the study is discussed, followed by the data management approach. Qualitative and quantitative statistical data analysis are also discussed; then, the quality and rigour of the research design are assessed and demonstrated. The Chapter concludes with issues on ethics, as they are important since the study involves human beings.

Chapter 6: Research findings

The qualitative data collected during the course of the research were analysed and interpreted in this Chapter. The Chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the results obtained from the thematic analysis performed in the study.

Chapter 7: Research findings

The quantitative data collected during the course of the research were analysed and interpreted in this Chapter. The Chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the results obtained from the EFA and CFA, and empirical data analysis performed in the study.

Chapter 8: Research findings: Structural equation modelling

Structural equation modelling was conducted to assess the structural model for the study and was presented in this chapter. The hypotheses of the study were also tested. The Chapter concludes with the test for mediation effects.

Chapter 9: Discussions, conclusions and recommendations

The Chapter presents the model by answering the secondary research questions and objectives, followed by the primary research questions and objectives, and the problem statement. The theories from the theoretical framework, literature from the literature review and results from the data analysis were included in the answers to the research questions and objectives. The main aim of the study, the significance of the study and a summary of findings are provided. Then, the theoretical and practical managerial implications of the study are discussed. This is followed by a section on the methodological implications of the study. Then, the limitations of the study are discussed. The Chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

1.12 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

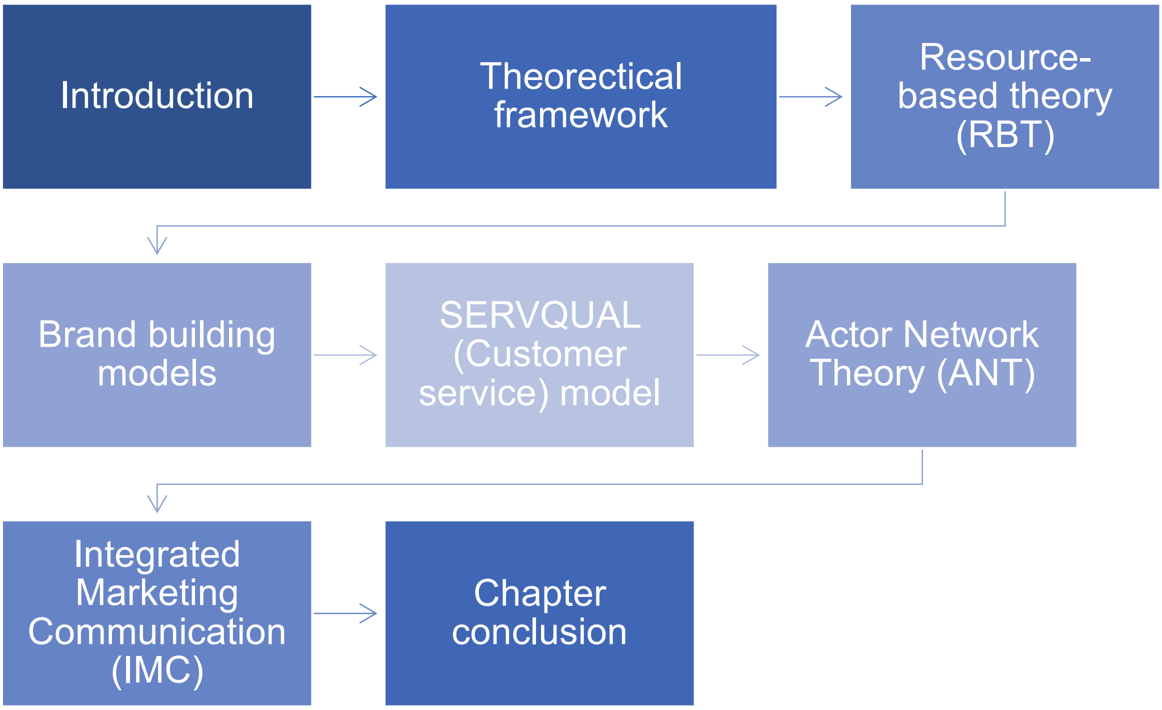
The contribution that SMMEs make at a social, economic and political level is undeniable and cannot be underestimated. It was stated in the Chapter that unfamiliar or unknown brands, compared to established brands, limit the market share of enterprises, attributing these shortcomings to the lack of branding and brand management by SMMEs. Moreover, it is important for SMMEs to engage in branding and brand communication deliberately and intentionally. Brands are assets, therefore, SMMEs must fundamentally build and develop their businesses as brands because branding benefits establishments. Branding offers enterprises the advantage of being relevant, differentiating themselves among their competitors and creating a competitive advantage.

More than a quarter (39%) of SMMEs operate in the food and drinks sector, and up to 75% of the microenterprises in South African townships are beauty salons. These enterprises often engage in brand communication haphazardly - the effects of brand management on a business should not be undermined. Brand management is not necessarily appreciated and is often misunderstood and interpreted by enterprise owners.

Theories grounding this study, include the resource-based theory (RBT), which argued for enterprises as brands and thus (Shariq, 2018) alluded that they are assets, and are managed through resources and capabilities. In addition, brand elements and brand identity were conceptualised and based on the RBT tenets. Brand building and development models highlighted the approach to branding that can be integrated into the SMME context. Service provision is an integral part of engaging with consumers and clients and implicitly communicate about the enterprises. This engagement, involving customers, clients and the enterprises, explains an interaction of the collective called actors or actants - from an actor network theory perspective - who use social media to communicate the businesses and their offerings. These offerings and brands are communicated using various marketing communication mix elements.

It is, therefore, important to discuss the theoretical framework for the study, as it serves as a guide, grounding the research and the structure of the study. The next Chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter was dedicated to providing the background and contextual discussion of the study. This Chapter focuses on the theoretical perspective of branding, communication and management theories and models to document the theoretical framework of the current study. A theoretical framework that serves as the foundation of this research is critical; hence, the branding, communication and entrepreneurship management of SMMEs are explored. This Chapter addresses the theoretical framework on brand communication management in developing and managing brands, communication management and the brand building and development activities for enterprises. The framework will, therefore, provide a scientific foundation for the research.

Ngulube (2018) suggests that theories cannot be separated from research and are fundamental in explaining the relationships among the research concepts. A theory is described as a set of interconnected concepts, definitions and propositions that illustrate a systematic view of situations and events, specifying correlations among variables to explain, explore or predict situations, events or phenomena (Berkovich, 2020; Glaz, Rimer & Viswanath, 2008; Ngulube, 2020). In addition, a theory assists in identifying what must be observed, measured and compared in research. Moreover, theories and models explain behaviour and recommend manners or approaches to achieve behaviour change. Models are conceived to draw on a number of theories to facilitate understanding of a specific problem or opportunity in a particular context or framework (Glaz *et al*., 2008). Propositions or hypotheses in research are used to test theories relevant for the study being conducted; and the methodology that fits with the model or theory is employed. Moreover, Ngulube (2020) posits that theories and methodology are the two major pillars of research.

A theoretical framework, consequently, assists the researcher in providing a synopsis of existing knowledge and directs future research undertakings (Vosloo, 2014). These summaries of existing knowledge have the potential to highlight gaps in concepts and relationships, thereby establishing sets of propositions or generalisations. Cobley and Schulz (2013) posit that communication study is essentially multidisciplinary, drawing and sharing concepts from psychology, sociology, political science and other social sciences theories.

The Chapter, therefore, departs by outlining the meta-theoretical conceptualisation that grounds this research, as shown in Table 2.1. The research is multidisciplinary in nature; therefore, the theories grounding it are from three disciplines, namely: marketing, communication and strategic business management. Choi and Wacker (2011) suggest that researchers not only use complementary theories to help explain a phenomenon, but also often integrate these theories to enrich the theoretical arguments used to address their research questions and objectives.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this research is presented in Table 2.1. Since the research is multidisciplinary in nature, theories were borrowed from the marketing management and business management disciplines. Social science theory is the overarching framework drawing from diverse theories found in marketing communication.

Table 2.1: Theoretical framework of the study

Academic discipline	Marketing Communication Management	Business Management
Academic field	Brand and Communication Management	Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship
Theories	Actor Network Theory Marketing communication mix theory SERVQUAL (Customer service)	Resource-based theory
Models	AIDA model of communication Brand building and development	
Concepts	Brand communication	
Constructs	Social media and Social technology	Market resources
	Advertising (AIDA), sales promotion, personal selling and sponsorship Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles	Brand related capabilities Brand elements Brand identity

Source: Own compilation

The change that directors of a relatively small company should make is to place brand management at a top position in their daily mindset (Pyper, Doherty, Gounaris & Wilson, 2020). Achieving brand recognition starts inside the organisation itself (Krake, 2005; Kaur, Malhotra, & Sharma, 2020; Van Nguyen, Lu, Hill & Conduit, 2019). Resource-based theory is therefore discussed next.

2.3 RESOURCE-BASED THEORY

The resource-based theory (RBT) originated in the field of economics as the work of Penrose (1959), which focused on the role of resources in facilitating or inhibiting business growth. The main dependent construct in this theory is competitive advantage, organisational performance and rents, while independent variables include assets, capabilities and resources. Analysis is conducted at the firm level. Barney (1991:108) defines resources as “all assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm dimensions, information, knowledge which are controlled by the business enabling it to conceive and implement strategies that improve efficiency and effectiveness”. From Barney’s (1991) definition, making reference to branding, a brand is considered a business asset by Aaker and Keller (1990), Keller (2006), Oh, Keller, Nelslin and Reibstein (2020), Keller and Brexendorf (2019) and Sinclair and Keller, (2014; 2017), who defined the concept similar to Barney (1991). Therefore, the current study asserts that brand communication that focuses on enterprises must consider brands as assets, and the purpose should be to create value through RBT by communicating the brand. Urde (1994; 1997) concurs with Oh *et al*. (2020), Keller and Brexendorf (2019), Sinclair and Keller (2017) that enterprises and organisations carrying a brand orientation regard their brands as strategic resources. Moreover, Beig and Nika (2019) advocate that brands are, therefore, assets and sources of competitive advantage for both manufacturers and retailers.

The RBT is a central paradigm in strategic management and is popular in adjacent and complementary fields, such as operation management and marketing; and management subdisciplines, such as human resource management and entrepreneurship (Hitt, Xu & Carnes, 2015), and it is the most influential perspective in the organisational sciences (Kellermanns, Walter, Crook, Kemmerer & Narayanan, 2016). Furthermore, Kellermanns *et al*. (2016) assert that the resource-based view (RBV) is being leveraged in entrepreneurship research and in that regard is an influential theory; and RBT or RBV of the business is one of the most widely accepted theories of management (Jogaratnam, 2016; Kellermanns *et al*., 2016; Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale & Lepak, 2014). The RBV perspective is designed to bring the elements of brand marketing communication into a well-coordinated process that communicates cohesive and consistent messages to stakeholders (Brodie *et al*., 2017). The resource-based view and resource-based theory are referred to interchangeably in marketing and management research (Kozlenkova, Samaha & Palmatier, 2014) because of their similarities. Barney *et al*. (2011) assert that RBV evolved into a theory, and consistent with the scholars, this study refers to RBT.

Barney (2013) theorises that the fundamental tenant of RBT is that potential profit for business strategies is dependent on the resources and capabilities attributes of the enterprise. RBT postulates that the optimal strategy for a particular business depends on its management of resources and capabilities (Barney, 2013). RBT, furthermore, suggests that a business's resources and capabilities are not productive in isolation (Pertusa-Ortega, Molina-Azorin & Claver-Cortés, 2010) but rather provide sources of competitive advantage. Ahmad *et al*. (2019) conceptualise four distinct brand-related capabilities, namely: distinctive capability, value adding capability, functional capability and symbolic capability, that enable a brand to be unique. These are also the capabilities that the study considers, as they are aligned to the research questions and objectives.

Brand-related capabilities are based on the brand orientation construct developed by Bridson and Evans (2004) and Bridson *et al*. (2013). Morgan, Vorhies and Mason (2009) theorise that there are two interrelated areas of marketing capabilities, which are the set associated with the marketing mix and the one concerned with the process of marketing strategy development. Wu (2010) asserts that these capabilities are valuable and not substitutable sources of advantage that have the potential to lead to superior performance; therefore, providing competitive advantage, as it might be difficult for competitors to imitate. Barney (2013) asserts that marketing is not only ideal to apply to RBT, but is also a source of methods and models required to test the theory as it has been developed in the strategic management field.

RBT advances that businesses should aim at accumulating resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable (VRIO) and that are supported by organisational capabilities that facilitate sustainable competitive advantages and superior performance (Kozlenkova *et al*., 2014). Furthermore, RBT asserts that a brand is a resource from the strategic management point of view; conversely, the brand equity theory positions a brand as an asset to the organisation (Keller & Lehmann, 2003; Keller & Brexendorf, 2019; Sinclair & Keller, 2016) and communicates the values and beliefs of the business that owns it. What is common about the brand from the perspective of these theories, is that it provides a competitive advantage. It is, therefore, pivotal for enterprises to build and develop their brands, and take advantage of the competitive advantage it provides as a resource. According to the RBT, both brand and relational resources can improve the firm's strategic position. Brand resources differentiate a business to gain more business opportunities, whereas relational resources focus on retaining customers from migrating to competitors (Kaleka, 2011).

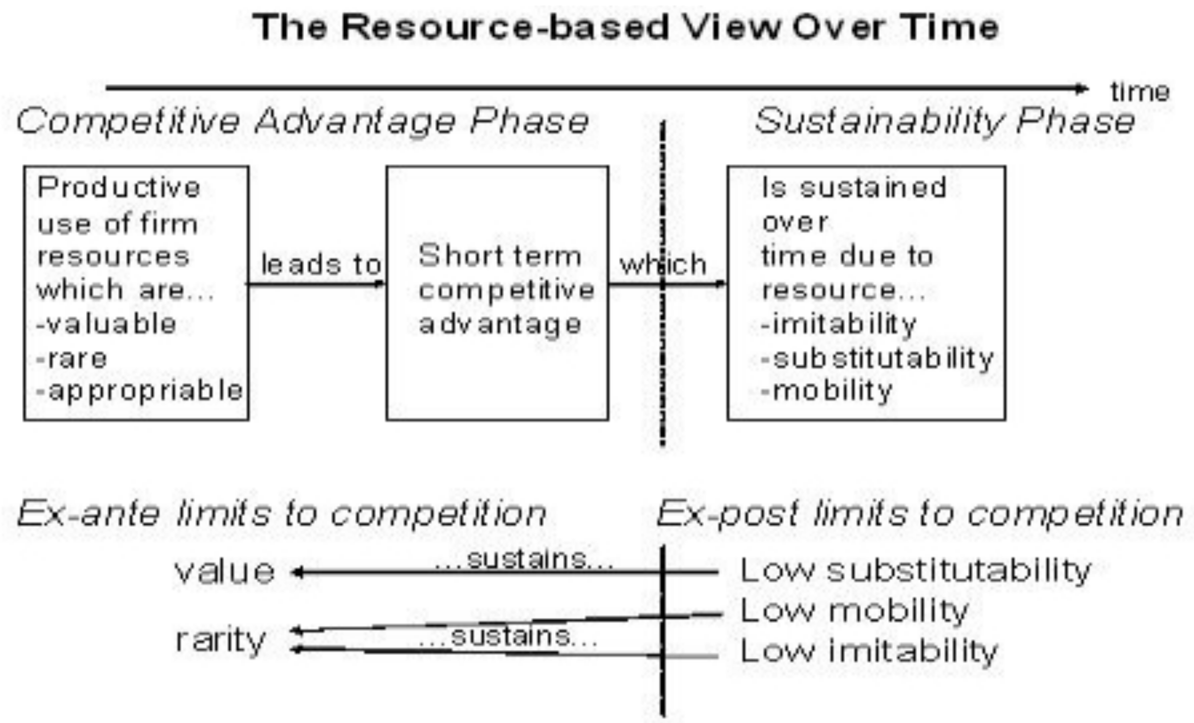
Kozlenkova *et al*. (2014), in their study on resource-based theory in marketing, suggest that there are four distinct perspectives to evaluate RBT, namely: marketing domains, market-based resources, exchange level analysis and RBT to related theories. For the purpose of the current study, the focus is on market-based resources, as it documents VRIO arguments for brands and relationships, as this research engages in brand communication, making branding and brand management the focus for taking advantage of the brand as a resource that affords SMMEs to create a distinctive competitive advantage. The current study asserts that the enterprise, as a brand, is an asset, communicates the business and builds relationships with consumers and clients. In addition, it is for the benefit of the enterprises to engage in branding and brand communication activities to build and develop the brand to be competitive.

The current study, therefore, adopts the market-related perspective of resource-based theory in its endeavour to develop a brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships with the aim of facilitating the adoption of VRIO in developing their enterprises as brands, thereby taking advantage of the competitive leverage that will set them apart from their competitors. Therefore, the brand facilitates an enterprise's relationships with its stakeholders, which is unique and impossible for competitors to imitate because of their individual historical conditions, causal ambiguity and underlying social complexity. Moreover, relational resources contribute to an enterprise's performance both directly and indirectly, contributing to the development of brand resources. Relational or social resources are intangible resources not completely owned or controlled by businesses. However, they can be deployed to manage beneficial relationships with customers and other stakeholders (Morgan, 2012).

The discipline of strategic management presumes that businesses attempt to differentiate themselves from their rivals to secure and sustain a competitive advantage (Hitt *et al.*, 2015). The purpose of the current study is to develop a branding communication model that SMMEs can use to manage and leverage branding and sustain competitive advantages for enterprises to grow through communication. Barney (1991) built upon these ideas to suggest that firms need valuable and rare resources to gain a competitive advantage, but to sustain that advantage over time, the resources must also be difficult to imitate and non-substitutable by other firms' resources.

From a marketing perspective, branding practices are considered fundamental to competitive or superior outcomes (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2009; Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Keller, 2001); therefore, providing brand capabilities, and differentiating products and services offered from those of competitors. Moreover, Buttenberg (2015) posits that, consistent with the resource-based view (RBV), the branding process is a market-related asset that can accumulate superior performance for a business that engages and implements it. Figure 2.1 depicts the overview of RBT over time.

Figure 2.1 The overview of RBT over time



Source: Wade and Hulland (2004).

RBT assumes that businesses within an industry are heterogeneous based on the differences in the resources. However, the condition is temporary, as homogeneity tends to develop over time (Essuman, Bruce, Ataburo, Asiedu-Appiah & Boso, 2022; Stoelhorst, 2021; Miller, 2019). This holds true based on the researcher’s observation over time, growing up in the township of the industries under study; that is, the fast-food and hair and beauty salons enterprises, tend to be homogenous. However, the owners of the enterprises are able to continuously set their trades and services apart as an effort to differentiate themselves.

RBT has been subjected to criticism (Priem & Butler, 2001), with scholars stating that the arguments are static in nature, ignoring the potential influence of the external environment. Leiblein (2011) suggests that many of the fundamental ideas and constructs of the RBT perspectives are used without clear distinction, therefore, creating an overuse of the concepts, which results in a lack of clarity, despite previous attempts to delineate these two concepts.

Barrales-Molina, Martínez-López and Gázquez-Abad (2014) and Kozlenkova *et al*. (2014) applied resource-based theory to marketing strategy. The theories about branding are embedded in a strategic management perspective drawing on dynamic capabilities within systems that build on Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) and Eisenhardt and Martin's (2000) concept of a dynamic capability. Capabilities refer to a firm's capacity to organise and manage resources to achieve specific goals (Duchek, 2020; Mikalef & Gupta, 2021). This study, therefore, investigated the four distinct brand-related capabilities, namely, distinctive capability, value adding capability, functional capability and symbolic capability, to determine SMME practices, as these capabilities enable a brand to be distinctive.

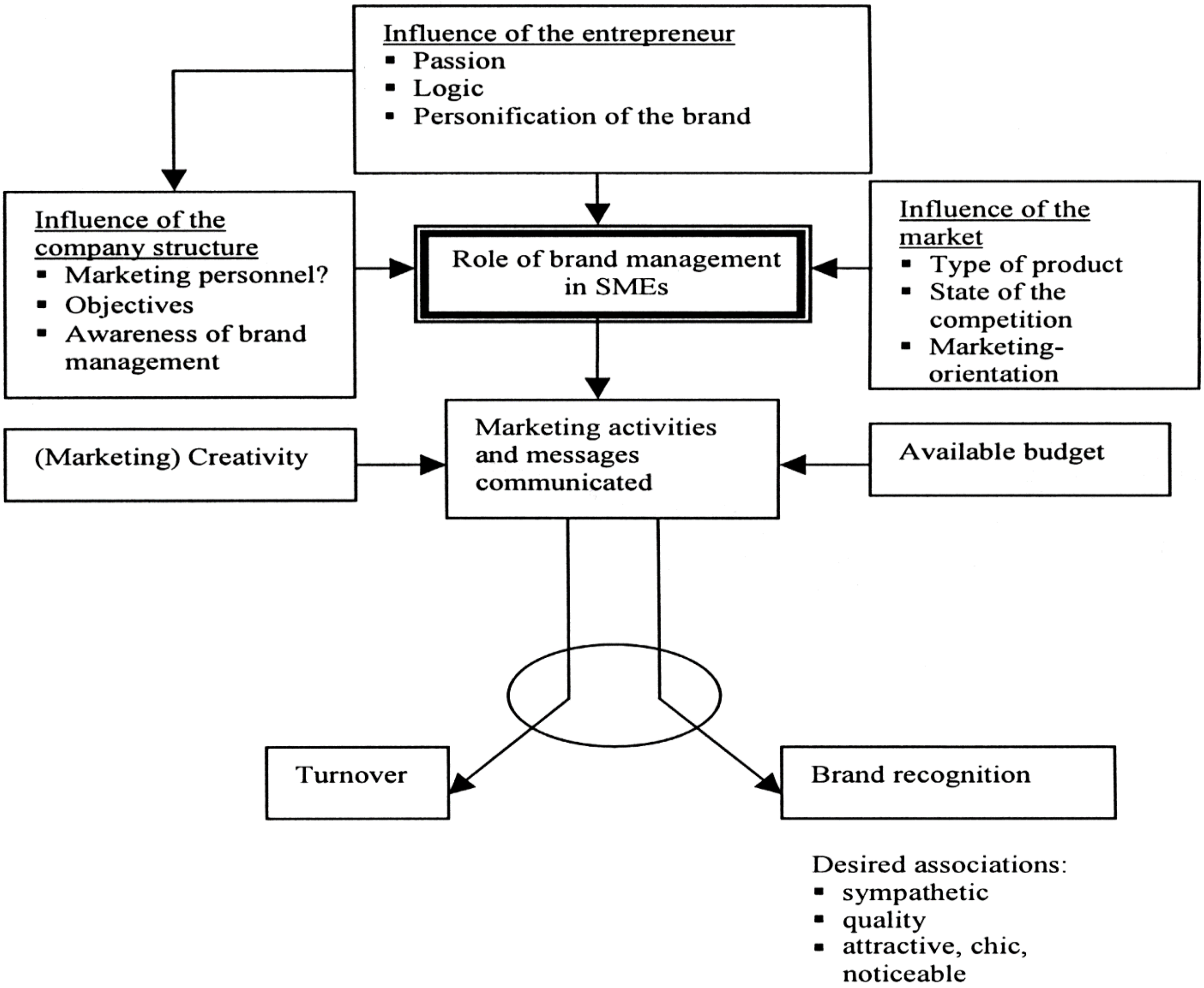
Accordingly, the literature on brand management focuses on brand orientation (Urde 2016; Urde, Baumgarth & Merrilees, 2013) from an organisational perspective. Brand orientation is an inside-out, identity-driven approach that considers brands as being core to an organisation and its strategy. Similarly, market orientation is an outside-in, image-driven approach (Iyer *et al*., 2021; Urde *et al*., 2013). Internal branding contains the three brand management factors that have been discussed in the literature: brand orientation, strategic brand management and brand performance (Iyer, Davari & Paswan, 2018). The wants and needs of the customer are relevant; however, they should not unilaterally direct the development of the brand and determine its identity (Urde *et al*., 2011). Therefore, both orientations are essential for this study, since an informed model should factor in the practices and activities of SMME owners and the perceptions of their clients and consumers.

2.4 BRAND-BUILDING MODELS

The Krake's (2005) brand-building model is acknowledged to be the earliest model proposed for small businesses. The model tested Keller's (1998) model and led to the development of "new guidelines for the construction of a strong brand in an SME". Although Aaker (1996) developed ten guidelines for creating strong brands, they are not applicable to SMMEs. However, they are accepted in the brand and business management fields. Figure 2.2 depicts the funnel diagram and explains the role of brand management in SMEs similarly to SMMEs. Therefore, in developing the model, Krake (2005) interrogated the role that managers play in the brand development of enterprises. The model further tested Keller's model in practice, which resulted in Krake (2005) revising the guidelines that Keller (1998) developed.

Krake (2005) theorised that there are pillars that marketing strategies directed towards managing brands that are based on differentiation and added value. Differentiation and value from the entrepreneurial perspective lend themselves to resource-based theory and models for competitive advantage.

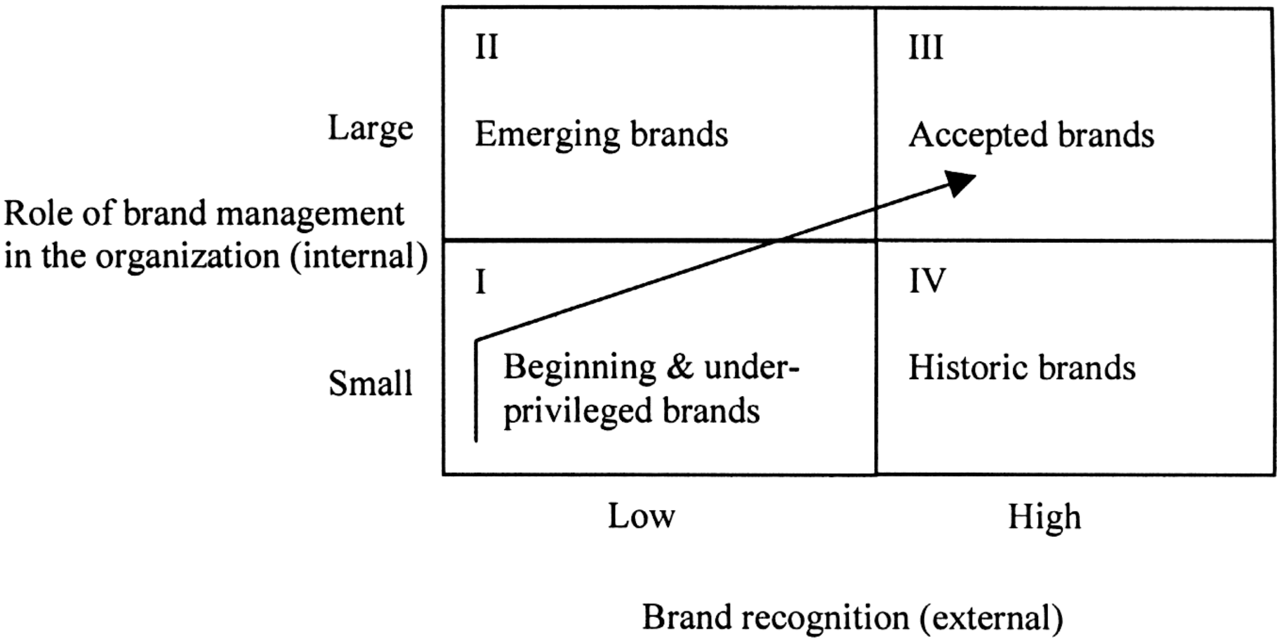
Figure 2.2: The funnel model for the role of managers in brand development for SMEs



Source: Krake (2005).

Krake's (2005) model discarded two of the guidelines theorised by Keller (1998), citing that they are not within the scope of the SMEs and SMMEs alike. The guidelines based on the Krake (2005) model are discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 2.3: Brand development model for SMEs



Source: Krake (2005).

Krake's study confirmed three of the five guidelines proposed by Keller for the creation of a strong SME brand; however, two guidelines were not so accepted. These changes led to the creation of the new model.

The guidelines for the creation of a strong SME brand as proposed by Krake (2005) are as follows:

- build one (or two) strong brands;
- focus on a couple of brand associations;
- integrate brand and marketing elements;
- be logical and consistent;
- link the entrepreneur with the brand; and
- cultivate a passion for the brand.

The two guidelines that Krake discarded are as follows:

- Design a brand-building "push" campaign and a creative "pull" campaign to attract attention.
- Broaden the brand with as many secondary associations as possible.

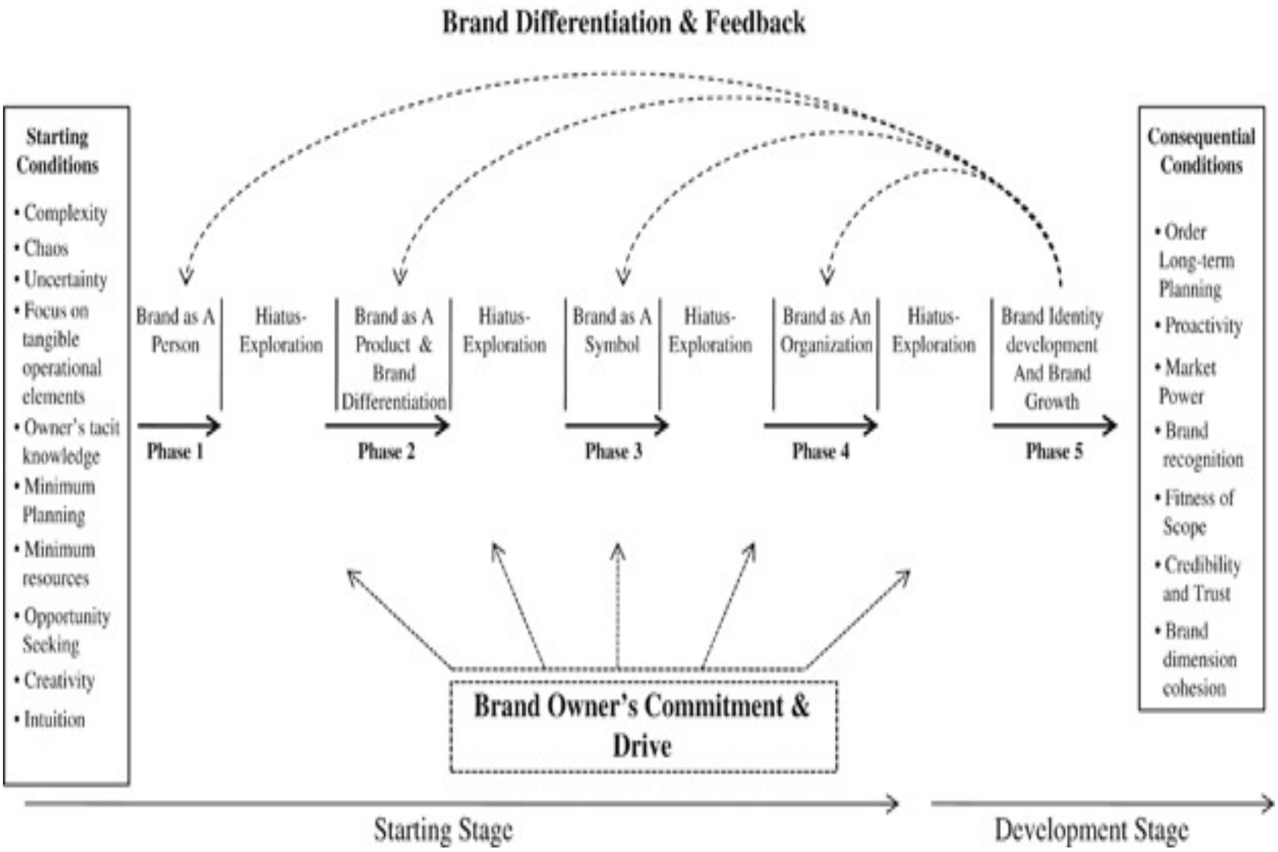
These Krake guidelines are applicable and appropriate for corporates. Therefore, Centeno *et al*. (2013) proposed a five-phases of the SME brand building model.

Five phases of the SME brand building model

Centeno *et al*. (2013) proposed the "five phases of SME brand-building" model based on Keller (1993) and Burmann, Jost-Benz and Riley's (2009) work. In his study, Keller (2013) proposes approaches to brand-building through four processes of designing and implementing brand marketing programmes. The processes comprise choosing brand elements/identities, developing marketing programmes, integrating marketing communications and leveraging secondary associations. Keller's perspective offers advantages in the manner in which the four suggested approaches appear to umbrella most of the extant models proposed for SMEs (Odoom, 2016).

The purpose of Centeno *et al*. (2013) was to investigate how SMEs build their brands and therefore, develop a conceptual model of SME brand development. The researchers' study found that SMEs engage in brand building, however, in a non-traditional manner and have limited resources and minimum brand planning. Limited resources and lack of marketing management skills have been documented as some of the reasons SMEs and SMMEs do not take advantage of branding. Accordingly, Centeno *et al*. (2013) propose that enterprise owners explore brands through experimentation. Moreover, the researchers developed the five phases of the SME brand-building model. Figure 2.4 depicts the model that (Centeno *et al*., 2013) developed to explain the brand-building process in SMME.

Figure 2.4: The five phases of SME brand-building



Source: Centeno et al. (2013).

By and large, however, the tests of these models have yielded varied outcomes, motivating further empirical-based findings in multiple contexts for theory development.

2.6 SERVQUAL (CUSTOMER SERVICE) MODEL

Grönroos (1984) developed a service quality model. He suggested that service quality comprises three dimensions, namely: technical quality, task quality and corporate image. Then, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) tried to compare and classify different methods for the evaluation of quality. The scholars introduced ten factors as dimensions of service quality, namely: reliability, sense of responsibility, competency, availability, humility, customer relationship, credibility, security, customer perception, and tangible aspects. Furthermore, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1991) revised and reduced ten dimensions of service quality to five dimensions called: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, credibility, and empathy factors. The most well-known scale to measure service quality is the

SERVQUAL scale presented by Parasuraman *et al*. (1991). The service quality model has standardised components used to measure people's expectations and perceptions about the quality of products and services (Esmaeilpour, Mohamadi & Rajabi 2016).

The service quality model is also known as a gaps model. The model was developed by Parasuraman, Valarie and Zeithaml between 1983 and 1988. The objective of the model was to identify the principal dimensions of service quality by proposing a scale for measuring service quality and recommending potential sources of service quality problems. Some scholars refer to SERVQUAL as the theory of customer service quality. SERVQUAL theory originates from the marketing, consumer behaviour and customer satisfaction fields. The SERVQUAL theoretical model is adopted in this study to explore customer service quality from the SMME perspective and to determine customers' perceptions regarding the customer service that the enterprises offer and use to market the businesses. The theory was developed by Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) from a European perspective and then revised in 1988 and 1991 to resolve the challenges with the high means and standard deviations found on some of the items in the measurement scales to capture a direct measure of the significance of each construct to customers. It analyses service quality at an individual level and is linked to expectation confirmation theory. The theory views service quality as the difference between what customers expect from a service offering and how customers perceive the services they receive (Parasuraman *et al*., 1988). SERVQUAL refers to the term perceived instead of actual service received; as a result, the use of the terms renders SERVQUAL to measure attitudes related to satisfaction.

The model of service quality was developed from an expectancy-confirmation paradigm (Oli & Dhanaseharan, 2023). The paradigm indicated that customers have perceptions of the expected customer service that influence how they perceive the quality of the service provided (Oli & Dhanaseharan, 2021). Therefore, service quality was conceptualised as an equation:

SQ = P- E

where:

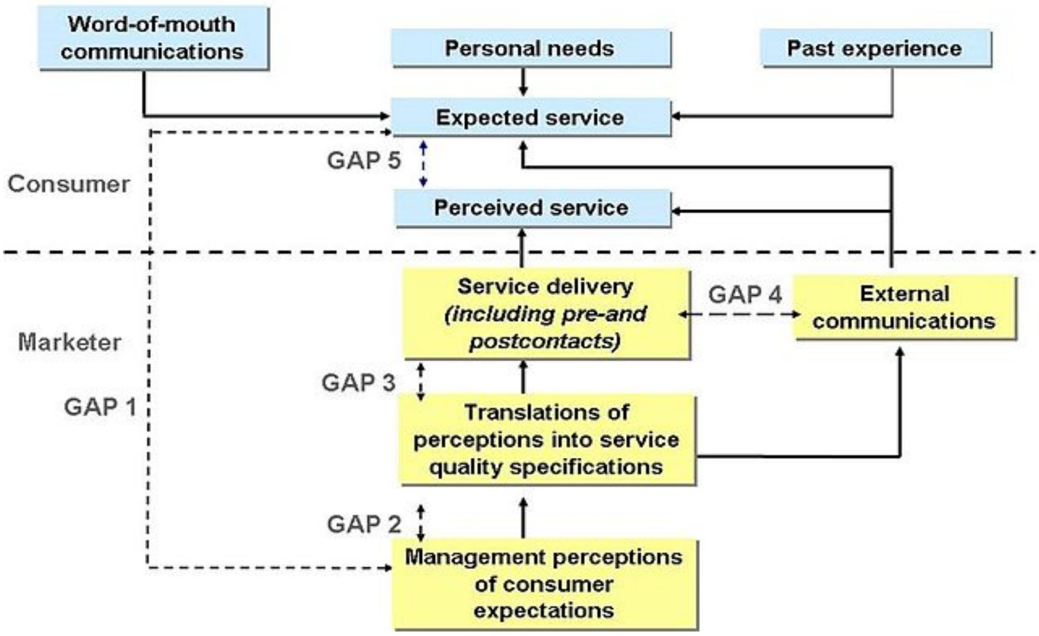
SQ is service quality

P is the individual's perceptions of a given service delivery

E is the individual's expectations of a given service delivery

The equation was interpreted as low service quality to mean that customers had high expectations compared to the received, while the opposite holds when service quality is high (Parasuraman *et al*., 1988).

Figure 2.5: Model of service quality



Source: Parasuraman *et al*. (1998).

The main independent construct or factor is service quality. There are no dependent constructs as SERVQUAL measures the service quality construct. SERVQUAL was developed to assess customer perceptions and expectations of service quality in service and retail businesses by Parasuraman *et al*. (1988), and it is a multi-item scale. The scale established the concept of service quality into five dimensions, namely: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy as described by Parasuraman *et al*. (1991).

- Tangibles: refers to physical facilities, equipment and staff appearance to mention a few (Peitzika, Chatzi & Kissa, 2020).
- Reliability: the ability to perform service consistently and accurately (Peitzika *et al*., 2020).

- Responsiveness: is the preparedness to assist and respond to customer needs (Peitzika *et al*., 2020).
- Assurance refers to the employees' ability to inspire confidence and trust (Endeshaw, 2019).
- Empathy is regarded as the extent to which an individualised, customised, and caring service is provided (Endeshaw, 2019).

  The dimensions are discussed in Chapter 5, which provides a literature review of the constructs and dimensions related to this study.

Table 2.2: Summary of the service quality gaps

Gap	Brief description	Probable Causes
Gap 1 The Knowledge Gap	Difference between the target market's expected service and management's perceptions of the target market's expected service	• Insufficient marketing research • Inadequate upwards communications • Too many layers of management
Gap 2 The standards Gap	Difference between management's perceptions of customer expectations and the translation into service procedures and specifications	• Lack of management commitment to service quality • Employee perceptions of infeasibility • Inadequate goal setting • Inadequate task standardisation
Gap 3 The Delivery Gap	Difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered	• Technical breakdowns or malfunctions • Role conflict/ambiguity • Lack of perceived control • Poor employee-job fit • Poor technology- fit • Poor supervision or training
Gap 4 The Communications Gap	Difference between service delivery intentions and what is communicated to the customer	• Lack of horizontal communications • Poor communication with advertising agency • Inadequate communications between sales and operations • Differences in policies and procedures across branches or divisions of an entity • Propensity to overpromise

Source: Rhodes (2009:6).

The model was criticised for capturing satisfaction rather than quality (Endeshaw, 2019). In addition, concern was raised that expectations are administered after customers experienced the service (Gunawardane, 2011; Kissa, 2017). Some researchers interrogated the dimensional structure of the instrument, as several researchers such as Peitzika *et al*. (2020) reported different dimensions in their studies. Angur, Nataraajan and Jahera (1999) compare SERVQUAL and SERVPERF (service performance), and found that although SERVPERF explains a greater overall service quality variance, the difference was average. As a result, the SERVQUAL model is being used extensively by both researchers and industry practitioners in measuring service quality in various contexts. Buttle (1996) advocates that the measurement of service quality is probably the best available. Hence, Anguar *et al*. (1999); Yavas, Bilgin and Shemwell (1997) proposed that the measurement can highlight the service quality dimensions that are important in influencing customers' quality perceptions and therefore aspects that management must prioritise. Parasuraman *et al*. (1998) point out that the SERVQUAL instrument can be adapted or supplemented to suit a research study, therefore, providing a skeleton for researchers and practitioners.

2.7 ACTOR NETWORK THEORY (ANT)

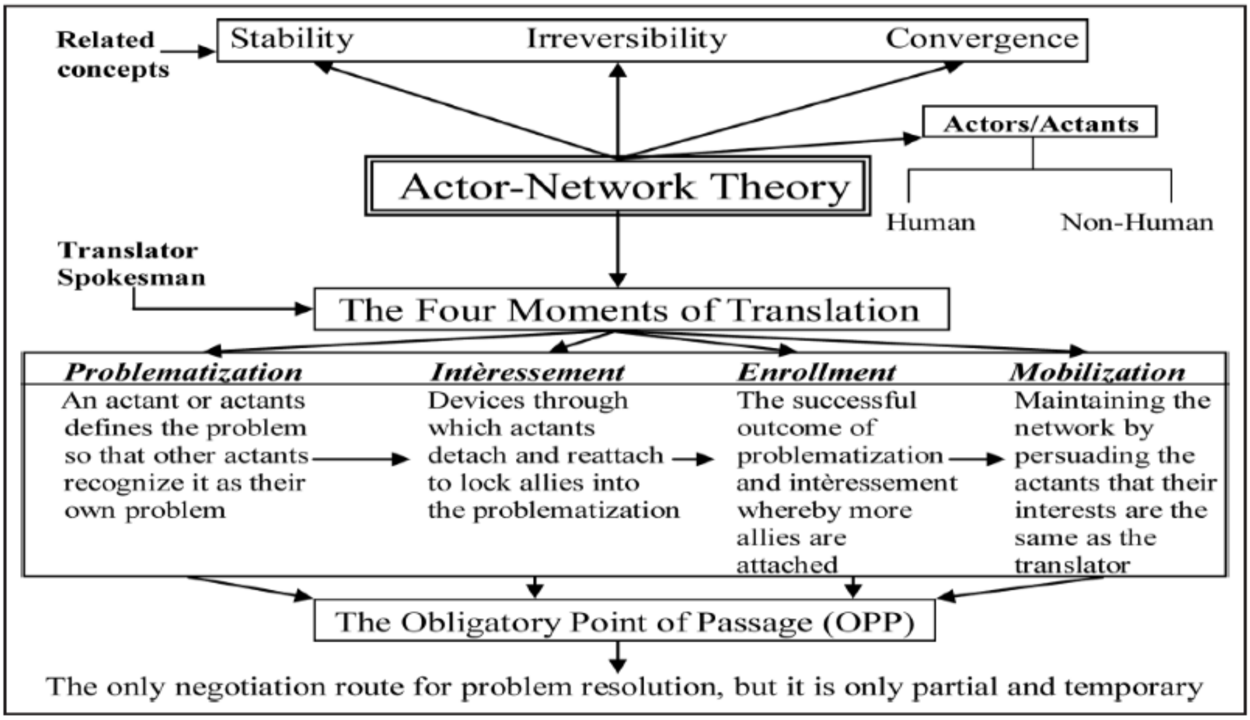
The ANT originates from the sociology field and is used to study individuals and networks. It is abbreviated as ANT and was developed by Callon (1986), Latour (1987) and Law (2001), who are known as sociologists of science. The theory is linked to social network theory, sociotechnical theory and network theory. ANT was reviewed and revised by Latour (1999) and Law (1992). It is unique from other conventional network theories in that it consists of people, objects and organisations who are actors or actants. The principal belief of this theory is the idea of a diverse network that embraces both the social and technical parts. ANT considers the social and technical parts to be inseparable and asserts that all actors are important to a social network.

The distinctive attributes of ANT are that it explains the social arena to embrace heterogenous networks that are made up of actors. Law (1992), however, suggests that researchers must be cautious of differentiating between social and technological phenomena. Moreover, Monteiro (2004) proposes that humans and non-humans form part of a similar heterogenous network; as such, they are to be considered the same.

An actor is "any element that bends space around itself makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates their will into a language of its own" (Callon & Latour, 1981). Latour (1996) asserts that an analysis of a network is important for an entity to be understood. Postma (2009) points out that the key focus of ANT researchers is the actor network; for that reason, the relationship is perceived to be about networking and connecting. Consequently, individual entities are understood to not act independently but rather to act with other entities as a collective in a network. Enterprises do not operate in isolation as they operate within communities and are there to serve the customers who are individuals or groups from the community. Therefore, the actor-network relationship is established through the offering of products and services that are communicated to the customer by means of persuasion.

The theory consists of main independent constructs or factors, namely: actor, network, translation, problematisation, obligatory passage point (OPP), interessement, enrolment and mobilisation. Translation is a process in which the actor network is crucial, and the strategies adopted may include negotiation, persuasion, bargaining or violence (Rhodes, 2009). OPP must take place for actors to realise their interests, meaning that SMMEs gain more power when they effectively use network resources. Creswell, Worth and Sheikh (2010), therefore, argue that ANT provides an outlook to view and understand how technology shapes social processes. The stability and irreversibility of a network requires constant encouragement through a network of alliances. Convergence, on the other hand, occurs through the process of translation that leads to agreement. Criticism about ANT theory assumes that all actors are equal and therefore share the same power (Hadden & Jasny, 2019, Khajeheian, 2018a).

Figure 2.6: ANT key concepts and translation moments



Source: Rhodes (2009:6).

Research in the fields of entrepreneurship (Horst & Hitters 2020; Khajeheian & Kolli 2020, Labafi & Williams 2018; Khajeheian 2016), management (Polyakova, Loginov, Strelnikov & Usova, 2019; Ribeiro, Silva, Duarte, Davids & Garganta, 2017) and marketing (Sharafi Farzad, Kolli, Soltani & Ghanbary, 2019; Khajeheian 2018b) has examined influencers, authorities and sources of power within networks. Kolli and Khajenheian (2020) found that social media analysis is a useful tool to study power relations in societies, organisations and markets.

Brand communication includes both social and technical aspects. Therefore, ANT will address these aspects equally. In the context of this study, social media forms an essential part of ANT, enabling research to understand enterprises and human behaviour in using technology-mediated social settings that influence customers and businesses. More importantly, SMMEs take advantage of social media platforms and technology; therefore, this provides transaction behaviour with their customers to accomplish their commercial activities. This viewpoint provides insight into how technology is adopted through the processes of interaction among entities (Lee, Harindranath, Oh & Kim, 2015). The interactions occur through the brand communication practices and activities that SMMEs engage in to develop and build their establishments as brands. SMMEs, therefore, influence and create perceptions regarding their businesses through social media technologies via social media and social media platforms. The constructs used in measuring actor networks in this study are, therefore, social media technology and social media platforms.

SMMEs and their customers are actors and actants engaging, building relationships and negotiating through brand communication practices and activities using social media as a network to build the relationships.

2.8 INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a concept that emerged during the late 20th century (Anabila, 2020; Kitchen, 2005). The emergence of IMC originates from the effects of information technology and changes in the marketing and marketing communication fields (Tafesse & Kitchen, 2017). Furthermore, Cornelissen and Lock (2000) point out that the concept of IMC dates back to the 1970s. Kitchen and Burgmann (2010), furthermore, point out that thus far, researchers have not been able to reach a consensus on the definition of IMC. The evolution of the IMC definition is captured in Table 2.3, demonstrating how it was referred to and defined from the early 1990s to the twentieth century.

Table 2.3: Integrated marketing communication definitions

Author and year	Definition
Beard (1997); Duncan and Everett (1993); Nowak and Phelps (1994)	The one sight, one sound or one voice or the seamless marketing communication approach.
Caywood, Schultz and Wang (1991)	[IMC is a] concept of marketing communications planning that recognises the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines – general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact.
Schultz (2004) Kliatchko (2005)	IMC is the concept and process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centred, and result-driven brand communication programmes over time.
Henninger *et al*. (2017)	"a strategic approach that allows for the integration of various communication channels to convey a consistent message."

Source: Own compilation.

Schultz's (2004) definition of IMC was adopted by the AMA to define integrated brand communication, and it is considered to be explanatory, as it explicitly mentions the importance of brand value and financial returns. Researchers such as Kliatchko (2005) and Stewart (1996) posit that there is no universal definition of IMC because of the diverse interpretations of the concept and the distinct values in academic and commercial fields. Kitchen, Bringell, Lit and Jones (2004a) highlight the five critical attributes of the IMC definition, which are as follows:

- Communication efforts must be directed at consumers to affect their behaviour.
- An outside-inside approach should be considered when developing a communication strategy.
- A relationship between the organisation and the customer is essential.
- All communication activities should be included with contact points integrated into a strategy.
- Coordination between communication disciplines is required to create a competitive brand.

IMC is said to originate from the communication, marketing and branding disciplines (Zahra, 2018). Zahra (2018) theorises IMC in the communication field to be an interdisciplinary concept that researchers and practitioners agree upon. Therefore, IMC is considered to be a practical framework to study topics related to branding. Keller (2016) and Zwerin, Clarke and Clarke III (2020) assert that technology development and communication media are transforming integrated marketing communication. Subsequently, Hossain, Kabir and Rezvi (2017) theorise a relationship between integrated marketing communication, brand orientation and market orientation.

There are criticisms of IMC, and Cornelissen and Lock (2000) argue that there is insufficient evidence of how the concept is implemented. Owing to the ambiguity and lack of universal agreement on the definition of IMC, scholars such as Cornelissen and Lock (2000), McGrath (2005a) and Stewart (1996) criticised IMC.

Criticism of IMC is grounded on its definition and is considered to be a managerial fad. Moreover, Schultz (2004b) addressed these criticisms by revising the version of IMC as adopted by the AMA (2007). Researchers acknowledge the importance of IMC; hence, Schultz and Kitchen (2000b) argue that although it is still in the preparadigm stage and cannot be called a theory, many communication studies have proven that IMC is widely accepted among marketers and public relations practitioners (Kitchen & Eagle, 2002; Reid, Johnson, Ratcliffe, Skrip & Wilson, 2001; Kitchen & Schultz, 1999; Kitchen & Schultz, 1998; Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). Schultz and Kitchen (2000b) argue that the validity of a concept or theory does not consist exclusively of universally accepted definitions. Additionally, Carroll and Swatman (2000) advance that although there are no definite number of investigations needed prior to a concept being called a theory, different concepts and frameworks are required and should be interrelated and linked for an actual theory to emerge. Kitchen and Burgmann (2010), therefore, questioned whether IMC should be linked to other communication concepts to develop an additional or different theory.

IMC aims to create a concerted effort between marketing elements for short- and long-term returns (Madhavaram, Badrinarayana & McDonald, 2005; Naik & Raman, 2003). In addition, it provides consistency in communication messages and functions. Kumar *et al*. (2016)

suggest that numerous communication activities must be considered for effective promotional efforts. There are six marketing communication mix tools, namely: *advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and social media.* Advertising is defined as a paid for, non-personal form of communication that identifies the sponsor (Key & Czaplewski, 2017:327). Direct marketing is described as a marketing communication tool that aspires to establish a one-to-one personal relationship with the target market (Key & Czaplewski, 2017). Sales promotion, on the other hand, is a marketing communication activity used to persuade customers to purchase a product or service and create brand loyalty (McKelvey, 2015). Public relations is described as a form of communication that seeks to use publicity to influence feelings, opinions or beliefs about a business to stakeholders (American Marketing Association, 2018). In contrast, personal selling is explained as the face-to-face interaction with customers to sell products and services (McKelvey, 2015). Social media is outlined as applications that allow for sharing, delivering information or ideas (Ahmed, Ahmad, Ahmad & Zakaria, 2019). Kumar *et al*. (2016) suggest that traditional communication tools may influence consumer activeness on social media. Social media is conceptualised as a business communication channel in the context of this study. The marketing communication mix tools are discussed within the parameters of this study in Chapter 4.

2.8.1 AIDA communication model

The AIDA, also called the hierarchy of effect model, has been widely adopted in marketing activities, particularly the integrated marketing communication efforts of a business (Chueng, Lo, Cui & Ho, 2023; Mumtaz, 2019; Pashootanizadeh & Khalilian, 2018; Senanu & Anning-Dorson, 2022). In 1898, St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 proposed a theory of communication called the AIDA model. The widely known acronym for the model is referred to as **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire and **A**ction.

Barnham (2008) posits that the AIDA model is a framework that elucidates brand communication as a diffusion of information from the brand to the consumer. In addition, the model is enshrined in the Shannon Weaver model (1949). Barnham (2008), however, argues that the AIDA model has been criticised in its manner of understanding the influence that brands have on consumer behaviour. In contrast, consumers attach emotions to brands, and brand communication facilitates action from consumers directly or indirectly. Moreover, Heath, Brandt and Nairn (2006) pronounce that brand communication conveys emotional values to consumers. Hassan, Nadzim and Shiratuddin (2015) posit that the basic principle of this model remains intact and relevant to date, although it has been modified throughout the years.

The current study argues that the AIDA model of communication is pertinent to the development and building of enterprises as brands, as Krake (2005) alluded that brand management is synonymous with creating brand awareness attracting consumers and clients alike. Zehir, Sahin, Kitapçl and Özahin (2011) indicate that the purpose of brand communication has been to expose the audience to a brand. Chinomona (2016) suggests that researchers and practitioners emphasise the critical role of brand communication in affecting brand image, brand trust and brand loyalty. For the brand communication elements that are considered for this study to achieve their objectives, the AIDA model should facilitate brand awareness and interest from consumers and clients. Brand communication can be considered to be a marketing communication construct that is focused on developing the brand and in the long-term creating brand equity. Effective brand communication has the potential to facilitate the building of strong brands.

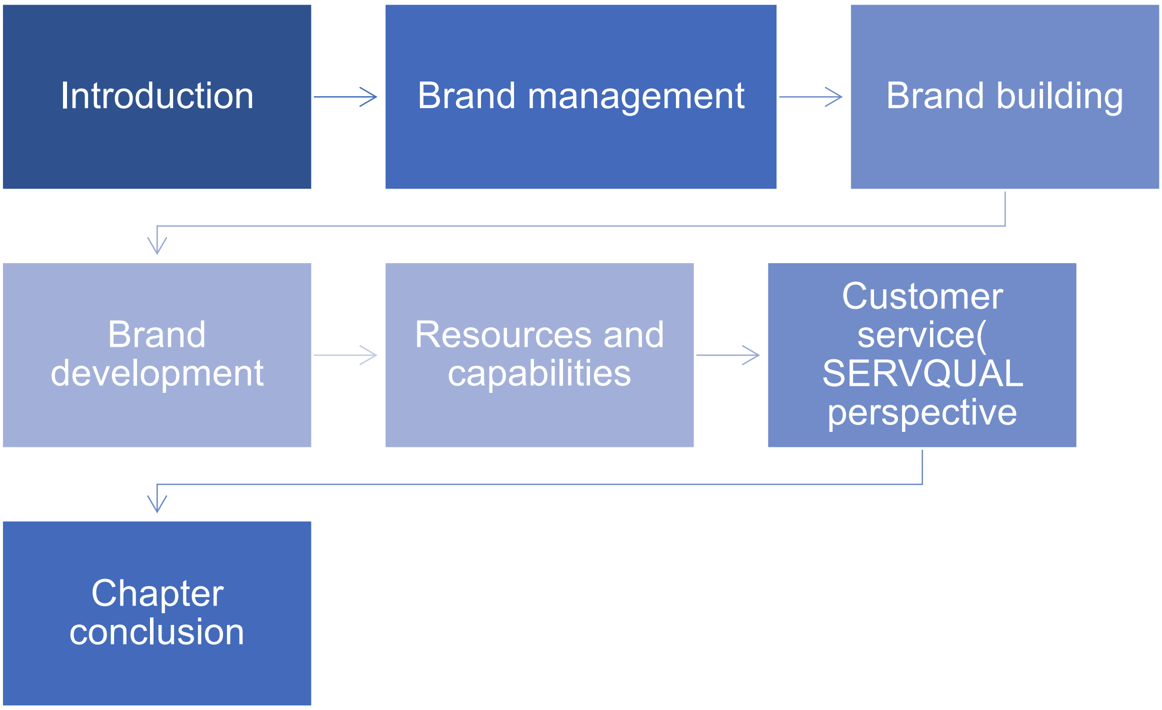
2.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This Chapter provides a discussion of the various theories and models, including frameworks that are related to the topic of the study. The discussions considered the views of scholars who contributed to the development of the theories, models and frameworks discussed. The criticism and advantages of the theories, model and frameworks were noted in some instances. The Chapter reviewed the RBT, ANT, brand development and building, IMC and AIDA, and SERVQUAL theories, models and frameworks relevant for brand communication, since the study is multidisciplinary.

The theories and models considered framed how brand communication was conceptualised. A multidisciplinary approach was considered for a better understanding of the phenomena in the context of the study, borrowing from the marketing, communication and management disciplines. The RBT definition highlighted the control that the businesses have to the strategies. Furthermore, the theory asserts that brands are strategic resources (Liu & Atuahene-Gima, 2018). The theory also integrates brand marketing communication.

Resources and capabilities are fundamental in a business and differentiate a business from its competitors. This differentiation transfers to the brand communication practices and activities of the establishments. The resources and capabilities contribute to brand building and development. Brand building and development are seen as processes. The brand building models provide guidelines to create a strong brand, and the SMME managers have a role in developing the enterprises. In the process of brand building and development, resources and capabilities are deployed and used among others, providing a service. Service quality is measured through SERVQUAL, and perceptions and expectations are central to service quality. In the process of providing a service, there are consumers and clients who are served and are considered actor-actants in the ANT. The ANT considers the actors and actants in a social context. Ultimately, a brand is offered to consumers and clients and needs to be communicated. IMC considers a concerted effort in communicating a brand, product, service or seller. The theories are explicitly and implicitly interrelated. Therefore, brand building and development are discussed in the next chapter, where the concepts and constructs are conceptualised.

CHAPTER 3: BRAND BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT



3.1 INTRODUCTIONN

The preceding Chapter provided the theoretical framework for the research study, focusing the discourse on theories and models pertinent to the study. The current Chapter presents a discussion of the literature review of the study and reviews the important research concepts and the constructs related to brand and branding management, marketing management and strategic management theories and models that ground this study. The focus will be on providing the definitions of the concepts, constructs and variables, how they have been operationalised and the discussions thereof.

3.2 BRAND MANAGEMENT

Traditional branding research view brand management as an interaction between, the seller and the buyer where the seller (enterprise) is concerned with building the brand while the buyer (customer) receives brand communications (Brodie, Benson-Rea & Medlin, 2017). Branding and brand management, therefore, have clearly become important management priorities for all types of establishments (Brodie *et al*., 2017). Lee and Arcodia (2011) argued that brand management is interrelated with the systems, organisational culture or structure of a business that assist in brand building activities. Moreover, Chen, Lam, and Zou (2011) advocated that brand management is crucial in brand building and development. It is clear that SMMEs, as establishments and enterprises, must invest in the business as a brand and, therefore, in the products and services that they offer to their consumers and clients. It is crucial for the enterprise to hold a position in the mind of the consumers.

de Chernatony and Riley (1998) classify definitions of the brand concept into 12 themes, namely: brand as a logo, brand as a legal instrument, brand as a company, brand as a shorthand, brand as a risk reducer, brand as an identity system, brand as an image in the consumer's mind, brand as a value system, brand as a personality, brand as a relationship, brand as adding value and brand as an evolving entity. The classification themes depict a picture of benefits that brands afford to owners in response to the competitive environment they operate in.

Kumar and Kumar (2020) argue that consumers establish societies around brands. These societies hold power for example, in the form of attitude, buying power, and influence on a brand. Schlager and Christen (2021) support Kumar and Kumar's (2020) argument, stating that the general marketing premise is that consumers with similar consumption patterns have similar behaviour. Moreover, in brand societies, a brand is the central point of social interaction among enthusiastic consumers (Coelho, Rita & Santos, 2018). Consequently, Kumar and Kumar (2020) assert that these consumers use the community to share their brand experiences and brand stories. The foregoing views, therefore, suggests that it is fundamental for SMMEs to regard their entities as brands that are shared among communities of consumers with similar interests and consumption patterns and to embrace the benefit, thereby deliberately developing brand management and communication practices to capitalise on these brand societies. Subsequently, brand communities can exert influential power affecting brand value because of the meaning derived and found in social engagement (Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Social engagement facilitates word-of-mouth, which is paramount to the development, success or failure of an enterprise (de Oliveira Santini, Laideira, Pinto, Herter, Sampaio & Babin, 2020; Goodman, 2019).

From the foregoing discussion, it is important to consider a discussion in branding. SMMEs can develop and implement branding efforts that include brand communication to realise survival and growth (Odoom & Mensah, 2019). Although the extent of branding efforts may vary across enterprise and company sizes, micro and small enterprises may equally achieve optimum performance benefits from their branding efforts as their medium counterparts (Gupta & Chauhan, 2021). In addition to company scope, the dynamics of branding efforts could also differ with regard to the nature of a product offered or sector in which the business operates. Therefore, it is imperative that a discussion be based on brand management practices and activities and that emphasis be placed on the perspective of brand building and brand development.

3.3 BRAND BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Brands are more than mere identifiers; they provide economic functions; hence, in the minds of consumers, it is important that they are perceived as being exclusive and creating value. In support of the statement, Kim and Chao's (2019) study found that consumers' rational perception and emotional feelings plays a fundamental role in the brand building process. Brand development is referred to as a strategic process aimed at creating and distinguishing an enterprise from competitors. Brand building, that is, building brands into strategic resources, was traditionally perceived from a brand orientation (Liu & Auahene-Gima, 2018). Urde (2016) asserts that in brand orientation, it is crucial to see and consider intangible values and symbols as resources, which can be a manner in which brand reality is approached. Mijan (2015) points out that brand orientation is rooted in market orientation studies, focusing on the business's brand. Therefore, brand orientation suggests that symbols and intangible values must be seen as resources when adopting a mindset for building brands. An enterprise might consider building the business, or its products and services, as brands. This study's view is in building the enterprise as a brand.

Development is, therefore, concerned with aligning a brand with its objectives, communicating the brand and engaging in making the brand relevant. Brand development is precisely about clarifying what a brand stands for. Hence, brand development is important for this study, which aims to assist SMMEs in townships in realising and taking advantage of the benefits of developing their enterprises as brands. In addition, brand development will, therefore, encourage entrepreneurs to align or formulate their enterprise visions, missions and values depending on whether they have them. The alignment and realignment have the potential to create a brand heritage that is authentic. Miller (2014), therefore, asserts that when brand development is based on a historical approach or designing the brand, then it gains a heritage; however, for the brand to achieve buy-in, it depends on its authenticity and leadership.

3.3.1 Brand building

Brand building is discussed from the Centeno *et al*. (2013) model's perspectives, that focus on SMEs and SMMEs, as they provide unique opportunities that are relevant to these enterprises.

3.3.1.1 Five phases of brand building

Centeno *et al*. (2013) developed five phases of SME brand building, and their conceptual framework was developed based on brand identity and brand differentiation as the key constructs to understanding brand development. Henceforth, Centeno *et al*. (2013) base their rationale for their study on the suggestions by scholars. Brand identity was conceptualised by Aaker (1996) and de Chernatony (2006) as a brand element that is composed of four dimensions, namely: *brand as a person*, *brand as an organisation*, *brand as a symbol* and *brand as a product.* Therefore, Carson and Cromie (1990) are of the view that the dimensions be considered when gathering data from SMME owners. Henceforth, Agres and Dubitsky (1996) content that brand differentiation may assist in developing and building a brand and is also fundamental to sustain growth. Centeno *et al*.'s (2013) research results led to their model, which they argued explains the brand-building process in SMEs and, therefore, SMMEs in a better light. The dimensions are discussed in light of brand building.

Brand as a person

Centeno *et al*. (2013) theorise that a relationship exists between the personality of the brand owner and the personality of the brand. SME brands are the personification of their owners, meaning that the same would apply to SMMEs (Centeno, Cambra-Fierro, Vazquez-Carrasco, Hart & Dinnie, 2019). Moreover, the enterprise's owner perspective is fundamental in this study to determine their practices and activities. In addition, the study advances the development of a brand communication model. In many cases, with respect to SMMEs, the enterprise name is linked to either the owner or a family member or is synonymous with the family name (Emmanuel, Peace, Ebele, Udeze & Abiodun, 2019), which is the case with some established and strong brands, such as Rich Mnisi and Dolce and Gabbana.

Brand as an organisation

Ledikwe, Roberts-Lombard and Klopper (2019), and Wang, Chowdhury Ahmed, Deng and Wang (2019), are of the view that the unique values driven by the personal values and vision of the brand owner are used by customers and clients of an enterprise as a barometer to evaluate if the values epitomise theirs when assessing the brand in their purchase decision process. SMMEs have informal and flat structures, and these structures determine whether the enterprise has processes and controls that allow for value creation targets for the customers and clients of their products and services (Angleles, Perez-Encinas & Villanueva, 2022; Cosenz & Bivona, 2021). The brand owner plays a fundamental role in building the enterprise as a brand (Tewary & Mehta, 2021).

Brand as a symbol

Brand owners from Centeno *et al*. (2013) indicated that they are aware of the significance of choosing a good brand name Shrum and Lowrey (2020) affirm the view. The scholars further highlight that the enterprise brand owners were assisted by external graphic designers to create their symbols (Centeno *et al*., 2013). The SMME owners suggested that colour assists in communicating their brand associations in regard to their product attributes, benefits and brand personality (Centeno *et al*., 2019). Colour carries different meanings with culture, a nation and countries, as the communication literature affirms (Suham-Abid and Vila-Lopez (2020) aver that enterprises have unique organisational values that are determined and aligned to the entrepreneur's personality. Centeno *et al*. (2013), furthermore, content that these unique values can serve as sources of brand differentiation, therefore, creating a competitive brand advantage in line with RBV brand-related capabilities.

Brand as a product

Centeno *et al*. (2013) assert that SMME owners are knowledgeable about their products, and the literature also affirms that a significant number of SMMEs are product-oriented as opposed to being brand-oriented. However, the majority of the enterprises' products are not branded; equally, so are their services. This study is interested in the enterprise as a brand so that the businesses can leverage the benefits that branding the entity offers, to the growth of the establishment.

The role of brand owner in brand identity

Centeno *et al*. (2013) conceive that enterprise owners are at the forefront of the developing stages of brand building as they are involved in creating and developing the brand identity dimensions and activities of the brand. Loecher (2000) underscores the importance of a brand owners' drive and commitment to the business, the researcher's suggestion is in line with Ajzen's (1991) TPB, which advances that an individual's behavioural intention is key. Brand owners are driven by their personal choices and preferences in their commitment to their brands; similarly, their personal choice and preferences motivate their drive and commitment.

3.3.2 Brand development

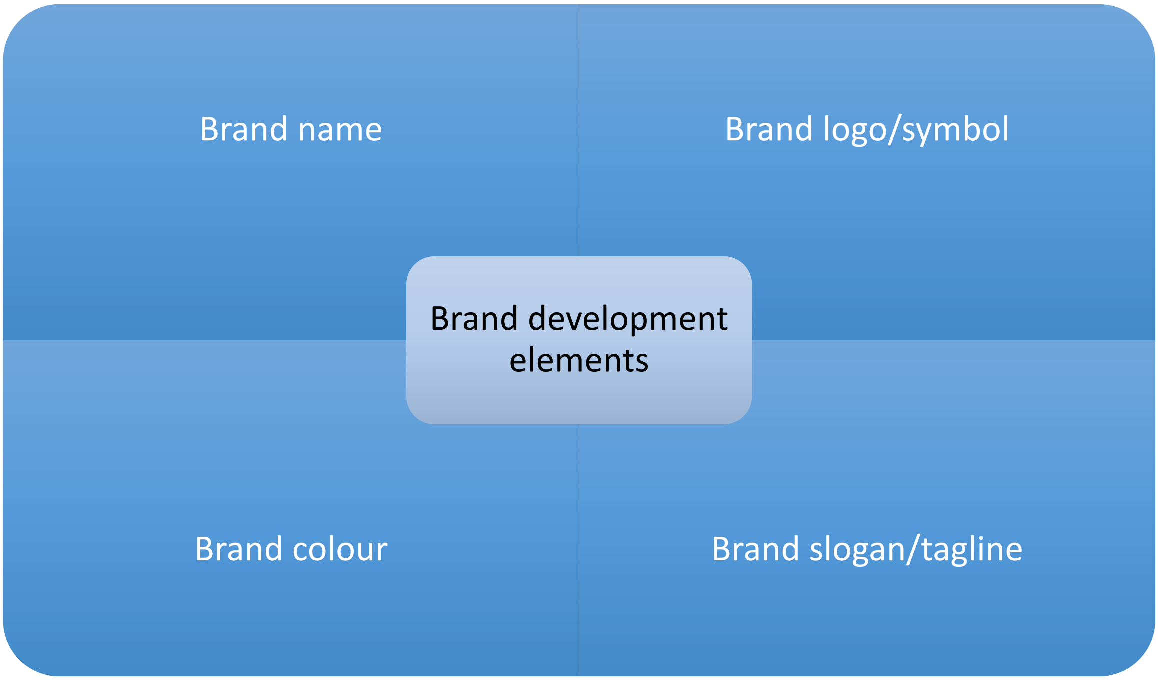
Brand development is a strategic process concerned with differentiating the establishment. As part of the process of developing the brand, there must be communication between the brand and the target market. Therefore, the brand elements and brand identity are discussed below from a brand development point of view.

3.3.2.1 Brand elements

Fundamentally, branding involves the process of creating a differential product or service through the use of brand elements such as names, logos, symbols, characters and colours (Odoom, 2016). These are also brand trademarks that protect the brand from competitors, as they are distinguished from those that offer similar products and services. Furthermore, Jin *et al*. (2019) and Odoom (2016) are of the opion that brand elements can be exploited to enhance not only the awareness of a brand but also to serve as key facilitators in the formation of distinctive brand associations. Consequently, the name, trademark and the images associated with the combination of brand elements such as fonts, symbols, colour and characters differentiate a business's brand from that of competitors (Brodie *et al*., 2017). Odoom (2016) asserts that since the various elements elicit different returns from consumers to the product or enterprise, it is imperative to incorporate substantial or all possible brand elements in building the brand SMMEs. Altshuler and Tarnovskaya (2010) further reveal that identities such as company name and brand name serve as guarantors of and advocate the quality of products in creating equity for an enterprise. The revelation asserts and supports the current research's objectives to develop SMMEs looking at their brand communication, which encapsulates the brand elements for their growth and competitive advantage. As it was alluded earlier, the SMMEs unconventionally use brand elements.

Shieh, Nguyen and Yang (2016) explore brand development in Taiwanese SMEs and theorised brand development elements to be the brand name, brand logo, brand image and brand communication. Brand elements embody the verbal and visual communication that identifies and differentiates a product or service and provides a competitive advantage to the enterprise. Brand elements are the visual components of an image that assists in exploiting brand strength as the basis for SME brand-building considerations, therefore, creating unique identities within their small but complex domain (Renton, Daellenbach, Davenport and Richard (2015) further are of the view that, in implementing core and noncore brand communication programmes consistent with the enterprise as a brand, SMEs enhance the creation of competitive advantages that is in line with the RBT theory. A brand as an intrinsic power that is produced by leveraging on its name, symbol, or logo, since prominent brand names and their images capture the attention of consumers and prompt them to purchase the brands (Keller, 2017). The current research assumption is that SMMEs use some of the criteria; however, the question is, was it a deliberate action or accidental? Therefore, the brand elements are discussed to provide their context in brand communication and to distinguish the brand from others. Figure 3.1 depicts the brand development elements.

Figure 3.1: Brand development elements



Source: Baran (2022).

3.3.2.2 Brand name

A brand name is said to have the following characteristics: length, distinctiveness, suggestiveness, commonness, and linguistic features. Furthermore, a brand name has factors such as liking, recognition and recall that influence the perception of the enterprise as a brand (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). Ailawadi and Keller (2004) affirm that brand names are key indicators of brand perceptions in the competitive environment. The brand name, in the case of a merger or acquisition, is regarded as one of the most important assets that is considered when evaluating whether a company is worth investing in (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). Therefore, SMEs seeking to grow and expand through mergers must carefully consider their choice of brand name.

An essential consideration when choosing a brand name is the extent to which it conveys descriptive or persuasive information (Gontijo & Zhang, 2020). A brand name communicates various aspects of the enterprise or organisation to consumers (Gontijo & Zhang, 2020). With reference to the descriptive meaning of the brand name, the question might arise: What does the brand name suggest about the product offered or the brand? It is documented that SMEs are creative and innovative – these must be the focal point of coming up with an enterprise name as a brand. However, innovation and creativity must not isolate aspects and consideration around a brand name. These aspects and considerations, from a practical perspective, must deliberately consider the fact that there are 11 official languages in South Africa and the meaning of the brand name must carry the same meaning across all languages.

When choosing a brand name, the name should be inherently *memorable*, *transferable*, *meaningful*, *likeable*, *adaptable* and *protectable*. A *memorable* brand name facilitates brand recall and recognition. A brand name with intrinsic *meanings* enhances the creation of strong, favourable brand and brand associations (Gontijo & Zhang, 2020). *Transferability* of the brand name in the context of South Africa's unique cultural landscape refers to the fact that the brand name must be able to transfer or translate across geographical boundaries and remain the same across cultural regions (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). A *likeable* brand is one that is fun, interesting, verbal and visual and that is pleasing to consumers (Keller &

Brexendorf, 2019). According to Keller *et al*. (1998), a brand name must also be *adaptable*, meaning updatable over time in the event that the geographical and cultural difference suggests.

A brand provides an owner with the benefit of protection from competitors (Tien *et al*., 2019). Protection is achieved and secured through patents, trademarks and copyright in line with the DTI guidelines for businesses in South Africa (DTI, 2018). The brand names are registered with the DTI so that other companies or enterprises do not use it (DTI, 2018). Subsequently, Tewary and Mheta (2021) point out that a brand name must be in sync with the brand logo, hence, it is imperative that there is synergy and coherence in all the activities around the brand as directed through the brand strategies.

3.3.2.3 Brand logo

A logo conceptualised as a graphic design that is used as a continuing symbol for a company, organisation, or enterprise or brand that a company uses, with or without its name, to identify itself or its products as a visual shorthand that carries desirable meanings and associations for products, services and organisations (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017).

The role of a logo is to represent an organisation, product or the name of a service or enterprise using lettering and image elements (Foroudi & Melewar, 2017). Morhart and Malär (2020) concur and assert that a logo provides a brand with an appearance, therefore, enhancing the brand's authenticity and personal appeal to consumers. Consumers refer to the brand logo to access the quality and value of the products and services offered by the brand or enterprise. Scholars have theorised that a logo is among the main instruments used to communicate image, gain attention, and increase recognition and differentiation of the brand, therefore, provoking an emotional response from the target market, the consumers, which leads to consumption (Bossel, Eyskens & Goukens, 2019; Walsh, Winterich & Mittal, 2010; Ad, Adr & Pascu, 2012). Consequently, a logo can shape a brand's reputation along with consumers' attitudes, their purchase intentions and their brand loyalty (Foroudi, 2019; Müller, Kocher & Crettaz, 2011). Therefore, a brand logo is crucial for SMEs to influence their consumers' and clients' attitudes and loyalty and communicate the enterprise's reputation.

Hynes (2009) indicates that to study the "triadic relationship between colour, design and the evoked meanings of logos is to understand how these contribute to building a consistent business image". The scholar underscores the importance of the current research. It is important to note that when creating or designing a logo, an attractive logo plays an important role in the process of brand development. Therefore, whether the logo depicts brand names or abstract designs, it serves as visual cues for faster processing and universal recognition of brands across different languages and cultures. The colours of the logo must be thought through by the owners of the enterprises and companies.

3.3.2.4 Brand colour

Colour can draw the attention of consumers. Rathee and Rajain (2019), buttress that colour influences consumers' behaviour and perceptions, induces moods and emotions, and assists organisations and enterprises in positioning or differentiating businesses from competitors. Humans have five senses, one of which is sight, which influences consumers' perception. A brand colour taps into the psychology of consumers as meanings are created for different colours. The general example is that of the colour red in a retail setting – the colour means discounts (go, shop) for consumers. However, in the context of transport, red means stop. Human psychology is able to distinguish the differences.

The psychology of colour is also widely used in marketing and branding (Kumar, 2017). Colour is understood to influence consumers' perceptions. Furthermore, Kumar (2017) asserts that these perceptions can be those that are not obvious, such as the taste of food. Moreover, brand colour is considered in the development of a model for brand communication to assist SMMEs in townships in understanding the influence that colour has on their consumers. However, the effects that colour has on consumers differ from those on humans in general.

The importance of colour as a brand strategy should not be undermined, as it is used among other aspects of the brand, such as a logo and name. Rathee and Rajain (2019) asserts the notion stating that when the brand logo colours are aligned with the enterprise or company personality, it attracts more consumers. It is, therefore, prudent that enterprises should choose colours that are appropriate for the business so that the connotation speaks to the enterprise as a brand and the products and services offered. The study of Seo and Scammon (2017) suggest that choosing a irrelevant colour can negatively influence brand awareness and any attempt to build a sustainable brand image. In their study, the researchers, Seo and Scammon (2017) propose that a colour that is cohesive and corresponds with the content of the message being communicated, facilitates easy processoing of the information and, therefore, the message appeal. The researcher found in their study, that specific colours do influence consumer perceptions. In support of Seo and Scammon (2017), Lim, Baek, Yoon and Kim’s (2020) experimental study observe consumer’s reaction to colour in the context of an advertisiement and found that colour serve as cue to consumer and persuades their decisions. Colour, therefore, distinguishes a brand from competitors similarly to the brand slogan or tagline.

3.3.2.5 Brand slogan or tagline

A tagline is also known as a slogan, catchphrase and positioning borders for a brand (Alnajjar & Toivonen, 2021; Miller & Toman, 2016). In the context of the current research, the two terms will be used interchangeably. A tagline is one of the elements that creates a first impression of a business (Kelly, 2017). In addition, it communicates how unique a brand is compared to competitors (Kelly, 2017). Most brands make use of slogans to enhance a brand's image and assist in brand recognition and recall (Suci, Maryanti, Hardi & Sudiar, 2022). Furthermore, Suci *et al*. (2022) assert that a slogan is used to assist in creating brand differentiation in consumers' minds, therefore, positioning the brand or the enterprise as a brand. Subsequnetly, Rybaczewska *et al*. (2020) argue that slogans play a supporting role in brand identity.

Rybaczewska *et al*. (2020) aver that a brand slogan represents one of the three key elements of brand identity – the elements with which the brand communicates with consumers. Slogans in their nature must communicate to some degree about the image of the product or an enterprise, thereby communicating what the brand is about.

A slogan affords companies and enterprises the unique position to act as a link between a brand's legacy and its evolving image. Hence, Slade-Brooking (2016) are of the view that a brand tagline emphasises the unique elements of a brand promise made to consumers. In addition, a tagline is the most vigorous brand identity element, and it offers the flexibility of being edited or revised when the need arises or external forces such as competition make it mandatory to do so. However, a tagline can be the least expensive form of communication and advertising for an enterprise or company. Moreover, changing it will not be an expense for an enterprise; however, the same might not hold for a corporation whose brand communication channels include television, radio and the internet, as these media vehicles are costly to corporates.

3.3.2.6 Brand identity

Aaker (1996:68) defines brand identity as “a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain”. These brand associations are important, as brand identity creates emotional bonds and relationships between the consumers and the brand - in this context, the enterprises. A clearly defined brand identity can create trust and enables much-needed brand differentiation from competitors. Moreover, brand identity must resonate with consumers and clients of the enterprise as a brand. This is the case as brand identity is the alignment of words, ideas, images, and associations that form consumers’ perceptions of a brand.

Scholars describe brand identity as a dimension of brand image (Brexendorf & Kernstock, 2007; Wijaya, 2013). However, other scholars (Mitchell, Hutchinson & Quinn, 2013) posit that brand identity and brand image must not be misunderstood to be the same, as they are distinct. Christmann, Alexander and Wood (2016) provide clarity, suggesting that brand identity refers to an internal perspective of a brand with reference to the brand promise and brand behaviour, while brand image denotes an external perspective in terms of the brand expectations and brand experience of consumers. Although Christmann *et al*. (2016) argue that brand identity is internal, the promise that a brand makes to the company is equally important to consumers and clients of the brand. Moreover, brand communication is mainly directed at the consumers and clients of an enterprise or organisation.

Muhonen, Hirvonen and Laukkanen (2017) posit that brand identity is a fundamental part of brand development, while Ahmad *et al*. (2019) is of the view that brand identity is fundamental to brand management. The latter has been defined as the process of improving a brand or enhancing customers' knowledge and opinions of a brand. Therefore, brand identity is considered an essential dimension of brand communication for the current research, with the objective of developing a brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships. The aim of the model is to assist SMMEs in enhancing consumers' and clients' brand knowledge of the enterprises as a brand for growth, competitive advantage and sustainability in terms of operating long-term. Hirvonen and Laukkanen's (2014) study supports and implicitly validates the current research, as their research integrates brand identity with the SMME brand orientation framework and empirically examines the relationship between the concepts. The study finds that brand identity has a positive effect on brand performance in SMMEs.

Brand communication must be consistent, and there must be cohesion in all the dimensions that the enterprise uses in its communication. In view of that, Mindrut, Manolica and Roman (2015) accentuate that brand features such as culture, vision, personality, positioning, and presentations, relationships and beliefs consistency shape brand identity. Most companies use branding strategies to communicate brand identity and value to potential consumers and stakeholders. In addition, every component that external stakeholders, such as consumers, encounter is relevant for forming brand identity. Identity signifies being true to self and being driven by personal goals that set a brand apart from others.

3.4 RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES

The brand can be seen as an unconditional response to customers' wants and needs, which is what market-oriented theory maintains (Iyer *et al*., 2021). Enterprises that regard brands as strategic resources would realise that the approach has far-reaching consequences for their branding strategy. Grant (1991) posits that the resources and capabilities of an enterprise are based on two premises, one of which is that resources and capabilities are the primary source of profit for the business. Businesses operate in dynamic environments, and this affects both established corporations and SMMEs, affirms Hans (2018). Therefore, to cope with and address these changes, enterprises need to sustain their competitive advantage to succeed in the market (He, Chen, Lee, Wang & Pohlmann, 2017). To achieve a competitive advantage, enterprises create, sustain and use a competitive advantage through strategic management of their brand (Iyer *et al*., 2021). As researchers point out, customarily, according to an integrated approach that integrates RBT and market-based view, businesses could develop marketing strategies based on their internal capabilities and external position. Hence, Aghazadeh (2015) avers that marketing strategies play two important roles to sustain competitive advantage: to encourage customers to return (according to market-based view) and to create distinctive competencies by making core competencies VRIO according to RBT. The resources and capabilities are, therefore, discussed next.

3.4.1 Market-based resources

The assumption of VRIO is that competitive advantage can be sustainable when it can be valuable, rare, inimitable by competitors and managed by the business or enterprise (Barney & Mackey, 2018; Barney & Hartley, 2012). There is a relationship between resources and profitability, and what is intriguing is that brands are highlighted as barriers to entry in the market or sector, therefore, influencing industry attractiveness and creating competitiveness barriers in place of barriers to entry. Consequently, this supports the study's objective, which is to assist SMMEs in building and developing their enterprises as brands for growth that translates into profitability. Therefore, marketing resources are important to an enterprise, as they are a source of competitive advantage and an outcome of its internal capabilities and external position in comparison to its competitors. Competition in nature sees rivals attempting to duplicate or eliminate an enterprise's competitive advantage (Levine, Bernard & Nagel, 2017). Hence, Barney and Mackey (2018) point out that enterprises must make an effort to maintain their competitive advantage to prevent it from imitation, duplication or elimination by competitors. Strategic assets are 'the set of difficult to trade and imitate, scarce, appropriable and specialised resources and capabilities that bestow the firm's competitive advantage'. Consequently, this study views the brand as an asset and considers the enterprise brand as such to facilitate potential competitive advantage.

3.4.1.1 Value

Value creation is at the core of marketing strategies (Priem, Wenzel & Koch, 2018). Therefore, enterprises that seek to create value must obtain a competitive advantage to achieve it (Rashidirad & Salimian, 2020). Contrary to Rashidirad and Salimian (2020), the study conducted by Baia and Ferreira (2020) found that value is not related to competitive advantage. However, Kozlenkova *et al*. (2014) assert that a resource is valuable if it facilitates the development and implementation of strategies that will assist the enterprises in lowering costs or increasing its profit beyond what the business would have profited without the resources (Barney & Hesterly, 2012). Teece (2018) suggests that the value of an organisation's resources and capabilities determine the scale of its competitive advantage. Therefore, enterprises must exploit their resources and capabilities to achieve competitive advantage from the resources. Barney and Hesterly (2012) aver that resources are considered to be valuable if they enable enterprises to exploit external opportunities or threats to the business. Moreover, Roy and Banerjee (2012) assert that a successful brand is fundamentally perceived as offering superior value, although this can be tangible or intangible. Furthermore, the concept of branding is always helpful because it provides a competitive edge.

3.4.1.2 Rareness

Barney and Hesterly (2012) suggest that resources are rare if competitors cannot exploit them. Rarity must be engaged from the resources perspective and the customer perspective in terms of the value that it generates (Alvarez & Barney, 2017). The rationale is that rare resources do not lead to competitive advantage by default, as they are exogenous to RBV. Rare resources in marketing result in perceptions of the brand, product or service and the experience from consuming or using the brand or product and services offered (Alvarez & Barney, 2017). Marketing can explain and strengthen the RBV approach to rarity. Customer value, which brands and branding provide, according to Srivastava, Fahey and Christensen (2001), is a combination of market-based assets and capabilities; as such, they are to be carefully designated as rare resources and can be transformed into multiple forms of customer-based advantages leveraged by enterprises and withstanding the effects of changes in their environment.

3.4.1.3 Imitable

Resources are documented to be imitable if it is costly for competitors to do so (Salazar, 2017). Moreover, if the resource is valuable and rare but lacks imitability, then competitive advantage is short-term for the enterprise (Alvarez & Barney, 2017; Barney, Ketchen & Wright, 2021). Alvarez and Barney (2017), declare that resources may be imperfectly imitable owing to unique historical conditions, causal ambiguity, or social complexity. A brand has been documented as a complex social construct. At a profound level, the objective of branding is to advance brand sustainability and inimitability, therefore, acquiring consumers and being competitive over competitors (Roy & Banerjee, 2012). De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo-Riley (1998) are of the view that brand differentiation protects the brand from competition and contributes to its growth, however, Liu and Atuahene-Gima's (2018) study found that differentiation is less effective in the context of product innovation. Chang, Wang and Cui (2021), Lin and Siu (2020) and Moon and Sprott (2016) submit that a brand-oriented organisation's investment in its brand protects it from being imitable as a result of the processes that they have in place. Therefore, it is ideal for enterprises to have processes in place to facilitate the protection of the business as a brand.

3.4.1.4 Organisation (enterprise)

Organisation with respect to market-related resources refers to the ability of an enterprise to exploit the competitive potential of its resources and capabilities (Barney & Hesterly, 2012). Therefore, the internal competencies of an enterprise determine whether the business can exploit the potential for competitive advantage.

3.4.2 Brand-related capabilities

Grant (1991) argues that capabilities are the source of competitive advantage, while resources are the source of capabilities. Alvarez and Barney (2017) adopted a similar position and suggested that resources do not contribute to sustained competitive advantages for a firm, but its capabilities do. Teece (2018) supports the importance of capabilities and suggests that a firm can gain competitive advantage from its ability to apply its capabilities to perform important activities within the firm. In contrast to resources, Sahoo (2019) describes capabilities as an enterprise's ability to organise and allocate resources, usually in combination using organisational processes, and to achieve a firm's desired objective. Teece (2018) explains dynamic capabilities as 'the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments.

An enterprise's capability is what it does from the collective of its resources working in synergy. Moreover, Vorhies, Orr and Bush (2011) argue that capabilities offer an enterprise a superior advantage by utilising the resource base of the business. Subsequently, capabilities complement enterprises' resources for the business to gain a competitive advantage. Keller (2017) is of the view that branding practices are considered fundamental to achieving competitive advantage. Notably, several scholars (Balmer, 2013) argue that the RBV assists in understanding the link between marketing resources such as branding. Moreover, it is paramount to consider brand management and branding by SMMEs to strive to achieve a competitive advantage. Therefore, the brand-related capabilities for achieving a competitive advantage for the current study and its context are distinctive, value-adding, functional and symbolic capabilities, as they are relevant to brand management, as the branding process, which is a brand activity, is a market-related asset that accrues a competitive advantage or superior performance by an enterprise as alluded to by Buttenberg (2015). Brand-related capabilities reflect the communication dimensions of an enterprise as branding communicates the brand to its stakeholders.

O'Cass and Weerawardena (2009) advance that managers' perception of their respective industry's competitive intensity will develop superior market learning and marketing capabilities, which will influence enterprises' internal capability development. Reid and Mavondo (2017) found that communication capabilities are directly influenced by brand orientation and that enterprise size does not moderate key relationships but directly affects communication capabilities and, therefore, brand performance.

3.4.2.1 Distinctive capabilities

Selznick (1957) asserts that distinctive capabilities refer to those things that an enterprise does especially well in comparison to its competitors. Research conducted by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2012), Bridson *et al*. (2013) supports Selznick's (1957) view that brands have the potential and ability to differentiate themselves from competitors; hence, it is important for SMMEs to consider and invest in their enterprises as brands. The implications of such behaviour attitudes from enterprise owners include, but are not limited to, business growth, competitive advantage and being distinguished. As Keller *et al*. (2011) posit, brands have distinct elements that are both tangible and intangible and which differentiate them from other brands. Both tangible and intangible elements are considered brand communication elements by scholars such as Chinomona (2016). This is a key consideration that SMME owners should investigate regarding competitors in their environment, especially in townships. From a consumer perspective, brand distinction may relate to marketing communications activities directed towards customers and clients. As such, the distinctive capabilities of a brand have the capacity to render the brand unique; however, it cannot be achieved in isolation from communication.

3.4.2.2 Value-adding capabilities

Brands are expected to add value to both consumers and owners. Value-adding capabilities are the brand's ability to add value to a brand further than its functional value. Consequently, the ability to add value is more than utilitarian values such as emotional attachment to the brand or experience with the brand. Value-adding activities focus on brand attributes such as expectations, experience and emotions. These attributes elevate the brand among its competitors. Customers and clients are exposed to and interact with the brand through the brand development elements and some of the brand communication dimensions, such as experience, image, value and identity, as highlighted in distinctive capabilities. Ahmad *et al*. (2019) hypothesise that the value of the brand results from its inbuilt capabilities, which render them resources for creating a differentiation advantage.

Muhonen *et al*. (2017) reveal that brand values, as part of the brand, are an important driver of brand vision, brand positioning and performance. Unlike branding activities in larger organisations, which are typically undertaken by a marketing department, an SME's branding activities are embedded throughout the entire firm (Simões & Dibb, 2001).

3.4.2.3 Functional capabilities

Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) refer to brand functionality as the extent to which the brand satisfies the basic needs of its target market. Brands are developed and built to meet and satisfy the needs and wants of customers and clients. In view of this statement, Bridson *et al*. (2013) concur with Evans *et al*. (2012) that the brand has the ability to relate functionally to the rational needs and wants of its target market. From a brand management perspective as theorised by branding gurus and seasoned scholars Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2012), the researchers assert that functional capabilities influence the consumption of a brand and therefore, satisfy the needs and wants of its customers and clients.

From a brand building and development perspective, brand functionality may achieve a competitive advantage for enterprises by integrating communication elements. The integration is essential because competitors are offering similar products and services; therefore, the level of similar utility of the brand may pose a challenge in achieving a distinctive advantage. Moreover, it is key that the enterprises' brand capabilities and resources are consistent throughout and at every point of contact with the brand. Therefore, Porcu, del Barrio-García, Alcántara-Pilar and Crespo-Almendros (2016) and Tafesse and Kitchen (2017) propose that the absence of functional capabilities may compromise and question the credibility of the communicated message. From the functional perspective, customers develop associations with the brand and the brand owner, where the brand benefits are also associated with the brand. The differentiation stage with respect to the brand focuses on creating a distinctive nature and name of the brand.

3.4.2.4 Symbolic capabilities

As Bridson *et al*. (2013) posit, a brand as a symbolic capability reflects the ability for its customers and clients to associate with it emotionally, create symbolic meaning, appeal and express its personality, beliefs and values to the target market. Brands are created to appeal to the target market's emotions and positive associations that carry meanings that the market uses to assess the beliefs and values of the brand. Moreover, consumers relate to brands that are aligned to their beliefs and values. Symbolic capabilities are created through the innate characteristics of a brand; hence, it is imperative to be deliberate in developing and building brands because they have long-term implications for enterprises, and this is evident with established brands. Ahmad *et al*. (2019), therefore, opine that brands, through their names, symbols, logos and other brand elements, have the capabilities to intrinsically produce symbolic values. Brands are more than what the owner thinks they are to the consumers. Therefore, it is fundamental that brand communication is also considered to create overall positive associations and perceptions, as it is not easy to change consumer perceptions about the brand.

Hammerl, Dorner, Foscht and Brandstätter (2016) and Keller *et al*. (2011), in their brand management studies, observe that the symbolic values of a brand that are attributed to the inherent capabilities of the brand exist. Hammerl *et al*. (2016) highlight Veblen's (1973) research in positing that consumption carries a symbolic meaning that communicates prestige and status and further argue that a symbolic view of brands is validated universally, as it serves as a useful basis for research endeavours. Therefore, through symbolic values, customers can identify certain attributes of a brand. Accordingly, brands similar to products and services offered by enterprises represent something; hence, they serve as symbols of status. Subsequently, Fennis and Pruyn (2007) presumed that consumers adopt the image of the brand, the view that is affirmed by Joshi and Garg (2021) who indicate that branded products can augment the social image of a consumer. In addition, a brand's symbolic attributes influence customers' choice and are used by them to distinguish themselves from their peers. Consequently, symbolic capability as a brand-related resource provides for the base to achieve a distinctive advantage.

Varadarajan and Malone (2018) posit that the symbolic elements of a brand relate to the emotional aspects of beliefs created in the minds of consumers. Moreover, symbolic elements differ in importance depending on the target audience. Galloway (2016) avers that brands are built and developed by taking advantage of emotive and social associations to enhance mediocre products.

3.5 CUSTOMER SERVICE: SERVQUAL PERSPECTIVE

Customer service is mainly an offering that is intangible and, as such, provide challenges to service providers, therefore, rendering service quality to be complex (Luo & Qu, 2016). However, in some industries, customer service is critical for businesses; therefore, its management is equally fundamental. The fast-food and hair and beauty salons operate in industries or sectors that provide service in their engagement with customers. While engaging with the businesses, customers form perceptions and attitudes towards the entities.

Zeithaml (1987) describes perceived quality as consumers' assessment of the businesses' overall service quality superiority. Parasuraman *et al*. (1988) explain perceived service quality as attitudes relating to service whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction. From service marketing literature, service quality was conceptualised to be centred on perceived quality. Parasuraman *et al*. (1988) propose five dimensions of service quality, namely: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Although there have been studies on service quality (Slack, Singh & Sharma, 2020; Zhang & Palacios, 2021), the researchers referred to Parasuraman *et al*.'s (1988) dimensions as identified in their studies. This research also followed a similar approach; however, the dimensions were operationalised in the context of the research.

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability is a promise that a business makes to its customers (Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022), that there will be service delivered, challenges with the service will be addressed and pricing of the service will be consistent. Therefore, reliability is described as an organisation's ability to deliver on service as promised - dependably and accurately (Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022; Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017; Ramya *et al*, 2019). Ramya *et al*. (2019) suggest that reliability in customer service is important, as it influences consumers' perceptions and businesses must pay attention to customers' expectations. Reliability may encompass consistency and attitudes towards customer complaints.

3.5.2 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is concerned with being keen to succour and deliver prompt service to customers. The focus of responsiveness is on attitudes and providing a timely response in addressing customer complaints (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017; Ramya *et al*., 2019). Furthermore, it is characterised by punctuality, presence, professionalism and commitment to delivering customer service from the employees of an enterprise (Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022). The duration that customers have to queue, influences their perception of the customer service received and the employees' responses to customer queries. Therefore, the attitudes of employees contribute to service delivery (Pakurár, Haddad, Nagy, Popp & Oláh, 2019) and how customers will perceive it.

3.5.3 Assurance

Ramya *et al*. (2019:40) define assurance as "employee's knowledge, courtesy and ability of the enterprise and the employees to inspire trust and confidence in their customers". Abu-Rumman and Qawasmeh (2022) concur with Ramya *et al*. (2019), stating that knowledge and skill are pertinent to assurance when delivering service quality. The fact that service is intangible makes trust and confidence important for customers to engage with the enterprise.

3.5.4 Empathy

Empathy is described as the provision of a personalised, caring customer service (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017; Ramya *et al*., 2019;). The authors point out that empathy is about treating customers as individuals and communicating through service that they are unique. Jalali *et al*. (2014) suggest that empathy is made up of factors, namely, personal attention to customers, the business hours appropriate for all customers (Namin, 2017), employees showing personal attention to customers, employees demanding the best interests for customers, and employees understanding unique customer needs.

3.5.5 Tangibility

Tangibility relates to the physical facilities, communication materials and technologies that enterprises and businesses alike use to deliver customer service (Ramya *et al*., 2019). Similarly, Sultana and Das (2016) established that the tangibility aspect of customer service provides customers with cues; the quality of service that they may expect from the service provider (Sultana & Das, 2016). Therefore, the researcher may deduce that tangibility includes factors such as cleanliness and uniformity that customers can see, touch and feel.

3.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

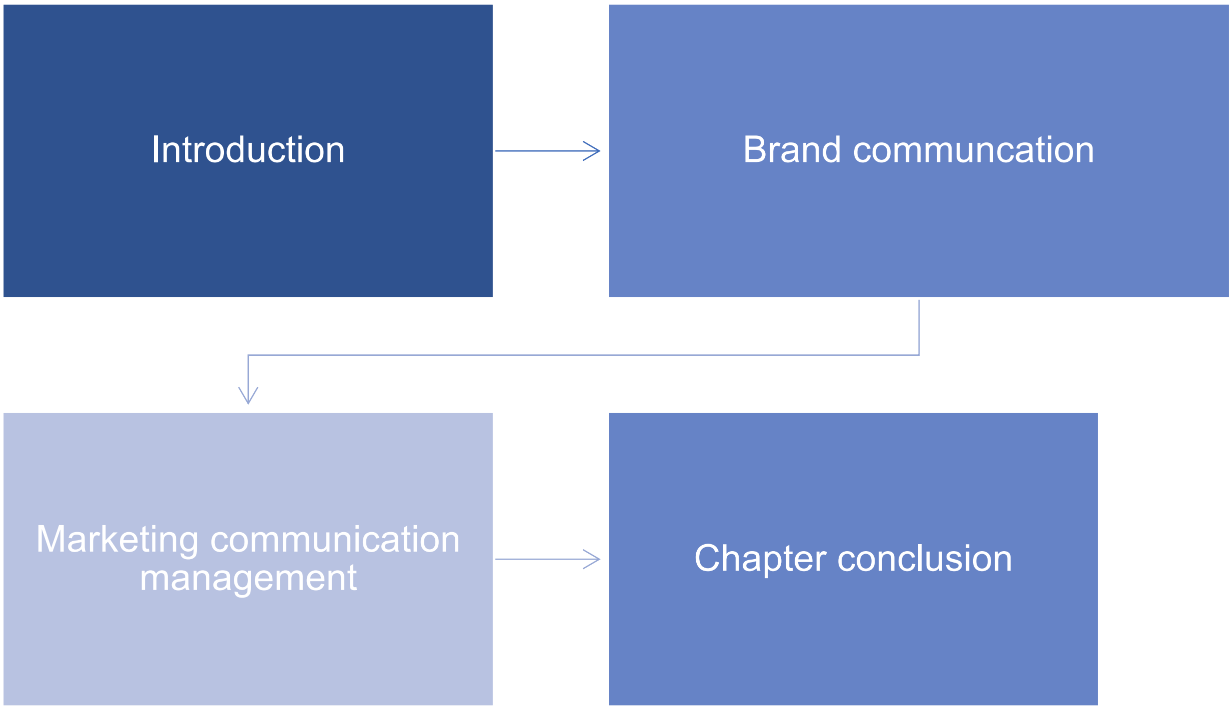
This chapter commenced with an introduction and provided a discussion of brand management. This was followed by a discussion of the empirical literature underlying the theoretical concepts and constructs of the study, namely, brand building and brand development. Thereafter, the resources and capabilities concluded with SERVQUAL a service quality measure.

Brands are acknowledged to provide an abundance of benefits, such as competitive advantage and monetary value to the owners or organisations managing them. Brand building and development create value not only to owners but also to their customers.

Brand differentiation is important in brand building and development, as it is crucial in sustaining growth. From a resource and capability point of view, differentiation is fundamental in branding and brand management. Similarly, brand development also supports the creation and distinguishing of businesses from competitors. Therefore, the brand elements set the enterprises apart. Brand identity was conceptualised differently by scholars; some defined it as a brand element, while others theorised it as a dimension of brand image. However, it is a fundamental aspect of brand development. Brand identity is communicated through various strategies and strategic channels. A competitive advantage is essential in managing the brand through brand building and development. In the marketing and communication context, competitive advantage can be achieved through the strategies that communicate the enterprise and set it apart from its competitors. Therefore, market-based resources and brand-related capabilities are considered by implementing the strategies. Since resources are sources of capabilities and capabilities are sources of competitive advantage, it can be surmised that resources are a crucial component in creating competitive advantage in the context of building and developing a brand. Customer service is also a component of an enterprise's strategy that has the potential to set the business apart from its competitors.

Since brand management was discussed with a focus on brand building and development, it is essential to discuss brand communication management. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, brand communication management is presented.

CHAPTER 4: BRAND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT



4.1 INTRODUCTION

A concise recapitulation of the preceding chapter is essential to assist in identifying the theoretical discussions covered thus far. The literature presented in Chapter 3 was focused on the concepts and construct and the variables on brand building and development models, resource-based theory and customer service (SERVQUAL perspective), that are fundamental in answering the research questions and realising the research objectives. This Chapter presents a review of the existing research on the marketing communication mix, focusing on its elements and social media. The brand communication background is discussed first to provide a backdrop for the Chapter; then, the marketing communication mix elements are discussed in detail. Thereafter, social media is discussed, and the Chapter concludes with a literature review on it.

4.2 BRAND COMMUNICATION

Communication is the human and social activity that links people and consumers together and enhables the creation of relationships (Bolton, McColl-Kennedy, Cheung, Orsingher, Witell & Zaki, 2018). Hence, Van Tonder, Petzer and Van Zyl (2017) are of the view that building rapport with consumers is key to achieving committed and loyal consumers to a brand. In branding, rapport is built among others through brand communication. Therefore, communication functions such as meaning creation and organising tasks play an important role in building brand relationships (Sheth, 2017). For SMEs and SMMEs alike, building long-term relationships through customer communication activities is the first step toward a cooperative partnership (Xie, Poon & Zhang, 2017), thus it is in line with the view of Van Tonder *et al.* (2017). Juntunen, Juntunen and Autere (2012), argue that, strong relationships are significant facilitators for SMEs and other types of businesses, leading to cost reductions and an increased level of service. Moreover, Hutchins and Rodriguez's (2018) study suggest that enhanced brand communication means better brand leverage. Consequently, communication relating to a brand is the exchange of information between the supplier (SMMEs) and the buyer (consumers and clients).

Sahin *et al*. (2011) accentuate that brand communication can be indirect communication and one-to-one or direct communication. Indirect communication consists of print-TV-radio advertising to mention a few, and this form of communication's main objectives are to increase brand awareness; to improve brand attitudes such as brand satisfaction and brand trust; and to affect purchasing behaviour, such as brand choice in consumer decision-making (Zehir *et al*., 2011). Direct brand communication focuses mainly on influencing current consumers' buying behaviour and is in fact transaction oriented (Sahin *et al*., 2011). Several previous studies have shown that direct brand communication can influence consumers' satisfaction with a brand (Sahin *et al*., 2011; Zehir *et al*., 2011). However, for the purpose of the current research, the focus is on brand communication dimensions and elements; as such, brand communication as a one- and two-way phenomenon will not be discussed in detail. Brand communication is an important strategy in marketing SMMEs. Furthermore, brand communication is the primary integrative element in managing brand relationships with customers, employees, suppliers, channel members, the media, government regulators and the community and creates positive brand attitudes (Kempf & Smith, 1998), Shieh *et al*. (2016) affirm the view. Brand communication can be one-way and two-way (multiway) in nature. While one-way communication consists of print, TV and radio advertising, two-way brand communication focuses mainly on directly influencing existing customers' buying behaviour and is essentially transaction-oriented (Sahin *et al*. 2011).

From the perspective of brand communication, Wijaya (2011) theorised brand as a mark left on the minds and hearts of consumers, which creates a specific sense of meaning and feeling. The emphasis of communication is, importantly, not a dialogue, but rather creating and providing messages "to" the customer. Brand communication is when an idea or image of a product or service is marketed so that distinctiveness is identified and recognised by existing and potential consumers (Chinomona, 2016). Moreover, advertising professionals in businesses undertake brand communication not only to build brand recognition, but also to build good reputations and a set of standards to which the company should strive to maintain or surpass (Sahin *et al*., 2011).

Brand communication has been acknowledged to consistently play an important role in creating positive brand attitudes (Buil, de Chernatony & Martínez, 2013; Langaro, Rita, & de Fátima Salgueiro, 2018). Moreover, `Gontijo and Zhang (2020) and Khalid (2016) are of the view that brand names have the ability to evoke feelings such as trust and confidence; this indicates that brand names should not be overlooked as a valid and useful avenue of communication in the creation of brand attitudes. Brand attitudes encapsulate the meaning that consumers attach to brands, which in turn affects their purchasing behaviour (Low & Lamb, 2000). Building customer-based brand equity requires consistent brand meaning upheld by brand communications over time (Keller, 1993). Brand communication strategies play an important role in developing brand knowledge because their objective entails informing, persuading and reminding consumers about the brand. From a strategic point of view, consistency refers to the existence of sharing common brand meaning and content among multiple means of communication because the messages may be focused on a host of different tangible or intangible aspects of the brand itself (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Keller, 2009).

Hence, it may be important to consider some of the particular characteristics and contexts of SMMEs, which may explain how they communicate their brands in the marketplace. Additionally, it may be argued that even when SMMEs favour several marketing approaches, the manner in which they implement them may show differences when compared to corporates owing to certain key characteristics. Langaro *et al*. (2018) note that brand communication exposes consumers to a brand, therefore, it can be viewed to maximise its influence on perceptions, brand awareness and soliciting purchase of the brand.

4.3 MARKETING COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

According to Finn and Grönroos (2017:447), from a consumer's perspective, marketing communication can be defined as "a process where a customer perceives an offering, product, service, company or person. It can be deliberated or embedded in context, visibly or merely in the head of the customer. It can include experience, processes, activities triggering value-in-use for the customer, and can consist of several simultaneous senders. On the other hand, a sender is not to be involved at all, and parts of the perception may be sourced in the past, present or future, and the process is constructed on the customer's logic. Consequently, Wu and Li (2017) view marketing communication as an intentional communication that is directed at the consumers of a brand, product or service. Chung, Jin, Joeng and Yang (2019), in their study, argue that there are branding strategies that employ the brand building approach; they highlight the marketing communication strategies as being essential in building and developing a brand. Communication about SMMEs' or suppliers' brands plays a crucial role in an SMME consumer's decision-making because brand value propositions that are communicated well will be better understood by SMME consumers and clients. From the perspective of SMME consumers, there are two aspects of communication: the first is the extent of the use of different sources of information, and the second is the extent of the primary search conducted by the buyer. Communicating the distinguishing characteristics of a brand is essential for building strong relationships with consumers. Subsequently, differentiation is the element that provides value to a brand (Gupta, Gallear, Rudd & Foroudi, 2020; Winzar, Baumann & Chu, 2018). In line with Gupta *et al*. (2020) and Winzar *et al*. (2018), it can be argued that a brand should be and is fundamentally key to integrated marketing in building relationships from communication directed to the consumers. This view is consistent with Mudzanani (2018) who, similar to Zehr *et al*. (2011), holds the view that integrated marketing communication enhances continuous consumer relationships through consistent communication efforts.

Wu and Li (2017) refer to the integrated marketing communication mix as communication tools and argue that the deliberate and appropriate use of these tools is a contemporary purpose in businesses. Phalatsi and Chipunza (2019) also refer to IMC and communication tools similar to Wu and Li (2017). The researcher, Lekhanya (2015) argues that enterprises, particularly the spaza shops in South Africa, use marketing communication tools in their daily practices, however, questions whether all tools can be used by enterprises. Hence, Kovanoviene *et al*. (2021) advocate for the choice of marketing tools used by businesses, stating that irrelevant tools may lead to ineffective communication, whereby consumers remain uninformed about the brand, product or service and therefore may purchase competitor’s offerings. A study by Kovanoviene, Romeika and Baumung (2021) determine the link between marketing communication tools and consumer perception of value in pursuit of loyalty and found that there is a statistically significant relationships between marketing communication tools and the perceived value of user loyalty. Accordingly, Kotler and Keller (2020) assert that, if marketing communication tools are effectively used, they provide financial returns to the business as well as feedback on the marketing activities that were implemented. Kotler and Keller (2020), therefore, theorise the integrated marketing communication activities to comprise of advertising, sales promotion, personal sales, public relations and direct marketing. Direct marketing was however, not considered for the study as SMMEs do not necessarily use it in their brand communication. In addressing the concern raised by Lekhanya (2015) and supporting the position of this study, Mgayi (2015) argues that enterprises mostly adopt advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, customer service, word-of-mouth (W-o-M) and packaging in their marketing communication tools.

Phalatsi and Chipunza (2019) therefore, are of the view that adopting marketing communication in the SMMEs sector, could facilitate exposure and popularity of the enterprises in the community and more importantly aid businesses to compete strategically. Subsequently, Hossain, Kabir and Rezvi (2017) support the view, arguing that IMC is a strategic process concerned with influential marketing communication programmes relevant to both the internal and external stakeholders and customers.

4.3.1 Integrated marketing communication mix

Kitchen (2017) indicates that integrated marketing communication (IMC) is an overarching theme in social science research particularly in marketing communications. This affirms the view of Davis (2017) who notes that communication is fundamental to branding and marketing. Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff and Terblanche (2020) suggeste that IMC is a communication effort that is directed towards managing relationships with customers in a manner in which it creates brand value. Kitchen's (2017) and Davis' (2017) view support the theoretical stance of this study in conceptualising and operationalising brand communication. With the proliferation of media channels in the late 20th and early 21st century, the amalgamation and synchronisation of different messages intending to represent a sole and distinctive image to all stakeholder groups has become both more important and difficult to achieve (Cornelissen, 2020). Moreover, Finne and Grönroos (2017) posit that IMC is a concept that aids the communicator to communicate a cohesive message and consider this as an important development in marketing communication. Similar to Khalid's (2016) view, IMC can thus be considered to help in creating coordinated and consistent messages across various channels of communication (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017; Luxton, Reid & Mavondo, 2015). However, Kitchen (2017) cautions against communicating messages that are irrelevant to consumers. Hence Belch and Belch (2018) aver that IMC serves to monitor brand communication strategies. However, these strategies must communicate coherent and consistent brand messages that will enable customers to identify products and services effortlessly. Therefore, Belch and Belch (2018) advocate that SMMEs must plan and approach their marketing communication messages in a coordinated manner, instead of doing so on an ad-hoc or haphazard way to ensure that it is effective. These are achieved through the use of the elements of the marketing communication mix that are considered to be the traditional marketing communication tools (Ramasobana, Fatoki & Oni, 2017). The elements of the marketing communication mix are discussed next. These are the elements that have been deemed applicable and relevant to the SMMEs.

4.3.1.1 Advertising

Hackley and Hackley (2015) posit that research that is conducted in advertising is conducted to enhance the effectiveness of communication. Advertising is mass communication and creates awareness of the brand, products or services (Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2020). Similarly, Selvakumar (2014) posits that advertising effects can be measured through brand awareness. Advertising is, therefore, a paid for, low-cost mass communication that is concerned with products and services of an advertiser targeted at a selected market with the objective being to persuade customers and potential consumers to purchase or have favourable perceptions of a brand or products and services. Communication and brand experience assume a key role in consumer communication (Mauroner & Best, 2016). Advertising is understood to stimulate demand for a brand. Therefore, brand advertising is intended for consumers, creating demand for the brand or product and services (Koekemoer, 2020). Additionally, it is documented to encourage, persuade or even manipulate the audience to action. Advertising is impersonal mass communication that offers control to the organisation responsible for implementing the promotional messages (Todorova, 2015). As a result of advertising, some brands, products or services are differentiated and unique compared to those of competitors. The enterprise’s approach to advertising is largely dependent on the capabilities and resources of the establishment and its communication objectives. Advertising supports other promotional resources (Todorova, 2015). Todorova (2015) suggests that advertising is multifunctional, as it is concerned with informing, persuading and reminding consumers about the brand, thereby influencing consumer perceptions.

AIDA as a communication model has been adopted in scholarly research addressing advertising (Budiawan, Satria & Simanjuntak, 2017; Weng, Huang & Bao, 2021); however, advertising is one of the elements of integrated marketing communication (Amoako, Anabila, Asare Effah & Kumi, 2017; Camilleri & Camilleri, 2018). Therefore, it is concerned with communicating a brand, service or product to the target audience, argues, Blakeman (2018). Similarly, a brand communicates a myriad of attributes, benefits and features to the target market. The AIDA model, as Pashootanizadeh and Khalilian (2018) suggest, is one of the popular “hierarchy of effects” models of communication that describes the stages in which communication moves consumers from attention to action.

Ghivru (2013) points out that in an attempt to define and explain consumer consumption and purchase behaviour, scholars used various models and strategies to improve brand communication and used the hierarchy of effects models from the developed models. Pashootanizadeh and Khalilian (2018) and Wiyaya (2012) postulate that the AIDA model has been adopted in marketing activities to attract and persuade existing and potential customers’ attention, interest, desire and action.

Attention: Brand communication must promote the enterprise through elements and dimensions to create awareness of the business and the service or product it offers. Hadiyati (2016) argues that the first step in the cognitive hierarchy of effects is to attract and retain customers’ attention.
Interest: Attention must be drawn using communication media (Hadiyati, 2016); however, in this instance, it will be through the details of the brand communication elements that the entrepreneur builds and develops the enterprise as a brand; a logo, for instance, that can create interest from the target market.
Desire: The brand communication elements should be intentionally crafted to create a desire to purchase the products and services that the enterprise offers. Hadiyati (2016) highlights that it does not always occur that consumers will have the desire to purchase the products and services, as they might be apprehensive questioning whether the brand will deliver on its promise or not.
Action: This is the stage that brand owners would like to achieve, having customers and clients purchase their enterprises’ products and services.

4.3.1.2 Public relations

Public relations is considered to be an integral part of promotion strategies and its objective is to influence the public’s opinion.. Moreover, Belch and Belch (2018:26) posit that public relations is a “systematic plan and distribution of information with the intention to control and manage the image of a business and the nature of the publicity that the enterprise receives”.

Voorveld (2019) asserts that public relations is the most effective approach that results in long-term customer association with a business. This approach to marketing communication is concerned with the enterprise image, Todora (2015) concurs with Belch and Belch (2001), stating that it is focused on the entire organisation rather than the product or service being offered. In addition, Camilleri and Camilleri (2018) concur with Belch and Belch (2001) who assert that public relations is used to enhance the image and reputation of an organisation. Todora (2015) is of the view that that public relations is relevant to organisational activities and covers all communications. Moreover, Camilleri and Camilleri (2018) argue that public relations is aimed at managing and maintaining communication with the stakeholders of businesses and it is, therefore, a valuable tool that can enhance the image and reputation of a business. In addition, public relations has the potential to persuade customers to purchase products and services of enterprises or businesses. Ngwenya (2015) accentuates that public relations has been consistent over the years and century, with its fundamental function being to inform and persuade people. Therefore, public relations, as a channel of communication, is viewed as a tool that segments the market.

Camilleri and Camilleri (2018) point out public service activities as one of the public relations tools that are used to communicate about the business. The scholar further aver that although public relations is a form of communication, it uses unpaid channels. In addition, public relations unlike, advertising and sales promotion, is not controllable (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2018). Subsequently, it is considered to serve as a supporting marketing communication tool.

The owner managers are key spokespersons for public relations and advertising activities and they sometimes become the “celebrity” of their brands (Centeno & Hart, 2012). Owner managers’ engaging in publicity increases brand knowledge at a minimum cost (Agyapong, Ellis & Domeher, 2016; Verhees & Meulenberg, 2004); and they act upon their unplanned and intuitive decisions.

4.3.1.3 Sales promotion

Belch and Belch (2018:23) define sales promotion as "any marketing or non-marketing effort or activity in which marketing or non-marketing means are used at a particular time to stimulate increased demand, thus providing extra value and incentives to stimulate prompt purchase or sales of the products and services". Van Heerde and Neslin (2017) assert that sales promotion is directed towards increasing sales, and therefore revenue, and can result in brand preference. Valos and Maplestone (2017) support the view of van Heerde and Neslin (2017) by arguing that sales promotion activities assist in accelerating sales of products and services and influence potential customers to make purchases. Sales promotion is done through sponsorships, special prices or discounts, thereby, offering incentives to consumers. Todora (2015) expands on Hartley and Pickton's (2010) view, pointing out that sales promotion is short-term, as it is aims at stimulating consumer purchases. Sales promotion, therefore, stimulates immediate purchases from consumers and supports advertising. Accordingly, van Heerde and Neslin (2017) argue that in promoting sales, businesses use coupons, rebates, price discounts and displays, and feature advertising to consumers. Goodie-Okio (2022) concur with the argument made by van Heerde and Neslin (2017), asserting that promotional activities use marketing tools such as special promotion, premium offerings, and contents to serve as incentives for sales of brand products and services. These promotions can have long-term effects on consumers post the promotion phase of the product and services offered by businesses, and can induce brand trials by prospective customers and purchases from existing customers.

Chang (2017) holds a similar view as that of van Heerde and Neslin (2017), affirming that sales promotion is considered a marketing routine that is aimed at elucidating action from consumers and facilitating media exposure, while retaining customers. Furthermore, Chang (2017) argues that sales promotion is crucial in the competitive era that businesses are operating in; as a result, it is an incentive that motivates consumers to purchase more products or services in a short period of time. Subsequently, Chung *et al*. (2019) propose that promotional strategies and activities are ideal in introducing a product or service; and even making the market aware of the products and services; and strengthening a brand. As such, Kumar *et al.* (2016) further expand on Chung *et al*. (2019) stating that price discounts as one of the promotion tools, contributes towards strengthening the brand, using media such as social media (Yasa, Giantari, Setini & Rahmayanti, 2020). Chung *et al*. (2019), Kumar *et al*. (2016) and Yasa *et al.'s* (2020) research, therefore, explicate the relationship and link between the theories grounding this study.

Goodie-Okio (2022) alludes that sales promotion contributes toward brand performance when implemented properly. Implementation could be in the form of communication activities - as Stephen and Aliyu (2017) point out - that provide value or incentives to enterprises and their customers, which is in line with the view of Chang (2017). These sales promotion activities are fundamental tools in marketing communication that are directed towards achieving goals and objectives of businesses. Camilleri and Camilleri (2018) posit that there are two main types of sales promotions, namely: customer-oriented and trade oriented. The customer-oriented sales promotions is viewed to be a strategy used to create demand for products and services. The consumer-oriented sales promotions, according to Camilleri and Camilleri (2018) are, samples, coupons, special offers, contests and competitions to mention a few. Thus, it can be summerised that these promotional activities augment the other marketing communication mix.

4.3.1.4 Personal selling

Personal selling is a personal form of presenting products and services or ideas. It is a two-way form of communication as the seller and buyer engage in the selling process. Todora (2015) points out that personal selling is seldom used as a single method of promotion; it is therefore supported by other promotional mix elements, as it does the same with the elements. Personal selling is personal communication between a firm's sales force and customers for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships. Adesoga (2016) adds to Kotler and Armstrong's (2008) view, stating that personal selling is unique compared to other promotional mix elements, as it is an individualistic approach engaging with customers on an individual basis.

Saxe and Weitz (1982:344) define customer-oriented selling as "the degree to which salespeople practice the marketing concept by trying to help customers make purchase decisions that will satisfy customer needs”. The marketing concept is concerned with satisfying consumer needs by providing products and services that meet customers’ needs. Word-of-Mouth (WoM) influences and encourages engagement and purchase decisions about a brand. Word-of-mouth is one of the most important channels of communication in information exchange among consumers (Chan & Ngai, 2011; Chu & Kim, 2011; Kim, Sung & Kang, 2014; Kunja & GVRK, 2020). It is considered a key marketing tool that can significantly affect attitudes and consumer behaviour (Chen & Xie, 2008; Chu & Chen, 2019; Kim *et al*., 2020). Likewise, Dost, Phieler, Haenien and Libai (2019), Sulthana and Vasantha (2019) concur that WoM is communication that is more effective in consumers’ decision-making than other traditional marketing tools, such as personal selling or advertising media, as consumers consider it to be more credible and reliable than communication driven by an organisation (Itani, Goad & Jaramillo, 2019).

4.3.1.4.1 Personal branding

Centeno *et al*. (2013) developed a brand building model and provided five phases of SME brand building. The first phase refers to a brand as a person which links to the current discourse that the owner has a personal influence in building and developing the enterprise as a brand. Centeno *et al*. (2019) studied the unexplored conceptualization of the brand-as-a-person in SME, by examining potential relations with the SME owner-manager. Centeno *et al*. (2019), furthermore, sought to describe the connection between brands and brand managers, as key decision-makers, at the time when the brand is being created and developed, and suggested that the owner-manager has a major role in formulating the brand’s personality, among other intangible elements. The results of their study reveal that SME owner-managers humanize their brands, and this result correlates with the items measuring personal selling in this study’s brand communication model. Machado, Vacas-de-Carvalho, Aar, André & Dos Santos (2019) affirm the view stating that brand personality is used to position the enterprise as a brand, which is part of the brand-as-a-person metaphor. Radler (2018), furthermore, elaborate on Centeno *et al*. (2019) and Machado *et al*. (2019), stating that consumers connect with brands that exhibit personalities that are like theirs. Davies, Rojas-Méndez, Whelan, Mete and Loo. (2018), contrary to Centeno *et al*. (2019) and Machado *et al*. (2019), studied management’s focus on consumer’s perspective, calling for contributions to theoretical underpinnings of the metaphor. Centeno *et al*. (2019) and Machado *et al*. (2019), however, with Banerjee (2016), aver that consumers prefer brands that are consistent with their personalities, therefore, brand managers ought to strive towards building brand personalities that would assist consumers to identify and relate with the enterprise.

SMME owners play an important role in many brand decisions, and builds his or her brand using personal intuition, passion, knowledge, expertise, and personality (Dion and Arnould, 2016; Kienzler, 2017). Centeno et al. (2013) argued that if a strategy is intuitively formulated, it could be inferred that brand-as-a-person is not formulated intentionally but is consciously learned, similarly to other management skills that are developed over time (Centeno et al., 2013).

Dion and Arnould (2016) suggest that brands that connect brandable qualities with their owner-managers' human characteristics are personified brands. There is evidence to suggest that brand management is beneficial for SMME performance (Agostinin *et al.,* 2015). Furthermore, Törmälä and Gyrd-Jones (2017) advocate that branding is an essential activity for building brand reputation, marketing a product/service and increasing profit. However, studies such as Krake's (2005) argue that branding is an activity directed towards building brand reputation, marketing the products and services of the enterprises and ultimately increasing profits. Although these researchers are contradicting one another, there is, as one could deduce, a consensus that brand management is fundamental to the SMMEs. Centeno *et al.* (2019) point out that the contradiction might be predominantly stemming from the personal position of the owner-manager, therefore, the influence that the SMME owner-manager exercise towards the marketing and branding decisions of the enterprise.

Brand management researchers have found that while brand managers in larger organisations formulate and track brand elements with respect to brand personality to rationally suit consumer's identity (Branaghan & Hildebrand, 2011), SMEs' brand elements are developed through owners' involvement and passion and their controlling influence (Centeno *et al*., 2013; Horan *et al*., 2011; Muhonen *et al*., 2017).

In analysing key aspects of SMEs, prior studies have shown that managers' personalities influence some managerial practices, especially under the conditions of uncertainty that are common to SMEs (Kienzler, 2017). Research has also found that managerial style, salespeople and brand personality should be aligned (Gammoh *et al*., 2014), especially considering that SME owner-managers are usually their firms' main salespersons. The owner-managers directly influence and decide how their brand is developed (Centeno *et al*., 2013; Christmann *et al*., 2016; Mitchell *et al*., 2015). As SME owner-managers have an important role in decision-making on brand activities, the brand may be built on their personalities (Krake, 2005; Muhonen *et al*., 2017).

Previous research has identified that traditional marketing activities are seen by entrepreneurs as impersonal, and personal branding offers a better way to leverage the specialist knowledge or unique contribution of the individual entrepreneur (Resnick *et al*., 2016). This personal means of marketing is also fuelled by new media platforms which offer unprecedented opportunities for individual self-expression and self-presentation. Individuals need no longer be tied to media agencies and can undertake marketing activities (Chen, 2013).

Frank and Watchravesrinkan (2016) maintain that social media marketing activities are more influential as opposed to the traditional marketing communication. Although social media is viewed to be an element of the marketing communication mix, a study by Chikandiwa (2013), that aimed to identify the role of social media in the marketing communication mix, argues its position, challenges and opportunities. Chikandiwa's (2013) study found that social media is not an element of the marketing communication mix, however, it should be integrated in the marketing communication mix for consistency and cohesive communication with customers. Contrary to Chikandiwa (2013), in Bowen and Bowen's (2016) study, social media is considered a unique marketing tool that enhances the brand's marketing communication. Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu and Krush (2016) affirm Chikandiwa (2013), by advancing that social media in marketing communication influences the effects of marketing. The foregoing discourse suggests that social media augments marketing communication activities directed towards a brand. Moreover, Tekin and Turhan (2020) advance that social media is a technology-enabled marketing communication that enables enterprises to innovatively explore opportunities and performance of the business.Social media is, therefore, discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Social media

Social media is argued to be a complementary capability that is compatible with branding (Kohli, Suri & Kapoor, 2015). Thus suggesting that there is a link between the tenets of social media and RBT, the resouces and capabilities. Odoom *et al*. (2017) point out that enterprises are challenged to embrace the use of social media as consumers could be reached through the media. Social media is defined as a "group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological ad technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). Alhabash, Mundel and Hussain (2017), therefore, conceptualised brand communication in social media as "any brand-related communication disseminated through social media and enables internet users to access, share, engage with, add to and cocreate". Hence, the position of this study holds similar view as that of Khalid (2016), who argues that social media is a robust communication media channel for brands that aspire and are driven towards connecting with customers and enhancing, among others, brand awareness and association. Moreover, Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi and Algharabat (2017) concur with Khalid (2016) as their research view social media to be a brand management tool.

Social media, unlike traditional media, is a two-way form of communication directed at the masses, groups or individuals. Hausman (2014) posits that social media, in comparison to traditional media, is effective two-way communication that creates engagement or promotes word-of-mouth communication. This word-of-mouth communication is similar to face-to-face communication, with far-reaching capacities. Jokinen (2016), furthermore, asserts that social media is a multidirectional and real-time communication media, that facilitate and support necessity-based communication and content use, therefore, allowing the sender to communicate in the desired moment and quantity. Kusumasondjaja (2019) and Valos, Maplestone, Polonsky and Ewing (2017) affirm the view of Jokinen (2016) and expand on the notion, asserting that social media is conceded to be an imperative communication platform that brands or businesses use to share information or activities.

Social media is conceived to be interactive and participative (Leung, Bai & Erdem, 2017) and changes how consumers interact with each other, organisations and brands, thereby, connecting businesses and brands with consumers instantly. Godey, Manthiou, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello and Donvito (2016) point out that social media denotes brand-building opportunities and brand management.

Graves (2016) points out that various brands use social media to draw attention from and involve consumers with brands. Accordingly, Jokinen (2016) points out that social media affords many uses in branding (Pozin, 2014), such as acquisition, communication and retention; however, it is not limited to the mentioned uses. Hence, brand communication through social media is important owing to its presence and instantaneity. From a brand communication perspective, social media allows users to be in control of the content they view, share, create or comment on, and it is economically feasible and can be measured. These do not require many resources, therefore, it saves costs for the users. Moreover, it provides possibilities for small businesses. Graves (2016) highlights the fact that social media provides data that are valuable and can provide brand perceptions of consumers in brand communication. Subsequently, social media is key in influencing and attracting consumer behaviour and perception towards a brand (Aydin, 2020; Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020) and can result in brand building (da Fonseca & Gustavo, 2020). Therefore, brands must be constantly managed and be present on social media (Hamzah, Abdul Wahab & Waqas, 2021; Pozin, 2014). This is important, as consumers are said to relate to brands in a manner that epitomises their interpersonal relationships that translate to consumer-brand relationships (Jain, Kamboj, Kumar & Rahman, 2018; Kumar & Kim, 2014). Brand anthropomorphism is acknowledged by Kim, Sung and Moon (2020) to influence consumer-brand relationships and their perceptions of the brand.

Brand anthropomorphism influences consumers' response to brand communication (Wu, Dodoo & Choi, 2023), suggesting that consumers respond to and interact with brands as they would to humans (Aaker, 1997; Zhang, Li, Ye, Qin & Zhong, 2020). Brand anthropomorphism is important in building consumer-brand relationships (Kim *et al*., 2020). Anthropomorphism refers to consumer's inclination to attribute human characteristics to entities and it is an extension of Keller's brand personality (Kim *et al*., 2020). Therefore, in line with Khalid's (2016) discourse, social media communication can be acknowledged as a beneficial media of communication for enterprises and social presence. Accordingly, Kim *et al*. (2020) point out that there is a positive relationship between brand anthropomorphism and consumers' engaging behaviour on social media. Therefore, it can be argued that it is crucial for enterprises to take advantage of social media and send messages that are directed towards building relationships and communicating the establishment as a brand. These can be achieved through the use of social media platforms and social media marketing.

4.3.2.1 Social media platforms

Social media platforms are perceived to be instruments used to create online communication between customers and the enterprise or brand (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020). In addition, platforms are also referred to as social networking sites that are the leading platforms in building and managing activities in enterprises (Kumar *et al.,* 2016), including the management and communication of brands (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The number of active users on social media platforms suggests that the platforms are ideal for use by enterprises as a medium of marketing communication (Yadav & Rahma, 2017) and can be used innovatively. Furthermore, Ajina (2019) argues that social media platforms as technology-based marketing communication tools, provide enterprises with opportunities to achieve their marketing objectives as they are associated with low costs. Rana, Barnard, Baabdullah, Rees and Roderick (2019) assert that the rationale for the innovative use of social media platforms by enterprises is credited to their lack of, or limited resources. The brand messages are created and communicated to the target audience through social media platforms (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2020). Social media as a technology-enabled marketing communication tool, therefore, allows users to engage with brands and each other using social media platforms that are available to users (Gómez, Lopez & Molina, 2019).

Cheung, Pires and Rosenberger III (2019) suggest that consumers search for information and reviews on social media platforms. Hence, Wang (2021) points out that social media platforms allow brands to directly engage and interact with consumers. Batra and Keller's (2016) view is supported by Cheung *et al*. (2019) that social media platforms enable communication between consumers and between consumers and companies. Congruently, businesses and consumers alike are creators of brand communication (Kallier, 2017). Social media platforms are different from other channels of communication with respect to modality, content accessibility (private or public), types of connections and longevity of content accessibility. Zhu and Chen (2015) distinguish between the different types of media platforms, namely, relationship media (Facebook and WhatsApp), self-media (Twitter and Weibo), creative outlets (YouTube, Instagram, and Flickr) and collaboration platforms (Quora and Reddit). Similarly, Nhuvira and Dorasamy (2021) assert that Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, as social media platforms, are invested in digital marketing. Furthermore, Makrides, Vrontis and Christofi (2020) point out that social media platforms use customer feedback to improve on their offerings. Thus, the same benefits are applied to enterprises or businesses that are using the platforms. Kushwaha *et al.* (2020) point out that more than 90% of businesses use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and others. Gómez *et al*. (2019), and Li and Bernoff (2011), are of similar view that social media platforms are sources of brand communication.

4.3.2.2 Social media marketing

Yadav and Rahman (2017:1296) define social media marketing as “a process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media platforms to build and maintain stakeholder relationships that enhance stakeholders' value by facilitating interaction, information sharing, offering personalised purchase recommendations, and word-of-mouth creation amongst stakeholders about existing and trending products and services”. From the definition, it can be deduced that social media marketing integrates social media platforms and search engines in communicating about the products, services or brand that an enterprise offers. Social media marketing (SMM) is perceived to be online communication used to interact with consumers (Tlapana & Dike, 2020). Hence, Wijaya and Padmanegara (2021) suggest that social media marketing is also known as digital marketing that use social media to deliver marketing activities, which include communication about a brand. Koay, Ong, Khoo and Yeoh (2020) view SMM as a fundamental approach to digital marketing. Consequently, Dwivedi *et al*. (2020) assert that SMM, if successfully implemented, has the potential to influence the effectiveness of brand marketing efforts. Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017) support the assertion, stating that the role that consumers assign to the brand within the social media space influence the effectiveness of social media marketing. In a study by Tlapana and Dike (2020), they sought to determine the usage patterns of social media among SMMEs, and found that enterprises are still not taking full advantage of social media marketing (Ajina, 2019). There are social media marketing tools such as search engines and websites that enterprises can use to communicate information about their products, services or brand. Althought there are a combination of marketing tools, Rodrigues and Martinez (2020) are of the view that there are two notable tools directed towards searching the adverts which communicate the brand, namely, search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM). SEO and SEM are commonly used in search engines and their purpose is to assist customers and facilitate ease of finding an enterprise or business.

Bhandari and Bansal's (2018) research focused on the effect of search engine optimisation as a marketing tool as it is extensively used. Subsequnetly, Bhandari and Bansal (2018:24) define search engine optimisation as "a mechanism that allows a consumer or stakeholder to find the most relevant online search". Furthermore, the researchers argue that in this technology era, it is virtually impractical to search for information without using the search engine. Levene (2010) explains a search engine as a complex software that allows the searcher to visit multiple websites and pages for relevant information. Luh, Yang and Hung (2016), therefore, asserts that the fundamental motivation of search engines is advertising that is crucial in pulling traffic to the website or page of a business. Bhandari and Bansal (2018) view a search engine as playing a mediating role between customers and the sites of enterprises.

The hypothesised model for the study, as shown in Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1 is based on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. Figure 1.3 depicts the hypothesised relationships, based on the purpose of this study, which is to develop a brand communication model for the enterprises. Therefore, based on the foregoing discussions in Chapter 3 and this chapter on brand communication, marketing communication management and IMC, and the hypothesised relationships between brand development, marketing communication, market resources, and customer service, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H_1: Brand development has a significant relationship with market resources

H_2: Brand development has an effect on customer service (SERVQUAL perspective)

H_3: Marketing communication has a significant relationship with market resources

H_4: Marketing communication has an effect on customer service

4.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

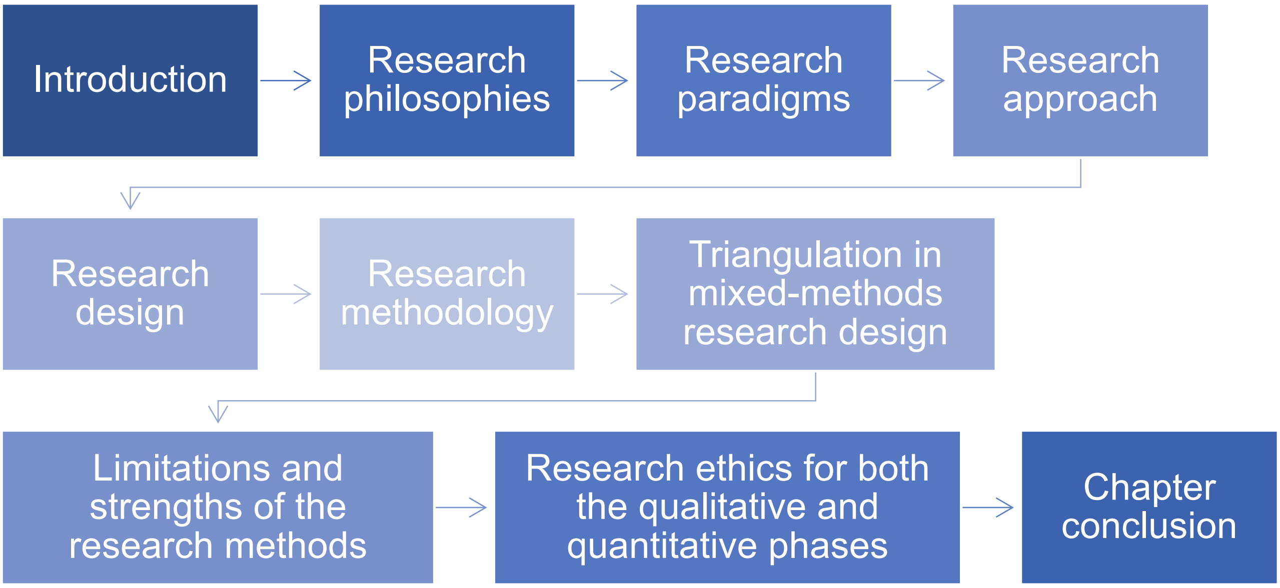
The main focus of this Chapter is the literature discussion on the marketing communication mix and social media from a communication management perspective. The marketing communication mix elements were discussed, and the AIDA elements were integrated into the advertising discussions as scholars point out that it is positioned in the component. Thereafter, social media and the various social media platforms were discussed.

Communication creates and provides messages for consumers. In addition, its objective is to expose the brand to the target audience and market. In communicating the brand, emphasis is placed on its distinctiveness. At the same time, brand communication facilitates and builds relationships with consumers of brands. Moreover, brand communication unifies customers and brand owners and therefore, influences consumer brand choice.

The integrated marketing communication mix elements are used to communicate a synergistic message about the brand. Social media, on the other hand, provides for a communication channel and platforms that businesses can take advantage of in communicating the brand.

The next chapter presents the research design and methodology for this study.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY



5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding Chapter presented the literature review on the marketing communication mix and social media in the context of communication management. The current Chapter outlines and highlights the planning and execution of the research design and methods to answer the research questions and objectives. The research questions and objectives were developed from the problem statement of the research, which provided the purpose and rationale for the research.

The Chapter focuses on describing the study's research design and methodology. In addition, the Chapter is grounded on the topic of the research. The research paradigm and philosophies concerned with the research approach are discussed; the sequential exploratory mixed-methods design is detailed; and the Chapter provides a detailed description of the inquiry strategy and the broad research design. The data collection approach adopted for the study is discussed, followed by the data management procedure. Qualitative and quantitative statistical data analysis are also discussed. Then the Chapter assesses and demonstrates the quality and rigour of the research design. It concludes with issues on ethics, more so that the study involves human beings.

The deliberation, choice and rationale for the design took cognisance of the key concept of the research and the subsequent research questions and objectives that the research sought to answer and address to develop a brand communication management model for SMMEs in South African townships.

Before describing the research design and methodology of the current research, it is imperative to discuss the research paradigms, beliefs and philosophical world views that influenced, informed and guided the researcher.

5.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES AND PARADIGMS

Creswell and Creswell (2018) posit that worldviews are a general philosophical orientation concerning the world and nature of research that the researcher brings to the study. Researchers, as individuals, develop worldviews that logically stem from their discipline or research communities. These worldviews influence the researcher to embrace a single or combination of the research methods approach. Moreover, the researcher is key in research.

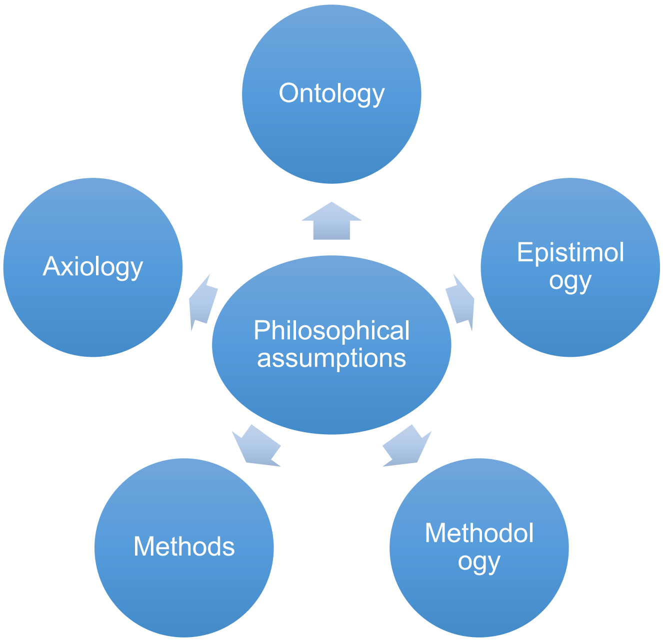
Scientific research philosophy is a system of the researcher's thought, following which new, reliable knowledge about the research object is obtained. Moreover, it is the basis of the research and involves the choice of research strategy, formulation of the problem, data collection, processing, and analysis thereof (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Žukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitienė, 2018).

Research philosophy can be defined as "the development of research assumptions, knowledge and nature" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:130). An assumption is perceived as a preliminary statement of reasoning, but it is based on the belief system of a researcher's knowledge and insights that are born as a product of intellectual activity (Khun, 1962). Research is based on assumptions from the researcher, the fact that it is from a researcher's perspective suggests that the assumptions will differ from one researcher to another about the nature of truth and knowledge and its acquisition (Creswell, 1998). Perhaps the difference in the truth, knowledge and its acquisition is a result of their own knowledge and expertise in their respective disciplines. Žukauskas *et al*. (2018) postulate that applied research methods allow scientists to generate ideas into knowledge in the context of scientific philosophical research, as such, creating knowledge contributions for a particular study. The research philosophies and paradigms are fundamental to the researcher as they capture the beliefs, assumptions and principles that influence the approach to the research study.

A research paradigm is "the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed" (Kuhn, 1962, 1970). In addition, a research paradigm is based on the three basic questions that scientists and researchers respond to, which are questions relating to the ontological, epistimological and methodological philosophies (Guba, 1990; Žukauskas *et al*., 2018). Babbie (1998), therefore, postulates that, in regard to social scientists, inquiries can be grounded in more than one paradigm depending on the situation, and they shape the theory created for general understanding. Furthermore, paradigms are frameworks or viewpoints that provide manners in which life is viewed and are grounded in sets of assumptions about the nature of reality concerning the research or the phenomena being researched (Babbie, 1998). The research philosophies and paradigms are now discussed.

There are five main scientific research philosophical assumptions, namely, ontological, epistemological, methodological, methods and axiological philosophies. Figure 5.1 depicts the five research philosophies.

Figure 5.1: Research philosophies



Source: Own compilation (2020).

5.2.1 Ontology philosophy

According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), the ontological question is "What is the form and nature of reality and therefore, what is there that can be known about it?" This refers to the perceptions of how things are and how they operate. The ontological assumption is a philosophical belief system concerning the social world. The social world in the context of this research refers to the environment where the consumers and clients of the enterprises engage. Leavy (2017) postulates that this belief system informs our sense of the social world and what we as researchers and individuals can learn about it; and how that can be accomplished. Moreover, the belief system that underpins this research is that reality is subjective and that SMME owners', customers' and clients' interpretation of reality is dependent on the current brand communication activities and practices that are directed towards brand building and the development of enterprises as brands.

The ontological belief system holds that general assumptions are created to perceive and understand the real nature of society (Gullion, 2018). In addition, there are multiple realities that can be explored and constructed through human interactions and meaningful actions (Lawson, 2019). These meaningful actions from the researcher's perspective assist in discovering how humans make sense of their social worlds in the natural setting through their daily routines, conversations and writings while interacting with others around them (Lawson, 2019; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The writings could be text and visual pictures. Social realities exist because of varying human experiences, which include human knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Experience with SMMEs as lived by their customers and clients assisted in developing the enterprises' brand communication model with the aim of building and developing enterprises as brands. Consumer and client lived experiences are crucial, as they are the individuals who consume and engage with enterprises as brands.

5.2.2 Epistemology philosophy

The epistemological belief system is concerned with how research is undertaken and what constitutes and counts as knowledge (Goldman, 2019). More importantly, epistemology is about how knowledge is generated, created, acquired or disseminated (Bento & Craib, 2023; Goldman, 2019; Lawson, 2019). Therefore, this belief system informs how a researcher enacts their role and how they and the research participants' relationship is understood. Moreover, the social environment is understood through the intellectual manner of interpretation that is influenced by interaction with social contexts (Bento & Craib, 2023; Goldman, 2019). Subsequently, the researcher or participants (co-knowledge producers), who are active in the research process, socially construct knowledge, be it through experiencing real life or natural settings (Bento & Craib, 2023; Goldman, 2019). Furthermore, the researcher and participants are connected in an interactive process of talking and listening, reading and writing (Goldman, 2019). Consequently, a more personal, interactive mode of data collection is experienced. What counts and constitutes as knowledge in this research is the literature relating to the study and the information that was gathered from the SMME owners and their consumers and clients through talking (interviews with SMME owners) and listening (recording of the interview, self-completed questionnaire by consumers and clients). Therefore, epistemology lends itself to the data collection process, where the construction of knowledge created contributes to the existing body of knowledge.

5.2.3 Methodology philosophy

According to Holden and Lynch (2004), this belief system holds that a methodological decision should be related to the philosophical position of the researcher and the analysed social science phenomenon. The social science phenomenon in this research is the brand communication of SMMEs in South African townships. The methodological belief system postulates that data should be collected by text in the form of interviews and reflective sessions. In addition, the researchers' values consider what constitutes a research product.

This philosophical assumption is centred around how I, as the researcher, obtain the desired data, knowledge and understanding to enable myself to answer the research questions and objectives that were posed and stated in Chapter 1 of the research from my research participants and respondents. The data, knowledge and understanding enabled me to contribute to the body of knowledge in the form of a model for brand communication management for SMMEs towards building and developing their enterprises as brands.

5.2.4 Methods philosophy

The belief system's methods are concerned with the specific tools, techniques and procedures that were used to generate and analyse data for the current research (Bento & Craib, 2023). Qualitative data were collected from micro and small enterprise owners through interviews and from their consumers and clients using the self-completion questionnaire. AtlasTi version 8.4 was employed to analyse qualitative data, while quantitative data were analysed using SPSS running tests such as EFA, CFA, composite scores to test the reliability of the scales and validity of measurements, and SEM, as the questionnaire was developed from the results of the qualitative data.

5.2.5 Axiology philosophy

Axiological assumptions are about the values and ethics of the research (Shan, 2022). It is about the ethical consideration for research. Since this research includes SMME owners, their consumers and clients (who are all humans), ethical considerations are involved. Ethics had to be considered when collecting data for the research from the participants and respondents. Data were collected through interviews with the SMME owners and surveys in the form of self-completion questionnaires from their consumers and clients. Therefore, consent from both the participants and respondents was key and preserved their rights. A consent form was given to both the owners and consumers and clients if they agreed to participate in the research. In addition, they were advised that, should they feel that they do not want to continue as participants at any point in the process, they are welcome to withdraw from the study.

From the foregoing discussions, the research paradigms are discussed next, as well as the researcher's worldviews.

There are five main research paradigms, as proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2014), Leavy (2014) and Žukauskas *et al*. (2018). These paradigms are discussed in the subsequent section. The five major paradigms in business and management are interpretivism/social constructivism, positivist and pragmatist/realistic research paradigms.

5.2.6 Interpretivist/social constructivist research paradigm

The interpretivist/social constructivist paradigm comes from the phenomenological theoretical school of thought and focuses on how individuals experience a phenomenon (Alharahsheh & Piu, 2020). The interpretivist philosophy holds an opposite view to that of the positivist philosophy. With the interpretivist research philosophy, it is said that the social world can be interpreted in a subjective manner (Bevir & Blakely, 2018). Therefore, researchers can be subjective in their philosophical view for as long as they are motivated by research problems, questions, methods and analysis strategies, conducted in an ethical manner (Alharahsheh & Piu, 2020). An interpretivist view suggests that attention is considered in understanding the ways or behaviours through which people experience the social world. Therefore, the principle posits that the researcher plays a specific role in observing the social world (Bevir & Blakely, 2018). Moreover, the research is then based and depends on the researcher's interests. This holds true for the fact that research is considered based on the researcher's interest, which perhaps stems from the challenges or opportunities that they have been observing in their social environment. Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Willis (1995) postulate that interpretivists are anti-foundationalists who believe that there is no single particular method but rather diverse paradigms to knowledge production. In addition, interpretivists derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest.

Myers (2009) argues that the premise of interpretive researchers is that access to reality is solely through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Accordingly, the philosophical base of interpretive research is hermeneutics and phenomenology (Boland, 1985). Furthermore, Bleicher (2014) explains that hermeneutics must be considered both an underlying philosophy and a specific mode of analysis, therefore, providing the philosophical grounding for interpretivism.

Although the study is not primarily phenomenological, some of its aspects are underpinned by the principles of phenomenology, which focuses on discovering and expressing essential characteristics of a certain phenomenon as they truly are, that is, the brand communication practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships. Creswell (1998) argues that a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon. Moreover, Lester (1999) maintains that phenomenology in the human scope is collecting rich information and perceptions through inductive qualitative research methods. These methods include interviews and observations from the perspective of the research participants.

5.2.7 Positivist research paradigm

This paradigm asserts that the social world is understood objectively by the researcher as an objective analyst, therefore, withdrawing from personal values and working independently (Alharahsheh & Piu, 2020). According to scholars, the positivist paradigm assumes a quantitative approach to researching a phenomenon, while a postpositivist approach aims to describe and explore in-depth phenomena from a qualitative perspective (Alharahsheh & Piu, 2020; Mohajan, 2018). In addition, a positivist paradigm argues that scientific knowledge consists of facts and truths that are presented by empirical means.

Descartes (1998) maintains that knowledge about reality can be generated based on motivation from the researcher. Researchers conduct research as a result of a phenomenon that motivates the interest, meaning that events are ordered and interrelated; therefore, reality is ordered and assumed (Alharahsheh & Piu, 2020).

The positivist paradigm asserts that real events can be observed empirically and explained with logical analysis, while the evaluation of the validity of a scientific theory is theory-based predictions and consistent with the information we are able to obtain using our senses (Alharahsheh & Piu, 2020). The criticism about this philosophy is that it fails to address the root of the problem but rather focuses on providing solutions. Therefore, to address this shortfall, the interpretivist philosophy of the current research resolves the challenge.

5.2.7 Pragmatist research paradigm and/or realistic research paradigm

A pragmatist research paradigm embraces mixed-methods approaches to research (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). This view suggests that the researcher's choice of research methods is dependent and relies on the research problem of the study. Accordingly, pragmatism does not belong to any philosophical system and reality, and researchers have freedom of choice (Alghamdi & Li, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). As research is a scientific and systematic process with golden threads, the freedom that Alghamdi and Li, (2013) and Kaushik and Walsh (2019) referred to means that, for the researcher, there are then options for the choice of methods, techniques and procedures that best suit their needs and scientific research aims and objectives. Creswell and Creswell (2018) concur with Alghamdi and Li (2013), as they posit that a single approach or strategy might not be sufficient to address the key research problem, objectives or questions; hence, researchers find themselves choosing the techniques and strategies that best fit and align to their research study. According to Žukauskas *et al*. (2018), pragmatists do not see the world as absolute unity. However, the nature of mixed-methods lends itself to the pragmatist paradigm view, as a researcher uses a combination of methods to provide rich results and even instruments that are developed in the process of the study to address the social problem of the research.

5.2.8 Paradigm for this study and justification

The research paradigm underpinning this research study is *pragmatism*. Prior to discussing the motivation for this paradigm, it is ideal to include a table depicting pragmatism and its elements. Table 5.1 highlights the elements of the pragmatic paradigm.

Table 5.1: Elements of the pragmatic paradigm

Assumption	***Emphasis or meaning***	***Characteristics***	***Relation to this study***
Epistemology	Knowledge generation/creation, acquisition and dissemination	The best method is the one that solves problems, finding out is the means and change is the underlying aim.	Knowledge acquisition from SMMEs, their consumers and clients, then dissemination for empowerment and business growth
Ontology	Nature of reality, what is known	Reality is constantly renegotiated, debated and interpreted.	SMMEs are engaged in some form of branding haphazardly so
Methodology	Strategy or plan of action	Uses mixed-methods research designs.	Exploratory sequential
Methods	Tools, techniques, procedures to generate and analyse data	Uses both the qualitative and quantitative methods.	In-depth interviews and surveys
Axiology	Values and ethics of research	Combines both objectivity and subjectivity.	Objective and subjective as a result of the design and methods

Source: Adopted from Creswell & Plano-Clark (2018).

Pragmatism suggests the use of diverse theories and methods and the collection of data from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Leavy, 2022; Morgan, 2022). Hence, it does not adhere to a particular set of rules or theories. Moreover, the researcher values what works in the context of a particular research question and focuses on the outcomes of action; as such, theories are considered for their usefulness in a particular context (Morgan, 2013;2022). The nature of the primary research question and the subsequent secondary questions for this study suggests and deems that a pragmatic paradigm is relevant to follow, as it is problem-centred. In addition, the study addresses the observation that the researcher made in the real world and through secondary data sources relating to entrepreneurs' marketing challenges among a myriad of problems that have been documented. Although not explicitly stated in previous studies, Tashakkori, Teddie and Teddlie (1998), who are considered leaders in the field of pragmatism, posit that the paradigm supports the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, placing the research question(s) at the centre of inquiry and relating all methodological decisions to the research question(s).

The current research employs the sequential exploratory mixed-methods design and, as such, renders it to be guided by the pragmatist paradigm. The research, therefore, follows the qualitative and quantitative research approach to explore the phenomenon of brand communication to develop a brand communication management model for SMMEs in South African townships. The current study is concerned with understanding the brand communication management practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships from the perspective of the owners of the enterprises and their consumers and clients, to assist in developing an informed brand communication management model for SMMEs that is practical. This was achieved through the collection of qualitative data by conducting interviews with the owners of the SMMEs. The results of the analysis informed the development of the quantitative data collection instrument, and the research questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the consumers and clients of the SMMEs under study. Once the data were analysed, the results from both methods were compared and then used to inform the development of the model, which was shared with the SMMEs. Consequently, triangulation occurred, which is used for the purpose of increasing the credibility of this study, therefore, enhancing the model being developed, as Hussein (2009) posits that it is the use of multiple methods in studying the same phenomenon of the study. Therefore, this paradigm aligns itself to a specific research approach or method.

5.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The research approach for this study is a qualitatively driven inquiry.

5.3.1 Qualitatively driven inquiry

The study follows a mixed-methods methodology and follows a qualitatively driven approach. Hesse-Biber and Johnson (2015) assert that this approach encompasses several theoretical traditions. The common core assumption is that social reality is constructed and subjective meaning is critical in knowledge building. As Hesse-Biber and Johnson (2015) explain, there are theoretical variations among qualitatively driven approaches, and different theorists categorise them in various ways. Table 5.2 depicts the three-category cluster of variations in qualitative research approaches.

Table 5.2: Three-category cluster variations in the qualitative research approach

VARIATION	*EXPLANATION*
Constructivist or interpretive approach	Assumes social reality is subjective, consists of narratives or meanings constructed or co-constructed by individuals and others within a specific social context.
Critical theory	It is concerned with how power and ideology create dominant understandings of social reality.
Feminist perspective	It is centred on knowledge building by focusing on lived experiences of women and other marginalised groups to access and highlight subjugated knowledge.

Source: Denzin and Lincoln (1998).

Table 5.3 depicts the research approach focusing on key research dimensions. A qualitatively driven approach to mixed-methods is characterised by giving the qualitative approach a privilege of being the core, and the quantitative approach and methods playing a secondary role in the mixed-methods design (Hessen-Biber & Johnson, 2015). Within a qualitatively driven mixed-methods study, the core method is qualitative and Ivankova and Plano-Clark (2018) suggest that such be notated and depicted in all caps (QUAL), and the quantitative component is depicted in lowercase letters (quan).

Table 5.3: Difference between a qualitatively and quantitatively driven approach

	Qualitatively driven	***Quantitatively driven***
Ontology: What is the nature of reality?	Social reality is multiple	There is a concrete social world "out there"
Epistemology: What can we know and who can know?	Goal is to understand multiple subjectivities. Individuals are the "experts." Through intersubjectivity, we understand human behaviours. There is no definitive subject–object split in knowledge-building.	Goal is to ascertain "the truth" to predict and even uncover "laws" of human behaviour through objective social inquiry. Scientists are the experts.
Types of questions	The purpose of this research is to understand (what, how, and why).	Statement of relationship between independent and dependent variable. Question phrased in terms of a hypothesis.
Type of data collected	Naturalistic settings: Participant observation (fieldwork), in-depth interviews, focus groups. Unobtrusive data: Documents	Surveys, experiments: Randomised controlled trials, systematic reviews/meta-analyses.
Type of analysis	Inductive: Goal is to generate theory. Looks for general themes/patterns in the data. Uses "thick description". Compares and contrasts thematic data. Specific types of analyses examples: Grounded theory, narrative analysis.	Deductive: Test out hypothesis. Explain variation in the independent variables by controlling the dependent variables. Stress is on statistical measurement.
Goal	Understand a "process".	Generalise, predict, and control research outcomes.

Source: Hesse-Biber and Johnson (2015).

Within a qualitatively driven mixed-methods approach, there remain contested areas with regard to whether the secondary component in fact can form a separate study by itself. Some mixed-methods researchers note that engaging in a qualitatively driven design means that the secondary component cannot stand on its own as a separate study (Morse, 2003, 2010; Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

The preceding discussions focused on the research approach to mixed-methods research. The research design is now discussed in the following section.

5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is an overall research strategy that is undertaken to integrate the components of the study in a coherent, cohesive and logical manner (Lune & Berg, 2017).

Before discussing the research design for the current study, it is important that the different types of approches are highlighted. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are three main types of research approaches: qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research approaches. Table 5.4 highlights the three main research approaches, showing the different design under each approach.

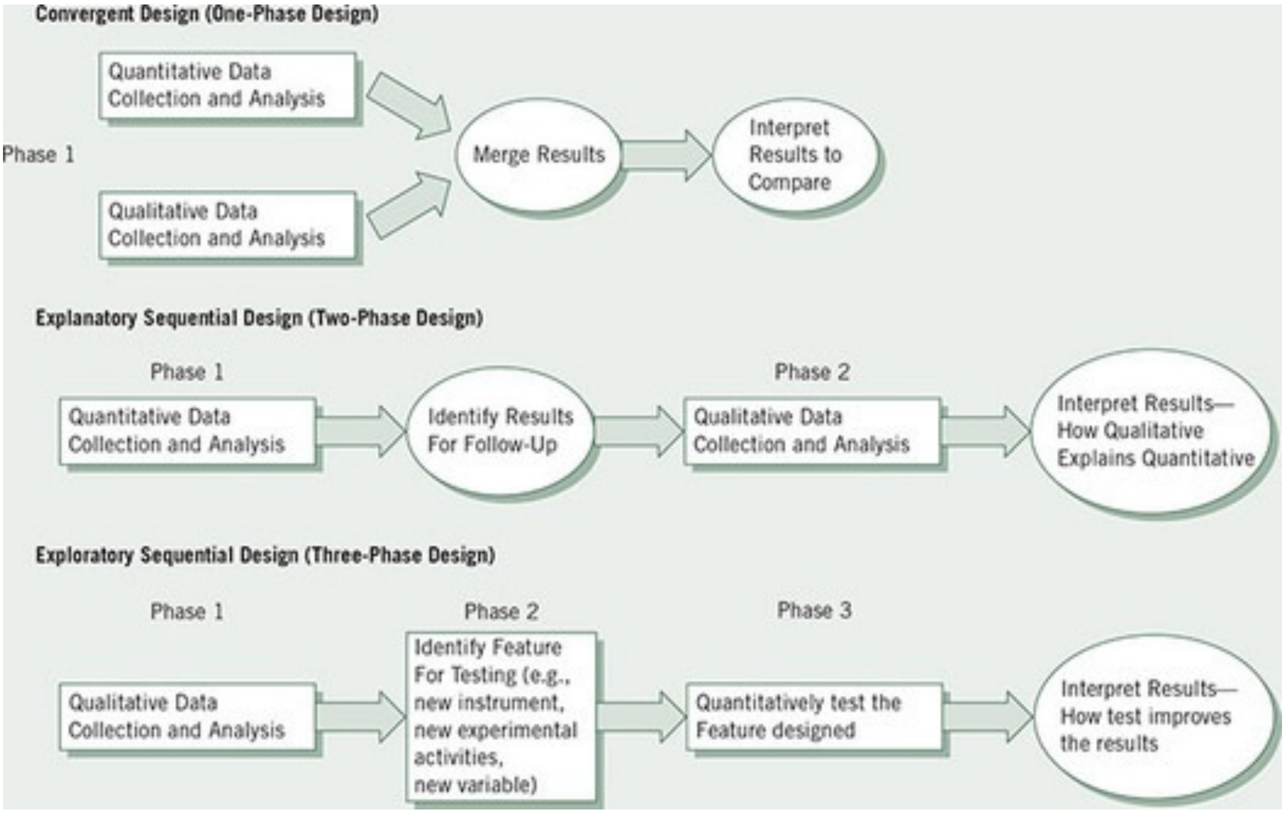
Table 5.4: The main research approaches

APPROACHES	***RESEARCH DESIGN (METHODS)***
QUANTITATIVE	Experimental design Non-experimental design Longitudinal design
QUALITATIVE	Narrative research Phenomenology Grounded theory Ethnography Case study
MIXED-METHODS	Convergent, exploratory sequential, explanatory sequential, and complex designs with embedded core designs

Source: Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Table 5.4 suggests that, in accordance with Creswell and Creswell's (2018) classification, this study follows the mixed-methods approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) propose various typologies of mixed-methods designs. Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Leavy (2022) propose that there are three primary types of mixed-methods research designs: sequential, convergent and nested. These designs are depicted in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Three core mixed-methods design



Source: Creswell and Creswell (2018).

However, both Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Leavy (2018) emphasise comprehensive designs. The designs are depicted in Table 5.5, which is an elaboration of mixed-methods approaches that are shown in Table 5.4. A typology serves several purposes, including guiding practice, legitimising the field, generating new possibilities and serving as a useful pedagogical tool (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Table 5.5: Mixed-methods designs

Design	***Procedure***	***Type of integration***
Explanatory sequential	Quantitative method is followed by qualitative method in order to explain the quantitative findings.	Explaining the data
Exploratory sequential	Explore a topic with a qualitative method and use the findings to develop and implement a quantitative instrument.	Building the data
Convergent or concurrent	Quantitative and qualitative data are collected (simultaneously if concurrent), and the data are brought together and compared.	Merging the data
Qualitative nested in quantitative	A secondary qualitative component is nested within the primary quantitative design.	Embedding the data
Quantitative nested in qualitative	A secondary quantitative component is nested within the primary qualitative design.	Embedding the data

Source: Leavy (2018).

Based on Table 5.5, this research followed the *sequential exploratory mixed-methods design,* since the first phase of data collection was qualitative, followed by the quantitative phase, to test the initial qualitative data. This was done to develop a comprehensive SMME brand communication management model that considered perspectives from SMME owners and their consumers and clients. The results of qualitative data collected from the owners of the SMMEs were used in the development of a research instrument to collect quantitative data from their consumers and clients in the form of their perceptions of the phenomena. Johnson and Christensen (2017) constructed the mixed-methods design matrix, which Creswell and Creswell (2018) termed the mixed-methods notation.

Table 5.6: Mixed-methods notation

Notation	What It Indicates	Example	Citation Establishing Notation
Uppercase letters	Greater emphasis given to a method	QUAN, QUAL	Morse (1991)
Lowercase letters	Lesser emphasis given to a method	quan, qual	Morse (1991)
+	Convergent methods	QUAN + QUAL	Morse (1991)
→	Sequential methods	QUAL→quan	Morse (1991)
( )	Embed within a design or framework	QUAN(qual)	Plano Clark (2005)
→←	Recursive	QUAL→←QUAN	Nastasi et al. (2007)
[ ]	Study within a series	QUAL → [QUAN + qual]	Morse & Niehaus (2009)

Source: Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Mixed-methods notation, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018), provides shorthand labels and symbols that are used in the methods to convey important aspects of research and provide a manner in which mixed-methods researchers can easily communicate their procedures. Morse (1991) was the first researcher to develop the notation; thereafter, academic writers such as Tashakkori *et al*. (1998) and Plano Clark (2005) compiled information on the notations. Table 5.6 depicts the mixed-methods notation as they have been chronologically documented by scholars such as Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Leavy (2018).

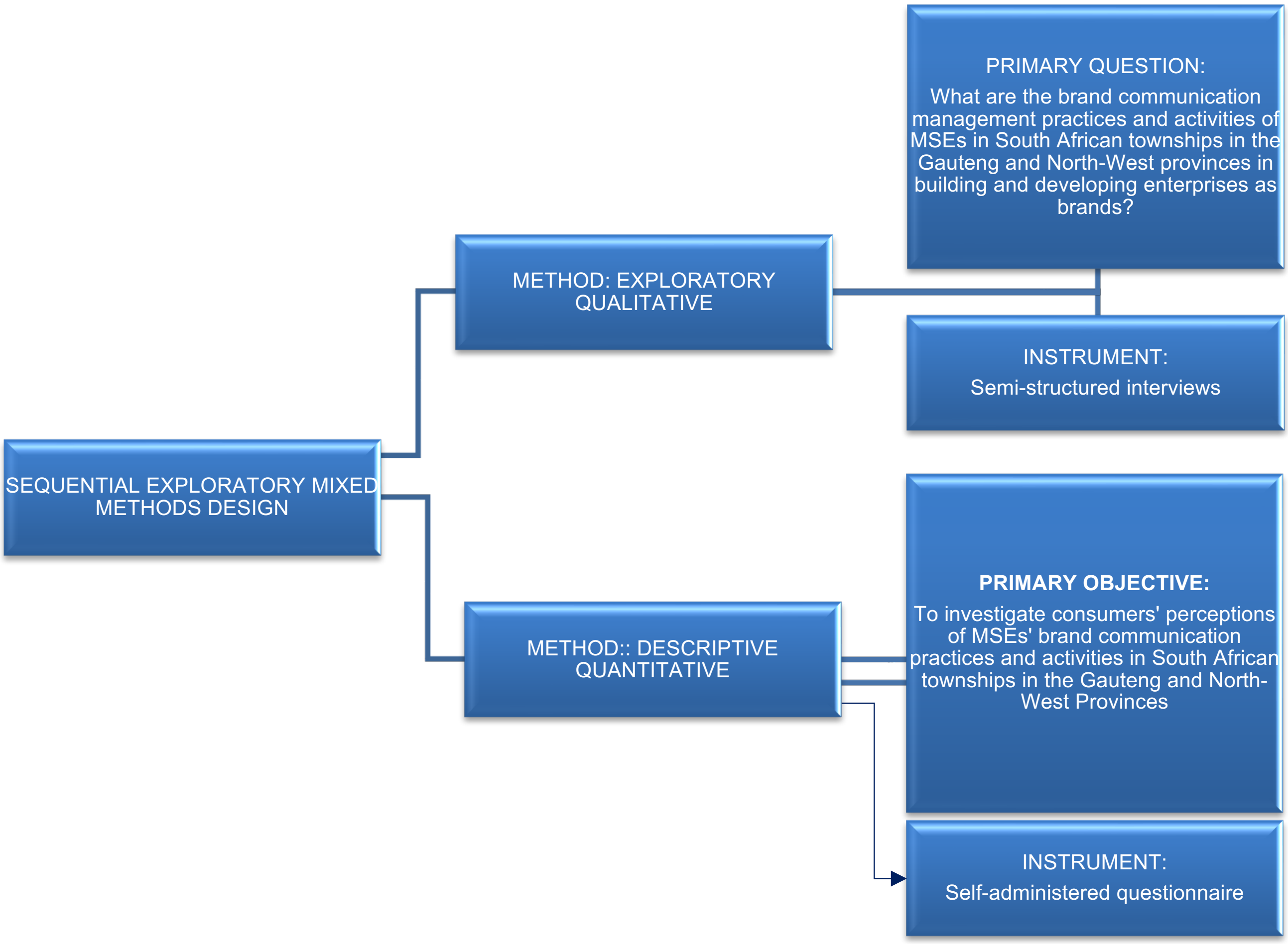
The current study follows the **QUAL → quan** (qualitatively driven sequential design) design, as qualitative data are key. Hesse-Biber and Johnson (2015) had earlier suggested qualitatively driven mixed-methods templates and argued that these designs are meant to answer core, qualitatively driven research questions, with the quantitative component (quan) taking on a secondary role in mixed-methods designs assisting the qualitatively driven component's research goals. The research design for the current research is, therefore, discussed in detail in the subsequent section.

5.4.1 Rationale for the research design

A single method of shedding light on a phenomenon is usually not adequate to facilitate a deeper understanding. Since the study aims to understand SMME brand communication practices and activities to enable the researcher to develop a brand communication management model for SMMEs in South African townships, a qualitative or a quantitative method alone was not considered adequate. A holistic approach was employed to understand the phenomenon of brand communication in the context of this study to gather data from both SMME owners and their enterprise consumers and clients to gain more insight into the problem and develop a credible and valid model. Moreover, Creswell and Creswell (2018) posit that, with mixing data, the researcher might have considered the strength of both data sets to develop a stronger understanding of the research problem or questions. Consequently, this allowed for the elaboration of multiple interpretations based on both the data sets explored. In addition, the mixed-methods design allows for validating qualitative with quantitative findings to develop a comprehensive model that factored the consumer, client and micro and small enterprise owners' perspectives respectively. Therefore, the mixed- methods research design was deemed appropriate for the current research.

Figure 5.3 depicts the research design and methods relevant for the current research. The research design is informed and aligned with the research philosophy and paradigms in social sciences.

Figure 5.3: Research design for the study



Source: Own conceptualisation.

5.4.2 Sequential exploratory research design

In this research, a *sequential exploratory mixed-method design* was followed, hence an integrated research design that comprises elements of both qualitative and quantitative research was included. The approach explored individual groups or entities in depth. The two individual groups that were of interest for this study are micro and small enterprise owners and the consumers and clients that consume and use their products and services. A combination approach is often the way to sufficiently comprehend human beings in their full complexity. A single approach is restricted to exploring phenomena in social science (Babbie, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A sequential exploratory mixed-method design is said to consist of three phases. Creswell and Creswell (2018) aver that this research design is used when a researcher first explores research by collecting qualitative data and its analysis to develop constructs for a research instrument to collect quantitative data. The current research developed a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire based on the themes derived from the qualitative data analysis, and thereafter subjected the research instrument to validity and reliability testing. The research instrument was then used to collect quantitative data from individuals who purchase and use services and products offered by the micro and small enterprises in South African townships. The researcher employed a three-phase procedure, with the first phase being exploratory in nature, the second phase being concerned with data collection research instrument development and the third phase involving the administration and testing of the instrument to a sample of a population that included the consumers and clients of the micro and small enterprises under study.

The social phenomenon in the context of this study is SMME brand communication, with the motivation being that SMMEs are engaged in unintended, unconventional and unstructured brand communication practices and activities. The sequential exploratory mixed method rigorously described the phenomenon and provided a deeper understanding within specific circumstances that the SMMEs in the two sectors engage in brand communication practices and activities. The aim of the sequential exploratory mixed method was to represent SMME brand communication practices and activities authentically by collecting information from owners, their consumers and clients. The first phase of the research design was qualitative in nature, followed by the quantitative phase. Quantitative research is deductive as it sets to accept or reject existing theories and models and is centred on relationships between the constructs and variables under study. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is inductive in nature, as its primary focus is generating meaning for knowledge building and contribution.

Qualitative research focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings and involves studying them in all their complexity, aiming to portray the issue in its multifaceted form (Johnson, Adkins & Chauvin, 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Mohajan, 2018). According to Neuman (2014), the qualitative approach captures and discovers the meaning of a phenomenon once the researcher becomes immersed in the data. Qualitative research involves the study, use and collection of a variety of empirical materials, exploratory sequential mixed-methods, documents, personal experience, introspective, life story interviews, and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Leavy, 2022; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Qualitative research aims at ascertaining patterns after a close observation and an engaged analysis of the research topic (Johnson *et al*., 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Creswell and Creswell (2018) concur, asserting that qualitative researchers collect data by examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants. In the context of this research, the researcher collected primary data from participants through interviews and thereafter developed a data collection instrument based on the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interviews. Therefore, the researcher immersed herself in the data through the transcription of the data collected from the interview to discover what brand communication practices and activities SMMEs are involved in, to enable the development of a model for SMMEs in South African townships. In the process of the interviews, it is assumed that SMME owners will provide stories about their enterprises, which will provide patterns in the analysis of data and the topic. Boyle (2003) and Hlatshwayo (2015) concur, suggesting that SMMEs need to consider an unconventional approach to branding, developing and building strong brands.

Quantitative research in general terms, is conducted to address questions regarding relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena that will be generalised to other persons and places (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; 2013). The current research addresses the research objectives and relationships among the measured variables to explain the perceptions of customers and clients of SMMEs in South African townships regarding brand communication phenomena. Quantitative research is concerned with the collection and analysis of numerical data and the application of statistical tests (Collis & Hussey, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Furthermore, quantitative research relates to investigations carried out on problems and addresses the testing of theories, which consists of variables. The adoption of quantitative research methodology by researchers means that the data concerned will be measured numerically and analysed using well-established statistical methods. Quantitative research methodology is often adopted to establish the validity of theoretical generalisations or propositions as it exists in social science and/or business studies literatures (Creswell, 1994; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The sequential design is said to be based on time order, as either the qualitative or quantitative data collection phase precedes the other (Leavy, 2018). The qualitative data collection led to the quantitative data collection in this research. The two types of sequential designs are exploratory and explanatory. The explanatory sequential design begins with qualitative methods, which are followed by qualitative methods. The exploratory sequential design, on the other hand, starts by exploring a topic through qualitative methods and thereafter using the findings to develop a quantitative instrument (Creswell, 2015; Leavy, 2018). The sequential design that the research followed was, therefore, exploratory in nature. Creswell (2015) posits that the approach is commonly used when the topic or population of interest is under-researched. The time sequence for the exploratory design is denoted as follows:
QUAL → quan design

Convergent or concurrent designs involve the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, analysing and integrating both datasets to cross validate the findings (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018, Younas, Pedersen & Durante, 2020), which is not the case with this research. With the nested design, one method is used as the primary method, the secondary method is used to collect additional data, and the primary method is the quantitative component of the design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Guetterman & Fetters, 2018, Ivankova & Plano-Clark, 2018). The primary method for this research is qualitative, and as such, the nested design is considered inappropriate for the research.

In mixed-methods research design, integration is a key feature (Bazeley, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Integration of the dataset for the current research builds the data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Fetters, Curry & Creswell, 2013; Younas *et al.*, 2020), as the qualitative findings have been used to build the quantitative phase of the study through the development of a research instrument that guides data collection for the quantitative phase.

5.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodologies are informed by the research design (Alavi, Archibald, McMaster, Lopez and Cleary, 2018; Coy, 2019), therefore, they are procedures that are used to collect and analyse data. A significant number of scholars (Azize, Cemal & Hakan, 2012; Budac & Baltador, 2014; Centeno & Hart, 2012; Chinomona, 2016; Odoom, 2016) who conducted research on SMEs and SMMEs in various aspects of their marketing and business management disciplines, from social sciences research, have mainly used qualitative research methods to understand the phenomena that they were researching. This, therefore, informed and substantiated the direction of the current research. In addition, the quantitative choice of the current research was informed similarly by the scholars who have researched consumer behaviour in relation to the constructs and concepts adopted in the current research. However, most importantly, the research paradigm of this study guided the choice of mixing of data. Moreover, the study emphasises the African experience, particularly the South African township, in the creation of meanings.

There were two phases in the data collection of this research. Phase one dealt with the qualitative methods and phase three with the quantitative methods. The discussions, therefore, followed the sequential flow of the data collection process concerning the research. As discussed in Section 5.5, the sequential mixed-methods design is as follows:

- **QUAL → quan design (qualitatively driven sequential design)**.

The discussions that follow have been structured into three phases, addressing each phase separately in the chronological order in which they were followed.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) assert that the data collection procedures consist of several interconnected steps: sampling, gaining permission and recruiting participants, identifying data sources, recording the data, and administering the data collection procedures. Additionally, in mixed-methods research, data collection needs to proceed along two strands, that is, qualitative and quantitative strands. Each strand must be conducted with rigorous approaches.

The data collection for this study occurred at two points of the design, whereby the initial phase saw qualitative data collection and the testing of the quantitative feature in the third phase of the study. The qualitative phase assisted in developing the quantitative features in the second phase, which was characterised by developing a research instrument to collect quantitative data in the third phase of data collection. The three phases are discussed in detail relating to data collection.

5.5.1 Qualitative methods: Phase one

Qualitative research is concerned with studying diverse materials that explain and provide an understanding of what is being studied (Johnson *et al*., 2020).

5.5.1.1 Population and sample

A population is a specified group of human beings or non-human entities, such as objects, educational institutions, time units, and geographical areas, that have similar characteristics and features and are the main focus of research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The population for the qualitative phase of this research is the owners of SMMEs in South African townships. These are owners of enterprises that provide fast food and offer beauty and hair salons services. According to SEDA (2020) estimates, there are over 2.6 million SMMEs of which 1. 748 031 (66.9%) are classified as informal while 755 265 (28.9%) were classified as formal. Attempts were made to access the list of SMMEs from the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), which has protocols to observe, including the POPI Act, and was willing to assist. However, owing to time constraints and the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher resolved to outsource the services, which meant that the company fieldworker would recruit the population conveniently in line with the characteristics of the target population.

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) postulate that qualitative researchers draw data from various sources, not necessarily from people but also objects, text materials and audio-visuals and electronic records. The specific entities selected for analysis comprise the sample. The selection of the sample depends on the research question(s) to be answered. With a sequential exploratory research design, the samples are ideally drawn from the same study population; however, that is not mandatory (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Leavy, 2018). The current study drew samples from different populations of interest; henceforth, the sample for qualitative data and quantitative data are different and are discussed in each phase of the research data collection. The sample for this phase of the research was the SMME owners of fast food and beauty and hair salon enterprises in South African townships. These are both formal and informal enterprises. Furthermore, they are owners who live and operate their enterprises in the townships of Gauteng and the North-West provinces, respectively.

5.5.1.2 Sample size

King, Horrocks and Brooks (2018), Islam, Khan and Baikady (2022) and Leedy and Ormrod (2013) argue that interviews can yield a great deal of useful information and can ask questions about facts, feelings, motives, present and past behaviour, standard behaviour and conscious reasons for actions or feelings. This was relevant for the current research, as it sought to develop a brand communication management model for SMMEs in South African townships. The questions that were asked during the interview reflected what Leedy and Ormrod (2013) assert as useful information that can be gathered during the interviews. In addition, the information gathered during the interviews obtained not only the facts, feelings, behaviours and reasons from the SMME owners' perspective, but also obtained advice on and directed the development of the research measurement instrument, which was used to collect quantitative data from the customers and clients of the enterprises.

Against this background, phenomenology refers to an individual's perception of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event, as it exists external to the person (Scott, 2022; Turquet, 2019). A phenomenological study is, therefore, research that seeks to understand people's perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). The sample size for qualitative research in general, varies from five to 24 interviews with individuals, who have had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied (Constantinou, Georgiou & Perdikogianni, 2017; Hennink, Kaiser & Marconi, 2017). There is contestation in research about the sample size for saturation as scholars indicated that most studies substantiate it superficially (Hennink, Kaiser & Weber, 2019; Hennink & Kaiser, 2021). Phenomenological researchers, therefore, may depend on interviews with a small, carefully selected sample of participants.

The sample for the qualitative research comprised a total of 16 MSE owners. The owners were categorised according to the fast food, beauty and hair salon services. Therefore, a total of eight fast food MSE owners were interviewed, and the same applied to the beauty and hair salon services owners. From each province, four fast food MSE owners were interviewed. The same quotas were applied with beauty and hair salon MSE enterprise owners. Razeghi, Roosta, Alemtabrizv and Gharache (2014) conducted a study that focused on the role of the corporate brand in the entrepreneurial SMMEs' total brand, and the sample size comprised six entrepreneurial businesses and a focus group consisting of ten entrepreneur owner managers. Therefore, the sample size for the current research was sufficient.

5.5.1.3 Sampling design (method)

The sampling design for this phase is multistage clustering. Babbie (2015) argues that cluster sampling is ideal when the researcher has difficulty in compiling a list of elements composing the population. Since the characteristics of the population of this study were known, stratification of the sample would therefore be ideal to selecting the sample. Creswell and Creswell (2018) however, aver that stratification means that there are specific characteristics of individuals. The qualitative strand of this research focus is on selecting the population based on the type of the enterprise. Individuals in this case are the enterprises, that are represented in the sample and are reflected in the population with specific characteristics. The population was divided into quotas according to the type of enterprise, the products and services they provide and their geographical location (see Appendix C p.459) for the criteria used. Quota sampling was used for the qualitative phase to achieve the overarching objective of sampling. There are various sampling techniques, the broad categories being probability and non-probability techniques. Table 5.7 depicts the sampling techniques and their descriptions.

Table 5.7: Types of probability and nonprobability sampling techniques

PROBABILITY SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	*DESCRIPTION*
Simple random sampling	Each element of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected as part of the sample.
Stratified random sampling	The population is divided into subgroups of mutual characteristics and a simple random sample is chosen from each subgroup.
Cluster sampling	The population is divided into subgroups of mutual characteristics and a simple random sample is chosen from subgroups. Often associated with area sampling.
Systematic sampling	Random selection of a digit (n) and then selection of sample element at every n the interval depending on population size and the required sample size.
NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	***DESCRIPTION***
Convenience sampling	Any process when researcher selects sample elements quick and easy.
Judgement sampling	The sample depends on the experience, skill, knowledge and insight from one choosing the sample to provide accurate information.
Quota sampling	The population is divided and assigned appropriate quotas based on prior knowledge and understanding of characteristics. Quota categories usually involve age, gender and occupation.

Source: Langer (2018).

Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, *et al*. (2014) account for the fact that the lack of transparency that is occasionally a feature of qualitative research is predominantly apparent in relation to sampling. The sample for qualitative data was selected based on the incorporation of appropriate proportions of each subgroup within the overall group of people or objects (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). A non-probability sampling technique called quota sampling was employed. However, the non-probability quota sampling technique is said to draw a sample that reflects the population in terms of varying categories such as gender, age and socio-economic groups (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2022). Bell *et al*. (2022) posit that there are practitioners who suggest that the sampling technique is similar to probability sampling. Accordingly, in the case of this research, the quotas were identified according to the type of enterprise, that is the fast food and the hair and beauty salon SMMEs who fall within the broader SMMEs in South Africa.

5.5.1.4 Data collection

The first data collection stage of this research is classified as exploratory. The qualitative data that were collected in this phase of the research. These qualitative data were collected from the owners of SMMEs in the two sectors of interest. The underpinning motivation for collecting qualitative data was to explore the SMMEs' brand management practices and activities used in building and developing the enterprises as brands. The explorative nature of the data was based on exploring the brand communication practices and activities that the SMMEs are currently using.

Pretesting: A pilot interview was conducted with two SMME owners from the Gauteng and North-West Provinces. The fast food owner is based in North-West Province, while the hair and beauty owner operates in the Gauteng Province. The interview with the owner of the fast food outlet in the North-West Province was conducted online on Microsoft Teams, owing to COVID-19 regulations and levels that were constantly being revised according to the development of the virus, which restricted movements in regions and provinces. The interview with the owner of the hair and beauty salon was conducted in person, as he had no access to Microsoft Teams or Google Meets. More importantly, pre-testing was performed to check whether the questions were not ambiguous, and to check the length and duration estimates of the interviews. During the pre-test, it emerged that the enterprise owners use customer service and social media technologies in their brand communication practices and activities to build and develop their enterprises as brands. There was a concern about the brand identity question that they deemed to be difficult; however, at the end of the interviews, the participants indicated that the questions and conversation made them reflect on their brand communication practices, activities and experiences. One owner said:

> "*I think it is very informative. As I said, it is probing questions that also taps into what the SMMEs should truly be looking at. It is very interesting. I feel like every SMME should be looking at this. I feel like my business partner should have been here because my eyes are opened to a lot of things that we overlook because we just want to render a service and so forth which is very important. I would say, questions were answered, but I have also learnt quite a lot from this. The questions are truly great!*".

Therefore, the final interview guide was amended based on the observation, practices and activities that emerged and feedback from the two participants.

Refining of the interview guide: Refining the interview guide is crucial in qualitative research in that I as the researcher must ensure that the guide answers the research questions and is practical. In the same vein, Majid, Othman, Mohamad, Lim and Yusof (2017) concur with Olson (2016) that with qualitative research, the interview questions are at the core of interviewing. In addition, interview piloting is fundamental to test the questions and to gain some practice in interviewing. Although piloting, that is, pretesting, is associated with quantitative research, it is also relevant to qualitative research. Therefore, my promoter Prof de Beer and Dr Makgopa, who is a researcher who specialises in mixed-methods studies, reviewed the interview questions as peers and scholars. Pre-testing of the interview questions ensured that participants were not led during the interview, as this could introduce researcher bias. This was addressed through the adjustment of the interview questions. Accordingly, Harding (2013) points out that piloting is fundamental prior to embarking on the actual data collection (See Appendix F p. 463 for the draft interview guide and the final guide).

Data collection: Interviews: Denzin and Lincoln (2018) accentuate that interviews are employed in many disciplines. Qualitative research aims at ascertaining patterns after a close observation and an engaged analysis of the research topic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). In the same vein, Creswell and Creswell (2018) concur that qualitative researchers collect data by examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants. In this study, qualitative data were collected through open-ended questions and structured interviews. The questions were predetermined in line with the research objectives of the study. The advantage of structured interviews is that questions are asked in the same order so that responses can easily be placed in similar categories, and they allow for the researcher to probe and request clarification of answers (Creswell, 2014). Structured interviews are also called patterned, planned or standardised interviews.

In the context of this research, a fieldworker was appointed to interview the participants. The motivation for considering this option is that the fieldworker works for a data collection company that is experienced in the field. The relevant documents that were e-mailed to the fieldworker prior to our online meeting included the consent form, confidentiality forms, interview guide and COVID-19 guidelines to help her prepare for the questions for clarity during the brief session. There were online meetings with the fieldworker to brief her about the protocol to follow in the field. This also entailed going through the interview guide and agreement on the updating and monitoring processes. The fieldworker made arrangements with her staff members of the communities in the targeted townships to pre-approach the SMME owners and seek permission to see them regarding research and make arrangements for interviews. Before the interviews began, the fieldworker had to discuss the consent form with the participants. The consent form contained the descriptions of the objectives of the research, confidentiality and anonymity clauses, assurance of protection of privacy, the prerogative to choose to stop participating at any time and the data production method. Furthermore, the participants were afforded opportunities to ask questions. There were daily and weekly updates; however, weekly updates were consistent with the daily updates because some of the interviews had to be conducted late at night owing to the nature of the businesses. The fieldworker collected primary data from participants through the in-depth interviews that were semi-structured, as they allowed for the interviewer to probe and uncover deeper and rich data about the enterprises. A recording device was used to record the conversations, and interviews and field notes were made. The recorded interviews, transcribed interviews, signed consent forms, permission letters and confidentiality forms were received from the fieldworker through Google workspace shareholder that is password protected.

Location and transcription of interviews: Data were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed by the service provider. Once I received the transcriptions back from the transcriber, I listened to the audio and compared the original recordings to confirm accuracy. I then made notes and observed inaudible data from the transcription.

Field notes: Field notes have been a predominant component of qualitative research since the early 1900s, and they were conceptualised in the field of ethnographic anthropology. However, they are now considered fundamental components of rigorous qualitative research (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). The fieldworker documented field notes during and after each interview. The fieldnotes were documented when the fieldworker recorded the interviews.

5.5.1.5 Data analysis

This section outlines the process followed in processing and analysing data for this study during the qualitative phase. Data analysis is concerned with reasoning to understand the data gathered for the study.

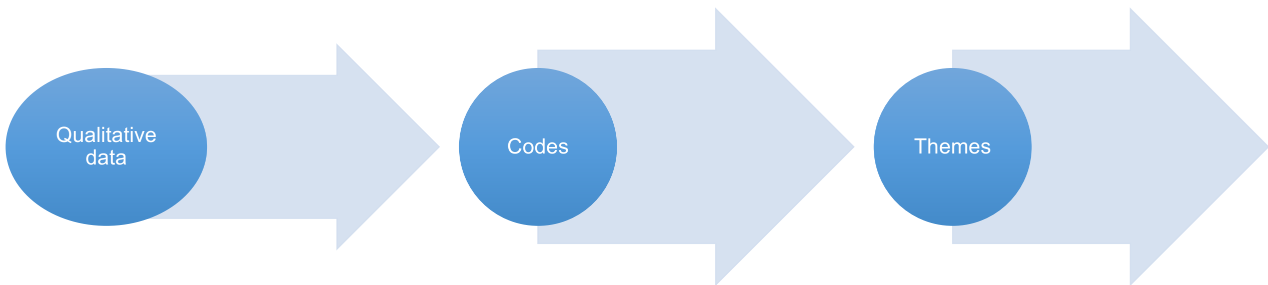
Data preparation: Data preparation focused on listening to the transcribed interviews, which were categorised by their province and type of business. Then, the transcribed interviews were saved in folders assigned to each province and the type of enterprise within each folder. The data were preliminarily coded in a memo while listening to the interviews and were marked according to the enterprise to obtain a feel for the data.

Memoing: Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that a researcher's role is important in research. As qualitative research is interpretive, there are strategic, ethical and personal issues that present themselves in the process. Therefore, reflexive thinking was incorporated into this research, which was done through writing memos. Memoing is basically recording reflective notes about the data and is considered to contribute to the credibility of research. Moreover, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) concur that memos are one of the most useful and powerful sense-making tools for researchers. Memoing promoted the tracking of the research progress and to note ideas regarding associations and relations within the data, particularly within each transcript. After each interview, I engaged myself in the data, playing back the recordings of the interviews and comparing them with the transcript. During this process, I somewhat started analysing and interpreting the data and stating the potential themes. In addition, I recorded ideas that came to mind, looking for themes that I deemed fundamental for the current research. Therefore, memoing was relevant when analysing data and making notes throughout the process. A memo was compiled in a journal dedicated to the research study, and descriptive summaries of data were documented. Furthermore, an attempt to synthesise data into a critical level analytic meaning was made. These served as first draft self-reports about the brand communication practices and activities that the owners pointed out in their responses and served as the basis for a more detailed and final report. The thoughts that occurred throughout the transcribed data interviews were jotted down and served as a reference in the process of analysing the reporting of the results.

Thematic coding: Qualitative data editing and coding assessed interviewer and participant error. These were errors that occurred when the researcher interviewed the interviewees, that is, the SMME owners. Coding was performed by labelling and organising qualitative data to identify the different themes that emerged from data that were collected from participants and the relationships between the themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Saldaña, 2021). Themes are patterns that are important to the phenomena being researched. Coding entailed interpreting and classifying responses so that they could be assigned colour codes during data analysis.

Thematic analysis: Braun and Clarke (2012), Creswell and Hirose (2019) and Saldaña, (2021) buttress that thematic analysis is a method that is employed to systematically identify, organise and offer insight into patterns of themes throughout a dataset. The researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2012) cited two main reasons for using thematic analysis, namely, accessibility and flexibility. In addition, it is an analysis that is deemed ideal for researchers who are new to qualitative research. Figure 5.4 shows the synopsis thematic analysis process that was followed.

Figure 5.4: Thematic analysis process



Source: Own compilation.

The thematic approach that was used is inductive; this approach to data coding and analysis is a bottom-up approach and is driven by what is in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). ATLAS.ti version 8.4 was used for data analysis. Evers (2016), Reichertz (2016) and

Saldaña (2015) concur that the nature of qualitative data analysis acknowledges the challenge in relating vast data sets and bringing order to the data chaos. Since the exploratory questions were ontological and epistemological in nature, this meant that they captured the participants' reality and understanding of the phenomenon by answering what and how questions. I subjected the data to two cycles of coding. The first was descriptive coding, where I read each interview line by line to identify codes in line with the research questions. The second cycle involved sorting the codes by categorising them; and a memo was used to document and capture observations made in the process. Saldaña (2013) notes that there is no agreement among researchers about how detailed codes must be and the maximum codes to reach data saturation; however, suggestions were made that they should be from 25-300 codes per research project. Archer (2018), however, argues that reality suggests that it is not practical, as a thorough analysis of coding and the number of codes depends on the nature of a study and its requirements.

Coding and categorising of data yielded a total of 480 codes that were colour coded according to the research questions. Then, the codes were merged according to the colour codes because they carried similar, if not the same, meanings, that ended with 83 codes. Thereafter, themes were generated based on the relationships, code frequencies and underlying meaning across codes; therefore, categorisation was performed. Thematic analysis methods assisted me in describing patterns across the data in an endeavour to understand the participants' experiences of reality in detail and advise the development of a research instrument. From the categories, the themes were then labelled. Thereafter, the analysed data were structured to enable interpretation of emerging concepts and explanation of data.

In acknowledging personal bias, myself the researcher and my personal beliefs and attitudes are inclined to influence my observations and interpretations of data. This is the case as the reason for researching the phenomena from the SMME and consumer perspectives is as a result of growing up in one of the South African townships and having observed how they have conducted their enterprises over the years. This led me to believe that they too have the potential to take advantage of branding and, in particular, brand communication similar to corporations, however, innovatively considering their financial constraints. Feedback from others is important for the current research, more so, since I am not familiar with qualitative research. Moreover, the opinions of my promoter Prof de Beer and Dr Pohl, who have a wealth of experience in qualitative research, contributed towards validation of methods, findings and conclusions.

Ethical issues: Leavy (2017) posits that the ethical substructures of research contain the philosophical, praxis and reflexibility dimensions. These dimensions ask the following questions:

- The philosophical dimension of ethics, which is based on the researcher's values system, addresses the question "What do you believe?" The historical developments in South Africa influenced the belief I brought to this research, highlighting the formation of South African townships. Chapter 1, which is based on SMME contextualisation, forms part of what also shaped my belief. This covertly brings in social justice, in that it touches on emancipating and empowering the SMMEs in the townships to grow.
- The praxis dimension of ethics addresses the question "What do you do?" There was no harm to the participants. The research is in fact aimed at empowering their enterprises, as such, contributing to the economy of South Africa through job creation, and alleviating poverty and, most importantly, improving the profit margins of enterprises.
- Finally, the reflexivity dimension of ethics, which combines philosophical and praxis, addresses the question "How does power come to bear?" Since reflexibility is concerned with paying attention to how power in research influences my attitude and behaviour and the role it lays in shaping the research experience, I take cognisance of the fact that the participants are crucial in this research and I respect and value their contribution in terms of the data that they have provided, which is key in the success of the current research.

The questions bring forth the importance of highlighting fundamental ethical principles. Eddie (1994) suggests two of the most fundamental ethical principles applicable to research, which are beneficence and nonmaleficence, and they encompass the maxim 'above all, do no harm'. These principles, in addition to the University of Pretoria's scientific research standards and integrity, guided my conduct and consideration, and that of my fieldworker, during data collection.

The initial plan was to do walk-in interviews at the enterprise establishments to set up a date for the interviews with SMME owners. However, owing to the global pandemic, a letter was sent to the DSBD to request a list and contact details of the SMMEs in Gauteng and North-West Province (see Appendix A p.457) so that I could conduct telephone instead of face-to-face interviews. However, the department had security measures in place and required time to ultimately obtain approval. Since the government of South Africa reviewed the COVID-19 levels and owing to time constraints as a result of the pandemic national restriction, the data collection task had to be outsourced to an experienced company that specialised in providing the services, Taarifa Research Consultancy. The fieldworker from the company complied with the COVID-19 regulations (see Appendix E p.462) for the protocol document. The fieldworker signed a confidentiality form (see Appendix B, p.458) prior to collecting data. In addition, the fieldworker pre-recruited the participants, that is, the SMME owner, thereby building rapport with them. The SMME owners were given a permission letter to sign upon agreeing to participate in the research (see Appendix D p.461), and appointments were confirmed.

Informed consent is a crucial aspect of research ethics because my research dealt with humans. “Informed consent puts forward that participants have adequate information regarding the research, are capable of comprehending the information and have the power of free choice that enables them to consent to or decline participation in the research voluntarily” (Polit & Hungler, 1999). An informed consent form was given to participants prior to commencing with the interviews. In addition, the fieldworker took the participants through the consent form and emphasised the fact that they are not coerced or obligated to participate in the interview and should they feel uncomfortable at any stage of the interview, they have a right to withdraw from participation or seek clarity. For a copy of the informed consent form see Appendix G p.469.

Phenomenological interviews are a strategy for generating knowledge. As Fielding and Thomas (2001) argue, phenomenological research typically involves conversational techniques, with the unstructured interview identified as a valuable approach when collecting data on sensitive topics. Since the data that have been collected are not sensitive in nature, a structured interview was considered for the current research.

Measures of validity and reliability for trustworthiness: Qualitative research methodology has been criticised for lacking rigour, transparency, justification of data collection and analysis methods, hence the importance of the integrity of findings (Noble & Smith, 2015; Hadi & José Closs, 2016). Moreover, validity and reliability measures are important in scientific research, as Noble and Smith (2015) concur that assessing the reliability of study findings requires a researcher to make judgements about the "soundness" of the research in relation to the application and appropriateness of the methods undertaken and the integrity of the conclusions. This is the case as scientific research is there to answer questions and achieve objectives to contribute not only to the body of knowledge, but also among others to provide practical frameworks, guidelines and models. While quantitative research uses statistical methods for validity and reliability of the research, qualitative research establishes validity and reliability through the design and incorporation of methodological strategies as a measure of trustworthiness.

According to Noble and Smith (2015), strategies to ensure trustworthiness include:

- accounting for personal biases that may influence the research findings of a study;
- acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis;
- meticulous record keeping, demonstrating a clear decision trail, and ensuring interpretations of data are consistent and transparent;
- establishing a comparison case/seeking out similarities and differences across accounts to ensure that different perspectives are represented;
- including rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts to support findings;
- demonstrating clarity in terms of thought processes during data analysis and subsequent interpretations;
- engaging with other researchers to reduce research bias;

- respondent validation includes inviting participants to comment on the interview transcript and whether the final themes and concepts created, adequately reflect the phenomena being investigated; and
- data triangulation, whereby different methods and perspectives help produce a more comprehensive set of findings.

For measures of credibility in qualitative research, Noble and Smith (2015) argue that truth value, consistency, neutrality and applicability are crucial. *Truth value* acknowledges that there are multiple realities, which might be influenced by the personal experiences of the researcher, resulting in methodological bias (Kumar, 2018; McGinley, Wei, Zhang & Zheng, 2021). Although my personal experiences growing up in the townships led to the current study, research is conducted within the parameters of a scientific study, as my objective is for the study to benefit not only academia but also the SMME owners and their consumers, which then impacts the economy of South Africa. SMMEs have been documented to have contributed to poverty alleviation and job creation from both developing and developed economies. In addition, the contribution of the study is towards township economies.

Bell *et al*. (2022) discuss four trustworthiness criteria and highlight that they are corresponding to criteria in quantitative research. Mason (2017) also asserts that they were mainly developed in quantitative research. Truthworthiness criteria are as follows:

Credibility, also referred to as internal validity (Bell *et al*., 2022): refers to whether there are multiple observers, a team of researchers. There was a single observer for this study. However, the researcher ensured credibility through consistency, neutrality and triangulation. These aspects are discussed next:

- *Consistency* as a measure of credibility relates to trustworthiness with which methods are undertaken and are dependent on the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Daniel, 2018; Rose & Johnson, 2020). I undertake to be transparent and clear in my documentation and analysis of the data. This exercise is directed towards ensuring that other independent researchers might be able to arrive at similar or comparable findings.

- *Neutrality* in credibility suggests that a researcher must assume a strict neutral stance that is without possible form of bias as much as possible and that the findings must reflect the views of the participants (Brennen, 2021; Chivanga & Monyai, 2021; Noble & Smith, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2019).
- *Triangulation* was considered to establish credibility of the methods of data collection and analysis. The methods of data collection were semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires. Triangulation was achieved through the process of using the qualitative results and themes to develop a measurement instrument that was used to collect quantitative data.

Transferability, also referred to as external validity (Bell *et al*., 2022): generalisability is the degree to which generalisations can be made from the data and context of the research study to the broader population (Creswell, 2014). Transferability can, therefore, be understood to refer to whether the study can be replicated. Furthermore, transferability and applicability should be considered to determine whether the findings can be applied to other contexts, settings or groups of participants and respondents. I ensured this in the precision taken in data collection, documenting, analysis and reporting. The study has a potential to be replicated; however, that will dependend on other researchers, as the context of the study is SMMEs in South African townships.

Conformability, also referred to as objectivity (Bell *et al*., 2022): refers to whether the data analysis can be validated and understood by other researchers. The study augmented conformability by ensuring that the process was transparent. It linked the findings and interpretations to the data in a manner that are easily understood.

Dependability, also referred to as reliability (Bell *et al*., 2022): refers to the responsibility of ensuring that the research process was logical, documented and observable. The interviews and transcribed data were submitted to the institution, together with the thesis in line with the commitment made to the Ethics Committee and requirements as stipulated by the institution.

5.5.2 Measurement scale development: Phase two

This second phase of the research focused on developing a research instrument to collect quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis can be used to develop a research data collection instrument with good psychometric properties (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, for the second phase of this research, a research measurement instrument was developed from the analysis conducted during the first phase of the research. Tshilongamulenzhe (2015) posits that the process of developing a valid and reliable measure is parallel to that directed towards building and testing theories. However, it is important to build instruments that can be used for other theories. Qasim, Ahmad, Omar, Zulkifli and Bakar (2016), in their research, refer to the literature review analysis when developing the five dimensions for their study. For the current research, the literature reviewed and the analysed qualitative data, guided the development of the items for brand communication towards the research instrument that was used to collect data during the third phase of the research. The empirical results to establish psychometric principles are reported in Chapter 7 (EFA and CFA results). A questionnaire (or psychological test) is a set of standardised self-reported statements scored and aggregated to produce a composite score that is an indicator of a phenomenon (Singh Junnarkar & Kaur, 2016; Zumbo, Gelin & Hubley, 2002). The process followed in the development of the brand communication management scale is discussed next.

5.5.2.1 Item generation

The primary role of this task addresses content validity, which is viewed as the psychometric requirement for measurement adequacy. Content validity was factored into the measure through the process of developing items for the measurement scales. Stone (1978) and Almanasreh, Moles and Chen (2019) buttress that judgement must be exercised in validating a measure, as there is not necessarily an acceptable index of the content validity of psychological measures.

Two approaches to developing items were considered, namely deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach is also called logical partitioning, while the inductive approach is known as grouping (Boateng, Neilands, Frongillo, Melgar-Quiñonez & Young, 2018; Cramer-Petersen, Christensen, & Ahmed-Kristensen, 2019). The difference between the two approaches is that the deductive approach requires a researcher to have knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study and a comprehensive literature review to develop the theoretical definition of the constructs (Boateng *et al*., 2018; Cramer-Petersen *et al*., 2019). Conversely, the inductive approach is ideal when there is little theory, as researchers attempt to identify constructs. For this study, a deductive approach was considered, and the supervisor and statistician were considered experts who provided critical review of the process to develop the items. The conceptual definitions were grounded on theory. Therefore, there was a well-defined association between items and their theories.

5.5.2.2 Item development

During this stage, the correlation with other items was important, in that the items had to relate to the constructs (Clark & Watson, 2019; Robison, 2018). The researcher considered the population and sample that was studied. There were no negatively worded questions, and the number of items measuring a construct or subconstructs was considered. As Cronbach and Meehl (1955) suggest, adequate sampling and parsimony are fundamental in achieving content and construct validity. A scale had a minimum of three items, and both Likert-like and rating scales were used. The researcher attempted to keep scale lengths not too long or too short to avoid having too few items, which could compromise content and construct validity, internal consistency and reliability (Clark & Watson, 2019; Diemer, Frisby, Pinedo, Bardelli, Elliot, Harris, McAlister & Voight, 2022). On the other hand, scales with too many items have the potential to result in respondents' fatigue or response biases (Brace, 2018; Rodríguez-Ardura, & Meseguer-Artola, 2020).

The constructs, namely, brand elements, brand-building dimensions, brand-related capabilities, and market-related resources, in the brand communication scale were conceptualised and operationalised in line with the problem being investigated. The questionnaire is the result of the conceptualisation and problem statement and the purpose of the research. The constructs were included as scales with items addressing them. The analysis also confirmed that the constructs are unidimensional. Therefore, there were similar perceptions regarding the constructs. The components of the constructs were included in the respective sections, and the results showed a similar perspective across all components of these constructs.

Although the scales were long, it was established during pretesting that the respondents did not experience fatigue, and to address bias, the researcher and fieldworkers underscored the importance of providing a true reflection of their perceptions. It was considered that the scale generates sufficient variance among respondents; hence, a 5-point Likert-like scale and the 7-point rating scales were used. Because the researcher planned for dominant statistical tests and confidence in the results, a large sample was considered, which was ultimately 820.

5.5.2.3 Item evaluation and refinement

Content validation was performed, and the researcher, together with a team that included the supervisor and statistician, evaluated the quality of the items in relation to the target population. Considerations were taken into account for the item wording to be simple and clear. Experts, one whose focus area of research was multidisciplinary, reviewed the draft questionnaire items. Experts included academics from the Marketing and Business Management disciplines and my supervisor and statistician. Qasim *et al*. (2016) argue that experts' judgement is sufficient in determining content validity, and there must be at least three to ten experts, of which the number is determined by the researchers' experience and scientific qualifications. My research experience is acceptable, and my scientific qualifications are excellent. Since a researcher can determine the number of expert reviewers, as per Qasim *et al*. (2016), I had five experts conducting the reviews. The statistician assessed whether the ideal scale should be a five-point or seven-point Likert scale considering their relevance for the research. The five-point scale was considered. Therefore, in finalising the draft, item quality and content relevance were based on the theory, literature, and experts' comments. The comments factored in the clarity, difficulty, relevance, and importance of the items. The final draft had 93 items in total on a 5-point Likert-like scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree and a 7-point rating scale. The draft instrument items were related to the research questions and objectives. In addition, the items used simple and understandable English language and were not ambiguous or leading respondents. The questions were closed-ended in nature. The scale measuring customer service was structured in a way that avoided common method bias. Common method bias occurs when disparities in responses are somewhat because of the instrument, rather than the actual predispositions of the respondents that the instrument tries to reveal. Doty and Glick (1998:374) posit that common method variance "occurs when the measurement technique introduces systematic variance into the measures". The potential biases that could affect this scale are consistency motif bias, acquiescence biases and item demand characteristics bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003).

Consistency motif bias refers to participants being inclined to do their best in maintaining consistencies in their responses to questions. Acquiescence biases refer to the tendencies of respondents to question, agree or disagree with the items, independently of their content. Item demand characteristics refer to items conveying hidden cues in how to respond to them. Content validity was also conducted through pretesting of the questionnaire, and in the development of the instrument, pretesting succeeded the expert opinion process.

5.5.2.4 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which an empirical measure satisfactorily reflects the real meaning of the concept under study (Babbie, 2020; Mata, Frey, Richter, Shupp & Hertwig, 2018; Mohajan, 2017; Pallant, 2020). The validity of a study is described as the degree to which it measures what it is supposed to measure (Pallant, 2020; Tambusai & Hasibuan, 2022). Kumar (2018) and Osman, Adis and Phang (2017) suggest that validity is also about being able to substantiate every question in a measuring instrument and making sure the questions meet the study's objectives. Therefore, internal and external validity are important for this study.

Construct validity refers to the research demonstrating that the items in a test measure the construct it claims to be measuring (Bandalos & Finney, 2019). Since the research instrument consisted of a Likert-like scale based on the emerging themes from the analysis, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify items in the scales that were intercorrelated.

Item discrimination refers to the extent to which an item on the measurement scale corresponds with the other items measuring the same construct (Boateng *et al*., 2018; Clark & Watson, 2019; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021; Kyriazso & Stalikas, 2018). Item discrimination was identified during the factor loading when conducting the EFA test.

5.5.2.5 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the stability and consistency of the measurement instrument, particularly the constructs that are being researched (Bryman *et al*., 2014; Cooper & Emory, 1995; Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund, 2000). This means that the measurement must be replicable in future research and produce consistent measures. Trustworthiness as a measure of reliability and dependability was concerned with motivating that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of acceptable quality. Dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings occurred as the researcher says (Creswell, 2014). The researcher also triangulated all data collected during the interviews with SMME owners and questionnaires completed by the customers and clients of the enterprises to provide reliable findings. Cronbach's alpha was conducted to assess the reliability of the rating scales in the research instrument.

5.5.2.6 Measurement instrument for the quantitative study

The questionnaire was developed to measure the eight main identified components (constructs), namely: social media, brand elements, brand-building dimensions, brand-related capabilities, brand identity, marketing communication mix, customer service and market resources. (See Appendix F p.463 for the full questionnaire that consists of 93 items that were divided according to the components).

Table 5.8: Constructs of the brand communication questionnaire

Research construct	**Number of items**	**Measuring scale**
Social media	14	Self-developed, guided by the literature
Social media platforms	4	Self-developed, guided by literature
Brand elements	8	Self-developed, guided by definitions from Kotler and Keller (2009)
Brand building dimensions	7	Self-developed, guided by definitions from the literature
Brand related capabilities	8	Self-developed, guided by definitions from Ahmad, Salleh and Perumal (2019)
Attitudes towards brand	3	Self-developed, guided by definitions from the literature
Brand identity	3	Self-developed, guided by definitions from the literature
Marketing communication mix: Advertising Sales promotion Personal selling Public relations	 11 6 3 4	Self-developed, guided by definitions from Kotler and Keller (2006)
Customer service: Reliability Responsiveness Assurance Empathy Tangible	 4 4 4 3 5	Self-developed, guided by definitions from Parasuraman (2016)
Market resources	6	Self-developed, guided by definitions from the literature
Total	93	

The questionnaire was based on the themes from the qualitative strand of the study and definitions from the literature review in Chapters 3 and 4. In addition, the constructs were developed guided by the definitions of authoritative scholars and in line with how they have been conceptualised in the study. Furthermore, the constructs are relevant to the SMMEs as their practices and activities comprise among others, these constructs. Studies by Cromhout (2020) focused on the impact of IMC and included brand elements; Soke and Wiid (2016) researched small business marketing in South Western Townships (Soweto) in South Africa; Torres, Augusto and Wallace (2018) studied social media activities; while Baber and Baber (2022) included the social media marketing effort construct in their research on the influence of social media marketing efforts and included a social media construct; Matekenya and Moyo (2022) adopted resources and capabilities in their study on innovation as a driver of SMME performance in South Africa. Therefore, the constructs in Table 5.8 are considered relevant for the study.

5.5.3 The quantitative method: Phase three

Quantitative research is conducted to address questions regarding relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena that will be generalised to other persons and places (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; 2013). The current research addresses the research objectives and relationships among measured variables to explain the perceptions of clients and customers of SMMEs in South African townships regarding the brand commination phenomenon.

The quantitative methodology is concerned with the collection and analysis of numerical data and the application of statistical tests (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Furthermore, quantitative research relates to investigations carried out on problems and addresses the testing of theories, which are comprised of variables. Adopting a quantitative research methodology, means that the data concerned were measured numerically and analysed using well-established statistical methods and tests. Quantitative research methodology is often adopted to establish the validity of theoretical generalisations or propositions, as it exists in social science and/or business studies (Creswell, 1994). Numerical data were collected through surveys using self-administered questionnaires that were precoded.

5.5.3.1 Target population, context and unit of analysis

Target population: The target population for the quantitative phase of this research comprises the consumers and clients of the fast-food outlets and beauty and hair salons in South African townships. These were respondents who reside in the Gauteng and North-West Province townships. In addition, these were consumers and clients who were between the ages of 18 and 60 years. Furthermore, they were consumers and clients who have patronised the enterprises. The researcher was granted permission by some of the owners of the SMMEs who were interviewed to survey their consumers and clients. These consumers and clients were approached on the enterprises' premises. When enterprises did not grant permission, the researcher and fieldworkers approached other fast-food outlets and beauty and hairs salons to permit them to survey their consumers and clients. The selection of these enterprises did not deviate from the selection criteria specified for the study.

Context: The context in the current research is the place where the target population, that is, the clients and customers of the enterprises, were interviewed. Therefore, the context included the two provinces where the enterprises were established. Furthermore, context refers to the South African townships in the two provinces.

Unit of analysis: The unit of analysis describes the level at which the research is undertaken and the objects that are researched (Blumber, Cooper & Schidler, 2008). The broad area of investigation in this research is in brand communication practices and activities and, more specifically, SMMEs. Consequently, the following categories of units of analysis can be distinguished, namely, individual consumers and clients.

5.5.3.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to drawing elements, that is, clients and customers, from a population to obtain a sample (Lohr, 2021). Sampling is used to obtain a representative sample that has similar characteristics to that of the population that is being studied. Quota sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, was used for the quantitative data collection. Quota sampling allows for the researcher to approach respondents who fit the characteristics of the subgroups (Bell *et al*., 2022). Similar to the rationale stated in section 5.5.1.3, the customers and clients of the enterprises were divided into quotas, that is, according to the type of enterprise that they patronised. In addition to the quotas being based on the type of SMME, the geographical location of the respondents in terms of the province was also a category used. Race was not applicable as a basis for quota, because the township residents are mainly black Africans. Although there has been a change in the profile of residents in the townships, as there is white South Africans residing there, they account for the minority. Once the quotas were established, the respondents were approached on a convenience basis. Table 5.9 shows the quotas as proposed for the quantitative data collection.

Table 5.9: Sample composition of the research sample

Control characteristics	Percentage	Total number
Type of SMME Fast food Hair and beauty	 50% 50%%	820
Province Gauteng North-West	 50% 50%	 410 410

Sources: Own compilation.

5.5.3.3 Sample size

Bryman *et al*. (2014) aver that a sample size is not rigid; it depends on various considerations, such as time and budget constraints. However, considerations should be made for sampling error in deciding about the sample size. The South African population as of 2018 stood at 57.78 million citizens. Of these 57.78 citizens, 15 488 137 million are people from the Gauteng Province and 4 108 816 million are from the North-West Province. There are 76 townships in South Africa.

Malhotra (2015) posits that the sample size of a study refers to the number of variables or items to be included in the study. The sample size is also affected by the normality of the data and the estimation method, which suggests that a minimum sample must be five times the number of items in the scale or a maximum of 10 x the number of items in a scale. In previous studies involving SMMEs, Gundala and Khawaja (2014) collected data through questionnaires from 62 participants. Olawale and Garwe (2010) collected data using questionnaires from 187 participants. The sample size is considerate of the necessary statistical data analysis required to achieve the objectives of the study. In addition, the sample size of this study factored in the factor analysis that was required to validate the structure of the constructs in the research instrument. Additionally, the SEM analysis relevant to the study requires a larger sample size; hence, the realised n=820 for the quantitative data.

5.5.3.4 Data collection

The primary objective of this research was to determine the perceptions of consumers and clients of SMMEs in South African townships regarding brand communication practices and activities in building and developing their enterprises as brands. Consequently, to achieve this objective, data were collected from the consumers and clients of these enterprises residing in Gauteng and North West-Province, respectively.

Pretesting the measurement instrument (questionnaire)

Kumar (2018) alludes to the importance of pretesting, which is also known as the pre-test. The scholar emphasiseds that it is a fundamental part of instrument construction. The pretesting of the research instrument for this study, was conducted to ensure face validity and content validity of the questionnaire. Face validity is about the extent to which the researcher believes the instrument is appropriate for the study. This research instrument was subjected to pretesting (pilot study) among customers and clients of the SMMEs, and this was done by the researcher. Data were collected from customers and clients of the targeted SMMEs. The pretest sample size was 50 respondents. The purpose of the study and of pretesting were explained to the respondents, and then respondents were requested to sign a consent form. I invited the fieldworker, who conducted the qualitative interviews, on my second day pretesting so that she could observe how I approached the respondents thereafter, I introduced myself and the study. The respondents took an average of 25 minutes to complete the questionnaires; it seems long, however, they did not complain. Questions 4.1, 4.4, 5.6 and 6.6 were repeating questions. There were errors with responses to the Likert scale items, whereby some respondents indicated two options for a single item. Twelve of the 31 responses had errors for Questions 7 and 8. It was suggested that Questions 7 and 8 be changed to ranking scales. There were skewed responses from seven respondents. The research instrument was then revised in accordance with feedback from the pretesting. Thereafter, data collection began.

Data collection: self-administered survey questionnaire

The third phase of this research was empirical in nature, and the researcher collected numerical data using a survey questionnaire. A survey questionnaire is easier to follow owing to the closed ended questions in it and it provides easy instruction for completion, thereby reducing fatigue (Bryman, 2012; Dalati & Gómez, 2018). A survey uses a variety of data collection methods, of which the most common are questionnaires and interviews (Ponto, 2015). Questionnaires for the study were self-administered and included items that reflect the research objectives. In addition, questionnaires may include demographic questions that can be used as qualifying questions for assessing and screening potential respondents. A self-administered survey was used to collect data, the rationale being that it is economical in design. As Bryman (2012) alludes, it is quick and cheaper to administer, while Creswell and Creswell (2018) point out that the data collection turnaround time is quick. In addition, self-administered questionnaires are convenient as respondents complete them at their own pace (Bryman, 2012) and it allows the researcher to provide clarity to the respondents. Although there are risks to the self-administered survey questionnaires, such as the research not being able to probe and collect additional data, the benefits were ideal for this study and the targeted respondents. Owing to the size of the sample, data collection was outsourced to the research service provider who conducted the interviews, with the assistance of the staff members, to perform the fieldwork. I held an online briefing with the owner of the company, that is, the fieldworker who accompanied me to the field during pretesting, and the fieldworkers from her company. The briefing focused on the observations and errors noted during the pretesting stage. Ensuring that the respondents answer all the questions, was emphasised. A total of 820 completed questionnaires were realised and subjected to various statistical data analyses. The completed questionnaires were possible as the fieldworkers were given a target of a minimum of 50 consumers and clients per enterprise and the field work was targeted and completed during the enterprises' peak time, particularly for the beauty and hair salons. which was during the weeks of the 15th, 25th and 30th of the month. The fast food enterprises were always busy with patrons visiting throughout the day. The respondents were a mix of customers and clients of the SMMEs who were interviewed, as the owners gave permission to survey their customers. Other interviewed owners who did not give permission, cited the nature of their business to require customer confidentiality, owing to the beauty cosmetic and aesthetics services they provide to their clients.

5.5.3.5 Data management

Data management is an important process in scientific research. Prior to data being analysed, it must be prepared, and preparation takes the form of validation, editing and coding, entry and cleaning. Data preparation included the process of examining the quality of data collected for the purpose of research and converting responses into electronic format for both quantitative and quantitative data for analysis (Babin & Zikmund, 2015). Quantitative data editing and coding entailed the process of checking if there were errors in the completed questionnaires before data entry, and the questionnaire was precoded at the initial development stage. The researcher checked for consistency of answers in the questionnaires and whether respondents indicated responses that were contradictory.

Data entry, cleaning and validation

Quantitative data validation was performed through data screening and verification. Screening occurred during data collection; the fieldworker's manager was asked to forward the first 100 completed questionnaires, which were subjected to EFA, focusing on descriptive analysis of the questionnaire. The researcher screened completed questionnaires for errors or bias in responses in the form of crossing a single rate in all the Likert scales measuring various constructs for the research. Data verification, on the other hand, was performed by discarding problematic completed questionnaires, which involved personal judgements.

5.5.3.6 Data analysis

Quantitative data captured in the Excel spreadsheet were transferred to the latest SPSS statistical software program, SPSS 28.0. Quantitative data analysis is an important aspect of research, as it enables the researcher to measure, analyse and understand a phenomenon (Ong & Puteh, 2017). In addition, the results of the analysis may confirm or reject the hypotheses made in the study.

For the purpose of data analysis, the sample size was randomly split. Kyriazos (2018) followed a 3-faced construct validation method as a routine for validity and reliability of an existing scale. Furthermore, the researcher pointed out that the routine may be followed for validating a newly developed scale. Since the measurement instrument for this study was developed by the researcher in line with theory and the literature review and definitions, the scale is considered to be new in the context of this study. Therefore, in line with Kyriazos (2018), a 2-faced construct validation that sought to establish validity and reliability of the scale for the context of this study, was followed. The sample was randomly split into two parts, 52% for EFA and 48% for a cross-validating CFA. Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988) recommended that a split be one-third (EFA) and two-thirds (CFA), and Singh *et al*. (2016) concurred with Kline (2016). Kline (2013) points out that construct validity is fundamental for the measurement process and embraces validity principles (Brown, 2015). Therefore, Cronchbach and Meehl (1955) posit that construct validity assesses the theoretical relationship of a variable to others, and it is measured only indirectly by indicators (Kyriazos, 2018). According to Thompson (2013), the validity, reliability and replicability of psychometric measures are maintained through cross-validation. A cross-validation process is characterised by a random split of a sample into two or more subsamples with the aim of repeating the analysis and factor analysis in each subsample (Byrne, 2012; Wang & Wang, 2012; Thompson, 2013; Brown, 2015; Schumacker & Lomax, 2015). It is suggested that sample splitting be performed when the sample is sizeable enough to accommodate it. DeVellis (2017) advocates that a generally preferable method of demonstrating generalisability is through the replication of a factor analytic solution in different samples. Sample one is called the calibration sample, while sample two is the validation sample. Byrne (2012) and Wang and Wang (2012) assert that the purpose of cross-validation is to examine whether the parameter estimates of sample one (calibration) can be replicated in sample two (validation). DeVellis (2017), in support of replicating findings, suggests that the split provides valuable information about scale stability.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to profile and describe the characteristics of the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The measures of spread (standard deviation), presentation of frequencies and measures of location were used to describe the outcome of the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Standard deviation, means and frequency were used to describe the characteristics in the present study. Means of differences between the constructs will be calculated and analysed. Standard deviations for individual items on the questionnaire were calculated. Correlation analyses were used to determine the influences or relationships between the constructs. Tables and graphs were generated and are interpreted in Chapter 7. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire are discussed next.

Validity and reliability of the research instrument

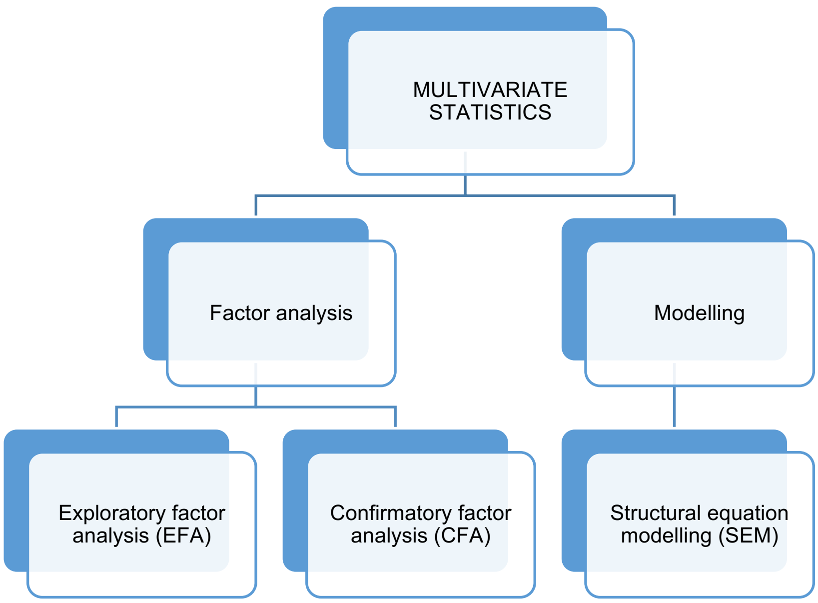
The questionnaire design and structure are important, as the internal reliability and validity of the collected data are dependent on them. Reliability refers to the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair *et al*., 2006). Reliability reflects the consistency of items over time, tests and groups (Kline, 2005; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Creswell (2012) asserts that in reliability testing, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for scales in a measurement instrument must be computed. This is conducted by calculating the mean score of the items of the same constructs in a study. Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measurement that is widely used to assess the internal consistency reliability of multi-item scales at an interval level of measurement (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). It assesses the equivalence, homogeneity and intercorrelation of the items used in a measure. The most popular test within the internal consistency method is the Cronbach coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951). Nunnally (1978) highlights that newly developed measures can be accepted with ≥.60; otherwise, ≥.70 should be the threshold (Kline, 2005; Polit & Beck, 2004), whereas a coefficient ≥.80 indicates that the measure is very reliable (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, Cronbach's alpha was used as an indicator of internal consistency reliability for the current study to test the degree to which the set of items of the constructs scale are internally consistent in their measurements and to determine whether they measure the same underlying construct. The threshold considered for this study is ≥.70.

Validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). To establish construct validity using statistical evidence, factor analysis was conducted. According to Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001), factor analysis is used to describe variability among variables. Owing to the nature of the study, considering the measurement instrument, factor analysis was conducted per constructs of the questionnaire, as the concepts are based on multidisciplinary theories, and items measuring each construct were constructed based on the themes. These themes were made up of codes from the qualitative data. The constructs were, therefore, conceptualised according to the literature definitions. EFA was, therefore, conducted on each individual construct to determine the dimensionality of the constructs.

Statistical methods followed in this study

Multivariate statistical analysis was conducted in this study, and it included factor analysis and modelling. The methods are illustrated in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: Multivariate statistics conducted in the study



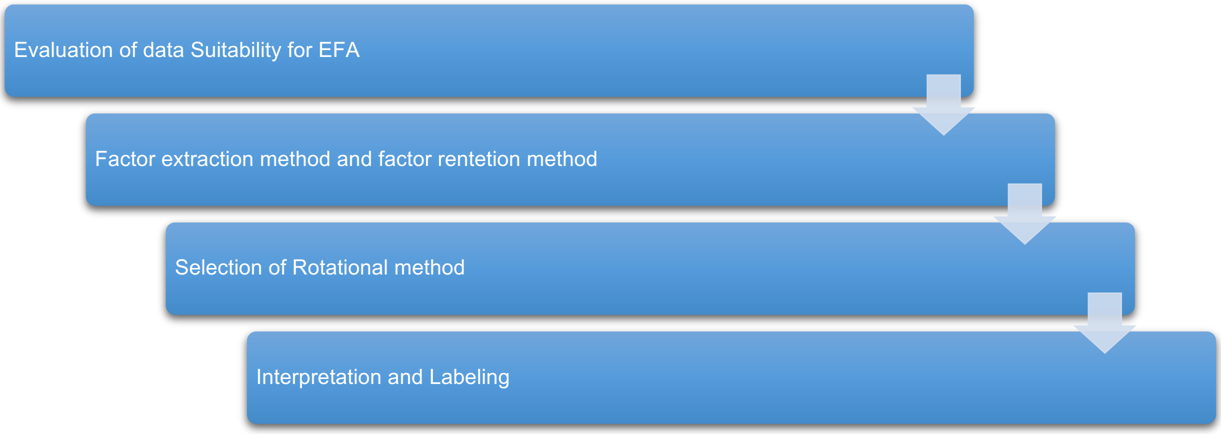
Source: Creswell (2018).

The statistical analysis commenced with the EFA; thereafter, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted based on the factors that were extracted and retained from the EFA results.

Then, the constructs were subjected to SEM, which is the most suitable multivariate method used to test interrelationships among variables in research (Bollen, 2014). The process followed in EFA is discussed first, and second will be CFA and finally SEM.

The process followed in assessing structural validity is depicted in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Exploratory factor analysis steps followed in this study



Source: Own compilation.

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is documented to be a complex and multistep process (Ledesma, Ferrando, Trógolo, *et al*., 2021; Weatherford & Maitra, 2019). EFA is conducted to explore the data and, subsequently, the number of factors that best represent the data for a study. Hair *et al*. (2014) point out that factors are derived from statistical results and not theory; as such, the factors can only be named after performing factor analysis. Factor analysis confirms the variables and factors to which they belong and provides structural validity. EFA for this study was conducted using principal axis factoring extraction and promax rotation to determine the unidimensionality of the constructs. This was followed by a measurement model (CFA), which was based on customer service, marketing communication mix and measurement model (a combination of the small constructs). The steps are discussed next.

Sample adequacy and factorability

Sample size is a fundamental issue in factor analysis (FA) (Kyriazos, 2018; Taherdoost, Sahibuddin & Jalaliyoon, 2022). However, there seems to be various concepts and guidelines regarding the acceptable or appropriate sample size. Taherdoost, Sahibuddin and Jalaliyoon (2014) observed the lack of agreement pertaining to the sample size; as early as 2005, Hograty, Hines, Kromrey, Ferron and Mumford (2005) argue that “these disparate recommendations have not served researchers well”. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest a rule of thumb that advocates for a sample size of at least 300 cases as a requirement for factor analysis. Hair *et al*. (1995), however, contend that sample sizes should be 100 or greater. The sample size for the EFA conducted for this study is n=442, which is above Tabachnick and Fidell (2001)’s suggested size.

The verification of the factorability of the data is concerned with how suitable data are for factor analysis (El-Den, Schneider, Mirzaei & Carter, 2020; Shrestha, 2021). Accordingly, EFA is concerned with the correlation matrix of the variables, also called items in the scales that are included in the analysis for a study (Bandalos & Finney, 2018; Schreiber, 2021). Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010) point out that the general acceptable rule of thumb in an EFA is for the sample to be at least five times the number of variables included in the analysis and that the sample-to-variable ratio thereof should ideally be 10:1. Hair *et al*. (2010) concur with Nunnally (1978) that the ratio should be at least 10:1. Contrary to Hair *et al*. (2010) and Nunnally (1978), Gorsuch (1983) and Hatcher (1994) recommend a minimum sample-to-variable ratio of at least 5:1 in EFA, but with stringent guidelines for when this ratio is acceptable, they acknowledge that higher ratios are better. MacCallum, Widaman, Preacher, and Hong (2001), on the other hand, challenge the ratio stating that there is no one fit ratio that works in all cases; the number of items per factor and communalities and item loading magnitudes thus can make any particular ratio restrained or insufficient. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) categorise the sample size for EFA as follows: 50 being very poor, 100 being poor, 200 being fair, 300 being good, 500 being very good, and 1 000 or more being excellent. However, for this study, the researcher followed Hair *et al*. (2010) and the Nunnally (1978) ratio.

Correlation matrix analysis

Henson and Roberts (2006) posit that a correlation matrix is one of the most popular EFA statistical techniques used to determine the relationships between variables. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) advocate that researchers must consider inspecting the correlation matrix for correlation coefficients that are above 0.30. Scholars suggest that the correlation loading be categorised according to their practicality and provide the following categories: the correlation loadings as 0.30 = minimal, 0.40 = important, and 0.50 = practical (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995a). Therefore, in the cases where correlations are less than 0.30, the researcher or statistician should reconsider if FA is an appropriate approach to be used for the research (Hair *et al*., 1995a; Tabachnick & Fidell 2001). A correlation matrix that reflects an identity matrix translates to no relationship among the items (Kraiser 1958); therefore, EFA should not be applied.

Factor extraction method and retention method

There are several factor analysis extraction and retention methods available for researchers and statisticians. Costello and Osborne (2005) advance that SPSS software has six methods in addition to PCA, SAS and other packages that have similar options, namely, unweighted least squares (ULS), generalised least squares (GLS), maximum likelihood (ML), principal axis factoring (PAF), alpha factoring (AF), and image factoring (IF).

Factor extraction

Factor extraction and retention are interconnected in that the extraction is complemented and substantiated by referring to the scree plot, which is used to analyse which factor is to be retained (Kline, 2016; Ledesma *et al*., 2021). Furthermore, Costello and Osborne (2005), Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), Thompson (2004) and Watkins (2018) posit that there are a number of ways to extract factors in analysing data. These methods encompass principal components analysis (PCA), principal axis factoring (PAF), image factoring, maximum likelihood, alpha factoring, unweighted least squares, generalised least squares and canonical. However, Henson and Roberts (2006) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) point out the two most commonly used methods in most studies, namely, PCA and PAF. The decision to use either of the two has been a debate among analysts (Henson & Roberts, 2006). Thompson (2004), however, asserts that the reality is that the variations between the two methods are often insignificant. Additionally, Schreiber (2021) concur with Thompson (2004) who accentuates that PCA is used often, and the rationale for that is the fact that it is the default method in many statistical software packages. Gorsuch (1983) and Taherdoost *et al*. (2022) maintain that PCA is normally suggested for use when there is no previous theoretical basis or model. The disadvantage of PCA is that it can produce inflated values of variance accounted for by a component in the event where the factors are uncorrelated and communalities are moderate (Gorsuch, 1997; McArdle, 1990). Costello and Osborne (2005) also point out that component analysis is concerned with data reduction, while Ford, MacCallum and Tait (1986) added that it disregards the underlying structure caused by latent variables, and components are calculated using all of the variance of the manifest variables and the variances shown in the solution. Costello and Osborne (2005) propose that PCA does not discriminate between shared and unique variance, therefore, producing inflated values of variance that are accounted for by the components, when factors are uncorrelated and communalities are moderate (Gorsuch, 1997).

Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum and Strahan (1999) advocate for PAF as a factor extraction method, citing that it is ideal in cases where the assumption for multivariate normality is “severely violated”. Violation occurs when the research scale contains Likert-type items (Goretzo, Pham & Buhner, 2021). The PAF is also said to be useful when researchers are concerned with determining the underlying factors that are related to a set of items (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the PAF is used as the researcher wanted to determine the correlation of items in a scale in relation to the construct. In addition, the measurement instrument for the current study is made up of Likert and rating scales that measure the concepts and constructs of the study. Costello and Osborne (2005) highlight that other authors argued that consideration must be made for other extraction techniques and suggested maximum likelihood or PAF, as they are acknowledged to give the best results depending on whether research data are normally distributed or significantly nonnormal. Maximum likelihood (ML) is a preferred approach, as it includes numerous fit indices. Therefore, MAP analyses were conducted.

Once factor extraction is completed, researchers must decide on the number of factors to extract, and the decision must consider the issue of overextraction and under extraction of factors to retain for rotation (Watkins, 2018).

Factor retention

Thompson and Daniel (1996) assert that the “simultaneous use of multiple decision rules is appropriate and often desirable”. In addition, Hair *et al*. (2010) point out that most factor analysts use multiple criteria, as there are several extraction rules and approaches that exist that include Kaiser’s criteria (eigenvalue > 1 rule), the Scree test, the cumulative percent of variance extracted and parallel analysis (PA) and MAP. It is, therefore, suggested that multiple approaches be used in factor extraction.

There are factor retention methods that include the cumulative percent of variance extracted, Kaiser’s criteria (eigenvalue > 1 rule) (Kaiser 1960), the scree test (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (PA) (MAP Velicer) (Horn, 1965). Cattell’s scree test (Cattell, 1996) involves the visual exploration of a graphical representation of the eigenvalues for breaks or discontinuities. The Kaiser-Guttman rule is said to be created for PAC and therefore, is associated with different assumptions. Velicer and Jackson (1990) indicate that eigenvalues, as a retention method, are one of the least accurate methods for deciding on the number of factors to retain. The scholar Velicer and Jackson (1990), therefore, suggested the scree test, Velicer’s MAP criteria and parallel analysis as alternative tests for factor retention.

As illustrated by Gorsuch (1983), Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) and Thompson (2004), interpreting Scree plots is subjective, requiring researcher judgement. Therefore, the number of factors to retain and the results can be different (Zwick & Velicer, 1986; Pett, Lackey & Sullivan, 2003). The disagreement and subjectiveness are reduced when the sample size is large, N:p ratios are >3:1 and communalities values are high (Linn, 1968; Gorsuch, 1983; Pett, *et al*., 2003). Zwick and Velicer (1986), however, resolved that the Scree test performed better than the K1 rule, although it was still correct only 57% of the time, and in most inaccurate cases, the overestimate of factors has been found (Ledesma

& Valero-Mora, 2007), even though Costello and Osborne (2005) note that the Scree test is the best choice for researchers.

In determining the number of factors for retention, the research theories, questions and the endeavour to extract factors that would produce the most interpretable results were considered in informing the decision. A scree plot was, therefore, considered as an alternative and complementary test for factor retention. Pallant (2011) points out that a researcher must look for a change or “elbow” in the shape of the plot to determine and confirm the factors to retain. In line with the PAF extraction method, the scree plots examined the graph, looking at factors with eigenvalues that were greater than 1, meaning that those that were considered were factors above the “elbow” for retention.

For the purpose of this study, the PAF is used as the researcher wanted to determine the correlation of items in a scale in relation to the construct. It is, therefore, suggested that multiple approaches be used in factor extraction; therefore, PA and MAP were also conducted.

Selection of the rotational method for factors

Williams, Brown and Onsman (2010) opine that when deciding how many constructs to consider for analysing data, it is important to establish whether a variable might relate to more than one factor, that is, cross-load. Hence, Costello and Osborne (2005) posit that the objective of factor rotation is to simplify and clarify the data structure. However, it does not improve the amount of variance extracted from the items. According to Fabrigar *et al*. (1999), it is essential for researchers to select the rotation method to yield a final interpretable factor solution. Furthermore, Taherdoost, Sahibuddin and Jalaliyoon (2020) suggest that factor rotation can produce a highly interpretable and simple solution and maximise high item loading and minimise low item loadings. Furthermore, there are two types of rotation techniques:

- Oblique rotation technique: Costello and Osborne (2005) argue that this technique is more accurate, although the data do not meet *a priori* assumptions. Theoretically, the method provides a more accurate and reproducible solution. The oblique rotation technique generates constructs structures that are correlated (Taherdoost *et al*., 2020). With oblique rotation, the pattern matrix is examined for factor or item loadings, and the factor correlation matrix reveals correlations between factors if there are any. The common oblique rotation techniques are quartimin, direct oblim and promax. There is, however, no widely preferred oblique rotation technique.

- Orthogonal rotation technique: This technique produces factors that are uncorrelated; however, its results are easy and simple to interpret compared to oblique rotation (Bandalos & Finney, 2018; Costello & Osborne, 2005; Taherdoost *et al*., 2022). Costello and Osborne (2005) and Bandalos and Finney (2018) buttress that the arguments of those advocating for this technique are flawed, and there are expectations that correlations among factors exist. The different methods for this technique are quartimax, varimax and equamax (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Taherdoost *et al*., 2022).

Thompson (2004) suggest that varimax rotation is the most common method of rotational methods for EFA and most often provides simple factor structures. In contrast, Fabrigar *et al*. (1999) declare that all techniques are more inclined to generate similar outputs. Therefore, for this study, the oblique Promax with Kaiser Normalisation rotation was performed to aid in deciding on the number of constructs to analyse the data and ultimately for interpretation of the results.

Sample size and communality estimate of variance

Costello and Osborne (2005) contend that there are no rigid rules for exploratory factor analysis in regard to sample size. The nature of the data to a certain extent determines the adequate sample size (Fabrigar *et al*., 1999) and suggests that there must be at least four items with acceptable reliabilities >.70 for each anticipated factor. However, MacCallum *et al*. (1999) recommend that a sample size must be greater than 400 to yield valid results under favourable conditions. In factor analysis, strong data translate to homogenously high communalities without cross loadings, including quite a few variables loading strongly on each factor. Costello and Osborne (2005) suggest that, should such issues appear in data, a larger sample size can aid in determining whether the factor structure and individual items are valid, and this is done by considering the following:

- Velicer and Fava (1998) state that item communalities with values at 0.8 or greater are high and social sciences considers low to moderate communalities of 0.40 to 0.70. For communalities that are below 0.40, it can mean that the item is not related to other items, or it suggests that there is an additional factor that should be explored. Therefore, research must decide whether to retain or delete the item; however, prior to doing that, the researcher must judge why the item was considered.
- Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest a minimum loading of an item to be at 0.32, which is approximately 10% variance overlap with other items in a factor; such items should be deleted from the analysis. In cases of a number of items cross-loading, the items are considered to be poorly written, or the *a priori* factor structure is possibly flawed.
- A factor that is measured by less than three items is weak and unstable, while a desired item loading is 0.5 and indicates a solid factor.

The researcher considered the commonalities of the factors. Communalities indicate how an individual item correlates with the rest of the items (Hair *et al*., 2010). For this study, the guideline used for considering the inclusion of items in a factor solution was whether they share at least 10% (commonality of 0.31) of their variance with the other items under consideration. Item loadings of 0.30 and larger were considered significant and used to interpret structures owing to n > 350 (Hair *et al*., 2010). The sample size for exploratory factor analysis was, therefore, n=442. The sample size was randomly split from N=820 for rigour and to allow for the other sample to be used to confirm the factor structure.

Table 5.10: Summary of parameters used in exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Measure	Parameters	Sources
Sample size	50 is very poor; 100 is poor; 200 is fair; 300 is good; 500 is very good; and 1000 or more is excellent.	(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001)
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin	Minimum acceptable value for EFA ≥ 0.60	(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001)
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Significance p ≤ .05.	(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001)
PAF factor load	Minimum load of ≥ .3 Minimum of 3 items per factor Scree plot Promax varimax	(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) (Costello & Osborne, 2005) (Cattelle, 1996)

Source: Taherdoost, Sahibuddin and Jalaliyoon (2020).

EFA, therefore, is exploratory by nature and design, and there are no inferential statistics as it was designed to explore a dataset, not to test hypotheses or theories (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The EFA results are discussed in Chapter 7.

Confirmatory factor analysis is discussed next. CFA is a modelling technique that can allow a researcher to test hypotheses using inferential techniques.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the hypothesised measurement model

Williams *et al*. (2010) highlight that CFA is a form of structural equation modelling that is applied to test the researcher's proposed theory or model. The rationale for conducting CFA, which is also known as a measurement model, is considered to confirm the constructs, the correlation between the constructs, their reliability and validity. AMOS was employed to run the composite reliability and discriminant validity tests. A measurement model first specifies the relationships among latent variables (unobserved variables or constructs) and their indicators (observed variables or manifest variables) (Jackson, Stephenson & Gillaspy 2009), including a description of the measurement properties (validity and reliability) of the observed variables (Kline, 1998). CFA is a tool for developing and refining measurement instruments, assessing construct validity, identifying method effects and evaluating factor invariance across time and groups (Brown, 2006; Kline, 1998).

CFA, in contrast to EFA, has assumptions and expectations based on an *a priori* model and theory about the number of constructs and which construct theories or models best fit (Brown, 2015; Bandalos & Finney, 2018; Hair *et al*., 2019). CFA, for this study, was conducted within the framework of structural equation modelling (SEM) to empirically evaluate whether the measurement model underlying the theoretical SMMEs brand communication management model has good fit with the empirically derived structure model. The measurement models (CFA) were used to confirm fit for customer service, marketing communication mix and measurement model: a combination of other constructs. AMOS (SPSS 28.0) was used as statistical software to conduct CFA. The three models were evaluated based on goodness-of-fit indices to test whether the proposed measurement models fit the data.

The item loadings explored the measurement model specification. The concern of a measurement model is the relationships between measured constructs, indicators and the constructs they were designed to measure (Crede & Harms, 2019). According to Sarmento and Costa (2017), it is crucial to examine three critical sets of results, that is, the parameter estimates, fit indices and potential modification indices, as they assist researchers in formally testing measurement hypotheses that can be modified so that they are more consistent with the actual structure of respondents' responses to the scale. There are several goodness-of-fit indices that are interpretable and that are calculated according to the recommended and acceptable thresholds. The following goodness-of-fit indices were used in the study:

The chi-squared test ($\chi 2$) (CMIN) indicates the difference between the latent and expected matrices, that is, testing the null hypothesis to determine whether a model fits the analysed covariance matrix perfectly (Fan, Chen, Shirley, John, Wu, Park & Shao, 2016; Kenny, 2015). A value near zero is desired as it indicates a better fit. The model is rejected when the p-value is smaller than a preset significance value.

$$T = (N - 1)\ Fmin$$

- Chi-square value = T
- N = sample size
- Fmin = minimal value of the fit function for the parameter estimation method used.

Normed fit index (NFI): which is also called Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index analyses the discrepancy between the chi-squared value of the proposed model and the chi-squared value of the null model (Chen, Zhang, Gu, Lee, Ren & Wang, 2020).

A comparative fit index (CFI): analyse the model fit, examining the discrepancy between the data and the proposed model while adjusting for the sample size issue intrinsic in the chi-squared test and the NFI (Sarmento & Costa, 2019). It assumes no relationships between measures. The thresholds range between 0 and 1, with the good-fit being greater than 0.09. Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2008) point out that this fit index performs well even when the sample size is small and is the least affected by the sample size.

Incremental fit index (IFI): compares T (chi-square value) against a baseline model or the independence model, which assumes that all the covariances are zero (Phakiti, 2018). Hence, Sitorus and Yustisia (2018) point out that IFIs should ideally be greater than 0.9 for an acceptable fit.

*The relative fit indices (*RFIs) compare the chi-square for the proposed model to a null model where a null model contains a model that has uncorrelated variables (Husain, 2019; Sideridis & Jaffari, 2022).

Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI): also known as a nonnormed fit index (NNFI), is a combination of a measure of parsimony with a comparative index between the proposed model and the null model (Hair *et al*., 2019). It assumes that all covariances are zero (Wang & Wang, 2019). The ideal index should be greater than 0.09 for an acceptable fit. TLI and CFI are the most widely considered incremental fit measures (Hair *et al*., 2019).

Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA): attempts to correct the tendency of the chi-square statistics to reject models with large samples by analysing the discrepancy between the proposed model using parameter estimates and the population covariance matrix (Xia & Yang, 2019). The general recommendation is that the RMSEA should be less than 0.05 for the fitted model to indicate a good approximation (Xia & Yang, 2018; 2019). Accordingly, Clark and Bowles (2018) posit that the values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicate acceptable fit, values between 0.08 and 0.10 indicate marginal fit, and values above 0.1 indicate poor fit.

Discriminant validity is the extent to which a variable or construct is truly distinct from other variables or constructs (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). High discriminant validity, therefore, provides evidence that a construct is unique and captures some phenomena that other measures do not (Hair *et al*., 2019). Fornell and Larcker (1981) indicate that the average variance extracted (AVE) is sensitive to a lack of convergent validity and can be used to assess discriminant validity, where if AVE is larger than the squared correlation, discriminant validity can be assumed (Hair *et al*., 2019).

Average Variance Extracted (AVE): it is the average percentage of variation explained (variance extracted) between the items of a construct (Shahverdi, Ismail & Qureshi, 2018). It is a measure of convergent validity, measuring convergence among a set of items representing a reflectively measured latent construct (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks & Ray, 2021; Yusoff, Peng, Razak & Nustafa, 2020). On average, an AVE of less than 0.5 indicates that more error remains in the items than variance held in common with the latent factor upon which they load (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2022).

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of the correlations (HTMT): this is the ratio of the between-trait correlations to the within-trait correlations. An HTMT value above 0.9 suggests a lack of discriminant validity. When the constructs in the path model are conceptually different, a lower threshold value of 0.85 is suggested (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table 5.11 indicates the thresholds for the fit indices.

Table 5.11: Summary of reference values for adjustment

	Very good	Good	Suffering	Bad
X^{*}/df	≤ 1	1; 2	2; 5	>5
NFI	≥ 0.95	0.9; 0.95	0.8; 0.9	<0.8
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.9; 0.95	0.8; 0.9	<0.8
RFI	The better the closer to 1			
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.9; 0.95	0.8; 0.9	<0.8
RMSEA (p-value ≥ 0.05	≤ 0.05	0.05; 0.08	0.08; 0.10	>0.10

Source: Sarmento and Costa (2017).

Structural Equation Modelling

The hypothesised relationships were tested by evaluating the point and interval estimates of the parameters provided during the SEM procedure. This allowed for the rejection or acceptance of hypotheses based on the results. SEM statistical technique was used for the study's empirical investigation, the rationale being that this technique is acknowledged, documented and recommended as the salient statistical method for evaluating a series of simultaneous hypotheses relating to the impacts of latent variables and manifest variables on other variables, with consideration for measurement errors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2018; Hair *et al*., 2010).

The hypothesised conceptual model for the study, as shown in Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1 is based on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. The model, Figure 1.3 depicts the hypothesised theoretical relationships, in line with the purpose of this study, which is to develop a brand communication model for the enterprises. The research hypotheses for the conceptual model is presented in this section.

Table 5.12: Summary of the research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship
H1	**Brand development has a relationship with the market resources**
H1a1	There is a relationship between brand-related capabilities and market resources.
H5a1	There is a relationship between brand elements and market resources.
H6a1	There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and market resources.
H2	**Brand development has a relationship with customer service (SERQUAL perspective)**
H1a2	There is a relationship between brand-related capabilities and service reliability.
H1a3	There is a relationship between brand-related capabilities and customer experience.
H5a2	There is a relationship between brand elements and service reliability.
H5a3	There is a relationship between brand elements and customer experience.
H6a2	There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and service reliability.
H6a3	There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and customer experience.
H3	**Marketing communication has a significant relationship with the market resources**
H2a1	There is a relationship between sales promotion and market resources.
H3a1	There is a relationship between social media platforms and market resources.
H4a1	There is a relationship between social media marketing and market resources.
H7a1	There is a relationship between advertising and market resources.
H4	**Marketing communication has an effect on customer service**
H2a2	There is a relationship between sales promotion and service reliability.
H2a3	There is a relationship between sales promotion and customer experience.
H3a2	There is a relationship between social media platforms and service reliability.
H3a3	There is a relationship between social media platforms and customer experience.
H4a2	There is a relationship between social media marketing and service reliability.
H4a3	There is a relationship between social media marketing and customer experience.
H7a2	There is a relationship between advertising and service reliability.
H7a3	There is a relationship between advertising and customer experience.

Chapter 8 deals with the hypothesis testing procedure followed in this study, where a summary of the statistical hypotheses, whether supported or not supported, are provided in Chapter 9. The level of significance considered in this study is (0.05) to determine statistical significance of the relationships, where the null hypotheses would not be supported if the significance is less than 0.05.

The sequence of data collection and analysis suggests triangulation in this research study; therefore, it is discussed in section 5.7.

Table 5.13: Sample size for SEM

Type of model	Minimum sample size
Models containing five or fewer constructs, each with more than three items (observed variables), and with high item communalities (0.6 or higher).	100
Models with seven or fewer constructs, modest communalities (0.5), and no underidentified constructs.	150
Models with seven or fewer constructs, lower communalities (below 0.45), and/or multiple under identified (fewer than three items) constructs.	300
Models with a larger number of constructs, some of which have fewer than three measured items as indicators, and multiple low communalities.	500

Source: Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle (2019).

Kenny (2015) suggests a sample size of N=200 or lower for SEM, where models show strong correlations. Therefore, a power analysis must be conducted to determine if the sample is sufficiently large using the Satorra and Saris (1985) method for a simulation. Furthermore, researchers can use Preacher and Coffman's web-based calculator to identify a poor-fitting model. A chi-square is considered a reasonable measure of fit for models with a sample size between 75 and 200; however, for those with a large size, the chi-square is considered statistically significant. Moreover, fit indices are presumed to provide for a good model.

- There are three main types of fit indices, namely, *the incremental, absolute and comparative* fit indices. An incremental (sometimes called *relative*) fit index is analogous to R^2, so a value of zero indicates having the worst possible model, and a value of one indicates having the best possible model (Bandalos & Finney, 2018; Bakar, Uzaki, Naim & Abdul Manaf, 2020). Kline (2015) and Ramlall (2016) point out that the standard definition of the best possible model is one in which c^2 equals its degrees of freedom (the expected value of c^2 given the null hypothesis of perfect fit). Furthermore, Kline (2015) and Ramlall (2016) argue that the worst possible model is called the *null* or *independence model,* and the usual convention is to allow all the variables in the model to have variation but no correlation. Consequently, an absolute measure of fit presumes that the best fitting model has a fit of zero (Ramlall, 2016). The measure of fit determines how far the model is from perfect fit. The common absolute fit indices are SRMR and RMSEA. A comparative measure of fit can only be compared when linking two dissimilar models and not to determine whether a specified model is good-fitting (Kenny, 2014; Ramlall, 2016). It is helpful to distinguish absolute indices that do not require a comparison between two models; examples of such are AIC, BIC, and SABIC (Kenny, 2014).

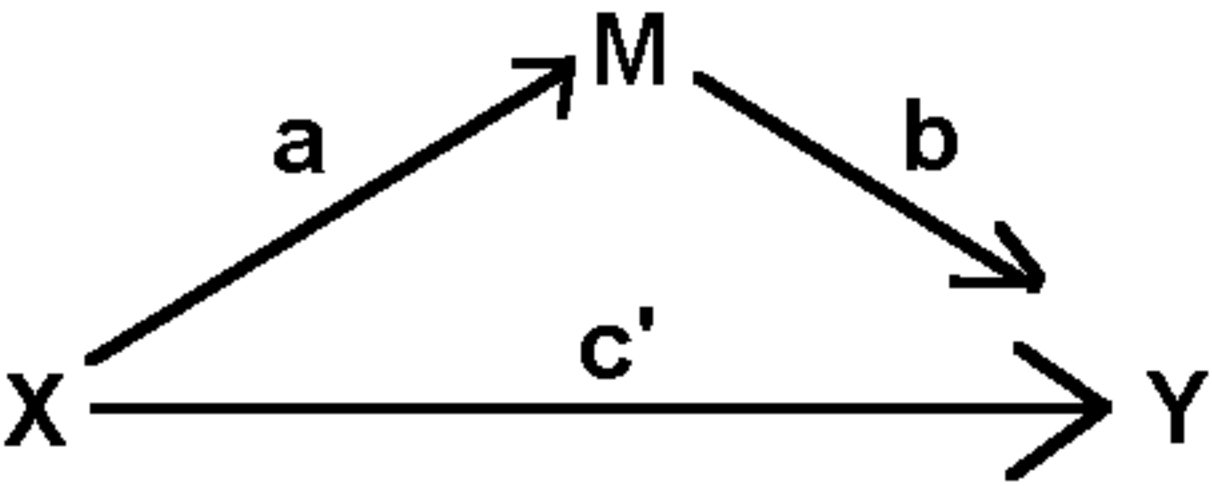
Fit indices:

- **Controversy about fit indices**: Barrett (2007) notes that there are researchers who do not believe that fit indices add anything to the analysis and only the chi square should be interpreted. The concern about the fit indices is that they allow researchers to claim that a misspecified model is not a bad model. Others Hayduk, Cummings, Boadu, Pazderka-Robinson and Boulianne (2007) argue that thresholds for a fit index can be misleading and subject to misuse.
- **Consensus on fit indices:** Analysts caution against rigid reliance on the fit indices, particularly the thresholds, as some good models may be discarded or bad ones accepted.
- **Computing a fit index:** Kenny, Kaniskan and McCoach (2014) argue that where the degree of freedom is insignificant, the fit indices should not even be computed. Therefore, research should identify the sources of the specification error, determine what parameter could be added to the model and then test that parameter.

Testing for mediation

Mediation is created when a third variable or construct intervenes between the two other related constructs (Chawala & Joshi, 2020; Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks & Ray, 2021). Furthermore, Hair *et al.* (2021) explain that mediation has the potential to explain a relationship and why relations exist between two constructs. Hair *et al*. (2019) maintain that there must be statistically significant correlations among the three constructs for mediation to be tested. Researchers explore mediation when they observe a relationship between constructs, although they cannot explain the reason it exists, therefore, requiring some explanation with intervening or facilitating variables. The mediator (M) facilitates and explains why the relationship between the two original constructs exists (Hair *et al.*, 2019) and links a cause and an effect (Wu & Zumbo, 2008). A mediating variable provides an explanation for the process through which two variables are related and how or why an independent variable impacts a dependent variable. A mediator is a result of the independent variable that influences the dependent variable. There is partial and full mediation, where full mediation occurs when the mediating construct fully provides an explanation of the relationship between the original constructs (i.e., X and Y), (Hair *et al.*, 2019) and partial mediation is explained when there is still a statistical relationship between the independent and dependent variables even in the absence of a mediator. Kenny (2018) highlights that a mediational model is a causal model, as the mediator is presumed to cause the outcome. Kenny (2018), Kenny and Judd (2014) explain a causal to imply that there is a relationship between two variables, that is the independent or causal variable (X) and the dependent or outcome variable (Y). Mediation analysis was statistically tested using linear regression analyses or ANOVA.

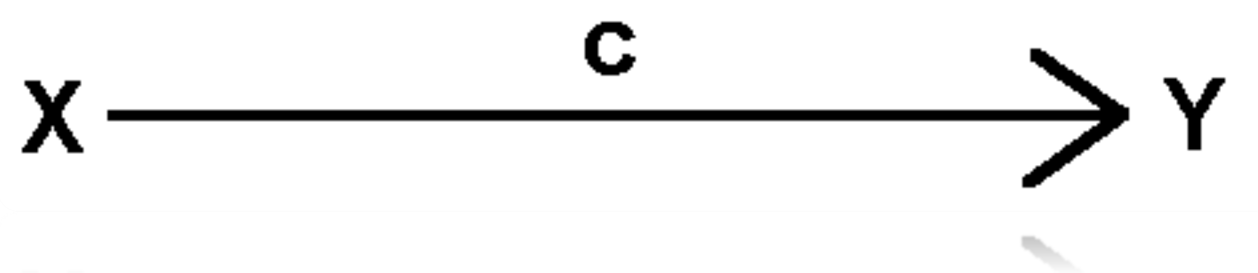
Figure 5.7: A mediated causal model



Source: Kenny (2018).

Figure 5.7 illustrates the mediated causal model. With this model, it is presumed that variable X (independent or causal variable) has an influence on the intervening or process variable M (path a), which sequentially has an influence on the dependent or outcome variable Y (path b) with the total effect presented by path c'.

Figure 5.8: Unmediated causal model illustrating the direct effect of variable X on variable Y



Source: Kenny (2018).

Figure 5.8 demonstrates the unmediated causal model. The model assumes that variable X (independent or causal model) has a direct causal effect on variable Y (dependent or outcome variable) with patch c, called the total effect (Kenny, 2018). Kenny (2018) and Kenny and Judd (2014) explain that there are four steps that are mandatory in statistical analysis when testing for mediation. These steps are based on four conditions that a relationship between variables must satisfy so that mediation is shown. The steps are highlighted next:

Step 1: There must be an indication as to whether there is an effect that may be mediated; consequently, the independent variable must influence the dependent variable (path c'), as illustrated in Figure 5.7.

Step 2: It is required that the independent variable correlates with the mediator, displaying that the independent or causal variable influences the mediator (path a), as demonstrated in Figure 5.7.

Step 3: There must be an exhibition that the mediator or intervening variable affects the dependent variable (path b) as pointed out in Figure 5.7.

Step 4: It must be determined whether the effect of the independent variable diminishes after manipulating the effects of the intervening variable or mediator (path c’), path c’ ought to be zero.

In cases where all four conditions are met and the influence of the independent or causal variable turns out to be non-significant and not different from zero in the presence of the mediator, then the mediator fully mediates the effects of the independent variable in the relationship with the dependent variable. However, should all the conditions be satisfied, although the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable continue to be statistically significant in the presence of the mediator, then partial mediation is achieved (Kenny & Judd, 2014).

5.6 TRIANGULATION IN MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

Creswell (2015) posits that triangulation was conceptualised in the late 1950s, 1959 and has been a methodological field for over 25 years. Triangulation is when a researcher is using both qualitative and quantitative methods to increase confidence. Triangulation is the process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verify the repeatability of interpretation (Flick, 2022; Gill & Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, Bryman *et al*. (2014) and Flick (2022) maintain that triangulation is the use of quantitative research to corroborate qualitative research findings or vice versa. Neuman (2014) advances that, in social science research, triangulation builds on the principle of learning from multiple perspectives rather than a single perspective in understanding a phenomenon being researched. Furthermore, there are four types of triangulation that are used in social sciences by social researchers, namely, triangulation of observer, theory, measure and method:

Triangulation of observers, as Neuman (2014) and Noble and Heale (2019) put it, is concerned with conducting interviews or being the sole observer of events and behaviour.

Triangulation of theory, on the other hand, considers multiple theoretical lenses to plan the study or interpret data (Dzwigol, 2020; Flick, 2022). These theoretical lenses have assumptions and concepts, as research is based on assumptions made by the researcher and concepts that have been researched by other scholars for the social worldview (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018).

Triangulation of measure is when a researcher employs multiple approaches to measuring a single variable (Abdalla, Oliverira, Azevedo & Gonzalez, 2018).

Triangulation of methods is concerned with a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches and data collection. Neuman (2014) argues that a study that uses a combination of the two approaches tends to be richer and more comprehensive. Neuman (2014) maintains that the combination of the two approaches can occur sequentially, simultaneously or in parallel.

Qualitative data were validated through triangulation and member checking. Fox and Bayat (2014), and Bell *et al.* (2022) state that triangulation as a form of data verification involves finding merging sources of information, that is, an audit trail of key decisions made during the research process and validation of the quality of the decisions. Triangulation occured when the researcher interpreted the findings, mixing or converting qualitative data from owners of SMMEs and quantitative data from customers and clients. Integration of qualitative data and quantitative data occur when refining the data collection instruments for the research. Creswell (2015) suggests four types of integration, namely, merging, explaining, building and embedding the data, and explained them in the following manner:

- *Merging the data*: The quantitative and qualitative results are brought together and compared.
- *Explaining the data*: The qualitative data are used to explain the results of the qualitative data.
- *Embedding the* data: One set of data is used to augment or support the other set of data.
- *Building the data*: The qualitative findings are used to build the quantitative phase of the study. The nature of the current research suggests that the integration strategy for the study is building the data. The rationale is that the data collected from the interviews contributed towards the development of a research instrument that is key in collecting quantitative data for the third phase of this research.

The current research lends itself to the triangulation of theory and methods. As a researcher, I sought to understand the phenomenon of brand communication in an endeavour aimed at brand building and the development of SMMEs as brands in South African townships. Therefore, we develop a model for the SMMEs to use. To achieve the purpose of the research, it was beneficial to collect data from both the SMME owners and their consumers and clients for a richer and more comprehensive model. Triangulation in this study was denoted from the interpretation of findings from the qualitative data from owners of SMMEs and the development of a quantitative data collection instrument for surveying their customers and clients, thus assuring validity. The nature of this research study is such that it provided for potential triangulation; using more than one method of data collection in the research study, it is a profound form of triangulation. The researcher aimed to triangulate the findings from the semi-structured interviews (sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, qualitative component of the research) and self-completion questionnaires (survey design and the quantitative component of the research).

5.7 LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is an intensive activity, which is reflected by data overload (Mattimoe, Hayden, Murphy & Ballantine, 2021; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2018). In addition, researcher bias has the potential to minimise the reliability of the findings (Johnson *et al*., 2020; Mackieson, Shlonsky & Connolly, 2019). I concur with Letherby, Scott and Williams (2013) that subjectivity exists in qualitative research; therefore, a constant critical reflection on the data is of utmost importance to reach an objective position. Additionally, qualitative research data processing and coding are characterised by time demands. It has been a scholarly debate that the generalisability of the qualitative findings, as well as the credibility and quality thereof, are generally questioned.

5.8 RESEARCH ETHICS FOR BOTH THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE PHASES

Bell *et al*. (2022) underscore the importance of ethical principles in research, stating that when a researcher adheres to values, he or she minimises the ethical risks. Key ethical considerations pertaining to this study related to harm to participants and respondents; completion of informed consent forms; and privacy and deceptions as highlighted by Diener and Crandall (1978). Therefore, considerations were made for permission from SMME owners to interview them and their consumers and clients. In addition, there is an informed consent form that SMME consumers and clients needed to sign prior to participating in the survey. There are ethical issues during data collection as well as in data analysis and reporting that must be observed and adhered to, considering the COVID-19 regulations, in protecting and respecting human lives.

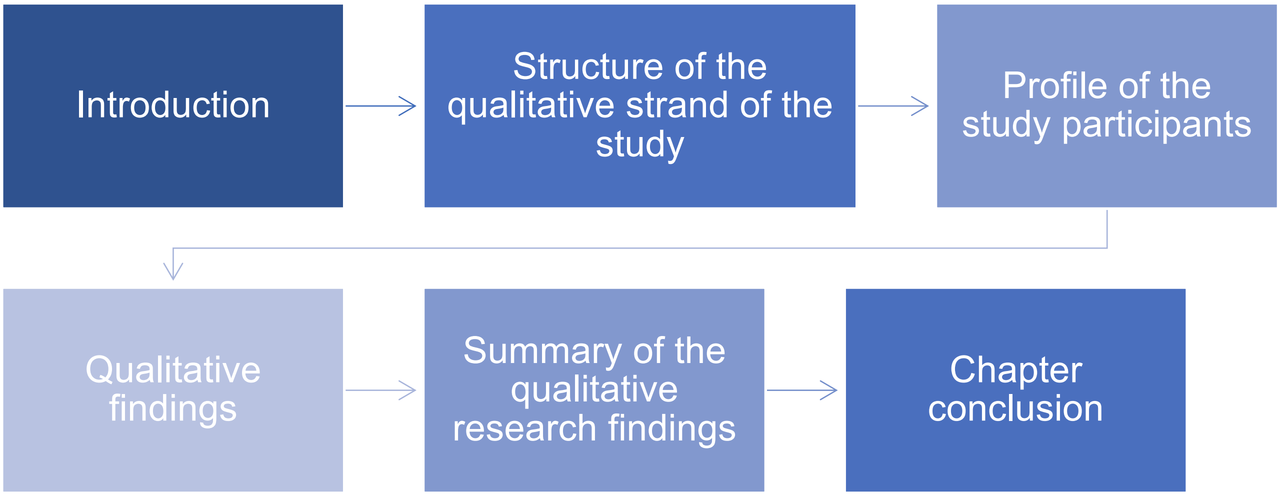
Ethical issues were discussed in detail and provided in Chapter 1 section 1.12.

5.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This Chapter discussed the research paradigm and philosophies that guided the research design and methods for the study. The research design and methods are discussed in detail. The design for this research is sequentially exploratory and follows a mixed-methods approach to answering the research questions and achieve the stated objectives for the study. The three phases that the research followed were detailed, and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this research, namely, population, sample, sampling, analysis, issues of credibility, reliability and validity, were explained.

The process that was followed when developing a research instrument from the data analysed in the qualitative phase was outlined and discussed. The structure of the questionnaire was also outlined. Thereafter, the data collection and analysis procedures were discussed in detail. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations for the research.

CHAPTER 6: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS



6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter described the research methodology for the study. Furthermore, it highlighted the design to the study, which is a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach. The Chapter also outlined the research design and methodology utilised to achieve the research objectives of this study. The current Chapter discusses the research findings of the study, in line with the approach, with the focus on the qualitative strand of the study. The discussions in this Chapter, therefore, first present the structure of the qualitative strand, followed by the profiling of the participants of the study. Thereafter, the qualitative research findings and the interpretation thereof were drawn from the qualitative data. Then, a summary of the research findings is presented. Lastly, the Chapter concludes with concluding thoughts relating to the content of the Chapter.

6.2 STRUCTURE OF THE QUALITATIVE STRAND OF THE STUDY

Research questions were formulated to address the problem statement of the study. These research questions are presented in Table 6.1 and were also posed in Chapter 1 of the research study.

Table 6.1: Research questions of the qualitative strand of the study

Research question number	Description of the research question
RQ1	What are the brand communication dimensions, practices and activities present in SMME brands in South African townships?
RQ2	a) How is brand orientation adopted by SMMEs in South African townships? b) What are the brand identities of these enterprises?
RQ3	What brand building and development activities do SMMEs in South African townships engage in?
RQ4	a) What are the brand resources and capabilities that SMMEs in South African townships use? b) How is customer service rendered at these enterprises?
RQ5	How do SMMES in South African townships create awareness through brand communication management?
RQ6	a) What technologies do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers? b) What social media tools do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?
RQ7	Which demographics influence the decision making of SMME owners in building and developing enterprises?

The research questions were stated in a manner in which the phenomenon under study is explored from the SMME owners' perspective. This was done to gain insight into the practices and activities of SMME owners when communicating their enterprises as brands.

The presentation of analysed data is an important stage in qualitative data, particularly in the writing up stage. Malhotra (2010), Yin (2011) and Verdinelli and Scagnoli (2013) buttress that data can be displayed by using various visual displays, as explained in Table 6.2, outlining the types of displays and their purposes. Malhotra (2010) asserts that there is a range of acceptable ways to present qualitative results, such as in the form of a narrative that focuses on sharing the participants' perspectives and ideas. Malhotra (2010) further affirmed that data may be displayed using non-narrative forms such as tables, figures, diagrams, charts or matrixes, as Verdinelli and Scagnoli (2013) reported. Therefore, both narrative and non-narrative displays may be adopted by the researcher. For this study, the non-narrative display in the form of a table is used to highlight the profile of the participants, and the narrative or boxed display allows for verbatim quotations from the participants.

Table 6.2: Types of visual displays and purposes

Visual display	Purpose
Boxed display	To highlight a specific narrative considered important and frame it in a box.
Decision tree modelling	To describe options, decisions, and actions.
Flow chart	To illustrate directional flow and show pathways of different groups.
Ladder	To represent the dimensions of the progression of a certain phenomenon through time or to show levels or stages.
Matrix	To cross two or more dimensions, variables, or concepts of relevance to the topic of interest.
Metaphorical visual display	To depict in a metaphorical way the topics or themes found.
Modified Venn diagram	To indicate shared or overlapping aspects of a concept, a category, or a process.
Network	To depict relationships between themes and subthemes or categories and subcategories.
Taxonomy	To classify or organise information.

Source: Verdinelli and Scagnoli (2013:364).

The next section presents the qualitative profile of the participants in the study.

6.3 PROFILE OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Table 6.3 depicts the profile of the participants in this study with respect to their demographics. The abbreviated codes BH and FF signify the participants' pseudo names meaning Beauty and Hair and Fast Foods, respectively.

Table 6.3: Demographic profile of the participants of the study

Pseudo name	Age	Gender	Qualification	Management experience	Number of employees	Type of Business	Year(s) in business	Demo influence
GP_BH_02	39	Female	Diploma (HR)	Not clear	0	Sole proprietor	2-3	Yes
GP_BH_03	29	Female	Certificate	None	1	Sole proprietor	1	Yes
GP_BH_06	45	Male	Grade 12	None	2	Sole proprietor	23	Yes
GP_BH_07	50	Male	Grade 12	None	1	Sole proprietor	23	Yes
GP_FF_01	36	Male	Diploma (Sound Engineering)	Manager	15	Partnership	13	Yes
GP_FF_02	36	Female	Degree (Engineer)	Supervisor	3	Sole proprietor	3	Yes
GP_FF_03	35	Female	N2 course	N/A	2	Sole proprietor	10	N/A
GP_FF_05	40	Female	Diploma (IT)	None	N/A	Sole proprietor		N/A
NW_BH_01	33	Female	N course	None	0	N/A	10	No
NW_BH_02	55	Male	Standard 5	Team leader	1-3	Sole proprietor	10	Yes
NW_BH_03	34	Male	Honours Degree	Director	5	Partnership	2	Yes
NW_BH_04	N/A	Male	Business Management course	None	0	Partnership	6	Yes
NW_FF_01	30	Female	Grade 12	None	23	Partnership	8 months	Yes
NW_FF_02	27	Male	Development Management Degree	None	N/A	Partnership	3	Yes
NW_FF_03	22	Male	Grade 12	None	2	Sole proprietor	4	No
NW_FF_04	41	Male	Grade 10	Training Rep	3	Sole proprietor	4	Yes
NW_SMME_A	36	Female	BCom Degree	Manager	5	Partnership	1	Yes
GP_SMME_B	42	Male	Technikon Module 5	None	0	Sole proprietor	18	

Source: Own compilation (2022).

The participants of this study were selected based on ownership; they had to be owners of beauty and hair salons and fast food enterprises. This sample was detailed in Chapter 5, the previous Chapter.

In the next section, the qualitative research findings are discussed.

6.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings and interpretations of the research study. The primary research question of the study is to explore the branding communication management practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships in the Gauteng and North-West Provinces in building and developing their enterprises as brands. The subsequent research questions were grounded and formulated from the primary research question of the study for the qualitative strand of the study. In detailing the responses below and therefore the findings, note that the names of the enterprises were blocked using a black highlight to protect the anonymity of the participants in line with the agreement made with the participants and observing the research ethics. Since data were collected in the Gauteng and North-West Provinces, participants were given pseudonym names in labelling the recorded interviews, and the names were also used in evidence provided in the form of quotations from the participant's responses; for example, *NWFF represents a fast-food enterprise from North-West, while GPBH stands for a beauty and hair salon from Gauteng*.

6.4.1 Themes from thematic analysis

Table 6.4 illustrates the research themes and subthemes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview recordings. The research question numbers and descriptions are also provided for readability. The themes that were identified are outlined in Table 6.4. The process followed entailed categorising codes that were used to generate the themes. These codes were in line with the research questions. The themes were based on the relationships among the codes, frequencies of the codes and the underlying meaning across the codes.

Table 6.4: Research themes and subthemes

RESEARCH QUESTION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THEMES	MAIN CONCEPTS
RQ1	What are the brand communication dimensions practices and activities present in SMME brands in South African townships?	Names, logos and colours symbolise and identify the enterprises Social media platform activities communicate about the enterprise Word-of-mouth, referrals, pamphlets, flyers and boards promote the enterprise Customer service and experience, discounts, and consistency communicate about the enterprise	Brand elements Social media Marketing communication mix Customer service
RQ2	a) How is brand orientation adopted by SMMEs in South African townships? b) What are the brand identities of these enterprises?	Personification orientates an enterprise Customer service and experience define enterprise identity	Brand personification building Brand identity
RQ3	What brand building and development activities do SMMEs in South African townships engage in?	Consistency, excellent service and quality, differentiation, knowledge, commitment and passion create and distinguish an enterprise A name, logo, colour and tagline enhance and	Service quality Distinct brand associations elements

RESEARCH QUESTION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THEMES	MAIN CONCEPTS
		facilitate distinct associations	
RQ4	a) What are the brand resources and capabilities that SMMEs in South African townships use? b) How is customer service rendered at these enterprises?	Trademarks, unique products and services, continuous improvement and equipment achieve better performance Price, being family oriented, personal and memorable experiences, and technology form competitive strategies Operating hours, quality customer service and customer experience facilitate service delivery	Market-based resource Brand related capabilities Service delivery
RQ5	How do SMMES in South African townships create awareness through brand communication management?	Word-of-mouth, personal selling, boards, flyers, SMSes, social media platforms, social impact, discounts, specials, freebies, social media marketing, advertising on social media, pamphlets, sponsorship, and customer service are communication tools that build awareness and influence behaviour	Marketing communication mix
RQ6	a) What technologies do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?	Canva, refresher app, Logo maker, Google, Long range systems, and SMSes technologies communicate about the enterprise and deliver services to customers	Communication technology

RESEARCH QUESTION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THEMES	MAIN CONCEPTS
	b) What social media tools do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?	Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter are used as platforms to communicate about the enterprise and deliver services to customers	Social media platforms
RQ7	Which demographics influence the decision making of SMME owners in building and developing enterprises?	Age, gender, qualification and managerial experience influence the management of brands	Population factors

6.4.2 The questions and quotations as evidence to the themes

The research questions are stated in this section, and the interpretations of the responses are stated thereafter. The quotations from the participants' responses to the questions are provided as support for the explanations.

6.4.2.1 Secondary research QUESTION 1

The first secondary research question was posed to explore and gain insight into the brand communication practices and activities and dimensions that the SMMEs used for their enterprises. Therefore, the following items were posed to gather responses to the secondary research question:

ITEM 1: Why did you choose the name for your business?

According to Participant GPBH02, the business name represents and suggests a solution to her customers and identifies with them. Participant NWBH02 mentioned that the name symbolises his passion for what he does and the business. Participant NWFF00 emphasises the issue of relevance regarding the name of the business. The participants' quotes in response to the questions are cited below:

GPBH02: *"Because I wanted, I am, you know because I have been in the industry for too long, I wanted, a lot of people know me as a beauty therapist. So people identify as someone who will do their nails, the make-up, but then I realised that people have issues, like serious, serious issues and I wanted to see me as that person who would give them solutions. I don't want to come flush, I don't want temporary solutions, I want people to come here and feel that they are getting the solution to their problems."*

NWBH02 *"Um I chose this name because the first thing, for me do to this job, I have to love people. So I sat down and thought, as I am going to work with people… if I don't love these people, it means my work will not prosper. So I sat down and thought, okay, the name of my business should be "Thanda Bantu"."*

NWFF00 *"There was truly no particular reason. We were looking for a business that would be relevant to the kids as well in the future. So what we decided on was in initial that would be relevant to all the kids in the family. Therefore, basically, that's how we got to the name."*

According to NWFF00, the name had to be relevant, while NWFF03 mentioned that it had to be short and clear and easy to read. NWFF02 highlighted that the name is suggestive, therefore, suggesting the products that the enterprise offers to its customers. Participants NWBH04 (the business names are their nicknames and linked to their names), and GPBH06, GPBH00, GPFF05 and NWBH03 supported this participant, saying:

NWFF02 *"We proposed names. Lefa and Keke actually came up with the name from the Soweto one, so we decided to use it as well, so I'd say Lefa came up with the name. It's just to say we specialise in kotas. We don't make chips and other things."*

NWFF03 *"It was short and clear, like you don't take time to read it."*

NWBH04 *"Papa is my nickname."*

GPBH06 *"It is my personal brand. That is my nickname."*

GPBH00 *"Because people know my name all around Atteridgeville."*

GPFF05 *"It is my name, I didn't want to use the name of someone I don't know or someone else".*

NWBH01 *"it is a nickname, I like it. The word comes from cappuccino so I removed the cup and was left with ccino. I used to like the word, and I decided to use the ccino and drop the word cup from cappuccino".*

Furthermore, Participant GPBH03 mentioned that, in fact, the name is linked to her actual name and surname; however, it is not a nickname similar to NWBH03, which is supported by her following response:

GPBH03 *"It's weird hey. Weird enough I didn't choose this name for myself. The person who did the logo for me was a friend of mine. By the way what do they call these people? Yes, graphic designer, so she was like playing around, obviously when I told her the idea that I want to open my own salon, then she offered that can I do the logo for you. So, eventually when I decided on this logo, she decided to put my full name and my surname, and then that's how I got the name. That's how I decided to go with it."*

NWBH03 *"It is my wife's name. She was looking for something to do on the side. I have got other businesses, and she wanted to do something on the side. So I just thought let me build here. There is some a story there, but anyway. We decided we were going to build there, and she was going to run the salon."*

Although Participant GPFF03's business name is actually her name, the name is unique, similar to GPBH07, who also stated that the name must be unique. Participant GPFF02 also agrees that the name had to be unique and carry a meaning:

GPFF03: *"Because my name is Constance so I decided to name my business after me. I opened this business and everything went well with it. I achieved so much from it. Because I remember when I started this business I was working."*

GPBH07 *"So when we registered the business, we were supposed to be unique. We couldn't use a name that already existed. So even if you go to Daveyton, anywhere the name must be unique."*

GPFF02 *"I chose the name because I have family in Limpopo obviously I wanted something unique but I want family quite close to Zimbabwe, it is a Shina name meaning source of creation. So, in a more spiritual context it is your Qamagu God* *sort of reference. However, we choose to sort of say the source of creation and creating flavours."*

ITEM 2: Are there specific reasons for the corporate colours for the business and the logo?

According to Participant NWFF00, the colour must be visible. Participant GPFF03, GPBH03 and NWBH03 responded saying that they love and like the colour, respectively. Participant NWFF03 mentioned that the colour must be attractive and appealing to customers, which corroborated the other participants' responses. With respect to the logo, Participants NWFF02, GPFF02 and GPBH03 indicated that they do have logos and pointed out that they were designed by someone else, mainly a friend. The participants' quotes in response to the questions are cited below:

NWFF00 *"I think it's a colour that most of us liked, or myself liked. They say it's the first colour children would see when they start seeing colours. Even from a distance, it is a colour that is visible. To the eye of the person, near or far, it is the first thing that they will notice, and that is the main reason we chose the colour."*

NWBH03 *"At the time it just looked nice."*

GPFF03 *"I don't know, I love black, I love black. So, they will wear their black trousers and black tops and then I will wear white apron and white mop cap."*

NWFF03 *"They are attractive. They are appealing to customers."*

NWFF02 *"They are more formal and user friendly, for example, if you want to paint. Unlike a yellow, where you would have to match it and find a balance. The logo was created by a graphic designer. He did that Roadhouse emblem. He just did some designs, and then we chose from the logos he's designed. We all use one logo. We did the logo only when we opened this branch. We never had one for the Soweto branch because it wasn't opened for long. It's the one that truly stood out for us. changing a logo all the time takes away from the familiarity of your brand because people get used to your logo after a while and costs money every time."*

GPFF02 *"Sort of the gold, the yellow the black and the white which also the time when I did it, I truly wasn't. It was a different colour so someone did the branding, you know you start a business and ask someone to please help me with a logo they do a logo and you are like okay it looks decent I like it and you run with it. I then started feeling as if now I need to start thinking of it more structured so I asked a gentleman* *to do it. He chose those colours and explained to me why the yellow why the black and why the white. The yellow entices appetite; it is used a lot in food businesses for that reason. The black sense of like seriousness not even seriousness like sort of classic he mentioned I can't remember. In addition, then the white sort of food cleanliness things linked to that. However, I have it somewhere."*

GPBH03 *"I love it, it's made with love that logo so, and I love it. My favourite colour is black and hence I decided to take black and white cause she gave me about four options; so, there were other colours but because this one had black, I decided to go with it because I love black. my logo represents me and my salon and what ehm, services I render."*

GPBH02 *"It's gold and white. There is something about gold; it says abundance to me, it says prestige, it says, and which is something, I was told initially not to go for gold because gold and black tends to be intimidating, it look too expensive, too exclusive, too elite you know, but I wanted people, everyone to see themselves in that, we have the right to dream, we have the right to feel like certain things. We also belong to certain things you know. I didn't want us to feel like other things are good for other people, you know. So for people to come from wherever and still find that oh this packaging, this what, in Soweto, you know you still want to give them that kind of Matisse, those brands that are high but still high and intimidating, cause those colours are intimidating, but with a lower price."*

ITEM 3: What are the brand communication activities that you embark upon to promote your business?

The participants indicated that the brand communication activities they use to promote their businesses entail social media using Facebook, Instagram, Word-of-Mouth (WoM), referrals and a few mentioned Twitter. They also use pamphlets, flyers, boards and technology such as Canva. There is also face-to-face. The participants' quotes in response to the questions are cited below:

GPBH02 *"So I have social media pages. So, I decided that I am going to do my own branding. No not branding but the marketing behind it. So, I create my own ads. So, I always look what is out there, what is catching to me, what I would go for, what I would click on, and I try to make something similar to that but in my colours, in my* *font, using people who look like me to make it attractive to them, and I always close it and go back to it and ask myself, would I truly open this and let me follow this, and you know, so that is what I do first, so I create my own ads, and then I post my ads on social media pages. With Facebook, you know there is Facebook market right. So, I am a member of different Facebook market groups where I will share my ads but because of marketing being, it's a business at the end of the day. Word of mouth, I rely on clients telling other clients, I don't do any trend, I don't have fliers,*

GPBH03 *"WhatsApp, Instagram and word of mouth also. Like if you plat one person you tell them please let the others know. You take pictures, you post, and they see that person on the streets, they ask them and they give them your number and they come. One thing I love is the fact that I get referrals. My salon grows because I get referrals. Yes, most of them are referrals; my clients refer people to me. So that is my way of using word of mouth locally and for outside, they are getting it from Facebook."*

GPFF02 *"I use social media it is just cheaper I use platforms, I use WhatsApp a lot so I do broadcasts daily, now and then not enough to annoy people, but I try to do broadcasts and obviously status updates. I then also use Facebook. We have a page Facebook we have an Instagram page we have a Twitter page as well. So daily at least once or twice a day we try to post something. We then create posters or slash flyers I use those I mainly just use Canva edit stuff like that and just put our logo there. The LinkedIn just to help with the CSI part to say okay we are also doing other things other than selling the pizza this is what. Those are the people I truly want to speak to maybe they can be able to help with."*

NWFF02 *"We use a tool on Facebook. We have a photographer. He takes photos of our kotas. We post. Our WhatsApp is also always busy because there's 4 of us. We also have KB in Potch. When we shoot, we shoot for all the branches. We all sell the same stuff. We use WhatsApp and Facebook. We've never tried the newspaper although – we only use online." Instagram. Mostly social media."*

NWFF03 *"Okay. Basically, I like to post. Like I did this post. I'm posting… like I create a post. Social media. Then, I laminate it. I put some colour on it and print it out…… to advertise it. Canva. I am using face to face… like verbal communication." I advertise it by posting it and by making pamphlets. I go to the rank sometimes. I talk to people. I tell them… I tell them that I am selling this type of a product, it costs this* *much, and I tell them where to find it. So that's how I do my marketing. Yeah. I'm doing… I'm also doing door to door. I got to people's houses selling Yeah.*

GPBH07" So I put up a board outside and advertise specials that I have. Like on a mampara week (The week before month end) I let people know that if a cut is R15 on that week it will be R8, just to attract people. I let them know that there are specials."

***NWFF00** "We are mostly using social media. It's the new buzz. It is a new way of communicating with the client. Therefore, that is what we are using. We have also made the pamphlets. We give out pamphlets at the robots or outside schools. Therefore, it is social media. The pamphlets that go out and it is a board. It is not just a board where the business is situated, but it is a board that needs to be at least 3 kilometres from the business so that it directs people to say this is where the place is. We have a board, but increasing the board is something that we are looking into in the future. The board is very important for people to identify the place where the business is."*

***GPBH00** "No. The customers actually do my advertising for me. As soon as they leave here and someone asks them where they did their lovely hair, they promote me. That is how I get clients."*

***GPBH06:** "We use WhatsApp and Facebook. Many people are on WhatsApp and Facebook, which makes it easier for them to reach us. My work speaks for itself. Word of mouth is more powerful than other things. A happy customer will tell other people about the brand. The most important thing is to stay consistent with the quality of your work. I always ask my customers to refer more people, and I give out my contact details."*

Participant GPBH02 indicated social media as an activity and does its own adverts on social media. Participant GPBH07 also uses boards and adverts where specials are advertised. Participants GPBH03 and GPBH06 indicated that they use WhatsApp, Instagram, WoM and referrals, while Participant NWFF02 indicated Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram only. Participant GPFF02 supported participants GPBH02, GPBH03 and GPBH06 by indicating that in addition to the social media platforms mentioned by the participants, the business uses Twitter and LinkedIn, which is mainly for promoting social responsibility, Canva and flyers. Participant NWFF03 also uses Canva, face-to-face, door-to-door and pamphlets in addition to the social media mentioned by other participants. Participant NWFF00 also uses pamphlets and boards in addition to social media.

ITEM 11: What brand communication dimensions do you use for your business?

According to Participant NWBH01, it is good work that translates to customer service and experience. NWFF02 supports NWBH01, indicating that good service is important; catering to different needs and providing discounts contributes to customer experience and loyalty. In contrast, GPFF01 emphasised the business image, citing that trading formally in an informal way allows customers to still experience the township feel and experience. The participants' are cited saying:

> ***NWBH01:*** *The best way to get customers is to do a good job so that when customers leave they can tell other people about your good work. Other people will ask where that person did their hair and the customer will refer them to me.*
>
> ***GPFF01:*** *It is only now that I am slowly trying to change the image of doing things formally but in a formal settlement. You must understand here it is unlike Soweto. At Soweto they have evolved from an informal trader to a formal trader but in an informal way. Like you will find a place which is posh but still selling the pap and vleis. So the people now it is a vibe to go to a place in Soweto a nicely laid out restaurant but with the same township feel and menu. So, some areas they don't receive that well - development supresses the sales. The more you try to and you think you are improving for the customers and stand out it is when they are actually leaving. We want to still maintain the informal image but implement the formalities inside."*
>
> ***NWFF02:*** *Our food options do that already, for example, we have a Bova, which can be shared among 6 people. We have different options that can serve different needs. Even if you don't have a lot of money, you can even get ice cream for a good price. We don't have anything specific that we are doing, but if I know you are a loyal customer, sometimes, I can just throw in a discount. Good service. You greet them when they come in, chat with them, treat your customers right.*

Participants GPBH06 and GPFF02 indicated consistency; that in their business they strive for consistency. In addition, GPBH06 indicated customer satisfaction and experience, which results in repeated demand for the services. The participants are cited saying:

> ***GPBH06:*** *I think my brand is perceived as a good brand because my customers keep on coming back for the satisfaction they get through my work. That is very important to communicate that through your brand. Customer satisfaction is more about your work. Once you do your job perfectly, then your customer will be happy. I teach my customers about hair. Most people do not know anything about the type of hair they have; for instance, most customers do not even know the texture of their hair. I always post relevant quotes that speak to my clients. My WhatsApp is consistent with what I do.*
>
> ***GPFF02:*** *It was easy I think because of like limited resources but I think it is consistency. If you will open at a set time, open and close at that time. Make sure that you try as much as possible that what they had previously still tastes the same the next time I think the consistency is what is needed.*

When probed and asked if brand communication is important for the enterprise, participants NWFF00 and GPBH00 responded by stating that:

> ***NWFF00*** *"It is fundamentally important. People want to know what you are about as aa business so that they know who they are buying from. A brand talks a little about the owner without directly saying who is the owner."*
>
> ***GPBH00*** *"Yes it is important. For people to be made aware of it."*

6.4.2.2 Secondary research QUESTION 2

The second secondary research question was posed to explore and gain insight into how brand-oriented SMMEs establish their brand identities. Therefore, the following items were asked to draw responses to the secondary question:

ITEM 4: How is brand focus adopted in your business?

According to Participants NWFF00, GPBH02, GPFF02 and GPBH06, consistency is used as the brand focus. Participant NWFF00 further stated that the business uses branded items such as a uniform and ensures visibility; and would like to modify the brand in the future. It can be said that the uniform serves to address visibility. Participant GPFF02, on the other hand, provided that the business use quality to brand focus and that the brand reflects the business. In the future, the business would like to change packaging and aesthetics. Similar to NWFF00, GPFF02 also underscored the importance of visibility, being visible on the establishment website. Participant GPBH06 indicated that the business uses accessibility and is community oriented, and as a person, the brand is passionate and respectful. In essence, visibility and consistency are used to create a brand-focused business among SMMEs. The participants' are cited saying:

> ***NWFF00*** *"That is actually interesting because it should be, isn't? it should be. I mean think about it. Food is filling my tummy and it's making me happy and for me I would see that as a person. It is something that I never truly thought of, but it should be, and I think our brand should be a person. I think what we do as small businesses is that we just want to start and we miss some of the important stuff which is branding. Before you even start trading, your branding needs to be out there, it needs to be communicated before you even do anything. I think that is something as small businesses struggle with or overlook when we start. However, it is a big part of the business. It is actually what we call the forefront of the business. Anyone that works for us. Anyone that's in the premises needs to be visible. How do they need to be visible? Branded clothing is very important. Even if it is a very small business in a very small place but for us if you work at any store, you want to familiarise yourself with who works here and branding is what makes those people stand out. Therefore, for us it is important for our staff and for us as well, when we enter the premises, we make sure that we are all branded. Even when we go to the stores sometimes, we go because it is the branding that will sell us at the end of the day. Therefore, it is a very important part of the business. I think one of the things is that at the moment we just want to be consistent with the brand that we have. So, nothing changes, no colour changes, maybe being modified in the near future but not necessarily change, just modified. Therefore, the brand that we chose to start the business with is the brand that we want to see in the next 30 years. Maybe modified here and there, but we just want it to be that way."*
>
> ***GPBH02:*** *"I want people to remember about this, hence I wanted colours to still look the same, so that it can look like something I have seen, you see. So it's very*

important that there is that consciousness, even with my clients. So, what I have done and that is the thing with Canva as well, the teaching, because you have to, with these things you have to manage and run your own brand, is that you have to learn all the time, so there is a lot studying you have to do. However, for your brand to be recognisable, you have to use the same, you have to be consistent at colours, you have to be consistent at the font, you know. So, things like that make you, even though they may be different, but you can see that the logo goes with that font, those colours, you see. However, I want people to remember about this, hence I wanted colours to still look the same, so that it can look like something I have seen, you see. Consistency makes it memorable, more than my face, because I am not putting my face out there.

GPFF02 *"At the moment we don't have a proper pizza box that is a big big goal for us. If I can have like boxes sort of think base boxes. Right now we use boxes that we buy at a local place and they are too think they just don't look good. In addition, also quality of the product they are very weak. That's the plan the look and feel to have the place itself also to just kind of reflect what we are about. I think us being that garage I think when someone comes maybe it doesn't truly say what we want it to translate. So in terms of a brand perspective I think the store I feel as if that could change the packaging definitely the big thing. In addition, then we are sorting out the website, we do have a website but it wasn't showing okay, it wasn't fitting that as well. Ideally our goal is to drive people onto the website from the website have more online sales than physical sales just because just having cash around is not truly safe. So more online sales drive people from the website have a regular newsletter that's our plan as well and then have proper packaging I think all of those things tie in."*

GPBH06: *"I want to remain consistent. I should always be accessible to my customers. I want to stay punctual because most businesses end up not functional because there is a problem with time management. This would be someone who respects what they do and prioritises what they do. This is someone who is passionate with what they do. This is someone who wants to do more. I would be happy to have more students that I could teach about hair than to be idle on the streets."*

According to Participant GPBH03, the plans around being brand focused are to have a website and banners. The enterprise as a person sees itself as compassionate, informative and delivers on promises. Participant NWBH03 highlighted that the enterprise is respectful and professional. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next.

> ***NWBH03:*** *"It is hygiene and the professionalism of the workers obviously working there. They would be classy. They would be beautiful. They would be respectful. They would value diversity obviously because you would want different people to be coming through. They would always be welcoming."*
>
> ***GPBH03***: *"Now I want a website that is the thing that I think is better. In addition, then I must also have banners, I think that is also part of the business, and because I travel a lot, especially when I go to stock and all that, then at least I can display them you see, and then my website, people can go and see my services there, yeah. I would say a flexible person, and then who keeps up with the latest trends, who is a hard worker, and then, okay she delivers, what can I say, I will say that she is friendly, she loves people, and then compassionate as well. In addition, informative also."*

In terms of a brand as a person, the participants mentioned that the businesses are sociable, accommodative, humble, determined, pragmatic, unique and friendly. The responses are cited next:

> ***NWFF02:*** *Someone sociable. Someone who is loved by people. They're not too flashy, an ordinary person who accommodates everyone. Doesn't have drama. Humble.*
>
> ***GPFF05*** *She is determined and pragmatic. She builds her own wealth; she does not depend on other people or ask.*
>
> ***NWFF03:*** *Someone who is unique, who loves himself or herself and is loving.*
>
> ***GPFF03:*** *You see friendliness, very friendly with people.*
>
> **ITEM 6: What is your brand identity? Please explain.** *In probing, the participants were asked to indicate how it is shaped, different from those of competitors, memorable and personal.*

The participants indicated that their brand identity is based on the *customer service* they provide, *the unique tastes and ingredients* and the *customer experience*. These are the aspects that enterprises use to differentiate themselves and create a memorable identity that is also personal. The brand identity of participants GPFF02 and NWFF02 is quality. Participant GPFF02 mentioned that in addition to quality, the business is about making a difference through the soup kitchen, which translates to community experience. Participant NWFF02 differentiates enterprise identity through the use of unique ingredients and good service.

The participants are cited saying:

> ***GPFF02:*** *"They get is they get a truly great product that is more than just a pizza. The things that we try to do around it in terms of the initiatives, the gaming, the soup kitchen all of these other things that are connected it is saying you are buying, yes you are buying something that taste truly good, you are buying something that is creatively done as well but you are also buying into an idea that is truly trying to make a difference."*
>
> ***NWFF02:*** *"At first, we wanted to be known as 'fast woof', but we haven't gotten it right yet. We're not just fast food. For us, the quality is very important. The food must always be great. In addition, we don't make your kota in advance. We make it when you arrive because we use fresh ingredients like lettuce, and chips, which are hot, so it has to be made when you come. We do have preorders – we make it when you order and then someone delivers to you. We charge something for delivery, depending on how far you are from us. We make sure everything is different, our spices, our sauces, we cook our chips differently. Our ingredients – we know what we use, and we choose quality ingredients with our food and our great service. Even if you delivered a great kota, but your service sucked, it wouldn't work. That is what makes people come back to you. They will come back for your great food, even if the service wasn't great, but we give good service. However, we don't make chips that way other people make chips. We don't put the chips in the oil then take it out so that they get soft. We do it differently. So also, because we do it differently you would be able to tell the difference, plus we have signature sauces that other people don't have the same sauces other people are using".*

In supporting the findings, Participants NWFF03 and GPBH07 mentioned customer service and customer experience as the enterprise identity. Participants GPBH02 indicated that the enterprise is passionate about service and that is accomplished through customer experience.

The participants are cited saying:

> ***NWFF03:*** *"Good memories? Basically, when they come here, I want them to play their favourite songs on Bluetooth. I like bringing my laptop so that people sitting outside can watch movies. However, mostly, I like giving them the chessboard so that they can play chess. I have a chessboard, you see? I take it outside so that it gets busy. Yeah, so that they can play chess. Chess is part of entertainment."*
>
> ***GPBH07****: "So it will be good service and his manner of communicating with the clients."*
>
> ***GPBH02:*** *"I think it has to be my, my passion in serving, you know, I'm a true servant leader, and I always want to serve, when people talk about what they use, they will say I use Nkuli's products, you know, because I am the one that they get in touch with. Yes, so there is going to be the banners, and there is going to be the product, and I want to get to a point where I believe in people trying things out, so to have samples as well".*

In supporting the findings, Participant GPFF05 indicated customer service and unique taste, while GPBH06 stated uniqueness, customer experience, customer service and skills, and quality of the products; and NWBH03 indicated the enterprise's identity to consist of professionalism, customer service and consistency. The participants are cited saying:

> ***GPFF05:*** *"customer service. Hygiene and passion. Like I am talking in terms of buying more spices that necessary because I want to get that nice taste. I am not just selling food so that I have something to do.*
>
> ***GPBH06:*** *"Hairstyles are not the same, and I offer very rare hairstyles. People know the hairstyles I do because they are very rare. More new clients. If someone new comes from afar and tells that they have been referred by one of my clients, for me it is about the skill and that you should trust me once I start doing your hair. I will do exactly what you asked for, and if you don't have a specific hairstyle, I will still use my discretion to give you a nice hairstyle: it is about the quality of the products one uses. First, it is about how you communicate with your clients. Customer service is*

also important. Last, it is the amount. My brand identity comes back to skills, beautiful hairstyles.

NWBH03: *"In fact, I have had two people released if I may call it that because they were not following the brand identity. They came to work not looking good, not smelling good. They came to work not looking good, not smelling good. I think I will go back to what I said before, professional, neat and excellence. I want a certain thing and I know something is good. So consistency would be the response I give you."*

6.4.2.3 Secondary research QUESTION 3

The third secondary research question was asked to explore and gain insight into the brand building and development activities that SMMEs engage in and use for their enterprises. Therefore, the following questions were asked to collect information from the responses to the secondary research question:

ITEM 5: How do you build and develop the business as a brand? Please explain your answer.

Participants GPFF00, GPBH02 and GPBH06 indicated that the enterprises build and develop the business as a brand through consistency, excellence in service and quality, differentiation, knowledge, commitment and passion. Furthermore, Participant GPFF00 mentioned that consistency, excellence and quality are the business practices. Participant GPBH02 also mentioned consistency, and the owner indicated that knowledge about and differentiating the service are the establishment practices. Participant GPBH06, similar to GPBH02, indicated knowledge, commitment, love and passion for what the business does as the practice. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited below:

GPFF00: *"It is a tricky one because as a business owner you think about it from service provider. The service you provide also speaks to your brand. If you pride yourself with excellence service, if you're doing food, excellent food, high quality presentation and all of that. That's speaks a lot about the brand because, if two people are in a taxi, and they mention your name of your business, you want someone to say, oh you mean that place that sells nice food. Therefore, I think what you are selling should be very consistent and what you are selling should speak to the brand.*

That is how far I can think for now. So I take out pamphlets to inform people if I have a special that's running."

GPBH02: *"When people talk about what they use, they will say I use Nkuli's products, you know, because I am the one that they get in touch with. Doing the eye brows like micro blading and all of those, which was different from what everyone was doing at the time. In addition, I gave it cheaply, which gave me exposure to other people. Because if I wasn't having that relationship with them, I wouldn't know if they were happy, if they were seeing results, so that constant checking up, the consistency, okay, what is working for you, the clients that have not seen results, I have not seen in months and years. I have to follow a lot of beauty, to see what's the latest, how can I get this machine. So I try to give my clients something that they are going to love out of the different things I do. I have a, I use an app for booking, which is a self-booking system, so it serves as a website for me; so, it gives the clients an opportunity to see what I do, you can click on it and book for yourself. It's results driven, it's, it's for everyone, and it's affordable.* ***The total guest experience****, where the client is your guest and the total guest experience can be messed up anywhere in between, where you can never find this client again, so the minute the client books the appointment, whether it's by SMS or whatever, make sure that the client is responded to promptly and swiftly and firmly, they are given the most important, all the information but by the time you hang up, the client knows what time the appointment is."*

GPBH06: *"I am passionate with what I do. So after doing your hair five times, I will offer you something for free. Or if you bring me a certain number of clients, I will offer something for free. Communication is very important. The manner in which you address a person is key. If you cannot communicate well with people, that would cause problems. The products that I use are of high quality. This is in terms of the shampoos and some of the other products I use. This will make sure that I am different. I need to be knowledgeable in regard to everything that relates to the business. You will have knowledge on how to use these products because you cannot find them anywhere."*

Participants NWBH01 and NWBH03 indicated quality service and experience and good for customers as their practices. The participants are cited below:

> ***NWBH01***: *"a good person. I do a good job, cut is a cut but when a customer is happy they will be back within two weeks."*
>
> ***NWBH03:*** *"I think that's what over the past year we have struggling to do. Getting people to understand that when you come here, this is the experience that you are going to get. The service is going to be at this level and then you will have a plan for the following year which is truly going back to the basics because I think we have dropped slightly as far as basics are concerned."*

Participants GPFF02, GPFF05, NWFF03 and GPBH06 indicated passion for customers, quality, respect for customers and product and service knowledge. The participants are cited below:

> ***GPFF02:*** *"In the pizza world what would make us different I think just out rightly being able to, the flavours just going out there and like intentionally then expanding more in terms of like the offering of the sort of fine line between township and African kind of thing. In this world where we are saying what else can we do in regard to pizza and flavours but specifically for this kind of palette."*
>
> ***GPFF05:*** *"passion"*
>
> ***NWFF03:*** *"I buy quality products."*
>
> ***GPBH06:*** *"It makes me sad when a client comes in and I am unable to do what they want. You then have to depend on someone else to do that for you. So, one needs to keep up so that the brand stays relevant. Commitment and love for what I do is important."*

ITEM 10: What are the elements that you use to promote your business? *In probing, the participants were asked to relate to the name, tagline, colours and logo of the enterprises.*

Participants GPFF01, NWBH03, GPBH02, GPBH03, GPFF05, GPBH07, NWFF02 and NWBH02 affirmed that they do have taglines that they use to promote their businesses. When asked if the brand elements matter and add value, Participant GPBH03 indicated that they are not necessarily beneficial, and GPFF05 on the contrary indicated that they are necessary. The participants' responses to the questions on their brand communication practices and activities, which were about the choice of name for the enterprise and colours for the business and therefore their logo, provided responses relating to the brand elements, namely, name, logo and colour used to promote the business. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited below.

GPFF01: *"The logo is the same. originally, it is yellow and black, but depending on what we are printing on, then we will change. Like on paper or? Like on our t-shirts, it is yellow and navy blue that is us. It is my favourite colours. Yes, golf shirts yellow and navy blue. Any item of clothing they are going to buy our brand it should be yellow and navy blue."*

NWBH03: *"The t-shirts have got white, gray, black, yellow which is rather gold. I encourage them not to wear them all the time, especially Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, because those are not busy days. However, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, I expect to."*

GPBH02: *"I have got logos for my brands. They are standard because I want them to still look like they are from one family. So its gold, black and white. it makes them identifiable, it makes them easy to identify. The logo I designed it myself. So my logo has a silhouette of the face and the body in one. Which is every part of a woman, you know. Every single thing that I do with is on that logo. my name is also a tag line on its own, the solutions, you can't add anything to it. The white gives them a nice background, so what Truglo is, Truglo has the logo of Above Face, and then it's a ring that has the logo of Above Face, and then it's Truglo by about Above Face, so it's actually telling that it comes from. You know, so it's the font, it's the colours, the touches and different shades of the colours of the logos, they might now be always the same, but they are always within the same family."*

NWFF02: *The logo is what speaks to people and pulls people to the place. Sometimes people will choose your place because of the logo, especially if it stands out and makes them wonder "What are they selling?*

GPBH03: *"Love your roots. Honestly speaking I don't see its benefits, other than the fact that it has decorated my logo so that it can have a slogan."*

GPBH06: *"Trust Your Stylist."*

NWFF02: *"Value for your money" – that what we use, we do put it on when we post."*

GPFF05: *"I like the colour brown. Yes maybe I just had not thought of it, but I think it is necessary."*

GPBH07: *"The name of my business is the brand. Yes I can say it's a brand as well. It concerns hair; I am actually a hair doctor. My work is hair."*

NWBH02: "*Yes. Slogan… Alright, I can say it's a slogan, but at the same time, I can say it's not a slogan."*

6.4.2.4 Secondary research QUESTION 4

The fourth secondary research question was posed to explore the brand resources and capabilities that SMMEs implemented towards the enterprise as a brand and how they render customer service. Therefore, the following questions were asked to gather responses to the secondary research question:

ITEM 12: How do you give better value, ensure the business is rare, inimitable and organised?

Participant GPFF01 revealed that the enterprise products and services are its trademark and have unique ingredients, to be specific, the spices and a variety menu that is exciting. Participants GPFF05 and GPFF03 also indicated unique spices (ingredients), while Participant NWFF03 indicated unique products. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

GPFF01: *"The only trademark items that we have is on the kota line, but we have goat head meat as well. You will not expect to get a box of fish and chips at the same place as the goat head. We have ribs, we have fish and chips, we have wraps we have pap and grills, beef pap and grills. We do have wings I think are even now becoming the fastest selling on our menu. I live here I didn't come here to invest, you try not to be ignorant of your competitors, Pork a lot of people are against pork where the Russians is concerned but I realised that if I sell pork meat as grills it is moving. So, I am the only one doing that again. Like we have prawns, we have a wrap with prawns. However, on things that stand out that will remain our trademark. So, that is why I am implementing the thing that I want to brand my serviettes now, you don't want to look like as if you are in a fight but you are actually growing. So brand awareness like you are here for branding. Remember we are formally but informally* *trading so the logo will not change. That is why on the uniform we make sure that it has to be navy blue and yellow but when I make a receipt you don't pay attention to details. Why our fries are standing out why specific spice, we invested time into them. We need to have not just an ordinary chips spice. We have the unique one that even today it remains the fastest selling kota with the meat like grilled steak. We don't doubt our menu; our focus is not even if we have perfected that one. We stand out already. So, the sauces why we use specific sauces for meat why we use specific sauces or spice for chips it is a trademark. There is a unique taste that we maintain. I think more than anything it is the menu that made it for us, the things that we sold."*

GPFF05: *"You can find them but it how you mix with the spices and know which sauce mixes well with another sauce. Like I have a good combination that I know works. When you cook with a simple sauce, the taste is not so good. So I know how to add and mix spices and change it."*

NWFF03: *"So, I tried to make use of combos so that our product becomes a unique product that will succeed. Okay. Basically, I think I make sure that between those two competitors I add an extra meal that they don't have. Okay. Most of my time I like to change products. Like from those quality sauces, I add top sauces because they love them. For Russians, I buy the ones that are on the market. That's what makes everything unique."*

GPFF03: *"The service that I give them. I make sure that my food is clean, I make sure my food tastes good. So, I make sure that when I am preparing my bunny chow, that each and everything that is in there, you are able to eat, taste and it must just bind together. You must just enjoy everything together. My secret, it has to be my spice. The spice that I use is very nice, so I don't just give it anyone."*

Participants GPBH02, GPFF02 and NWFF02 specified unique products and services, continuous improvement, unique menu and taste as the enterprises' resources that set them apart from competitors. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

GPBH02: *"You know, so I am always researching, I am always trying to see what the next, how can I better this, how can I better that. Obviously with the packaging, that's what I am going to say, but I know that my product is unique because of the* *ingredients it has, I know my product is unique because of the value of the ingredients, and they don't come cheap, and I always say to my clients."*

GPFF02: *"I think what makes us unique is our intention; our intention is for this to ultimately be a sustainable business. So, I think that is the first thing our intention second, the product yes there are definitely big brands that have dominated and monopolised the field, but I think our story of where we come from truly does differentiate us a lot. I think the way in which we do the product we intentionally try to say that we are taking something that is very European and try to put it in a township African context, so I think that is a huge statement."*

NWFF02: *"And then you make stuff that you don't usually find in the township, like trifle and ice cream, cakes, cupcakes there no take-away joint that sells those things in the township. Even our kota is different. We've got ribs and chips – things you wouldn't usually find in the township. We have branded stickers. Quality, quality, quality. Nothing. Taste. I'm not sure if they can truly replicate our taste. We are the only ones that make our kotas like this, they are already different from what people see. You have to keep modifying (evolving) the menu."*

Participants GPBH07 and NWBH01 revealed that for providing VRIO, they give customers unique service and go as far as addressing economic and political challenges such as load shedding by having inverters and generators. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

GPBH07: *"We have a generator. I use the generator as backup when there's no electricity. The work of my hands, how I do my work is unique, people know that they will get something different. It's the dedication I have for the work that I do."*

NWBH01: *"It is the service and the work I do, that's why I say that it is good service. I would say talking to people in a good manner and always smiling. I have an inverter so I connect the inverter to the battery and I continue."*

ITEM 13: What do you do best compared to competitors, meeting expectations, satisfying customer wants and achieving emotional appeal?

Participants NWBH04, NWBH01 and NWFF01 indicated their cheap and affordable prices. The participants are quoted next.

NWBH04: *"Our prices are also cheap."*

NWBH01: *"You know that in a business there is that thing called price discrimination. So you find that I offer my cut at R50 some others offer their cut at R70 so it will be otherwise, but that is price discrimination so you get the price when you get to the salon."*

NWFF01: *"Yes they are expensive but the quality comes first, it's because they want quality. They bought from the prices that you see."*

The participants also indicated price and pointed out that they provide experiences that are memorable and personal. Similarly, they provide delivery services and are family oriented. The participants NWBH04, GPFF01 and GPBH02 are cited next:

NWBH04: *"Affordable prices and I also make sure that customers are happy with their hairstyles. It's service! You will leave my salon satisfied. Our prices are reasonable."*

GPFF01: *"So experience is the best, we sell experience more than anything. We had the till slip is an experience, delivery, sweets, and wet wipes is an experience. Don't undermine the space that you are in. Even if you sell fat cakes, treat fat cakes seriously. The people who are leaving at 6 am for the bus you have to be there at 5:30 am so that when they pass by they can get fat cakes. So, it is the discipline that comes with it. Yes and when you see the bike passing you pay attention that they actually deliver; like now it is a typical bike; it is not branded."*

GPBH02: *"Every brand I use, I have a direct relationship, even in written form with the manufacturer. I never want any of my people who I try, I use my products on to ever say I have this problem and I don't know who to run to. You know, so that's what I pride myself in. I pride myself in guarding each and every product line, each and every house, each and every ingredients, you know. In addition, affordable price, yeah. It's results driven, it's, it's for everyone, and it's affordable. For me, is that, I never want to stop serving, at another level, I always want, people always want to feel special, people want to feel, I make people feel special, I'm always serving, and that ability to serve, sets me apart from, I'm not saying it sets me apart, but it's something I hold highly, I do have clients that are not happy, today I have had to* *refund the client that paid yesterday, and she came, I corrected whatever she wasn't happy with, but I still refunded her, she came here and she gave me cash and I said that no, this is for your next treatment, you know, I handled her so well, overturned her negativity and refunded her, and served her with the same grace that I did yesterday, that she actually ended up feeling bad for her attitude, and she said I want to come for me (unclear) I even gave her samples. Every client is personal, so I have a very personal experience with every client; some it may be from a point of motherhood, some, it might be from a point of relationships, some it might be from a spiritual point, I have got several people who might say I will come here, sometimes people who might say. it's a personal experience for difference people."*

Participants GPFF02, NWFF02 and GPFF03 responded that they provide delivery service, affordable prices and memorable experiences. The participants are cited next:

GPFF02: *"Currently we are working with one that is owned by a young boy where he delivers bicycles; it is called door step delivery."*

NWFF02: *"We are not that affordable, but we are not expensive. We want to give you good food at a decent price. We want to balance that. So, for pricing depends on your customers, so you have to check what it is they like vs what they can afford; for example, there was a time we always had small children coming. They like our kota, but they can only afford R10 – they can't afford more than that, so we have to see what they like, for example, we know that they like lettuce, chips, achaar sauce, so you can compromise and put all those things for them, but not include the vienna, because it will take the price up. So you don't completely destroy the flavour for them. So you've still made it affordable for them, and they are happy."*

GPFF03: *"Because you are watching me as I a prepare your food, you can see what I am doing, and I have to make sure as a person who I am doing the right thing because she is also looking at me, and I don't want you to eat your food and wonder what Connie is doing now."*

ITEM 14: How do you deliver your customer service?

According to Participants GPFF01, NWBH01, NWBH04, GPFF02, NWFF02, NWFF03, and GPBH06, service delivery is done through the use of technology, phone order taking and bookings, provision and delivery of quality service, flexible operating hours, providing delivery services, offering convenience, affordability, being patient and humble, presentable and clean establishment and good communication. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***GPFF01:*** *"Yes we have a point of sale right and this long range system we have it as well. We have approximately 15 units and as you buy you will see it. We introduced it last year during COVID because of social distancing and so on. Then, when you are sitting in the car, it vibrates, and you come take your food. However, now since last year I have tried to look informal on the outside but trade formally. Where now we have deliveries we have a point of sale, you buy you get a slip, it is not everywhere where you get a slip when you buy a kota. Like WhatsApp, we don't encourage people to send orders using WhatsApp, as we are not always on the phone. So we would rather not have the orders via Facebook, phone in we answer and you can place your order. Even on Facebook if you want something I send you the contacts to call in. call the landline and place an order."*
>
> ***NWBH01:*** *"If it was not providing quality then customers would not come back. So it means that I offer good quality since they do come back."*
>
> ***NWBH04:*** *"We speak politely with our customers. We also make sure that they are happy with their hairstyles. You always get what you want and that's what makes our customers come back. Quality service! If we are too busy, I would suggest to the customer to come back tomorrow early. We do bookings as well. Booking is a safer option. Customers will wait for you if they make bookings. You build a relationship in various ways. I build a relationship through the work I do. We don't have a specific time to close the salon, but we open at a certain time. I don't mind closing at 10pm at night if I started late. On weekends we can start working at 7h00 if we have got appointments."*
>
> ***GPFF02: "****So we deliver within like a 5 to 10 kilometre radius either we do that using the local taxi network or we try to partner up with or rather collaborate with young delivery businesses around the township."*
>
> ***NWFF02:*** *"For your business to grow, you need customers so you have to keep your customers happy and have a relationship with them. When they are happy, you're happy. You're making money, everyone is happy. We always deliver delicious food,*

so as long as we keep delivering that delicious food consistently, with the same quality, with all their sauces, it's important. The customer comes back for the same quality or flavour. They are spending their money, so they expect to be happy with the quality of food you give them, so that they keep coming back, yes, because we're the only one that's open during the events close by. Convenience, speed, good quality food, good value, affordability. Nurturing your customer relationship, for example, giving them discounts when they are out of cash."

NWFF03: *"Sometimes when it's the weekend, I don't close at nine o'clock. Like, I go extra mile. Okay. I train them to know how to speak to customers. Like, even when the customer is wrong, every time, they must be humble. Like, "Okay, I understand I did this. I can change this for you. Yeah, such things. Like… I greet customers, first thing. I make them happy. I ask them how their food was. Like yesterday, they said, "Oh, it was delicious, but why didn't you add this?". Like I keep them close to the business. I have to know that my business is running well or not. Or my customers are satisfied or not. Yes or no. What you see is what you get."*

GPBH06: *"It is the kind of personality I have, but I will always refer back to my work. You are unique because of your work. So for me, it is quality products and quality service. Communication, quality service, trust, it not about me and the last thing, the place must always be representable and clean. That's part of customer service. That is one of the things customers look at."*

Participants NWBH02, GPBH02, GPFF05 and GPFF03 added that they provide good treatment of customers, follow-up services, friendly and good service and turnaround time. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

GPBH02: *"I get to let them try thigs out, and I follow up on how they are feeling, how they are doing and how these things are treating them, so definitely they are going to be coming back for something else. I have Loco, which is a, so there is Loco as well, so what it does is, it's your credit card paying system, mobile one, which I can take anywhere, it uses Wi-Fi, internet connection, so, you give clients the convenience, you give clients the flexibility and the fact that they have access to you."*

GPBH03: *"It's definitely patience. In regard to patience, I think I am very patient. I feel like I even tolerate things that I am not supposed to be tolerating sometimes,* *because sometimes there is some disrespect, and I have this thing of saying that I need to sustain my business and I am building a brand, so I don't want to come across as that rude hairdresser."*

***GPFF05**: "I am friendly; I am not rude I know that you have to greet a customer and acknowledge them and offer good service."*

***GPFF03:** "The way I treat them, the treatment that I give them. I make sure that when you eat, you get satisfied. I make sure that my business is very clean. I make sure that I give the best service. You come to sister the enterprise because of the service that you have received before and for what you see again whenever people are there. So I make sure that I give my best. Okay I will make sure that whenever my customers come to buy at the shop, the don't have to wait for long."*

***GPBH07:** "When you say that you will open the salon at 8 am, you need to keep to that time as clients become happy when you keep time. So, a person will know that Monde is open at 8 am, at 10 am I can go straight to a funeral, and I know that I will get a better service at Monde's place. Additionally, everything that you use must be kept clean. Towels and so on, people must not find themselves being wiped with dirty towels with hair. A person must know that whenever I go there, the towels are clean."*

***NWBH02:** "Mostly, our customers, if you don't treat them well, they are the ones who will tell people to never set foot inside your business because and they will tell them what was done to them."*

6.4.2.5 Secondary research QUESTION 5

The fifth secondary research question was posed to explore and gain insight into how SMMEs create attention, interest, desire and action through brand communication management. Therefore, the following questions were asked:

ITEM 15: How do you bring your business to the community's attention?

The participants indicated that they draw attention by relying on Word-of-Mouth or referrals, boards, flyers and sending SMSes. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited below:

NWBH01: *"I sent out sms's, that was it as there was no WhatsApp in those days, word of mouth. I am sure you saw a board outside when you came. It has a picture of braids and nails and all that. So, everyone who was passing by could see that I offer those services."*

GPFF01: *"With our service that we give. Every day, 365 days, we get asked for the menu, so I think referrals for us are doing bigger than boards or flyers.*

NWFF02: *"In the township, you don't have to do much. Word of mouth is the most effective tool. Once one person buys a kota, they tell someone else that they bought a kota at a certain place, let's go."*

GPFF05: *"I sometimes did flyers."*

NWFF03: *"Because people from other towns tell me, "Dude, I heard about… you're selling this and that, at this place." So, we sometimes grab those customers' attention, who live in the other towns. Yes, a while back though. We would call people and do their hair for free when promoting a certain product. Have banners and all that."*

NWBH03: *"I guess that's what we do, we also ask our customers to tag us so that other can know that we did this work, some recognition there."*

According to participants NWBH02, NWBH03, GPBH02 and GPFF02, the enterprises use social impact and social media platforms to draw attention to their businesses as brands. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

NWBH02: *"Okay. I have not reached that stage where I know how to advertise it, but what I like is that my system of advertising is treating customers well. When a customer comes here and he or she is beautiful or he or she is satisfied with the service, or when the hairdresser exceeds the customer's expectations, the moment the customer leaves the salon and people see that he or she is too beautiful, they are going to ask, "Where did you do your hair?. I made a shade. I don't use the shade. The community does. I realised that when people are waiting for taxis here, they get scorched by the sun. I realised that sometimes they would be standing there while it's raining. So, the best way to make sure that people won't be begging anyone, I decided to make a shade that would extend to the outside. They won't beg me or anyone, but they will know that Thanda Bantu made a shade for them."*

NWBH03: *"Again it was flyers; it was Facebook."*

GPBH02: *"I chose the platform of social media and used that to my advantage, and that gave me, same, every client that I have had, through social media."*

GPFF02: *"So that is how it started but what it has become and I want it to be is a business that has a strong social impact element to it. Therefore, we use the pizza as a way of connecting with the community being able to share information and play a part in us making different because we are surrounded by problems. It is working I think I don't even think it is a township business thing; it is a business thing in general. If you provide a good service then someone is most likely to tell other three people about that. However, for now it has gotten us to this point it has truly a lot of it has been people asking others if they have had our pizzas."*

Participants GPBH07 and NWFF00 indicated that, in addition to W-O-M like other owners, they also do personal selling to attract attention to the enterprises. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited below:

GPBH07: *"So when you are in business, you should market yourself in every angle. When someone has a dandruff or rash problem, I tell them that they will get help here. I also tell them that they must tell others about me they must just <u>spread the word</u> that they will no longer suffer from these problems if they come to this salon."*

NWFF00: *"I think being involved with what the community is doing. Knowing what is happening in the communities is very important. So making yourself part of the community. Knowing what's happening within the community and being part of them does wonders to your brand. There is a day in a month where we literally do word of mouth by ourselves. It takes out a lot from the SMME, when you have to go out and just sell yourself to people because sometimes you have to do that. You cannot just say social media will do that for me. Once a month, we decide on a day. We decide on a specific place or event. We will ask of we can have a stall there and speak about our business or give out coffee."*

NWFF01: *"It is only that poster written chips and russian, it is only that one. We told people personally like people whom we knew that they speak too much we told them that we make Spatlo. They will go around to the taverns and tell people who we sell Spatlo. Like WhatsApp, here on WhatsApp are not people from around here."*

ITEM 16: How do you make your customers interested in your communication to them?

Participants NWFF00, NWFF01 and GPFF03 indicated that they do sales promotions, specials in the form of discounts, freebies to create interest in their enterprises and the products and services they offer. In addition, Participant NWFF01 uses social media. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***NWFF00:*** *"Special, sales, buy one get one free."*
>
> ***NWFF02:*** *"If I have a new menu, I'll post that, just to remind people. Sometimes we do a photoshoot of our kotas, and then I post them. Sometimes we have specials, like wings can come with a bun – we post that. It's how you have formatted your posters, the colours, how your pictures were taken. I have to show the ones with things you don't find in the townships – it must get their attention. I post the same ways as I do on Facebook. Maybe I'll just change the caption a bit, add some music, make a mini video with pictures of a whole lot of our kotas, with music."*
>
> ***GPBH06:*** *"If you have referred three or four people, I will offer you something. So, clients are incentivised to send more people if you give them something. I could treat their hair for free or do a hairstyle for free. Khanyi will tell me what they want but if it is more expensive, then I'd give them a discount."*

Further to sales promotions, specials, discounts and social media, Participants GPBH02, GPFF02, NWFF01, NWFF03 and GPFF03 indicated that they use social media marketing, advertisements, pamphlets and personal selling to make customers interested in their communication. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***GPBH0****2: "Yeah, I go into, I follow a lot of people within the business that I do, and I see what, how they do it, and I try to mimic it, then I see, sometimes my ads look like professional done, you know, because I put time in it, and I always compare them to other people, that okay, if I do this, I might, that's it."*
>
> ***GPFF02:*** *"However, I truly think that we have not used like social media marketing the way that it should be; so, I think there is room for that and I am hoping that it yields better results."*
>
> ***NWFF01:*** *"Yes, we are the adverts."*

NWFF03: *"Okay. Sometimes I sell combos. Sometimes I sell tea. In winter, I sell tea. I make sure that each and every time after advertising they find what they were promised."*

GPFF03: *"I will go to social media, Facebook because I am on Facebook and I will also use my WhatsApp, I have got so many people, my clients again, we use WhatsApp for them to place their orders, we do the online, because their order is through WhatsApp, through calling, and then I will advertise there. In addition, then I will also do pamphlets. Then, I will have kids hand out the pamphlets on the streets. I am sure the word can go out there. I used to call the passers-by, and say hi I am making bunny chows, today I am giving out a taste and I would like you to taste my Russian, please taste my Vienna, I used to give out then they started telling each other that there is a bunny chow place and then that is how I became popular."*

ITEM 17: How do you make people want and come to your business?

According to participants GPFF03, NWBH02 and NWBH03, the enterprises use public relations, sponsorship and sales promotion in the form of special offers to make customers desire and purchase their products and services. The participants are cited saying:

GPFF03: *"What I do, I love children, yes. I am more in helping the children than the adults. So, whenever I see that there is a child who is suffering or you can see that they don't have food coming back from school or something, I always make them something. Yes, I am supporting a local guy, even with the potatoes, I am supporting a local guy and he also delivers."*

NWBH02: *"Sometimes when people come and say… as you can see, this is a business establishment… like the other day there was a… we're in the period of local government elections… they came here asking for donations. I didn't ask them why they wanted donations from me. I took out money and gave it to them because they came and asked. You see? So I have that feeling that if my business grows, I will be able to help other people."*

NWBH03: *"It is a perception thing truly and not that we prefer a certain type of a customer. It is a perception that individuals have of the business. I guess for us it is to change that perception and I think by doing things like matric drives. Go to schools and offering a service for free to five or six matriculants that have done well in that* *year. Going out to students and offering students special haircuts. That also would bring them back to say, wait, it is not R1 400, it is R140 and that for me would definitely help grow the brand and actually acquire a new customer instead of sticking to the older generation customer as you have also just mentioned."*

Participants GPBH02 and GPBH07 also added that they use specials, discounts and sales promotion. The participants are cited saying:

GPBH02: *"Yes, I do a lot of specials as well. I do specials on a monthly basis, like I do the major specials, like your Valentine specials, your Mother's Day specials, and all of those are like a month to month in between, you know, so I have got, and with this industry, there's low season, and then there is high season, this is where it's just completely dry, and it happens, hence, I offer so many services, so that people don't think that this is for winter and this is for summer."*

GPBH07: *"If you understand people, you know when its mampara week, the customers get helped because they still get a service even if they don't have that much money. I reduce the price to R8, and at the end of the day, I have money. If it was my normal prices, I wouldn't have the money. People would only come month end."*

According to Participants NWFF02 and NWFF03, customer service, adverts, pamphlets and face-to-face marketing are what they use to make customers desire and act by purchasing their products and services. The participants are cited saying:

NWFF02: *"Let's say I have advertised and you see my ad for the first time, and you come. I make sure that when I make your kota, you get the best kota ever so that you can come again".*

NWFF03: *"it's marketing – face to face marketing It's all about satisfaction… customer satisfaction. To make sure that… I don't lose customers. Yeah. So like, change the customer… eh suppliers. The reason why… there was a supplier that brought us bread that would expire in a day's time. Like just one night and the bread is already spoiled. So like… yeah that is why I have changed the supplier of the bread that I bought the last time. By making pamphlets. It's part of. I type them and laminate them. So, that's the strategy I use to be able to… to make a difference."*

6.4.2.6 Secondary research QUESTION 6

The sixth secondary research question was posed to explore the social media technologies and platforms that SMMEs use to communicate their enterprises. Therefore, the following questions were asked:

ITEM 19: Do you use technology to communicate about the business? Explain your answer.

The participants use various technologies to communicate their businesses. Participant GPBH02 mentioned that the enterprise uses a refresher app for bookings, Canva and the Google platform. Participants NWFF03 and GPFF02 indicated that they also use Canva. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***GPBH02:*** *"It's the booking system and it allows me to book anytime, so you don't have to call me, I just get a message that says, Khethiwe has booked for such and such a day and it gives them the ability to even shift the appointment. It gives them the ability to cancel the appointment, to reschedule, you know, so it's flexible to them and it's flexible to me. And it's fun in a way, so the app, once the client has booked, the fresher app then sends a notification to the client to confirm the appointment with the address, so it continuously sends them reminders, until they come, and when you want directions, it will give you directions, and then, even after you have come into the space, you use the same system to close the sale, and it send the receipt to the client. So what I have done and that is the thing with Canva as well, the teaching, because you have to, with these things you have to manage and run your own brand, is that you have to learn all the time, so there is a lot studying you have to do."*
>
> ***NWFF03:*** *"Canva. Canva is an internet that basically deals with designing, typing and creating."*
>
> ***GPFF02:*** *"We then create posters or slash flyers I use those I mainly just use Canva edit stuff like that and just put our logo there."*

Participant GPFF05 uses the logo maker app, while Participant NWFF02 uses the digital menu. Participant GPFF01 indicated that the enterprise uses social media and long-range systems. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***GPFF05:*** *"Yes but on the phone, not those which are printed. Yes then I put it on my status and on Facebook, logo maker".*
>
> ***NWFF02:*** *"No, we use Khokha."*
>
> ***GPFF01:*** *"Then, in terms of communication we are on social media more than anything. All these change, the packaging technology I have LRS a long range system, those things that when we have an order they vibrate and you come we have that."*
>
> ***NWFF02:*** *"We do put it on when we post. It's on our digital menu."*

In addition to the technologies mentioned earlier, SMME owners also use SMS. This is evident in their responses during the interviews. The SMSes are used to send communication for order taking. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited below:

> ***NWFF02:*** "*I can take your order from an SMS, but I would first have to call you to confirm*."
>
> ***NWBH01:*** "*I sent out SMSes*."
>
> ***NWFF04:*** "*I would SMS. Sometimes I could see their number appear on WhatsApp, and I would send a message*."

ITEM 20: What social media platforms do you use and why?

Participants GPFF01 and NWBH01 indicated that they use Facebook and WhatsApp social media platforms. They post status updates, pictures of the services and food they offer and sell. Participant NWBH04 uses the platforms for bookings and to provide directions similar to Participant GPBH02's use of technology. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***GPFF01:*** *"Branding and communication I think it is something that I have undermined because of where we are. Then, in terms of communication, we are on social media more than anything. If we have something on the menu or trading hours we use*

Facebook or WhatsApp usually that is how we communicate we don't do in a formal way where we want to be out there. I think word of mouth more for us is what works more than. Yes those are the ones I usually post every now and then like maybe this week when I am cooking something I will just take a photo. We like taking photos of our food, and we put it as a WhatsApp status."

NWBH01: *"I Facebook, WhatsApp status sometimes take pictures and post them onto Facebook. Facebook everyone has it, even young kids. The majority of people have Facebook. WhatsApp status many people can see it in a short space of time. I post it and then I write about it. In addition, sometimes I write the price on Facebook to show people who the haircut is smart and how much it costs. It is fast you see the 'likes' yes once you have many likes it means that the viewership was high but even they didn't like it, they have still viewed."*

NWBH04: *"I would upload pictures. I also posted a few pictures on Facebook. New customers would come to the salon. The customer would be the one telling me that they saw our details on Facebook. Some customers would make bookings via Facebook. Some would ask for directions."*

Participant GPBH02 also uses Facebook and advertises on the social media platform. The owner uses Instagram in addition to WhatsApp. Participant GPBH03 uses WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram for posting, building a clientele, bringing referrals and communicating with customers. Participant GPFF06 uses referrals, provides customer services and posts services. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

GPBH02: *"I am spending money on Facebook for my ads to be seen on Facebook and Instagram. However, also something that I have realised through advertising through Facebook is that there are so many people who require my services, especially at the price that I am giving it, in other provinces. I am investing to leads. So for an ad, maybe I will run an ad for about two weeks, it depends, and I will decide that okay for the next month I will pay an R1000 for this ad. For the next seven days, for the next whatever. In addition, some ads are more popular than others, you know, and those that are popular I might decide to boost again. I am seeing the value in it but also those small ads, I weigh to introduce people into these other things that I do.*

So they might want, they might be attracted to one thing but as soon as they go my page or they come to me, then they learn about all these things, these other services."

GPBH03: *"WhatsApp, Instagram. Eventually, I started posting on Facebook and told people who I do platting, and people came, and that's when I started doing house calls. Yes, cause that's the one that I post a lot on. Every day. Like I spend most of the time on Facebook. I am comfortable with Facebook over Instagram because it has been years since I have been using Facebook, so I don't truly understand Instagram. It's very important; it plays a major role in building clientele. Most people don't know me, and most of my clients I found them on Facebook. I feel like communication is key, that's how I always put it. My clients, I communicate with them via WhatsApp, via Facebook. I feel like WhatsApp is instant compared to Facebook. It is instant because most of the time when you send it now, it is received now, and one can answer now. It also brings referrals, it's both. Remember in my Facebook there is this button that you press that takes you straight to my WhatsApp."*

GPBH06: *"WhatsApp is our number 1 because it does not cost a lot of money. Even with 20 cents, one is able to view WhatsApp statuses or whatever or read messages. With word of mouth, I always ask my clients to refer more people. I give out my contact details. Although I don't use any money to market my business, I still get referrals. I post my pictures and quotes on WhatsApp, and I also respond quicker to clients' messages. Quick response time is very important as a business man. It could be someone who urgently wants to come to the salon or who needs a response now. You could lose the client if you respond after 30 minutes."*

Participants NWFF01, GPBH06, NWFF02 and GPFF05 support the foregoing participants that they use Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram social media platforms. The participants further stated some of the reasons for using Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram for advertising, to take orders and to find new customers. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

NWFF01: *"Facebook, Facebook has a lot of people there new customers. I only take orders from people whom I trust."*

GPBH06: *"Many people are on WhatsApp and Facebook, and that makes it easier for them to reach us."*

NWFF02: *"We use social media quite a lot as well, and they are the ones that are always on their smartphones. Sometime you will hear customers say they saw something on Facebook, but they can't remember what it is, but they want to try it. Additionally, with Facebook, you can monitor how many people have interacted with your page, and how they have shared and how many people it's reached. It shows you all the activities that happened on your page. In addition, also, you can advertise for my brand on your page. In addition, there's a tool where you can pay for promotions, even if I don't have a page. I spend money on my data Instagram is different. It's not easy to reach everyone on Instagram – not everyone has access, like older people and younger children. They use Facebook before they use Instagram. Facebook is more effective because many people are on it. On Facebook, I post, but I don't like to use too many videos because posts are more permanent. I want it to look clean and organised. In WhatsApp, the post disappears. No, not every month. Maybe every three months. I usually use it if I'm launching something, like I've added something to the menu. You can interact with customers. When they ask "how much", you can always respond. Additionally, some of our customers come from Klerksdorp. Our Facebook page has our location our contact details, everything. They can even order from Facebook, but that is not a service I currently use, but WhatsApp is fine it has a quick turnaround. A customer can order, and you can respond quickly."*

GPFF05: *"Facebook yes but Instagram no. I have them but I don't know why I don't use them, a lot. Twitter is worse because I don't understand it, yes I am on Facebook mostly. Yes, I do get customers. You have to advertise constantly so that they remember. You can't advertise once and then only advertise after a few days. You have to keep on reminding them."*

Participant GPFF02 also uses the main social media platforms mentioned by other participants and mentions that Facebook is interactive. In addition to these platforms, the owner uses Twitter and LinkedIn mainly for outreach programmes. The outreach programme supports participants NWFF00, GPFF01 and NWFF02, who also have community projects. The participant's quote in response to the question is cited next:

> ***GPFF02:*** *"So, because we use social media a lot before COVID. Yes there is a definitely a feeling it feels different on each platform so on LinkedIn it is very serious so even the way that I write like I said I mostly speak about the outreach programmes that we have the collaboration that we have. Then, when I am on Twitter on Twitter, it is easier because I can post maybe approximately three or four times all in a row. So, it is slightly more casual but also there I show a lot of the product. Just so, the people know that it is actually pizza and then I also, so there I play around between retweeting from my personal account to my business account. Then, on Instagram I do a lot of pictures and videos there. In addition, then also more like advertising there so I will say it costs this much this is the picture, this is the video this is what it costs and this is where we are at. There I am just trying to get people just to come and then Facebook as well like I want them to come and buy. Facebook I get more interactions there especially my personal one but on the business one also I have got the price there I have got the picture there and I am very casual there. Because our customers use their phones a lot, I save all their numbers. Then, I post my special changes on our menus, events we are having or when we are giving away freebies. We collect clothes that are donated, and then we post them on our WhatsApp. Sometimes people give away clothes, and then people can come and pick what they want. Some people are struggling out there."*

ITEM 21: How do you deliver your customer service online?

Participants GPFF03, GPBH06 and NWBH03 indicated that they use social media platforms to provide online customer service. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

> ***GPFF03:*** *"I tell them that guys she has ordered, here is WhatsApp, because sometimes we do get difficult customers. I always show them my phone. She has ordered, let us check the time."*

GPBH06: *"Yes they do book their appointments via WhatsApp. When someone calls, I am able to tell them what to and if the hair is damaged and tell them to wash the hair and things like that."*
NWBH03: *"So, there are people who send a WhatsApp to say that I would like to come at this time then I just forward to the group receptionist and they jot it down."*

Participant GPFF01 pointed out that the enterprise uses an app for customers to place orders, while Participant GPBH02 mentioned that there is an app that is used for booking appointments and provides online vouchers for customers. Participant NWFF02 has an active online page that is used to post and to promote special offers. The participants' quotes in response to the question are cited next:

GPFF01: *"However, now since last year I have tried to look informal on the outside but trade formally. Where now we have deliveries we have a point of sale, you buy you get a slip, it is not everywhere where you get a slip when you buy a kota. No not yet we have an app for now the app you logon with our menu and our contacts and so on, you cannot place order on there yet."*

GPBH02: *"And the client, it sends a thank you message to the client, it gives the client an opportunity to rebook if they wish to and they can rate us on the system, but apart from that, what we do, we serve drinks, we serve refreshments, we have Wi-Fi, a password that we give to clients, unlimited, while they wait, while they are here, then they can use our Wi-Fi. No, when I, on the app, I close the payment, and I do click if it's cash, and whatnot, so it doesn't do these thing, but it will tell me on this day, you have had certain, it will tell me that you have had so many cash payments, credit card payments and vouchers. I also have voucher."*

NWFF02: *"We've considered it. We actually wanted to buy a board, but because we will have different specials, and they keep changing; It's easier to do it online, where we can just change it. We don't print anything or do flyers. I post them a few times a month, just to keep the page active, and then also when it's month end, I have to post something – I look at the time of the month."*

6.4.2.7 Secondary research QUESTION 7

The seventh secondary research question was posed to explore and gain insight into whether demographics determine the decision making of SMME owners in building and developing enterprises as brands and thus their brand communication management of SMMEs in South African townships. Therefore, the following questions were asked:

ITEMS 22 – 24: How old are you? What is your gender? What is your highest qualification? Do you have experience as a manager?
The participants were between the ages of 27 and 55 years. The minimum qualification of the participants was Grade 12, and the highest was an honours degree registered for a master's degree. Gender was equally distributed between the females and males. Their managerial experiences ranged from being a team leader to a director. **The participants' quotes in response to the questions are cited next.**

> ***GPFF01:*** *"Yes, I was a manager of a bottle store for five years; I was a facility manager when I was doing sound engineering."*
> ***GPBH02:*** *"I have got a diploma in beauty therapy and human resources."*
> ***GPFF02:*** *"I have got N4 in civil engineering and building; site supervision that sort of thing but in terms of the shop all of it has just been learnt."*
> ***GPBH06:*** *"Grade 12. I have done that with Revlon and obtained a certificate. So they will teach you how to apply chemicals, types of hair and all that."*
> ***NW_BH:*** *"I have an honours degree and am busy with my master's in Industrial Psychology? I'm currently a director at the university."*

The information on the demographics of the participants is captured in Table 6.3 in section 6.2.1. The participants' ages ranged from 22 – 53 years, and a gender balance of 50% males and 50% females was achieved.

ITEM 25: Do you think that the demographic information you provided influences your decision-making in building and developing your business as a brand?

According to participants NWFF02, NWFF03, GPBH06 and GPBH03, their age, qualifications and managerial experiences influence how they manage their enterprises as brands. The participants are cited saying:

> ***NWFF02:*** *"Yes. Most of the things I do in business, I learnt to do at school. I learnt to communicate through experiences at school."*
>
> ***NWFF03:*** *"Yes. Because I try all my best to achieve all of those things you're talking about."*
>
> ***GPBH06:*** *"Yes, but my only experience is in the salon."*
>
> ***GPBH03:*** *"A lot, I feel like a lot. Because some of the things, okay for me, I like putting it like this, it is kind of nice being your own boss, you know, because you determine your own hours. In addition, you don't have to answer to anyone. In addition, you run your business the way you want, so you are accountable for everything. There are no blame games to say that at the end of the day you use someone as a scapegoat. You are responsible for everything."*

The responses to the questions on demographics summarised the profile information of the owners of the enterprises. The background questions asked during the interviews and conversations, on the other hand, guided in providing the information used to profile the enterprises under study.

In the next section, a summary of the findings of the semi-structured interviews that were conducted for this research study are presented.

6.5 SUMMARY OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

A summary of the qualitative research findings is provided below.

Research question 1:

- The enterprise ***names***, ***logo*** and ***colour*** are part of the brand communication practices and activities of the business. A name is said to symbolise and identify the establishments, carry meaning, should be relevant and unique. Participants highlighted that the colours must be visible and attractive. Logos were mainly made by the owners' friends, who are graphic designers, and by people who are close to them. The name, logo and colour are **brand elements**. ***(Names, logo and colours symbolise and identify the establishments.)***
- In terms of the activities used to promote the business, the participants use social media platforms and technology such as ***Facebook***, ***Instagram*** and ***Twitter*** to post their products and services and provide updates or communicate with customers. In addition to social media platforms, they use ***word-of-mouth*** and rely on ***referrals,*** which are basically forms of W-O-M. Participants further indicated that **pamphlets**, ***flyers*** and ***boards*** are used to promote the enterprises, and these are sub-elements of the **marketing communication mix elements**. ***(Social media platforms promote the business.)***
- ***Customer service and experience*** and ***discounts*** are part of the communication dimensions of enterprises. The participants also emphasised ***consistency*** as a dimension. ***(Customer service and experience communicate the enterprise.)***
- Participants view brand communication as fundamental to the business.

Research question 2:

- In terms of adopting brand focus, the participants emphasised ***consistency*** in what they do. There are ***branded items*** such as the ***uniform*** that the businesses use to brand and communicate the enterprises. ***Quality*** is crucial in business, and enterprises are community oriented. With respect to the characteristics that personify the enterprises as being brand focused, the establishments are said to be ***respectful,***

compassionate, professional and sociable. (***Personification orientates a brand.)***

- **Brand identity** is defined by the ***customer service and experience*** that the enterprises provide to the customers. ***(Customer service and experience defines the enterprise identity.)***
- The brands are therefore reflective of the journeys from establishing the enterprises, as they defined how the owners identify their businesses as a person.

Research question 3:

- ***Consistency, excellent service and quality, differentiation, knowledge, commitment and passion*** are the practices of the enterprise owners. In addition, the owners use the ***quality of the service and experience*** to promote the brand. These practices are **dimensions of service quality**. ***(They create and distinguish an enterprise.)***
- ***Brand name, colour, tagline and logo*** are **brand development elements** that are used to promote the business. These elements are linked to the owners' brand communication practices and activities. Brand names are mainly the owners' names or nicknames or are linked to their products and services. Taglines, similar to brand names, are linked to products and services. Colours were the preferences of the owners, while logos were designed by the owners' friends, who are graphic designers, and the people who know the owners. ***(Brand development elements enhance and facilitate distinct associations.)***

Research question 4:

- ***Trademarks (products and services), unique menu and spices, continuous improvement and equipment*** are **market-related resources** that are used to provide value and ensure that the business is rare, inimitable and organised. ***Prices*** are what set the enterprises apart from their competitors; and to satisfy customer needs and wants; and emotionally appeal to the customers. Therefore, it is multifaceted from the enterprise perspective ***(Achieve better performance.)***
- ***Family-oriented, personal and memorable experiences*** are **brand-related capabilities** practical to enterprises ***(Form competitive strategies.)***

- ***Technology, operating hours, quality, and customer service and experience*** are used for **service delivery**. (***Facilitates service delivery.)***

Research question 5:

- ***W-O-M, referrals, personal selling, boards, flyers, SMSes, social media platforms and social impact*** are used to communicate with customers. These are elements of the **marketing communication mix**.
- **Sales promotion** in the form of ***discounts and specials, freebies, social media marketing, advertisements on social media platforms (Facebook and WhatsApp) and pamphlets*** are used to make customers interested in enterprise communication.
- ***Public relations, sponsorship, sales promotion, customer service and personal selling*** are used to create desire and action.
- All of the above are the **marketing communication mix.** Therefore, in creating attention, interest, desire and action (AIDA), SMME owners use marketing communication mix elements. Additionally, ***consistent customer service and samples*** are used in brand communication activities and practices; however, samples are elements of the marketing communication mix. ***(Communication tools to build awareness and influence behaviour.)***

Research question 6:

- The **technologies** used to communicate with customers of the enterprises are ***Canva, refresher App, Logo maker, Google, long range system and SMSes***. ***(Enterprise communication technologies.)***
- **Social media platforms** that are being used are ***Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram***; they are used for order taking, booking, building clientele and advertising. ***Twitter and LinkedIn*** are used for outreach projects. ***(Social media facilitates the delivery of online customer service.)***

Research question 7:

The majority of the participants were in their 30s and a few in their 40s and 50s in terms of age. The minimum qualification of the enterprise owners was Grade 12 (Matric), and there were those who had diplomas and management degrees. The owners had some management experience as team leaders, supervisors, training representatives, managers and directors. More than 50% of the participants had some managing experience. The enterprise owners thought that their demographic profiles, particularly the ones that were asked during the interview, influenced their activities and practices directed towards developing and building their businesses as brands. ***(Population factors encompassing demographics.)***

6.5.1 Reflection

The participants were asked to provide feedback or comment on the conversation and questions asked during the interview, and their responses are recorded as follows:

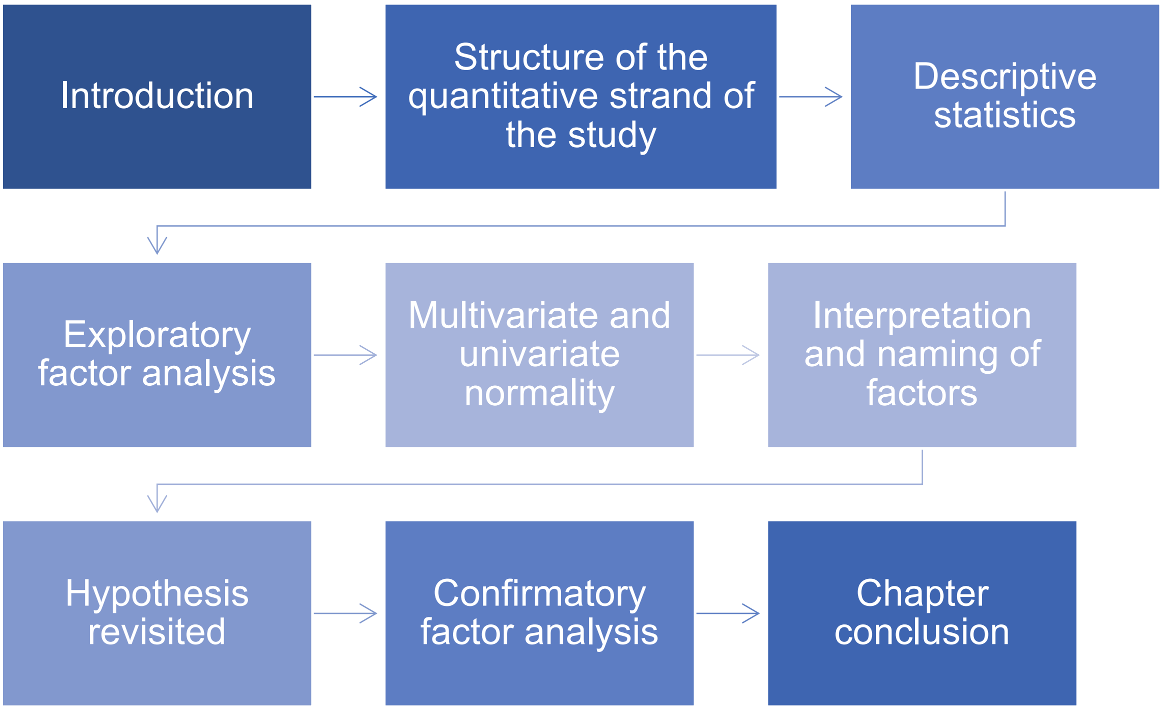
QUESTION: And do you have any comments regarding the interview?

> ***NW_FF:*** *I think it is very informative. As I said, it is probing questions that also taps into what the SMMEs should truly be looking at. It is very interesting. I feel like every SMME should be looking at this. I feel like my business partner should have been here because my eyes are opened to a lot of things that we overlook because we just want to render a service and so forth which is very important. I would say, questions were answered, but I have also learnt quite a lot from this. The questions are truly great!*
>
> ***GP_BH:*** *Due to it being my very first interview, I had absolutely no problem with it I actually liked it. It actually gave me something to think about. Even on those that I didn't understand I will still continue to search, I saw how to conduct a business.*

6.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The results of the thematic analysis pointed out that the brand communication practices and activities that SMME owners use are a combination of the brand elements, social media and the marketing communication mix. The owners create loyalty through the services they provide to the customers. Customer experience can result in spreading W-o-M, which is a deliberate strategy by enterprise owners. Service experience is linked to customer experience and is used to communicate the business. Customer service and experience are prevalent strategies that enterprises take advantage of to communicate with customers of the enterprises. The approach seems appropriate and economically viable for the enterprises considering the limited resources that are at their disposal. Social media and technology are beneficial for enterprises and are used for multiple purposes. This is owing to the benefits that they provide the enterprises. The benefits that were highlighted by the owners of the enterprises range from a wider reach to service delivery through order taking, booking of appointments and visibility. In the next chapter, Chapter 7, the quantitative data results are discussed.

CHAPTER 7: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS



7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter 6 provided the qualitative research findings. The current Chapter provides the quantitative research rsults. The structure of the quantitative strand is briefly outlined, and the research objectives of the study are provided in Table 7.1. The descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural path modelling results of this study are presented. The Chapter provides evidence for the empirical results of the research objectives for this study. The descriptive statistics presented the demographic profiles of the respondents and the statistics for the scale items measuring the constructs of this study. With instrument development in mind, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on a random sample of approximately 50% of the sample (calibration sample), which was followed by the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which was conducted on the other half of the sample (validation sample) to confirm the brand communication scale that resulted from the EFA. The Chapter concludes with a summary.

7.2 STRUCTURE OF THE QUANTITATIVE STRAND OF THE STUDY

This section of the Chapter presents the results and interpretations of the quantitative data that were collected for this study. The section will unfold as follows. First, the demographic profile of the respondents will be presented. Then, the descriptive discussions of the constructs of the study are presented. Thereafter, the EFA results followed the results of the reliability tests on the various constructs of the instrument. Subsequently, the CFA results will be presented. The section concludes with the presentation of SEM results based on the conceptual model diagrammatically presented in Chapter 5 of the study and the hypothesis test results.

There are research questions that were formulated to achieve the objective and address the problem statement of the study. These research objectives are tabulated in Table 7.1 below.

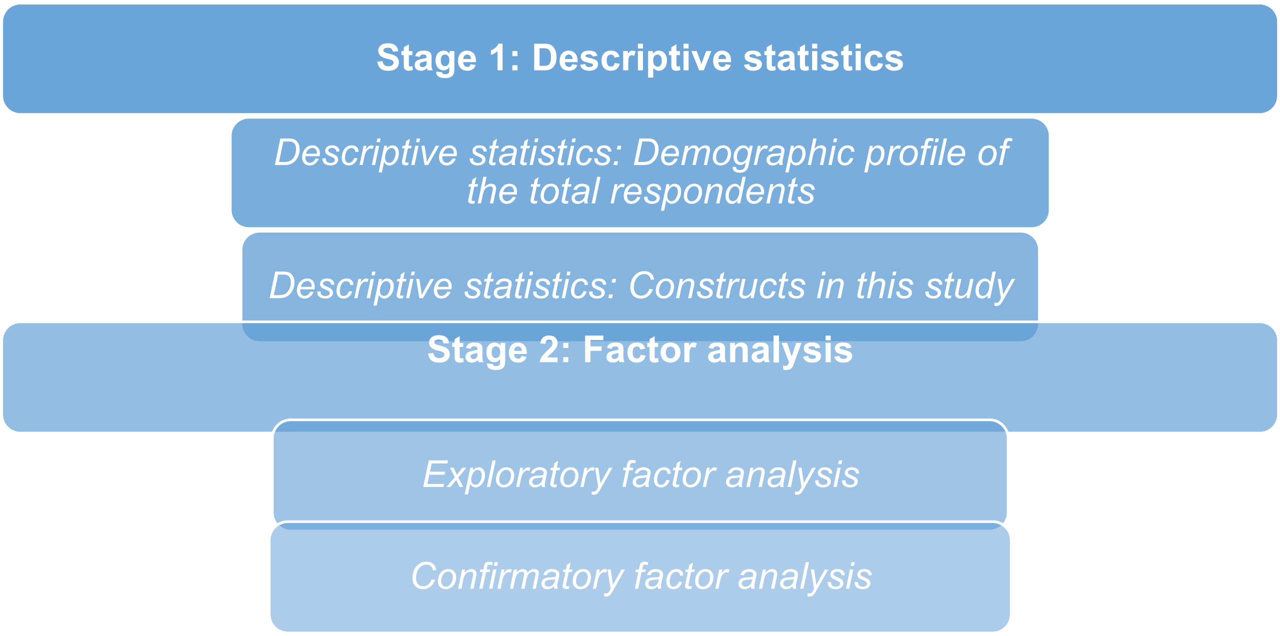
Table 7.1: Research objectives of the quantitative strand of the study

Research objective number	Description of the research objective
RO 1	To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication management practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand.
RO 2	To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of market-based resources.
RO 3	To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of service reliability.
RO 4	To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of customer experience.
RO 5	To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of market-based resources.
RO 6	To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of service reliability.
RO 7	To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability and brand building) influences the perceptions of customer experience.
RO 8	To determine whether social media influences the perceptions of market-based resources.
RO 9	To determine whether social media influences the perceptions of service reliability.
RO 10	To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study.

The research objectives presented in Table 7.1 are also stated in Chapter 1 of the study.

Figure 7.1 is provided to diagrammatically depict the stages in the quantitative data analysis phase of this study.

Figure 7.1: Stages of the data analysis used in this study



Source: Own compilation (2022).

In the next section, the descriptive statistics results of the study are presented.

7.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND CONSTRUCTS OF THE STUDY

This section of the study reports and interprets the results of the demographic information of the respondents of this study. The focus of the discussions is on the descriptive statistics with respect to the demographic profile, the sample distribution in relation to the province and the types of SMMEs on which the respondents based their responses in this study. In addition, the number of years that the respondents frequented the SMMEs are documented.

7.3.1 Descriptive statistics: Demographic profile of the total respondents

This study provides the demographic details of interest to profile the respondents and includes age category, gender, race and educational qualification. In addition, the number of times the respondents frequented the SMMEs, the types of SMMEs and the province in which the SMMEs operated were important for this study. The sample consisted of the customers of the SMMEs in the South African townships from the North-West and Gauteng Provinces. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Summary of the demographic category of the respondents

		Demographic profile of respondents (n=820)	
Variable		**N**	**Percent (%)**
Age			
	18-30	433	52.8
	31-40	267	32.6
	41-50	97	11.8
	51-60	21	2.6
	>60	2	0.2
Gender			
	Female	438	53.4
	Male	365	44.5
	Prefer not to answer	17	2.1
Race			
	African/Black	820	100
	Indian	0	0
	Coloured	0	0
	White	0	0
	Other	0	0
Highest educational qualification			
	Below matric	154	18.8
	Senior certificate/Matric	390	47.6
	Diploma/Post Matric	159	19.4
	Degree	87	10.6
	Honours degree	21	2.6
	Master's degree	8	1.0
	Doctorate/PhD	1	0.1*
Total		820	100

*NOTE: The percentage value for Doctorate/PhD highest educational qualification brings the total to 100.1% due to rounding off of the values.

The study envisaged the collection of 800 completed self-administered questionnaires. The data collection yielded a successful collection of 820 completed questionnaires. In line with

Table 7.2, a majority percentage of the respondents (52.8%) included 18-30 year old respondents, followed by the age group 31-40, accounting for 32.6% of the respondents. The respondents who were of the ages 41 to above 60 collectively accounted for 13.6% of the respondents. With regard to the respondents' gender, the majority, 53.4%, were females. All respondents for this study were African (100%), and logic affirms that the majority of the race that resides in South African townships are black Africans. A substantial percentage, almost half, of the respondents (47.6%) had a senior certificate/matric as their highest qualification, with those who had diploma/post matric certificate accounting for (19.4%) of the respondents, followed by below matric (18.8%) then degree (10.6%) and those with postgraduate degree (3.7%) collectively.

Table 7.3 highlights the sample distribution of the respondents with regard to the province they are from and the type of SMMEs they patronise. The profile of the respondents is therefore presented with reference to the total number per SMME types and per province and is tabulated in Table 7.3.

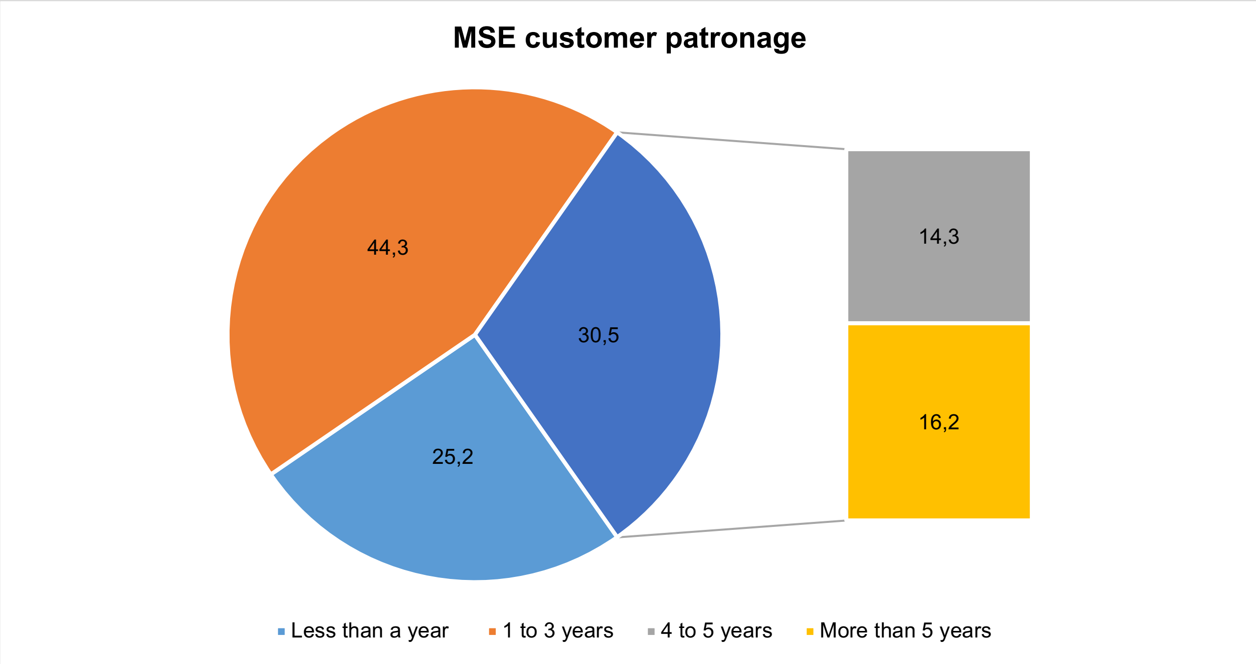
Table 7.3: Sample distribution in terms of the total number of respondents per SMME type and per province

SMME TYPE	PROVINCE	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
FAST FOOD	North West	203	24.8
HAIR AND BEAUTY SALON	North West	205	25.0
FAST FOOD	Gauteng	209	25.5
HAIR AND BEAUTY SALON	Gauteng	203	24.8
TOTAL		**820**	**101.0**

*NOTE: The percentage value brings the total to 100.1% due to rounding off of the values.

Table 7.3 indicates a fair distribution of responses with regard to the province and SMME type, as it was imperative for the data collected to be fairly distributed across, as discussed in Chapter 5 and the research design and methodology chapter in section 5.6.1.2.

Figure 7.2: Respondents' number of years of patronage



Source: Own compilation.

The results of Figure 7.2 revealed that the majority of the respondents have been frequenting their SMME for a year to three years (44.3%), followed by 25.2% of the respondents indicating that they have been doing so for less than a year. Those who have been frequenting the SMMEs for more than five years accounted for 16.2% of the respondents, followed by 14.3% stating that they have been doing so for 4 to 5 years. The results therefore suggest that most of the respondents (69.5%) have been frequenting the enterprises for three years at most.

In the next section, the descriptive statistics are discussed in relation to the constructs of the study.

7.3.2 Descriptive statistics: Construct items of the study

The descriptive statistics of the constructs of the study are reported in this section. In this study, four major constructs and 16 subdimensions were measured, namely: social media technologies (social media, social media platforms), customer service (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles), brand building and development (brand elements, brand identity, brand-related capabilities, brand-building dimensions, market-based resources), and marketing communication mix (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations). This section, therefore, reconciles the primary and secondary research objectives of this study, the primary research objective being:

- To investigate consumers' perceptions of SMMEs' brand communication practices and activities in South African townships in the Gauteng and North-West Provinces.

Table 7.4 provides a summary of the number of constructs and items included in this study. The research constructs used in this study were conceptualised in the literature review (refer to Chapters 3 to 5).

Table 7.4: Main constructs of the study and items measuring them

Research construct	Questions in the questionnaire	Number of items
Social media	Q2.1 – Q2.8	14
Social media platforms	**Q3.1 – Q3.4**	**4**
Brand elements	Q4.1 – Q4.8	8
Brand building dimension	**Q5.1 – Q5.7**	**7**
Brand related capabilities	Q6.1 – Q6.8	8
Attitude towards quality	**Q7.1 – Q7.3**	**3**
Brand identity	Q8.1 – Q8.3	3
Marketing communication mix	**Q9.1 – Q9.24**	**24**
Customer service	Q10.1 – Q10.20.	20
Market resources	**Q11.1 – Q11.6**	**6**

The descriptive results for each of the constructs of this study are presented in the next section. The measurement items of the constructs resulted from the thematic analysis conducted in the qualitative strand of this research, which was used to develop a comprehensive measure that will ultimately be used to develop a brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships. It is a comprehensive model in the sense that it encompasses the brand development and building activities and practices of the enterprises and the perceptions of their customers in relation to their activities and practices.

7.3.2.1 Respondents' perceptions of the constructs

In this section, the respondents' perceptions are presented and discussed with regards to the constructs of this study. The quantitative data collection of this study required the respondents, the customers of the SMMEs (n=820), to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert-like scale with agreement scales ranging from "Strongly disagree=1", "Disagree=2", "Neither agree nor disagree=3", "Agree=4" to "Strongly agree=5" with 14 statements regarding social media. For graphical descriptive purposes only, the disagreement scales (1 and 2) were combined to be "Disagreement", scale point 3 (neutral) remained as is and the agreement scales (4 and 5) were combined to be "Agreement". This combination was applied to all the Likert-like scales for this study, namely, scales measuring brand elements, brand building dimensions, brand-related capabilities, marketing communication mix, customer service and market resources.

Results for social media

Zhang, Guo, Hu, and Liu (2017) point out that social media allows users to communicate and generate content without being physically present. Moreover, social media is considered to be an effective billboard for a firm's commercial goals and performance, and businesses use social media to increase company brand image and awareness (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016), as such, influencing company and enterprises' branding strategies. Therefore, in measuring the perceptions of the SMMEs' social media, respondents had to indicate their level of agreement with the statements on social media. The results are presented in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Respondents' perception of social media (n=820)

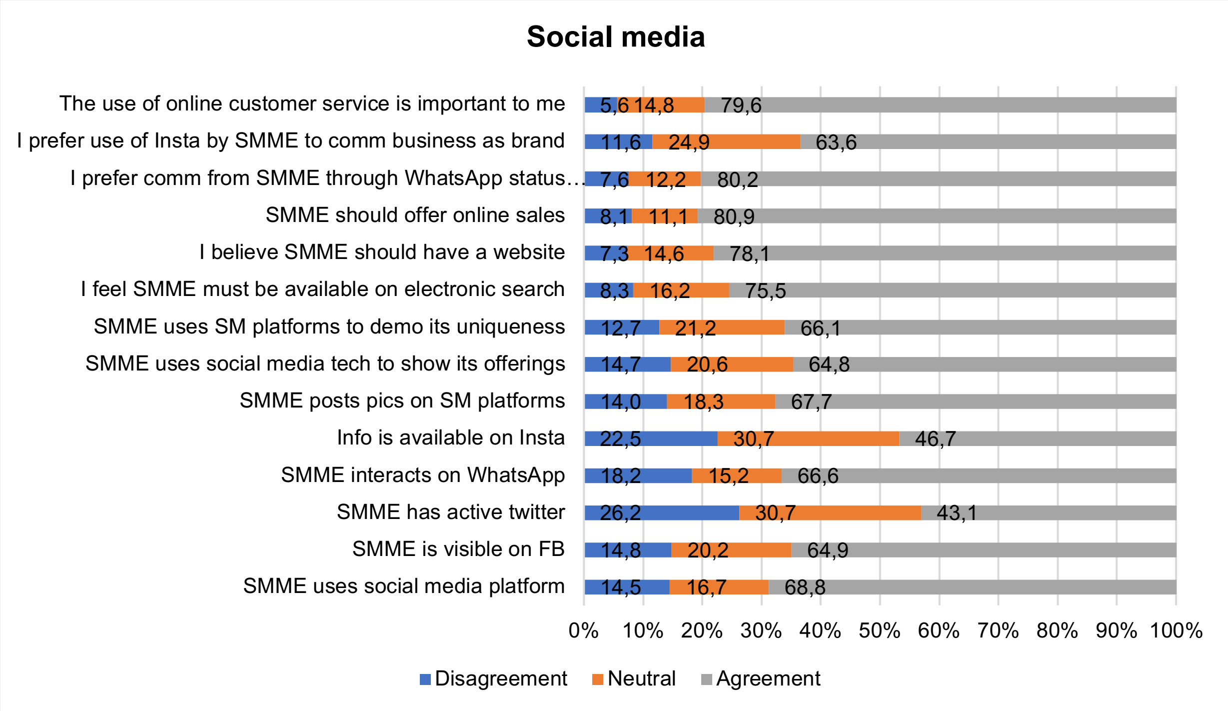
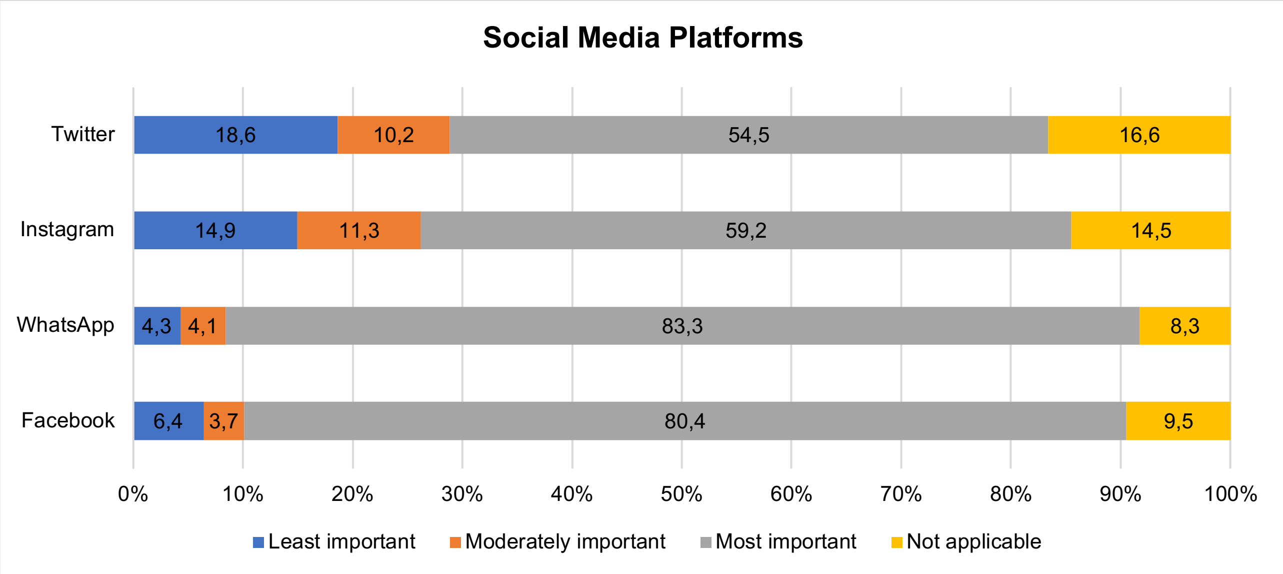


Figure 7.3 illustrates that the customers perceive the SMMEs to be using social media to communicate about the business, as at least two-thirds (68.8%) of the respondents were in agreement. At least three quarters of the respondents were in agreement that the enterprises must be available on electronic search engines and that the enterprises should have websites, suggesting that they should offer online sales and that they prefer to receive communication from the enterprises through WhatsApp status updates and that the use of online customer service is important to them. However, less than half of the respondents (43.1%) agreed that the enterprises have an active account on Twitter, and 46.7% agreed that the enterprise information is available on Instagram.

Results for social media platforms

Social media platforms are crucial for disseminating information and engaging in communication from and to various stakeholders. A rating scale was used to measure the importance of social media platforms that the SMME owners indicated in the qualitative data analysis phase that they use. Therefore, respondents (n=820) were asked to rate the platforms, with 1 being least important to 7 being most important and 8 being N/A (not applicable). For the purpose of interpretation, ratings 1, 2 and 3 were combined to be "least important", rating 4 to be "moderately important", ratings 5, 6 and 7 were combined to be "most important" and rating 8 to be "not applicable".

Figure 7.4: Respondents' perception of social media platforms



*NOTE: The percentage value for Twitter and Instagram is 99.9% due to the rounding off of the values.

Figure 7.4 illustrates the respondents' rating of the social media platforms that are important according to them. WhatsApp was considered the most important (83.3%), with Facebook (80.4%) being the second most important.

Results with respect to brand elements

Keller (2008) describes brand elements as the unique aspects of a brand that aid in differentiating a brand from competitors and creating an identity in the various environments and markets. In measuring the respondents' perceptions of the brand elements that the SMMEs use to build and develop their enterprises as brands, eight statements were used whereby the respondents had to indicate their level of agreement.

Figure 7.5: Respondents' perception of brand elements (n=820)

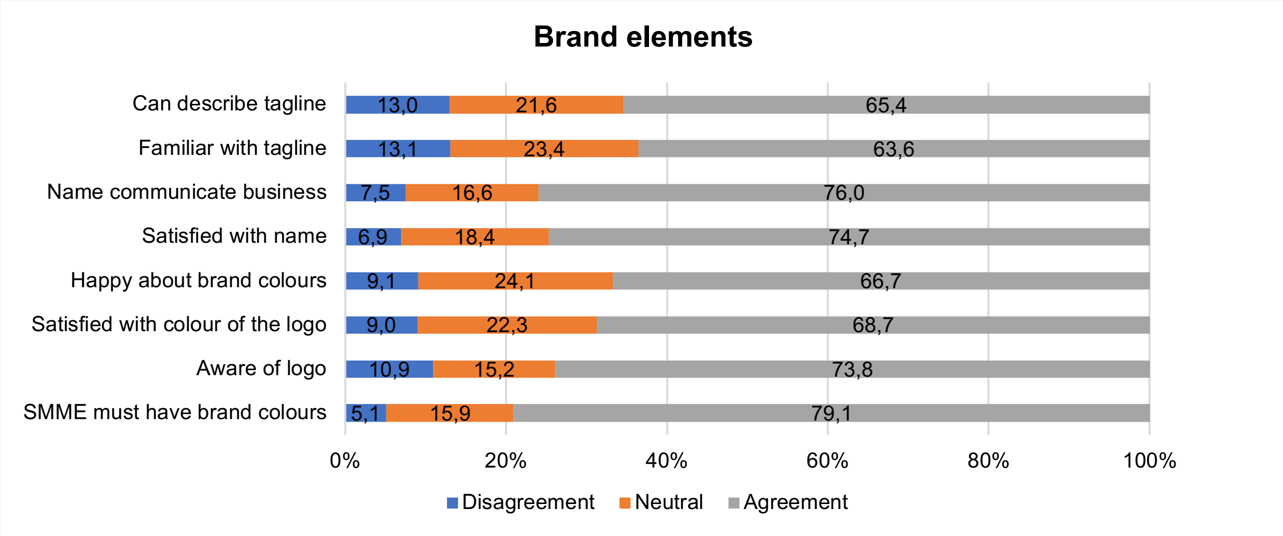


Figure 7.5 illustrates the respondents' level of perception regarding the brand elements that SMMEs use in developing and building their enterprises as a brand. Almost two-thirds, at least 63.6%, were in agreement with all the statements regarding brand elements. A large majority (79%) of the respondents agreed that the SMMEs must have brand colours. However, the lowest percentage of respondents, 63.6%, agreed that they are familiar with the tagline, and 65.4% of the respondents agreed that they are able to describe the tagline of the SMMEs. Therefore, SMMEs should focus on improving their taglines, making them visible.

Results with respect to brand building dimensions

Keller (2008) explained brand building as an activity that aids in generating awareness about a business deploying strategies and campaigns with the objective of creating a unique and permanent image in the market. There were seven statements used where the respondents had to indicate their level of agreement with relating to their perceptions of the SMMEs' brand building dimensions.

Figure 7.6: Respondents' perception of the brand building dimension (n=820)

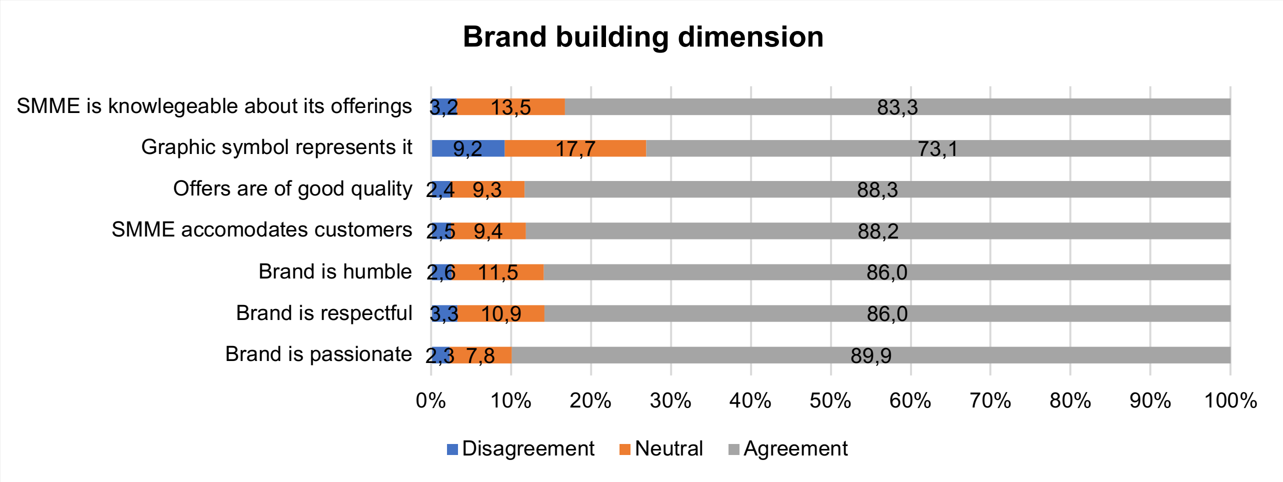


Figure 7.6 illustrates the respondents' perceptions of the SMME brand building dimensions. Regarding brand building, a large majority, above 80%, were in agreement with all statements except the statement that a graphic symbol describes it (73.1%). Of importance is that the highest percentage of respondents (89.9%) agreed that the enterprise brand is passionate about its customer.

Results with respect to brand-related capabilities

According to Cardinali, Travaglini and Giovannetti (2019), brand-related capabilities embrace strategic importance on the capabilities needed to exploit the opportunities in the market. Eight statements were used to measure brand-related capabilities, and the respondents had to indicate their level of agreement relating to their perceptions of the SMMEs' brand-related capabilities.

Figure 7.7: Respondents' perception of brand-related capabilities (n=820)

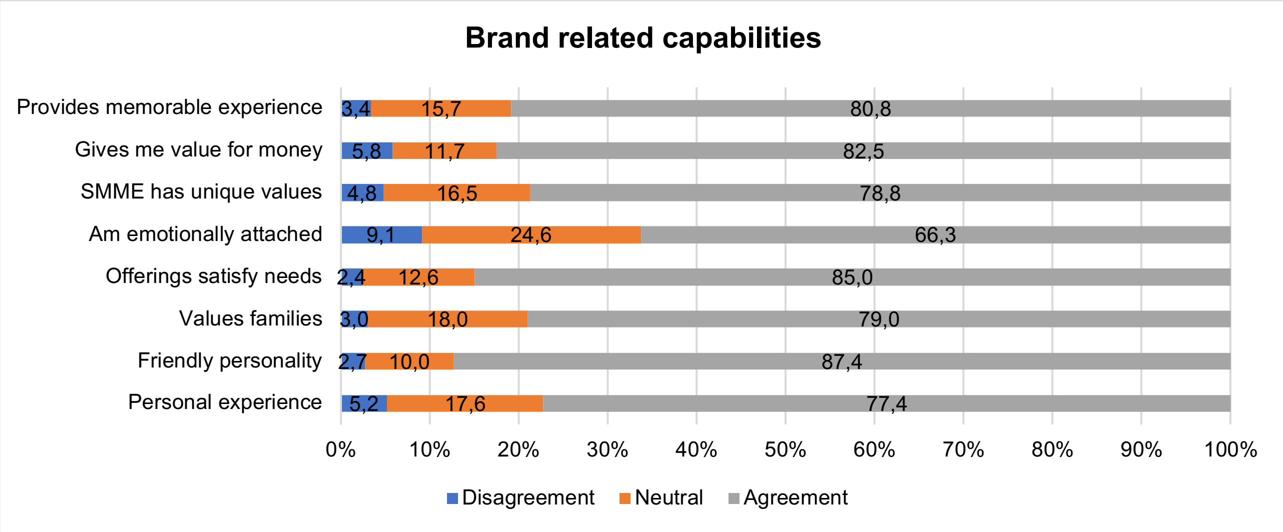


Figure 7.7 illustrates the respondents' perceptions of SMME brand-related capabilities. More than three quarters of the respondents, above 77%, agreed with all the statements except the statement of being emotionally attached to the SMMEs. Approximately two-thirds (66.3%) of the respondents indicated that they are emotionally attached to their respective enterprises.

Results with respect to attitude towards the quality of SMMEs as brands

Attitudes towards brands influence consumers' purchase decisions (Netemeyer & Garretson, 1998), and positive attitudes towards brands lead consumers to trust the brand and therefore, have confidence in the business. A rating scale was used to measure the attitude of the respondents with regard to the quality of the enterprises as brands. Therefore, respondents (n=820) were asked to rate their attitudes towards the quality of the SMME as a brand.

Figure 7.8: Respondents' attitude toward the quality of SMME as a brand (n=820)

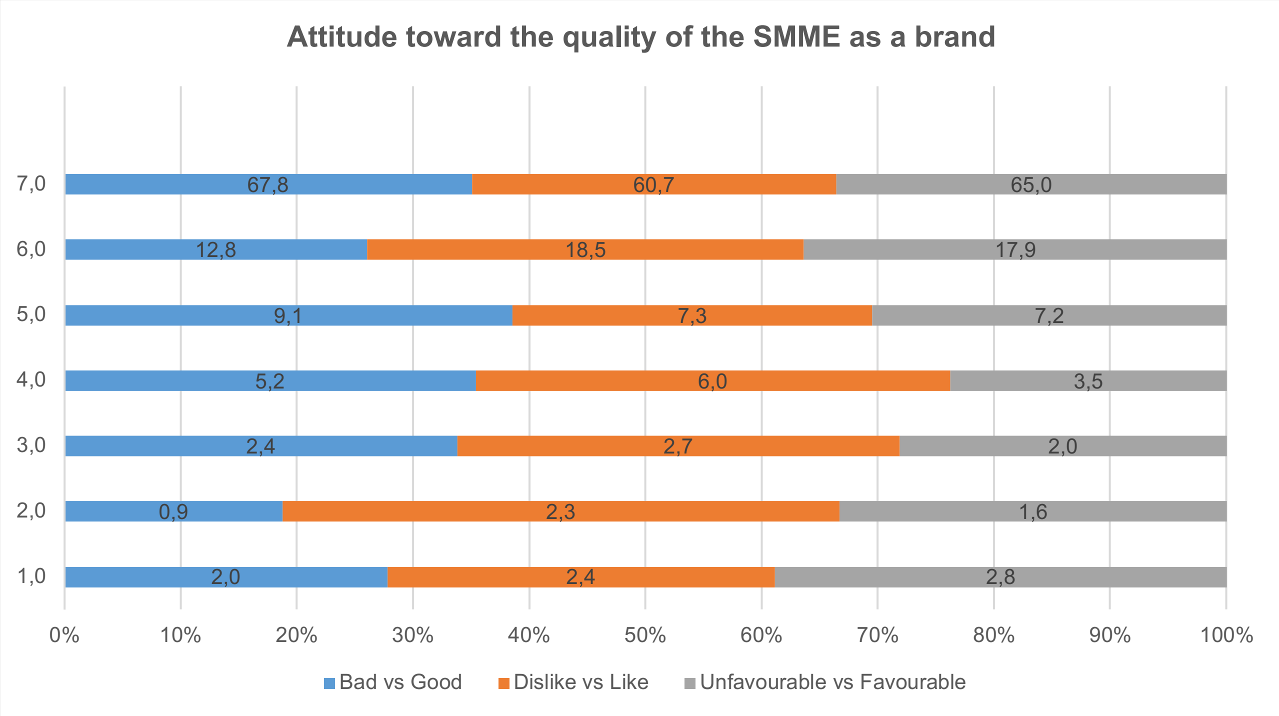
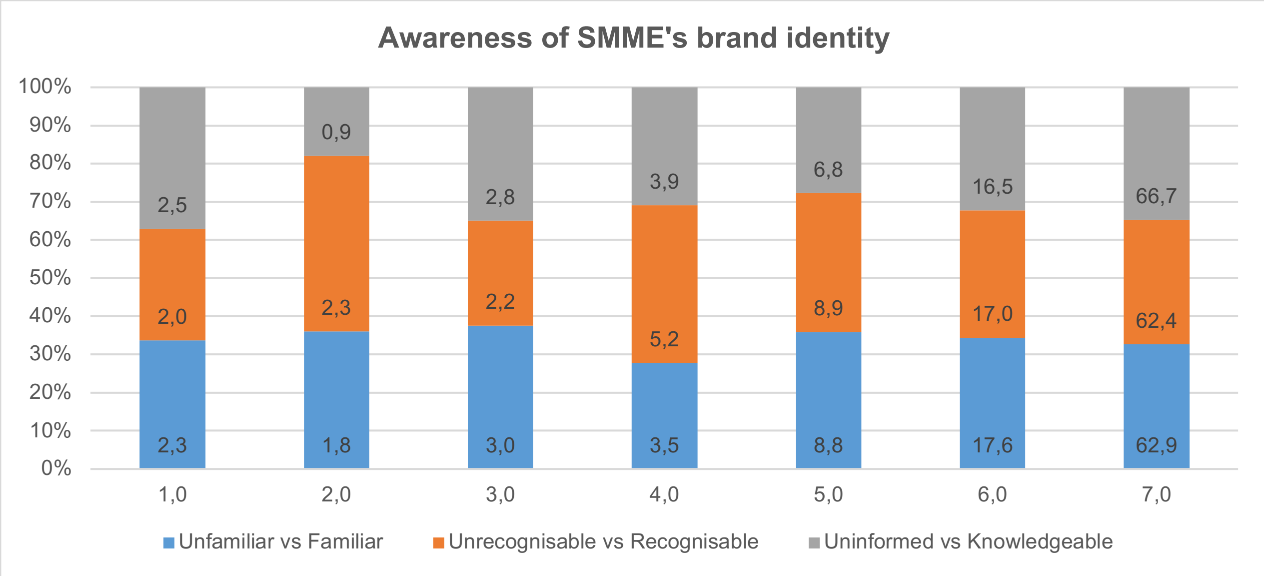


Figure 7.8 elucidates the attitudes of respondents towards the quality of the enterprises as brands. The respondents' attitudes towards the quality of the SMME as a brand are good (67.8%), with 65% indicating that their attitudes are favourable, while 60.7% of the respondents suggested that they like the enterprises as brands.

Results regarding brand identity

Foroudi, Dinne, Kitchen, Melewar and Foroudi (2015) describe "planned brand identity" to be brand identity that the business pursues to achieve through the design and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive communication strategy that creates awareness that is key in brand communication. A rating scale was used to measure the attitude of the respondents with regard to brand identity. Therefore, respondents (n=820) were asked to rate their awareness.

Figure 7.9: Respondents' perception of brand identity (n=820)

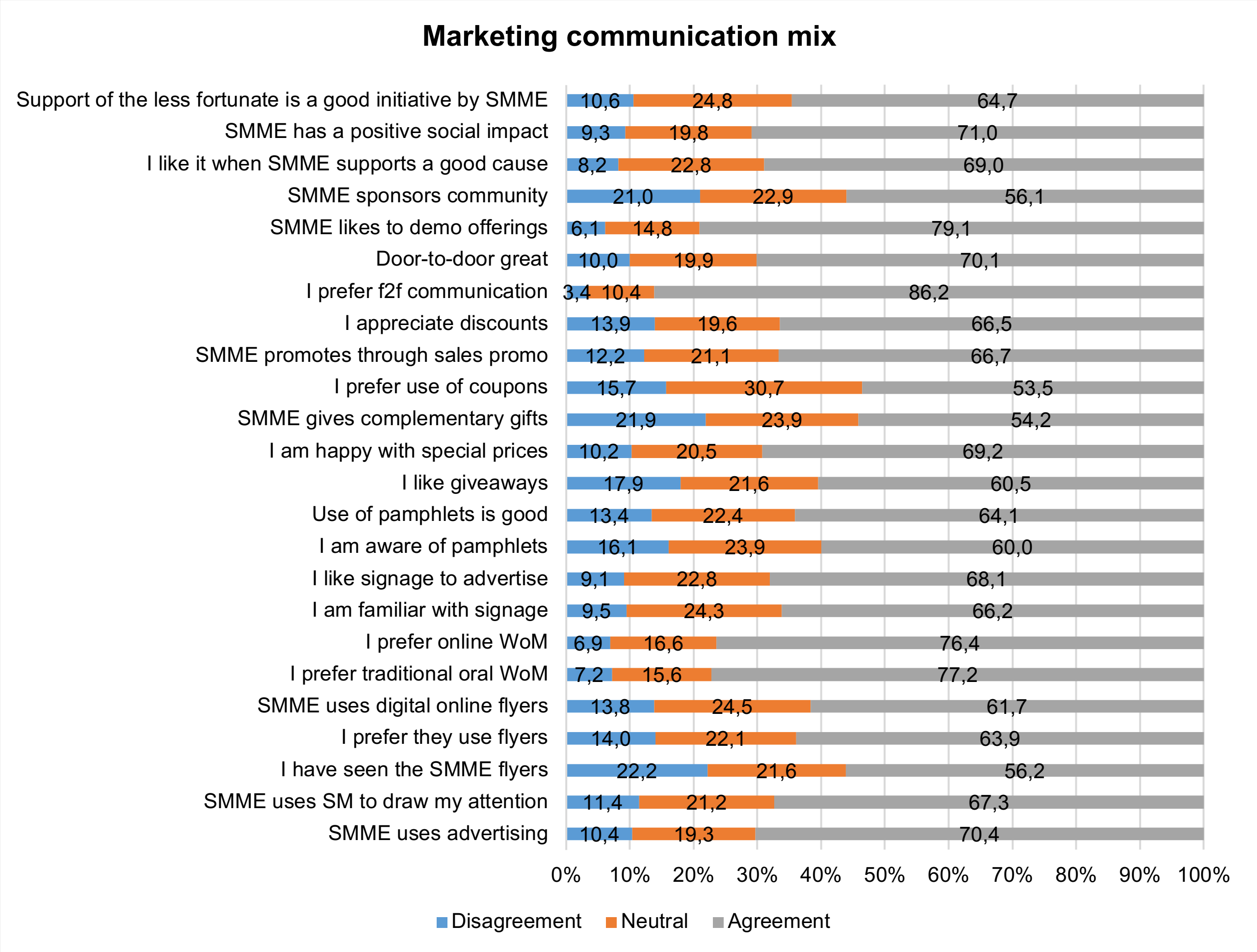


The results presented in Figure 7.9 show that 62.9% of the respondents were familiar with the brand identity. Approximately 62.4% of the respondents indicated that they recognise the brand identity, while 66.7% indicated that they are knowledgeable of the SMME's brand identity.

Results with respect to the marketing communication mix

Kotler and Armstrong (2011) explain marketing communication mix as a specific combination of instruments to promote a business communicating customer value and building relationships with customers; hence, Camilleri and Camilleri (2018) concur and describe the marketing communications mix as a specific combination of elements. With regard to the marketing communication mix, 24 statements were used to measure its dimensions, and the respondents (n=810) had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with relating to their perceptions of the SMMEs. Items (statements) Q9.1 – 9.11 measured advertising, Q9.12-Q9.17 measured sales promotion, Q9.18-9.20 measured personal selling and Q9.21-Q9.24 measured public relations.

Figure 7.10: Respondents' perception of the marketing communication mix (n=820)



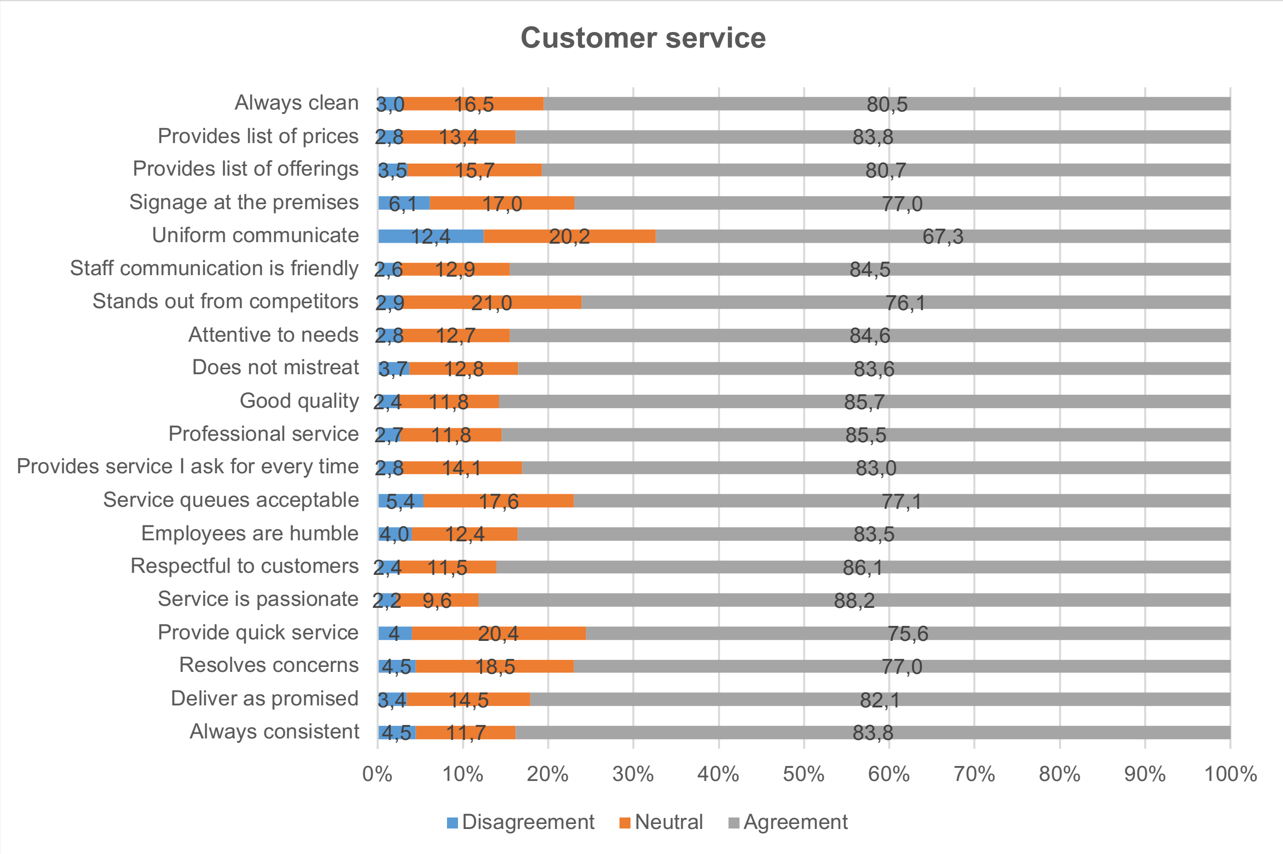
*NOTE: The percentage value does not all add up to 100% due to the rounding off of the values.

Figure 7.10 illustrates the respondents' perceptions regarding the SMME marketing communication mix that SMMEs use in developing and building their enterprises as a brand. At least half, over 50%, of the respondents agreed with all the statements regarding the marketing communication mix. A large majority (86.2%) of the respondents agreed that they prefer face-to-face communication with the employees of the SMMEs. However, the lowest percentage of respondents, 53.5%, agreed that they preferred coupons, and only 56.2% had seen the SMME flyers.

Results for customer service

According to Hsieh and Chuang (2020), customer service is important, as it results in increased product quality, competitive advantage, profitable opportunities and potential increases in sales and income. Accordingly, Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2018) underscored the importance of excellent quality customer services, arguing that it is not just about the knowledge and skills of the individual but also the way that the business as a whole strives to present a clear, positive message to customers. In measuring the respondents' perceptions of the customer service that the SMMEs provide to building and developing their enterprises as brands, 20 statements were used whereby the respondents had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. These statements were based on customer service dimensions, namely, reliability (Q10.1-Q10.4), responsiveness (Q10.5-10.8), assurance (Q10.9-Q10.12), empathy (Q10.13-Q10.15) and tangibles (Q10.16-10.20). These dimensions were, however, not developed separately in the measurement instrument but rather stated as a single non-delineated 20 statements.

Figure 7.11: Respondents' perception of customer service (n=820)



*NOTE: The percentage value does not all add up to 100% due to the rounding off of the values.

Figure 7.11 illustrates the responses to the statement regarding the customer service of the enterprises used in developing and building their enterprises as a brand. A significant 88% of the respondents agreed that the service provided is passionate. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents, that is, 66%, agreed that the staff at the establishments wear uniforms that they perceive to be communicating to them.

Results for market resources

Market-related resources provide better value, ensuring that the business is rare and cannot be exploited by competitors, inimitable in terms of not being copied and organised with reference to the resources and competencies of the business (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991). There were six statements in the measurement instrument to measure the respondents' perceptions in relation to the market resources of the enterprises. The respondents had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with regard to SMME market resources.

Figure 7.12: Respondents' perception of market resources (n=820)

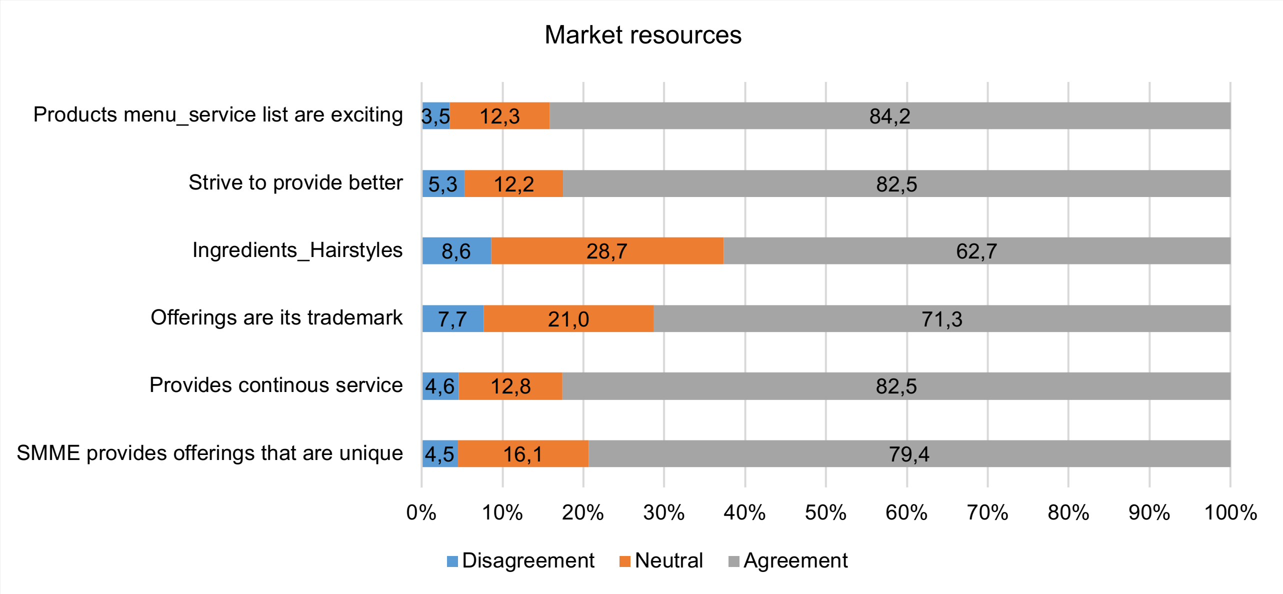


Figure 7.12 illustrates the respondents' level of perception regarding the market resources that SMMEs use in developing and building their enterprises as a brand. Almost two-thirds, 62.7%, agreed with all the statements regarding market resources. Moreover, a large majority (84%) of the respondents agreed that the SMMEs must have an exciting menu or service lists. However, the lowest percentage of respondents, 62.7%, agreed that the ingredients/hairstyles are rare and could not be found from competitors.

In the next section, the factor analysis (exploratory and confirmatory) is discussed in relation to the constructs of this study.

7.4 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR VARIABLE EVALUATION: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Williams, *et al*. (2010) assert that factor analysis is divided into two main categories: EFA and CFA. The EFA followed in this study is detailed in this section. The statistical package SPSS version 28 was used to conduct the EFA and to interpret and label the constructs. Conversely, CFA was used to confirm the factor structure identified through the EFA. The dataset of the main study was split into a random sample (sample 1: calibration sample) consisting of approximately 55% of the data (n=442); and sample 2, which consisted of the remaining cases (n=378) of the sample. Sample 1 was used for the EFA performed during this phase of the data analysis, and sample 2 (validation sample) was used for the CFA that was performed. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the approach is recommended within the scientific parameters and addresses the research and statistical rigour required in the analysis.

7.4.1 Exploratory factor analysis

In this section, the EFA results are presented. The EFA results that are presented comprise the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity as indications of the appropriateness of conducting EFA. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was used as the extraction method, and the Promax with Kaiser Normalisation technique was used as the rotation method. The EFA was conducted on responses to the Likert scale statements in questions 2, 4-6, and 9-11 and to the rating scale questions 7 and 8 of the measurement instrument. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28 on the calibration sample, sample 1 (n=442) of the respondents.

Each of the subsections was individually analysed. This was done in line with Hagger Gucciardi and Chatzisarantis (2017), who assert that a researcher include all the items in the model for EFA, that violated the content validity and nomological validity at the beginning of the analysis. Bagozzi (1981:327) explains nomological validity to "refer to the degree to which predictions in a formal theoretical network containing a construct of interest are confirmed". In one sense, the difference between predictive and nomological validity is one of degree and not kind. Predictive validity entails the relationship of measures of a variable to a single antecedent or consequent. Nomological validity, in contrast, involves many antecedents and/or consequents in a complex system". Hair *et al*. (2010) assert that mixing dependent and independent variables in a single factor analysis and then using the derived factors to support dependence relationships is inappropriate. Hair (2015) maintains that the technique can be used to factor analyse either independent or dependent variables considered separately. The EFA procedure commenced with the KMO test for sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity, which assesses the suitability of the data for factor analysis. According to Kline (2014), Pallant (2011) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), the KMO index ranges from 0 to 1, and a minimum value of 0.6 is considered appropriate for conducting factor analysis, while for Bartlett's test of sphericity, a significance value of smaller than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) is needed.

The results of the exploratory factor analysis on social media are discussed first.

7.4.1.1 Results of the factor analysis: Social media

The factor analysis of the 14 social media variables is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Social media

The results of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated that the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.930, which is above the minimum recommended value of 0.6. The KMO value confirms that the items are suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted to test the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. An identity matrix is a matrix in which all the diagonal elements are 1 and off-diagonal elements are 0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). As shown in Table 7.5, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated statistical significance ($p<0.001$). Therefore, the results of both the KMO measure and Bartlett's test support the factorability of the correlation matrix of the social media items.

Table 7.5: Factor analysis results for social media

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings	
					1	2
Social media		.930 *p*< .000		60.2		
Q2.1. The SMME uses social media platforms to communicate about the business.			0.581		0.761	
Q2.2. The SMME is visible on Facebook.			0.653		0.845	
Q2.3. The SMME has an active Twitter account.			0.567		0.664	
Q2.4. The SMME interacts with me on WhatsApp.			0.472		0.657	
Q2.5. The SMME information is available on Instagram.			0.646		0.695	
Q2.6. The SMME posts pictures of its offerings on the social media platforms.			0.762		0.866	
Q2.7. The SMME uses social media technologies to show its offerings.			0.809		0.840	
Q2.8. The SMME uses social media platforms to demonstrate its uniqueness.			0.779		0.853	
Q2.9. I feel that the SMME must be available on electronic search engines such as Google search.			0.646			0.662
Q2.10. I believe that the SMME should have a website.			0.630			0.719
Q2.11. The SMME should offer online sales.			0.539			0.867
Q2.12. I prefer to receive communication from the SMME through WhatsApp status updates.			0.446			0.665
Q2.13. I prefer the use of Instagram by the SMME to communicate the business as a brand.			0.536			0.670
Q2.14. The use of online customer service is important to me.			0.579			0.766

Factor extraction and retention

The principal axis factor analysis (PAF) method was used to extract the factors, followed by a promax rotation with Kaiser normalisation for rotating the factors. The PAF revealed two factors (or components) with eigenvalues larger than 1. For the social media construct, the analysis initially identified two factors based on the eigenvalue criterion (eigenvalue greater than one) (Field, 2013), indicating that the social media construct is not unidimensional. These two factors cumulatively explained 60.2% of the total variance in the data.

The scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) also supported the interpretation of a two-factor solution. The scree plot was included as an alternative test for factor retention. Therefore, the factors above the "elbow" point were retained for further analysis.

To aid in the interpretation and scientific utility of these two factors, promax rotation with Kaiser normalisation was performed. The factor pattern matrix contains the loadings of the factors. The inclusion of items in a factor solution depended on whether their communalities explained 0.3 of their variance with other items or above. Zeller (2006) supports communalities of 0.25, 0.275 and 0.30 as common minimum communalities. Hair (1995) suggests a minimum of ≥.30. Cheng (2019) advocates for researchers to make judgements on items with communality <0.5 and >0.25, stating that 0.5 is recommended, while >0.25 is acceptable. Therefore, for this study, communalities were accepted at 0.3 and above.

The factor rotation for this construct converged in 3 iterations. The factor loading reveals two factors. The factor loading for the social media construct, which revealed items Q2.1 to Q2.8 loading strongly on factor 1 (social media platforms) and items Q2.9 to Q2.14 loading as factor 2 (social media marketing) to enterprises. The two factors that were identified to explain social media were labelled (F1) social media platforms (Q2.1 – Q2.8) and (F2) social media marketing (Q2.9 – Q2.14).

Next, the reliability of the new factors was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the factors for social media

Table 7.6 shows the internal consistency (reliability) of the ***social media platforms*** subscale. Items Q2.1, Q2.2, Q2.3, Q2.4, Q2.5, Q2.6, Q2.7 and Q2.8 loaded strongly together as factor 1 in the final EFA analysis. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.927, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7, was obtained (Pallant, 2020).

Table 7.6: Internal consistency reliability for social media platforms

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q2_1	25.50	45.357	0.727	0.919
Q2_2	25.56	44.084	0.791	0.915
Q2_3	25.95	45.353	0.639	0.927
Q2_4	25.50	45.139	0.659	0.925
Q2_5	25.87	44.066	0.706	0.921
Q2_6	25.42	43.359	0.839	0.911
Q2_7	25.50	43.198	0.844	0.910
Q2_8	25.43	44.069	0.830	0.912

Table 7.7 shows the internal consistency reliability for ***social media marketing*** subscale. Items Q2.9, Q2.10, Q2.11, Q2.12, Q2.13 and Q2.14 loaded strongly together on factor 2. A reliability analysis conducted on these six items obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.884, which is above the generally accepted minimum of 0.7.

Table 7.7: Internal consistency reliability for social media marketing

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q2_9	20.01	16.503	0.706	0.862
Q2_10	19.94	16.650	0.721	0.859
Q2_11	20.02	16.782	0.723	0.859
Q2_12	19.98	17.267	0.630	0.874
Q2_13	20.30	16.386	0.667	0.869
Q2_14	19.96	16.703	0.729	0.858

The results of the EFA conducted for brand elements are reported next.

7.4.1.2 Results of the factor analysis: Brand elements

The factor analysis of the eight brand element variables is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Brand elements

The value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.882, which is above the minimum recommended value of 0.6. The KMO value confirms that the items are suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated statistical significance ($p<0.001$). Therefore, the results of both the KMO measure and Bartlett's test support the factorability of the correlation matrix used. The communality estimates and factor loadings as indicated in the pattern matrix are shown in Table 7.8 together with the KMO and Bartlett's test and the variance explained in the factor extraction. The communalities of the items were all above 0.30, except for Q4.1. Item 4.1 was, therefore, excluded from further analyses.

Table 7.8: Factor analysis results for the brand element construct

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Brand elements		.882 *p*< .000		57.1	1
Q4.2. I am aware of the SMME's logo			0.626		0.788
Q4.3. I am satisfied with the colours of the logo of the SMME.			0.701		0.852
Q4.4. I feel happy about the brand colours being used consistently in promotional materials.			0.613		0.798
Q4.5. I am satisfied with the name of the SMME.			0.600		0.715
Q4.6. The brand name of the SMME communicates about the business.			0.598		0.721
Q4.7. I am familiar with the tagline (slogan) of the SMME.			0.736		0.829
Q4.8. I can describe the tagline (slogan) of the SMMEs			0.708		0.781

Factor extraction and retention

The PAF method was used to extract the factors and revealed unidimensionality for the brand element construct. The PAF revealed the factor with a single eigenvalue larger than 1. This factor explained 57.1% of the total variance in the data, using a scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) and eigenvalues >1 criteria to determine the underlying factor. The analysis yielded one factor; therefore, the factor above the “elbow” point was retained.

Next, the reliability of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the brand elements factor

Table 7.9 shows the internal consistency reliability for the ***brand*** element subscale. Items Q4.2, Q4.3, Q4.4, Q4.5, Q4.6, Q4.7 and Q4.8 loaded strongly as a single factor, brand elements, in the final EFA analysis. A Cronbach’s alpha of 0.918 was obtained, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2020). The researcher used all seven items as a measure of brand elements.

Table 7.9: Internal consistency reliability for brand elements

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q4_2	27.31	31.362	0.751	0.898
Q4_3	27.39	30.673	0.808	0.892
Q4_4	27.36	31.360	0.757	0.897
Q4_5	27.22	32.553	0.682	0.903
Q4_6	27.18	32.607	0.688	0.903
Q4_7	27.46	30.272	0.787	0.894
Q4_8	27.43	30.727	0.740	0.899

The results of the EFA conducted for brand building dimensions are reported next.

7.4.1.3 Results of the factor analysis: Brand building dimension

The factor analysis of the seven brand building dimensions variables is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Brand building dimensions

The KMO value is. 905, which is above the minimum recommended 0.6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated statistical significance ($p<0.001$) for items in the brand building dimension construct (Field, 2013), indicating that a factor analysis was appropriate for the construct. The results, therefore, confirm that the items are suitable for factor analysis, and the factorability of the correlation matrix used in this EFA analysis is supported.

Table 7.10: Factor Analysis Results for the brand building dimension construct

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Brand building dimension		.905 *p*< .000		61.2	1
Q5.1. The SMME brand is passionate about its customer.			0.586		0.770
Q5.2. The SMME as a brand is respectful.			0.681		0.843
Q5.3. The SMME as a brand is humble.			0.720		0.871
Q5.4. The SMME accommodates its customer.			0.682		0.852
Q5.5. The products/services offered are of good quality.			0.624		0.822
Q5.6. The SMME has a graphic symbol that represents it.			0.441		0.602
Q5.7. The SMME is knowledgeable about its products/services.			0.516		0.678

Factor extraction and retention

The PAF method was used to extract the factors and revealed unidimensionality for the brand building dimensions construct. The PAF revealed the factor with one eigenvalue larger than 1. This factor explained 61% of the total variance in the data. Using a scree plot (see

Appendix K p. 490) and eigenvalues >1 to determine the underlying number of factors, the analysis yielded one factor, as the factor above the “elbow” point was retained.

Next, the internal consistency (reliability) of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the brand building dimensions factor

Table 7.11 shows the internal consistency reliability for the ***brand building dimensions*** scale. Items Q5.1, Q5.2, Q5.3, Q5.3, Q5.4, Q5.5, Q5.6 and Q5.7 loaded strongly together on factor 1, which is brand building, in the final EFA analysis. The Cronbach’s alpha obtained is 0.908, which is above the minimum of 0.7. The item diagnostics shown in Table 8.11 show that Cronbach’s alpha could improve if item Q5.6 was deleted; however, based on the item total correlation and its loading in the EFA, factor analysis was retained. The item-to-total correlations are also all above 0.50; therefore, these seven items were used as a measure of the brand building dimension.

Table 7.11: Internal consistency reliability for the brand building dimension

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q5_1	25.48	17.144	0.718	0.896
Q5_2	25.51	16.414	0.784	0.888
Q5_3	25.52	16.228	0.809	0.885
Q5_4	25.47	16.608	0.798	0.887
Q5_5	25.43	17.040	0.773	0.891
Q5_6	25.79	16.419	0.589	0.915
Q5_7	25.57	16.790	0.671	0.901

The results of the EFA conducted for brand-related capabilities are reported next.

7.4.1.4 Results of the factor analysis: Brand-related capabilities

The factor analysis of the eight brand-related capabilities variables is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Brand-related capabilities

The value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was. 921, which is above the minimum recommended 0.6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance ($p<0.001$). The results, therefore, confirm that the items measuring brand-related capabilities are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 7.12: Factor analysis results for the brand-related capabilities construct

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Brand related capabilities		.921 *p*< .000		59.1	1
Q6.1. The SMME provides a personal experience.			0.499		0.704
Q6.2. It has a friendly personality.			0.594		0.759
Q6.3. It values families.			0.619		0.795
Q6.4. The products/services satisfy needs.			0.640		0.822
Q6.5. I am emotionally attached to the SMME.			0.528		0.730
Q6.6. The SMME has unique values.			0.604		0.796
Q6.7. The SMME gives me value for money.			0.532		0.709
Q6.8. The SMME provides a memorable experience.			0.648		0.824

Factor extraction and retention

The PAF analysis method was used to extract factors. The analysis confirmed unidimensionality for the brand capabilities construct, with only one eigenvalue exceeding 1, explaining 59.1% of the variance in the data. All items were retained for further analysis as their communality loadings were more than 0.3. An inspection of the scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) for factor retention for the brand-related capabilities construct also supported the interpretation of the one-factor solution. Therefore, only one factor was retained for further analysis. Next, the reliability of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the brand-related capabilities factor

Table 7.13 shows the internal consistency reliability of the ***brand-related capabilities*** subscale. Items Q6.1, Q6.2, Q6.3, Q6.4, Q6.5, Q6.6, Q6.7 and Q6.8 loaded strongly together as factor 1 in the final EFA analysis. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.917, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2020), was obtained. The item diagnostics shown in Table 7.13 showed that the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved by deleting any of the items. The item-to-total correlation of these items was also above 0.50. Therefore, these eight items were used to measure brand-related capabilities.

Table 7.13: Internal consistency reliability for brand-related capabilities

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q6_1	29.28	24.011	0.670	0.911
Q6_2	29.11	24.970	0.717	0.907
Q6_3	29.21	24.044	0.754	0.904
Q6_4	29.14	24.277	0.778	0.902
Q6_5	29.47	22.975	0.699	0.910
Q6_6	29.27	23.752	0.763	0.903
Q6_7	29.16	23.991	0.675	0.910
Q6_8	29.17	23.621	0.789	0.901

The results of the EFA conducted for attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand are reported next.

7.4.1.5 Results of the factor analysis: Attitudes towards the quality of SMME as a brand

The factor analysis of the three attitude statements towards the quality of SMME as a brand variable is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Attitudes towards the quality of SMME as a brand

The KMO is above the minimum recommended 0.6, the value was. 722, and Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance ($p<0.001$). Accordingly, the results confirm that the items are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 7.14: Factor analysis results for attitudes towards the quality of SMME as a brand

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Attitude toward quality of SMME as a brand		0.722 *p*< .000		67.5	1
Q7.1. Bad vs Good			0.510		0.774
Q7.2. Dislike vs Like			0.610		0.895
Q7.3.Unfavourable vs Favourable			0.527		0.789

Factor extraction and retention

For the attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand construct, one factor was identified based on the eigenvalue criterion (eigenvalue greater than one) (Field, 2013), therefore, indicating that the construct is unidimensional. This factor explained a total of 67.5% of the total variance.

A further inspection considering the scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) for factor retention, the attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand construct, also supported the interpretation of the one-factor solution. Therefore, only one factor was retained. Next, the reliability of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand factor

Table 7.15 shows the internal consistency reliability for ***attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand*** subscale. Items Q7.1, Q7.2 and Q7.3 loaded strongly together on factor 1, which is attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand in the final EFA analysis. The Cronbach's alpha obtained for the three items that were included in the reliability analysis is 0.859, which is above the minimum of 0.7. The item diagnostics shown in Table 7.19 show that the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved even if there were items deleted. The item-to-total correlations are also all above 0.50. Therefore, these three items were used as a measure of attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand.

Table 7.15: Internal consistency reliability for attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q7_1	12.38	6.526	0.707	0.827
Q7_2	12.58	5.387	0.781	0.756
Q7_3	12.43	6.038	0.719	0.815

The results of the EFA conducted for brand identity are reported next.

7.4.1.6 Results of the factor analysis: brand identity

The factor analysis of the three brand identity variables is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Brand identity

The value of KMO measure of sampling adequacy was. 733, and Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance ($p<0.001$). The results therefore confirm that the item measures are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 7.16: Factor analysis results for the brand identity construct

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Brand identity		0.733 *p*< .000		73.0	1
Q8.1. Unfamiliar vs Familiar			0.577		0.807
Q8.2. Unrecognisable vs Recognisable.			0.684		0.922
Q8.3. Uninformed vs Informed			0.609		0.831

Table 7.16 shows that the communality value for items for all items was greater than 0.3. This means that the items measuring attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand are related similarly to brand identity.

Factor extraction and retention

The PAF method of analysis confirmed unidimensionality for the brand identity construct, as the analysis identified only one factor based on the eigenvalue criterion (eigenvalue greater than 1) (Field, 2013), explaining 73% of the variance in the data. All items were retained for further analysis, as they demonstrated loadings of more than 0.30. A further inspection considering the scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) for factor retention, the brand identity construct, also supported the interpretation of the one-factor solution. Therefore, only one factor was retained.

Next, the reliability of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the brand identity factor

Table 7.17 depicts the internal consistency reliability for the ***brand identity*** subscale. Items Q8.1, Q8.2 and Q8.3 loaded strongly together as a single factor in the final EFA analysis. The Cronbach's alpha of these three items is 0.888, which is above the generally accepted minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2020). According to the items diagnostic, the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved, and the item-to-total correlations were all above 0.50. Therefore, these three items measure brand identity.

Table 7.17: Internal consistency reliability for brand identity

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q8_1	12.53	6.227	0.753	0.867
Q8_2	12.52	6.146	0.826	0.800
Q8_3	12.41	6.709	0.768	0.853

The results of the EFA conducted for marketing communication mix are reported next.

7.4.1.7 Results of the factor analysis: Marketing communication mix

The factor analysis of the 24 marketing communication mix variables is presented.

Exploratory factor analysis: Marketing communication mix

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was above the recommended threshold of 0.5 at .954, while Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance (p<.001) for the marketing communication mix items (Field, 2013), indicating that a factor analysis was appropriate.

Table 7.18: Factor analysis results for the marketing communication mix construct

Construct	**Item description**	**KMO & Bartlett's test**	**Communalities**	**% Variance explained**	**Factor Loadings**		
Marketing communication mix		0.954 *p*< .000		59.6	1	2	3
Q9.12. I like the giveaways that the SMME provides me.			0.697		0.726		
Q9.13. I am happy with the special prices.			0.617		0.676		
Q9.14. The SMME gives complementary gifts.			0.690		0.696		
Q9.15. I prefer that the SMME use coupons.			0.608		0.571		
Q9.16. The SMME promote its			0.665		0.604		

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings		
	products/services through sales promotion						
	Q9.17. I appreciate the discounts that the SMME gives to me.		0.675		0.596		
	Q9.21. The SMME sponsors the community.		0.635		0.735		
	Q9.22. I like it when the SMME supports a good cause.		0.719		0.761		
	Q9.23. The SMME has a positive social impact.		0.647		0.666		
	Q9.24. The support for the less fortunate is a good initiative by the SMME.		0.726		0.769		
	Q9.1. The SMME uses advertising to communicate the business as a brand.		0.621			0.646	
	Q9.2. The SMME uses social media to draw my attention.		0.684			0.477	
	Q9.3. I have seen the SMME flyers.		0.680			0.796	
	Q9.4. I prefer that the SMME uses flyers for communication.		0.694			0.803	
	Q9.5. The SMME uses digital online flyers to communicate the brand, which I prefer.		0.680			0.658	
	Q9.8. I am familiar with the SMME signage.		0.669			0.482	
	Q9.9. I like the signage that the SMME uses to advertise its products and services.		0.714			0.516	
	Q9.10. I am aware of the pamphlets that the SMME distributes.		0.774			0.756	
	Q9.11. The SMME use of pamphlets is good.		0.743			0.663	
	Q9.6. I prefer traditional oral word-of-mouth communication to know about an SMME.		0.472				0.451
	Q9.7. I prefer online word-of-mouth communication to know about an SMME.		0.474				0.354

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Q9.18. I prefer face-to-face communication with the employees of the SMME.			0.380		0.596
Q9.19. It is a great idea that the SMME does door-to-door selling of its products/services.			0.519		0.625
Q9.20. The SMME likes to demonstrate its products/services.			0.641		0.533

Factor extraction and retention

The PAF results of the marketing communication mix construct revealed three factors. These factors were identified based on the eigenvalue criterion, with eigenvalues greater than one (Field, 2013), subsequently indicating that the marketing communication mix construct is not unidimensional. Factor 1, Factor 2 and Factor 3 cumulatively explained 59.6% of the total variance. All items were retained for further analysis, as they demonstrated loadings of more than 0.30. Items Q9.6 and Q9.7 were initially considered to be included in Factor 2. However, because both items also loaded on factor three, it was subsequently decided to include the items in factor three, as they loaded higher in factor three and had appropriate theoretical justification to be included with factor three. An inspection of the scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) also supported the interpretation of the three-factor solution. The "elbow" showed that three factors can be retained. Therefore, Factors 1, 2 and 3 were retained.

Prior to discussing the rotational methods for factors, it is important to point out that, the marketing communication mix and the social media constructs show the same results in terms of the factor loading when the items for both concepts are combined in line with the literature discource that suggests that social media is the element of the marketing communication mix. In the context of this study, the theoretical conceptualisation and statistical analysis of the two concepts, confirm that these are two distinct concepts and so are the constructs that make them up.

7.4.1.8 Rotational method for factors

Table 7.18 shows the factor loading for the marketing communication mix construct, which revealed items Q9.12 to Q9.17 and Q9.21 to Q9.24 loading strongly on factor 1. Items Q9.12 to Q9.17 measured sales promotion in the measurement instrument (see Appendix H p. 470), while items Q21 to Q24 measured public relations; therefore, a review of the four items suggested that the construct can emerge with those of sales promotion. The ten items were collectively renamed sales promotion. Items Q9.1 to Q9.5 and Q9.8 to Q9.11 were loaded as Factor 2. Factor 2 items measured advertising in the measurement instrument (see Appendix H p.470). Factor 3, which measured personal branding, consists of items Q9.6, Q9.7 and Q9.18 to Q9.20.

Next, the reliability of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for marketing communication factors

Table 7.19 shows the internal consistency reliability of the ***marketing communication mix: advertising*** subscale. Items Q9.1, Q9.2, Q9.3, Q9.4, Q9.5, Q9.8, Q9.9, Q9.10 and Q9.11 loaded strongly together as Factor 2 in the final EFA analysis. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.937 was obtained, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2020). The item diagnostics shown in Table 7.23 showed that the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved by deleting any of the items. The item-to-total correlation of these items was also above 0.50. Therefore, these nine items were used to measure marketing communication mix: advertising.

Table 7.19: Internal consistency reliability for marketing communication mix: Advertising

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9_1	29.92	53.477	0.723	0.932
Q9_2	29.92	52.424	0.747	0.931
Q9_3	30.21	50.404	0.768	0.930
Q9_4	30.05	51.152	0.770	0.930
Q9_5	30.00	51.141	0.783	0.929
Q9_8	29.89	52.866	0.721	0.932
Q9_9	29.86	52.316	0.776	0.929
Q9_10	30.04	50.517	0.804	0.928
Q9_11	29.98	51.176	0.776	0.929

According to the literature on sponsorship and sales promotion, it is suggested that sponsorship complements sales promotion and works best as part of integrated marketing communications. Table 7.20 depicts the internal consistency ***Marketing communication mix: Sales promotion*** subscale. Items Q9.12 – Q19.17, Q9.21 – Q9.24 loaded strongly together on Factor 1 in the final EFA analysis. These ten items reflect a combination of sales promotion and sponsorship (see Question 9 in the questionnaire included in Appendix H p. 470). The Cronbach's alpha of these ten items is 0.938, which is above the generally accepted minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2020). According to the items diagnostic, the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved, and the item-to-total correlations were all above 0.50. Therefore, these ten items measure sales promotion.

Table 7.20: Internal consistency reliability for marketing communication mix (MCM): Sales promotion (sponsorship)

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9_12	34.11	63.952	0.789	0.930
Q9_13	33.88	67.046	0.705	0.934
Q9_14	34.27	63.527	0.782	0.931
Q9_15	34.18	65.202	0.719	0.934
Q9_16	33.94	65.479	0.770	0.931
Q9_17	33.97	65.235	0.766	0.931
Q9_21	34.19	64.262	0.750	0.932
Q9_22	33.88	66.830	0.759	0.932
Q9_23	33.83	67.515	0.704	0.934
Q9_24	33.88	66.249	0.779	0.931

Table 7.21 shows the internal consistency reliability for ***Marketing communication mix: Personal branding*** subscale. Items Q9.6, Q9.7, Q9.18, Q9.19 and Q9.20 loaded strongly together on factor 3 in the final EFA analysis. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.804, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2020), was obtained. The item diagnostics illustrate that the Cronbach's alpha cannot be improved if there were items deleted. The item-to-total correlations are all above 0.50. These five items were, therefore, used as a measure of marketing communication mix: personal branding.

Table 7.21: Internal consistency reliability for marketing communication mix: Personal branding

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9_6	16.25	8.328	0.566	0.773
Q9_7	16.24	8.519	0.549	0.778
Q9_18	16.06	9.157	0.541	0.781
Q9_19	16.39	7.695	0.639	0.750
Q9_20	16.22	8.163	0.655	0.745

The results of the EFA conducted for customer service are reported next.

7.4.1.8 Results of the factor analysis: Customer service

The factor analysis of the 20 customer service variables is presented.

Results of the factor analysis: Customer service

The KMO value was .963, which is above the minimum recommended of 0.6, while Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance ($p<0.001$). The results, therefore, confirm that the items measuring customer service are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 7.22: Factor Analysis Results for the customer service construct

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings	
Customer service		0.963 *p*< .000		60.4	1	2
Q10.1. The SMME is always consistent with its product/service quality.			0.656			0.883
Q10.2. The SMME delivers as promised.			0.587			0.838
Q10.3. The SMME resolves my concerns within a reasonable time.			0.703			0.767
Q10.4. The SMME provides a quick service.			0.596			0.551
Q10.5. The SMME provides a service that shows that it is passionate about its customers.			0.533			0.491
Q10.6. The SMME is respectful to me as a customer.			0.664		0.547	
Q10.7. The SMME employees are humble.			0.654		0.642	
Q10.8. The service queues are acceptable.			0.602		0.732	
Q10.9. I trust my SMME because it provides the products/services I ask for every time.			0.679		0.720	
Q10.10. The SMME gives a professional service.			0.697		0.631	
Q10.11. The products offered are of good quality.			0.708		0.720	

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test	Communalities	% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Q10.12. The SMME does not mistreat me.			0.678		0.779
Q10.13. The SMME is attentive to my needs.			0.677		0.703
Q10.14. The SMME stands out from its competitors.			0.639		0.768
Q10.15. The staff communicates in a friendly manner.			0.615		0.788
Q10.16. The staff wear a uniform that communicate the SMME to me.			0.564		0.573
Q10.17. There is signage at the SMME premises.			0.612		0.655
Q10.18. The SMME provides a list of its products/services			0.610		0.708
Q10.19. The SMME provides a list of prices of its products/services.			0.672		0.701
Q10.20. The SMME is always clean.			0.584		0.816

Factor extraction and retention

Two factors were identified for the customer service construct based on the eigenvalue criterion, with eigenvalues greater than one criterion (Field, 2013), therefore, indicating that the customer service construct is not unidimensional. The two factors cumulatively explained 60.4% of the variance. An inspection of the scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) supported the interpretation of the two-factor solution. The "elbow" showed that two factors can be retained. Therefore, Factors 1 and 2 were retained.

Table 7.22 provides the pattern matrix results of the customer service construct. The results show that the factor loading revealed two factors measuring customer service. Factor 1 consists of items Q10.6 to Q10.20, whereas Factor 2 is made up of items Q10.1 to Q10.5.

Next, the reliability of the factors was calculated.

Reliability statistics for customer service factors

Table 7.23 depicts the internal consistency reliability for the ***service reliability*** subscale. The items constituting this subscale, from the reliability analysis conducted on the five items, had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.886, which is above the expected minimum of 0.7. These items were Q10.1, Q10.2, Q10.3, Q10.4 and Q10.5, and they loaded strongly together on Factor 2. According to the items diagnostic, the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved, and the item-to-total correlations were all above 0.50. Therefore, these five items measure customer service: enterprise perspective.

Table 7.23: Internal consistency reliability for service reliability

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10_1	16.76	7.654	0.771	0.850
Q10_2	16.73	7.900	0.727	0.860
Q10_3	16.84	7.355	0.805	0.841
Q10_4	16.79	7.719	0.700	0.867
Q10_5	16.63	8.750	0.623	0.883

Table 7.24 shows the internal consistency reliability for the ***customer experience***. Items Q10.6, Q10.7, Q10.8, Q10.9, Q10.10, Q10.11, Q10.12, Q10.13, Q10.14, Q10.15, Q10.16, Q10.17, Q10.18, Q10.19 and Q10.20 loaded strongly together on Factor 1 in the final EFA analysis. These 15 items all reflected customer service from the customer's perspective (see Question 10.6 – 10.20 in the questionnaire included in Appendix H p. 470). A reliability analysis obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.954, which is above the minimum of 0.7. The item diagnostics of the scale items showed that the Cronbach's could improve if item Q10.16 was deleted; however, based on the item- to-total correlation and its loading in the EFA, it was retained. The item-to-total correlation of these items is also above 0.5. Therefore, these fifteen items were used as a measure of customer service: customer experience.

Table 7.24: Internal consistency reliability for customer experience

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10_6	58.77	85.407	0.750	0.951
Q10_7	58.80	84.845	0.760	0.950
Q10_8	58.96	83.735	0.724	0.951
Q10_9	58.82	84.105	0.797	0.949
Q10_10	58.81	84.841	0.781	0.950
Q10_11	58.77	84.797	0.804	0.949
Q10_12	58.81	84.744	0.773	0.950
Q10_13	58.80	84.964	0.783	0.950
Q10_14	58.91	84.105	0.773	0.950
Q10_15	58,81	84.990	0.757	0.950
Q10_16	59.20	82.464	0.640	0.954
Q10_17	59.01	83.587	0.687	0.952
Q10_18	58.90	84.695	0.722	0.951
Q10_19	58.85	84.661	0.770	0.950
Q10_20	58.84	84.493	0.737	0.951

The results of the EFA conducted for market resources are reported next.

7.4.1.9 Results of the factor analysis: Market resources

The factor analysis of the six market resource variables is presented.

Results of the factor analysis: Market resources

The value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .880, while Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance ($p<0.001$). The results, therefore, confirm that the items measuring market resources are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 7.25: Factor analysis results for the market resources construct

Construct	Item description	KMO & Bartlett's test		% Variance explained	Factor Loadings
Market resources		0.880 *p*< .000		59.4	1
Q11.1. The SMME provides products/services that are unique			0.564		0.795
Q11.2. The SMME provides continuous service.			0.549		0.775
Q11.3. The SMME has products/services that are its trademark.			0.486		0.710
Q11.4. The ingredients/hairstyles are not found from those competing with it.			0.564		0.768
Q11.5. The SMME strive to provide better products/services.			0.596		0.797
Q11.6. The products menu/services list are exciting.			0.594		0.777

Factor extraction and retention

The principal axis factoring analysis revealed one factor with an eigenvalue larger than 1. The analysis confirmed unidimensionality for the market resource construct, as the analysis identified only one factor based on the eigenvalue criterion (eigenvalue greater than 1) (Field, 2013). This factor explained a total of 59.4% of the total variance. Further inspection considering the scree plot (see Appendix K p. 490) for factor retention, the market resource construct, also supported the interpretation of the one-factor solution. Therefore, only one factor was retained.

Next, the reliability of the factor was calculated.

Reliability statistics for the market resources factor

Table 7.26 shows the internal consistency reliability for the ***market resources*** subscale. Items Q11.1, Q11.2, Q11.3, Q11.4, Q11.5 and Q11.6 loaded strongly together as a single factor, market resources, in the final EFA analysis. These six items all reflect market resources (see Question 11 in the questionnaire included in Appendix H p.470). A reliability analysis conducted on these six items obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.894, which is above the generally expected minimum of .7 (Pallant, 2020). The item diagnostics shown in Table 8.38 showed that the Cronbach's alpha could not be improved by deleting any of the items. The item-to-total correlations were also all above .50. These six items were, therefore, used as a measure of market resources.

Table 7.26: Internal consistency reliability for market resources

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q11_1	20.25	13.880	0.741	0.872
Q11_2	20.24	14.298	0.723	0.875
Q11_3	20.45	13.527	0.675	0.883
Q11_4	20.50	12.908	0.727	0.876
Q11_5	20.19	13.911	0.745	0.871
Q11_6	20.10	14.449	0.717	0.876

In the next section, MAP analysis is discussed as an alternative for factor retention in addition to Kaiser's criteria and scree plots, which are discussed in sections 6.6.1.1.2 to 6.6.1.10.2. The decision is made in line with Thompson and Daniel (1996) and Hair *et al*. (2010), who point out that it is beneficial to use multiple approaches in factor retention (Velicer & Jackson, 1990).

7.4.1.10 MAP analysis for factor retention

Velicer and Jackson (1990) posit that Velicer's Minimum Average Partials (MAP) criteria and Parallel Analysis (PA) are some of the alternative tests for factor extraction. Hayton, Allen and Scarpello (2004) point out that PA, as a factor retention approach, has a tendency to retain too many factors, while MAP underestimates factors. Although PA and MAP were developed primarily for PCA, MAP is considered to be the second most accurate approach for factor extraction (Zwick & Velicer, 1986). MAP underestimates factors where there are items with low factor loading or number of variables per factor (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007).

Scholars have advanced that there are no methods that have been confirmed to be applicable in all situations (Fabrigar *et al*., 1999; Gorsuch, 1983; Pett *et al*., 2003). Therefore, Fabrigar and Wegener, (2012), Hair *et al*. (2010), Izquierdo Alfaro, Olea Díaz & Abad García (2014), Lloret, Ferreres, Hernández and Tomás (2017), Loehlin & Beaujean (2017) and Norris & Lecavalier (2010) buttress that researchers consider employing multiple methods and assessing a plausible solution to identify the most appropriate factor solution. However, factor retention must be in line with the relevant theory and prior research (Watkins, 2018). Based on the foregoing discussion about PA and MAP, MAP was considered the other alternative approach for this study.

Owing to the nature of the constructs, MAP analyses were conducted for the marketing mix questions (see Appendix H p.470), social media and customer service questions. It was not meaningful to conduct MAP in the case of unidimensional constructs found through EFA (brand elements, brand-related capabilities, brand building dimensions, market-based resources, attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand, brand identity).

The MAP analyses revealed one dimension in the case of the customer service construct. As stated before, MAP analyses tend to provide an under-extraction answer. Studying the strength of the factor loadings and the factor correlation, it was decided to retain two factors. In the case of the marketing mix, four factors are advised; however, the EFA analyses, conducted using PAF, revealed only three factors. The potential reason can be found in the fact that PCA uses total variance to extract factors compared to common variance used by PAF. Therefore, the researcher retained three factors. In the case of social media, the MAP analyses revealed two dimensions, the same number that has been established through the PAF analyses. Therefore, the two dimensions were retained.

The next section focuses on multivariate and univariate normality followed in the study.

7.5 MULTIVARIATE AND UNIVARIATE NORMALITY

Mardia's coefficient can be used in CFA/SEM to test multivariate normality but has some shortcomings. According to Bollen (1989), if Mardia's coefficient is lower than p (p +2), where p is the observed variables, then we can assume multivariate normality. Univariate normality, skewness and kurtosis for each variable in the data set were determined. There is no consensus regarding an acceptable degree of non-normality, but cut-off values of 3.00 for univariate skewness and 7.00 for univariate kurtosis have been proposed (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). Following the argument of Kline (2011), the absolute value of skewness greater than 3 and kurtosis value greater than ten may indicate a problem, and values above 20 may indicate a more serious problem. Bryne (2010) and Hair *et al*. (2010) argue that data are considered to be normal if skewness is between -2 and +2 and kurtosis is between -7 and +7. When conducting analysis in AMOS, the built-in test for normality involves the calculation of Mardia's coefficient, which is a multivariate measure of kurtosis. AMOS provides this coefficient and a corresponding "critical value", which can be interpreted as a significance test (a critical value of 1.96 corresponds to a p value of .05). If Mardia's coefficient is significant (for example, the critical ratio is greater than 1.96 in magnitude), the data may not be normally distributed. However, this significance test on its own is not a practical assessment of normality, especially in SEM. This is because tests such as these are highly sensitive to sample size, with larger sample sizes being more likely to produce significant (nonnormal) results. In SEM, where the sample size is expected to be very large, this means that Mardia's coefficient is almost always guaranteed to be significant. Therefore, the significance test on its own does not provide very useful information. In light of this, it is recommended that the significance tests be used in conjunction with descriptive statistics, namely, the kurtosis values for individual variables (Stevens, 2009).

In the EFA, owing to some items having skewness and kurtosis above +2 or below -2, which is the general threshold, the decision was to use PAF, although de Winter and Dodou (2012) advise and advocate for PAF. With the CFA, using ML, skewness and kurtosis is only a problem if skewness is outside -2 and +2 and kurtosis above 7 or below -7 even though some researchers and authors suggest 10. However, none were a problem for this study. In the next section, the interpretation and naming of factors are discussed.

7.6 INTERPRETATION AND NAMING OF THE FACTORS

Interpretation is the process of examining and selecting variables or items that are attributable to a construct and allocating a name for that construct. In this study, particularly this Chapter, reference is made to items instead of variables. It is important that labels of constructs reflect the theoretical and conceptual objectives (Taherdoost *et al*., 2020). At least two or three variables must load on a factor so it can be given a meaningful interpretation (Isaac & Michael, 1997). Henson and Roberts (2006) suggest that three or more items must load on a factor to meaningfully interpret a factor and thus a construct. The labelling of constructs is a theoretical, subjective and inductive process (Pett, *et al*. 2003). Henson and Roberts (2006) note that "the meaningfulness of latent factors is ultimately dependent on researcher definition". Williams, *et al*. (2010) posit that the process of thoroughly and systematically analysing factors is aimed at isolating items with high loadings in the pattern matrices, basically searching for factors that combined explain the majority of the responses. If the researcher is content with these factors, these should then be **operationalised and descriptively** labelled. It is important that these labels or constructs reflect the theoretical and conceptual intent (Williams *et al*., 2010). The naming of the factors is provided.

Naming of the new constructs

The factor analysis, namely, exploratory (Section 7.4.1.1) and CFA (Section 7.8.3.1), suggested that social media consists of two factors, marketing communication mix is measured by three factors, and customer service consists of two factors. These factors must be renamed, and the discussions and naming are provided next.

7.6.1. Social media

Social media is documented to have changed the marketplace, particularly those of consumers (Evans, Bratton & McKee, 2021; Helal, Ozuem & Lancaster, 2018), with major power migration taking place and to the emergence of a new class of powerful and sophisticated customers who are challenged to influence, persuade and retain (Appel *et al*., 2020; Constantinides, 2014; Evans *et al*., 2021). Social media provide two ways to communicate that makes it easier for customers to contact and interact with service providers or businesses (Appel *et al*., 2020; Hennig-Thurau *et al*., 2010; Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). The pattern matrix analysis results revealed that the respondents perceived social media to be made up of two factors. Factor 1 items reflect social media platforms, while Factor 2 items reflect respondents' social media marketing. Therefore, these factors can be labelled *social media marketing* and *social media platforms*.

Social media platforms

Social media platforms enable businesses to lower or save on marketing costs, as businesses do not necessarily have to invest larger sums of funds or budgets to communicate their business as brands, and the products and services they offer (Dahnil Marzuki, Langgat & Fabeil, 2014; Kallier, 2017; Michaelidou, Siamagka &Christodoulides, 2011), and spend more money on traditional media; hence, organisations are able to save costs and yet reach masses of their target markets (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). This is relevant for the SMME environment and markets given their financial challenges, as documented by the majority of scholars who researched their challenges and opportunities. Social media platforms are also considered "user-generated communication" (Odoom *et al*., 2017; Yaseen *et al*., 2019). Social media marketing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Quora are for connecting with people. Social media marketing tools help us to connect with people on these platforms, for example, to post on Instagram, to create posts using editing tools such as Canva. Therefore, for the context of this study, Factor 2 is termed social media marketing.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing is considered an integral element of the 21th century. Scholars who empirically investigated specific social media marketing objectives (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Bianchi & Andrews, 2015; Schultz & Peltier, 2013) suggested that they include stimulating sales, increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, generating traffic to online platforms, reducing marketing costs, and creating user interactivity on platforms by stimulating users to post or share content. In addition, Hafez (2021) suggests that social media marketing promotes communication between customers and businesses, enabling activities that enhance brand awareness. As Wang and Kim (2017) put it, enterprises, therefore, advertise on social media sites and manage the content they generate and that of their consumers to build brand awareness among consumers. Therefore, businesses are able to observe and analyse conversations in social media to understand consumers' view of the organisation or its actions (Schweidel & Moe, 2014). Consumers' perception of the role of businesses and brands within the social media scope determines the effectiveness of social media marketing (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017). Researchers such as Ashley and Tuten (2015) and Canhoto and Clark (2013) suggest that many users and consumers expect companies to participate in social media and purposely draw businesses into the social media conversation. This supports the respondents' responses to the items measuring Factor 1, referring to the questionnaire (see Appendix F p. 463). Consequently, Factor 1 is perceived and labelled social media marketing.

7.6.2 Marketing communication mix

Kotler and Keller (2006:112) define a marketing communication mix (also known as promotion mix) as "*a set of components that interact and integrate together to achieve the institution's promotional objectives in the context of the prevailing marketing philosophy*". Marketing communication mix elements include public relations, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and direct marketing used to communicate the firm's products/service to consumers. Respondents perceived the marketing communication mix to comprise three factors (see Table 8.24). Factor 1 items reflect sales promotion and public relations, Factor 2 items reflect respondents' advertising and Factor 3 reflects personal branding. Therefore, these factors can be labelled *sales promotion, advertising* and *personal branding,* respectively.

Sales promotion (Factor 1)

Upon close interrogation of the items that measured sales promotion and public relations and the definitions of the constructs, the sales promotion focus is on adding value to the seller's product, and it is targeted at consumers of the enterprises and owners of the brands. Public relations maintains or enhances goodwill with the company's various stakeholders. However, in the context of this study, the respondents perceived the items measuring public relations to be related to sales promotion. This means that the enterprises are considered to be adding value to their products and services through sponsors, good causes, their social impact and supporting the less fortunate. Therefore, the respondents understood public relations to be promotion of the products and services of SMMEs through the management of communication about the enterprises. Moreover, Bakir, Herring, Miller and Robinson (2019) posit that public relations is an organised persuasion activity in organised persuasive communication. This, therefore, supports the labelling of Factor 1 as interpreted and named ***sales promotion***.

Advertising (Factor 2)

The respondents understood the items to measure ***advertising***. Advertising is one of the most apparent marketing activities in the communication mix that shares a brand's functional and emotional values (Aaker, 1997; De Chernatony, 2010; Rosenbaum-Elliot, 2020). The success of the advertising and its ability to influence people depends on how well the advertising fits the organisation's objectives (Kim & Lee, 2020; Rosenbaum-Elliot, 2020). Advertising spending increases the possibility and occurrence of brand appearance, which enhances brand awareness (Chu & Keh, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2020; Rosenbaum-Elliot, 2020).

Personal branding (Factor 3)

Therefore, items Q9.6 and Q9.7 loaded strongly as measuring personal branding. The respondents understood the items to be personal branding. Therefore, Factor 3 is operationalised and labelled ***personal branding***. Centeno *et al.* (2019) studied the influence of SME owner-manager on the brand-as-a-person metaphor and confirmed that the metaphor is an extension of the enterprise owners. Kienzler (2017) argues that the enterprise's owner-managers tend to build their business brands using their personal reflections. Personal branding is, therefore, described as self-promotion through communication of the distinct values or traits of an individual. Therefore, factor 3 is labelled personal brand as the items describe the traits and values of the owner-managers of the enterprises.

7.6.3 Customer service

The pattern matrix results show that customers perceive customer service to comprise two factors. The customer service factor analysis and pattern matrix outputs suggested that the study proceed with the analysis based on two factors instead of five.

Customer experience and service reliability

The South African township consumers understood customer service to be measured by customer experience and service reliability. This is supported by scholars and practitioners who concur that perceptions of quality are subjective and that many factors influence these perceptions, such as income and education (Grönroos 1988; Parasuraman, 1998; Parasuraman *et al.,* 1991; Schneider & White, 2004; Wang, Tao & Chu, 2020), basically the socioeconomic and political landscape of the nation and townships and urban dwellers. Parasuraman *et al*. (1986:3) define perceived quality as “the customer’s judgement about a service’s overall excellence or superiority”. There is also a general consensus among scholars that service quality is an elusive and abstract concept that is difficult to define and measure. Therefore, it makes sense in this context to have such feedback from the consumers bearing in mind that the arguments from scholars on customer service (SERVQUAL) and perceived quality are based on American school of thoughts and European thoughts. When considering the dimensions of customer service (SERVQUAL), reliability refers to performing a service right the first time, of which this is the role of the enterprises or organisation. Responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles, on the other hand, as conceptualised in this study and clustered together in the factor extraction exercise, suggest the experience that customers had when engaging with the businesses and their staff. Therefore, in the context of this study, the two factors are interpreted and named Factor 1 as ***customer experience*** and Factor 2 as ***service reliability***.

In the next section, the reliability analysis is discussed based on the factors as revealed in the pattern matrix, which are interpreted and named in the previous section.

Table 7.27 shows the internal consistency reliability analysis for the brand communication management model scales.

Table 7.27: Overall coefficient value for the brand communication model

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Social media platforms	0.927	8
Social media marketing	0.884	6
Brand elements	0.918	7
Brand building dimension	0.908	7
Brand related capabilities	0.917	8
Attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand	0.859	3
Brand identity	0.888	3
Advertising	0.937	9
Sales promotion	0.938	10
Personal branding	0.804	5
Customer service: service reliability	0.886	5
Customer service: customer experience	0.954	15
Market resources	0.894	6

Since the exploratory factor analysis extracted and retained 13 factors, with social media factors being social media platforms and social media marketing, the marketing communication mix made up of three factors (advertising, sales promotion and personal branding) and customer service comprising of two factors (service reliability and customer experience), the proposed hypotheses that are being explored in this study have been revisited and adapted in line with the extracted factors for the study.

7.7 HYPOTHESES REVISITED

The hypotheses stated in Chapter 1, section 1.7 have been revisited and stated accordingly. These hypotheses are stated as follows:

H1a1: There is a relationship between brand related capabilities and market resources.

H1a2: There is a relationship between brand related capabilities and service reliability.

H1a3: There is a relationship between brand related capabilities and customer experience.

H2a1: There is a relationship between sales promotion and market resources.

H2a2: There is a relationship between sales promotion and service reliability.

H2a3: There is a relationship between sales promotion and customer experience.

H3a1: There is a relationship between social media platforms and market resources.

H3a2: There is a relationship between social media platforms and service reliability.

H3a3: There is a relationship between social media platforms and customer experience.

H4a1: There is a relationship between social media marketing and market resources.

H4a2: There is a relationship between social media marketing and service reliability.

H4a3: There is a relationship between social media marketing and customer experience.

H5a1: There is a relationship between brand elements and market resources.

H5a2: There is a relationship between brand elements and service reliability.

H5a3: There is a relationship between brand elements and customer experience.

H6a1: There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and market resources.

H6a2: There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and service reliability.

H6a3: There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and customer experience.

H7a1: There is a relationship between advertising and market resources.

H7a2: There is a relationship between advertising and service reliability.

H7a3: There is a relationship between advertising and customer experience.

The results of the CFA for the 13 factors are discussed next.

7.8 RESEARCH RESULTS: CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA) OF THE HYPOTHESISED THIRTEEN-DIMENSION MEASUREMENT MODEL

CFA were conducted to confirm the results of the EFA with the other part of the split sample (Byrne, 2012; Byrne, Shavelson & Muthén, 1989; Wang & Wang, 2012). In cross-validation, a sufficiently large sample is randomly split into two subsamples. The first sample is called the calibration sample, and the second is called the validation sample. The purpose of cross-validating a factor analysis is to examine whether the parameter estimates of the calibration sample can be replicated in the validation sample (Byrne, 2012; Byrne *et al*., 1989; Wang & Wang, 2012). The generally suggested way to split a sample is by randomly dividing it into two equal parts.

This section of the study presents the empirical results of the CFA. The empirical research objectives are also addressed. The CFA was intended to evaluate whether the 13 factorial dimensions generated from exploratory factor analysis fit the data in the other split sample.

The 13 factorial dimensions from the EFA that were included in the CFA are as follows: social media platforms; social media marketing; brand elements; brand-building dimensions; brand-related capabilities; attitude towards the quality of SMME as a brand; brand identity; sales promotion; advertising; personal branding; customer experience; service reliability; and market-related resources.

Owing to the large number of constructs and the items measuring them, it was not considered feasible to conduct one measurement model owing to the number of observations to free parameter ratio, which could lead to various statistical estimation issues. Therefore, it was broken into three separate models, namely: customer service (customer experience and service reliability), marketing mix (advertising, sales promotion and personal branding) and the rest of the constructs social media platforms, social media marketing, brand elements, brand building dimensions, brand related capabilities, attitude towards the quality of SMME as brand, brand identity and market related resources. Discriminant validity of the constructs will be conducted afterwards using the Fornell and Larcker criteria. The analysis was conducted on sample 2, which consisted of the remaining cases (n=378) of the sample, using SPSS. The results are discussed in the next section.

7.8.1 Confirmatory factor analysis for customer service

CFA was used to test whether the two categories of customer service, categorised as customer experience and competitive advantage, could be confirmed in this study. The measurement model (CFA) was employed to confirm fit and to evaluate construct validity.

7.8.1.1 Customer service CFA

The customer service model is illustrated and discussed next.

Figure 7.13: Model 1 as originally postulated with respect to factors underlying customer service

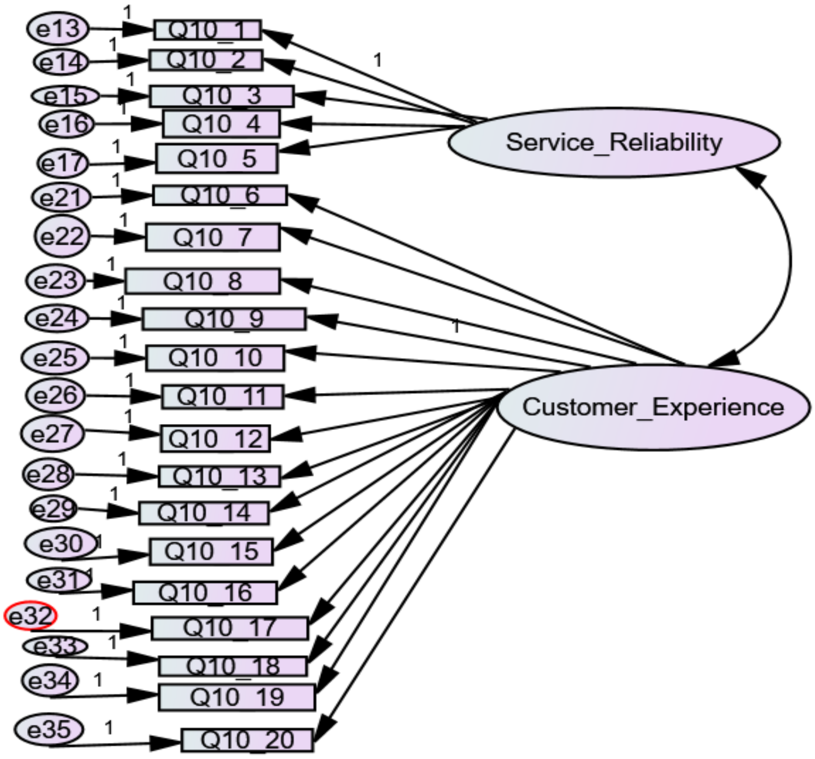


Figure 7.13 presents the measurement model for the latent variable customer service, which EFA explained as customer service: service reliability (Q10.1 – 10.5 observed variables) and customer service: consumer's experience (Q10.6 – Q10.20 observed variables). Model 1 was tested for consistency with the observed data using CFA. A model with the following goodness-of-fit indices indicates acceptable fit: RMSEA values between 0.05 and 0.08; CFI, IFI and TLI above 0.9 and a CMIN/df value smaller than 3 (Hair *et al*., 2014; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000:36) or smaller than 5 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Four error covariances were included and can be theoretically justified. Table 7.29 shows the correlation matrix and is followed by the explanation of the error covariances, which improves the model fit.

Table 7.28 shows the goodness-of-fit indices for the customer service measurement model.

Table 7.28: Goodness-of-fit indices of the measurement model (CFA) for customer service

Model	CMIN ($\chi 2$)	df	P	CMIN/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	IFI	SRMR
Model 1	565.722	165	0.000	3.429	.080	.934	.924	.935	.0402
Indicated acceptable fit				<3 or <5	≤0.08	≥0.90	≥0.90	≥0.90	<0.08

The initial model indicated acceptable fit. The CMIN/df (3.425) was above 3 but below 5. RMSEA (0.080) indicated an acceptable fit to the threshold of ≤0.08. CFI (0.934) indicated an acceptable fit; TLI (0.924), which was greater than 0.90, also indicated an acceptable fit; and SRMR (0.0 402) is less than the 0.08 threshold. The standardised regression weights (factor loadings) for the default model were all above 0.5, which means that no items were considered for deletion. The correlation between the two customer service constructs is strong (0.880). The correlations between the constructs are shown in Table 7.29.

Table 7.29 shows the correlation matrix of the measurement model for customer service that included the four error covariances. To make the model fit, the error covariances had to be included as they suggested strong correlations present between the customer experience construct and between the service reliability construct. This was over and above the relationship with the constructs. Covariances suggest that all items are related to the extent to which they are part of a construct; however, there are times when they show additional correlation that can be included in the model.

Table 7.29: Correlation estimates of the measurement model for customer service

			Estimate
Customer Experience	<-->	Service Reliability	.879
e33	<-->	e34	.363
e15	<-->	e16	.412
e28	<-->	e27	.281
e26	<-->	e24	.246

Table 7.29 indicates the item relationship between e15 and e16. Reading the items statement from the questionnaire suggests that the items are related even though they load as measures of customer experience in EFA. Items e15 and e16 explain turnaround time in customer experience. Items e33 and e34, e28 and e27 and e26 and e24 loaded as measures of service reliability in EFA. Items e33 and e34 explain the list of products and services and that of their prices as it is normally provided in the same poster or website of

the enterprises. Items e28 and e26 are about the treatment that customers receive, while items e26 and e24 are about the professionalism of the enterprises. The output for the model presenting the standardised regression weights for the measurement model is presented in Appendix H p.470.

7.8.2 Confirmatory factor analysis for marketing communication mix

CFA was used to test whether the three categories of marketing communication mix, categorised as sales promotion, advertising and personal branding, could be confirmed in this study. The measurement model (CFA) was employed to confirm fit and to evaluate construct validity.

7.8.2.1 Marketing communication mix CFA

The marketing communication mix model is illustrated and discussed next.

Figure 7.14: Model 2 with respect to factors underlying marketing communication mix with merged constructs

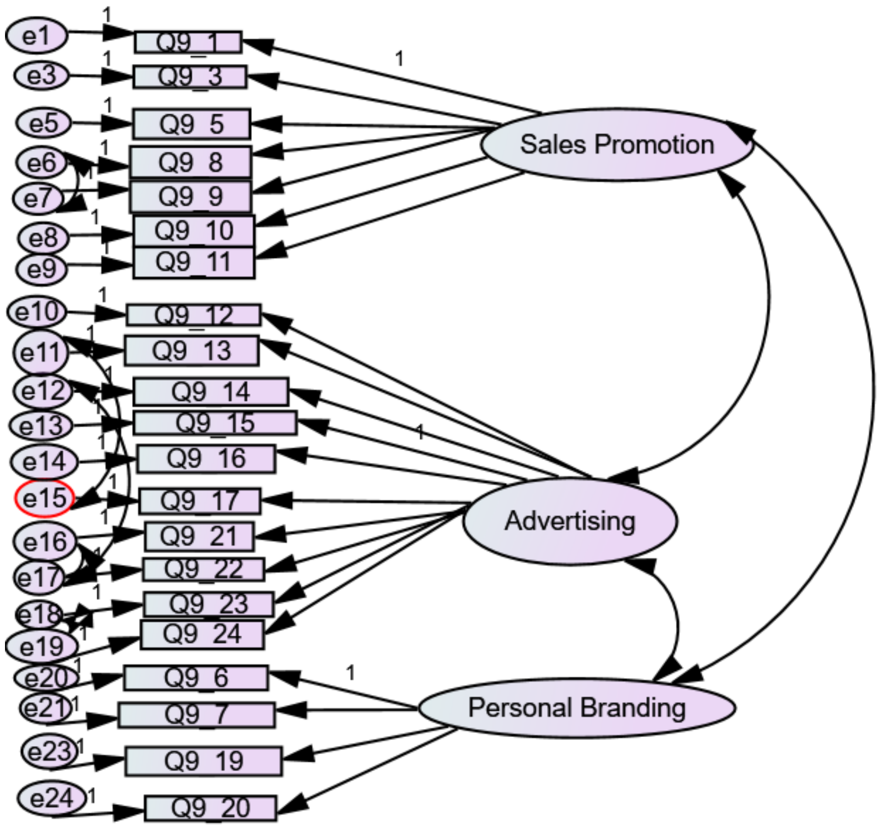


Figure 7.14 presents adapted model 1, which illustrates the measurement model for the marketing communication mix with merged constructs. The constructs are sales promotion, advertising and personal branding. The model is presented using items Q9.1, Q9.3, Q9.5 and Q9.8 – Q9.11 loading on sales promotion latent variable, items Q9.12 – Q9.17, Q9.21 – Q9.24 loading on advertising latent variable and items Q9.6, Q9.7 and Q9.19-Q9.20 loading on personal branding latent variable. Items Q9.2, Q9.4 and Q9.18 with standardised regression weights below 0.5 were deleted.

Table 7.30: Goodness-of-fit indices of the CFA measurement model for the marketing mix

Model	CMIN (χ2)	df	P	CMIN/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	IFI	SRMR
Model 1	605.371	181	.000	3.345	.079	.928	.917	.928	0.0445
Indicated acceptable fit				<3 or <5	≤0.08	≥0.90	≥0.90	≥0.90	<0.08

Table 7.30 shows the goodness-of-fit indices for the marketing communication mix measurement model. The model fit statistics revealed acceptable fit indices with a CMIN/df value of 3.345, which is less than 5; RMSEA (0.079), which is below 0.08; and CFI (0.928), TLI (0.917) and IFI (0.928), which are all above 0.90, indicating an acceptable fit. Last, the SRMR is lower than 0.05, which indicates a good fit. The correlation between the constructs is shown in Table 7.31.

Table 7.31 shows the correlation matrix of the measurement model for marketing communication mix that included the five error covariances.

Table 7.31: Correlation estimates of the measurement model for marketing communication mix

			Estimate
Advertising	<-->	Sales promotion	.850
Sales promotion	<-->	Personal branding	.843
Advertising	<-->	Personal branding	.798
e17	<-->	e16	.242
e18	<-->	e19	.449
e12	<-->	e17	-.360
e6	<-->	e7	.316
e11	<-->	e15	.280

Table 7.31 indicates the item relationships, for example, e6 and e7 (explains signage). Reading the item statements from the questionnaire suggests that the items are related even though they load as measures of sales promotion in EFA, while items e17 and e16 (explains community support), e18 and e19 (social support), e12 and e17 (explains giving for free), and items e11 and e15 (discount prices) loaded as measures of advertising in EFA. With CFA, these items are not discussed. Five error covariances were included and can be theoretically justified. The output for the model presenting the standardised regression weights for the measurement model is presented in see Appendix H p.470.

7.8.3 Confirmatory factor analysis for brand building and development

CFA was used to test whether the eight categories of brand building and development, categorised as brand capabilities, attitudes towards quality, market resources, social media 1 (social media marketing), social media 2 (social media tools), brand elements, brand building dimensions and brand identity, could be confirmed in this study. The measurement model (CFA) was employed to confirm fit and to evaluate construct validity.

The measurement model is illustrated and discussed next.

7.8.3.1 Brand building and development, and social media CFA

Figure 7.15: Model 3 with respect to factors underlying latent variables

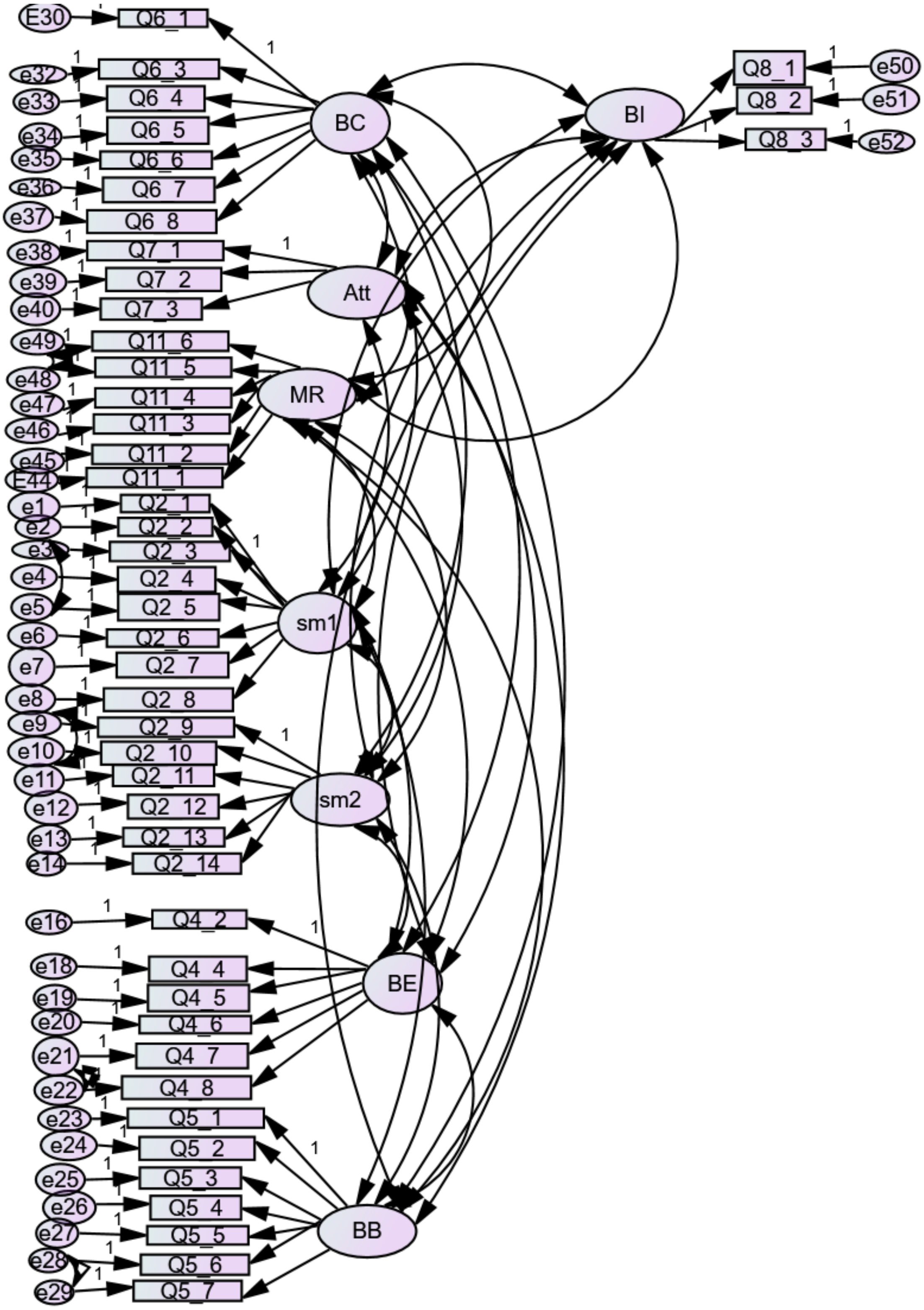


Figure 7.15 illustrates the measurement model with respect to the underlying latent variables brand elements (Q4.2, Q4.4 – Q4.8), brand building dimensions (Q5.1 -Q5.7), brand-related capabilities (Q6.1, Q6.3 – Q6.8), attitude toward quality of the SMME as a brand (Q7.1 – Q7.3), brand identity (Q8.1 – Q8.3), market-related resources (Q11.1 – Q11.6), social media marketing (Q2.1 – Q2.8) and social media tools for online accessibility and visibility (Q2.9 – Q2.14). All the constructs in this measurement model, with the exception of brand capabilities and brand elements, were as originally postulated with respect to the factors underlying them.

Table 7.32: Goodness-of-fit indices of the CFA for the measurement model

Model	CMIN ($\chi 2$)	df	P	CMIN/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	IFI	SRMR
Model 1	2122,912	956	0.000	2.221	.057	.905	.897	.905	.0588
Indicated acceptable fit				<3 or <5	≤0.08	≥0.90	≥0.90	≥0.90	<0.08

The goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model are presented in Table 8.32. The model fit statistics indicated that the CMIN/df (2.221) and RMSEA (0.057) confirmed adequate model fit. The CFI (0.905) and IFI (0.905) are both above 0.9, indicating acceptable fit, although TLI (0.897) was slightly lower than the threshold of 0.9. In terms of baseline comparisons, it is acceptable that at least two of the indices be above 0.90. The SRMR was lower than 0.08, which indicated an acceptable fit. Items 4.3 and 6.2 were deleted owing to redundancy (high error covariance with more than one item in the same construct). The measurement model can therefore be considered acceptable. The output for the model presenting the standardised regression weights for the measurement model is displayed in Appendix H p.470. The correlation between the constructs is shown in Table 7.32 above.

Table 7.33 shows the correlation matrix of the brand building and development and social media models that included the five error covariances.

Table 7.33: Correlation estimates of the measurement model for brand building and development and social media

Correlations			Estimate
Social media marketing	<-->	Social media platforms	.700
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Brand elements	.690
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand elements	.681
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand building dimensions	.451
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand elements	.643
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand building dimensions	.497
Social media platforms	<-->	Attitude towards quality of the SMME	.179
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand related capabilities	.593
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand related capabilities	.595
Brand elements	<-->	Brand related capabilities	.730
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Brand related capabilities	.774
Social media marketing	<-->	Attitude towards quality of the SMME	.246
Brand elements	<-->	Attitude towards quality of the SMME	.311
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Attitude towards quality of the SMME	.237
Brand related capabilities	<-->	Brand identity	.326
Attitude towards quality of the SMME	<-->	Brand identity	.794
Social media platforms	<-->	Market based resources	.562
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand identity	.233
Social media marketing	<-->	Market based resources	.571
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand identity	.203
Brand elements	<-->	Market based resources	.667
Brand elements	<-->	Brand identity	.342
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Brand identity	.303
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Market based resources	.656
Brand related capabilities	<-->	Attitude towards quality of the SMME	.307
Attitude towards quality of the SMME	<-->	Market based resources	,333
Brand related capabilities	<-->	Market based resources	.797
Brand identity	<-->	Market based resources	.358
e22	<-->	e21	.573
e3	<-->	e5	.482
e28	<-->	e29	.358
e10	<-->	e9	.474
e48	<-->	e49	.298

Table 7.33 indicates the item relationships for e3 and e5 and e10 and e9 measuring the social media constructs. The items loaded as social media platforms and social media marketing, respectively, in the EFA. E3 and e5 explained SMME being active on the media platform, whereas e10 and e9 explained online availability. Reading the items statement from the questionnaire suggests that items e22 and e21 are related even though they load as measures of brand elements, e28 and e29 measure brand building dimensions and e48 and e49 measure market-based resources in EFA. Therefore, e22 and e21 explained knowing and being familiar to the tagline, while items e28 and e29 explained representation

through symbol and knowledge. Error covariance e48 and e49 explained quality in terms of better products and services and their existing menu list. The output for the model presenting the standardised regression weights for the measurement model is presented in Appendix K p.490.

The convergent and discriminant validity of the thirteen constructs is discussed next.

7.8.4 Convergent and discriminant validity

CFA is a technique that "seeks to confirm if the number of factors (or constructs) and the loadings of observed (indicator) variables on them conform to what is expected on the basis of theory" (Malhotra, Hall, Shaw & Oppenheim, 2007). Therefore, to reach confirmation and to accurately perceive the representation of the constructs by the observed variables, it is necessary to evaluate the reliability and validity of the scale (Hair, *et al*., 2009). Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used measure for reliability and internal consistency, with the accepted rule for accepting internal consistency as 0 to 0.49 being unacceptable, 0.50 to 0.59 poor, 0.60 to 0.69 questionable, 0.70 to 0.79 acceptable, 0.80 to 0.89 good and from 0.9 to 1 excellent (Sarmento & Costa, 2017). In regard to CFA, there is an alternative to confirming and accurately perceiving constructs by the observed variables by evaluating composite reliability (CR). Hair (2009) described CR as the measure of reliability and internal consistency of measured variables that represent a latent construct. Sarmento and Costa (2017) suggest that CR must be evaluated prior to measuring validity. Furthermore, Sarmento and Costa (2017) advised that there are several types of validity methods that are dependent on the research objectives; however, there are two main techniques, namely convergent and discriminant validity. Validity is aimed at determining if the scale measures the construct that the researcher wishes to evaluate in reality, basically, measure what it is intended to measure.

7.8.4.1 Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE): convergent validity

The CR and AVE values were used in the assessment of convergent validity (Cheung, Cooper-Thomas, Lau & & Wang, 2023). Convergent validity is based on the study of expected and plausible relationships with other measures related to two types of variables: i) relationships established with variables measured by different instruments that intentionally measure the same construct; ii) relationships with instruments that measure other aspects with which a positive or negative relationship is expected to exist (Cheung *et al.* 2023). This type of validity can be explained by construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE), a measure of consistency that reveals the mean percentage of explained variance between the items of a construct. According to Hair (2009), convergent validity is observed when CR is higher than the AVE, and the AVE is higher than 0.5. This suggests that the loadings of the observed variables conform to theory (Malhotra *et al*, 2007).

Table 7.34 presents a summary of the convergent validity statistics. The table shows the calculated values for the CR and AVE for each construct.

Table 7.34: CR and AVE scores

CONSTRUCT	Cronbach's alpha	Joreskog rho = CR	Rho vc = AVE
Customer service: service reliability	0.927	0.895	0.631
Customer service: a consumer's experience	0.884	0.957	0.601
Sales promotion	0.918	0.918	0.616
Advertising	0.908	0.941	0.616
Personal branding	0.917	0.761	0.445
Brand elements	0.859	0.885	0.525
Brand building dimension	0.888	0.900	0.566
Brand related capabilities	0.937	0.884	0.560
Social media platforms	0.938	0.920	0.623
Social media marketing	0.804	0.863	0.514
Attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand	0.886	0.864	0.681
Brand identity	0.954	0.893	0.736
Market related resources	0.894	0.890	0.575

Based on Table 7.33 above, the CRs and Cronbach alphas of all of the factors exceeded the suggested minimum of 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability (Nunnally, 1978). The results indicate that all constructs AVE were above 0.5, except for personal branding. Since AVE is a conservative measure of convergent validity, it can be concluded on the basis of CR scores that the latent constructs are acceptable. Therefore, for the measurement models based on CR values, all the constructs that were presented can be considered reliable.

Discriminant validity is discussed next.

7.8.4.2 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity, also mentioned as divergent validity, consists of the degree "to which a measure does not correlate with other measures from which it is assumed to diverge" (Sánchez, 1999). Discriminant validity is confirmed between the latent constructs in this measurement model. In addition, according to Garson (2016), the Fornell-Lacker criterion establishes discriminant validity as a set of constructs for which the latent construct AVE should be higher than its squared correlation with any other constructs or, equally, the square root of AVE should be larger than its squared correlation with any other constructs. In Table 7.35, the value in bold represents the squared AVE value. All 13 constructs showed discriminant validity.

Fornell-Lacker Criterion

Table 7.35 shows the diagonal of the square root of the AVE of the latent variables. Potential multicollinearity was observed between *customer service and service reliability*, *advertising and sales promotion*, *personal branding and advertising*, *personal branding and sales promotion*, and *market resources and service* reliability. Multicollinearity has the potential for large standard errors and large sampling errors, making the coefficients unreliable and decreasing their accuracy (Alin, 2010), as it suggests that respondents are somewhat confused by the variables measuring the constructs.

Table 7.35: Fornell-Lacker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

	Customer experience	Customer experience	Sales promotion	Advertising	Personal branding	Brand related capability	Attitude toward the quality of enterprise as a brand	Market resources	Social media platforms	Social media marketing	Brand building	Brand identity	Brand elements
Service reliability	0.794355												
Service reliability	0.814	**0.7752**											
Sales promotion	0.622	0.654	**0.7849**										
Advertising	0.679	0.685	0.797	**0.7849**									
Personal branding	0.569	0.604	0.724	0.669	0.6671								
Brand related capability	0.690	0.730	0.661	0.689	0.618	**0.9402**							
Attitude toward the quality of enterprise as a brand	0.281	0.272	0.288	0.259	0.366	0.271	**0.8252**						
Market resources	0.712	0.768	0.652	0.656	0.613	0.715	0.301	0.7583					
Social media platforms	0.510	0.517	0.690	0.677	0.532	0.560	0.174	0.516	**0.9592**				
Social media marketing	0.433	0.486	0.522	0.533	0.457	0.519	0.212	0.497	0.649	**0.705049**			
Brand building	0.633	0.673	0.552	0.543	0.520	0.725	0.245	0.626	0.487	0.459	**0.9487**		
Brand identity	0.316	0.290	0.331	0.244	0.358	0.306	0.720	0.331	0.220	0.180	0.308	**0.8579**	
Brand elements	0.523	0.569	0.686	0.670	0.555	0.646	0.281	0.584	0.623	0.565	0.671	0.308	**0.819146**

- The diagonal of the square root of the AVE of the latent variable indicates the highest in any column or row. The results marked in colour indicate discriminant validity problems.

According to the Fornell and Larcker criteria (Table 7.35), five pairs of constructs do not meet the requirement for discriminant validity. They are service reliability and *customer experience*, *advertising and sales promotion*, *personal branding and advertising*, *personal branding and sales promotion*, and *market resources and customer experience.* As a result, the five pairs of constructs were also subjected to the HTMT criteria for discriminant validity (Voorhees, 2016). The HTMT results are discussed.

Heterotrait-Monotrait Approach (HTMT)

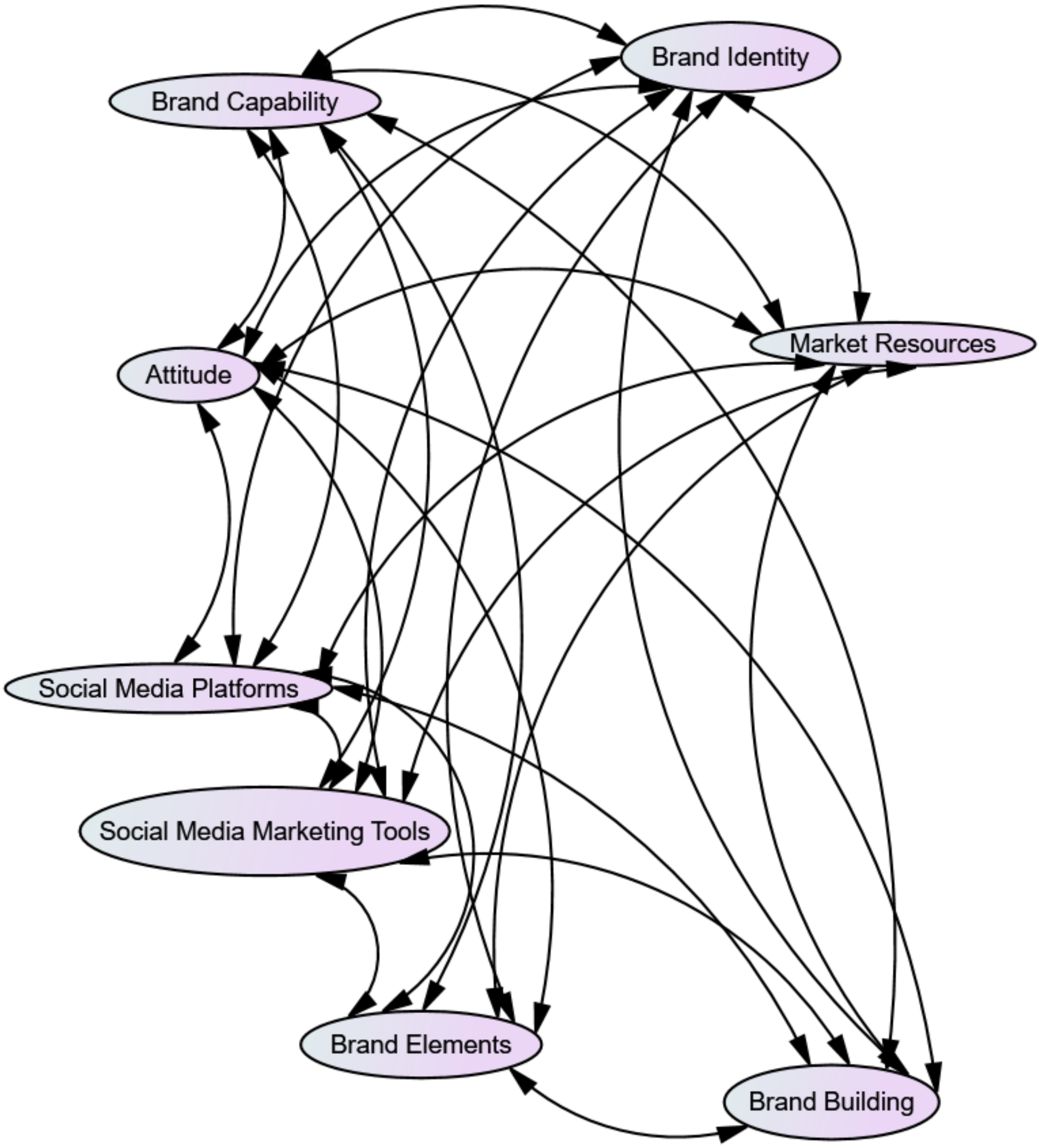
Appendix K p.490, HTMT depicts the HTMT results of the constructs. The threshold for indicating discriminant validity is considered to be 0.85 for strict discriminant validity and 0.900 for liberal discriminant validity. Henseler, *et al*. (2015) support the selection of a liberal discriminant validity for as long as the constructs are not the same conceptually.

The HTMT discriminant validity criterion in terms of specificity, for example, HTMT.90 or HTMT inference, which is dependent on the sample size, is acceptable. Equally, the strictest standards require HTMT.85 to assess discriminant validity. Four of the five pairs meet the criteria for strict discriminant validity, and one pair still meets the liberal threshold for discriminant validity. The five pairs of constructs are discussed; however, their HTMT output tables are included in Appendix K p.490 owing to space limitations.

Although the pairs did not meet the F & L and HTMT thresholds, discriminant validity for the pairs was considered and adopted at the CFA stage. Since there is a service reliability and customer experience pair that does not meet the conservative threshold, it still meets the liberal threshold, as stated in Henseler (2015) and Voorhees (2016). Therefore, they display near multicollinearity but still meet the threshold. In conclusion, discriminant validity could be confirmed across all constructs. If there are any issues that arise in the SEM owing to near multicollinearity, the appropriate statistical analysis will be followed and applied.

The final brand communication management model is presented below. Figure 7.16 depicts the measurement model for the brand communication management model of this study.

Figure 7.16: Brand communication management measurement model



<u>*Note</u>: Attitude=attitude towards quality of SMME as a brand, Brand capability = Brand related capabilities, Brand building = Brand building dimensions, Market resources = Market-based resources, Social media marketing tools = Social media marketing.

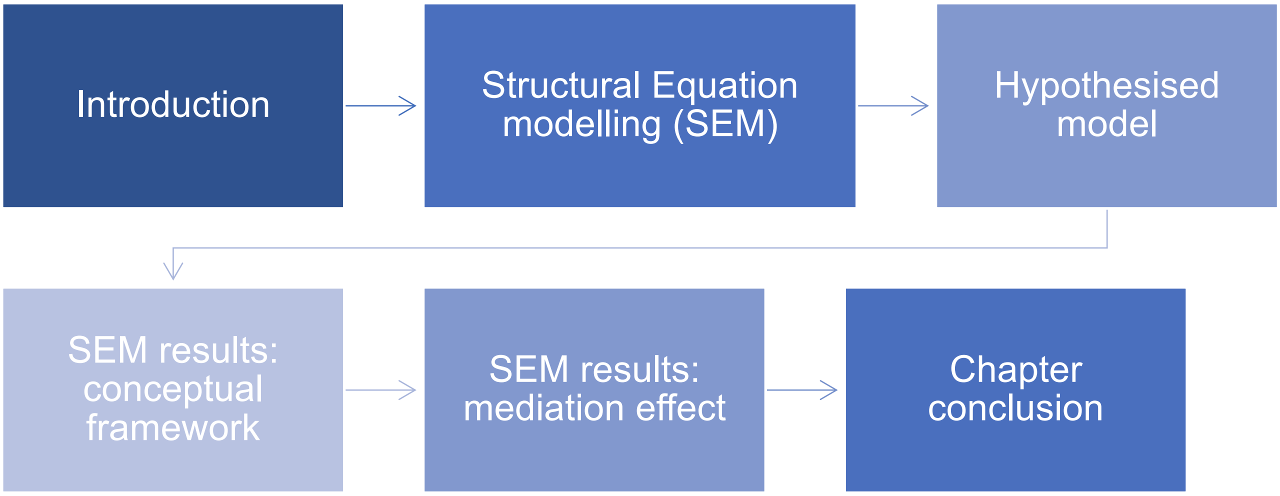
7.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This Chapter presented and interpreted the results for exploratory factor analysis, conducted on approximately half of the sample. The results of the test for sample adequacy were presented, followed by the factorial structure computed through a PAF extraction using the oblique Promax with Kaiser Normalisation rotation technique. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha analysis results for all the subscales of the brand communication scale were presented and interpreted.

The Chapter also reports on CFA that was conducted on the 13 major constructs identified through the EFA on the other approximately half of the sample in the study. It provided confirmation with regard to the construct validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Since all the Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported indicated good reliability, further analysis of the data was conducted.

The next Chapter (Chapter 8) presents the structural equation modelling (SEM) of this study.

CHAPTER 8: RESEARCH FINDINGS: STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING



8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter focused on the factor analysis, that is, the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results. In this Chapter, the framework is tested according to the hypotheses outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. There are three stages to the quantitative data analysis in this study. Stages 1 and 2 (descriptive statistics and factor analysis) of the quantitative data analysis are presented in Chapter 7. In stage 3, the SEM is presented in this Chapter.

This Chapter begins with the hypothesised model of the conceptual framework and is followed by the results of the SEM. The figures and tables presented in this Chapter are generated from the findings of the study and are therefore compiled accordingly. This Chapter addresses the structural model, which differs from the measurement models presented in Chapter 7. The measurement models dealt with the relationship between latent and measured variables, while the structural model is concerned with the direct and indirect effects on the preassumed causal relationships, that is, the nature and significance of the relationships between the constructs. In addition to the causal effects, the mediating role of brand identity was tested to enhance the understanding of brand communication. AMOS software (version 28) was used to test the hypothesised model.

The hypothesised model, which is based on the three measurement models derived from the conceptual framework and confirmed in the confirmatory factor analysis, is discussed next.

8.2 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

This study followed a covariance-based structural equation modelling approach (CB-SEM). Zhang, Dawson and Kline (2021) describe CB-SEM as a reflective measurement in which hypothetical constructs are assessed as common factors that are assumed to cause their indicators, the observed or manifest variables. Cheung (2015) points out the characteristics of CB-SEM that make it to be considered an analytical method, namely: its integration of several multivariate techniques, such as regression analysis, path analysis and confirmatory analysis, therefore, performing simultaneous analysis of observed variables; and latent structures, and their relationships and impact on corresponding outcomes (Cudeck, Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). CB-SEM accounts for measurement errors in both the predictive and outcome variables and allows for testing of several contrasting models, interpretations and comparisons. This approach assists researchers in discovering the best possible models that are theoretically accurate and parsimonious.

8.2.1 Structural equation modelling analysis

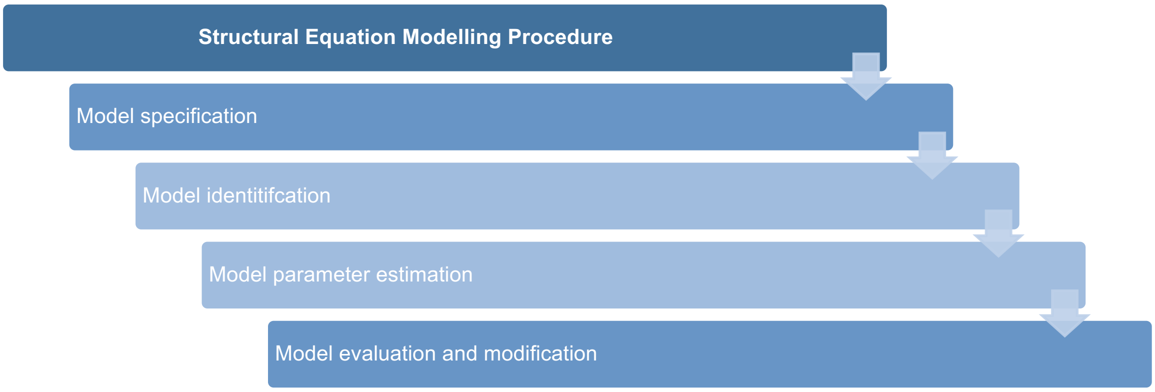
Zhang *et al*. (2021) underscore the importance of following best practices when conducting SEM analysis. The methods, procedures, approaches and tests used or conducted in research are chosen for specific reasons owing to their advantages and shortcomings. In analysing the causal effects between the constructs of the study, CB-SEM was selected as an appropriate technique, and the rationale for the selection is as follows:

- Cheung (2015) advances that CB-SEM is a multivariate statistical technique that is used to build or test theoretical models and therefore, estimates relationships between observed and latent variables concurrently.
- SEM as a modelling approach is able to test for direct and indirect or partial and complete mediation effects on preassumed causal relationships between variables or constructs (Fan, *et al*., 2016).
- SEM is able to provide more precise parameter estimates and increased statistical power due to its ability to model constructs as latent variables (Hoyle & Smith, 1994; Kline, 2016).
- The path analysis explains the causal relationships among variables, and the path diagram can distinctly present the direction of the effects and covariances in a single picture (Kline, 1998).
- Hayduk *et al*. (2007) posit that the real goal of SEM is to test theory; therefore, it is acceptable if there are no models retained after the analysis.
- A two-step approach was followed in this study. The first step was to evaluate the measurement model in CFA, and the second step evaluated the structural model.

8.2.2 Structural equation modelling procedure

SEM is viewed as a technique that is used within the context of data use in scientific research (Zhang, 2021). As such, Burnham and Anderson (2013) suggest that model development should follow four main steps. These steps are model formation, model specification, model estimate and model evaluation. However, Byrne (2013), Kline (2010) and Hoyle (2011) suggest that there are five logical steps in SEM. The SEM procedure for this study followed the steps of Burnham and Anderson (2013) and is depicted in Figure 8.1, followed by their discussion.

Figure 8.1: Structural equation modelling procedure



Source: Burnham and Anderson (2013).

8.2.2.1 Model specification

Model specification can be performed using a set of equations or a diagram. A diagram is used for this study to specify the theoretical model. Fan *et al*. (2016) posit that model specification is based on a researcher or a scholar's knowledge when defining hypothesis relationships among the variables of the study. Basically, model specification is about defining the hypothesised relationships between variables. In addition, it embraces the sample size, statistical power, multivariate normality and central issues to the underlying SEM technique (Zhang *et al*., 2021).

8.2.2.2 Model identification

Kline (2011) posits that model identification has two necessary requirements, that is: the model degree of freedom must be greater than or equal to zero ($dfM \geq 0$); and the latent variables, including the residual terms, must be assigned a scale. The models that violate the degree of freedom requirement are underidentified. Fan *et al*. (2013) maintain that model identification is considered to ascertain if the model is overidentified, just identified or underidentified. To estimate the model using the observed variables, model identification must be performed since there are latent and observed (measured) variables in a model. Accordingly, Kline (2016; 2011) asserts that a model is identified in cases where it is theoretically possible to calculate the unique estimates of the parameters. A model that is overidentified is a model that has been identified with fewer free parameters than the observations, and the degrees of freedom are greater than zero. The just-identified model, on the other hand, occurs when the model is also identified; however, the model has the same number of free parameters as observations, and the degree of freedom is equal to zero. An underidentified model in the context of SEM arises where it is not possible to uniquely estimate all its parameters. The degree of freedom (*df*) for model Chi-square (x^2) is a measure of the degree of overidentification of the model.

8.2.2.3 Model parameter estimation

The model parameter estimation addresses model coefficients that can only be determined in model identification, where it is established whether the model is just identified or overidentified. Model fit estimated values are an indication of how well a model fits the overall data. In addition, model estimation values indicate the parameter estimates that indicate the strength of the hypothesised relationships between variables. Kenny (2011) indicates that the parameter of an estimated model predicts the correlations or covariances between observed variables. In addition, the correlation of the latent variables can be compared.

8.2.2.4 Model evaluation and modification

Model evaluation is concerned with the model performance and assesses the fit indices. This is done by quantitatively calculating the indices for the overall goodness of fit for the model. There are a number of fit indices and their thresholds to consider when evaluating the model performance. These indices include the comparative, incremental and absolute indices, such as RMSEA with 90% CI, IFI, CFI and SRMR (Zhang *et al*., 2021), as used in Chapter 7, discussed under the CFA section. The thresholds are also the same as those considered during CFA. Kline (2016) posits that approximate fit indices are continuous measures of model-data correspondence.

Model evaluation

The model evaluation is conducted for the overall model fit. There are three versions of goodness of fit measures of the structural model that are generated by Amos software. The saturated model contains many parameter estimates as degrees of freedom and is considered to be the most nonparsimonious model. The goodness of fit measure for the saturated model is 1.0, while for the parsimonious model, it is zero points (0.). RMSEA cannot be computed for the saturated model. The independence model parsimony tends to have a ratio of 1 whenever the saturated model parsimony ratio is 0.

The default model is the most parsimonious model and is the theoretical or structural model for a study; and is a much better fit than the saturated and independence models when comparing their goodness of fit measures. Garson (2009) advocates for researchers to find the most parsimonious model that is not significantly different from the saturated model; and that should fully explain the data.

The goodness of fit indices to test both the measurement and structural models are discussed in section 8.4.1.1.

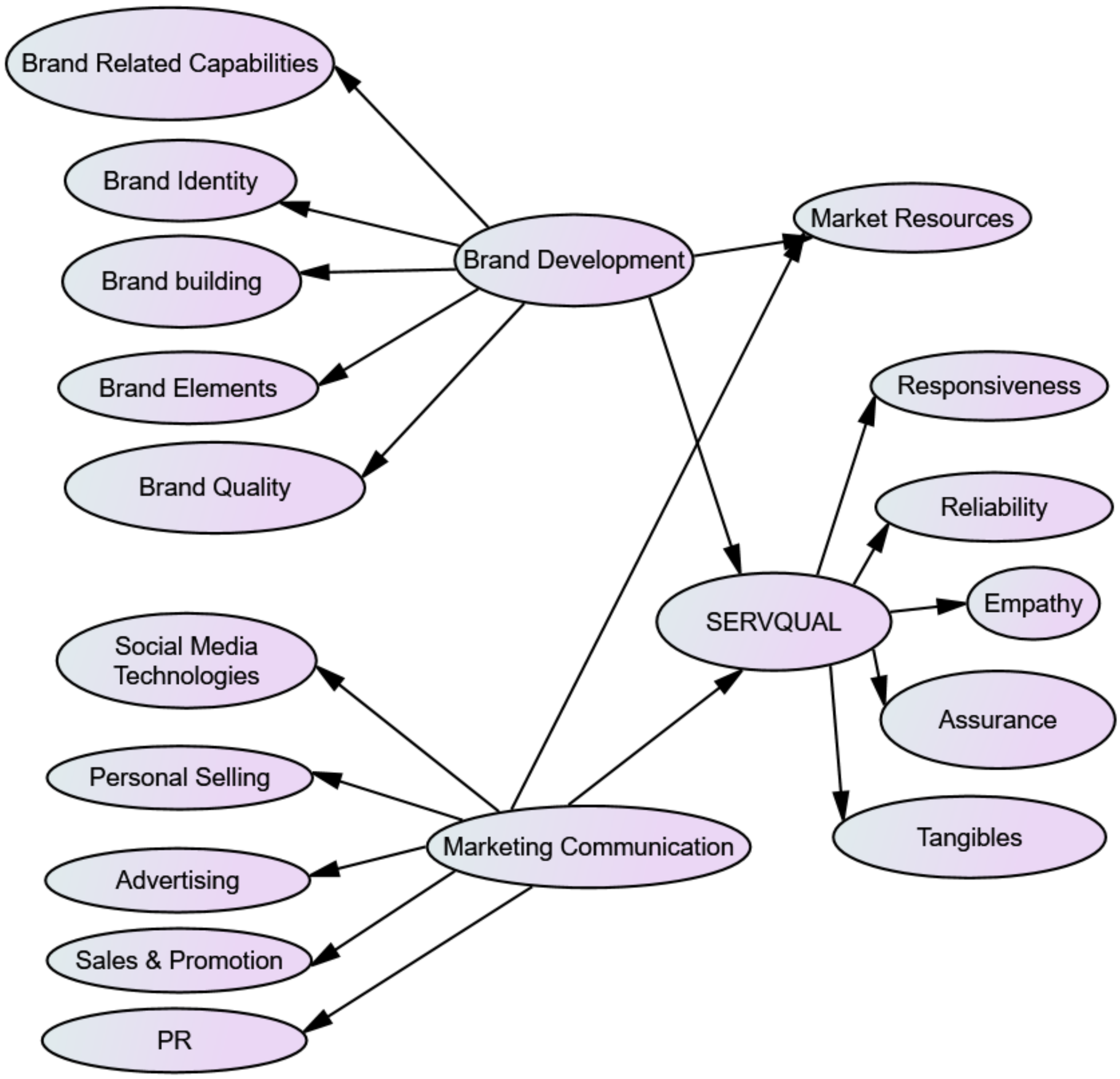
Model modification

Model adjustments or modifications are made to improve the model fit. The modification index is the Chi-square value, with 1 degree of freedom, that is considered whether freeing parameter constraints or adding paths to the model would improve it. Values greater than 3.84 indicate that the model would ‘improve’, and the p value for the added parameter would be $p<.05$, while values larger than 10.83 indicate that the parameter would have a $p<.001$. Only modification indices larger than 10 were considered for potential inclusion in the model. However, model adjustments were only considered if they were statistically sound and theoretically justifiable, as modification indices might suggest paths that are not fundamentally substantive or change the core conceptual model. Therefore, the modification indices are not considered in isolation but rather with the theoretical knowledge to motivate the rationale.

8.3.1 THE HYPOTHESISED MODEL BASED ON THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

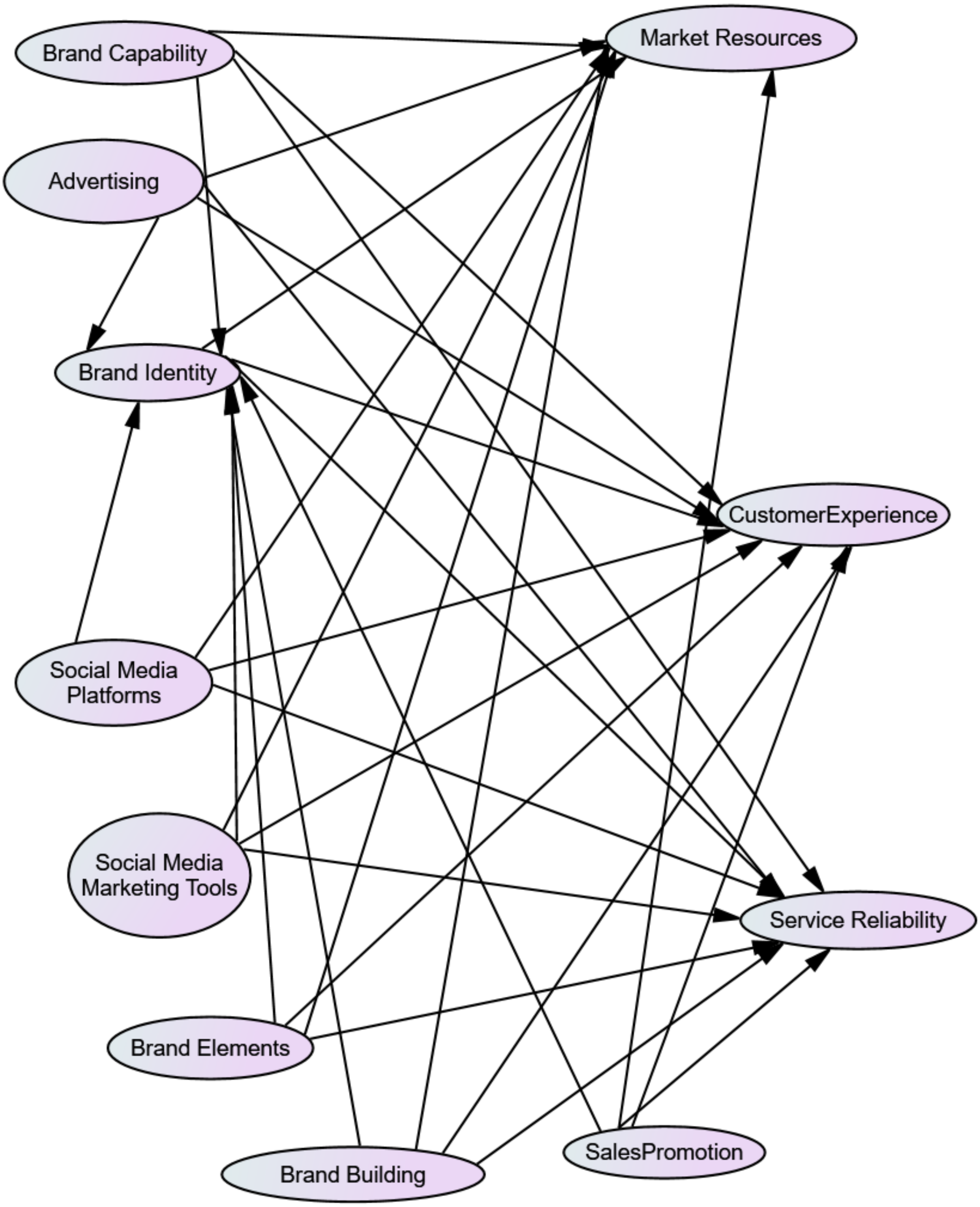
The initial hypothesised model that the study advances was developed based on theory and knowledge and is presented in Figure 8.2. The model formed the basis of the analysis.

Figure 8.2: Hypothesised model: Relationships between the constructs for the study



After EFA, which was conducted on a random sample of approximately half of the sample, the hypothesised model (Figure 8.2) changed, as the analysis identified the factors for the study. These factors were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis conducted on the other half of the sample (Byrne, 2012; Byrne *et al*., 1989; Wang & Wang, 2012; Zhu, 2017). The explored, extracted and confirmed factors revealed social media to have split and comprised two factors, namely, social media platforms and social media marketing. The five dimensions of customer service resulted in only two factors, that is, service reliability and customer experience, while the five marketing communication mix elements resulted in three factors, namely, sales promotion, advertising and personal branding. Therefore, because of the factor analysis, the initial hypothesised model changed accordingly to reflect the extracted and confirmed factors for the study.

Figure 8.3: Revised hypothesised model



*Note: Social media marketing tools = Social media marketing.

Figure 8.3 represents the relationship between the latent constructs of the model. Social media platforms are represented by eight items (Q2.1 – Q2.8), social media marketing is measured by six items (Q2.9 – Q2.14), brand elements is represented by eight items (Q4.1

– Q4.8), brand building dimensions by seven items (Q5.1 – Q5.7), brand-related capabilities by eight items (Q6.1 – Q6.8), attitude towards quality by three items (Q7.1 – Q7.3), sales promotion by fifteen items (Q9.6 – Q9.7, Q9.12 – Q9.24), advertising by nine (Q9.1 – Q9.5 and Q9.8 -Q9.11), service reliability by five items (Q10.1 – Q10.5), customer experience by fifteen items (Q10.6 – Q10.20) and market resources by six items (Q11.1 – Q11.6).

The results of the structural equation modelling are discussed in the next section.

8.4 SEM RESULTS: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The EFA extracted 13 factors, and these factors were confirmed in the CFA; therefore, the measurement model was confirmed to be a 13-factor model. The brand identity construct was the 12th and the attitude towards the quality 13th construct. The initial SEM excluded these two constructs; however, brand identity was used as a mediator. The analysis of the conceptual structural model was, therefore, conducted to assess whether the 11-factor model fit the data. Lai and Green (2016) posit that a hypothesised model is evaluated by assessing its fit to data when conducting SEM. Therefore, the hypothesised structural model was tested to determine the overall model fit and the structural path coefficients. Zhang *et al*. (2021) assert that it is best practice in CB-SEM to report on a series/variety of goodness-of-fit indices as they are developed based on various assessing assumptions in terms of what constitutes or comprises a good model. The goodness of fit indices that are used to assess the model fit are RMSEA, standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and the comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990; Steiger & Lind, 1980), IFI and TLI, and chi-square. Kline (2016) explains that it is poor practice to drop paths with coefficients that are not significant and to add paths that would reduce the chi-square in cases where there is no theoretical justification for the changes.

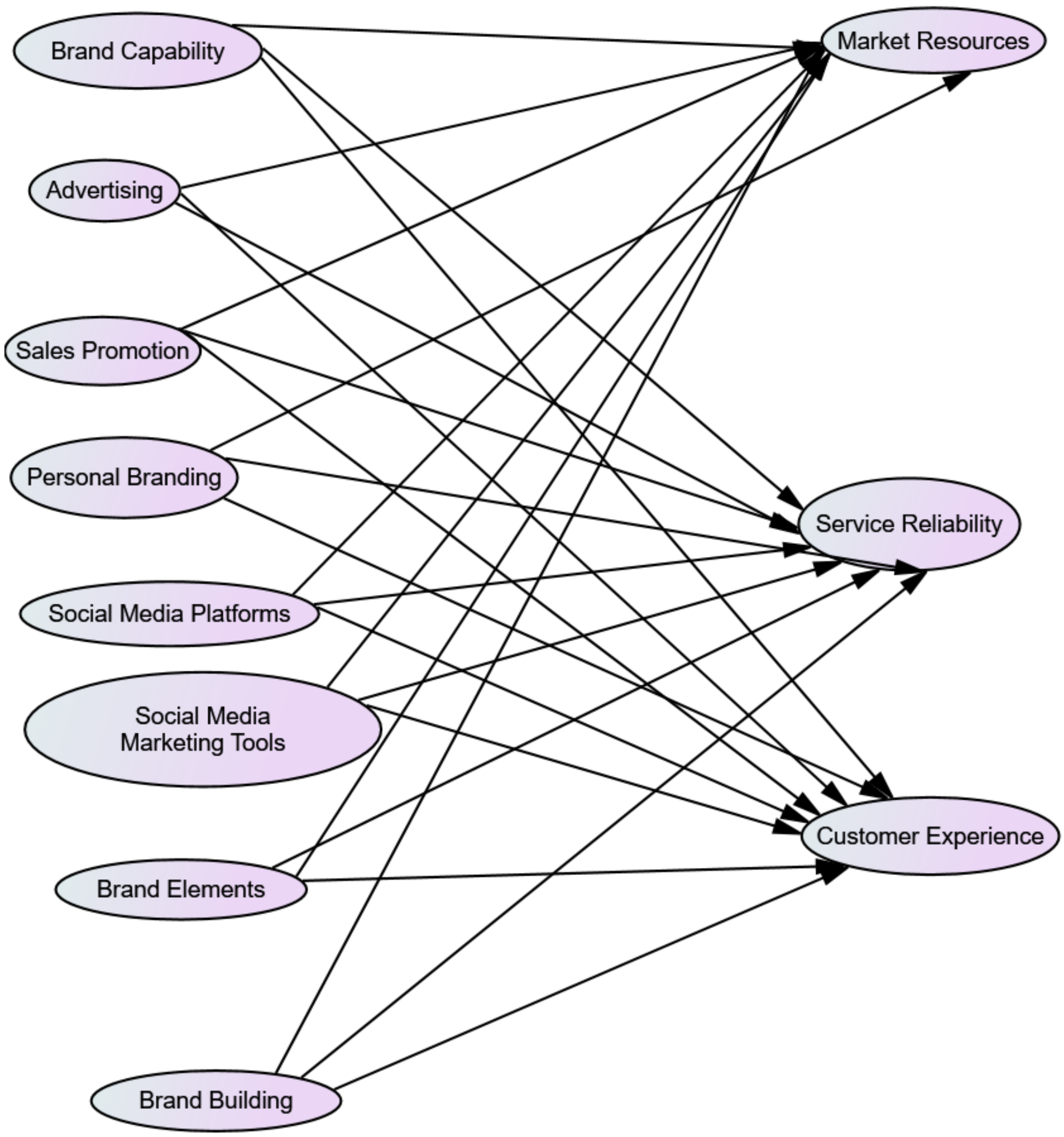
According to Kline (2005), for a model to indicate an adequate model fit, the CFI must be above 0.90 and RMSEA must be below 0.080. McDonald and Ho (2002) point out that there are no clear cut-off points that explicitly suggest that a CFI represents a "bad" fit. Furthermore, Hu and Bentler (1999) and MacCallum *et al*. (1996), scholars who proposed the cut-offs, emphasise that the values were a guide rather than rigid thresholds. Fan and

Sivo (2007), Markland, (2005), and Marsh, Hau and Grayson (2005), who are authoritative SEM experts, caution against overinterpreting cut-offs. The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) must be ≤.080 for a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Kline (2005) posits that the standardised regression estimate, that is, the coefficient from an indicator variable to its construct, must be 0.30 or above to indicate that the variable adequately contributes to the construct it is assumed to measure.

8.4.1 SEM model 1 and 2: relationship between the constructs

The SEM with the constructs, Figure 8.4, for the study is presented and discussed. Figure 8.4 is an illustration of SEM 1 with all 11 constructs and without awareness. The model fit indices are provided in Table 8.1.

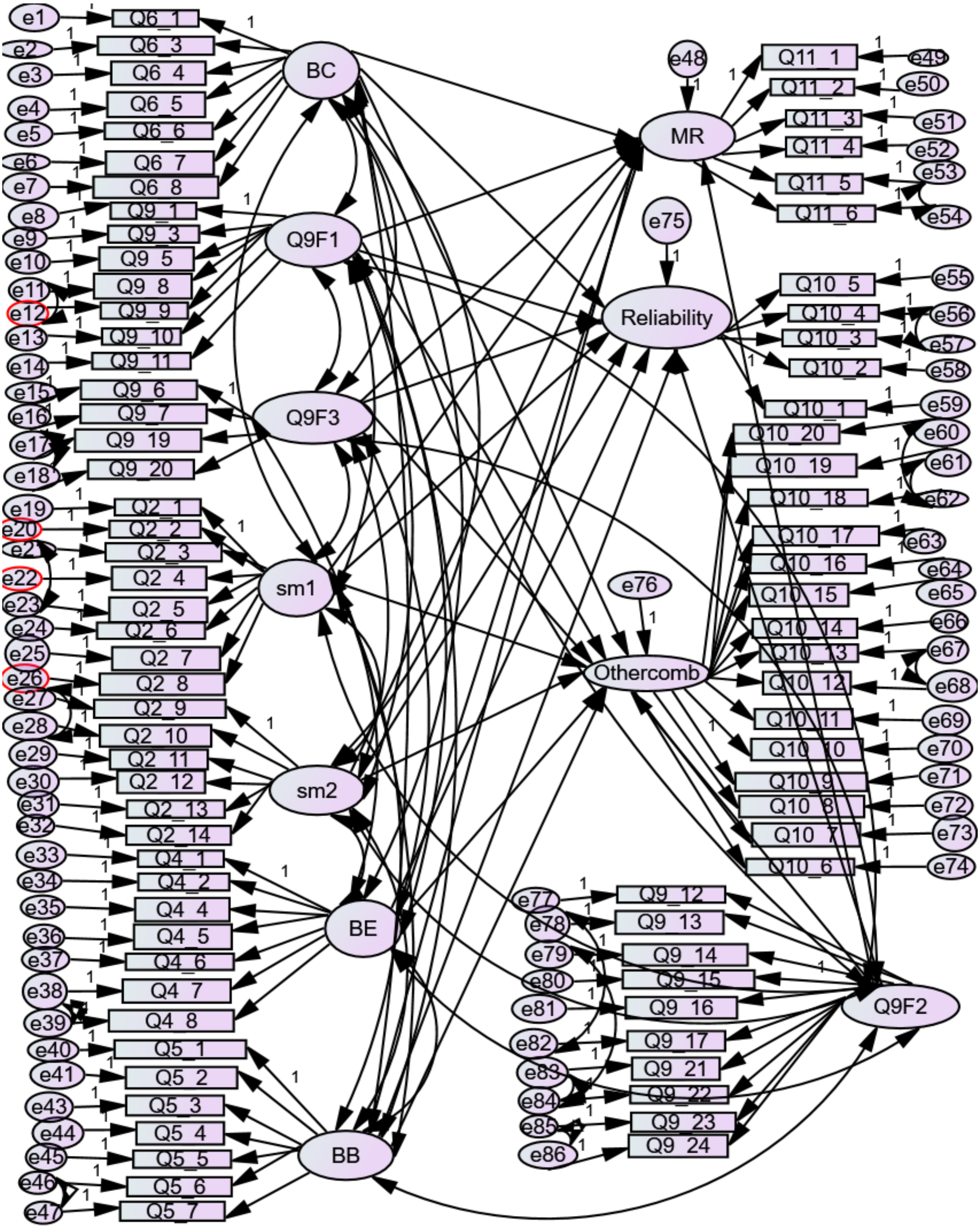
Figure 8.4: SEM conceptual model 1



*Note: Social media marketing tools = Social media marketing.

Figure 8.5 below depicts SEM 2 with the marketing communication mix factors, namely, sales promotion and personal branding merged. The model fit indices are provided in Table 8.1.

Figure 8.5: SEM conceptual model 2



8.4.1.1 Evaluating path structural equation model fit

The SEM, as depicted in Figure 8.3, consisting of the 11 constructs of the study, is presented. The latent constructs are social media platforms, social media marketing, brand elements, brand building dimensions, brand-related capabilities, advertising, personal branding, sales promotion, customer experience, service reliability and market resources. The path analysis tested the influence of social media platforms, social media marketing, brand elements, brand building dimensions, brand-related capabilities, advertising, personal branding, and sales promotion constructs on customer experience, service reliability and market resource constructs. The results of the model fit and goodness-of-fit indices are presented.

The goodness-of-fit indices were employed to test the proposed model, and they are discussed. The goodness-of-fit indices of the structural model are provided in the table and discussed next.

Table 8.1: Goodness-of-fit indices for conceptual SEM 1 (without modifications) and SEM 2 (including error covariances)

Model	CMIN (x^2)	df	p	CMIN/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	IFI	**AIC**	**BCC**	SRMR
Model 1	10693.792	3187	0.000	3.355	.054	0.86	0.54	0.86	11 125.792	11 174.509	0.0528
Model 2	9151.121	3172	0.000	2.885	.048	.888	.883	.889	9613.121	9665.222	.0534
Indicate acceptable fit				<3 or <5	≤0.08	≥0.90	≥0.90	≥0.90			<0.08

The initial structural model (model 1) did not adequately fit the data. The CMIN/df is slightly above the threshold of <3. The RMSEA and SRMR are lower than 0.08, the threshold for adequate fit. The fit indices, CFI (.86), TLI (.854) and IFI (.86), however, were close but not above the ≥0.90 threshold.

The initial structural model, therefore, did not fit the data adequately. Hair *et al*. (2014) aver that in cases where there is a challenge with the model fit, there are options to potentially improve the fit, which can be done by deleting observed variables that loaded below 0.5, deleting the non-statistically significant paths or examining the modification indices for potential covariances. In addition, these additional covariances must be theoretically substantiated. Similarly, the changes must not only be about achieving an improved model fit but also ensuring that the model still represents the fundamental theoretical hypothesised model.

Kenny and McCoach (2003) point out that models with many variables tend to have inadequate model fit. In addition, Kenny (2011) emphasises that a good-fitting model does not necessarily indicate a good model, as that is also dependent on the parameters. Therefore, it is important to examine parameter estimates and discriminant validity. Although there were high correlation values between three of the construct pairs, the pairs were subjected to the HTMT, as it is a recommended discriminant validity metric (Voorhees *et al*., 2016). Therefore, appropriate statistical analysis was conducted in SEM as indicated in Chapter 6 section 6.9.4.2.

As all loadings (standardised regression weights) of the items were above point 5 and the intent was to test all the conceptual paths, modification indices were studied to determine if some can be added to the model, provided they can be defended statistically and theoretically. The improved model fit (model 2) is shown in Table 8.1. The CMIN/df is below the threshold of <3. The RMSEA and SRMR are lower than 0.08, the threshold for adequate fit. The fit indices, CFI (.888), TLI (.883) and IFI (.889), however, were very close but not above the ≥0.90 threshold. As alluded, Lai and Green (2016) point out that RMSEA and CFI may provide inconsistent fit at times owing to the indices evaluating different perspectives in accordance with the nature of their design. However, Wisting, Wonderlich, Skrivarhaug, Dahl-Jørgensen and Rø (2019) advocate for permissible fits >.080 and, thereby, suggest the following range of fit index: (CFI) >.95 being a good fit, >.90 suggesting a traditional fit and >.080 sometimes being permissible. Both the AIC and BCC measures were smaller for model 2 than for model 1, therefore, confirming an improved model fit. The justification of the added covariances follows the correlation discussion. The structural path coefficients of the structural model are discussed next.

8.4.1.2 SEM path: Relationship among the constructs

According to Byrne (2016), for a probability ($p<0.05$), the Critical Ratio (CR) must be >1.96 for a hypothesis to be rejected at an estimate of zero. Therefore, an individual item loading of >0.5 for the latent constructs was accepted. The standardised regression weights are normally between 0 and 1, but standardised regression weights that are larger than 1 are mathematically feasible and may be caused by multicollinearity between some of the constructs (Deegan, 1978). The scholar further maintains that standardised regression coefficients greater than 1 legitimately occur. Deegan (1978) suggests that researchers are not obliged to modify the model with strong multicollinearity, as such risks the biasing effects of model specification error, for the presence of multicollinearity holds no bias in estimated coefficients.

According to Hair *et al*. (2014) and Collier (2020), a structural model is concerned with describing the relationship between latent constructs. Structural path analysis examined how the independent variables of social media platforms, social media marketing, brand elements, brand building dimensions, brand-related capabilities, advertising, personal branding, and sales promotion constructs influence the dependent variables, namely, customer experience, service reliability and market resource constructs.

Table 8.2 represents the standardised and unstandardised regression weights, that is, the structural paths estimates of the SEM. Some of the standardised regression coefficients were larger than one. The cause, in most cases, is multicollinearity between constructs. Based on Table 8.3, when looking at sales promotion and personal branding, they are closely related with the correlation value of 0.957 similar to advertising and personal branding (0.882) and sales promotion and advertising (0.856). The constructs were separate when running the EFA when the factors were extracted and confirmed through CFA (reliability and validity testing). However, when subjected to conceptual model testing, multicollinearity, specifically between the constructs of sales promotion and personal branding, was observed. An option to deal with the situation is to merge the constructs that were decided upon after the results were obtained. The variables measuring personal branding, Q9.6, Q9.7, Q9.18 to Q19.20, when considering the definition of sales promotion and the literature on it, suggest that the two constructs may be merged and called sales promotion.

Table 8.2: Structural path coefficients: Structural model 1

Relationships			**Estimate (Unstandardised regression weights)**	**S.E.**	**C.R. (t value)**	**Standardised regression weights**	**P**
Market Resources	<---	Brand Capabilities	-.162	.197	-.824	-.153	.410
Service reliability	<---	Brand Capabilities	-.314	.255	-1.233	-.298	.217
Customer experience	<---	Brand Capabilities	-.456	.283	-1.609	-.458	.108
Market Resources	<---	Sales promotion	-1.399	.452	-3.098	-1.380	.002
Market Resources	<---	Personal branding	2.649	.707	3.744	2.092	***
Market Resources	<---	Social media platforms	-.013	.093	-.136	-.015	.891
Market Resources	<---	Social media marketing	.021	.105	.195	.021	.845
Market Resources	<---	Brand elements	.287	.217	1.321	.194	.186
Market Resources	<---	Brand building dimensions	-.027	.149	-.184	-.023	.854
Market Resources	<---	Advertising	-.004	.131	-.033	-.005	.974
Service reliability	<---	Sales promotion	-2.104	.587	-3.582	-2.081	***
Customer experience	<---	Sales promotion	-2.313	.662	-3.493	-2.428	***
Service reliability	<---	Personal branding	3.547	.917	3.866	2.810	***
Customer experience	<---	Personal branding	3.899	1.038	3.756	3.277	***
Service reliability	<---	Social media marketing	-.129	.136	-.952	-.134	.341
Customer experience	<---	Social media marketing	-.164	.148	-1.109	-.180	.268
Customer experience	<---	Social media platforms	.021	.130	.161	.027	.872
Service reliability	<---	Social media platforms	.012	.120	.096	.014	.923

Relationships			Estimate (Unstandardised regression weights)	S.E.	C.R. (t value)	Standardised regression weights	P
Customer experience	<---	Brand elements	.412	.306	1.345	.297	.179
Service reliability	<---	Brand elements	.263	.280	.941	.179	.347
Customer experience	<---	Brand building dimensions	.018	.209	.087	.016	.930
Service reliability	<---	Brand building dimensions	.013	.192	.070	.011	.944
Customer experience	<---	Advertising	.052	.182	.287	.069	.774
Service reliability	<---	Advertising	.130	.168	.774	.162	.439
Q2_5	<---	Social media platforms	1.050	.049	21.447	.715	***
Q2_4	<---	Social media platforms	.998	.047	21.171	.707	***
Q2_3	<---	Social media platforms	.946	.049	19.174	.648	***
Q2_2	<---	Social media platforms	1.078	.043	25.177	.818	***
Q2_1	<---	Social media platforms	1.000	NA	NA	.764	
Q2_9	<---	Social media marketing	1.000	NA	NA	.696	
Q2_10	<---	Social media marketing	.995	.039	25.822	.718	***
Q2_11	<---	Social media marketing	.992	.053	18.818	.730	***
Q2_12	<---	Social media marketing	.961	.052	18.445	.714	***
Q2_13	<---	Social media marketing	1.102	.059	18.744	.727	***
Q2_14	<---	Social media marketing	1.046	.052	20.214	.793	***
Q2_6	<---	Social media platforms	1.188	.044	27.203	.871	***
Q2_7	<---	Social media platforms	1.231	.044	28.274	.899	***
Q2_8	<---	Social media platforms	1.164	.043	27.303	.874	***
Q4_5	<---	Brand elements	1.535	.101	15.167	.764	***
Q4_4	<---	Brand elements	1.756	.113	15.585	.806	***
Q4_2	<---	Brand elements	1.544	.106	14.603	.712	***
Q4_1	<---	Brand elements	1.000	NA	NA	.537	

Relationships			Estimate (Unstandardised regression weights)	S.E.	C.R. (t value)	Standardised regression weights	P
Q5_1	<---	Brand building dimensions	1.000	NA	NA	.771	
Q5_2	<---	Brand building dimensions	1.193	.046	25.804	.836	***
Q5_3	<---	Brand building dimensions	1.175	.046	25.776	.835	***
Q5_4	<---	Brand building dimensions	1.113	.043	25.791	.835	***
Q5_5	<---	Brand building dimensions	1.087	.043	25.284	.822	***
Q5_6	<---	Brand building dimensions	.983	.062	15.944	.552	***
Q4_6	<---	Brand elements	1.564	.103	15.193	.766	***
Q4_7	<---	Brand elements	1.745	.115	15.113	.759	***
Q4_8	<---	Brand elements	1.697	.115	14.752	.727	***
Q5_7	<---	Brand building dimensions	.990	.049	20.023	.676	***
Q6_5	<---	Brand Capabilities	1.165	.057	20.487	.740	***
Q6_4	<---	Brand Capabilities	.928	.043	21.526	.778	***
Q6_3	<---	Brand Capabilities	.977	.046	21.203	.766	***
Q6_1	<---	Brand Capabilities	1.000	NA	NA	.715	
Q6_6	<---	Brand Capabilities	1.075	.048	22.305	.806	***
Q6_7	<---	Brand Capabilities	.996	.051	19.557	.707	***
Q6_8	<---	Brand Capabilities	1.040	.047	22.070	.798	***
Q11_1	<---	Market resources	1.000	NA	NA	.783	
Q11_2	<---	Market resources	.922	.040	23.109	.765	***
Q11_3	<---	Market resources	1.053	.048	22.065	.736	***
Q11_4	<---	Market resources	1.136	.049	22.968	.761	***
Q11_5	<---	Market resources	.966	.042	23.179	.770	***
Q11_6	<---	Market resources	.917	.040	22.855	.761	***
Q10_5	<---	Service reliability	.816	.035	23.548	.740	***

Relationships			Estimate (Unstandardised regression weights)	S.E.	C.R. (t value)	Standardised regression weights	P
Q10_4	<---	Service reliability	.974	.041	23.936	.752	***
Q10_3	<---	Service reliability	1.043	.039	26.670	.811	***
Q10_2	<---	Service reliability	.985	.037	26.586	.808	***
Q10_1	<---	Service reliability	1.000	NA	NA	.820	
Q10_9	<---	Customer experience	1.000	NA	NA	.793	
Q10_20	<---	Customer experience	.980	.040	24.236	.757	***
Q10_10	<---	Customer experience	.994	.037	26.591	.812	***
Q10_11	<---	Customer experience	.985	.036	27.252	.827	***
Q10_12	<---	Customer experience	1.010	.039	25.596	.790	***
Q10_19	<---	Customer experience	.946	.038	24.831	.772	***
Q10_13	<---	Customer experience	.989	.038	25.894	.797	***
Q10_14	<---	Customer experience	1.060	.041	25.593	.789	***
Q10_15	<---	Customer experience	.964	.038	25.625	.790	***
Q10_16	<---	Customer experience	1.090	.054	20.177	.654	***
Q10_17	<---	Customer experience	1.026	.045	22.724	.720	***
Q10_18	<---	Customer experience	.977	.041	23.953	.751	***
Q10_8	<---	Customer experience	1.024	.044	23.490	.739	***
Q10_7	<---	Customer experience	.991	.039	25.178	.780	***
Q10_6	<---	Customer experience	.927	.036	25.576	.789	***
Q9_8	<---	Sales promotion	1.134	.055	20.436	.755	***
Q9_5	<---	Sales promotion	1.267	.060	21.194	.783	***
Q9_3	<---	Sales promotion	1.330	.064	20.624	.761	***
Q9_15	<---	Advertising	1.000	NA	NA	.734	
Q9_16	<---	Advertising	1.020	.043	23.617	.809	***

Relationships			Estimate (Unstandardised regression weights)	S.E.	C.R. (t value)	Standardised regression weights	P
Q9_17	<---	Advertising	1.033	.044	23.227	.797	***
Q9_21	<---	Advertising	1.065	.048	22.007	.759	***
Q9_22	<---	Advertising	.882	.040	22.236	.769	***
Q9_23	<---	Advertising	.884	.041	21.707	.749	***
Q9_24	<---	Advertising	.974	.042	23.109	.793	***
Q9_14	<---	Advertising	1.178	.048	24.419	.835	***
Q9_13	<---	Advertising	.892	.042	21.441	.740	***
Q9_12	<---	Advertising	1.134	.047	24.050	.822	***
Q9_6	<---	Personal branding	1.000	NA	NA	.566	
Q9_7	<---	Personal branding	.999	.072	13.968	.587	***
Q9_19	<---	Personal branding	1.031	.077	13.387	.554	***
Q9_20	<---	Personal branding	1.121	.073	15.427	.678	***
Q9_9	<---	Sales promotion	1.195	.055	21.675	.803	***
Q9_10	<---	Sales promotion	1.434	.062	23.191	.862	***
Q9_11	<---	Sales promotion	1.397	.061	22.834	.848	***
Q9_1	<---	Sales promotion	1.000	NA	NA	.696	

*** Significance at the 0.1% level (p value <0.001)

** Significance at the 1% level (p value <0.01)

* Significance at the 5% level (p value <0.05)

“A” Significance at the 10% level (p value <0.01)

Table 8.3 illustrates the correlations between constructs for the model.

Table 8.3: Structural parameter estimates: correlations of SEM 1

Correlations			Estimate
Social media marketing	<-->	Social media platforms	.710
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Brand elements	.642
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand elements	.690
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand building dimensions	.478
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand elements	.588
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand building dimensions	.476
Social media platforms	<-->	Brand capabilities	.559
Social media marketing	<-->	Brand capabilities	.549
Brand elements	<-->	Brand capabilities	.684
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Brand capabilities	.752
Sales promotion	<-->	Personal branding	.957
Advertising	<-->	Personal branding	.882
Sales promotion	<-->	Advertising	.856
Brand capabilities	<-->	Sales promotion	.627
Brand capabilities	<-->	Personal branding	.785
Social media platforms	<-->	Personal branding	.693
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Advertising	.512
Brand elements	<-->	Advertising	.718
Social media marketing	<-->	Advertising	.619
Social media platforms	<-->	Advertising	.674
Brand capabilities	<-->	Advertising	.681
Social media platforms	<-->	Sales promotion	.683
Social media marketing	<-->	Sales promotion	.554
Social media marketing	<-->	Personal branding	.621
Brand elements	<-->	Sales promotion	.750
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Personal branding	.759
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Sales promotion	.494
Brand building dimensions	<-->	Personal branding	.637

Table 8.4 shows the residual error terms that were added based on their modification values in the model; e39 and e38 (.580), e21 and e23 (.527), e46 and e47 (.395), e28 and e27 (.474), e53 and e54(.250), e62 and e61(.361), e57 and e56 (.318), e67 and e68 (.260), e62 and e60 (.138), e84 and e83 (.217), e85 and e86 (.354), e79 and e84 (-.318), e11 and e12 (.374), e78 and e82 (.195) and e17 and e18 (.391) were correlated.

Table 8.4: Residual error terms

Correlations			Estimates
e39	<-->	e38	.580
e21	<-->	e23	.527
e46	<-->	e47	.395
e28	<-->	e27	.474
e53	<-->	e54	.250
e62	<-->	e61	.361
e57	<-->	e56	.318
e67	<-->	e68	.260
e62	<-->	e60	.138
e84	<-->	e83	.217
e85	<-->	e86	.354
e79	<-->	e84	-.318
e11	<-->	e12	.374
e78	<-->	e82	.195
e17	<-->	e18	.391

Items e39 and e38 were Q4.8 ("I can describe the tagline of the SMMEs") and Q4.7 ("I am familiar with the tagline of the SMMEs"), respectively, in the questionnaire and were both referring to knowing the tagline of SMMEs and part of the brand element construct. Therefore, it is logical to covary these error terms. The corresponding e21 and e23 were Q2.3 ("The SMME has an active Twitter account") and Q2.5 ("The SMME information is available on Instagram"), respectively, and both were part of the social media platform construct referring to the social media platforms that SMME use. The corresponding items e46 and e47 were Q5.6 ("The SMME has a graphic symbol that represents it") and Q5.7 ("The SMME is knowledgeable about its products/services"), which were measures of the brand building dimensions construct; therefore, the correlated error makes logical sense. The corresponding items e28 and e27 were Q2.10 ("I believe that the SMME should have a website") and Q2.9 ("I feel that the SMME must be available on electronic search engines such as Google search"). Both items measure the social media marketing construct and refer to being available on a search engine. Therefore, it is sensible to have the correlated errors.

The corresponding items e53 and e54 were Q11.5 ("The SMME strives to provide better products/services") and Q11.6 (The products menu/service list are exciting"). The items both measured market resources and referred to the products/services of SMME being good, therefore, making sense to have the correlated errors. Items e62 and e61 were Q10.18 ("The

SMME provides a list of its products/services") and Q10.19 ("The SMME provides a list of prices of its products/services"), representing the customer experience construct. Both items Q10.18 and Q10.19 referred to the list of products/services of the SMME, which provides both the items being sold and their respective prices, and it is, therefore, reasonable to have the correlated errors. The corresponding items e57 and e56 were items Q10.3 ("The SMME resolves my concerns within a reasonable time") and Q10.4 ("The SMME provides a quick service"), which measured service reliability and referred to the turnaround time in service provision; therefore, the existing correlated error makes sense. The correlated error items e67 and e68 were items Q10.13 ("The SMME is attentive to my needs") and Q10.12 ("The SMME does not mistreat me"). Both items Q10.3 and Q10.12 measured customer experience and refer to conduct/treatment received from the SMME and therefore, is sensible for the error to occur.

The corresponding items e62 and e60 were items Q10.8 ("The service queues are acceptable") and Q10.20 ("The SMME is always clean") and measured customer experience. Correlated error items e84 and e83 were items Q9.22 ("I like it when the SMME supports a good cause") and Q9.21 ("The SMME sponsors the community"), respectively; both were measures of sales promotion and refer to the SMME providing community support. Therefore, the correlated error between items e84 and e83 is logical. The corresponding correlated error items e85 and e86 were items Q9.23 ("The SMME has a positive social impact") and Q9.24 ("The support for the less fortunate is a good initiative by the SMME"). They are both measures of the sales promotion construct and refer to addressing social issues in the community; therefore, the error is sensible.

The corresponding items e79 and e84 were items Q9.14 ("The SMME gives complementary gifts") and Q9.22 ("I like it when the SMME supports a good cause"), measured the sales promotion constructs and referred to providing free items; therefore, the correlated error is reasonable, although the error is negatively correlated. Items e11 and e12 were items Q9.8 ("I am familiar with the SMME signage") and Q9.9 ("I like the signage that the SMME uses to advertise its products and services") and measure advertising, and both items refer to SMME signage and therefore, render the correlated error sensible. The corresponding items e78 and e82 were items Q9.13 ("I am happy with the special prices") and Q9.17 ("I appreciate the discounts that the SMME gives to me"), measured sales promotion and referred to price. Therefore, the correlated error is reasonable. Last, items e17 and e18 were Q9.19 ("It is a great idea that the SMME does door-to-door selling its products/services") and 9.20 ("The SMME likes to demonstrate its products/services"), measured personal branding and refer to presenting a product/service; therefore, the correlated error is rational. Based on the correlated errors that could be rationalised, it can be stated that the covariance between the error term in the model is justified. Future research is required to refine the constructs identified in this study.

After merging the sales promotion and personal branding constructs, the model was tested. The results of SEM 3 are discussed.

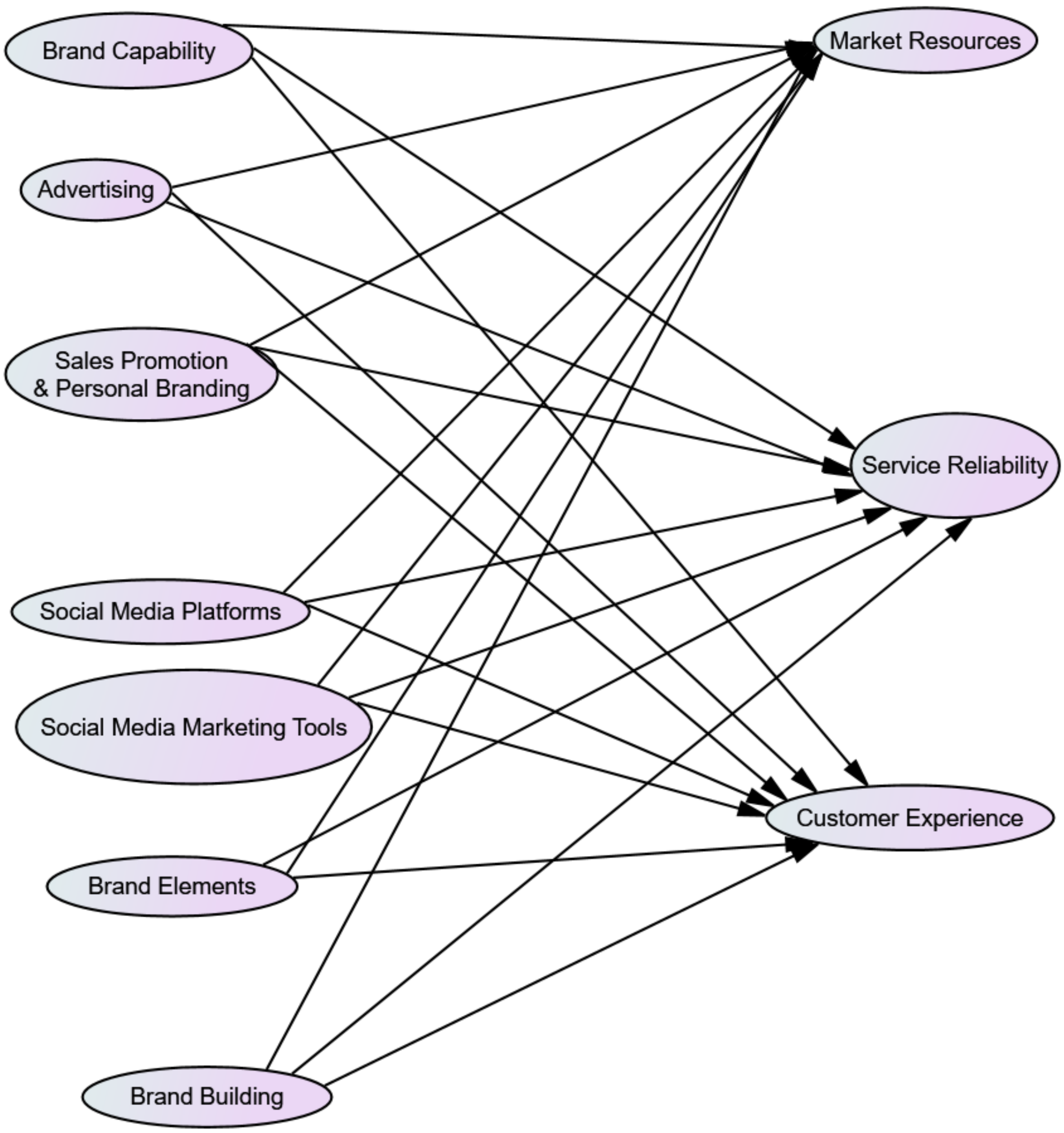
8.4.2 SEM 3

In this section, the relationship between the constructs of the study are considered and discussed. In this model, the sales promotion and personal branding factors were merged.

8.4.2.1 Evaluating path structural equation model fit

The model was tested by evaluating the goodness-of-fit indices. Figure 8.6 depicts SEM 3.

Figure 8.6: SEM conceptual model 3



*Note: Social media marketing tools = Social media marketing.

Figure 8.6 represents the relationship between the latent constructs of the model. Social media platforms are represented by eight items (Q2.1 – Q2.8), social media marketing is measured by six items (Q2.9 – Q2.14), brand elements is represented by eight items (Q4.1 – Q4.8), brand building dimensions by seven items (Q5.1 – Q5.7), brand-related capabilities by eight items (Q6.1 – Q6.8), attitude towards quality by three items (Q7.1 – Q7.3), sales promotion by thirteen items (Q9.6 – Q9.7, Q9.12 – Q9.24), advertising by nine (Q9.1 – Q9.5 and Q9.8 -Q9.11), service reliability by five items (Q10.1 – Q10.5), customer experience by fifteen items (Q10.6 – Q10.20) and market resources by six items (Q11.1 – Q11.6).

The goodness-of-fit indices of the structural model are provided in the table and discussed below.

Table 8.5: Goodness-of-fit indices for conceptual SEM 3

Model	CMIN (x^2)	df	P	CMIN/ df	RMSE A	CFI	TLI	IFI	**AIC**	**BCC**	SRM R
Model 1	9151.12 1	317 2	0.00 0	2.885	.048	.889	.884	.889	9613.12 1	9665.22 2	.0542
Indicate acceptab le fit				<3 or <5	≤0.08	≥0.9 0	≥0.9 0	≥0.9 0			<0.08

The third model was fitted to the data. Model 3 showed that item 9.14 had strong covariance with item 9.17 (-.271) and item 9.15 (.241); therefore, item 9.14 was further deleted from the construct. The goodness-of-fit indices with item 9.14 deleted revealed a RMSEA (0.48), SMRM (0.542) with fit indices IFI (.889), TLI (.884) and CFI (.889). The fit was similar to model 2 but did address the concern of multicollinearity and its effect on the standardised regression weights. Furthermore, Lai and Green (2016) suggest that there are instances where RMSEA and CFI provide inconsistent fit because the two indices evaluate fit from different perspectives by their design. Further evidence can be found in Hu and Bentler (1999:4), who assert that values above 0.080 for parsimony indices could be permissible indices. Wisting *et al*. (2019:3) also state that an index of >.080 is permissible. Wisting *et al*. (2019: 3) suggest the following range of fit index: (CFI) >.95 (good fit), >.90 (traditional fit) and >.8 (sometimes permissible). There were no further allowable modifications that were made to improve model fit. Therefore, based on the comparison of the three models, Model 3 was interpreted and represented in the research hypothesis.

Table 8.6: Structural path coefficients: Structural model 3

Relationships			Unstandardised regression weights	S.E.	C.R. (t-value)	Standardised regression weights	P	Label	Hypothesis Supported or not supported
Market resources	<---	Brand related capabilities	.360	.059	6.145	.340	***	H1a1	Supported
Service reliability	<---	Brand related capabilities	.380	.056	6.800	.360	***	H1a2	Supported
Customer experience	<---	Brand related capabilities	.323	.048	6.737	.325	***	H1a3	Supported
Market resources	<---	Sales promotion	.245	.076	3.223	.247	.001	H2a1	Supported
Service reliability	<---	Sales promotion	.085	.072	1.183	.086	.237	H2a2	Not supported
Customer experience	<---	Sales promotion	.092	.061	1.496	.098	.35	H2a3	Not Supported
Market resources	<---	Social media platforms	-.058	.039	-1.484	-.071	.138	H3a1	Not supported
Customer experience	<---	Social media platforms	-.047	.032	-1.462	-.060	.144	H3a2	Not supported
Service reliability	<---	Social media platforms	-.053	.037	-1.410	-.064	.159	H3a3	Not supported
Market resources	<---	Social media marketing	.117	.043	2.741	.121	.006	H4a1	Supported
Service reliability	<---	Social media marketing	.011	.040	.268	.011	.789	H4a2	Not supported
Customer experience	<---	Social media marketing	-.002	.035	-.068	-.003	.946	H4a3	Not supported
Market resources	<---	Brand elements	-.099	.053	-1.843	-.101	.065	H5a1	Not supported
Customer experience	<---	Brand elements	-.113	.044	-2.570	-.124	.010	H5a2	Supported
Service reliability	<---	Brand elements	-.185	.052	-3.583	-.191	***	H5a3	Supported
Market resources	<---	Brand building dimensions	.238	.057	4.208	.196	***	H6a1	Supported

Relationships			Unstandardised regression weights	S.E.	C.R. (t-value)	Standardised regression weights	P	Label	Hypothesis Supported or not supported
Customer experience	<---	Brand building dimensions	.392	.048	8.172	.344	***	H6a2	Supported
Service reliability	<---	Brand building dimensions	.360	.055	6.561	.297	***	H6a3	Supported
Market resources	<---	Advertising	.169	.063	2.678	.201	.007	H7a1	supported
Customer experience	<---	Advertising	.281	.053	5.342	.357	***	H7a2	Supported
Service reliability	<---	Advertising	.362	.062	5.864	.434	***	H7a3	Supported

*** Significance at the 0.1% level (p value <0.001)

** Significance at the 1% level (p value <0.01)

* Significance at the 5% level (p value <0.05)

"A" Significance at the 10% level (p value <0.01)

Table 8.6 depicts the results of the relationships between the latent constructs of the study. The statistical significant relationships are subsequently listed. Brand related capabilities have moderate positive relationships with market resource, (β= .340; $p < 0.001$), service reliability (β= .360; $p < 0.001$) and with customer experience (β= .325; $p < 0.001$). Sales promotion has a weak positive relationship with market resources, (β= .247; $p < 0.001$). Social media marketing has a weak positive relationship with market resources, (β= .121; $p < 0.001$). Brand building dimensions has a weak positive relationship with market resources at a statistically significant (β= .196; $p < 0.001$). Advertising has a weak positive relationship with market resources, (β= .201; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, brand element has a weak negative relationship with customer experience (β= -.124; $p < 0.05$). Brand elements has a weak negative relationship with service reliability (β= -.191; $p < 0.001$). Brand building dimensions has a positive moderate relationship with customer experience (β= .344; $p < 0.001$). and a weak positive relationship with service reliability (β= .297; $p < 0.001$) and advertising has a moderate positive relationship with customer experience (β= .357; $p < 0.001$) and service reliability (β= .434; $p < 0.001$).

The hypotheses that were developed and stated for the conceptual model were evaluated. The evaluation was based on the SEM model which was discussed in section 8.4.1.2. The hypotheses stated had to meet the required criteria in order to be supported/not supported. The model fit had to be established, since the model fit requirements were met and the variance explained were acceptable; the statistical significance and direction of the relationships could be assumed based on the *p*-values. Therefore, the inferences are drawn from the results of the analysis.

The hypotheses relating to the constructs of the study are subsequently discussed. The relationships in the hypothesised model and their associated hypotheses are provided. The path coefficients and the corresponding *p*-values for each relationship are stated and indicated accordingly. The *p*-values are indicators of whether the structural path is statistically significant at 0.01%, 1% and 5%. Table 8.5 depicts the hypotheses results.

The relationship between market resources and the independent variables, namely: brand related capabilities and market resources (H1a1), sales promotion and market resources (H2a1), social media marketing and market resources (H4a1), brand building dimensions and market resources (H6a1) and advertising and market resources (H7a1), as per structural path estimates, were statistically significant and therefore support the hypotheses; while the relationship between social media platforms and market resources (H3a1) and brand elements and market resources (H5a1) were not statistically significant and therefore do not support the hypotheses.

The relationship between service reliability and the independent variables, namely, brand related capabilities and service reliability (H2a1), brand building dimensions and service reliability (H6a2), brand elements and service reliability (H5a2) and advertising and service reliability (H7a2) were statistically significant and therefore support the hypotheses. The relationship between social media platforms and service reliability (H3a2), sales promotion and service reliability (H2a2), and social media marketing and service reliability (H4a2), were not statistically significant and therefore do not support the hypotheses.

With regard to the relationship between customer experience and the independent variables, the relationships between brand related capabilities and customer experience (H1a3), brand elements and customer experience (H5a3), brand building dimensions and customer experience (H6a3) and advertising and customers experience (H7a3) were statistically significant, and therefore support the hypothesis. The relationships between sales promotion and customer experience (H2a3), social media platforms and customer experience (H3a3), social media marketing and customer experience (H4a4) were not statistically significant and therefore do not support the hypotheses.

In the next section, the mediation effect between two constructs taking an indirect path as a result of the third variable is examined and discussed.

8.5 SEM RESULTS: TEST FOR THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF BRAND IDENTITY

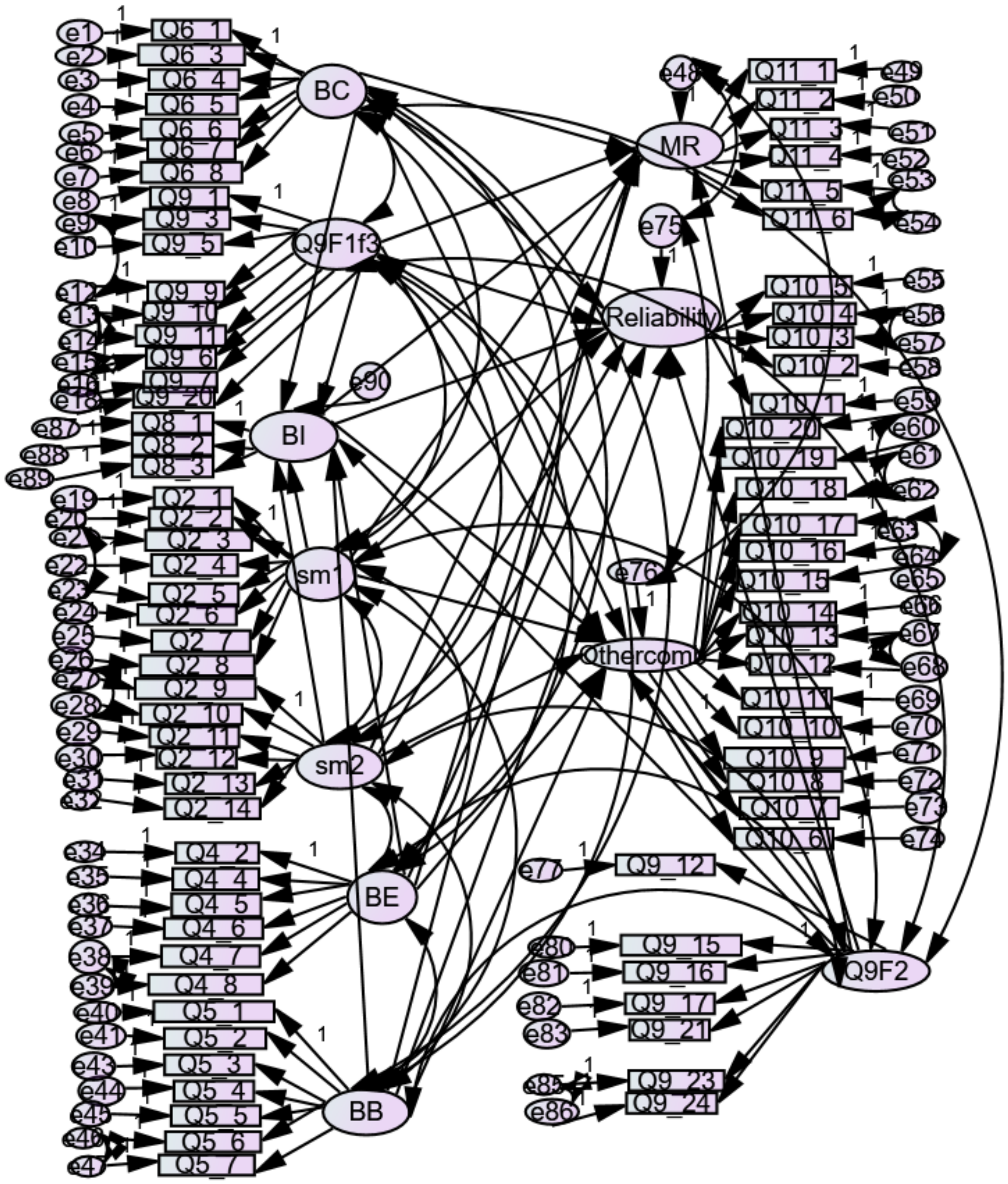
In this section, SEM is discussed based on the potential mediation effect of brand identity between marketing communication mix components and service reliability, marketing communication mix and market-based resources, brand development elements and service reliability, and brand development and market resources. Hair *et al*. (2019) point out that the brand identity variable that serves as a third variable has a potential intervening influence on the relationship between the other two constructs. Mediation explains how the independent variable impacts a dependent variable. Mediation is part of the causal pathway of an effect that explains how or why an effect occurs. Mediation can be partial or full in structural models. Full mediation occurs when the mediating construct completely explains the relationship between the other two constructs (Hair *et al*., 2019).

8.5.1 SEM: Model fit with brand identity as a mediator between the constructs

The SEM mediation model fit is discussed. Figure 8.5 depicts the structural model that describes the mediating model for assessing the mediation research hypotheses in the study. The mediation of brand awareness was tested between all independent variables (exogenous constructs) and all three dependent variables (endogenous constructs).

Mediation was therefore, tested between advertising and service reliability, customer experience and market-based resources with brand identity as the mediator. Then, between sales promotion and service reliability, customer experience and market resources with brand identity as a mediator. Thereafter, mediation was tested between brand capabilities and service reliability, customer experience and market-based resources and between brand building dimensions and service reliability, customer experience and market-based resources with brand identity as a mediator. Brand identity as a mediator between brand elements and service reliability, customer experience and market-based resources was tested. The mediator role of brand identity in the relationship between social media marketing and service reliability, customer experience and market-based resources was tested. Mediation was also tested to establish whether brand identity mediates the relationship between social media platforms and service reliability, customer experience and market-based resources.

Figure 8.7: SEM mediation model



The goodness-of-fit results are provided in Table 8.7 and discussed next.

Table 8.7: Goodness-of-fit indices for the SEM mediator model

Model	CMIN (χ^2)	df	P	CMIN/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	IFI	**PCLOSE**	**SRMR**
Model 1	7915,361	2933	0.000	2.699	.046	.902	.897	.902	1,000	0.0526
Indicate acceptable fit				<3 or <5	≤0.08	≥0.90	≥0.90	≥0.90		

The structural model fit the data adequately. The CMIN/df is less than the threshold of <3, which suggests that there is adequate data fit. The RMSEA showed good fit with the values of.046, as it was below the threshold of 0.05 for good fit. The fit indices, CFI (.902), TLI (.897) and IFI (.902), were above the ≥0.90 threshold except for TLI; however, Zhang *et al.* (2021) indicates that either CFI or TLI can be considered for model fit, and as such, since the CFI is above the threshold and the TLI is near the threshold, the model can be said to indicate an adequate fit.

8.5.2 Structural path with coefficient: Brand identity as a mediator

Since the model fit has been established, the relationships between the constructs of the study are determined in relation to brand identity as a mediator. The direction of the mediation effect is determined and discussed.

8.5.2.1 SEM Mediation path

In analysing whether any two of the variables in the study are associated via a third variable, brand identity, the bias corrected bootstrapping approach was adopted as recommended by MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West and Sheets (2002). A bias-corrected bootstrapping was used, where the intervals for indirect effects involved multiple repeated samples with replacement from the data set, considered the best method for testing indirect effects (Chen & Fritz, 2021). The latent variable (SEM) or observed variables (path) are refitted and estimated for all parameters retained for each bootstrapped sample. A multiplication of corresponding fitted path coefficients is considered for indirect effects. The lower and upper bounds percentiles are determined for each effect. Using Amos, the indirect, direct and total effects were established. The number of bootstrap samples was 200, and the bias-corrected confidence interval was set at 95%. The standardised direct and indirect effects were examined.

The results showed that the indirect effect is statistically significant, at the p<0.05 level of significance for advertising and service reliability (p=0.005), advertising and market resources (p=0.004), sales promotion and service reliability (p=0.009) and sales promotion and market resources (p=0.006).

Table 8.8 shows the mediation effect analysis for the statistically significant indirect effects.

Table 8.8: Mediation effect analysis

Relationship	**Effects**	**Point Estimation**	**Lower (Bias-Corrected 95% CI)**	**Upper (Bias-Corrected 95% CI)**	**p**
Adv– BI -SQ	Indirect effect	-.051	-.129	-.021	.005
	Direct effect	.474	.279	.701	.011
SP – BI- MR	Indirect effect	.055	.025	.119	.006
	Direct effect	-.007	.063	.427	.009
SP - BI - SQ	Indirect effect	.055	.019	.117	.009
	Direct effect	.219	-.231	.178	.972
Adv – BI - MR	Indirect effect	-.051	-.129	-.018	.004
	Direct effect	.162	-.026	.314	.104

***Note:** SQ: Service reliability; BI: Brand identity; Adv: advertising; MR: Market-based resources; SP: Sales promotion.

Next, the direct effects results were used to determine whether partial or full mediation was explained.

8.5.3 Partial and full mediation

This section serves to determine whether the mediation path can be considered full or partial mediation. If the bias corrected bootstrapped confidence interval (CI) of the direct effect does not include zero, partial mediation occurs (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Full mediation occurs where the direct effect is not significant and the confidence interval (CI) does include zero (0).

Table 8.8 depicts the direct effects of mediation. The results indicate that brand identity was a partial mediator in the relationship between service reliability and advertising as well as between sales promotion and market-based resources, as the CI did not include zero for the direct effect. The mediation effects are shown in Figure 8.8 to Figure 8.11.

Figure 8.8: Mediator path diagram (service reliability and advertising)

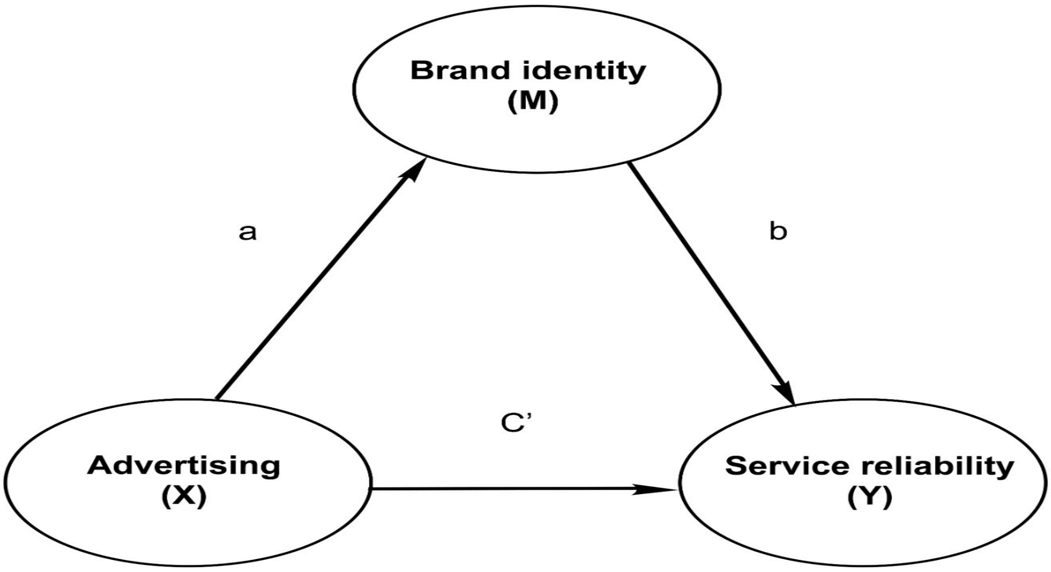


Figure 8.8 depicts a mediating diagram for determining whether brand identity mediates the relationship between service reliability and advertising. The results showed that there is partial mediation from service reliability to advertising as a result of brand identity.

Figure 8.9: Mediator path diagram (sales promotion and market-based resources)

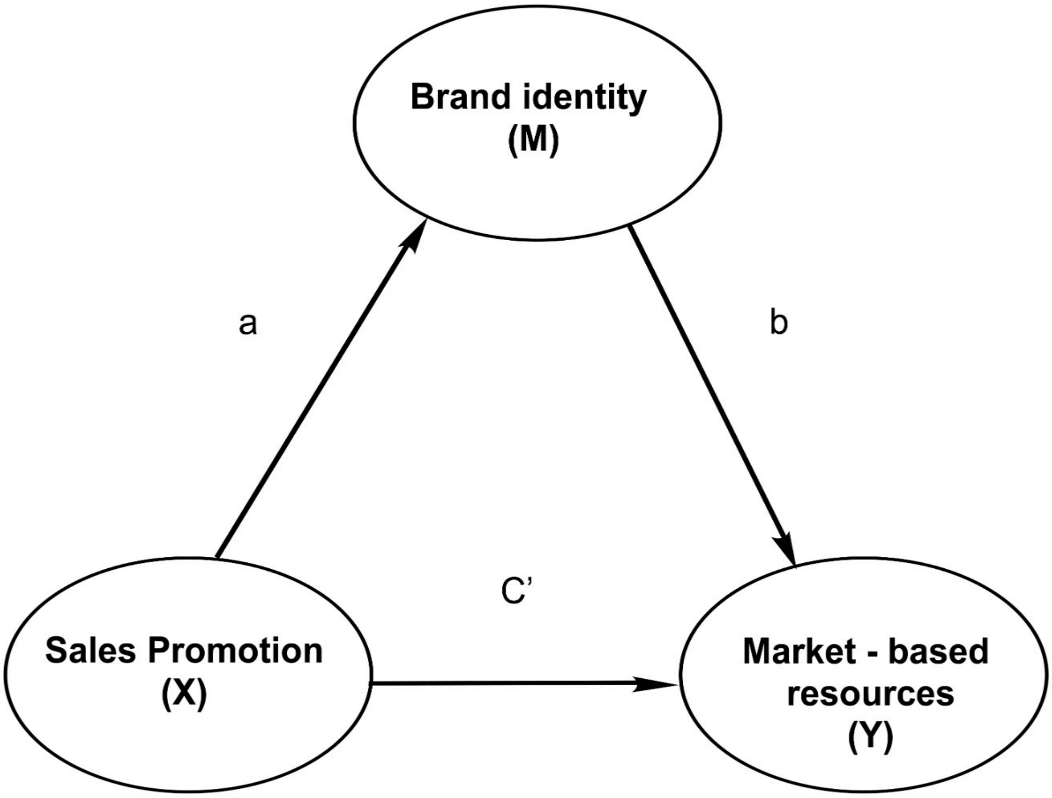
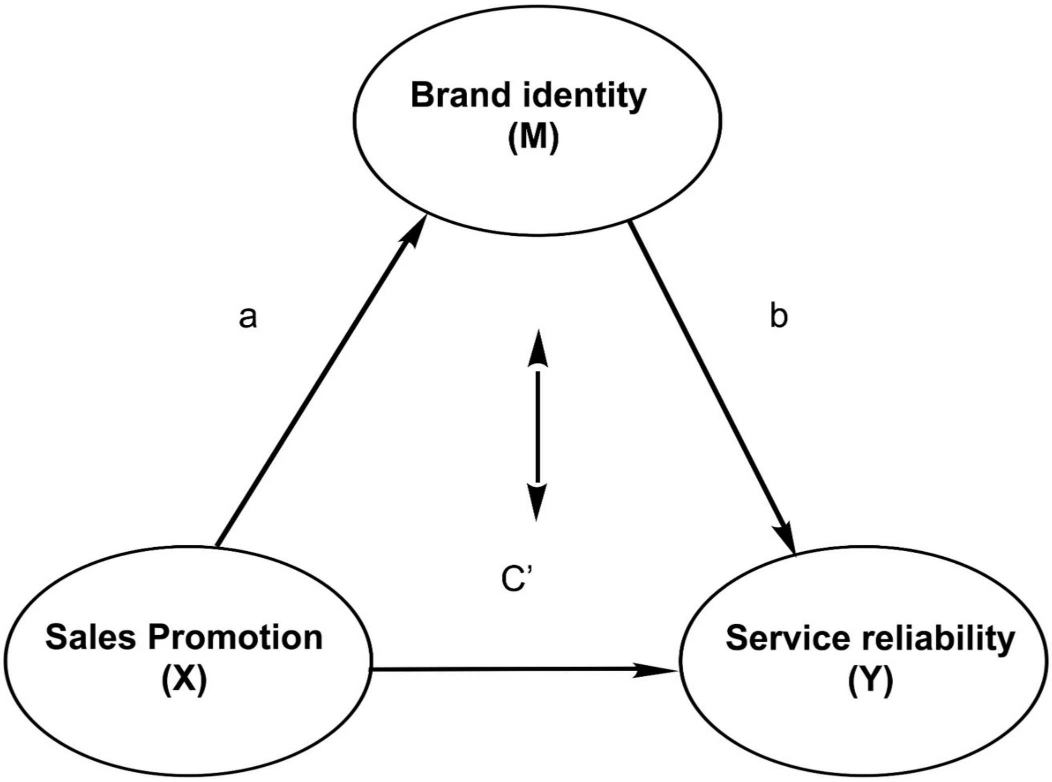


Figure 8.9 illustrates a mediating effect relationship as a result of brand identity. The analysis showed that brand identity partially mediates the relationship between sales promotion and market-based resources.

Figure 8.10: Mediator path diagram (service reliability and sales promotion)



In determining whether mediation exists between service reliability and sales promotion, the results showed that brand identity fully mediates the relationship between the two constructs. This relationship is depicted in Figure 8.10.

Figure 8.11: Mediator path diagram (advertising and market-based resources)

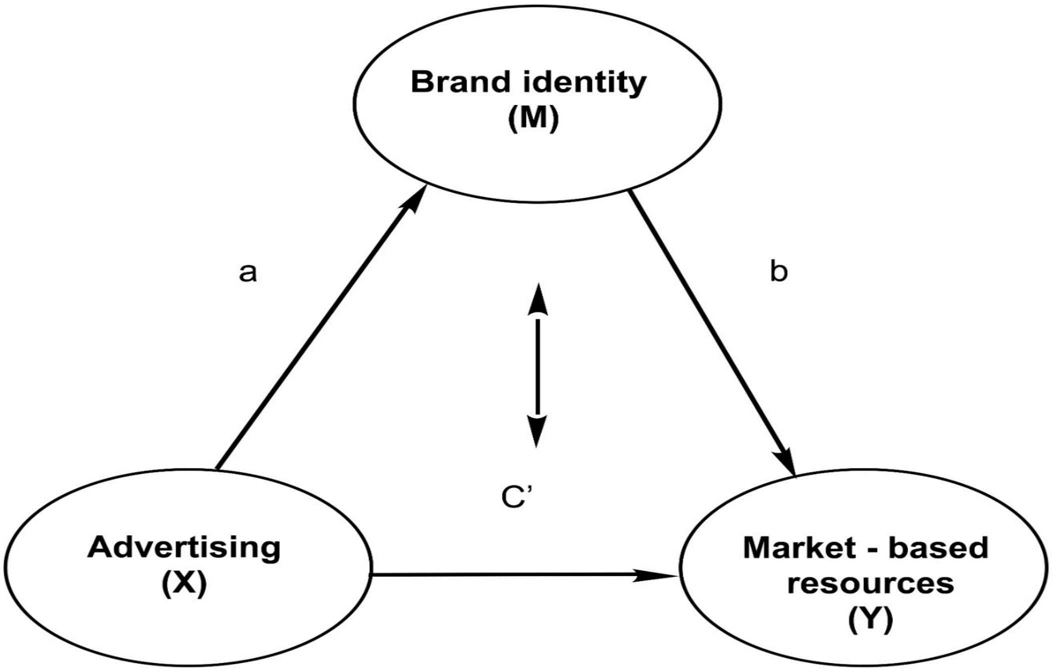


Figure 8.11 illustrates the full mediating effect that brand identity has on advertising and market-based resources. The analysis showed that brand identity fully mediates the relationship between advertising and market-based resources.

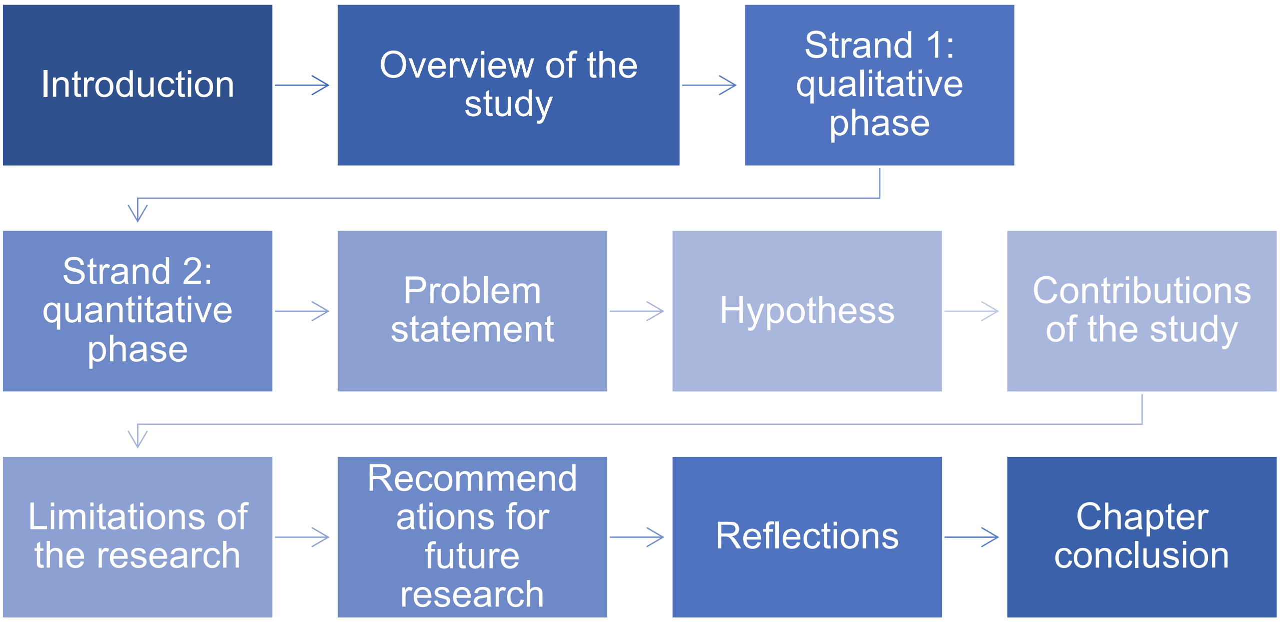
8.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

CB-SEM was performed in this study. SEM was conducted to test the causal relationship between the constructs of the model. The hypothesised structural model was tested for model fit, and it was confirmed. The latent constructs and the observed variables showed specific statistically significant relationships, and the latent constructs also revealed significant relationships. Therefore, the relationships between the constructs can be said to be measures of the proposed brand communication management model, but refinement with follow-up studies is needed.

The correlation analysis showed that some constructs were closely related, such as sales promotion and personal branding, advertising and personal branding, sales promotion and advertising. These are factors that measure the marketing communication mix concept. In evaluating path model fit, the fit was a challenge because there are many variables. However, the fit was therefore near the threshold permissible.

The hypotheses that were tested revealed that only market-based resources and sales promotion, market resources and personal branding, customer experience and brand-related capabilities, customer experience and sales promotion, customer experience and personal branding, service reliability and sales promotion and service reliability and personal branding hypothesised relationships were supported in the model. The mediation analysis confirmed partial and full mediation, suggesting that brand identity does serve as a mediator in this study, influencing the relationships between some of the constructs of the brand communication management model.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



9.1 INTRODUCTION

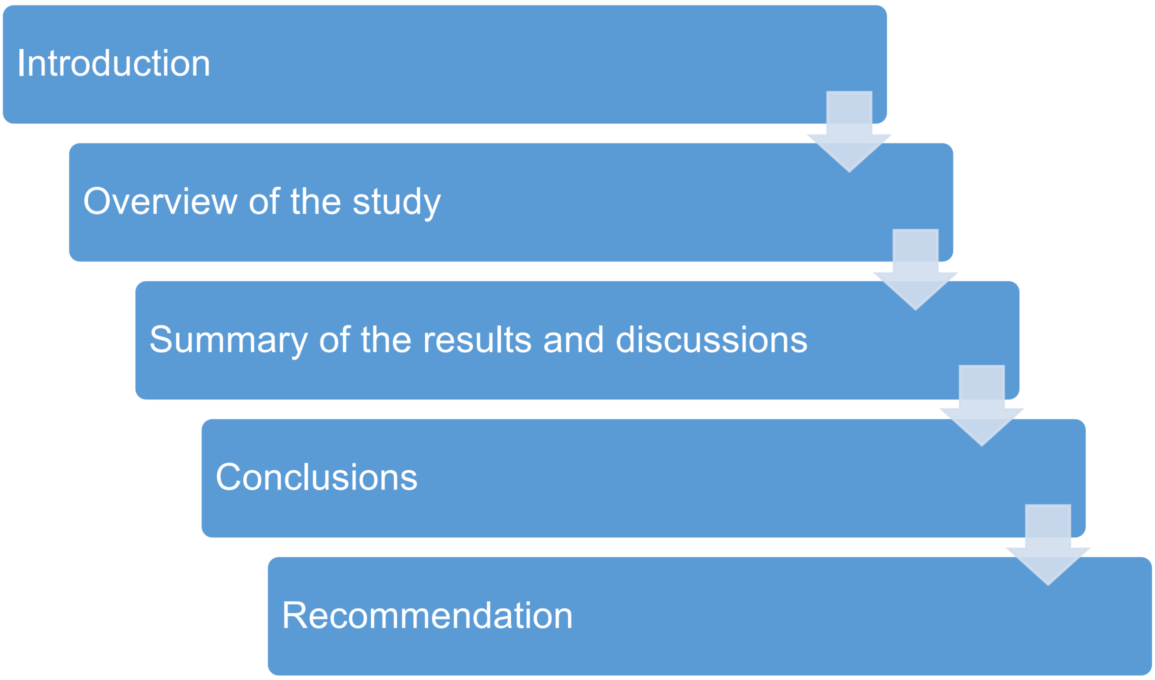
The importance of SMMEs and their contributions to the economy are widely acknowledged in literature. Examples include studies that focus on the role of SMMEs in spearheading economic growth and addressing social problems (Makwara, 2019) in a country's economy (Hlengwa & Thusi, 2018; Maduku & Kaseeram, 2021, 2019; Niewenhuizen, 2019). Cant and Rabie (2018) argue that the importance of SMMEs in townships and their contributions to the country's economic growth and development have been overlooked. A lack of resources is cited as one of the reasons why these enterprises are often not sustainable (Aigbavboa, Aghimien & Mabasa, 2018).

Branding and brand management is known to contribute to the financial growth of enterprises (Paul, 2019). However, little research has so far focused on brand communication management of SMMEs with consideration of the practices and activities that enterprises engage in to establish as brands and this is evident in the studies conducted by (Boukis *et al*., 2017; Maduku *et al*., 2016; Mudanganyi, *et al*., 2020; Wiid & Cant, 2021). In addition, there is a lack of SMME models, theories, and frameworks (Tewary & Mehta, 2021) in this regard, as shown in the literature review. Therefore, in an endeavour to build a brand communication management model, the current study explored SMME owner's practices and activities with regard to branding. The study also gathered the perceptions of customers and clients of the enterprises. Thereafter, the measurement model and the structural models were developed, and causal relationships among the constructs of the model were tested, together with the mediating effect of brand identity on the other latent constructs in the model.

In concluding this thesis, this Chapter discusses the results according to the research questions and objectives, together with their implications, the study's contributions, and gaps in the literature. This is followed by a summary of conclusions and suggestions for future research in this domain.

The discussions in this Chapter follow the sequence presented in Figure 9.1

Figure 9.1: The Chapter sequence



9.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the brand management practices and activities of SMMEs in building and developing their enterprises as brands. In addition, the study sought to develop a brand communication management model for SMMEs. To achieve that, a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was followed. The qualitative phase was the first phase of this study, and focused on exploratory research, while the second phase was the quantitative phase, which followed the descriptive research approach. Owners of SMMEs in South African townships were interviewed, and the data that were collected from them informed the development of the research measurement instrument. The research measurement instrument was used to collect quantitative data from the customers of the enterprises in the form of self-administered surveys. The rationale for the design was to facilitate the development of an informed model that considered the unique perspective of SMMEs and their consumers in townships.

The research questions and objectives are restated to orientate the conclusion of this study and to frame the discussion of the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

9.3 STRAND 1: QUALITATIVE PHASE

The first phase of the research study was qualitative. The discussion commences with a restatement of the secondary research questions, followed by the primary research question, for ease of reference. The questions were aimed at exploring the SMME owners' practices and activities in building and developing the enterprises as brands. Keller (2021) advances that there are a number of influences, such as technology, that impact and will impact brands in the future, including how they are built and managed. These influences are said to continuously change aspects of business management and branding practices.

9.3.1 Secondary research questions

RQ 1: What are the brand communication dimensions, practices and activities present in SMME brands in South African townships?

9.3.2 Brand communication practices, activities, and dimensions

The thematic analysis revealed that brand elements, social media, marketing communication mix (promotion activities), and customer service are the brand communication dimensions, practices and activities in which SMMEs in South African townships engage. The brand communication dimensions are used for various purposes, such as symbolising and identifying, communicating about, and promoting enterprises.

9.3.2.1 Brand elements

Brand elements are used to symbolise and identify the establishments. Farhana (2012) described brand elements as trademarkable designs that serve to identify and differentiate the brand. Cai (2002) and Keller (2021) both note that these brand elements are in the form of brand name, term, logo, sign, design, symbol, slogan, package or a combination of any of the mentioned elements. From Cai (2002) and Keller's (2021) explanations of the elements, it is evident that the definitions have remained consistent over decades.

Keller and Swaminathan (2020) accentuate that brand elements are intended to identify and differentiate sellers, including their products and services, from competitors. Keller (1998) highlights that brand elements can help build stronger identities and presence with consumers, and that these elements are dynamic and multidimensional. Keller (1998) maintains that the marketplace is cluttered and, as a result, brand elements not only serve to identify the enterprises, but also serve as sellers of the brand. Therefore, brand elements should not be neglected by SMME owners. A simple brand element such as a brand name is noted and its meaning positioned in the memory of consumers. This suggests that the brand elements serve other purposes apart from symbolising and identifying the enterprise. Brand elements also differentiate and distinguish a brand and the enterprise.

Brasel and Hagtvedt (2016) found that consumers had favourable attitudes towards a brand when there was consistency in brand cues such as slogans or logos. Therefore, SMME owners must ensure consistency in all the brand elements they use to symbolise and identify their enterprises in brand communication. The names of enterprises suggest the products and services that are offered and identify the business, while colours carry meaning and segment the customers of the enterprises, suggesting that the product or service being offered is luxurious or not. Logos represent the enterprise and speak to the business and its offerings. It is, therefore, clear that creative and strategically sound management of brand elements can be an effective way to generate greater consumer interest and engagement with a brand.

9.3.2.2 Social media

The SMME owners in the current study use social media platform activities to communicate information about their enterprises. Alhabash *et al*. (2017) explain that brand communication in social media requires that the owners of enterprises invest in branded items such as the brand elements to communicate with consumers and broaden their client base. The social media platforms that SMME owners use to promote their enterprises are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. This supports the findings of Kushwaha *et al*. (2020), who found that 90% of the business owners in their study used social media platforms to market their enterprises.

According to Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010), companies and small enterprises alike are progressively using social media in their marketing and brand-building activities. The findings of the present study indicate that enterprises in the townships are aware of the role of social media in remaining relevant and competitive. The enterprises were found to use the platforms for activities such as promoting products and services, communicating with customers, or updating changes and offers. As early as 2010, Dickey and Lewis (2010) noted the increase in the use of social media by society, and it is therefore wise that the SMME owners in the study make use of social media platform activities to communicate with society and promote their enterprises. In addition, the owners highlighted the benefit of using the platforms, such as being able to reach a large number of members of a target market.

Social media platforms not only allow enterprise owners to communicate with customers; consumers and clients are also able to engage with each other and share information (Alalwan *et al*., 2017). In this way, enterprises are able to build relationships with existing and new customers (Alalwan *et al*., 2017). Social media is a brand management tool; therefore, SMMEs must manage their presence on such platforms effectively to increase their profits through long-term relationships with the customers. Alalwan *et al*. (2017) and Bartlett (2010) point out that social media is a powerful medium for building relationships. Social media has long been considered a marketing tool that increases marketing communication effectiveness (Berinato, 2010; Dholakia & Durham, 2010) and can positively influence consumer perception (da Fonseca & Gustavo, 2020).

9.3.2.3 Marketing communication mix

A brand must be communicated to the target market, and one strategy to achieve this is the marketing communication mix. Davis (2017) affirms this view, and indicates that communication is fundamental in branding. SMME owners in the townships use a mix of W-o-M, referrals, pamphlets, flyers, and boards to promote their enterprises. Kitchen (2017) advises that enterprises include relevant messages and information in their communication. The SMME owners in the present study indicated that information on their businesses are spread by W-o-M by existing and returning customers. These customers serve as referrals to their peers (Kumar, Lahiri & Dogan, 2018). In some instances, the owners intentionally request the customers to spread W-o-M information and refer the new customers to them. It is, therefore, evident that owners acknowledge the importance and difference that W-o-M serve in promoting enterprises.

W-o-M is considered a more reliable source of information on enterprises (Kumar *et al*., 2018), especially in an era where the credibility and reliability of sellers are determinants of whether customers will engage with the enterprise (Lepojević & Đukić, 2018). This form of communication activity has the benefit of speeding up purchasing processing.

Enterprise owners distribute printed and digital flyers and boards to promote their businesses to potential and existing customers. The flyers are similar to tweets on Twitter.

As noted by Khalid (2016), enterprises must ensure that the messages are well co-ordinated and consistent, and that they include brand elements such as the brand name, logo, and brand colours in their flyers, boards, and pamphlets.

9.3.2.4 Customer service

Customer service is critical to the success of SMMEs (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020), as it directly influences the customer experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) state that customers engage with brands and services that provide superior experiences. In addition to customer experience, owners should ensure consistency in their communications.

From the findings, it is clearly evident that consistency is applied in the practice and activities of SMMEs. It is worth noting that, although discounts are considered a promotional activity in the context of marketing communication, the owners of the enterprises use promotions as one of the communication dimensions. The use of discounts could enhance the customer experience (VanDoorn, Mende, Noble, Hulland, Ostrom, Grewal & Petersen, 2017) in that they feel valued by the enterprises when giving back to them in the form of the discounts. Discounts, by their nature, enhance communication about a product or service, and therefore the brand. Collier, Barnes, Abney and Pelletier (2018) posit that a distinctive service experience creates loyalty. Therefore, the SMMEs must strive to enhance their customer service.

RQ 2: a) How is brand orientation adopted by SMMEs in South African townships?

9.3.3 Brand orientation adoption

The brand identities of the enterprises are personification-oriented, i.e., the owners of the enterprises highlighted personification as the business identity.

9.3.3.1 Brand personification

Brand personification is achieved by portraying the enterprise as respectful, compassionate, sociable, and professional. The personification traits are what create unique associations with the enterprises. Braxton and Lau-Gesk's (2020) study of the impact of collective brand personification on happiness and brand loyalty found that customers' satisfaction is greater when they feel that they belong and that the brand is authentic. These feelings were the results of the enterprise aligning with the brand as a person and with its environment. These traits set an enterprise apart from its competitors and render it memorable. Braxton and Lau-Gesk (2020) further argue that brand personification provides meaning to unfamiliar brands, and emotional bonds are established as a result (Singh, Bajpai & Kulshreshtha, 2021). Therefore, brand personification affects consumers' attitudes towards a brand.

RQ 2: b) What are the brand identities of these enterprises?

9.3.4 Brand identities

The SMME owners indicated that customer service and experience are the deliberate strategies they adopted to create their SMMEs' identities. The activities around customer service and experience assist SMMEs in defining the enterprises as brands.

9.3.4.1 Brand identity

The owners further suggested that customer service and experience define their enterprise's identity. Beck, Rahinel and Bleier (2020) posit that brands are operating in an extraordinary era where consumers are apprehensive about using a new brand. Therefore, the role of brands in providing comfort and reassurance is pronounced. Customer service and experience are some of the aspects of experiencing brands that provide reassurance and comfort, as they are distinct and set the enterprise apart from competitors. Companies and enterprises that have mastered the provision of both customer service and experience enjoy the benefits of customers being loyal to the brand or business.

Aaker (1996) points out that entrepreneurs find ways to create powerful brands in a unique way in order to create value for consumers, thereby establishing a unique identity and differentiating the enterprise from its competitors. Keller (1998) suggests that brand elements can represent brand identity, and contribute to strengthening the uniqueness of the identity, while customer service and experience communicate the brand identity (Bilgin, 2018; Cheung *et al*., 2019).

RQ 3: What brand-building and development activities do SMMEs in South African townships engage in?

9.3.5 Brand building and development activities

According to the owners of the enterprises, service reliability and distinct brand association elements are their preferred brand-building and development activities. Service reliability creates and distinguishes enterprises, while distinct brand association elements enhance and facilitate distinct associations.

9.3.5.1 Service quality

According to the SMME owners, high-quality customer service is made up of consistency, excellent service, quality, differentiation, knowledge, commitment, and passion. These customer service components are what set the enterprises apart from their competitors. Ozbekler and Ozturkoglu (2020) indicate that businesses underscore the importance of being competitive by expanding their customers' service quality perceptions. Customer perception influences purchasing decisions; hence, quality is important and distinguishes an enterprise, and it is not easily emulated by competitors. Setyawati (2022) found that service quality is the most effective strategy for differentiating a business, and that it builds a competitive advantage. Setyawati (2022) adds that service quality is critical in remaining competitive, and that it impacts the development and survival of a business.

9.3.5.2 Distinct brand association elements

Distinct brand association elements comprise the brand name, logo, colour, and tagline. These elements enhance and facilitate distinct associations. Keller (1993) and Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey (2005) explain brand associations as the meaning that a brand carries for consumers; it is anything that is linked in memory to a brand. Therefore, brand association elements have communication functions that directly and effectively deliver the message and meaning of the brand to consumers (Jin *et al*., 2019). The SMME owners in the present study indicated that brand name, logo, colour, and tagline serve as their brand communication dimension practices and activities. These practices symbolise and identify the enterprises, while at the same time serving as brand-building and development activities that enhance and facilitate distinct associations. In communicating about the enterprises, the elements implicitly and explicitly create distinct associations with the enterprises as brands. Such practices have been documented as effective in differentiating the brand, making it stand out (Keller, 2003).

RQ 4: a) What are the brand resources and capabilities that SMMEs in South African townships use?

9.3.6 Resources and capabilities

The importance and future of brands are of value, as they inform the allocation of resources and capabilities. The entrepreneurs confirmed using market-based resources and brand-related capabilities in their enterprises.

9.3.6.1 Market-based resources

The participants acknowledged using trademarks (cf. Ananda, 2022), the uniqueness of their products and services, continuous improvement, and equipment as market-based resources in their enterprises to aid in advancing and achieving better performance. Kauka *et al*. (2020) posit that these resources are important for a business. Resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and organised create a competitive advantage for enterprises and assist them in performing better. Levine *et al*. (2017) posit that competition can cause rivals to attempt to duplicate or eliminate competitors. However, the listed market-based resources that the SMME owners in the current study mentioned are VRIO, which protect the enterprises and provide them with a competitive advantage.

9.3.6.2 Brand-related capabilities

The brand-related capabilities, according to the owners of the enterprises, inform their competitive strategies. The brand-related capabilities that the enterprises implement are price, being family-oriented, personal and memorable experiences, and the use of technology. Personal and memorable experiences, as Wiedmann, Labenz, Haase, and Hennigs (2018) found in their study, are established through multisensory marketing.

These capabilities add value to enterprises and customers; are distinctive from those of competitors; and provide functional and symbolic roles in the business. Khan (2017), amongst others, found price and experience to be the marketing capabilities in the enterprise arena.

RQ 4: b) How is customer service rendered at these enterprises?

9.3.7 Customer service

The SMME owners indicated that they offer customer service through their service delivery. Service delivery is made up of operating hours, quality customer service, and customer experience. The service quality components facilitate service delivery.

9.3.7.1 Service delivery

Customer experience indirectly facilitates the interaction between the enterprise and the customer, and influences how they perceive service delivery (Lim & Kim, 2018). Service delivery satisfies customer needs and wants, and enhances the customer's experience. A positive customer experience result in satisfied customers, thereby creating a competitive advantage for the enterprise. The owners of the SMMEs indicated that they ensure that their customers have an outstanding experience of service delivery, which tends to lead to the spread of positive W-o-M. The owners suggested that they deliberately strive for such an experience for the benefits that it provides the enterprise. This finding confirms the view of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), who posit that customer experience is an important driver of business success and competitive advantage, and that it creates a unique and sustainable advantage for the enterprises over time. Similarly, customer service is related to customer experience, and the SMME owners noted using it to promote the enterprise while delivering service. In doing so, the owners ensure that they provide a friendly, professional, and personalised service. Similarly, in providing quality customer service, the owners and employees of SMMEs make sure that they relate to and have good relationships with their customers. It is worth noting that customer service and experience are also part of the SMME owners' brand-orientation adoption approach to building their brand. They indicataed that it defines the enterprise's identity. Their operating hours are flexible and aimed at accommodating the customers. The owners open early and close late to accommodate their customers' needs.

RQ 5: How do SMMEs in South African townships create awareness through brand communication management?

9.3.8 Creating awareness through brand communication management

Creating awareness around the brand is necessary in managing brand communication, as brand awareness assists customers in recognising and remembering a brand.

9.3.8.1 Marketing communication mix

Enterprises use various tools to create awareness through brand communication. The tools are implemented to build awareness and influence behaviour. The tools used by SMMEs are, in essense, the elements of the marketing communication mix. The communication tools are W-o-M, personal selling (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2018), boards, flyers, SMSes, social media platforms (Alalwan *et al*, 2017; Alhabash *et al*., 2017) social impact, discounts, specials, freebies, social media marketing, advertising on social media (Kushwaha *et al*., 2020), pamphlets, sponsorship, and customer service (Davis, 2017). W-o-M provides referrals, while door-to-door (personal selling), SMSs, and social media platforms are used mainly to draw attention from customers in creating awareness. Some owners also use flyers, and others use Twitter tweets, boards, and pamphlets to create awareness and communicate the enterprise and its offerings. The entrepreneurs post content online on social media platforms and offer discounts, specials, and freebies to draw interest to their communication and in the customer service they provide. In addition, they engage in social media marketing and advertising, social impact, and sponsorships to create interest in their enterprises.

Kushwaha *et al.* (2020) found that social media and digital media are more effective than traditional IMC tools. The enterprises in the current study employ a mix of traditional IMC, and social and digital media. Since the main focus of the enterprises is on garnering attention and creating interest in the businesses, much effort is directed towards activities that promote these two aspects of their brand communication management in creating awareness about the enterprises. It would be beneficial for them to capitalise on social media, enhance traditional tools and investigate how it could be augmented by digital media.

RQ 6: a) What technologies do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?

9.3.9 Technologies used to communicate with customers

Communication technology is used to communicate with customers (Cornelissen, 2020). The owners use technologies such as Canva, refresher app, Logo maker, Google, Long range systems, and SMSs. These technologies are used to communicate information about the enterprise and deliver services to customers. Canva is used to create professional designs (Gehred, 2020) that the owners use in their various social media platforms and communication vehicles. Fresher app is used to facilitate bookings, and SMME owners noted that it enhances the visibility of the enterprises. The owners use logo maker to create an enterprise logo if they do not have the services of a graphic designer. Google provides enterprise information and even directions to enterprises. Long-range systems are not used by many owners; however, it was mentioned that these facilitate customer service and distinguish the enterprises that use them. SMSs are still in use, and augment social media.

RQ 6: b) What social media tools do SMMEs in South African townships use to communicate with customers?

9.3.10 Social media tools for communication with customers

Social media use in communicating with the customers of enterprises had been adopted by the majority of enterprises, due to its cost-effectiveness. Township SMMEs mostly use social media platforms.

9.3.10.1 Social media platforms

The social media platforms that township enterprises use to communicate with their customers are Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter. Although the majority of the owners are familiar with Twitter, they use it cautiously, as they noted that interactions tend to be ruthless. Facebook and WhatsApp are mainly used by owners who wish to reach a wider market. They monitor feeds from the platforms, and noted that the platforms are economical. The platforms allow for two-way communication (Alalwan *et al*., 2017). Instagram is also used, but mostly for postings about the products, services, and special offers.

RQ 7: Which demographics influence the decision-making of SMME owners in building and developing enterprises?

9.3.11 Demographics

Vallabh and Mhlanga (2015) state that demographic variables have a significant impact on enterprise performance. Feder and Niţu-Antonie (2017) posit that entrepreneurial intentions are determined by a myriad cognitive and contextual factors. Therefore, in the current study, the demographics were considered to assess which ones influence the decision-making of the owners of the enterprise in building and developing enterprises, particularly as brands.

9.3.1.1 Population factors

Population factors such as age, gender, level of education, and management experience were found to influence the management of brands in the enterprises operating in South African townships. The owners of the enterprises affirmed that these factors influence how they manage their businesses as brands.

In concluding the discussions on the secondary research questions, it is important to highlight that, based on the themes that emerged in the qualitative strand, 13 concepts were retained, which formed the constructs of the study. The population factors were considered for profiling the participants, and were not used in the quantitative strand of the study. The communication technologies were also not included in the quantitative strand, as these refer to the internal aspects of the enterprises, on which the respondents in the quantitative strand would not have been able to provide data. The technologies were, however, linked to the brand elements, as they were used to develop the elements, particularly Canva, the Refresher app, and Logo maker. The other technologies were incorporated into customer service because it transpired that the owners used them to provide customer service and distinguish their enterprises.

9.3.12 Primary research question

What are the branding communication management practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships in the Gauteng and North-West Province when building and developing enterprises as brands?

The main purpose of the research study was to explore the brand communication management practices and activities of SMMEs in South African townships in building and developing enterprises as brands. A detailed discussion of the findings was presented in Chapter 6. The main findings were that SMME owners are engaged in brand communication management practices and activities that are directed towards building and developing their enterprises as brands. The findings suggest that the main brand elements are social media, marketing communication mix, and customer service. Brand orientation was adapted in line with the brand personification concept, while brand identities were defined from a brand identity perspective, focusing mainly on customer service and experience. Furthermore, customer service quality and distinct brand association elements are the main brand-building and development activities in which SMMEs in the townships engage. Therefore, the brand resources and capabilities that the SMMEs use, given their limitations, are market-based resources and brand-related capabilities, while they render customer service by means of service delivery.

It was further confirmed that the marketing communication mix is the brand communication dimension of practices and activities in SMME brands, as these are also used to create awareness through brand communication management. SMMEs in the townships use technology to develop their brand and render customer service. In addition, the enterprises use social media platforms to communicate with customers. It is worth noting that the owners of the SMMEs confirmed that demographics, that is, their population factors, influence their decision-making in building and developing their enterprises as brands.

The quantitative findings are discussed in alignment with extant literature in the next section. First, the constructs discussed in Chapter 7 are listed, for ease of reference.

9.4 STRAND 2: QUANTITATIVE PHASE

The quantitative results reported in Chapter 7 confirmed that social media consist of two factors, namely social media platforms and social media marketing. In addition, the CFA confirmed the marketing communication mix factors to be advertising, sales promotion, and personal branding, while customer service was confirmed to consist of two factors, that is, service reliability and customer experience.

The research objectives are now discussed.

9.4.3 Secondary research objectives

The descriptive statistics in section 7.3.2 provided information regarding the perceptions of consumers about the constructs of the study before these were subjected to factor analysis. These secondary objectives were achieved by measuring the various relationships in the study's hypothesised models and testing the relationships between the variables of the study. CFA was performed to assess perceptions by testing the correlations between the variables of the study, and SEM was used to test the causal relationships. The measurement model tested the correlations between the factors of the study, while the structural model tested the causal effects between the factors that make up the components of the proposed brand communication management model.

RO1: To determine the consumers' perceptions of the brand communication management practices and activities in building and developing the SMME as a brand

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the perceptions of consumers. The practices and activities that emerged from the qualitative data collected from the owners of the SMMEs became the constructs for the quantitative phase of the study. These constructs were: social media, social media platforms, brand-building dimension, brand-related capabilities, attitudes towards quality of the SMME as a brand, brand identity, marketing communication mix, customer service, and market resources. Consumers' perceptions of these constructs were, therefore, measured.

It was found that the consumers perceive the SMMEs to be using social media to communicate about the business, and pointed out that social media platforms are important, this is supported by (Bowen & Bowen, 2016; Kusumasondjaja, 2019; Valos *et al*., 2017)) studies. Customers perceive brand colour to be more noticeable compared to other brand elements, and indicated that the enterprises must focus on this element. The SMMEs are perceived to be passionate about the business; however, customers disagreed that graphic symbols describe an enterprise. Brand-related capabilities do influence the perceptions of customers (Hadi, 2022). However, the customers are not necessarily attached to the enterprises. The customers have a positive attitude towards the SMMEs and is familiar with the brand identity. The customers prefer face-to-face marketing communication, as this conveys a greater passion for customer service. Customers also suggested that enterprises offer exciting menus and services.

The consumers perceive social media to comprise social media platforms and social media marketing which was affirmed by (Aydin, 2020; Ibrahim *et al*., 2020) studies. They also perceive the marketing communication mix to comprise of three distinct components, namely: sales promotions (Chang, 2017; van Heerde & Neslin, 2017), advertising (Koekermoer, 2020), and personal branding (Machado *et al*., 2019) which influence demand from the consumers. Customer service is perceived to encompass customer experience and service reliability, these results are supported by Wang *et al*. (2020) who argued that customer service is subjective, thus can be perceived differently by consumers. It is, therefore, important that enterprises understand these distinctions when formulating or implementing communication strategies aimed at their customers.

RO2: To determine whether marketing communication influences the perceptions of market-based resources

The study objective was achieved, as the results confirmed that marketing communication, that is, advertising and sales promotions, influence perceptions of market-based resources. Sales promotions and personal branding were merged based on the statistical evidence that the items measured the same construct. The regression path coefficients of the structural model revealed that sales promotion and advertising have a weak positive relationship with market resources. This means that, although there is the perception that marketing communication influences perceptions of market-based resources, the perceptions is not strong. The hypotheses that relate to this objective are H2a1 and H7a1 (refer to Table 9.1). The hypotheses were supported. Therefore, there is a relationship between sales promotion and market-based resources. However, there is also a relationship between advertising and market-based resources.

The findings support the assertion by Zahra (2018) that integrated marketing communication theory is interdisciplinary and, as a result, is a framework to consider for branding research. RBT is considered a complementary theory in management fields (Hitt *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, the findings suggested that marketing communication influences market-based resources. In addition, a causal relationship was found between marketing communication (sales promotion and advertising) and market-based resources.

RO3: To determine whether marketing communication influences perceptions of service reliability

Service reliability is one of the components of customer service, and the objective was to determine if marketing communication influences perceptions of service reliability. The results showed that advertising has a weak positive relationship with service reliability. This means that advertising does influence perceptions of service reliability. Therefore, advertising is used as a point of reference when assessing the enterprise's service reliability. Sales promotion, on the other hand, has no relationship with service reliability, meaning it is not perceived to influence service reliability. Literature on IMC (Kitchen, 2017) indicates that consistent communication messages suggest a consistent service experience, thereby influencing perceptions.

Although SMMEs use sales promotion, it is not considered to influence perceptions of service reliability. Service reliability in the context of the study is used by enterprises to distinguish the enterprise. Therefore, the sales promotion strategies that the enterprises put in place will not necessarily make much of a difference in how service reliability is viewed. Hence, service reliability must be such that it differentiates the enterprise from competitors.

RO 4: To determine whether marketing communication influences perceptions of customer experience

The results showed that there is no significant relationship between sales promotion and customer experience. The hypothesised relationship, H2a3, was thus not supported. Although both are components of the marketing communication mix, sales promotion is not perceived to influence market resources. Marketing communication is considered to promote the enterprise, build awareness, or influence behaviour by the owners of the enterprises. Therefore, more effort is required in sales promotion activities to enhance perceptions of customer experience. The literature on sales promotion suggests that it stimulates sales (Hartley & Pickton, 2010). Valos and Maplestone (2017) aver that it could be that sales promotion is perceived to be sales-driven rather than an effort to enhance the customer experience.

Advertising as a component of the marketing communication mix has a moderate positive relationship with customer experience. Thus H7a3 was supported. Advertising was found to influence consumer perceptions, as it informs, reminds, and persuades consumers. The persuasion strategies could thus influence the customer experience.

RO 5: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability, and brand building) influences perceptions of market-based resources

Research examining the effects of the dimensions of logo design and colour on brand gender perceptions and the effects thereof found that the masculinity and femininity of the logo has a positive effect on consumers' perceptions and affective response towards the logo (Machado, Fonseca & Martins, 2020). The current study found that brand-building dimensions have a weak positive relationship with market resources. Brand elements, on the other hand, do not influence the perceptions of market-based resources, as the relationship was found not to be significant. Although the perceptions were not significant, it was found that there is a relationship between brand elements and market-based resources. Brand-related capabilities are perceived to positively and significantly influence perceptions of market-based resources.

Hypothesis H1a1 and H6a1 were supported, while H5a1 was not supported (refer to Table 9.1). Since brand elements distinguish and differentiate brands, they are supported by the RBT, which asserts that brands are assets. Ridgway and Myers (2014) support the notion that brand development influences perceptions of market-based resources. In their study, Ridgway and Myers (2014) examined consumers' perceptions of colours used in brand logos, and found that consumers attribute brand personality traits to brand logo colours in line with their commonly held colour associations. The researchers further highlighted that an understanding of consumers' perceptions of the colours used in brand logos aid in developing appropriate brand communication strategies.

RO 6: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability, and brand building) influences perceptions of service reliability

Brand-building dimensions showed a weak positive relationship with service reliability. This relationship was, however, statistically significant. Brand elements, on the other hand, showed a statistically weak but significant relationship with service reliability, which means that it does influence perceptions of service reliability. Brand-related capabilities had a significant positive relationship with service reliability; therefore, it influences the perceptions of service reliability. The customer service theory (Oli & Dhanaseharan, 2021) suggests that service reliability can influence perceptions. Therefore, the same should hold for service reliability being influenced by brand development, as there are causal relationships between the constructs.

A study by Rybaczewska *et al*. (2020) on slogans, brands, and purchase behaviour of consumers found that slogans and taglines are key features of a brand that influence consumers' perceptions and brand recall. In addition, Cheema, Rehman, Zia and Rehman's (2016) research on the impact of taglines found that there is a strong impact on brand perception, which provides an advantage by creating strong brand associations, suggesting that taglines influence perceptions of service quality. Therefore, it is assumed that there are relationships between brand development elements and service quality.

The related hypothesised relationships, H1a2, H5a2, and H6a2, were supported. The hypotheses indicated relationships between brand elements and service reliability, between brand-related capabilities and service reliability, and between brand-building dimensions and service reliability, respectively.

RO 7: To determine whether brand development (brand elements, brand capability, and brand building) influences perceptions of customer experience

Brand-building dimensions showed a positive moderate relationship with customer experience. This relationship was statistically significant. Brand elements showed a negative moderate relationship with customer experience, therefore indicating an influence on perceptions of customer experience. Brand-related capabilities had a positive statistically significant relationship with customer experience, and therefore influences perceptions of customer experience. Brand development was found to positively influence customer experience.

A study by Mihardjo, Sasmoko, Alamysyah, and Elidjen (2020) assessed the impact of the integration of distinctive capabilities and customer experience in supply chain management. Milhardjo *et al*. (2020) found that developing a co-creation strategy was supported by distinctive capabilities and customer experience. In addition, co-creation is key in sustaining the business to focus on developing customer experience and providing distinctive capabilities. These findings are in line with those of the current study (see H1a3, H5a3 and H6a3 in Table 9.1). Therefore, the objective of the study to determine whether brand development influences perceptions of customer experience was achieved.

RO 8: To determine whether social media influences perceptions of market-based resources

Based on resource-based theory, Huang, Dyerson, Wu and Harindranath (2015) argue that competitive advantage can be temporary or sustainable. The researchers suggest that a stronger market position offers a temporary competitive advantage, whereas a sustainable competitive advantage is achieved through superior technological resources and capabilities. Social media platforms use technology; hence, the hypotheses in the present study stated that there is a relationship between the constructs of the study, based on the notion that social media platforms and social media marketing influence perceptions, particularly of service reliability, as service is provided, amongst other means, through social media.

Social media in the context of the study is made up of social media platforms and social media marketing. According to the structural path coefficient, social media platforms do not influence perceptions of market-based resources. However, social media marketing do have a moderate positive relationship with market-based resources. Based on the moderate positive relationship, it can be said that social media marketing do influence perceptions of market-based resources. Market-based resources in SMMEs assist in achieving better performance, while social media communicates about the enterprise. Considering that SMMEs use social media platforms extensively, these platforms must be perceived positively to influence perceptions of the market-based resources for better outcomes in the performance of the enterprises. SMMEs, therefore, must capitalise on social media marketing to communicate about the enterprise and deliver service to customers.

Huang and Tsai (2013) studied Taiwanese companies to develop a theoretical model explaining the factors that contribute to brand orientation and its impact. The results showed that organisational resources could facilitate the building of brand-oriented organisations. The finding of Huang and Tsai (2013) is aligned with the supported H4a1 of the present study.

RO 9: To determine whether social media influences perceptions of service reliability

Social media platforms and social media marketing were found not to influence perceptions of service reliability. This was not anticipated, mainly because social media and service reliability are practices and activities that SMMEs mostly engage in to develop their enterprises as brands. Contrary to the research findings, Naeem (2019) found that social networking platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are used by both customers and businesses to generate service reviews. As such, it was expected that there would be a relationship between social media and service quality, and, in addition, that social media would influence perceptions of service reliability, as noted by da Fonseca and Gustavo (2020). However, based on the results of the present study, H3a2 and H4a2 were not supported (refer to Table 9.1).

RO 10: To determine whether social media influences perceptions of customer experience

The SERVQUAL (customer service perspective) theory suggests that customer service can be used to categorise perceptions, and that communication may influence perceptions. Social media platforms and social media marketing were found not to influence perceptions of customer experience. Customer experience, and social media should be reviewed by the enterprises if they want to be perceived positively. The results were not anticipated, considering the fact that the enterprises use social media extensively.

Contrary to the present study's results, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) conclude that social media introduced new channels of brand communication that allow brand engagement on social networking sites. MacInnis and Jaworski, as far back as 1989, suggested that business-created social media communication should stimulate brand awareness and enhance brand perception. Hewett, Rand, Rust and Van Heerde (2016) indicate that companies benefit from using social media for personalised customer responses, although there is still a place for traditional brand communications, such as press releases and advertising.

H3a3 and H4a3 were not supported (refer to Table 9.1), as the results showed that social media platforms and social media marketing do not influence perceptions of customer experience. The current study found that there is no relationship between social media platforms and customer experience.

RO 11: To explore the mediating effect of brand identity among the exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study

Brand identity was found to have a mediating effect on some of the constructs of the brand communication management model. The findings of this study are in line with those of Cheraghalizadeh and Dědková's (2022), who tested the mediation effect, based on social exchange theory. Their research evaluated the effect of service reliability and social media marketing on customer retention and how customer satisfaction, brand awareness, and brand image mediate the association in the context of the hotel industry. The current study found that customer experience and brand identity, mediate the relationship between service reliability and revisit intention, and also the relationship between social media marketing and revisit intentions. Therefore, brand identity plays a mediating role in the context of the current study.

Furthermore, brand identity was found to partially mediate the relationship of advertising to service reliability and sales promotion with market-based resources. These results are aligned with those of the study by Farzin, Sadeghi, Fattahi & Eghbal (2022), who investigated the mediating role of brand identity, and found that electronic W-o-M can indirectly affect consumer behavioural responses through brand equity and brand identity, and can also have a direct impact on consumer decisions. The present study found a significant and direct relationship between brand identity and advertising, between brand identity and service reliability, between brand identity and sales promotion, and between brand identity and market-based resources.

The present study further found that brand identity fully mediates the relationship between sales promotion and service reliability. It also fully mediates the relationship between advertising and market-based resources. This means that the direct effect is insignificant. The relationships that exist between the exogenous and endogenous variables are a result of brand identity. Therefore, brand identity is important in the relationship between sales promotion and service reliability, and between advertising and market-based resources.

9.4.4 Primary research objective

- **To determine consumer and client perceptions of SMMEs' brand communication practices and activities in South African townships in the Gauteng and North-West Province and to develop the brand communication management model**

The brand practices and activities that the enterprises use in building and developing the businesses as brands influence consumer perceptions. The practices are used to symbolise and identify the enterprise, communicate about and influence the behaviour of the customers of the enterprise, while the brand activities, amongst other things, facilitate distinct associations. An empirical strategic brand communication management model was developed based on the measurement model and structural model procedures that were followed.

9.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem that was investigated sought to explore brand and branding communication with the target markets. The current research showed that the brand management practices of the enterprises compared to corporates, are different. Although enterprises are engaged in brand communication, it is done haphazardly.

The aim of the current research was to develop a brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships, to enable them to strategically use brand communication management for differentiation and gain a competitive advantage. Therefore, the research established the brand communication practices and activities in building and developing the enterprises as brands from the owners' perspective. A measurement instrument was then developed to determine the perceptions of their customers about their practices and activities. This measurement instrument contributes to theory and methodology in the unique context of townships in South Africa, which is an emerging economy. Thereafter, a measurement model was tested to establish correlations between the components of the proposed model, which were subjected to SEM. A structural model was tested to establish the causal effect of the components to finalise the brand communication model. A strategic brand communication management model was, therefore, developed for SMMEs.

9.6 HYPOTHESES

The measurement model was assessed for validity and reliability using CFA procedures such as the model fit in terms of goodness-of-fit indices, correlation estimates, convergent and discriminant validity, CR and AVE, the Fornell-Lacker criterion, and HTMT. The results confirmed the model’s validity and reliability, therefore indicating that the measurement scales exhibited evidence of convergent validity, as each item in the scale had statistically significant loadings on their respective factors. The hypotheses were tested using SEM, which assessed the causal relationships between the constructs of the structural brand communication management model. Not all the hypotheses were supported. Table 9.1 illustrates the results of hypotheses regarding relationships between the confirmed constructs of the study.

Table 9.1: Summary of the results relating to the tested hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported or not supported
H1a1	There is a relationship between brand-related capabilities and market resources.	Supported
H1a2	There is a relationship between brand-related capabilities and service reliability.	Supported
H1a3	There is a relationship between brand-related capabilities and customer experience.	Supported
H2a1	There is a relationship between sales promotion and market resources.	Supported
H2a2	There is a relationship between sales promotion and service reliability.	Not supported
H2a3	There is a relationship between sales promotion and customer experience.	Not Supported
H3a1	There is a relationship between social media platforms and market resources.	Not supported
H3a2	There is a relationship between social media platforms and service reliability.	Not supported
H3a3	There is a relationship between social media platforms and customer experience.	Not supported
H4a1	There is a relationship between social media marketing and market resources.	Supported
H4a2	There is a relationship between social media marketing and service reliability.	Not supported
H4a3	There is a relationship between social media marketing and customer experience.	Not supported
H5a1	There is a relationship between brand elements and market resources.	Not supported
H5a2	There is a relationship between brand elements and service reliability.	Supported
H5a3	There is a relationship between brand elements and customer experience.	Supported
H6a1	There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and market resources.	Supported
H6a2	There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and service reliability.	Supported
H6a3	There is a relationship between brand building dimensions and customer experience.	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported or not supported
H7a1	There is a relationship between advertising and market resources.	Supported
H7a2	There is a relationship between advertising and service reliability.	Supported
H7a3	There is a relationship between advertising and customer experience.	Supported

With regard to H1a1 to H1a3, the results indicated that brand-related capabilities, market resources, service reliability, and customer experience have a relationship (contribute positively) to perceptions of brand communication practices and activities in building and developing enterprises as brands. The results demonstrated the significant relationships of brand-related capabilities with market resources, service reliability, and customer experience.

The results of the structural model showed a statistically significant relationship between sales promotion and market resources (H2a1). However, service reliability and customer experience (H2a2 and H2a3) do not have a relationship with sales promotion, and thus do not positively influence perceptions of brand communication.

With regard to H3a1 to H3a3, there was no evidence of relationships of social media platforms with market resources, service reliability, or customer experience. Therefore, these do not positively influence perceptions. H4a1 was supported. However, H4a2 and H4a3 were not supported.

The results of the structural model showed that, of the three hypotheses on brand elements, only H5a1 was not supported, as the results did not demonstrate a significant relationship between brand elements and market resources. H5a2 and H5a3 were supported by significant relationships.

With regard to H6a1 to H6a3 and H7a1 to H7a3, there are statistically significant relationships between brand-building dimensions and market resources, between service reliability and customer experience, between advertising and market resources, and between service reliability and customer experience.

9.7 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The contributions of this study — theoretical, methodological and practical — to the fields of business, communication, and marketing management are discussed in the next section.

9.7.1 Theoretical contribution

This study generated knowledge and insights into brand communication practices and activities from an SMME perspective, particularly SMMEs in South African townships. Furthermore, the study expands the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship in general and in the South African context. The study extends the existing knowledge of South African SMMEs, particularly in the fast food, beauty, and fashion industries. Furthermore, the study expands the theoretical understanding of SMMEs in general and in the South African context. Since the study focused on South African townships in a developing economy, it affords researchers an opportunity to refine theories through context-specific operationalisation of theories.

The theoretical contribution of this study addresses the limited body of knowledge from a multidisciplinary standpoint and adds to the growing theoretical discourse on brand communication. It is noteworthy that there is a growing interest in brand communication from scholars. However, there is still a need to extend the current theory and focus, as the majority of recent research focused on brand image, social media, and brand equity, which are expansions of concepts that have been studied under various contexts. This study contributes to the theoretical body of knowledge on brand communication management by conceptualising and operationalising a comprehensible understanding of brand communication management practices and activities that entrepreneurs engage in to develop their enterprises as brands.

The phenomenon was conceptualised through the lenses of the RBT, ANT, marketing communication mix and SERVQUAL (customer service). These theories underpinned the investigation into brand communication management, which is an ambiguous phenomenon; and allowed for defining new variables, as discussed in section 9.2; and explaining their roles, which contributes to theory. The conceptualisation of the constructs or dimensions that comprise an integrated theoretical brand communication management model for developing enterprises as brands in the context of South African township entrepreneurs allowed for the development of a reliable and valid measurement instrument. This instrument contributes to understanding the relations among and the importance of each construct to brand communication management in the township context.

The fact that the study borrowed from various management disciplines provides for a theoretical contribution in the sense that the relationships between the constructs of the study that make up the brand communication management model were explored, confirmed, and structurally modelled. These constructs were tested for causality, in addition to how they relate theoretically from a multidisciplinary discourse.

9.7.2 Methodological contribution

A multidisciplinary approach to studying the phenomenon of brand communication in management studies is scarce, particularly in South Africa and in the context of SMMEs. Branding and brand communication management in the SMME context are still agendas in academic discourse. Moreover, brand communication management is considered to be a corporate strategy or approach. Therefore, the multidisciplinary approach required a different methodological strategy to answer and address the research questions and objectives of the study. Charman *et al*. (2017) assert that there is a gap in methodologies for researching the informal economy and informal micro-enterprises, therefore suggesting that there is a need for a different methodology to address local economic dynamics. In the current study, mixed-methods were employed — both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The sequential exploratory research approach in this study is attributed to the unique methodological contribution. The approach provided an understanding of the brand communication practices and activities of SMME owners in South African townships, thereby advancing the mixed-methods approach to generate knowledge.

The qualitative strand of the research provided themes that emerged from the thematic analysis, and these themes formed the basis for developing a valid and reliable measurement instrument for brand communication management, particularly SMME brand management. The measurement instrument was empirically tested for reliability and validity. The Brand Communication Management Scale and its subscales were confirmed reliable and valid, and can therefore can be applied in SMME studies and subjected to other relevant management studies, taking cognisance that it originated from a multidisciplinary perspective. Rigour was followed in the process of developing the scale, and the reliability coefficients of the scale and subscales were confirmed (see Chapter 7). The Brand Communication Management Scale is a valid and reliable 12-dimensional scale that researchers could adopt in other studies. The scale and its subscales complied with the psychometric requirements, and were thus found to be valid and reliable. The subscales were measured for interrelatedness, and were found to be interrelated.

The methodological approach and processes allowed for triangulation. Triangulation was in the form of methods, using both qualitative and quantitative data, and following a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach. The qualitative data were used to develop the measurement instrument for the quantitative data collection. This triangulation process contributed to methodological rigour, which assured content and construct validity. Content and construct validity were satisfied in the process of the development of the interview guide which was based on the theoretical framework, which again was based on theories and models.

9.7.3 Practical contribution (managerial implications)

The study makes a practical contribution through the development of a brand communication management model for SMMEs in townships, which may be useful to entrepreneurs in other developing economies. The model might provide SMME owners with guidelines on or insights into certain aspects of development or self-development, to effectively and deliberately implement brand communication and manage it in their establishments. The aim in developing the model was that it should be practical and easy to understand and implement.. The recommendations elaborate on how managers of SMMEs may consider its application. The model has the potential to allow SMME owners to embrace deliberate development of their enterprises as brands, in accordance with the phase or growth stage of the business.

The data collection and analysis process exposed me to the reality that some of the SMME owners were indeed engaging in branding practices and activities informally and unconventionally, as alluded to by Boyle (2003). Opoku *et al*. (2007) note that the owners are not prioritising branding in their enterprises, and are therefore not taking advantage of the opportunity to build strong brands. It would benefit SMME owners to continue using social media platforms to communicate the enterprises. Brands with strong equity are not accidental; rather, they are the result of thoughtful and imaginative planning and a strategic brand management process (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). It is therefore hoped that the model offered in this study serves as a strategic and pragmatic framework for building SMME brands in South African townships.

Political impact: The project addressed the national issue of empowering SMMEs, which have been acknowledged as contributors to alleviating poverty and creating employment. In support of the NDP, which envisages small and medium businesses creating 90% of South Africa's jobs, the study identified SMME branding and communication training needs, thereby developing a profile that the Ministry of Small Business Development could implement in a drive to achieve its mandate.

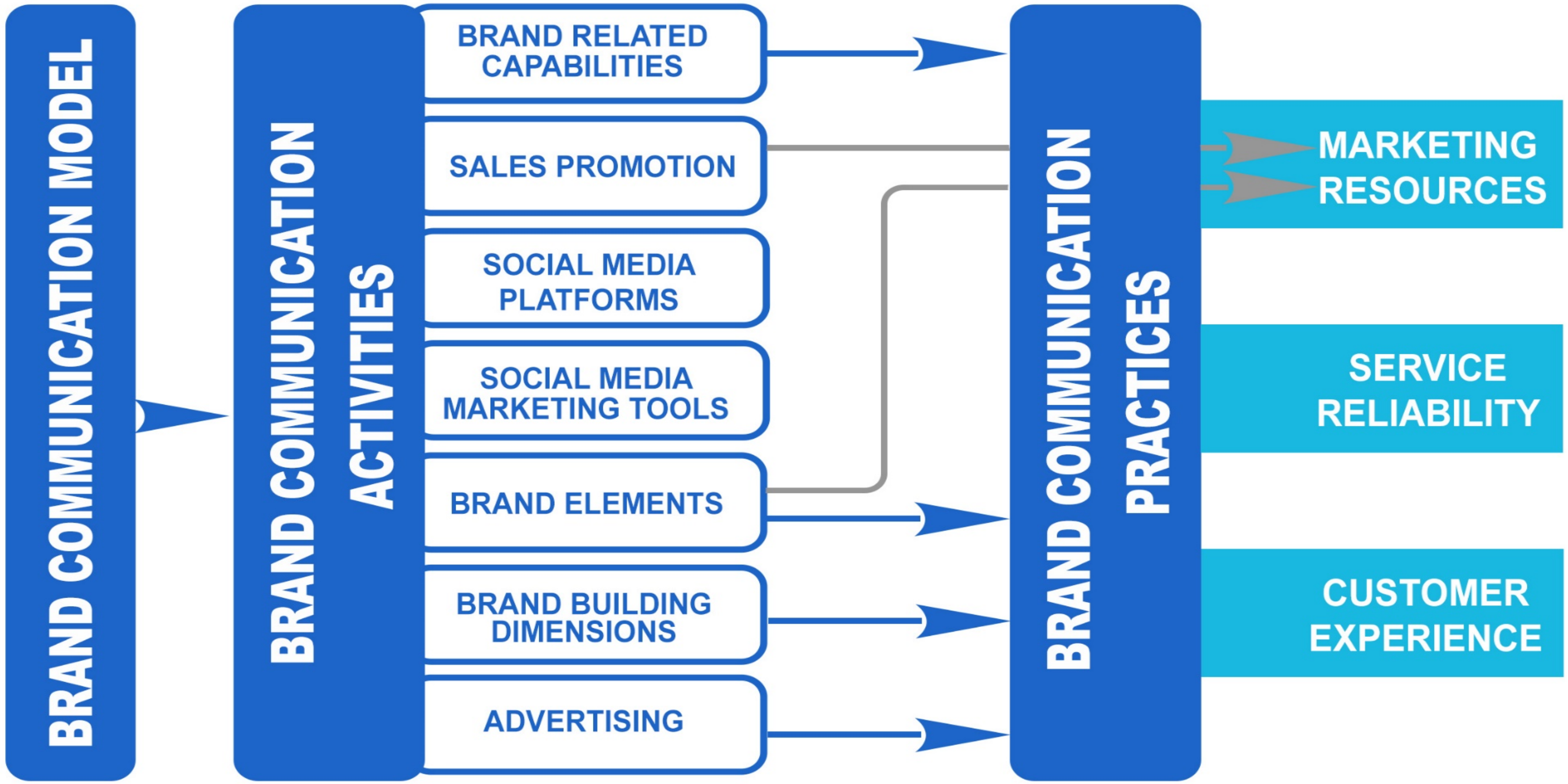
Economic impact: Consumers are brand-conscious and may pay premium prices for their preferred brands. Therefore, by focusing on branding the enterprise, SMMEs will have opportunities to grow their businesses and become prominent players in their respective industries. In this way, their profit margins could increase, and they could become more sustainable in the long-term.

Social impact: The primary objective of businesses is to make a profit and grow. The growth of enterprises translates to offering a wider range of services and products and, most importantly, creating more employment opportunities for local communities.

Macro level: The importance of the SMME sectors varies greatly across countries. SMMEs are faced with challenges of remaining relevant in the markets in which they operate, and to achieve that, the enterprises are required to continuously revise the branding aspect of the business. The markets today are characterised by vocal customers who provide inputs and want to see them implemented. In addition, these customers' needs and wants are changing at a rapid pace, which challenges enterprises to constantly improve their business offerings.
Micro level: The economic involvement of SMMEs critically depends on their success in their home countries and markets. SMMEs address national and local government challenges and conditions such as poverty and unemployment, directly and indirectly. Large and successful firms have developed from SMMEs. Therefore, investing in the growth of SMMEs is essential in addressing the aforementioned challenges. At the micro level, the study contributes to knowledge on SMMEs and brand communication management in terms of both skills and implementation.

The proposed model of the study is shown in the figure below.

Figure 9.2: BRAND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES



*Note: Social media marketing tools = Social media marketing.

9.8 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The study, in as much as it makes contributions, is not without limitations. With regard to the literature review, the study was limited by a lack of research conducted on brand communication management focusing on SMMEs in South Africa. The use of specific theoretical concepts in the study posed theoretical limitations, thus, limiting the variables under study through the operationalisation of definitions of concepts. Furthermore, theoretical discussions were grounded in brands, branding, entrepreneurship, strategic management, and communication in the fast food and beauty industries, thereby excluding sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, although they have been researched.

Empirically, a limitation relates to the sample composition. The sample was limited to SMMEs in townships in two provinces and two sectors. The measurement instrument developed in the study and the brand communication management model are the result of scientific research, which may require further analysis to improve and advance the body of knowledge and practical application of the model.

9.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Companies today are required to listen to their customers and find touchpoints where they can meet their customers. They need to understand their customers and recognise their contexts. This requires that companies transform messages to address customer meaning and value (Finne & Grönroos, 2017).

The results of this study provide avenues for research using a multidisciplinary approach in the area of brand communication management. As the current study was cross-sectional, longitudinal studies could be considered, to allow researchers to explore the phenomenon over a period of time. Since the study was limited to fast-food and hair and beauty salons, it might be valuable to consider other industries in the SMME sector.

The SMMEs were defined according to the OECD (2019) and extant literature. However, there is still a need to clarify whether further distinction between SMMEs according to size is necessary in defining these enterprises — as MSMEs or broadly as SMMEs. The Minister of Small Business Development, Ndabeni-Abrahams (2022), pointed out the need for academics to provide clarity in this regard.

It is recommended that the study be replicated in other developing economies, to compare and confirm the measurement instrument's performance and the results of the study. Additionally, it is recommended that future research refine the constructs that were identified in this study. Furthermore, to examine the rigour and robustness of the observed variables, it is proposed that future studies test the proposed brand communication management model.

Studies on SMMEs brand communication should research the critical role that personal influence plays in building relationships, and include the influence of interpersonal communication. Since most of the enterprises are owner-managed, the owner's personal influence may affect many facets of the enterprise.

The interviews highlighted the importance and benefits of the use of social media by the owners of the SMMEs. However, the results suggest that the hypothesised relationships between social media platforms and social media marketing and other constructs in the study were not supported. Further research could be conducted to provide more insight in this regard. In addition, the study revealed that customer service is perceived to comprise service reliability and customer experience, which are thus fundamental in managing and maintaining consistency in delivering a high-quality service. Therefore, there is a need to further explore the two concepts in management disciplines.

Since the model was tested for mediation effect and it was found that brand identity plays a mediation role in the model, it is recommended that future research test for both the moderation and mediation effect, or just the moderation effect, of the construct in the model or in a different context.

9.10 REFLECTIONS

This research study has been a journey in which I gained more research knowledge, and it broadened my understanding of qualitative research. The approach to the research problem seemed superficial at first, and I looked at it from a multidisciplinary approach. The research was realised, and it was all worth it, considering the fact that the motivation behind the study was the observations that I made throughout my years of growing up in a township.

It is noteworthy that some of the SMME owners indicated that they did not think of branding when they opened their enterprises. This confirms the observations that other researchers have documented in their studies. The enterprise brand elements were mainly developed by their friends, of which the majority were graphic designers. The owners, however, did have inputs in finalising the elements. Those owners who had some of the brand elements in place indicated that they would consider these further, as the interviews made them reflect on their strategies to develop their enterprises as brands.

9.11 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This Chapter provided discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for future research. The research questions and objectives were revisited, and the discussions expounded on the questions and objectives, to illustrate that they were answered and achieved. The outcomes of the hypothesised relationships were outlined. The contributions of the study were discussed, as well as the limitations, and recommendations for future research.

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APPENDIX A:

- REQUEST FOR SMMEs LIST AND CONTACTS -

UNISA university of south africa

Prof Nkoana Simon Radipere Building
Office 5-57
UNISA
Muckleneuk Campus
0003
2020-07-23

Small Business Development Department Republic of South Africa
77 Meintjies Street
Sunnyside
Pretoria
0097

Re. Request for a list of the SMEs in Gauteng and North-West Province

Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs

I am a PhD student in the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria. As part of my study, I am conducting research on brand communication of SMEs in South African townships with the purpose of developing a brand communication model for the owners and their businesses. In addition, the study will determine perceptions of customers and clients with regard to brand communication. The SMEs my research is targeting are those from the fast-food and beauty sectors respectively, both the formal and informal enterprises.

I, hereby, request a list of the SMEs in Gauteng and the North-West Province and the owners' contact details, to identify a sample of respondents and to seek permission to interview them telephonically.

Please note that the study will be guided by the following principles:

- The study has been approved by the University of Pretoria's Research Ethics Committee and will comply with all the ethical requirements of this committee.
- Respondents will participate in the study on an anonymous and voluntary basis and will not receive any incentives to encourage their participation.
- I will schedule an appointment with the owners of the enterprises to minimize the disruptive impact on them and on their business.
- I will provide you with a copy of the interview schedule (guide) on request.
- I will provide you with a copy of my final report on request.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information about my study. You are also welcome to contact my study leader, Dr Estelle de Beer (tel. 012 420-5082, e-mail: estelle.debeer@up.ac.za) to confirm that this is a legitimate research project.

University of South Africa
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REQUEST LETTER.pdf

APPENDIX B:

- CONFIDENTIALITY FORM -

Confidentiality agreement of field workers

This is to certify that I, ________________________________, the field worker of the research project, **A brand communication model for SMMEs in South African townships,** agree to the responsibilities of the data collected from participants (and additional tasks the researcher(s) may require in my capacity as a field worker).

I acknowledge that the research project is conducted by Ms SSLN Mosupyoe of the Department of Business Management, University of Pretoria.

I understand that any information (written, verbal or any other form) obtained during the performance of my duties must remain confidential and in line with the University of Pretoria Policy on Research Ethics.

This includes all information about participants, their employees/their employers/their organisation, as well as any other information.

I understand that any unauthorised release or carelessness in the handling of this confidential information is considered a breach of the duty to maintain confidentiality.

I further understand that any breach of the duty to maintain confidentiality could be grounds for immediate dismissal and/or possible liability in any legal action arising from such breach.

Full Name of field worker: ____

Signature of field worker: _______________________ Date: ____________

Full Name of Primary Researcher: __________________________________

Signature of Primary Researcher: __________________ Date: ___________

APPENDIX C:

- SMME SCREENING CRITERIA -

SCREENING CRITERIA

Hair and beauty SMME criteria

Residential	Semi-permanent structure	Permanent structure	Retail space
• Operating within residential yard – but separate building outside • Non permanent structure vs permanent structure • Signage – no signage vs hand written signage vs commercial brand signage • Water system – bucket vs sink/taps • Work station – demarcated individual work stations vs demarcated task station within the structure • Additional services (nails & eyelashes) – done by an employee or outsourced.	• Container vs corrugated iron (shack) • Signage – no signage vs hand written signage vs commercial brand signage • Water system – bucket vs sink/taps • Work station – demarcated individual work stations vs demarcated task station within the structure • Additional services (nails & eyelashes) – done by an employee or outsourced. • Located within close proximity to a shopping centre or commercial area vs located within residential area.	• Stand alone or part of a mixed use building • Signage – no signage vs hand written signage vs commercial brand signage • Water system – bucket vs sink/taps • Work station – demarcated individual work stations vs demarcated task station within the structure • Additional services (nails & eyelashes) – done by an employee or outsourced. • Located within close proximity to a shopping centre or commercial area vs located within residential area.	• Work station – demarcated individual work stations • Additional services (nails & eyelashes) – done by an employee or outsourced. • Visible reception area • Located inside another business such as a gym • Number of services offered.

Food retailer SMME criteria

Residential	Semi-permanent structure	Permanent structure	Retail space
• Operating within residential yard – but separate building outside • Non permanent structure vs permanent structure • Signage – no signage vs hand written signage vs commercial brand signage • Number of employees • Operating times • Pre-order via phone and collect option • Seating availability • Menu diversity • Branded packaging • Delivery option	• Container vs corrugated iron (shack) • Signage – no signage vs hand written signage vs commercial brand signage • Number of employees • Operating times • Pre-order via phone and collect option • Seating availability • Located within close proximity to a shopping centre or commercial area vs located within residential area. • Franchise vs privately owned • Menu diversity • Branded packaging • Delivery option	• Stand alone or part of a mixed use building • Signage – no signage vs hand written signage vs commercial brand signage • Number of employees • Operating times • Pre-order via phone and collect option • Seating availability • Located within close proximity to a shopping centre or commercial area vs located within residential area. • Privately owned • Menu diversity • Branded packaging • Delivery option	• Number of employees • Operating times • Pre-order via phone and collect option • Seating availability • Privately owned • Menu diversity • Branded packaging • Delivery option

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

APPENDIX D:

- PERMISSION LETTERS -

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Economic and
Management Sciences

University of Pretoria
Department of Business Management
Cnr Lynnwood Road and Roper Street
Hatfield
South Africa
2020-07-23

SME owner's address

Request for permission to conduct research among patrons of your business

Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs

I am a PhD student in the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria. As part of my study, I am conducting research on brand communication of SMEs in South African townships with the purpose of developing a brand communication model for the owners and their businesses. In addition, the study will determine perceptions of your customers with regard to your brand communication. In order to have a representative sample of the target population, I have identified your business as a place that my potential respondents frequent.

I, hereby, request permission to conduct an interview with you, as well as a survey research study among 50 patrons of your business.

Please note that the study will be guided by the following principles:

- The study has been approved by the University of Pretoria's Research Ethics Committee and will comply with all the ethical requirements of this committee.
- Respondents will participate in the study on an anonymous and voluntary basis and will not receive any incentives to encourage their participation.
- I will agree on a method for distributing my questionnaires to the patrons that will minimize the disruptive impact on them and on your business.
- I will ask you to check and approve my final questionnaire.
- I will provide you with a copy of my final report on request.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information about my study. You are also welcome to contact my study leader, Dr E de Beer (tel. 012 420-5082, e-mail: estelle.debeer@up.ac.za) to confirm that this is a legitimate research project.

Your kind co-operation is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Sebilaro Lebogang Mosupyoe (Miss)
Cell: 082 677 4440
E-mail: mosupsln@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX E:

- COVID-19 PROTOCOL IN THE FIELD -

Taarifa Research Consultancy (2016/385108/07)
3 Mampuru Street
Orlando West Extension
P.O. Orlando
1804
Mobile: +27 81 570 2515
Email: Khethiwe@taarifa.biz

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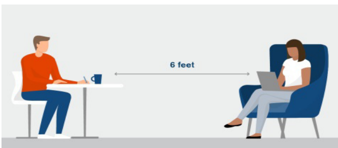
20 April 2021
Lebogang Mosupyoe
SMME & Customers
Gauteng and North West
COVID-19 Protocols

Interviewer to be equipped with disposable masks to be used only once per respondent.

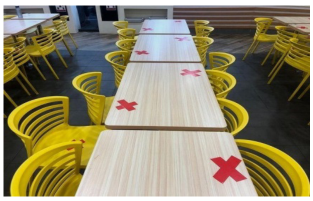
Interviewer to be equipped with plastic face shield which will be sanitised before and after the qualititive interview.

200ml/250ml spray sanitiser to be carried and used by all interviwers at all times.

Sanitiser used will be in accordance to the World Health Organisation guidelines.



Social distancing to be adhered to during the face to face qualitative interview.



If the business premise is small, seek to conduct the survey when there are no staff or customers present.

Ask the SMME owner to find a secluded area, where the interviewer will not be in physical contact with the customers.

Sanitise recording equipment and stationery before and after the qualitative interview.

APPENDIX F:

- DRAFT AND FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDES -

DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS
Introduction and background questions for profiling the SMMEs. Tell me about the business	• May I ask how long have you been operating the business? • How many people are employed by your business? • Why did you choose this name? • What are the reasons for the specific colours for the brand? • Who are your consumers or clients?
Do demographics determine the decision making of SMMEs owners in building and developing the enterprises as brands	• May I ask, how old are you? What is your gender? What is your highest qualification? Do you have managerial experience?
What are the brand communication practices and activities of the SMMEs' in South African townships?	• Do you consider your business to be a brand? Why? • Do you think that brand communication is important for the business? Please explain your answer? • Are you using brand communication to promote your business? If yes, why? If no, why not? • What brand communication activities do you use to communicate your business?
How is brand orientation adopted by SMMEs' in South African townships?	• Do you regard the brand as a person? Please explain your answers? • Is branding essential to your strategy and how does branding flow through all your marketing activities? • How do you ensure that branding is essential in running this business? • How do you ensure long-term brand planning for your business as it is critical to your future success? • What is your view of the brand, do you consider it as an important asset for your business?
What brand building and development practices do SMMEs' in South African townships engage in?	• How do you build and develop the business as a brand? • Does consumers' brand experience influence their behaviour? Is this important for the business? Why? and how do you enhance consumers' experience with your business as a brand? • Do you think branding activities can assist you in building and developing a strong quality brand? Please explain your answer.

	• Do you think that brand identity is important for enhancing brand building, development and business performance? • What is the business striving for in terms of the integration of your brand communication activities?
What is your brand identity? **(Brand identity is the unique associations consumers and clients use to associate the brand) it creates emotional bond. It is the brand promise and behaviour**	• How is brand identity build in your business? • How have you differentiated your business from your competitors, and how is it personal and memorable? • What are your brand values? • Does your brand represent the business values? Please explain your answer. • Do these brand values guide your marketing communication activities? How do you see the business future, do you know what needs to be done to achieve your goals?
What brand development elements do SMMEs in South African townships use for their enterprises?	• Do you use any brand communication elements? If yes, which ones are those? If not, why not? • Do you think that a brand name must meet consumer expectations? How does your brand accomplish that? Is it important for consumers to feel confidence in a brand's name? • Did you develop a brand tagline for your business? Please explain your answer. • What are the brand colour(s) of the business? Do they carry any meaning? • What is your brand logo? Does it matter and why?
What brand communication dimensions do SMMEs in South African townships use for their enterprises? **(Brand value, equity, the value of Polo is in its quality hence consumers purchase)**	• What is the brand image, associations, that your business portray to the consumers and clients? • How is brand value, differentiation, communicated? • How do you create brand trust towards your business? • Do you think that your consumers and clients are loyal towards your business? Why? And what efforts to you direct towards building brand trust, that is delivering on the promise? • What brand experience is your business creating ?
What are the market resources and capabilities that SMMEs' in South African townships are or have implemented towards the enterprise as a brand?	• How do you create superior value, ensure a rare brand that is inimitable and organised? • What is it that you do exceptionally well in comparison to your competitors with regard to your business?

	• How do you achieve emotional appeal to the consumers or clients and what symbols do you use? • How do you add value to your brand? • How does your business as a brand satisfy the basic wants and needs of your consumers or clients?
How is AIDA achieved through brand communication management by SMMEs' in South African townships?	• How do you create attention towards your business?. • How do you create interest in your communication towards your business's consumers and clients? • How is desire towards your business created? • How do you encourage action towards your business from your consumers and clients?

Any comments regarding brand communication practices and activities? Are there additional comments or suggestions to what we have discussed?

Thank you for your time that you have taken to participate in this study.

FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student : Ms Sebilaro SLN Mosupyoe
Field of study : PhD Communication Management
Student number : 28350686
Supervisor : Prof Estelle de Beer

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Brand communication is the combination of all branding communication activities that influence consumers' opinions of an enterprise and the products or services of the enterprise.

Background questions for profiling the SMMEs

How long have you been running the business?
How many people are working for you in your business?
Who are your customers?

Brand communication practices and activities

1 Why did you choose the name for your business?
2 Are there specific reasons for the corporate colours for the business and the logo?
3 What are the brand communication activities that you embark upon to promote your business? Please explain your answer (Probing questions: business as brand, importance of brand communication, promoting your business and what do you use)

Brand orientation adoption

Brand orientation is a deliberate approach to brand building that is characterised by brands being the focus around which the organisation's processes revolve and whereby brand management is perceived as a core competence and where brand building is intimately associated with business development and financial performance (Gromark & Melin, 2013) (adoption =undertaken and implemented and brand focus= the foundation on which all the brand activities can be built on:

4 How is brand focus adopted in your business? Please explain (Probing questions: As a person, plans, implementation, importance, long-term planning)

Brand building and development practices

Brand building is about developing brand value and development practices is referred to as strategic process aimed at creating and distinguishing an enterprise from competitors therefore clarifying what a brand stands for and incorporate brand strategy, brand management, brand identity and graphic design concerned with the realignment of the vision, mission and values:(practices=habits or customs):

5 How do you build and develop the business as a brand? Please explain your answer (Probing questions: Customer experience, quality brand, brand identity, brand performance)

Brand identity

Brand identity is the unique associations consumers and clients use to associate the brand, it creates emotional bond. It is the brand promise and behaviour:

6 What is your brand identity? Please explain (Probing questions: how it is shaped, different from competitors, memorable and personal)

Brand development elements

Brand development elements the brand elements can be exploited to enhance not only the awareness of a brand, but also to serve as key facilitators in the formation of distinctive brand associations:

7 What are the elements that you use to promote your business? In your opinion: Does it matter and does it add value to your business? Please explain (Probing questions: Name, tagline, colours, logo)

Brand communication dimensions

Brand communication dimensions are points of parity with and points of difference from the competitive offerings, forming perceptions of differentiation in the minds of buyers

8 What brand communication dimensions do you use for your business? Please explain (Probing questions: Image, loyalty, identity, association, trust building, experience)

Market resources and capabilities

Giving better value from prices and profit viewpoint, ensuring that the business is rare that it cannot be exploited by competitors, inimitable in terms of not being copied and organised with reference to resources and competencies of the business

9 How do you give better value, ensure the business is rare, inimitable and organised? (Probing question: Relate to symbol, satisfying basic wants)

10 What do you do best compared to competitors, meet expectations, to satisfy customer wants and achieve emotional appeal?

AIDA

11 How do you bring your business to the community's attention?.

12 How do you make your customers interested in your communication to them?

13 How do you make people want and come to your business?

Customer service

14 How do you deliver your customer service?

Social media

15 Do you use technology to communicate about the business? Explain your answer.

16 What social media platforms do you use and why?

17 How do you deliver your customer service online?

Demographics

18 How old are you?

19 What is your gender?

20 What is your highest qualification?

21 Do you have experience as a manager?

22 Do you think that the demographic information you provided influences your decision making in building and developing your business as a brand?

Are there additional comments or suggestions to what we have discussed?

Thank you for the time that you have taken to participate in this study.

APPENDIX G:

- INFORMED CONSENT FORMS -

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Department of Business Management

A brand communication model for SMEs in South African townships

Research conducted by:
Ms SSSL Mosupyoe (28350686)
Cell: 082 677 4440

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Sebilaro Sybil Lebogang Ntshole Mosupyoe, Doctoral student from the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to develop a brand communication model for SMEs in South African townships. In addition, to determine your perceptions of the SMEs' current brand communication.

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 15 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 Estelle de Beer on 012 420 5082 or Estelle.debeer@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

__________________________ ____________________

Participant's signature **Date**

APPENDIX H:

- FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE –

FACTOR ANALYSED QUESTIONNAIRE

Resp. no.			

- Brand communication survey -

Dear respondent

Thank you for your willingness to complete this brand communication survey. The purpose of the survey is to determine the influence of the **Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME)'s** brand communication practices and activities on customer's perception towards developing and building the **SMME as a brand**. The survey should not take more than **20 minutes** to complete. This is an anonymous and confidential survey. You cannot be identified and the answers you provide will be used for research purposes only. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please answer <u>ALL</u> the questions by placing a cross (×) in the appropriate block.

Please select the type of SMME and Province that you will complete the questionnaire base on:

1	2	3	4
Fastfood (North West)	Beauty and Hair salon (North West)	Fastfood (Gauteng	Beauty and Hair salon (Gauteng)

Please keep in mind the SMME that you have selected above when answering all the questions in the survey.

Q1. Please indicate the number of years you have been frequenting this SMME:

Less than a year	1
Between 1 and 3 years	2
Between 4 and 5 years	3
More than 5 years	4

Q2. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **social media**.

Social media platforms						
2.1	The SMME uses social media platforms to communicate about the business.	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	The SMME is visible on Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
2.3	The SMME has an active Twitter account.	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	The SMME interacts with me on WhatsApp.	1	2	3	4	5
2.5	The SMME information is available on Instagram.	1	2	3	4	5
2.6	The SMME posts pictures of its offerings on the social media platforms.	1	2	3	4	5
2.7	The SMME uses social media technologies to show its offerings.	1	2	3	4	5
2.8	The SMME uses social media platforms to demonstrate its uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media marketing						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
2.9	I feel that the SMME must be available on electronic search engines such as Google search.	1	2	3	4	5
2.10	I believe that the SMME should have a website.	1	2	3	4	5
2.11	The SMME should offer online sales.	1	2	3	4	5
2.12	I prefer to receive communication from the SMME through WhatsApp status updates.	1	2	3	4	5
2.13	I prefer the use of Instagram by the SMME to communicate the business as a brand.	1	2	3	4	5
2.14	The use of online customer service is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5

Q3. Please rate each of the social media platforms that you use according to how important they are to you with 1 being Least important and 7 being Most important. If you do not use any of these then indicate by placing a check mark on the 8_N/A option.

3.1	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A
3.2	WhatsApp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A
3.3	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A
3.4	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A

Q4. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **brand elements**.

		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
4.1	I feel that the SMME must have brand colours for the business.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I am aware of the SMME's logo	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I am satisfied with the colours of the logo of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	I feel happy about the brand colours being used consistently in promotional materials.	1	2	3	4	5
4.5	I am satisfied with the name of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
4.6	The brand name of the SMME communicates about the business.	1	2	3	4	5
4.7	I am familiar with the tagline (slogan) of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
4.8	I can describe the tagline (slogan) of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5

Q5. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **brand building dimensions**.

		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
5.1	The SMME brand is passionate about its customer.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	The SMME as a brand is respectful.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	The SMME as a brand is humble.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	The SMME accommodates its customer.	1	2	3	4	5
5.5	The products/services offered are of good quality.	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5.6	The SMME has a graphic symbol that represents it.	1	2	3	4	5
5.7	The SMME is knowledgeable about its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5

Q6. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **brand related capabilities**.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
6.1	The SMME provides a personal experience.	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	It values families.	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	The products/services satisfy needs.	1	2	3	4	5
6.5	I am emotionally attached to the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
6.6	The SMME has unique values.	1	2	3	4	5
6.7	The SMME gives me value for money.	1	2	3	4	5
6.8	The SMME provides a memorable experience.	1	2	3	4	5

Q7. Please rate your attitude toward the quality of the SMME as a brand, by placing a check mark on one of the seven positions.

7.1	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
7.2	Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
7.3	Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable

Q8. Please indicate how well you are aware of the SMME's brand identity, by placing a check mark on one of the seven positions.

8.1	Unfamiliar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Familiar
8.2	Unrecognisable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Recognisable
8.3	Uninformed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgeable

Q9. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on the **marketing communication mix**.

Sales promotion						
9.12	I like the giveaways that the SMME provides me.	1	2	3	4	5
9.13	I am happy with the special prices.	1	2	3	4	5

9.14	The SMME gives complementary gifts.	1	2	3	4	5
9.15	I prefer that the SMME use coupons.	1	2	3	4	5
9.16	The SMME promote its products/services through sales promotion	1	2	3	4	5
9.17	I appreciate the discounts that the SMME gives to me.	1	2	3	4	5
9.21	The SMME sponsors the community.	1	2	3	4	5
9.22	I like it when the SMME supports a good cause.	1	2	3	4	5
9.23	The SMME has a positive social impact.	1	2	3	4	5
9.24	The support for the less fortunate is a good initiative by the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
Advertising						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
9.1	The SMME uses advertising to communicate the business as a brand.	1	2	3	4	5
9.3	I have seen the SMME flyers.	1	2	3	4	5
9.5	The SMME uses digital online flyers to communicate the brand, which I prefer.	1	2	3	4	5
9.8	I am familiar with the SMME signage.	1	2	3	4	5
9.9	I like the signage that the SMME uses to advertise its products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
9.10	I am aware of the pamphlets that the SMME distributes.	1	2	3	4	5
9.11	The SMME use of pamphlets is good.	1	2	3	4	5
Personal branding						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
9.6	I prefer traditional oral word-of mouth communication to know about an SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
9.7	I prefer online word-of-mouth communication to know about an SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
9.6	I prefer traditional oral word-ofmouth communication to know about an SMME.	1	2	3	4	5

9.19	It is a great idea that the SMME does door-to-door selling of its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
9.20	The SMME likes to demonstrate its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5

Q10. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **customer service**.

Customer experience						
10.6	The SMME is respectful to me as a customer.	1	2	3	4	5
10.7	The SMME employees are humble.	1	2	3	4	5
10.8	The service queues are acceptable.	1	2	3	4	5
10.9	I trust my SMME because it provides the products/services I ask for every time.	1	2	3	4	5
10.10	The SMME gives a professional service.	1	2	3	4	5
10.11	The products offered are of good quality.	1	2	3	4	5
10.12	The SMME does not mistreat me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.13	The SMME is attentive to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
10.14	The SMME stands out from its competitors.	1	2	3	4	5
10.15	The staff communicates in a friendly manner.	1	2	3	4	5
10.16	The staff wear a uniform that communicate the SMME to me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.17	There is signage at the SMME premises.	1	2	3	4	5
10.18	The SMME provides a list of its products/services	1	2	3	4	5
10.19	The SMME provides a list of prices of its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
10.20	The SMME is always clean.	1	2	3	4	5
Service reliability						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
10.1	The SMME is always consistent with its product/service quality.	1	2	3	4	5
10.2	The SMME delivers as promised.	1	2	3	4	5

10.3	The SMME resolves my concerns within a reasonable time.	1	2	3	4	5
10.4	The SMME provides a quick service.	1	2	3	4	5
10.5	The SMME provides a service that shows that it is passionate about its customers.	1	2	3	4	5

Q11. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **market resources** .

		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
11.1	The SMME provides products/ services that are unique	1	2	3	4	5
11.2	The SMME provides continuous service.	1	2	3	4	5
11.3	The SMME has products/services that are its trademark.	1	2	3	4	5
11.4	The ingredients/ hairstyles are not found from those competing with it.	1	2	3	4	5
11.5	The SMME strive to provide better products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
11.6	The products menu/services list are exciting.	1	2	3	4	5

Q12. Please indicate your age in years:

18 – 30	1
31 – 40	2
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	4
Over 60	5

Q13. Please indicate your highest educational qualification:

Below matric	1
Senior certificate/Matric	2
Diploma/Post Matric Certificate	3
Degree	4
Honours degree	5
Master’s degree	6
Doctorate / PhD	7

Q14. Please indicate your race:

African / Black	1
Indian	2
Coloured	3
White	4
Other	5

If other, please specify your race …………………………………………………………………..

	1	2	3
Q15. Please indicate your gender.	Male	Female	Prefer not to answer

Thank you for completing the survey I appreciate your assistance.

FINAL FIELD QUESTIONNAIRE

Resp. no.			

- Brand communication survey -

Dear respondent

Thank you for your willingness to complete this brand communication survey. The purpose of the survey is to determine the influence of the **Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME)'s** brand communication practices and activities on customer's perception towards developing and building the **SMME as a brand**. The survey should not take more than **20 minutes** to complete. This is an anonymous and confidential survey. You cannot be identified and the answers you provide will be used for research purposes only. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please answer <u>ALL</u> the questions by placing a cross (×) in the appropriate block.

Please select the type of SMME and Province that you will complete the questionnaire base on:

1	2	3	4
Fastfood (North West)	Beauty and Hair salon (North West)	Fastfood (Gauteng	Beauty and Hair salon (Gauteng)

Please keep in mind the SMME that you have selected above when answering all the questions in the survey.

Q1. Please indicate the number of years you have been frequenting this SMME:

Less than a year	1
Between 1 and 3 years	2
Between 4 and 5 years	3
More than 5 years	4

Q2. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **social media**.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1	The SMME uses social media platforms to communicate about the business.	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	The SMME is visible on Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2.3	The SMME has an active Twitter account.	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	The SMME interacts with me on WhatsApp.	1	2	3	4	5
2.5	The SMME information is available on Instagram.	1	2	3	4	5
2.6	The SMME posts pictures of its offerings on the social media platforms.	1	2	3	4	5
2.7	The SMME uses social media technologies to show its offerings.	1	2	3	4	5
2.8	The SMME uses social media platforms to demonstrate its uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5
2.9	I feel that the SMME must be available on electronic search engines such as Google search.	1	2	3	4	5
2.10	I believe that the SMME should have a website.	1	2	3	4	5
2.11	The SMME should offer online sales.	1	2	3	4	5
2.12	I prefer to receive communication from the SMME through WhatsApp status updates.	1	2	3	4	5
2.13	I prefer the use of Instagram by the SMME to communicate the business as a brand.	1	2	3	4	5
2.14	The use of online customer service is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5

Q3. Please rate each of the social media platforms that you use according to how important they are to you with 1 being Least important and 7 being Most important. If you do not use any of these then indicate by placing a check mark on the 8_N/A option.

3.1	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A
3.2	WhatsApp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A
3.3	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A
3.4	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8_N/A

Q4. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **brand elements**.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
4.1	I feel that the SMME must have brand colours for the business.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I am aware of the SMME's logo	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I am satisfied with the colours of the logo of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	I feel happy about the brand colours being used consistently in promotional materials.	1	2	3	4	5
4.5	I am satisfied with the name of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
4.6	The brand name of the SMME communicates about the business.	1	2	3	4	5
4.7	I am familiar with the tagline (slogan) of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
4.8	I can describe the tagline (slogan) of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5

Q5. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **brand building dimensions**.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5.1	The SMME brand is passionate about its customer.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	The SMME as a brand is respectful.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	The SMME as a brand is humble.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	The SMME accommodates its customer.	1	2	3	4	5
5.5	The products/services offered are of good quality.	1	2	3	4	5
5.6	The SMME has a graphic symbol that represents it.	1	2	3	4	5
5.7	The SMME is knowledgeable about its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5

Q6. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **brand related capabilities**.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
6.1	The SMME provides a personal experience.	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	It has a friendly personality.	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	It values families.	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	The products/services satisfy needs.	1	2	3	4	5
6.5	I am emotionally attached to the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
6.6	The SMME has unique values.	1	2	3	4	5
6.7	The SMME gives me value for money.	1	2	3	4	5
6.8	The SMME provides a memorable experience.	1	2	3	4	5

Q7. Please rate your attitude toward the quality of the SMME as a brand, by placing a check mark on one of the seven positions.

7.1	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
7.2	Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
7.3	Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable

Q8. Please indicate how well you are aware of the SMME's brand identity, by placing a check mark on one of the seven positions.

8.1	Unfamiliar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Familiar
8.2	Unrecognisable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Recognisable
8.3	Uninformed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgable

Q9. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on the **marketing communication mix**.

Advertising						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
9.1	The SMME uses advertising to communicate the business as a brand.	1	2	3	4	5

9.2	The SMME uses social media to draw my attention.	1	2	3	4	5
9.3	I have seen the SMME flyers.	1	2	3	4	5
9.4	I prefer that the SMME uses flyers for communication.	1	2	3	4	5
9.5	The SMME uses digital online flyers to communicate the brand, which I prefer.	1	2	3	4	5
9.6	I prefer traditional oral word-of-mouth communication to know about an SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
9.7	I prefer online word-of-mouth communication to know about an SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
9.8	I am familiar with the SMME signage.	1	2	3	4	5
9.9	I like the signage that the SMME uses to advertise its products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
9.10	I am aware of the pamphlets that the SMME distributes.	1	2	3	4	5
9.11	The SMME use of pamphlets is good.	1	2	3	4	5
Sales promotion						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
9.12	I like the giveaways that the SMME provides me.	1	2	3	4	5
9.13	I am happy with the special prices.	1	2	3	4	5
9.14	The SMME gives complementary gifts.	1	2	3	4	5
9.15	I prefer that the SMME use coupons.	1	2	3	4	5
9.16	The SMME promote its products/services through sales promotion	1	2	3	4	5
9.17	I appreciate the discounts that the SMME gives to me.	1	2	3	4	5
Personal selling						

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
9.18	I prefer face-to-face communication with the employees of the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5
9.19	It is a great idea that the SMME does door-to-door selling of its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
9.20	The SMME likes to demonstrate its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
Public relations						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
9.21	The SMME sponsors the community.	1	2	3	4	5
9.22	I like it when the SMME supports a good cause.	1	2	3	4	5
9.23	The SMME has a positive social impact.	1	2	3	4	5
9.24	The support for the less fortunate is a good initiative by the SMME.	1	2	3	4	5

Q10. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **customer service**.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10.1	The SMME is always consistent with its product/service quality.	1	2	3	4	5
10.2	The SMME delivers as promised.	1	2	3	4	5
10.3	The SMME resolves my concerns within a reasonable time.	1	2	3	4	5
10.4	The SMME provides a quick service.	1	2	3	4	5

10.5	The SMME provides a service that shows that it is passionate about its customers.	1	2	3	4	5
10.6	The SMME is respectful to me as a customer.	1	2	3	4	5
10.7	The SMME employees are humble.	1	2	3	4	5
10.8	The service queues are acceptable.	1	2	3	4	5
10.9	I trust my SMME because it provides the products/services I ask for every time.	1	2	3	4	5
10.10	The SMME gives a professional service.	1	2	3	4	5
10.11	The products offered are of good quality.	1	2	3	4	5
10.12	The SMME does not mistreat me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.13	The SMME is attentive to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
10.14	The SMME stands out from its competitors.	1	2	3	4	5
10.15	The staff communicates in a friendly manner.	1	2	3	4	5
10.16	The staff wear a uniform that communicate the SMME to me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.17	There is signage at the SMME premises.	1	2	3	4	5
10.18	The SMME provides a list of its products/services	1	2	3	4	5
10.19	The SMME provides a list of prices of its products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
10.20	The SMME is always clean.	1	2	3	4	5

Q11. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on **market resources** .

		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
11.1	The SMME provides products/ services that are unique	1	2	3	4	5
11.2	The SMME provides continuous service.	1	2	3	4	5
11.3	The SMME has products/services that are its trademark.	1	2	3	4	5
11.4	The ingredients/ hairstyles are not found from those competing with it.	1	2	3	4	5
11.5	The SMME strive to provide better products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
11.6	The products menu/services list are exciting.	1	2	3	4	5

Q12. Please indicate your age in years:

18 – 30	1
31 – 40	2
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	4
Over 60	5

Q13. Please indicate your highest educational qualification:

Below matric	1
Senior certificate/Matric	2
Diploma/Post Matric Certificate	3
Degree	4
Honours degree	5
Master's degree	6
Doctorate / PhD	7

Q14. Please indicate your race:

African / Black	1
Indian	2
Coloured	3
White	4
Other	5

If other, please specify your race ………………………………………………………………..

	1	2	3
Q15. Please indicate your gender.	Male	Female	Prefer not to answer

Thank you for completing the survey
I appreciate your assistance.

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APPENDIX I:

- ETHICAL APPROVALS -

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Approval Certificate

1 August 2019

Ms SSLN Mosupyoe
Department of Business Management

Dear MKs Mosupyoe

The application for ethical clearance for the research project described below served before this committee on 28 February 2019:

Protocol No:	EMS181/19
Principal researcher:	**SSLN Mosupyoe**
Research title:	A brand communication framework for SMEs in South African township
Student/Staff No:	28350686
Degree:	PhD (Communication Management)
Supervisor/Promoter:	Dr E de Beer
Department:	Department of Business Management

The decision by the committee is reflected below:

Decision:	Approved (Phase 1)
Conditions (if applicable):	
Period of approval:	March 2019 – October 2019

The approval is subject to the researcher 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 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. If during the course of the research it becomes apparent that the nature and/or extent of the research deviates significantly from the original proposal, a new application for ethics clearance must be submitted for review.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

pp PROF JA NEL
CHAIR: COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS

Fakulteit Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe
Lefapha la Disaense tša Ekonomi le Taolo

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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E-mail: alewyn.nel@up.ac.za

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Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Amendment Approval Certificate

8 February 2022

Ms SSLN Mosupyoe
Department: Business Management

Dear Ms Mosupyoe

The amendments to the research project described below served before this committee on 21 May 2021.

Protocol No:	EMS252/21
Principal researcher:	Ms SSLN Mosupyoe
Research title:	A brand communication framework for SMEs in South African townships
Student/Staff No:	28350686
Degree:	Doctoral
Supervisor/Promoter:	Prof E de Beer
Department:	Business Management

The decision by the committee is reflected below:

Decision:	Approved
Conditions (if applicable):	
Period of approval:	2021-12-10 to 2022-03-31

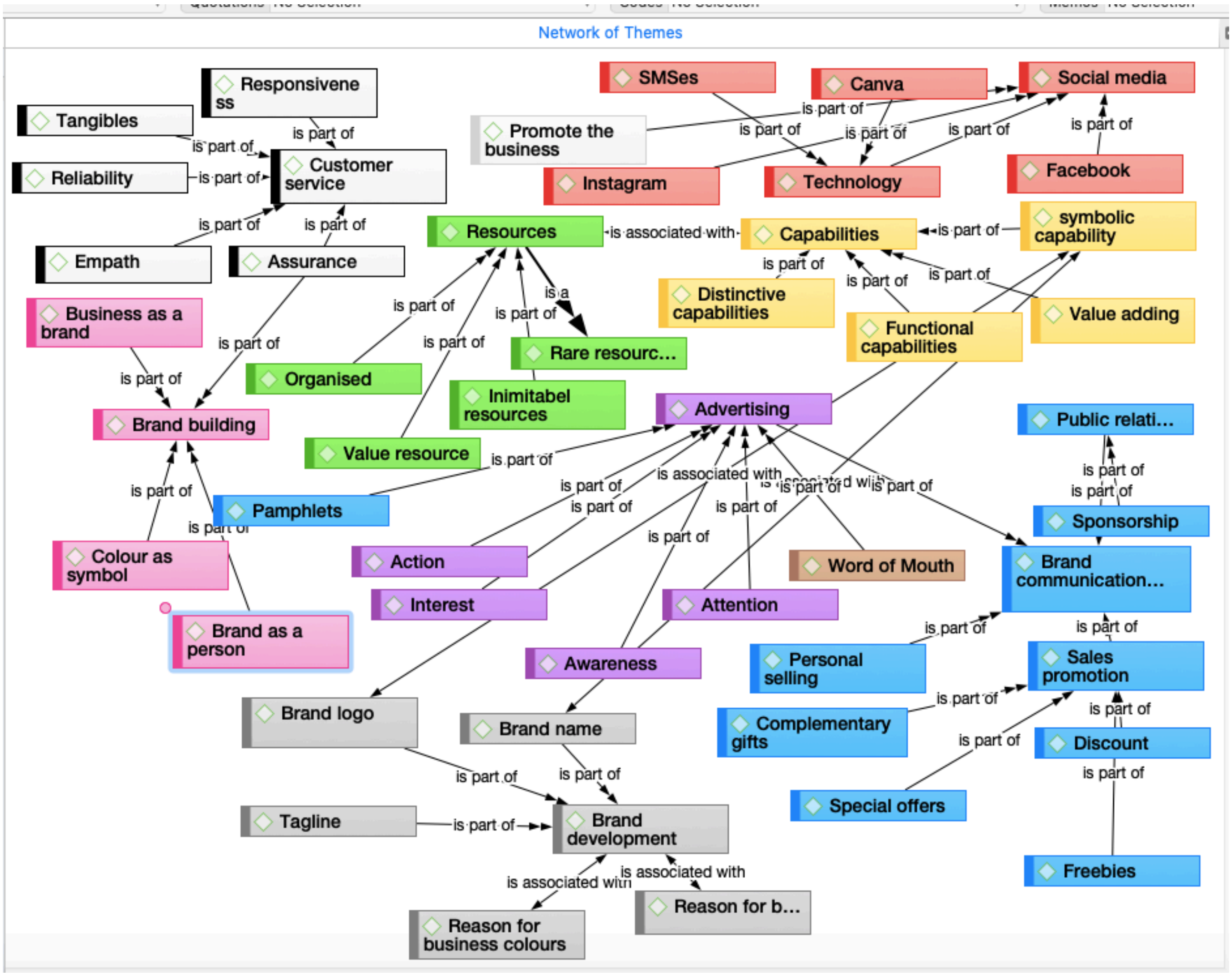
We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

pp PROF JA NEL
CHAIR: COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS

APPENDIX J:

- NETWORK OF THEMES -



APPENDIX K:

- SCREEPLOTS, MAP, HTMT -

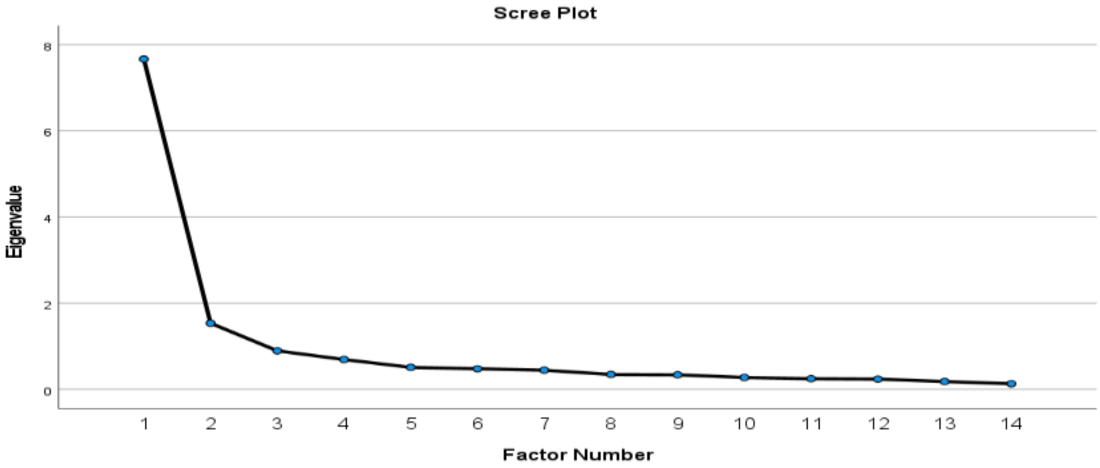


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for Social media

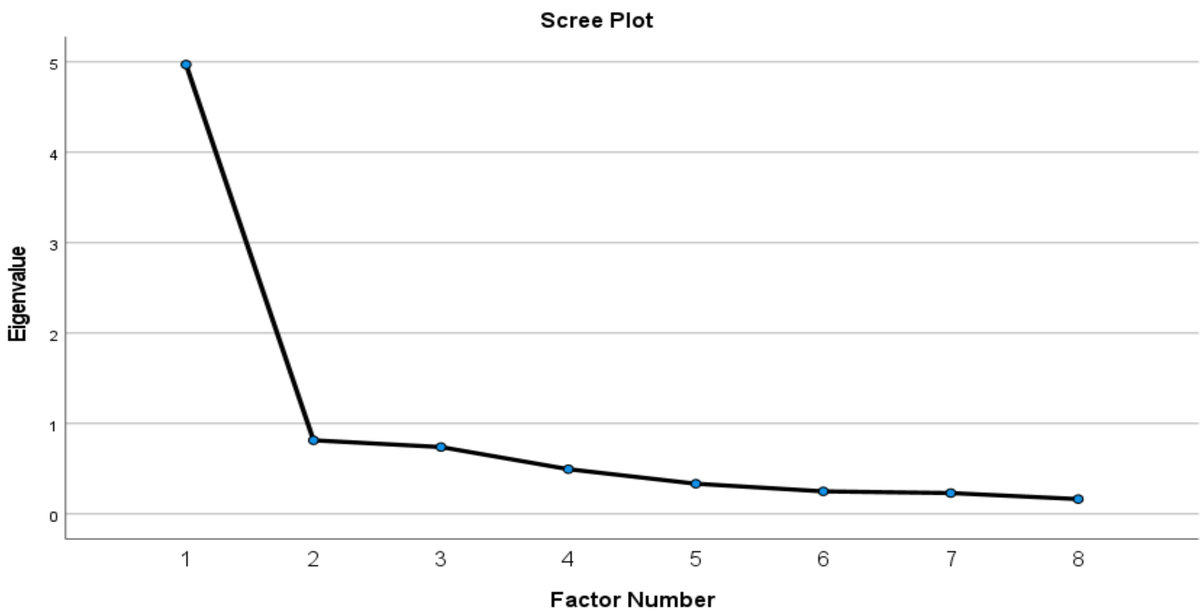


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for brand elements

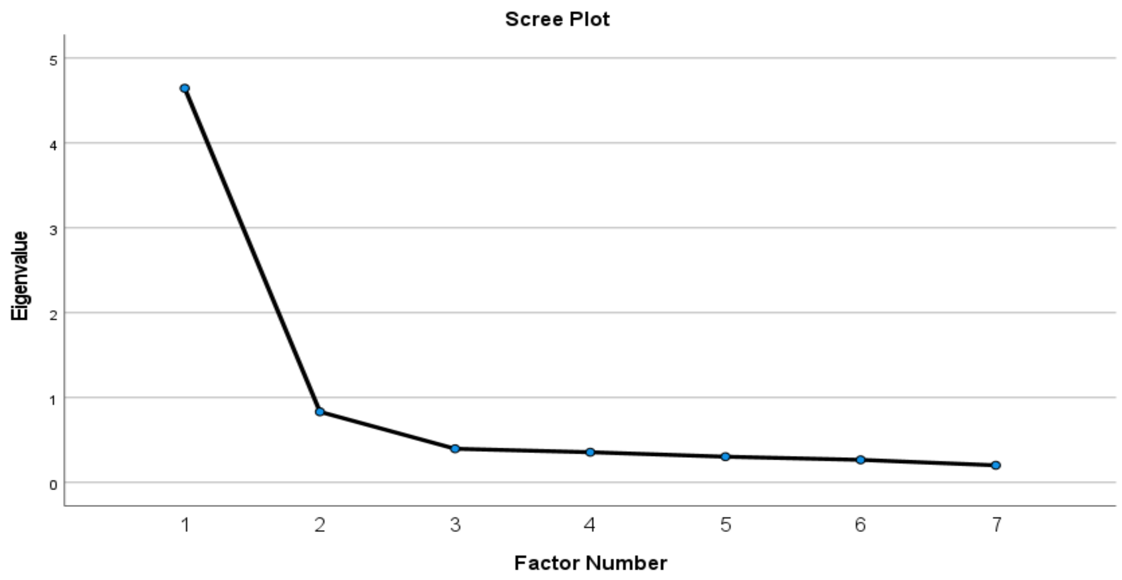


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for brand building dimension

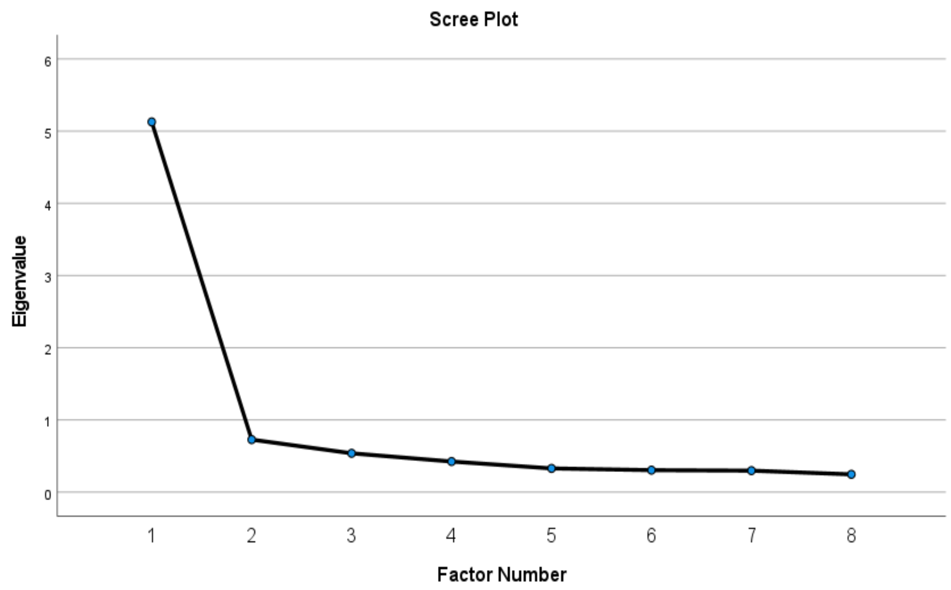


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for brand related capabilities

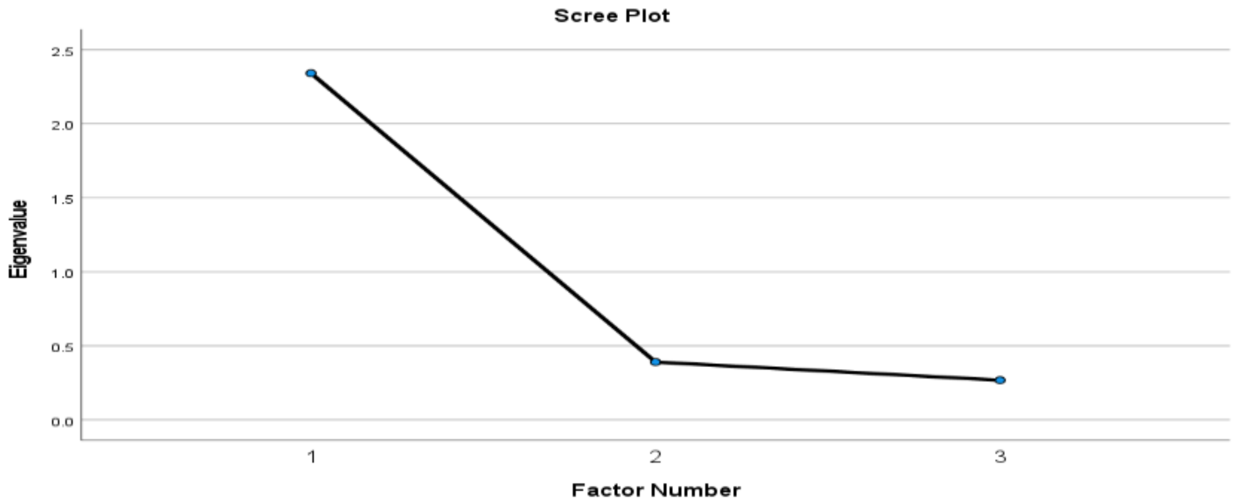


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for brand related capabilities

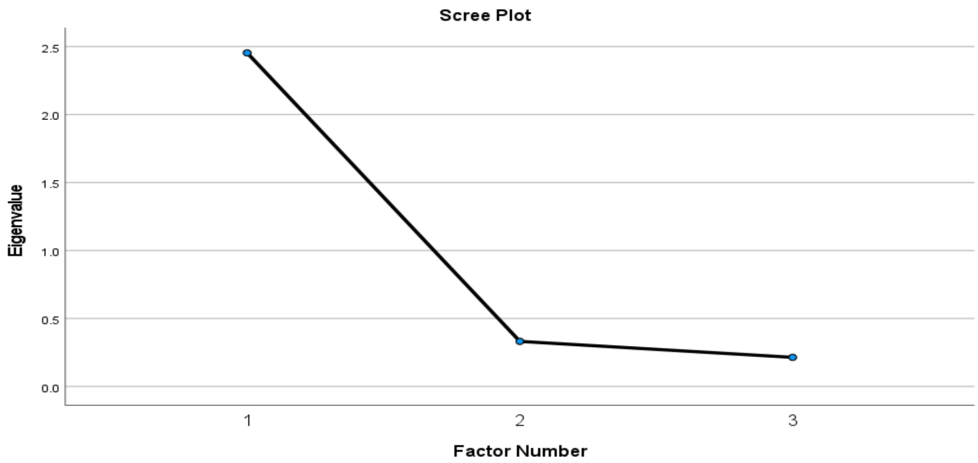


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for brand identity

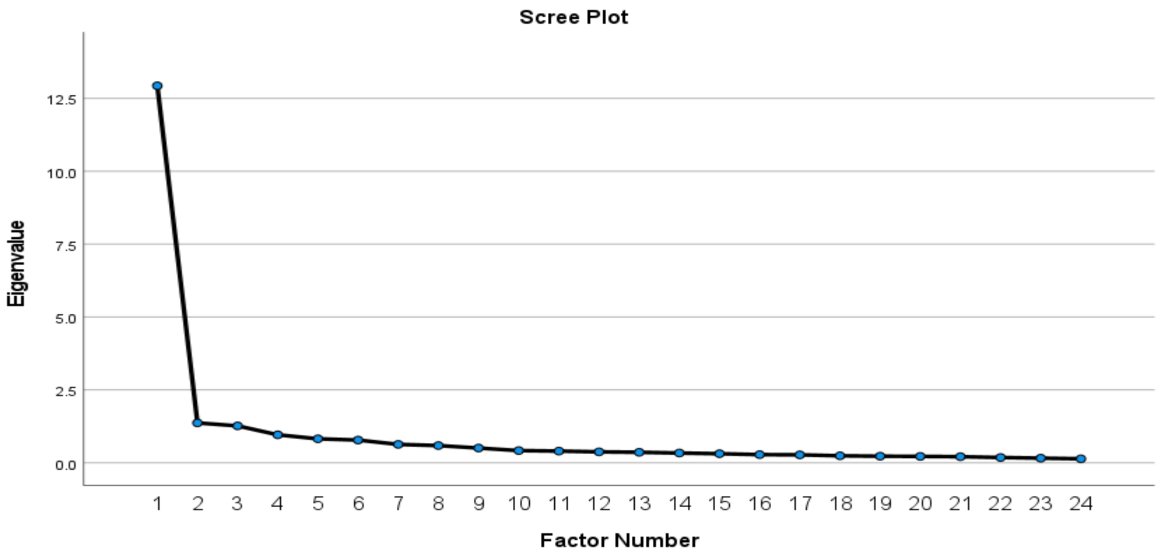


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for marketing communication mix

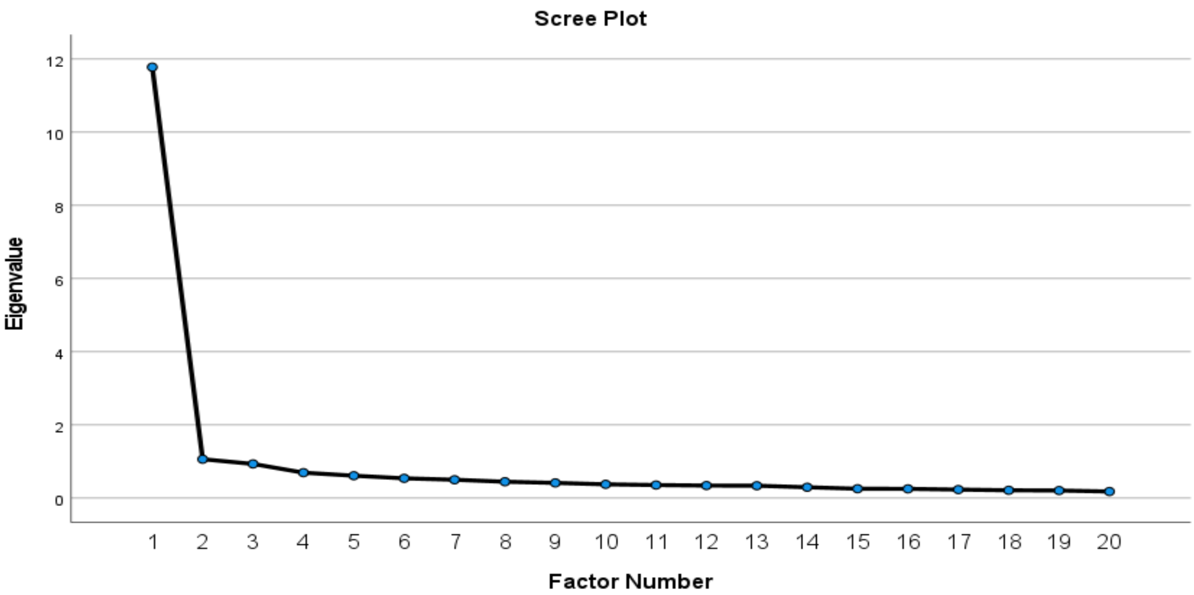


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for customer service

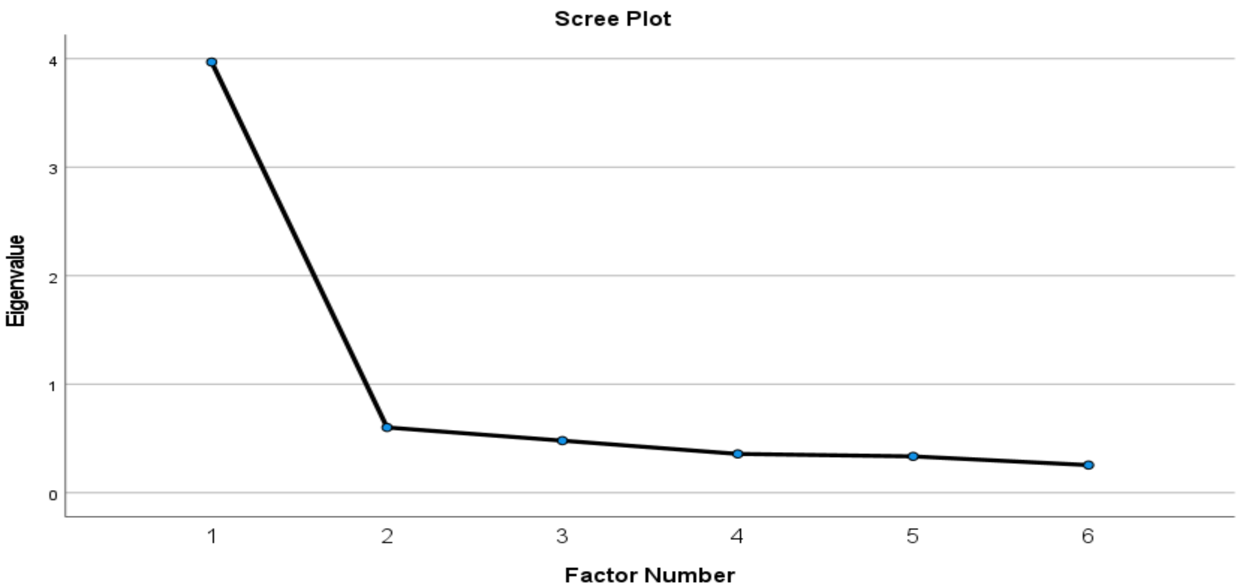


Figure: Scree plot for factor retention for market resources

MAP ANALYSIS FOR THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCTS

Table: MAP for Social media

Items	**Eigenvalues**	**Velicer's Average Square Correlation**
Q2_1	7.668431592	.27267025
Q2_2	1.537000168	.04995995
Q2_3	.896493855	.03159199
Q2_4	.693946685	.03360394
Q2_5	.512126643	.04133527
Q2_6	.479307422	.05398613
Q2_7	.446360250	.06831525
Q2_8	.347084280	.09519359
Q2_9	.339087103	.14173999
Q2_10	.276872550	.17541346
Q2_11	.248914295	.24370067
Q2_12	.239159814	.36178460
Q2_13	.183299870	.46761318
Q2_14	.131915474	1.00000000

*The smallest average squared correlation is:159199256

* The number of components is: 2

Table: MAP for Marketing communication mix

Items	**Eigenvalues**	**Velicer's Average Square Correlation**
Q9_1	12.93305212	.27392774
Q9_2	1.36817537	.02244111
Q9_3	1.26693366	.02154524
Q9_4	.96067520	.02117714
Q9_5	.82328935	.02081193
Q9_6	.78007470	.02158813
Q9_7	.63176071	.02367466
Q9_8	.59145886	.02759968
Q9_9	.50641632	.03013115
Q9_10	.41927266	.03622084
Q9_11	.40209986	.04075257
Q9_12	.37560072	.04844815
Q9_13	.36116768	.05495204

Q9_14	.33582472	.06302159
Q9_15	.31236753	.07353853
Q9_16	.28076295	.08741608
Q9_17	.27283119	.10129351
Q9_18	.24102892	.12183040
Q9_19	.22695456	.14782981
Q9_20	.21982568	.18732431
Q9_21	.21071118	.25378541
Q9_22	.18221244	.35342180
Q9_23	.15964431	.56473489
Q9_24	.13785930	1.00000000

*The smallest average squared correlation is: 2.081192967

* The number of components is: 4

Table: MAP for customer service

Items	**Eigenvalues**	**Velicer's Average Square Correlation**
Q10_1	11.77729802	.32458052
Q10_2	1.06081026	.01700587
Q10_3	.93198051	.01774115
Q10_4	.69285750	.01786164
Q10_5	.61007166	.02145419
Q10_6	.53869162	.02563944
Q10_7	.49938423	.03025599
Q10_8	.44541864	.03522173
Q10_9	.41369356	.04221777
Q10_10	.37443349	.05027435
Q10_11	.35464467	.06070974
Q10_12	.34092603	.07353154
Q10_13	.33621629	.08792085
Q10_14	.29413033	.10477900
Q10_15	.25401068	,13127865
Q10_16	.25062276	.17033703
Q10_17	.23071559	.22486557
Q10_18	.21147040	.30921571
Q10_19	.20452882	.48035438
Q10_20	.17809494	1.00000000

*The smallest average squared correlation is: 1.700586692

* The number of components is: 1

HTMT RESULTS OF THE PAIRED CONSTRUCTS

Table: HTMT results for market resources and service reliability

	Q11_1	Q11_2	Q11_3	Q11_4	Q11_5	Q11_6	Q10_6	Q10_7	Q10_8	Q10_9	Q10_10	Q10_11	Q10_12	Q10_13	Q10_14	Q10_15	Q10_16	Q10_17	Q10_18	Q10_19	Q10_20
Q11_1	--																				
Q11_2	0.587	--																			
Q11_3	0.546	0.615	--																		
Q11_4	0.582	0.541	0.615	--																	
Q11_5	0.574	0.596	0.529	0.605	--																
Q11_6	0.581	0.551	0.542	0.574	0.700	--															
Q10_6	0.489	0.550	0.433	0.474	0.576	0.568	--														
Q10_7	0.424	0.525	0.411	0.507	0.508	0.450	0.651	--													
Q10_8	0.407	0.482	0.416	0.473	0.490	0.524	0.647	0.629	--												
Q10_9	0.427	0.500	0.443	0.464	0.482	0.510	0.601	0.605	0.651	--											
Q10_10	0.460	0.597	0.525	0.516	0.513	0.535	0.665	0.631	0.556	0.662	--										

Q10_11	0.421	0.565	0.466	0.415	0.553	0.543	0.655	0.604	0.574	0.700	0.710	--									
Q10_12	0.451	0.504	0.422	0.494	0.560	0.538	0.620	0.635	0.598	0.545	0.611	0.662	--								
Q10_13	0.498	0.551	0.479	0.512	0.616	0.539	0.616	0.588	0.605	0.610	0.627	0.672	0.734	--							
Q10_14	0.518	0.553	0.573	0.482	0.472	0.485	0.572	0.594	0.554	0.575	0.673	0.628	0.600	0.648	--						
Q10_15	0.462	0.523	0.464	0.460	0.564	0.571	0.632	0.608	0.599	0.602	0.623	0.668	0.673	0.668	0.619	--					
Q10_16	0.436	0.409	0.516	0.523	0.349	0.410	0.452	0.493	0.520	0.419	0.513	0.473	0.512	0.492	0.592	0.588	--				
Q10_17	0.475	0.496	0.496	0.465	0.466	0.448	0.572	0.567	0.496	0.542	0.584	0.612	0.597	0.587	0.637	0.578	0.554	--			
Q10_18	0.488	0.498	0.450	0.445	0.524	0.530	0.611	0.607	0.540	0.521	0.576	0.624	0.637	0.604	0.653	0.651	0.576	0.680	--		
Q10_19	0.482	0.469	0.430	0.482	0.519	0.523	0.572	0.576	0.515	0.546	0.566	0.618	0.590	0.605	0.611	0.640	0.518	0.680	0.753	--	
Q10_20	0.563	0.500	0.494	0.498	0.521	0.502	0.591	0.541	0.558	0.548	0.572	0.598	0.660	0.601	0.672	0.619	0.573	0.646	0.723	0.670	--

B	0.583
A	0.602
C	0.493
HTMT	0.831767

Table: HTMT results for advertising and sales promotion

	Q9_1	Q9_2	Q9_3	Q9_4	Q9_5	Q9_8	Q9_9	Q9_10	Q9_11	Q9_12	Q9_13	Q9_14	Q9_15	Q9_16	Q9_17	Q9_21	Q9_22	Q9_23	Q9_24
Q9_1	--																		
Q9_2	0,663	--																	
Q9_3	0,586	0,618	--																
Q9_4	0,532	0,531	0,647	--															
Q9_5	0,566	0,656	0,617	0,646	--														
Q9_8	0,477	0,541	0,534	0,523	0,595	--													
Q9_9	0,522	0,551	0,511	0,521	0,601	0,732	--												
Q9_10	0,535	0,579	0,650	0,599	0,648	0,672	0,734	--											
Q9_11	0,554	0,578	0,620	0,575	0,636	0,632	0,709	0,795	--										
Q9_12	0,490	0,520	0,597	0,507	0,513	0,538	0,571	0,622	0,646	--									
Q9_13	0,401	0,450	0,406	0,398	0,403	0,513	0,573	0,564	0,512	0,659	--								

Q9_14	0,446	0,498	0,556	0,517	0,555	0,507	0,576	0,625	0,628	0,780	0,658	--							
Q9_15	0,409	0,436	0,474	0,429	0,452	0,452	0,522	0,548	0,536	0,601	0,488	0,674	--						
Q9_16	0,532	0,532	0,516	0,490	0,532	0,564	0,549	0,608	0,588	0,661	0,612	0,718	0,618	--					
Q9_17	0,432	0,449	0,503	0,431	0,485	0,530	0,545	0,558	0,541	0,688	0,705	0,702	0,600	0,703	--				
Q9_21	0,466	0,548	0,526	0,472	0,565	0,476	0,527	0,568	0,571	0,606	0,474	0,615	0,561	0,582	0,603	--			
Q9_22	0,433	0,458	0,409	0,379	0,489	0,503	0,548	0,527	0,530	0,548	0,551	0,518	0,501	0,571	0,577	0,685	--		
Q9_23	0,474	0,522	0,465	0,445	0,535	0,577	0,614	0,634	0,622	0,598	0,566	0,607	0,477	0,584	0,572	0,672	0,712	--	
Q9_24	0,433	0,564	0,459	0,405	0,555	0,534	0,601	0,620	0,597	0,616	0,603	0,631	0,507	0,612	0,586	0,698	0,727	0,782	--

B	0,602
A	0,618
C	0,516
HTMT	0,845453

Table: HTMT results for advertising and personal branding

	Q9_1	Q9_2	Q9_3	Q9_4	Q9_5	Q9_8	Q9_9	Q9_10	Q9_11	Q9_6	Q9_7	Q9_18	Q9_19	Q9_20
Q9_1	--													

Q9_2	0,663	--												
Q9_3	0,586	0,618	--											
Q9_4	0,532	0,531	0,647	--										
Q9_5	0,566	0,656	0,617	0,646	--									
Q9_8	0,477	0,541	0,534	0,523	0,595	--								
Q9_9	0,522	0,551	0,511	0,521	0,601	0,732	--							
Q9_10	0,535	0,579	0,650	0,599	0,648	0,672	0,734	--						
Q9_11	0,554	0,578	0,620	0,575	0,636	0,632	0,709	0,795	--					
Q9_6	0,388	0,451	0,403	0,486	0,505	0,451	0,475	0,517	0,513	--				
Q9_7	0,343	0,377	0,344	0,350	0,500	0,571	0,489	0,445	0,455	0,430	--			
Q9_18	0,322	0,316	0,304	0,315	0,268	0,438	0,400	0,358	0,371	0,322	0,413	--		
Q9_19	0,383	0,394	0,410	0,377	0,401	0,414	0,426	0,444	0,447	0,404	0,430	0,408	--	
Q9_20	0,426	0,484	0,507	0,415	0,468	0,484	0,455	0,509	0,496	0,395	0,384	0,494	0,595	--

B	0,602
A	0,427

C	0,424
HTMT	0,836157

Table: HTMT results for personal branding and sales promotion

	Q9_6	Q9_7	Q9_18	Q9_19	Q9_20	Q9_12	Q9_13	Q9_14	Q9_15	Q9_16	Q9_17	Q9_21	Q9_22	Q9_23	Q9_24
Q9_6	--														
Q9_7	0,430	--													
Q9_18	0,322	0,413	--												
Q9_19	0,404	0,430	0,408	--											
Q9_20	0,395	0,384	0,494	0,595	--										
Q9_12	0,362	0,381	0,433	0,433	0,531	--									
Q9_13	0,287	0,305	0,462	0,321	0,454	0,659	--								
Q9_14	0,426	0,380	0,443	0,479	0,504	0,780	0,658	--							
Q9_15	0,341	0,317	0,365	0,397	0,409	0,601	0,488	0,674	--						
Q9_16	0,430	0,444	0,487	0,411	0,514	0,661	0,612	0,718	0,618	--					
Q9_17	0,351	0,369	0,441	0,348	0,503	0,688	0,705	0,702	0,600	0,703	--				
Q9_21	0,365	0,328	0,361	0,404	0,529	0,606	0,474	0,615	0,561	0,582	0,603	--			

Q9_22	0,295	0,366	0,429	0,381	0,514	0,548	0,551	0,518	0,501	0,571	0,577	0,685	--		
Q9_23	0,395	0,419	0,442	0,442	0,540	0,598	0,566	0,607	0,477	0,584	0,572	0,672	0,712	--	
Q9_24	0,406	0,394	0,415	0,494	0,587	0,616	0,603	0,631	0,507	0,612	0,586	0,698	0,727	0,782	--

B	0,427
A	0,618
C	0,417
HTMT	0,81067

APPENDIX L:

- EDITER LETTER –

EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

7542 Galangal Street

Lotus Gardens

Pretoria

0008

22 February 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate serves to confirm that I have language edited S Mosupyoe's thesis entitled, **"TOWARDS A BRAND COMMUNICATION MODEL FOR SMMEs IN SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS."**

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:

Dr Jack Chokwe (PhD)

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Professional EDITORS Guild

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Associate Member

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This serves to certify that I duly edited:

CHAPTER 9

of

TOWARDS A BRAND COMMUNICATION MODEL FOR SMMEs IN SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS

by

SEBILARO SYBIL LEBOGANG NTSHOLE MOSUPYOE

I am an accredited editor with the University of Johannesburg, University of Stellenbosch Business School, NWU, UP, UCT, and GIBS, and my clients include the United Nations Global Compact, Absa, FNB, Takealot, and various other universities and organisations in South Africa and Namibia.

Please note that all editing is done in *Track Changes*, and I therefore have no control over what is accepted or rejected by the author. Furthermore, I have no control over text added at a later stage.

Should there be any queries, please contact me on the number provided above.

Teresa Kapp

APPENDIX M:

- TITLE APPROVAL LETTER –

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic
and Management Sciences

1920 – 2020
Advance

Our ref: 28350686
Contact person: Ignatious Dire
Tel: +27 12 420 5278
E-mail: dire@up.ac.za

Date 11 May 2023

Dear Ms S Mosupyoe

APPROVAL OF REVISED TITLE REGISTRATION

I have a pleasure in informing you that the following **revised** title registration has been approved.

A brand communication model for micro and small enterprises in South African townships

Your enrolment as a student must be renewed annually until you have complied with all the requirements for the degree, preferably during the official period of enrolment but before **28 February**. You will only be entitled to the guidance of your supervisor if annual proof of registration can be submitted

Yours sincerely

For: Prof Chitiga-Mabugu
Dean Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

EMS revised title registration 2021