The impact of e-word-of-mouth, engagement and brand image on soccer fans' intention to purchase football tickets

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the influence electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) engagement and brand image have on purchase intention. The study was based on understanding factors influencing football fans' consumption behaviour in relation to sports, specifically football. The study involved different aspects, including the impact of social media and branding on consumer behaviour. The literature consulted assisted with conceptual model and hypotheses development, around which the study was centred.

Data for this study was collected from 260 Orlando Pirates FC fans at the Sebokeng branch, where participants were all supporters of the football club which was the subject of the study. Data was collected through a self-administered survey. Using the SPSS 22 and AMOS 22 packages to analyses the data, all the hypotheses were confirmed at 99% confidence level. E-WOM proved to be the most influential factor on fans' consumer behaviour towards purchase intention while engagement showed the least.

The conclusion and recommendation section was informed by the results following the data analyses. Recommendations which emanated from the findings were split between marketing practitioners and academic researchers. Maintaining a positive brand perception proved to be beneficial for brands based on the outcomes of the study. The outcomes also proved that the participant ranked engagement on the club's Facebook page as the lowest factor t influence their consumer behaviour.

As there are few studies on fans' consumption behaviour in the sports environment, let alone football in South Africa, it would be interesting to see more studies done in this field in future.

DECLARATION

I, Mthobisi Nhlabathi, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Mthobisi Patric Nhlabathi

Signed at …………………………………………………

On the …………………………….. day of ………………………… 20…..

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of e-word of mouth, engagement and brand image on the soccer fans' intention to purchase tickets for Orlando Pirates FC matches. The concept of word of mouth (WOM) is not recent, having been used by various researchers in various disciplines. This concept will be discussed in relation to viral marketing, a concept which has been researched by various authors. This discussion will be used to explain e-Word-of-Mouth as a concept, which is discussed in details under the literature review.

1.2   Context of the study

Developments in the media and technology fields have resulted in various areas of interest which have drawn the attention from researchers in marketing and other non-marketing related fields. The evolution in the media space has led to a dramatic shift in the way marketing is done. With the emergence of the internet, the importance and relevance of integrated marketing communications (IMC) has gained more attention from various researchers. Through IMC, social media have also attracted a lot of attention in the marketing space in terms of their relevance as a marketing platform.

Developments in the technology sector have, according to Joachimsthaler and Aaker (1999), have resulted in traditional media to loose recency and effectiveness in modern marketing. Media planning for traditional media has proven more costly when benchmarked against modern media (e.g. internet, mobile, social media, and so on). Mass media continue to be the victims of such dynamics (Joachimsthaler and Aaker, 1999).

Since the introduction of online networks, the world is fast becoming a society of networks with a fast-growing number of people becoming connected on social media. A similar trend is seen in developing countries, like South Africa, where social media

connectivity is growing as well (Zaglia, 2013). The trends in connections are crucial to understand so that marketers and organisations can find a way of incorporating them on their strategies going forward. An increase in the number of people on social networks and the time they spend online will make the world even more socially connected. It is important to look at IMC and its influence on society.

1.3 Problem statement

Word of mouth (WOM), in general, is a concept which has been, and still is, utilised in various spheres of life. The electronic version, e-WOM fairly does not have a longer history of existence considering its dependence on electronic media which also date back a few decades ago. Effectiveness of word of mouth in the marketing field has been explored in previous studies. Brand image and engagement in relation to purchase intention have also been investigated although very few researchers have looked into the impact of e-WOM, engagement and brand image on the intention to purchase tickets for soccer matches.

1.3.1 Main problem

To investigate the influence of e-word-of-mouth, engagement and brand image on the intention to purchase soccer tickets for Orlando Pirates FC games. In addition, the study seeks to investigate which of the three variables carries more weight in influencing the decision.

Sub-problem 1

With social media viewed as a new and improved form of the previous media types, only with added functionalities, what are the reasons for the use of these communication platforms by soccer fans?

Sub-problem 2

With Orlando Pirates FC being one of the three biggest teams in South Africa (the other two being Kaizer Chiefs and Mamelodi Sundowns), what is the impact of its brand image, engagement and the word-of-mouth generated on club's Facebook page on their fans' intention to purchase match tickets?

1.4   Significance of the study

With social media proving to be an important part of marketing in recent years, it is important to investigate their impact on marketing as a discipline and the purchase decision making of consumers. Social media provide their users with various options of usability. As a result of technological advancements and the emergence of social media, virtual communities have also emerged. These communities are online platforms which allow its members the opportunity to share issues of their interest amongst one another (Chou and Sawang, 2015). The interactivity of these platforms has brought consumers closer to one another, irrespective of geographic disparities, to create dialogues on issues which affect them. In this case, consumers have been empowered to co-produce media messages. Influencing the production process by raising concerns about products or brands and services, has given consumers a voice in their brand experience.

With Facebook being the leading social network in the world in terms of users (13 millions), according to a WebAfrica (2015) report, it is important to investigate the influence it has on soccer fans' decision making processes. Analysing and understanding the contents of consumers' conversations on social media can help marketers identify online communities which share common ideas and interests. These findings can therefore be used to communicate relevant messages with the potential of facilitating favourable purchase decision-making by consumers.

A number of engagement-based concepts have been proposed in different bodies of literature, including tourism, such as customer engagement behaviour (Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, and Verhoef, 2010), customer brand engagement

(Hollebeek, 2011), online consumer engagement (Mollen and Wilson, 2010), the customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012), customer engagement value (Kumar, Novak and Tomkins, 2010), community engagement (Hamilton and Alexander, 2013) and co-creation as a customer engagement behaviour (Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012, Cabiddu, Lui and Piccoli, 2013). Some studies define engagement in terms of a psychological state (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2010), while others focus on its behavioural manifestations toward a company or a brand (Hollebeek, 2011; Kumar et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010).

The advent of social media led to an explosion of interest in customer engagement, given the opportunities presented by these media to facilitate close relationships with customers (Gorry and Westbrook, 2011; Hudson and Thal, 2013). Engagement includes: browsing and consuming consumer-generated media contents, content contribution, active participation (Yoo and Gretzel, 2011), levels of participation in online tourist communities (Hamilton and Alexander, 2013; Wang, Yu and Fesenmaier, 2002), user-generated hotel reviews as a particular type of customer engagement behaviour (Park and Allen, 2013), social media marketing (Chan and Guillet, 2011), and tourism blogs as elements of tourism destination strategy (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). Despite the increasing research on the adoption of social media by the tourism industry and some evidence that confirms a return on investment for companies that have invested in this technology (Dholakia and Durham, 2010), tourism scholars claim that research must adopt new theoretical and methodological approaches to better explain the unique characteristics of social media (Chan and Guillet, 2011; Hudson and Thal, 2013). Moreover, this theoretical foundation is relatively underdeveloped, and a better understanding of the concept is essential to the development of customer engagement strategies (Sashi, 2012).

Consumers who engage on social media, according to the functional engagement theory, want to have the feeling of togetherness on these virtual platforms (Lim, Hwang, Kim and Biocca, 2015). According to this definition, fans who are part of the Orlando Pirates FC Facebook page want to be part of the virtual community and share common interests with

one another. This gives them a feeling of togetherness, although this takes place in the virtual space. This is supported through the social presence theory which argues that social media consumers want to be aware of one another's presence (Lim et al, 2015). This sense of togetherness is perceived to be similar to a real life engagement by a group of audience watching a match in the same space (Lim et al., 2015).

The functional engagement theory states further that word-of-mouth information from friends, family and sources that are reliable to consumers will influence their purchase decisions. It is therefore crucial to investigate how engagement and e-WOM influence decision making. It is also important to look at how Orlando Pirates FC as a brand has the power to influence the intention to purchase tickets to the team's matches.

1.5   Delimitations of the study

The limitations of this study are drawn from Lim et al (2015) who argued that studies on social media should not ignore the level of social media experience among the target audience for the study. Since the internet is a fairly new phenomenon in South Africa, this poses as the limitation of this study as literacy levels are still low. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was applied in the educational environment, it is important that the teachers who will be using these technologies understand and accept them. This necessitates investigating the core elements that may lead to acceptance of these technologies (Sanchez-Prieto, 2015).Another potential limitation will be the issue of affordability as social media engagements require technological devices (i.e. cellphones, smartphones, computers, etc.) with access to the internet, for which some people might not have the buying power.

1.6   Definition of terms

Social Media

The growth in internet access worldwide resulted in the formation of online social networking sites where users of these sites could interact. MySpace (2003) and Facebook

(2004), for instance, were formed as a result collectively called social media as they are popularly known today (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).

Web 2.0

The term was described as software where content and applications can be modified by all users (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). Hermida, Fletcher, Korell and Logan, (2012) referred to Web 2.0 as a term to describe internet technologies which allow end users to exchange content over the virtual space (online).

Virtual Communities

Electronic media and infrastructure allow people to interact remotely on common issues (Malhotra, 2000). Unlike telephone interaction, this kind of interaction takes place on the internet involving numerous people, irrespective of the physical location of participants.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

This term refers to the interpersonal communications which consumers have among one another about brands an organisation or firm (Zhanga, Ye, Law and Li, 2010). This communication takes place online.

1.7   Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, there will be some assumptions made in order to allow the survey to focus on the variables identified. The assumptions may not work as planned in reality.

- The sample and responses collected will reflect the general representation of the entire universe of this study
- There will be enough Orlando Pirates FC fans willing to participate in the survey
- Orlando Pirates FC will provide access to their fan base for the survey
- The responses given will be consistent and relationship between the variables will be measurable and logical.

1.8 Summary

This chapter covered various sections in research where subsections were discussed, which include the purpose, context and significance of the study. Two theories which formed part of the research were the Intergraded Marketing Communication and the Technology Acceptance Model, which were discussed in detail with relevant examples provided. The problem statement, delimitation of the study, definition of terms and the assumptions were also covered in the study. The next chapter will discuss literature which is relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to look at existing research that has been conducted on the key variables that are being investigated in this study. This will help in drawing a picture of what prior researchers have contributed in this field and identify the gaps from these studies. The first part of this literature review will discuss theories and models which were used to ground the study. These will be Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The second part will discuss each variable in terms of the relevant theories and finding by other authors. These variables under investigation are e-WOM, engagement, brand image and purchase intention.

2.1.1   Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Developments in technology are an on-going process which have resulted in the emergence and growth of social media. Stafford and Faber (Eds) (2005) argued that such advancements pave the way for new media platforms to exist while the once-so called new media loose relevance and move towards the old media classification. Stafford and Faber (Eds) cited Marvin (1988, 3) who argued that:

> "New technology is a historically relative term. We are not the first generation to wonder at the rapid and extraordinary shifts in the dimensions of the world and the human relationships it contains as a result of new forms of communication."

According to Mihart (2012), IMC is a relatively new concept dating back to the last decade of the 20th century. Smith (2013) seconded this argument by saying that the concept started in the 1990s as marketing values were shifting from product-focused approaches to make customers the focal point of marketing strategies. Two contrasting views have been identified by previous researchers in relation to IMC. On the one hand, researchers argued that IMC is the new way of approaching marketing communications

in the modern era. This view talks to the evolution that is happening in various disciplines, including marketing. In contrast, other researchers view IMC as a management fad or fashion, with weak theoretical foundation, not going beyond collection of specific concepts of traditional marketing, presented in a new form (Spotts, David and Mary, 1998; Cornelissen, 2000; Gould, 2004).

Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan and McDonald (2005) argued that IMC should replace traditional media platforms which are limited in their reach and should also promote engagement with customers to improve an organisation's relationships with its customers. As far as IMC is concerned, this concept has evolved in its functions from its inside-out approach where it just brought communication tools together to a brand management strategic process. IMC has become a tool through which organisations are able to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of their communication activities with current and potential customers, staff and other relevant stakeholders (Belch and Belch, 2009). The IMC's task in this instance is to generate synergy in communication for financial effects in the short-term and generate customer relationships that will last longer and be profitable in the future (Belch and Belch, 2009).

Antošová, Mihalčová and Csikósová, (2014) defined IMC as an approach to brand communications where all aspects of marketing communication (advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, online communications and social media) collaborate to provide customers with the best experience, thus reinforcing the brand's core message. Organisational communication can no longer be fully understood by just relying on advertising. A holistic approach is needed, which IMC provides. This definition includes social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) as important platforms of an organisation's communication. The most important aspect of using various communications platforms to engage with consumers is that the messages need to be consistent throughout the channels to avoid contradictions across these platforms.

The importance of IMC has been discussed by various researchers. Naik and Raman (2003) suggested that IMC assists organisations in developing their brand equity for both the organisation as a whole as well as their individual brands. Kitchener et al. also

supports this argument by saying that IMC's role in organisations has become that of managing marketing communications in a holistic manner for an organisation to realize its strategic goals. Synergy talks to the consistency in the messages conveyed by various platforms to all relevant stakeholders to avoid generating confusions through contradicting messages.

Because of these developments in the technology space, Sanchez-Prieto (2015) mention that the concept of mobile learning was born with unique characteristics such as customisation of content, increased flexibility in the learning process, access to more information, adaptability and so on. This study was conducted in the educational field where researchers saw mobile devices as having potential to function as learning tools.

2.1.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

To understand the new media field, it is important to start by understanding the acceptance of these new technologies in the societies where they are introduced. This will help in understanding their effectiveness, post their acceptance. The theory to be used to investigate this is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was developed by Davis in 1986. The TAM has undergone a lot of developments before getting to its current state. TAM evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TAC) in the social psychology field, with its purpose being to understand people's behaviours based on their behavioural intentions (Sanchez-Prieto, 2015).

The intention to behave in a certain manner depends largely on the attitude toward the behaviour and the subjective norm, which is the social or organizational pressure toward the performance of a behaviour as perceived by an individual (Wu and Chen, 2005 in Sanchez-Prieto, 2015: 2). It is also crucial to note that the individual perceptions and attitudes towards the intention to purchase could be influenced by the perceived usefulness (PU) of, in the case of Davis' study, information systems. The perceived usefulness is defined as,

"the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance'' (Davis, 1989: 320).

This definition talks about the fact that users of technology are interested in knowing how the device they are using will be useful in their lives. For instance, the respondents in Davis's study were concerned about the impact the technology piece will have on their job performance. If the perceived usefulness of the device or system has a positive perception on the user's mind, it is likely to influence that consumer's intention to purchase.

On the other hand, consumers are not prepared to put unnecessary effort in using a technological device or system. They are more interested in the ease of use of the system, which also affects their decision making. Davis (1989: 320) also defined the ease of use as

"the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort".

As much as the model sounds interesting, it also has its disadvantages and limitations which Davis explained as follows:

- **Lack of consideration of external variables**: Including factors such as previous experience, perceived enjoyment or facilitating conditions.
- **Dependence on self-reports**: This dependence occurs when measuring the use of the system, which limits the reliability of the model and it hinders the study of the relationship between the BI and AU of the system (Agudo-Peregrina, Hernández-Garcia and Pascual-Miguel, 2014).
- **Low levels of variance in exploratory studies**: In this type of study, the explanation of behavioural intention can, on occasion, be relatively low.

Throughout its evolution, the TAM has undergone various changes which have impacted the final version as we know it today. Sanchez-Prieto et al (2015) argue that the integration of new technologies in the formal education space requires positive buy-in

from the teachers who will be responsible for passing the knowledge to learners. The most common research on the TAM in relation to students focused on university students to understand their acceptance of a new information system to help them with their studies (Gao, 2005). On the other hand, Yu, Lin, Han and Hsu (2012) studied the use of the TAM in relation to high school students. This theory is also used to understand the impact of external factors such as motivations and academic success (Huffman and Huffman, 2012; Jou and Wang, 2012 in Sanchez-Prieto et al., 2015).

The teachers' acceptance of the technologies is not automatic and without any influencing factors. Sanchez-Prieto et al (2015) came up with an extended version of the TAM called the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Various researchers have done studies on different applications of the TAM, with King and He (2006) focusing on pre-service teachers, Wu and Liu (2013) on primary school teachers as well as Pynoo and van Braak (2014) on teachers at all levels (Sanchez-Prieto et al, 2015).

To expand the TAM, a couple of constructs were added by Sanchez-Prieto et al (2015) to understand the reasons which affect behavioural intentions. These constructs were:

- **Perceived enjoyment**

This concept is defined as the degree to which the use of the technology is perceived as enjoyable, regardless of the performance consequences that can be anticipated. The focal point of this definition is the joy gained from the information system.

- **Subjective norm**

This was used to describe the organisational or social pressure placed on the individual to perform a given behaviour, as perceived by an individual. The influence comes from the organisation itself.

- **Self-efficacy**

It is described as the assessment made by an individual on their ability to properly use the devices. This term, proposed by Bandura came from the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1978).

- **Facilitating conditions**

This construct measures the individual's perception of the resources at their disposal to support their behaviour.

- **Anxiety toward mobile devices**

This construct is defined as the degree of an individual's apprehension, or even fear, when faced with the possibility of using mobile technologies (Garcia, 2008). These constructs suggest that any person who is not comfortable with any technology is unlikely to intend to use it in the future.

- **Resistance to change**

This construct refers to the reluctance to change a particular routine which had made the subject comfortable. The change may be seen as a disruption of order.

By considering the rate of increase in social media uptake and their usage worldwide and in South Africa, it is evident that the acceptance of mobile media technologies is growing at an alarming rate. Various researchers have released results which support this argument. Thousands of blogs, millions of tweets and billions of emails are written each day (Berger, 2014: 587). Social talk generates over 3.3 billion brand impressions each day (Keller and Libai, 2009) and shapes everything from the movies consumers watch to the websites they visit (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Chintagunta, Gopinath, and Venkataraman, 2010; Godes and Mayzlin, 2009; Trusov, Bucklin and Pauwels, 2009). According to Nail (2009), more than one billion people use social media, and research suggests that up to 85% of consumers prefer that companies interact with them on social media. Similarly, an increasing number of businesses explicitly recognize the value of social media, especially for marketing and advertising (Aral, Dellarocas, and Godes

2013). By looking at these findings, it would be difficult for marketers to ignore the opportunities that are presented by social media in reaching more consumers with their messages.

The most important thing is to understand the content and nature of engagement on social media to be able to align marketing strategies to address issues that can be identified from these platforms. As for content, it is important to understand what consumers talk about, what is trending in the market and what consumers like and dislike, which affect the organisation or brand. The content will help in guiding marketers in terms of what and how they should offer their consumers.

On the other hand, the nature of the conversations on social media reflects consumer behavior on these platforms. This refers to whether they discuss specific topics about a brand or just general discussions which do not have a direct actionable impact on an organisation. The nature of consumers' conversations will also inform marketers about the level of influence consumers have on one another's purchase decisions. For instance, if a consumer seeks information about a certain brand and another consumer with knowledge about that brand provides an advice and recommendations, this might have an influence on the final purchase decision. According to the World Bank, 44% of the world population had access to the internet, while about 52% of the South African population is connected to the internet (World Bank, 2015). WebAfrica (2015) published asocial media usage stats in South Africa showing Facebook as a leader at 13 million users, YouTube at 8.28, Twitter at 7.4 million and Instagram at 2.68 million. Table 1.1 in the appendix section shows internet usage around the world.

2.2   E-Word-of-Mouth (WOM)

Word of mouth (WOM) communication, in an academic environment, has been in existence for decades dating back from the 1950s, with various researchers using it in their studies. The concept has since received a lot of attention from scholars and

practitioners. Researchers have defined the concept in various ways based on their research.

De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) argue that researchers have shown

> *"personal conversations and informal exchange of information among acquaintances to be not only influential in consumers' choices and purchase decisions (Arndt,1967; Whyte, 1954), but to also shape consumer expectations (Anderson and Salisbury, 2003; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996), pre-usage attitudes (Herr, Kardes and Kim, 1991), and even post-usage perceptions of a product or service (Bone, 1995; Burzynski and Bayer, 1977)".*

Cheung and Lee defined traditional WOM as the oral form of interpersonal non-commercial communication among associates (Cheung and Lee, 2012) while Westbrook (1987) defined it as ''informal communication by one consumer directed towards other consumers about the ownership, usage or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers'' (Yap, Soetarto and Sweeney, 2013); Berger, 2014). Some researchers, including Engel, Kegerreis and Blackwell (1969); Feldman and Spencer (1965); Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) have found WOM to be more effective in influencing consumer behaviour as compared to personal selling, advertising and promotions (Yap et al, 2013; de Bruyn and Lilien, 2008; Castranovo and Huang, 2012; Thandani, 2012). This is why organisations in the social media era have and are still shifting from push advertising towards developing relationships with consumers, thus pushing WOM promotion through social media platforms like Facebook (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015).

Some researchers have defined word-of-mouth as oral, informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization or a service (Eisingerich, Chun, Liu, Jia and Bell, 2015; Higie, Feick and Price, 1987). This definition is in line with the fact that normally the communication in WOM is not commercial in nature, but just a way of consumers to express their views about these products, brands and so on.

In 2010, a study by Bughin, Doogan and Vetvik found that between 20% and 50% of all purchase decisions were made based on WOM influence among consumers. In support of this argument, Cheung and Thadani (2012) argued that word-of-mouth (e-WOM in this case) has become an important element in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions. The study also discovered that WOM influenced decisions twice as much as advertising (Berger, 2014).

In another study, e-Marketer showed that about 61% of consumers have consulted online information sources before making a decision to purchase any product (Cheung et al, 2012). This shows the power of the platform and how it has established social media as a powerful source of information.

In yet another study conducted in the United States of America, Hermida et al (2012) mentioned that Facebook emerged as the main driver of traffic for some of the recently accessed sites. This study was conducted among 25 news websites based in the US. To support the findings of this study, it is important to look at Shan, Panagiotopoulos, Regan, De Brún, Barnett, Wall and McConnon (2015) who argued that some communications managers showed strong trust on social media as the most effective way to engage with certain audiences for consumer awareness campaigns (e.g. against obesity, food safety on budget food labelling awareness, and so on).

The WOM has a huge impact on consumer behaviour. Belew highlighted the importance of WOM in the restaurant environment where one unsatisfied customer has an estimated power to tell at least ten more people about the bad experience. Each of these ten people could also tell ten more people each. The message about the bad experience of one customer could spread exponentially. Belew calls this the WOM Multiplier effect (Belew, 2014; Cheung et al, 2012). The concept comes in various forms, which include face-to-face and online discussions (e-WOM).

Developments on the internet space have taken the WOM online, where strangers from various geographies can share information about products without having to meet in person (Cheung et al, 2012). Arthur Campbell emphasised this argument that the initial

stage during a launch of a new product is when information about the product spreads among people through WOM (Campbell, 2015). This model is based on the assumption that early purchasers of a product will spread the information about the product to other potential consumers (Campbell, 2015). Balakrishnan, Dahnil and Yi (2014) also defined online e-WOM as:

> *"any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about the product or company which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet" (Balakrishnan et al, 2014; Yoo et al, 2015).*

The internet has therefore enhanced the impact of WOM by opening new platforms for consumers to share opinions and information about products and services. It is important to note that e-WOM does not replace traditional forms but enhances its reach and effectiveness.

The evolution of e-commerce (online shopping) has enabled several industry leaders to capitalize on the WOM multiplier effect, as defined by Belew (2014). This was made possible by the fact that customers have views they are willing to share with one another online. Belew argued that Amazon.com is one of the earliest online retailers to allow customer reviews of a product to be posted on their website (Belew, 2014). This platform has allowed customers to give feedback about the products and share their experiences with the producers of the products and among one another. This has changed the way marketing and shopping is done.

When discussing the concept of e-WOM, Castranovo and Huang (2012) referred to viral marketing, a term which refers to social media usage to spread information about products and brands among friends and family. Ho and Dempsey (2008) also published an article which described viral marketing as the act by marketers of creating online or electronic content which has a URL link that is made available to internet users. If the consumer decides to forward the URL to another internet user, the electronic content is spread, reaching a huge number of people. This is a typical example of viral marketing. To

describe the act of passing electronic content by consumers, they call this e-word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which is one of the variables being investigated in this study.

To expand on these definitions, Habibi and Richard (2014) encouraged organisations to facilitate brand communities as consumers can benefit the firm by working as a support service department in helping one another resolve issues. Members of a brand community can also work as brand ambassadors, thereby promoting and defending the image of the brand.

Killian and McManus (2015) argued that viral marketing can work for and against brands depending on the experiences consumers get from their encounter with the brands. Brand managers can gain positive traction when the experience consumers received has been positive. This can generate a positive WOM which consumers will spread at no cost for the brand. Alternatively, consumers have the power to spread negative messages about the brand when they feel that they have been treated negatively by the brand. Viral marketing becomes an important concept as this study looks at the use of word of mouth (eWOM in this case) to spread messages.

In order to offer consumers what they want and thereby increasing consumption of a brand or product, Moran and Gossieaux (2010) cited in Castranovo and Huang (2012), argued that the approach should be to understand their needs and wants by analysing their social media conversations.

Previous studies have suggested that WOM on social media, which Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy and Skiera (2010) called social Word-of Mouth (sWOM), supplements traditional personal word of mouth (WOM) in influencing consumer behaviour. Most studies have focussed on the consequences of WOM (e-WOM) such as revenue growth, customer retention and promotion of customer purchase intention (Yoo et al, 2015). Reduction of risk, search time, purchase regret, discovery of new products and increasing social status among others, are the motives Yoo et al provided for consumers' use of e-WOM (Yoo et al, 2015).

Consumers have different drivers for participating in the online word-of-mouth. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) referred to Dichter (1966) and Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998) drivers to an online context proposed and empirically tested several reasons why a consumer might engage in e-WOM communication. Six of the reasons have been used in the Hennig-Thurau et al.'s study and are listed and briefly discussed below:

- **Positive self-enhancement**

This factor reflects the consumer's need to share their consumption experience to augment their own image as intelligent shoppers.

- **Social benefits**

This occurs when a consumer transmits WOM message for identification and social integration purposes. This happens when a consumer wants to fit into a certain social group or online community. This argument was supported by Habibi and Richard who used the social identity theory to argue that consumers subscribe to a brand community to accomplish the need for identification with symbols and groups, which in turn offers them the ability to augment their self-concept (Habibi and Richard, 2014). Through these cyber communities, consumers are able to share their feelings and experiences with brands and among themselves.

- **Concern for other consumers** relates to genuine offer to help other consumers make better purchase decisions.
- **Helping the company** relates to a consumer's desire to help a company as a result of a particularly pleasing consumption experience.
- **Venting negative feelings** relates to a dissatisfying consumption experience that results in the consumer wanting to share frustration and anxiety through negative WOM.

De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) argued that consumers with limited expertise in a certain product category (Furse, Punj and Stewart, 1984; Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger and Yale, 1998), who perceive a high risk indecision-making (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Kiel and

Layton, 1981), or who are deeply involved in the purchasing decision (Beatty and Smith, 1987) are more likely to seek the opinions of others for product advice. Various researchers shared similar views, by arguing that consumers trust expert knowledge from fellow consumers whom they trust instead of other sources (Habibi and Richard, 2014; Wu, Chen, and Chung, 2010). Zaglia (2013) supported this argument by saying that consumers normally seek advice from other consumers in order to get solutions tailored for their problems, where experienced consumers' advice can influence intention to purchase by the inexperienced members.

2.3   Engagement

Engagement as a concept has been researched in the field of marketing by various researchers in different studies and contexts. Engagement as a term has been identified as one of the important factors which provide sustainable competitive advantage in today's business environment and has been used is various disciplines, according to Cabiddu et al (2014), such as consumer behaviour, tourism, such as customer engagement behaviour (van Doorn et al., 2010), customer brand engagement (Hollebeek, 2011), online consumer engagement (Mollen and Wilson, 2010), the customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012), customer engagement value (Kumar et al., 2010), community engagement (Hamilton and Alexander, 2013), and co-creation as a customer engagement behaviour (Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012, Cabiddu, Lui and Piccoli, 2013).

The term is also defined in the psychology context (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2010), while others focus on its behavioural manifestations toward a company or brand (Hollebeek, 2011; Kumar et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010). Hollebeek et al (2014) identified marketing terms such as consumer engagement and community engagement in order to conceptualise engagement. The focus of their paper was on consumer engagement with particular brands. The focus is also on the motivational state (van Doorn et al. 2010), which occurs by virtue of an individual's (i.e. the 'engagement subject') focal interactive experiences with a particular object or agent (i.e. the 'engagement object'; Hollebeek, 2011a/b), which is key for many online

offerings (Malthouse and Hofacker, 2010; Sawhney, Verona and Prandelli, 2005; Shankar and Batra, 2009).

Specific engagement subjects may include organisations, brands, organisational activities and so on, which take place beyond just purchasing (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Despite the difference in consumer engagement and brand engagement concepts, they may reflect a highly similar conceptual scope. Consumer engagement differs from satisfaction in that it is focused on consumers' cognitive, emotional and behavioural dynamics during specific brand interactions (whereas satisfaction may largely arise thereafter) (Hollebeek et al, 2014).

The modern business world requires organisations to be present in the social media space so that they can be able to keep in touch with their current and potential customers. Social media have become more relevant in recent years to enable organisations to interact with the public, ranging from consumer engagement, brand promotions, complaints, campaigns, and so on (Shan, Panagiotopoulos, Regan, De Brún, Barnett, Wall and McConnon, 2015). Habibi et al (2014) support these statements by saying that the age of social media has been more about building virtual (brand) communities and channelling consumers towards engaging with the community and the brand itself. The social media also offer consumers the platform to raise and share their concerns with and about their brands easier than ever before.

Smith and Gallicano (2015) argued that people tend to confuse using social media tools with social media engagement, which they argue that are two different concepts. The differences they pointed out were that using the tools refers to the multiplicity of choices that are available to users while engagement has emotional and cognitive implications in the absorption and use of social media.

An example can be made using television viewing, especially sport in this case, which has seen huge evolution with the advent of social media in recent years. Viewing has become more interactive than ever before, with some applications allowing viewers to send their comments about a particular show while it is live (Lim et al, 2015). This allows

viewers to give the TV channel or producers instant feedback about the programme, on one side. On the other, the interactivity gives a viewer interaction among fellow viewers. Three levels of social TV viewing have been identified in relation to TV watching and engagement and are discussed below (Lim et al, 2015).

2.3.1 Functional engagement

In recent years, interactivity as a term has been expanded by research studies to incorporate the role played by social media. The focus is no longer on the organisation's messages to the consumers, but on the relationships organisations build with their consumers. This is because of the consumers' ability to influence the content produced. Lim et al (2015) state that functional engagement's focus is on the online users' instantaneous participation in the social media platform to contribute towards the content generated on these platforms, which was previously defined as interactivity (Steuer, 1992). Consumers are able to co-create and share content by engaging in conversations about topics of their interest, characteristics that define functional   engagement (Lim et al, 2015).

Facebook posts, likes, tweets, re-tweets, and so on, are regarded by organisations as part of engagement (Lim et al, 2015) as organisations use such platforms to communicate information on an official public platform and directed to people who are interested in the communication (Zaglia, 2013).

2.3.2 Emotional engagement

According to this approach, TV sport viewers are likely to express their feelings about a sporting event they are watching with the broadcaster and other viewers. Other consumers tend to comment on the post or 'like' it in the context of Facebook (Lim et al, 2015). The level and direction of emotional attachment to a brand can affect the consumption behaviours of the consumers.

2.3.3 Communal engagement

The communal approach argues that viewers engage in social media in order to be part of a particular virtual community with other fans (Hull and Lewis, 2014; Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar, 2015). This has been found to be the second most important reason why TV viewers engage on social media prior to, during and post an event (Lim et al, 2015). These types of viewers are called engaged viewers and play an important role in working as ambassadors for the channel in promoting its brand and offerings. According to the social presence theory, consumers feel the need to express their presence in the virtual community when watching an event, to feel a sense of togetherness with other viewers.

Various researchers have been cited by Smith and Gallicano (2015) in trying to define engagement. Different approaches in the applications came out form each definition, with Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel, (2009) defining it from an experiential perspective as "a collection of experiences" that comprise social media user beliefs about "how a site fits into his or her life". Paek, Hove, Jung, and Cole (2013) also defined the term from the same point of view saying that "engagement is utilitarian and based on social facilitation, civic mindedness, and inspiration". According to these definitions, engagement is about the experience gained by consumers when engaging with brands, organisations, etc. on social media, in this case.

On the other hand, Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) gave their definition from a consumer perspective, arguing that online brand engagement involves positive brand experiences that find their way on the virtual space. To give a more comprehensive and elaborate definition, Oh, Bellur and Sundar (2010) also looked at the term form an experiential perspective as

> *"progression from interacting with the interface physically to becoming cognitively immersed in the content offered by it and then onto proactively spreading the outcomes of this involvement".*

In simpler terms, Smith and Gallicano (2015) defined social media engagement as what people feel about the content of these platforms and the actions they take about it, which may include interacting online.

Other scholars have also contributed their views on the definition of engagement. For instance, traditional media did not allow users to engage with brands in an interactive manner as the message dissemination followed a one-way stream, with consumers playing the role of a receiver. Social media have come to empower consumers by providing platforms where they can interact with brands, (Campbell, Pitt, Parent and Berthon, 2011; Conroy, Feezell and Guerrero, 2012; Shao, 2009; Voorveld, Niejens and Smit, 2011), as well as with fellow consumers, expressing themselves online through the information they share (Kang, 2014; Phillips, 2008).Interaction, according to Habibi et al (2014), refers to the sharing of stories, photos, videos, liking and making comments on related issues in the community page.

Smith (2013) gave engagement a definition form a public relations point of view saying that the term refers to the manner in which the public interact with organisation (brands) and among each other vis-à-vis the message.

Social media users normally engage on social media in order to strengthen their relational associations (Hargittai and Hsieh, 2010), which in turn results in online interactions and support among users (Bennett, Wells and Freelon, 2011; Davis, 2010; Rains and Keating, 2011; Steuber and Solomon, 2011; Waters and Williams, 2011).

Brand loyalty has been discussed by Habibi and Richard as an important phenomenon in brand communities as previous researcher argued that a brand community is a place for loyal consumers of the brand (Habibi and Richard, 2014). The members of the community can offer opinions that may help the brand with improvements. Brand communities can also be helpful in influencing consumers in their consumer behaviours, a point which suggests that positive relationship with a brand can influence the consumers' purchase intentions.

In their study to investigate the impact of brand communities on purchase intentions, brand loyalty and community identification, Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann (2005) found that brand relationship quality has a positive impact on brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Habibi et al (2014) also supports this statement by arguing that consumers with higher engagement levels with brands tend to form stronger bonds with that brand, thus increasing more positive relationships with consumers. This, in turn, helps the organisation in reducing the consumer-to-consumer negative engagement about the brand by managing the conversations.

Engagement on social media comes with certain expectations from the consumer's side. Responsiveness is one of them, where organisations are expected to be responsive in order to engage their customers and stakeholders efficiently. One of the main challenges relates to the fact that assessments of social media usage in organisations tend to be reflected in measures of interaction, for example, the volume of reactions to content published by the organisation (e.g. retweets, likes) or the size of networks formed (e.g. Facebook friends, Twitter followers) (Panagiotopoulos et al, 2015). These measures are then used to assess an organisation's performance in terms of responsiveness.

It is also important to understand that the demographics of the social media users are changing rapidly and re-alignment is crucial for organisations to remain relevant. According to the Oxford Internet Survey in 2013, the age groups 45–64 are growing at the fastest rate on social media, implying a possible steady move by younger users to different networks (Dutton, Blank and Groselj, 2013).

For organisations to be interesting in their engagements with customers or consumers, they need to generate the right content to appeal to the target market. Panagiotopoulos et al. (2015) argued that organisations need to increase the different forms of content, from normal tweets and Facebook posts to visuals, audio and so on, in order to stimulate engagement. Generating content for the sake of it will not help organisations or brands. It has to be interesting enough to attract consumers to engage with, for instance, a campaign, a survey and so on.

From the studies they conducted on the interactions organisations had with consumers, Panagiotopoulos et al (2015) came up with three types of engagements. These were:

- Queries from the public about food-related policies, regulations, eating habits, food storage, transportation and safety; also includes complaints related to eating facilities, food hygiene, labels and expiry dates.
- Reactions and engagement with the organisation's campaigns, news feeds or alerts (including product recalls and allergy warnings).
- Food crises and safety incidents that demand immediate attention and tend to generate significant reaction from consumers.

Engagement on social media can take different forms. In a context of a media campaign, social media users can engage with the campaign by 'liking', re-tweet or comment about it. This acts as a way of recognising the brand and also information sharing by consumers (McConnon et al, 2015; Panagiotopoulos et al, 2015). Facebook, Twitter and blogs were identified by organisations as the most effective means of addressing crises both as sources of information as well as platforms for information sharing (Panagiotopoulos et al, 2015). On Facebook and Twitter, any post identified as a query by the organisation can be acknowledged immediately and later followed by a detailed message to address the problem. On twitter, the query would be addressed within the limited characters or redirected to an email address if the response is beyond the character limits.

To take the engagement to the next level, organisations will attend to conversations on social networks even if they are not directed at them. As long as the complaint relates to them and they feel the need to respond to the query (Panagiotopoulos et al, 2015). In some instances, organisations would intervene on conversations on public forums that promote false information even though the organisation's name is not part of the organisation.

2.4   Brand Image

Brands have been discussed by researchers in the broader marketing discipline, from different approaches. Consumers who possess a similar way of thinking and interest

towards a particular brand normally share certain characteristics that can be used to group them together to form a brand community. Such communities have been described by Zaglia (2013) as characterised by commercial features, making them different from the traditional communities. Members of such communities share similar love for a brand.

Members of a particular brand community often feel the sense of belonging to that group such that leaving the group can be equivalent to leaving a family. For instance, people would say that they have been loyal to a particular brand for some time and leaving would mean that they are detached from the group.

Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) have argued that brands need to develop and maintain positive reputations in order to be successful. The reputation is more than just keeping the consumers satisfied, but has to do with meeting and sometimes exceeding consumers' expectations over time to gain good ratings from customers' evaluations and attract even more. Consumers will trust a brand which they perceive to be credible, which refers to the brand image created and managed over a period of time (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009).

Brands have a significant role to play in creating lasting bonds with customers in order to try and hook them for longer. Customers bring more value to the organisation, the longer they stay with it. Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) supported this statement by arguing that customers who purchase from the same company over time bring in more income and financial sustainability. Having committed customers is a good thing for organisations and brands because it gives some form of stability in terms of the income that can be generated from such customers.

As the bond between an organisation and its customers becomes more solid, disruptions tend to have less impact on the repurchase from the consumers. Commitment from consumers to continue buying from the same organisation despite disruptions in the market or their personal lives suggests a stronger tie which the customer has with the brand or organisation. Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) argued that loyalty grows as a result of the bond created.

The bonds that will lock customers into buying from the same company are normally emotional in nature. Marketers have the responsibility to find ways of ensuring that these bonds are established and strengthened for the organisation to realise more profits going forward. In order to achieve this, Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) suggested that marketers need to take care of three key issues, namely the nature of the emotional brand attachment, antecedent drivers of the emotional attachment as well as distinguish controllable antecedents.

i)   Brand Experience – satisfaction & trust

Various researchers have discussed the influence of brand experience on customers in strengthening relationships. Christodoulides, De Chernatony, Furrer, Shiu, Abimbola, (2006) argued that positive brand experience occurs when negative experiences are surpassed by positive ones through interaction with the brand. Higher brand experience has a positive correlation higher customer satisfaction. It is also argued by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) that positive brand value may lead to brand trust, which improves the possibilities of repeat purchase by customers. From the above discussions, Chinomona (2013) concluded that brand experience positively influences brand satisfaction and trust in South Africa.

ii)   Emotional brand attachment

Theories from various schools of thought have looked at emotional attachment with a brand as one of the factors that influences repurchase behaviours. While other forms of loyalty may be driven by factors like high switching costs from one brand to another, loyalty theories argue that loyalty is a result of the strong ties between customers and brands or organisations (Dick and Basu, 1994; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Oliver, 1999). According to this argument, it is highly crucial for marketers to try and make customers loyal to create a steady income base for themselves.

Grisaffe and Nguyen used Thomson et al.'s (2005) definition of emotional brand attachment which describes the attachment as

"an emotion-laden bond between a consumer and a brand characterized by deep feelings of connection, affection and passion" (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011: 1053).

If consumers feel emotionally attached to an organisation or brand, their commitment to use the same brand or organisation continuously intensifies according to the emotional brand attachment. Zaglia (2013) discussed moral responsibility as one of the factors which cause brand community members to feel morally attached to other members and the community in its entirety.

iii)   Emotional attachment drivers

In terms of the drivers of emotional attachment, psychological bond was identified by Oliver (1999) in Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) as one of the key factors, arguing that this form of attachment involves emotions, affection, admiration as well as dedication (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). If marketers are able to find a place and be top of consumers' minds, their bond with such consumers will be stronger. To support this argument, Meyer and Allen (1997) in Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) argued that emotional attachment has also been proven to be influential in committing employees to a particular employer based on the psychological bond between the two parties. Oliver also emphasised the importance of emotional attachment on customer loyalty, which is the outcome of the relationship (Olver, 1999).

Albert et al (2008) have made a distinction between brand love and brand attachment, with the first one having nothing holding the customer from buying other brands. Attachment creates bondages that are hard to break, either financially or emotionally. Brand love can take place even between a brand and non-customers where the customers just love the brand although they may not consume it. For instance, a consumer can love a certain car brand but not afford to purchase it because of financial constraints. The result will be the customer buying a different and affordable car brand.

iv)   Controllable antecedents

Antecedents which marketers can control have been investigated by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) in their study. A powerful marketing strategy and execution can be used to influence the desired brand attachment from customers, where customer satisfaction, perceived value and brand differentiation help in strengthening the attachment. Other factors that were mentioned by their respondents were good pricing, availability, strong brand image, advertising and so on. Brand name and image also appeared to be important factors in the relationship, with a stronger brand also adding to the creation of stronger bonds with customers.

Marketing communications was also identified as one of the important factors in creating such bonds, which is closely relevant to this study. By engaging with consumers or fans (in this case), organisations want to make their consumers feel that they are not ignored. This goes back to engagement, especially on social media for the purpose of this study.

2.5   Purchase Intention

Purchase intention has been researched in various fields by previous researchers. It is important for this study to investigate some of the factors in the social media environment that could influence consumers' purchase decision making. Developments in the internet have changed the way consumers make their purchase decisions as there are new possible factors nowadays that could have a positive or negative influence on decision-making. It is also important to investigate the role of peer communication on consumer purchase decision making as this might be useful information for brands and organisations in terms of planning their strategies.

In their study to understand factors that influence consumer behaviour, Chinomona and Dubihlela (2014) cited two definitions of repurchase intention. On the one hand, Gounaris, Dimitriadis and Stathakopoulos (2010) defined the term as the willingness by the consumer to purchase products and services from the same supplier over a long time. On the other hand, the term was defined by several researchers (Hsu, 1987; Dodds,

Monroe and Grewal, 1991; Shao, 2009) as the personal decision consumers make following a general assessment on whether to buy products or services. According to this definition, purchasing something for consumers is a process which requires them to evaluate the products and services they are considering buying.

In a study to investigate the purchase intention of environmentally-friendly automobiles, Yusof, Singh and Razak (2013) discovered that various factors such as price, country of origin, corporate credibility, brand, brand awareness, emotional attachment and accessibility and so on, also influence the decision making process. Based on the above discussions, it is important for marketers to incorporate these antecedents of purchase decision making in their marketing strategies in order to have the desired influence on the consumers. If consumers feel that organisations or brands are addressing their issues, trust and attachment towards the brand are likely to strengthen, hence the intention to buy or continue buying the same brand.

The frequency and duration of visit by a consumer to a virtual community has an impact on the extent of influence on that consumer (Valck, 2009). Different consumers have various ways of coming to a decision. As argued by De Bruyn and Lilien (2008), some consumers would seek expert reviews about a particular product before buying if they are deeply involved in the purchase process or perceive the decision as risky. This also goes back to the functional engagement theory's argument that consumers prefer information from sources close and reliable to them (friends, family, experts in the field, etc.).

Social media platforms provide consumers the opportunity to have a voice on their concerns regarding a product or service and this facilitates their decision-making process (Wang et al, 2012). These platforms also work as information sources for consumers during their decision making process. According to Moschis and Churchill (1978), peer socialisation has been understood to be playing an important role in influencing decision-making. Conventional socialisation is a term used by Moschis and Churchill (1978) to refer to the practice through which consumers (e.g. friends, peers, family, and so on) share knowledge and attitudes among themselves through communication, where the

information is then used in their advantage when making purchase decisions (Ward, 1974).

Peer communication, especially through social media, as an influence on consumer decision making has been rarely researched (Iyengar, Han and Gupta 2009; Trusov, Bodapati and Bucklin, 2010) despite Godes and Mayzlin's argument that social media act as a suitable source of information for its users and has shown benefits for companies (Godes and Mayzlin, 2004). This is the main reason Wang et al. (2012) conducted their study to investigate the effect peer communication among consumers has on their attitudes and intentions to purchase products and services.

In their study on the effect of social and traditional media on sales and the performance of a company, Stephen and Galak (2009) found that both marketing platforms had positive effects on consumer attitudes towards brands although traditional media appeared more effective than social media. The theory of reasoned action (TRA) states that attitude is a mixture of communications with regards to the aspects and advantages of a brand. The assumption here is that brand awareness and image affect brand attitude (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). According to the this definition, it is important for organisations to monitor and respond to what consumers say about brands as this might have an impact on the performance of the brand and the organisation as a whole.

Word of mouth has been discussed by Castranovo and Huang (2015) as having power to spread information about products and brands among friends and family. The functional engagement theory (model), according to Lim et al. (2015), refers to the instant interface which social media provides to consumers to produce, analyse and share information among one another. According to this theory, consumer purchases are likely to be influenced by WOM information from friends, family and any other source that is close and reliable to them. Castranovo and Huang (2012) also stressed the importance of the internet in enabling consumers to interconnect and share product and brand information.

Tseng, Kuo, and Chen explained in their study that e-WOM was found to have a lot of influence on consumer purchase intentions regardless of their online community types

(Balakrishnan et al., 2014). The study argued further that a positive e-WOM has a greater impact than traditional advertisements (Balakrishnan et al., 2014; Berger, 2014), which is one of the reasons why companies should encourage their online consumers to share knowledge and experiences with one another to spread the e-WOM. Another motivating factor for organisations to encourage their consumers to engage online is, according to Haron and Razzaque's study in Balakrishnan et al. (2014), consumers can develop online trust through interactions with members in their virtual communities. Companies should monitor these interactions in order to understand their consumers better.

In light of this discussions, Jin (2012) cited in Nadeem, Andreinib, Saloa and Laukkanenca (2015) introduced the concept of online shopping via Facebook, which refers to a customer's engagement on social media to express their willingness to purchase as well as following and liking brands. This study is not going to take this approach as purchasing online is not the aim here, but rather to understand how these online interactions influence the intention to purchase for consumers.

Sin et al (2012) referred to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to investigate the factors which influenced Malaysian young consumers' involvement in online purchase intention in social media. The TRA suggests that

> *"a person's voluntary behaviour is predicted by his or her attitude toward that behaviour and his or her perception of others' beliefs whether he or she should or should not perform that behaviour".*

This theory suggests that consumer purchase behaviour can be influenced by other people surrounding that consumer. This can be peers, family, colleagues and so on (Lim et al, 2015). In this case, engaging with these groups can increase the chances of behavioural change based on the influence exerted by these groups. In 2008, East, Hammond and Lomax (2008) agreed that WOM is mostly the main reason consumers choose brands although it is not clear how positive word of mouth (PWOM) and negative word of mouth (NWOM) influence these choices. However, Balakrishnan et al (2014) argued that positive e-WOM has a direct relationship with consumer intention to purchase and carries

more weight than traditional advertisements. These arguments suggest that consumers would trust information they receive from other consumers closer to them better than any other source. This is an important point on consumer behaviour as it talks to the fact that groups have the power to influence the behaviours of its members.

In a study on online shoppers, Jimenez and Mendoza (2013) argued that shoppers have increasingly relied on e-WOM to communicate with other shoppers while this communication used to happen in a face-to-face fashion before the internet era. Recent studies on the influence of purchase intention by consumers discovered other factors, besides product review ratings, that influence ratings-text congruence (Schlosser, 2011), valence (Lerman, 2007), and the source of the review (Forman, Ghose, and Wiesenfeld, 2008).

King, W. R. and He, J. (2006) mentioned that products with more reviews tend to receive more attentions from consumers. This kind of relationship also depends on the reviewer of the products as De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) argued that experts in a field tend to be the ones who provide reviews, and consumers who perceive a high risk indecision-making or who are deeply involved in the purchasing decision tend to be likely to seek the opinions of others for product advice. Trust comes out as an important factor in consumer behaviour as less trustworthy information sources are unlikely to influence consumer purchase intentions.

The e-WOM has been identified as an influence on several decision makings, including the intention to purchase, levels of trust and loyalty, consumer engagement and so on (King et al., 2006). It was also discovered by King et al that consumers not only seek information through e-WOM during purchase process, but also even if there is no need for a product at that time (King et al., 2006). At times e-WOM can be generated by advertisements to spark conversations on a certain topic to get consumers to engage on those topics. During a purchase decision-making process where the consumer intends to purchase a product or service, positive reviews of the product tend to carry more weight than negative ones unless the consumer was not intending to buy the product, in which case the negative reviews weigh more (King et al., 2006). If the main driver of purchase

decision is to prevent loss for the consumer, negative reviews have more weight than positive ones.

Research on the consumer purchase behaviour has been conducted by various researchers to evaluate factors that influence repurchases, consumer repurchase and shareholder value as well as repurchase and business profitability (Chinomona and Dubihlela, 2014). The results of these studies have shown that consumer repurchase intention can lead to financial gains for the business. It is therefore important for companies to develop their strategies in a manner that will influence consumer repurchase behaviour.

Looking at the factors that influence consumer behaviour, Chinomona and Dubihlela (2014) discovered a series of events that eventually lead to purchase intention. Customer satisfaction with a certain products tends to lead to trust towards that product, which eventually leads to purchase intention. Drawing from De Bruyn and Lilien's (2008) argument that consumers who lack expert knowledge in certain industries tend to seek expert knowledge from sources they trust, it is evident from Chinomona and Dubihlela's arguments that trust may lead to purchase intention.

2.6   Conclusion of Literature Review

Consumer behaviour follows a string of processes before a consumer can reach a decision to purchase a product or service. The steps involved in the purchase decision-making are influenced by a number of factors which have the power to influence how consumers behave.

The TAM has been discussed in relation to its relevance in the purchase decision process by consumers where technology, especially social media, is involved. The development in the communication sector where IMC plays an important role has also been discussed.

E-WOM, engagement and brand identity have been shown to have an impact on the purchase intention. These hypotheses will be tested through a survey that will be

conducted in order to draw informed conclusions. Chapter 3 will focus on the research methodology that was used to collect data.

2.7   Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

2.7.1   *Conceptual Model*

Based on the literature discussed in the preceding sections, a conceptual model of the study being conducted is provided in **figure 2.1** below. Each variable being discussed has been represented in the model while the nature and direction of the hypothesized relationships between variables are represented by the arrows. The section below illustrates the development of each hypothesis based on the available literature.
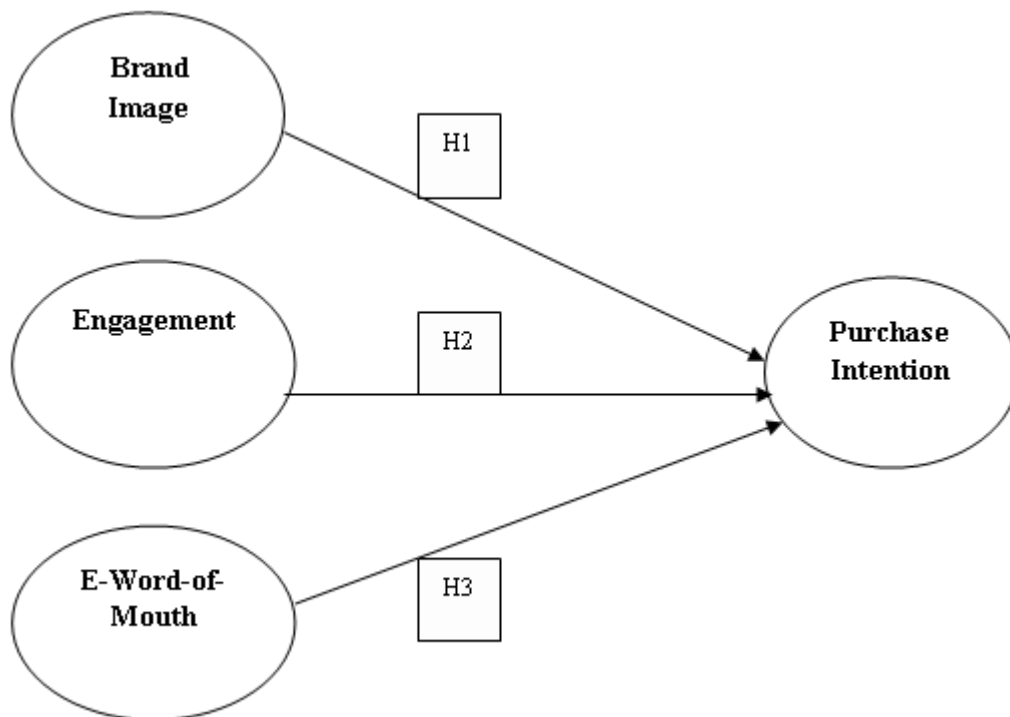
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model

2.7.2 Hypotheses Development

i. **E-WOM – Purchase Intention**

Amongst the different factors which have an impact on consumer behaviour, various researchers in marketing and other consumer behaviour fields have investigated the impact of word of mouth as one of the caus es affecting consumer behaviour, both positively and negatively.

Moschis and Churchill (1978) highlighted peer socialisation as a crucial role-player in impacting consumer decision-making. When consumers (e.g. friends, peers, family, and so on) engage in what Moschis and Churchill termed conventional socialisation, knowledge sharing among the consumers, resulting in the information gathered being factored in when making purchase decisions (Ward, 1974).

The internet has proven to be an important factor towards consumer decision making. Peer communication came up as a strong factor in influencing consumer behaviour, which brand, academics and marketing practitioners need to take note of in their strategic planning. According to Gounaris, Dimitriadis and Stathakopoulos (2010), purchase intention is concerned with the consumer's eagerness to purchase products and services in the future. The discussion was supported in a slightly different way by various researchers (Hsu, 1987; Dodds et al., 1991; Shao et al, 2009) who saw purchase intention as the conclusion a consumer reaches on whether or not to purchase a product or service, based on the customer's assessment (Balakrishnan et al, 2014; Chinomona and Dubihlela, 2014).

The frequency, duration and level of participation in online conversations have an impact on the extent of influence on the consumer in question (Valck, 2009). De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) have argued that consumers who have a deeper involvement with the purchase process place value in seeking expert advice before they can commit to purchasing a product or service. A similar case takes place for consumers who perceive the purchase as risky or too technical for their knowledge. In these and other similar instance, word of mouth plays a crucial role in the direction of the decisions made (King et al., 2006).

Balakrishnan et al (2014) asserted positive e-WOM directly impacted consumer purchase intention, showing more weight over traditional advertisements.

Godes and Mayzlin (2004) argued in favour of social media as a suitable source of information for its users, from which companies benefit in return. This argument was supported by researchers who concluded that peer communication among consumers affects their attitudes and intentions towards purchase intention (Wang et al, 2002; Balakrishnan et al., 2014). Using the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as a foundation for their study, Sin et al (2012) found Malaysian young consumers' purchase intention to be influenced by the consumers' attitudes towards their decisions. Chinomona and Dubihlela's (2014) study concluded that a series of events in involved during a decision making process, where customer satisfaction was seen to influence consumer trust towards a products or service, which eventually leads to the intention to purchase that product or service.

H1: There is a positive relationship between e-word-of-mouth and purchase intention

ii. **Engagement - Purchase Intention**

Organisations that are involved in online or offline engagement with consumers need to consider ways of developing strong bonds with their customer through these engagements (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Ilic, 2011). Various researchers argued that e-tailers give a lot of attention on the effects of consumer engagement trust, attitudes, and loyalty (Bowden, 2009; Leventhal, Hollebeek, and Chen, 2014). Online media become important in facilitating the connection between consumers and brands as well as among consumers who are willing to share information about brands and products.

Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) defined loyalty, brand loyalty in this case, as a positive attitude displayed by consumers towards a brand, coupled with the intention to continue purchasing the product or service. Various researchers concurred that continuous loyalty towards a brand or product is justified by a positive attitude shown by consumers toward the brand (Gruen, Summers and Acito, 2000).

Eargly and Chaiken (1993) disused the tendency to evaluate consumer behaviour in a favourable or unfavourable manner and called this an attitude. Among other factors, this tendency is influenced by trust a consumer shows towards a brand (Limbu, Wolf, and Lunsford, 2012). A positive attitude was found to be influential towards positive feelings, thoughts and consumer decision-making (Bagozzi and Warshaw, 1990). Various researchers also supported this argument by concluding that attitude directly influences behavioural intention, which refers to purchase intention in this case (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Zhang and Kim, 2013).

In the environment where online media are becoming more popular in business, online trust has been viewed as an important facto e-tailors need to consider when establishing strong relationships with consumers (Ruiz-Mafe, Marti-Parreno and Sanz-Blas, 2014). However, the nature of the digital environments poses challenges as far as trust is concerned due to the risks involved (privacy and security) in dealing with the online media. Peer recommendations, through e-WOM in this case, has been proven to be influential in strengthening trust among consumers and thus impacts on consumers' purchase intentions (Kim and Prabhakar, 2000).

H2: The is a positive relationship between engagement and purchase intention

iii. Brand image – Purchase Intention

A study by Blackwell and Miniard (2006) found that brand image is used as an alert for recalling information of brands; therefore brand image may have real and virtual associations in consumers' minds. Consumers try to access tangible and intangible product and/or service associations through the brand image via media channels, thereby gathering market intelligence (Story and Loroz, 2005). Although a brand may not possess intrinsic attraction or generate the trust required to make it sell, customers will buy based on the image associated with it (Rappaport and Stephen, 2007). The development of brand groups on Facebook and their potential for increasing brand awareness has been advanced by the rise of Web.2.0 in the past few years (Chu, 2011).

Brand equity has been clarified as the benefit endowed by the brand to the product (Farquhar, 1989). Aaker (1996) noted that a strong and reputable brand image enables customers to build up affirmative attitudes and feelings about the brand, thus enhancing its perceived value. The power or predominance of the brand image as a result of consumers' attitude towards the product (Faircloth, Capella and Alford, 2001) indicates that consumers' attitudes to brands and different brand affiliations can result in a positive brand image and greater brand equity (Dellarocas, 2003). Brand image and brand equity are mutually interdependent and effectual.

Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) highlighted the need for brands to develop, strengthen and uphold positive relationships with consumers for continued success of the brand. Meeting a consumer's expectation is one level of developing a good image for the brand while exceeding these expectations makes the brand even better. Consumer perceptions about a brand play a crucial role in affecting trust among consumers (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). As argued by Kim and Prabhakar (2000), consumer trust towards a brand has proven to lead to purchase intentions of that brand.

A good brand experience has been proven to strengthen the relationship between a brand and its consumers (Christodoulides, De Chernatony, Furrer, Shiu and Abimbola, 2006). In a separate study, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) concluded that positive brand value accumulated from positive experience can potentially lead to brand trust, and therefore improving chances of repeat purchase by customers. Among influential factors, emotional brand attachment was also identified to have impact on brand trust which takes place due to strong bonds between customers and brands or organisations (Dick and Basu, 1994; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Oliver, 1999). To illustrate the importance of brand attachment, Albert et al (2008) distinguished between brand love and brand attachment. The former, on one hand, does not prevent the consumer from buying other brands, as brand love can happen even though a consumer may not afford the product or service they love. Brand attachment, on the other hand, develops ties that are hard to break, either financially or emotionally.

H3: There is a positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention

2.8   Summary

This chapter discussed the literature covered which is relevant to the variables and relationships being investigated. Literature on E-WOM, Brand Image, Engagement and Purchase Intention, with sub-sections under each variable was discussed. The discussions led to the development of hypotheses to highlight the relationship between the models under investigation as well as the development of the conceptual model based on the hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research Philosophy

Various approaches are used by researchers to conduct studies which they use to provide answers to their research objectives and contribute to the increasing world of knowledge. Prior to selecting the appropriate research approach, Zou, Sunindijo and Dainty (2014) suggested that researchers first need to explain clearly the research philosophy upon which the study will be based in order justify the choice of the approach. This argument was supported by Dibartolo (1998) who argued that researchers are supposed to be cognisance of the research paradigm on which underpins their study.

With the researcher's philosophy being a compass for providing direction in terms of the research techniques and strategies, it is important to understand the difference in these philosophies. Zou et al. (2014) highlighted ontology and epistemology as the two main philosophical approaches in research.

3.1.1   *Ontology*

Ontology, on the one hand, is concerned with whether reality of social entities is or is not independent of the researcher's perceptions and behaviour (Zou et al., 2014). The differing states of independence are referred to as objectivism and constructivism (Zou et al., 2014).

According to Bryman (2008), objectivism suggests that social phenomena take social actors as external truths which they cannot control. Constructivism has a different approach to this, arguing that social phenomena can be influenced and their results are not static.

3.1.2 *Epistemology*

Epistemology on the other hand is concerned with a way of understanding and communicating knowledge in the social world to others. Positivism is one of the epistemological approaches which seeks to apply natural science to understand social reality. According to Petty et al., positivism is seeks to find the truth through a systematic ways where data can be quantified to produce objective results (Petty et al., 2012)

Interpretivism is another epistemological approach which is concerned puts emphasis on having a set strategy to appreciate the differences between objects and human beings. This philosophy argues that knowledge and social truth is subjective to individual interpretations of the social world (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) knowledge should be innate or can be learned (Zou et al., 2014). Zou et al (2014) argued further that researchers in social sciences should understand that any chosen assumption affects data collection and analyses approaches, thus affecting the outcomes of the study. The table below illustrates the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods, with their research philosophies.

Feature	Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Philosophical assumptions	• Objectivism • Positivism	• Constructivism • Interpretivism
Relationship between the researcher and participant	• The possibility and necessity of separating the researcher from the participant	• An interdependence between the researcher and the participant

Research focus	• Finding out numerical qualities of an event or case	• Understanding the nature and essence of events, people, or cases
Research objectives	• Predict, describe, test theory • Tackle macro-issues, using large, random, and • representative samples • Identify general patterns and relationships	• Understanding and theory building • Tend to analyse micro-issues, using small, non-random, and non-representative samples • Interpreting events of significance
Research design	• Deductive • Surveys & experiments	• Inductive • Ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, and narrative
Research methods	• Questionnaires (close-ended questions) • Structured interviews & observations	• Open-ended questions • In-depth interviews • Participant observation
Samples	• Tend to be large, representative samples	• Tend to be small, non-representative samples.
Analysis and findings	• Computerized analysis dominated with statistical and mathematical methods	• Human analysis following computer or human coding • Tend to consider the contextual framework which makes distinction

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	• Clear distinction between facts and judgments • Findings rely heavily on the quality of the data collection instrument • Findings attempt to be comprehensive, holistic and generalized	between facts and judgments less clear • Findings depend on how the researcher can probe deeper during data collection • Findings are seen to be deep, precise, narrow, and not generalized

Source: Zou et al. (2014): Table 3.1: Distinctions between quantitative research and qualitative research

Any chosen assumption about the social phenomena will require the researcher to choose the most appropriate data collection and analysis approach, among quantitative, qualitative and a mixture of the two approaches. Quantitative methods are concerned with the collection of numerical data, linking theory and research through empirical justification, positivism, and objective approach to social phenomena (Zou et al., 2014; Petty et al., 2012).

Surveys and experiments are the main research designs used in quantitative studies where surveys utilise questionnaires, structured observations and interviews to collect data from a clearly defined sample, analysed and the results generalized against the entire population. Experiments are conducted by measuring the impact of a treatment or catalyst on a controlled group or object as compared to an uncontrolled one. This method follows the positivist approach as explained by Petty et al. (2012).

Qualitative research methods are concerned with understanding the factors influencing people's or objects' behaviour. It does not stop its probing at the empirical level, as does the quantitative approach. The three approaches used in qualitative methods give differing views of the truth in social sciences (Zou et al., 2014). The first approach seeks to link theory and research while applying deductive researching to make sense of the social word. The interpretivist epistemological viewpoint, the second approach, puts emphasis

on discovering the truth through the interpretation of social participants. This is supported by other researchers who argued that meaning and the truth has to be arrived at through interpretation by individuals (Dyson and Brown, 2006; Petty et al., 2012). Lastly, the constructivist approach views the social phenomena as being influenced by social interactions (Zou et al., 2014). Ethnography, case studies, grounded theory, narratives and phenomenology are the five forms of conducting qualitative research.

For the purpose of this study, the quantitative approach was adopted as the nature of the study requires the researcher to collect and analyse empirical data. The positivist approach will be the founding philosophy for the study.

3.2   Research methodology/paradigm

In order to conduct any research, there must be a clearly defined research methodology that will outline all the procedures to be followed. It can be a single or mixture of methods. The sections below will outline the procedures that were followed in data collection and analysis. The most appropriate method depends on the approach of the study and the problem that needs to be addressed.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) have defined research methodology as a general plan of how researchers go about finding answers to research question. There are three main types of research approaches that are usually used to conduct research. These are qualitative, quantitative and a mixture of the two methods. Kraus (2005) has described qualitative research, which is sometimes referred to as constructivist and interpretive method (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2014), as one which is concerned with understanding the context of any data collected and analysed. This suggests that the data collected needs to be interpreted in order to solicit the inherent message in responses. In this case, they believe that there is more than one truth in the world. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2014) concurs by saying this method is concerned with deducting, validating, theory testing, explaining, estimating and standard way of gathering data.

Researchers in the quantitative methodology criticize qualitative methods researchers for attaching their emotions, opinions (interpretations), and not distancing themselves from the study. According to this argument, different researchers can get different results from the same data collected using qualitative methods.

Quantitative research method, on the other hand, is a social research method concerned with analysis of data using numerical methods (Zou et al, 2014). Bryman and Bell (2003) also described this method as:

> *entailing the collection of numerical data and as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive, a predilection for a natural science approach (and of positivism in particular), and as having an objectivist conception of social reality.*

Based on this description of the quantitative methodology, it was chosen based on its relevance to the current study.

3.3   Research Design

According to Zou et al (2014), quantitative research comprises of two primary research designs, namely surveys and experiments. Surveys are used to collect numerical data on trends, opinions and attitudes of a population by studying the population sample. Questionnaires, structured interviews and structured observations are forms used for collecting data (Zou et al, 2014).

On the other hand, experiments are used to determine the impact of a specific treatment on the outcome of the experiment. For the purpose of this research, a survey was conducted using a questionnaire distributed to respondents as the collection tool.

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 Target Population

A population is defined as the total number of participants who have been identified as having the predetermined characteristics by the researcher (Kolb, 2008). The population for this study comprised all Orlando Pirates FC fans throughout South Africa from which sample frame and sample size were derived. The main defining characteristics of the population are each member's affiliation with the Orlando Pirates FC as a supporter. Defining the characteristics of the population was necessary to ensure that participants in the study were all Orlando Pirates FC supporters as the study is based on the relationship between the football club as a brand and its supporters.

3.4.2 Sample and sampling method

- **Sampling frame**

Once a target population for a research study has been identified, the researcher takes a step further to look at the sample frame which is defined as the list of population units from which a sample will be drawn for inclusion in the study (Tustin et al., 2010; Santy and Kneale, 1998; Yang et al., 2006). For this study, the sampling frame was a list of all registered Orlando Pirates fans in the Johannesburg area. From this sample frame, the required number of respondents was selected.

- **Sampling size**

A sample size is determined by the nature and objectives of the study. Accuracy and adequacy in determining the size of the sample has an impact on the quality of data collected and the intended outcomes of the study (Singh, 1986; Randall and Gibson, 1990). For the purpose of this study, 260 respondents formed part of the survey, whose data was run on the AMOS software. To minimize the level of errors in sampling, Yang

et al (2006) suggest that the bigger the sample size the smaller the error is likely to occur. This suggests that generalizability of the study outcomes on the entire sampling frame improves.

Table 3.1: Profile of respondents

Respondents description	Size of sample
• Orlando Pirates FC fans in the Sebokeng branch • Have access to and active on social media • Engage on soccer/Orlando Pirates matters on social media	260 respondents

3.5   The research instrument

Research approaches used to determine the required sample comprise two sampling methods, namely, non-probability and probability sampling techniques. Under non-probability sampling, there is theoretical sampling, dimensional sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling, volunteer sampling as well as convenience sampling (Tansey, 2007; Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins and van Wyk, 2010). Probability sampling is made up of simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, stage sampling, cluster sampling and multiphase sampling (Tustin et al., 2010; Tansey, 2007). Each of these above sampling methods was described by Tustin et al. (2010) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) as follows;

•   In a simple random sampling, all subjects have an equal opportunity of being picked up for the survey. The probability of being selected into the survey is known.

- In systematic sampling, subjects are selected using a pre-defined system. This happens after a random start. Selecting the other participants follows a system. For instance, every 4th on the subject can be selected following the initial random start.

- In stratified sampling, the population is separated into groups or strata from which a random sample is drawn. This method ensures that each group within the population is represented.

- In cluster sampling, the population is divided into subgroups or clusters, each of which represents the entire population. This usually happens when the population is too geographically dispersed.

- Multistage sampling works as a continuation from previous sampling methods the sample is drawn from existing samples or through a multistage process.

Upon getting the list of all the members of the supporters' branch, each member was given an equal opportunity to participate in the survey to eliminate any bias in the findings. As described above, the simple random sampling method was used as a probability sampling method (Bryman, 2012). Morrison argued that a sampling method plays a crucial role in influencing the accuracy and quality of the study (Morrison, 1993).

Questionnaire in a research design helps in searching for the desired form of answers that will be measurable when it comes to data analysis. The language or languages used in the questionnaire needs to be easy to understand by the respondents (Endacott, Benbenishty and Seha, 2010). This study used questionnaire written in simple English to allow respondents to answer without any need for clarity, as this was a self-administered survey.

The questionnaire was designed so that respondents could be more specific with their answers. Five sections were used, with Section Asking for respondents' demographic information. Sections B, C, D and E investigate the variables for the study, i.e. Brand Image, Engagement, e-Word-of-Mouth and Purchase Intention.

To widen the range and weighting of respondent feedback or response to each research instrument in sections B, C, D and E, a 7-point Likert scale was utilised, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Responses to instruments were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS and AMOS. The research instruments that were used to collect data and the previous research form which they were adapted are shown in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Variables, instruments and sources

Research Constructs		Measurement items as adapted	Source
Brand Image	BI1	The products of this brand have a high quality	Salinas, E.M. and Pérez, J.M.P. (2009), "Modelling the brand extensions' influence on brand image", Journal of Business Research, Vol. 62 No. 1, pp. 50–60
	BI2	The products of this brand have better characteristics than competitors	
	BI3	The products of the competitors' brand are usually cheaper	
	BI4	This brand is nice	
	BI5	This brand has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors	
	BI6	This brand does not disappoint its customers	
	BI7	This brand is one of the best brands in the sector	

	BI8	This brand is very consolidated in the market	
Engagement	ENG1	I'm interested in using Facebook to get updates about Orlando Pirates	Nadeem et al., (2015) – engaging consumers online through websites and social media: A gender study of Italian Generation Y clothing consumers
	ENG2	I'm interested in using Facebook to browse my information about Orlando Pirates	
	ENG3	I'm interested in using Facebook for browsing upcoming Orlando Pirates matches	
	ENG4	I am interested in utilizing Facebook for searching Orlando Pirates news	
	ENG5	I am interested in using Facebook to refer to consumer reviews about Orlando Pirates	
E-Word-of-Mouth	E-WOM1	I recommend Orlando Pirates to my connections	Goyette et al, 2010) –e-WOM Scale: Word-of-Mouth Measurement Scale fore-Services Context
	E-WOM2	I speak of Orlando Pirates' good side	
	E-WOM3	I'm proud to be say I'm an Orlando Pirates supporter	
	E-WOM4	I recommend people to watch Orlando Pirates at stadiums	

	E-WOM5	I often say positive things about the Orlando Pirates	
	E-WOM6	I have said positive things about Orlando Pirates	
Purchase Intention	PI1	Given the chance, I intend to purchase a ticket to watch Orlando Pirates matches at the stadium	Abzari et al, 2014) - Analysing the effect of social media on brand attitude and purchase intention: the case of Iran Khodro company.
	PI2	It is likely that I will likely purchase a ticket to watch Orlando Pirates matches in future	
	PI3	I expect to purchase a ticket to watch Orlando Pirates matches at the stadium	

3.6   Procedure for data collection

Potential respondents for this survey were identified and briefed on the purpose of the research and to assure them of the confidentiality of the data collected. This is a necessary step to go through in a self-administered survey.

According to Bryman (2012), self-administered questionnaire has the following advantages, although these are not all it has;

Table 3.3: Pros and cons of self-administered questionnaire

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Cheap to administer • Quicker to administer • No interviewer interference • Can be completed at respondent's convenience	• Low response rate • Researcher cannot probe respondents for further details • Respondents cannot probe if unclear

In order to address some of the issues or disadvantages such as response rate, the researcher was present at the venue where respondents were completing the surveys. To ensure non-interference with the process, the survey did not help any participant to complete the survey as the briefing session was meant to address any issues for the respondents.

3.7   Data analysis approach

3.7.1   Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) *

Based on the hypothesized relationships between the variables in the conceptual model and the nature of the study, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilized to analyse the data. Recently, various researchers have shown increasing interest in SEM as a powerful tool in the field of quantitative research (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Nusair and Hua, 2010).

Various researchers have described SEM as a technique which is mainly applied to studies that have to deal with relationships between observed and latent variables, which collectively make up a model (Qureshi and Kang, 2015; Suhr, 2006; Hoyle, 1995). This statistical technique is multivariate in nature and is therefore able to measure the causal latent constructs identified using factor analysis. According to Suhr, the SEM is

responsible for both variation and covariation of the variables which are measured in the model (Suhr, 2006; Nusair and Hua, 2010). The two main objectives of SEM are:

- *To understand variation/covariation trends among certain variables*
- *To use the model, specified to explain the level of variance between the variables being measured (Kline, 1998)*

Besides its similarities to regression analysis, SEM's success is attributed to its ability to consider measurement error while evaluating causal relationships between constructs. A summary of the pros of this technique is as follows:

- *It allows for the approximation of a series and multiple regression equations simultaneously (Nusair and Hua, 2010; Bacon, 1997)*

- *It has the capability to incorporate latent variables into the analysis, and accounts for measurement errors in the approximation process (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and William, 1998; Suhr, 2006; Nusair and Hua, 2010)*

- *SEM is a statistical approach that establishes measurement models and structural models to address intricate behavioural relationships (Nusair and Hua, 2010; Washington, Karlaftis and Mannering, 2003).*

- *This model differs from traditional statistical methods in that the latter only measures observed variables while the former measures, besides observed, unobserved variables too. This is important, according to Bacon, as most marketing variables are latent. For instance, brand loyalty could be measured using latent variables such as intention to purchase the brand, willingness to recommend the brand to others as well as customers perceptions about the brand (Bacon, 1997).*

The SEM analysis was carried out employing a two-phase approach (Anderson and Gerbing, 1998; Hair et al., 1998). On the one hand, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine the competence of the measurement model (Nusair and Hua, 2010). The CFA comes from Spearman's 1904 description of factor analysis in an attempt to identify causal constructs (Violato and Hecker, 2007), which later led to the emergence

of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) method. Researcher built further from the EFA until the confirmatory factor analysis came into existence, as it is known today.

The CFA is responsible for allowing researchers to model a priori to explain how measured variables identify unobserved variables. Researchers are able to use CFA to model latent variables without any errors, as this method is able to pick up any variability in a measured variable which is linked to the unobserved construct (Violato and Hecker, 2007). As a SEM measurement model, the CFA is responsible for outlining the fundamental link between underlying hypothetical constructs and indicators.

Construct and item reliabilities were both tested (Nusair and Hua, 2010). On the other hand, convergent and discriminant validities were also checked to ensure construct validity, before the measurement model was evaluated and completed the construct (Nusair and Hua, 2010). This was the first phase of the SEM analysis.

The second phase of the analysis involved the goodness-of-fit indices (NFI, RFI, IFI, RMSEA, CFI and NFI) which were used to measure the model fit for measurement and structural model (Hair et al., 1998; Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Nusair and Hua, 2010).

Figure 3.1: Data analysis approach

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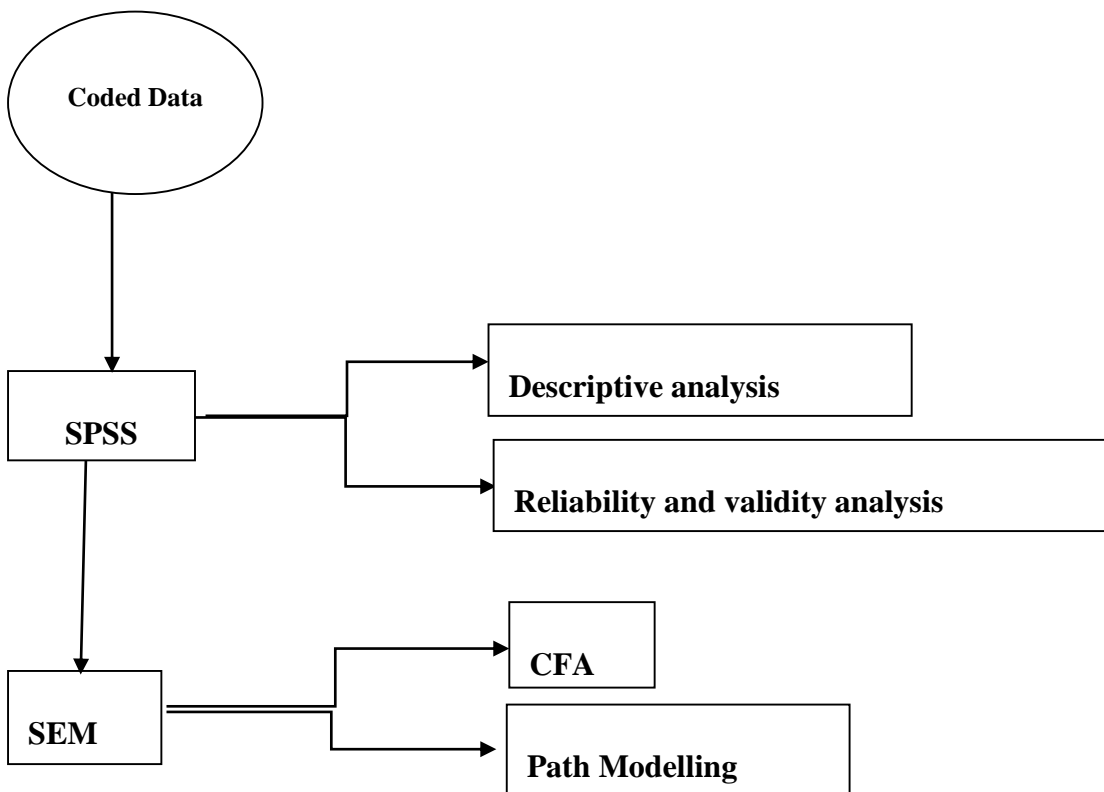
3.7.2   Data Cleaning and Coding

Upon collection of all responses from the survey, the data was captured into an excel spreadsheet with each response having its own row. The data was then checked for any incorrect or missing information. To present the data in a format that would be easy to run on the SPSS 22 and AMOS 22 programmes, numerical codes were assigned to each response provided (coding) (Lethbridge, Sim and Singer, 2005).

3.8   Limitation of the study

For the purpose of this study, there were some limitations which guided the approach and extent of the investigation. This study only focussed on the impact of e-WOM, engagement on Facebook and brand image of Orlando Pirates FC on the fans' intention to purchase soccer match tickets. The Orlando Pirates FC fans and Facebook page was the focus of this study, with Orlando Pirates FC Sebokeng branch fans being the subject of the study.

3.9   Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology applied in this study. The research paradigm, research design, sampling design, research instrument, data collection and data analysis approach were the main sections covered in this chapter while their sub-sections were used to provide detailed discussions of the each section. The actual research instrument, as adopted from previous researchers, was also provided in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4. Presentation of results

4.1 Introduction

Having collected and screened the data, this chapter seeks to present the data as run on the SPSS and AMOS programmes and provide necessary interpretation. The numbers will not have any clear meaning without the right interpretation, which will help the researcher to validate the hypothesized relationships between variables or constructs. This will also help the researcher meet the research objectives as set out in the first chapter. The layout of the chapter consists of four parts, namely, descriptive data (with graphic representations), validity and reliability testing as well as confirmatory factor analysis results.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics using SPSS

To present the data in a descriptive format, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to display responses to each variable quantitatively (Landau and Everitt, 2004).

Descriptive statistics is employed by researchers in order to summarise the information collected during the survey into short and easy-to-follow quantitative data (Burns and Bush, 2006). Hsu and Shine added that ddescriptive statistics is used to establish general trends in the data collected for a study (Hsu and Shine, 2007). Tustin et al (2010) also mentioned the purpose of descriptive statistics as to:

- Provide present preliminary insights of the data collected.
- Help researchers to identify possible errors during data capturing and coding.
- Present the data in tabular and graphic forms to make it easier to read.
- To test the satisfaction of statistical tests subsequent to the study.

Demographic profiles such as gender, age groups, academic qualifications, marital status and so on, were represented graphically using the SPSS software.

4.2.1   Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 260 respondents participated in the survey. The data collected was run on the SPSS programme to produce the summarised information as shown in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1: Demographic profiles of respondents

	Demographic	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	147	56.5	56.5
	Female	113	43.5	100
	Total	**260**	**100**	
Marital status	Married	112	43.1	43.1
	Single	148	56.9	100
	Total	**260**	**100**	
Age	17yrs/less	5	1.9	1.9
	18-25yrs	66	25.4	27.3
	26-35yrs	133	51.2	78.5
	36-45yrs	27	10.4	88.8
	45yrs+	29	11.2	100
	Total	**260**	**100**	
Qualification	High School	74	28.5	28.5
	Diploma	63	24.2	52.7
	Degree	85	32.7	85.4
	Postgrad	35	13.5	98.8
	Other (specify)	3	1.2	100
	Total	**260**	**100**	
Occupation	Student	10	3.8	3.8
	Employed	172	66.2	70
	Self-employed	64	24.6	94.6
	Unemployed	12	4.6	99.2
	Other (specify)	2	0.8	100
	Total	**260**	**100**	

The sample was made up of 147 male respondents who represented 56.5% of the sample while females made up the remaining 43.5%. The marital status of the sample was split between 112 (43.1%) married and 148 (56.9%) single respondents.

Over half of the respondents fell within the 26-35 years age group (51.2%), followed by 18-25 year olds (25.4%). The 17-years or less, 36-45 years and 46+ years groups made up 1.9%, 10.4% and11.2% respectively. This shows that respondents below the age of 18 years formed a bare minimum of the sample.

32% of the respondents said they had completed a degree, followed by 28.5% who said they had completed high school education. 24.2%, 13.5% and 1.2% said they had a diploma, postgraduate degree and other (none of the options provided), respectively.

Employed respondents made up 66.2% of the total sample, followed by self-employed respondents at 24.6%, then unemployed (4.6%), students (3.8%) and other (0.8%) respectively.

4.3   Summary of item scale results

Below is a discussion of the results for each of the items that were used during the survey. Each item consists of a table and graphic representation of the results. The measurement scale was a 7-likert scale which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The middle part of the scale was neutral; in which case it would mean the respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with the item statement. Strongly disagree, disagree and slightly disagree, collectively make up the negative perception the respondent had towards the brand based on the item. These three options fall on the negative side of the Likert scale, reflecting the respondent's unfavourable feeling towards the brand.

The opposite is true with the right hand side of the Likert scale which is made up of slightly agree, agree and strongly agree. These three options collectively reflect on a positive perception the respondent had towards the brand based on the measurement item. Each option reflects on the intensity of negative or positive perception towards the brand.

The tables and graphs for portraying the results have been put at the appendices section and will be referred to during the discussions. Brand Image results are in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2; Engagement in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3; E-Word-of-Mouth in Table 4.4 Figure 4.4 and Purchase Intention in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 in the appendices section.

4.3.1   Brand Image

i)   BI1 – The products of this brand have high quality

A total of 209 respondents mentioned that products of Orlando Pirates as a brand were of high quality. A further 33 respondents strongly agreed with the statement while only one slightly agreed. This brings the total of respondents agreeing with the statement to 243. The four respondents who made up 1.4% of the total survey felt that the quality of the brand's products was similar to those of its rivals.

ii)   BI2 – The products of this brand have better characteristics than competitors

A total of 249 respondents collectively agreed that Orlando Pirates' products had better characteristics than those of their rivals. A total of 212 respondents fell on the agree segment, followed by 26 on the strongly agree and 11 who slightly agreed. The neutral segment represented those respondents who felt that the Pirates products had characteristics which were on the same level as those of its rivals.

iii)   BI3 – The products of the competitors' brand are usually cheaper

When comparing the price of Orlando Pirates products, including team jerseys, flags, etc., a total of 201 respondents sat on the neutral segment. This indicated that the respondents felt that the Orlando Pirates products were priced similarly to those of its rivals. The remainder of the respondents were split between those who thought the products were more expensive (21) and those who though were less expensive (38) than those of its competitors.

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iv)   BI4 – This brand is nice

As the survey was targeted at Orlando Pirates fans, it was not surprising that a combined total of 253 respondents said the Orlando Pirates brand was nice. This figure was spread across slightly agree (3), agree (170) as well as strongly agree (80).   Only 2 of the respondents felt that the Orlando Pirate brand was not nice, which is less than 1% of the responses collected.

v)   BI5 – This brand has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors

One hundred and ninety-five (75%) respondents agreed that the Orlando Pirates brand had a distinguished personality from those of its rivals. This was followed by 57 (21.92%) respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. Only two (0.77%) respondents disagreed with this statement.

vi)   BI6 - This brand does not disappoint its customers

As a brand, Orlando Pirates had 101 (38.9%) respondents who could neither agree nor disagree with the statement that the brand did not disappoint it fans. A total 57 (21.9%) respondents felt disappointed with the brand, especially based on the team's performance around the data collection period. This was however cancelled out by 102 (39.2%) who agreed with the statement.

vii)   BI7 - This brand is one of the best brands in the sector

A total of 250 (96.2%) respondents agreed that Orlando Pirates was one of the best brands in its sector. This figure was made up by 186 (71.5%) who agreed, 58 (22.3%) who strongly agreed and six (2.3%) who slightly agreed. Only five (1.9%) of the respondents were undecided on this item.

viii)   BI8 - This brand is very consolidated in the market

A total of 252 (96.9%) agreed that Orlando Pirates was a much consolidated brand in the market. Out of this number, 153 (58.9%) agreed with the statement while 92 (35.4%) and seven (2.7%) strongly agreed and slightly agreed, respectively.

4.3.2 Engagement

i) **ENG1 - I'm interested in using Facebook to get updates about Orlando Pirates**

One hundred and forty eight (56.9%) respondents declared their interest on using Facebook to get updates about Orlando Pirates. This was followed 38 (14.6%) who slightly agreed and 23 (8.9%) who strongly agreed. A combined total of 35 (13.5%) respondents declared their disinterest in engaging on Facebook for a similar activity.

i) **ENG2 - I'm interested in using Facebook to browse my information about Orlando Pirates**

A total of 212 (81.5%) agreed that they were interested in using facing to browse information about Orlando Pirates. This figure was made up of 160 (64.5%) who slightly agreed, 35 (13.5%) and 17 (6.5%) who strongly agreed. A total of 32 (12.3%) disagreed with the statement.

ii) **ENG3 - I'm interested in using Facebook for browsing upcoming Orlando Pirates matches**

To browse information on upcoming Orlando Pirates matches, 153 (58.9%) declared their moderate interest, followed by 41 (15.8%) with slight interest and 18 (6.9%) with strong interest. About 29 (11.2%) respondents showed no interest at all.

iii) **ENG4 – I am interested in utilizing Facebook for searching Orlando Pirates news**

To search for news about Orlando Pirates, 149 (57.3%) were keen to use Facebook, followed by 39 (15%) who were slightly keen and 23 (8.9%) strongly keen. This was in comparison to a total of 31 (11.9%) who were not keen at all

iv) ENG5 - I am interested in using Facebook to refer to consumer reviews about Orlando Pirates

One hundred and forty-five (55.8%) of the consumers were moderately interested in using consumer reviews about Orlando Pirates on Facebook, followed by 37 (14.2%) who were strongly interested and 30 (11.5%) who declared slight interest. In contrast, 31 (11.9%) were not interested at all.

4.3.3 E-Word-of-Mouth

i) EWOM1 - I recommend Orlando Pirates to my connections

Out of the 260 respondents, 166 (64%) agreed that they recommended Orlando Pirates to their Facebook connections. A further 80 (31%) of the respondents strongly agreed to this statement, making the agree section a 95% combined majority. The remainder of the responses was share between strongly disagree (2%), disagree (2%) and slightly disagree (0.4%). These results indicate that Orlando Pirates supporters are will to invite more people to be part of the club's fan base, which is good for the club. Based on literature, this shows the power of word or mouth, which sees consumers referring the Orlando Pirates FC brand to their networks.

ii) EWOM2 - I speak of Orlando Pirates' good side

One hundred and sixty four (63%) of the entire respondents moderately agreed that they speak of the good side of Orlando Pirates as their tea of choice, followed those who strongly agreed to the statement (31%) and 2% who slightly agreed. Those who disagree made up the remaining 4% combined.

iii) EWOM3 - I'm proud to be say I'm an Orlando Pirates supporter

A total of 175 (67%) respondents strongly agreed that they were proud to be Orlando Pirates fans, followed by 70 (27%) who moderately agreed and only 4% of the respondents expressed the opposite.

iv) EWOM4 - I recommend people to watch Orlando Pirates at stadiums

One hundred and fifty two (59%) respondents moderately agreed that they encouraging their networks to watch Orlando Pirates FC matches at the stadium, followed by ninety one (35%) who strongly agreed. Overall, 96% of the respondents agreed to the statement with less than 4% who disagreed.

v) EWOM5 - I often say positive things about the Orlando Pirates

One hundred and sixty moderately agreed that they often spoke positively about Orlando Pirates FC, followed by 32% (81) who strongly agreed and 4% (9) slightly agreed to this statement. Slightly over 3% of the respondents opposed the statement.

vi) EWOM6 - I have said positive things about Orlando Pirates

One hundred and sixty respondents (62%) moderately agreed to have spoken positively about Orlando Pirates FC, followed by eighty seven (34%) who strongly agreed. Those who disagreed made up just above 3% of the total.

4.3.4 Purchase Intention

i) PI1 - Given the chance, I intend to watch Orlando Pirates matches at the stadium

One hundred and fifty one (58%) of the respondents moderately said they intended to purchase tickets for Orlando Pirates FC matches, followed ninety six (37%) who strongly agreed and only 3% disagreed with the statement.

ii) PI2 - It is likely that I will watch Orlando Pirates matches in future

One hundred and fifty three (59%) respondents moderately expressed their likelihood to purchase match tickets for Orlando Pirates games, followed by ninety four (36%) who felt strongly about the statement while only a total of 3% expressed the unlikelihood of this happening in the future.

iii)   PI3 - I expect to watch Orlando Pirates matches at the stadium

A total of two hundred and forty five respondents (95%) agreed that they expected to purchase tickets for Orlando Pirates FC matches in the future. This figure was split among those who moderately agree (53%), strongly agreed (40%) and slightly agreed (2%). Only 3% of the respondents contradicted the statement.

4.4   Validity and reliability measurements

Table 4.6 below, presents data from the validity and reliability assessments as conducted. These results will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Table 4.6: Measurement of validity and reliability

Research constructs		Mean	Std. Deviation	Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE	Item loadings
Brand Image	BI1	5.89	1.004	0.461				0.549
	BI2	5.89	0.929	0.402				0.524
	BI4	6.23	0.664	0.561	0.93	0.78	0.42	0.660
	BI5	6.16	0.604	0.568				0.697
	BI7	6.09	0.778	0.577				0.767
	BI8	6.24	0.779	0.612				0.653
Engagement	ENG1	5.29	1.470	0.582				0.962
	ENG2	5.34	1.364	0.595				0.951
	ENG3	5.32	1.368	0.607	0.93	0.98	0.91	0.977
	ENG4	5.33	1.413	0.599				0.944
	ENG5	5.43	1.454	0.619				0.933
E-Word-of-Mouth	EWOM1	6.10	1.099	0.819				0.908
	EWOM2	6.12	0.983	0.791		0.96	0.80	0.907
	EWOM3	6.47	1.123	0.795				0.843

	EWOM4	6.16	1.004	0.826				0.893
	EWOM5	6.13	0.966	0.802				0.914
	EWOM6	6.17	0.965	0.773				0.903
					0.92			
Purchase Intention	PI1	6.20	1.002	0.786				0.984
	PI2	6.19	1.013	0.763	0.92	0.95	0.93	0.953
	PI3	6.16	1.160	0.672				0.834

4.5   Assessment of measurement instruments

Measurement in social research is an important step during research as it allows the researcher to understand the relationship between the empirically grounded indicator and the underlying unobservable concept (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Based on the above definition, reliability is concerned with the extent to which an experiment or any measuring procedure yields similar results upon repeated trials (Carmines and Zeller, 1979).

According to Tustin et al (2010), the term validity applies to instruments that measure the extent to which score differences on the measurement reflect the exact differences among individuals, groups or situations they are measuring. Validity puts more consideration on the accuracy of the measurement used (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002).

To measure the acceptability of a measurement instrument, it is important to measure the reliability of the measurement tool. Reliability has been defined as "the measure of data collection techniques or analysis procedure's ability and extent to yield consistent findings" (Wadsworth, H. M. Stephens, K. S. and Godfrey, A. B., 2002). Dusick (2011) supported this argument by saying that reliability refers to the extent to which the measurement instruments consistently and accurately measure what they are meant to. Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability Index (CRI) were utilised to test reliability of the measurement tools. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was undertaken to check the reliability of the measurement items and the internal uniformity of the research

constructs. To determine the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values, the SPSS and AMOS software packages were utilised.

Validity is used by researchers to investigate whether the research instruments function well in measuring what they are intended to measure (Bryman, 2012; Budiman and Wijaya, 2014). Convergent and discriminant validities were employed to check the uniqueness and distinctness of the measurement items (Bryman, 2012).

4.5.1 Measurement instruments validity

According to Bryman (2012), validity is used by researchers to assess the accuracy of research instruments in measuring what they are meant to measure. Discriminant and convergent validities make up the construct validity.

i)   Convergent Validity

Sarstedt, Ringle, Smith, Reams and Hair (2014) argued that for convergent validity to occur, there must be a certain degree to which a construct comes together in its indicators by explaining the variance of the measurement items. A minimum AVE value for each construct has to be not less than 0.5 in order for convergent validity to be considered adequate (Yang and Lai, 2010). For this study, the values ranged from 0.419 to 0.819, which is acceptable. A figure that is slightly below 0.5 could be accepted, according to (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), provided that the composite reliability value is above 0.6. This will make convergent validity of the construct adequate. Measurement items which measure the same construct have to be related while those measuring different constructs are expected to differ (Peter, 1981).

Based on the factor loadings, any value that is greater than 0.5 signifies convergent validity. The values ranged from 0.524 and 0.984.

ii)   Discriminant Validity

The measure of distinctiveness among measurement items is referred to as discriminant validity. The items have to be varied in such a way that the average variance extracted for

each construct is greater than the correlation between the constructs involved in the model, all squared (Malhotra, 1996; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nusair and Hua, 2010).

i) Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix

Table 4.7: Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix

	BI	ENG	EWOM	PI
BI	1			
ENG	0.219**	1		
EWOM	0.881**	0.366**	1	
PI	0.730**	0.382**	0.784**	1

Previous writers have argued that the value of correlation between variables, high or low, directly signifies the relationship between the variables involved. A higher value signifies a stronger relationship and the opposite is true for a lower value (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). Any value below zero signifies a negative relationship, with values closer to -1 signifying a stronger negative relationship (Grace, 2006; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). For this study, all variables were positively correlated and significant at a 0.01 (1%) confidence level, as shown in Table 4.7 above.

4.5.2 Measurement Instruments Reliability

To verify the trustworthiness of the research measures, the composite reliability test (CR), Cronbach's alpha test (Cronbach α) and average variance extracted (AVE) test were conducted. As mentioned by Dusick (2011), composite reliability has a coefficient greater

than that of a Cronbach's alpha which is 0,6. This figure suggests that the research instrument's reliability is marginally acceptable.

i) Composite Reliability

Based on Yang and Lai's (2010) argument, the composite reliability value must not be less than 0.7 in order to be accepted when analysing reliability and determining internal consistency of constructs (Hair et al., 2006). The formula below was used to calculate the CR value:

(CR): CRη = (Σλyi) 2/ [(Σλyi)2+ (Σεi)]

The formula says: Composite Reliability = (square of the sum of the factor loadings)/ {(square of the sum of the factor loadings) + (sum of error variances)}. The resulting values for the composite reliability ranged from 0.810 to 0.977.

ii) Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Shared Variance (SV)

The evaluation of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) yielded values ranging from 0.419 to 0.934. The formula used to calculate these vales was:

AVE = Vη=Σλyi2/ (Σλyi2+Σεi), which states that: (Summation of the squared of factor loadings)/ {(summation of the squared of factor loadings) + (summation of error variances)

According to Chinomona (2011), 0.5 (as supported by Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) is taken as the threshold for basic research while exploratory research uses   as   its threshold. Although 0.419 is below the suggested threshold, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that 0.4 can be accepted based on condition that composite reliability figure is above 0.6, therefore making convergent validity of that construct adequate. In this instance, the brand image had a CR value of 0.78 and an AVE value of 0.419, which is acceptable according to Fornell and Larcker (1981).

iii)   Cronbach's Alpha Test

The Cronbach's alpha is a measurement tool used by researchers to assess the internal consistency of a measurement scale. The test results are represented by a value ranging from 0 to 1 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011) where Chinomona argues that a higher Cronbach's coefficient alpha's value reflects more reliability of the measurement scale (Chinomona, 2011).

Table 4.8: Reliability test criteria, description for each criteria and the acceptance level for each criteria

Reliability test criteria	Description	Level of acceptance	Reference
Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency of items' coefficient	Value must be equal to or greater than 0.7	Bland and Altman (1997).)
Composite reliability (CR)	When measuring internal consistency of the measurement model	Value must be equal to or greater than 0.7	Hair el al (2006)
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Reliability and validity of items' measurement tools	Value must not be less than 0.5	Fraering and Minor (2006)

4.6   Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): Model and Model Fit assessment

4.6.1   Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Figure 4.6 is the CFA model which was used to arrive at the results as presented in Table 4.9. The oval or circular shapes on the model represent the latent or unobserved variables while the rectangular shapes represent the observed variables. The measurement errors on the model are represented by the smaller circular shapes attached adjacent to the

observed variables while the double-headed arrows between latent variables represent the relationships between the two variables involved.

Figure 4.6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
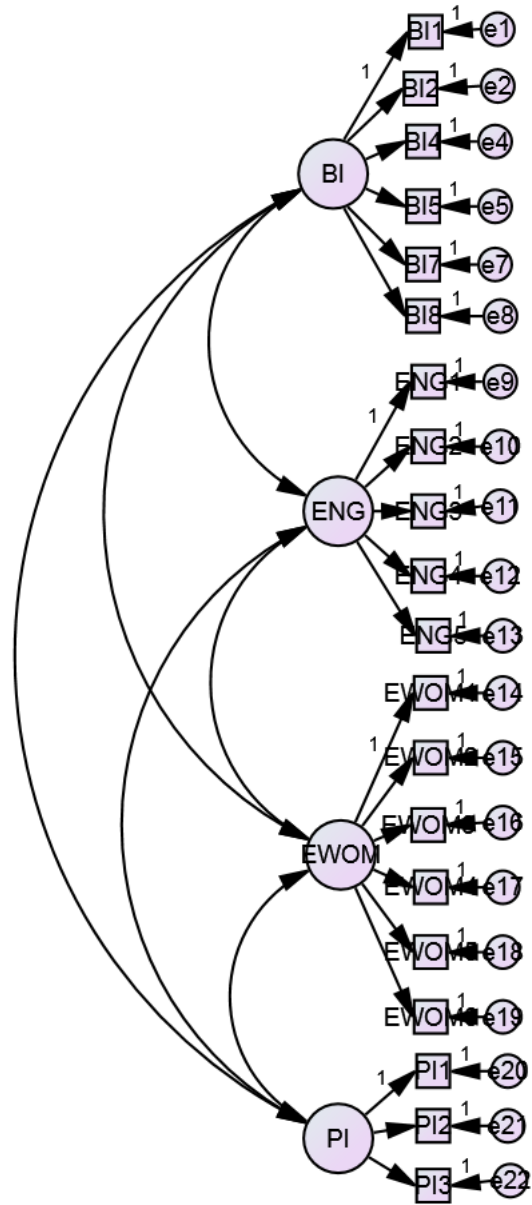
4.6.2   Model Fit/Acceptability

Various researchers have argued that a model fit assessment has to be conducted in order to determine the extent to which the model represents the sample. Schumacker and Lomax (2004) argued that confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) fit indices do not possess any single statistical test of importance which identifies any proper model given the sample data. The reason behind this argument is that there can be alternative models which are capable of producing similar results as the model fit. To ensure consistency in model fit, using a combination of criteria is recommended (Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008).

To hypothesize about the constructs measured by the test in question, the researcher has to apply the confirmatory factor analysis, which is an analytical tool that also offers an empirical basis for quantifiable interpretation (Burton, Ryan, Axelrod, Schellenberger and Richards, 2003). To get the standard weights from the run, the CFA provided values for each component of the model fit as represented in the Table 4.9 below and corresponding discussions subsequently.

Table 4.9: CFA Model Fit Results

Model Fit criteria	Chi-square (χ^2 /DF)	GFI	NFI	RFI	TLI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Indicator value	2.277	0.901	0.956	0.935	0.963	0.975	0.976	0.070

i)   Chi-square (χ^2 /DF)

Nevitt and Hancock (2000) mentioned that the chi square fit statistic is a tool that researchers use in order to determine a hypothesis of how well the proposed model fit the population. This argument was supported by Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2008) who

described the Chi-Square value as a traditional measure for model fit, where the extent of discrepancy between fitted and sample covariance matrices are evaluated. One of the limitations associated with this index has to do with its sensitivity towards sample size. The Chi-Square statistic mostly rejects the model if the sample size is too large (Hooper et al., 2008). On the other hand, samples sizes that are too little do not afford the Chi-square the power to distinguish between good and bad fitting models. For this value to be acceptable, it should be below three (3), which is the case above (2.277), as recommended by Chinomona (2011).

ii)   Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)

In order to determine the variance proportion accounted for by the covariance of the population, Joreskog and Sorbon developed the GFI as an alternative to the Chi-Square (Hooper et al., 2008). The purpose of the goodness of fit index is to indicate a satisfactory level of the model fit, where its value ranges between 0-1 (Cheung and Rensvold, 2002). For a reasonable measurement of the fit, a general agreement is that the GFI has to be greater or equal to 0.90 to be acceptable (Bollen, 1990). For this study, as shown in the Table 4.9, the value was 0.903. Sample size also affects the GFI value where larger, in case of a lower factor loadings and sample size, an acceptable vale for cut-off is 0.95 as opposed to 0.90 as mentioned above.

iii)   Normed Fit Index (NFI)

This statistic is meant to measure the inconsistency between the chi-squared value of the null model and the chi-squared value of the hypothesized model (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). The general consensus is that the NFI value needs to be greater than 0.90 to be acceptable (Hu and Bentler, 1999). It was 0.953 for this study. Hooper et al (2008) identified the limitation of this statistic is its sensitivity to sample size where fit for samples below 200 is undermined.

iv)   Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)

The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is meant to deal with sample size matters which are linked to the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The acceptability of this measure depends on a value that is equal to or greater than 0.9 (Hooper et al., 2008; Chinomona, 2011). In this study, the value is 0.961.

v)   Incremental Fit Indices (IFI)

To deal with issues of parsimony and sample size, which was known to be associated with the NFI, Bollen (1989) introduced the IFI. Chinomona (2011) suggested that the acceptable value for IFI in the model is greater or equal to 0.9, which was 0.974 in this study. These indices use the Chi-Square by comparing it to a baseline model, hence they are normally referred to as comparative or relative fit indices (Hooper et al., 2008). These indices hypothesize (null) about non-correlation of all variables (Hooper et al., 2008).

vi)   Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

To improve on the shortfall of the NFI, the comparative fit index was created to accommodate smaller sample sizes (Hooper et al., 2008; Byrne, 1998). Values for this statistic range between 0 and 1, where a value closer to 1 indicates good fit (Hooper et al., 2008; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Chinomona, 2011). Fan et al. (1999) added to this argument by saying all SEM programmes include CFI due to its popularity as it is least influenced by sample size. For this study, this figure was 0.974, representing a good fit.

vii)   Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

In recent years, the RMSEA has come to be recognized as one for the most informative fit indices based on its ability to show the extent to which a model, which contains unfamiliar but optimally selected parameter estimates, fits the population covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). This is a model that was established by Steiger and Lind (1980). The most recent acceptable value that signifies good fit should be below 0.06, although

initially this value ranged between 0.05 and 0.10, according Hu and Bentler (1999). To ensure a good model fit, the RMSEA should be less than or equal to 0.5 and an adequate fit if RMSEA is less than or equal to 0.8 (Chinomona, 2011; Hooper et al., 2008). For this study, the figure stood at 0.066.

viii)   Factor loadings

To determine whether the measurement items load well in their variables, the factor loadings are examined, as shown in Table 4.9 above. None of the results are below 0.5, which is the lowest value any loading can get. This therefore signifies that all items are loading well and measure at least one half of their respective variables (Shevlin and Miles, 1998).

4.7   Path modelling

This study performed Path Modelling using AMOS 22 software package once a model fit had been evaluated using CFA. Path modelling defines the relationships between observed or measured variables and theoretical constructs and tests the structural paths of the hypothesised research model (Roche, Duffield and White, 2011; Anderstand and Gerbing, 1998). SEM technique demonstrates and tests the theoretical underpinnings of the proposed study and the significance of the relationships between model constructs.

SEM stipulates a technique where separate relationships are allowed for each set of dependent variables and provides an estimation technique for a series of separate multi regression equations to be estimated concurrently. It further contains two mechanisms namely the structural model, which is the path where independent, and dependent variables are being linked and the measurement model enables this study to use several indicators for a single independent variable. In this study several attributes are to be identified as having an effect on repurchase intention. The multi-item scales for each construct can be developed, thus assessing each relationship simultaneously rather than separate by incorporating all the multi scale items to account for measurement errors with each scale.

Figure 4.7: Path Model diagram
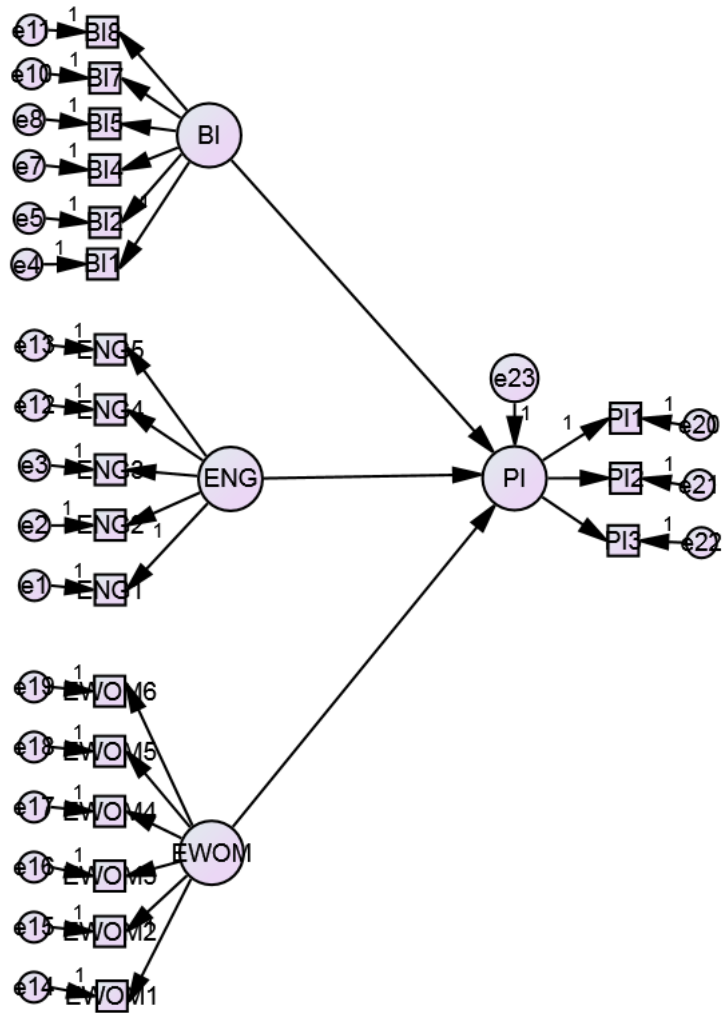
4.7.1   Model Fit Assessment

Model fit indices were based on the path model diagram represented by Figure 4.7 are presented in Table 4.10, whose analysis is presented subsequently.

Table 4.10: Path Model fit assessment

Model Fit criteria	Chi-square (χ^2 /DF)	NFI	RFI	TLI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Indicator value	2.531	0.946	0.928	0.955	0.967	0.967	0.077

As in the CFA, the acceptable levels on the values expressed in the above table apply. All the values are within the acceptable range. The chi-square (2.531) was acceptable at <3 to meet the fit while NFI (0.946), RFI (0.928), TLI (0.955), IFI (0.967) and CFI (0.967) were also acceptable at >0.9. The RMSEA (0.077) is acceptable at <0.08.

4.8   Test Hypotheses Results

Results from the hypotheses tests are presented in Table 4.11 below, which is followed by the discussion of the results.

Table 4.11: Hypothesis Test Results (based on Path Modelling)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	P value	Rejected/Supported
EWOM >>> PI	H1	0.653	***	Supported and significant
ENG >>> PI	H2	0.164	***	Supported and significant

BI>>>PI	H3	0.254	***	Supported and significant
[a]significance level p<0.05; [b] significance level p<0.01; [c] significance level p<0.00				

Based on the model fit results reflected on the Table 4.11 above, all the hypothesised relationships between latent variables are supported and significant to the 0.01 confidence level. The differing values signify the intensity of the relationship each of independent latent variables (Brand Image, Engagement and E-Word-of-Mouth) has with the dependent variable (Purchase Intention). Based on previous researchers' arguments, p-values represented by p<0.001, p<0.01 and p<0.05 indicate the significance of the relationship between the variables. The sign of the path coefficient (positive or negative) represents the density of the relationship between the variables being examined where a bigger coefficient represents a stronger relationship (Chinomona, Lin, Wang and Cheng 2010: 191).

4.9 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter was focussed on the presentation of test results as outlined in Chapter 3. Descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessments, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), path modelling, and test hypotheses were presented. The next chapter will discuss the results as presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 5.   Discussion of Research Outcomes

5.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present test results on the hypothesised relationships between the latent variables. Subsequent to the results presentation, each hypothesis will be discussed in relation to the outcomes and implications of the results will be discussed to align the results to the objectives of the study.

According to Hardy and Bryman (2004) and Bryman (2012), data analysis is the crucial part of conducting research. Research has no meaning if the data collected is not analysed and interpreted. Ullah (2010) shared a similar argument that data analysis involves the preparation and structuring of raw data to solicit valuable information. McLeod (2001) also supported this argument by saying that the data collected is the source of the information required to draw conclusions about the hypothesized relationships between variables. The raw data was organised and cleaned up before it could be coded in an Excel spread sheet for analysis. To gain comprehension of the attributes of each variable, descriptive statistics analysis were utilised. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 22) were used to analyse data by conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path modelling to establish the validity, reliability and model fit of the data collected.

The conceptual model reperseted by Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationships that were being tested bewteen latent variables. Results from the tests and based on the hypothesised relationships are rpessented in Table

5.2   Hypotheses test results

Results from the hypothesis tests are presented in Table 5.1 below, which is followed by the discussion of the results.

Table 5.1: Hypothesis development results

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	P value	Rejected/Supported
EWOM >>> PI	H1	0.653	***	Supported and significant
ENG >>> PI	H2	0.164	***	Supported and significant
BI>>>PI	H3	0.254	***	Supported and significant
[a]significance level p<0.05; [b] significance level p<0.01; [c] significance level p<0.00				

Based on the model fit results reflected on the table above, all the hypothesised relationships between latent variables are supported and significant to the 0.01 confidence level. The differing values signify the intensity of the relationship each of independent latent variables (Brand Image, Engagement and E-Word-of-Mouth) has with the dependent variable (Purchase Intention). Based on previous researchers' arguments, p-values represented by p<0.001, p<0.01 and p<0.05 indicate the significance of the relationship between the variables. The sign of the path coefficient (positive or negative) represents the density of the relationship between the variables being examined where a bigger coefficient represents a stronger relationship (Chinomona, Lin, Wang and Cheng 2010: 191).

5.2.1 Hypothesis 1 outcomes

The hypothesised relationship for H1 was that there is a positive relationship between e-WOM and intention to purchase soccer tickets. This hypothesis suggested that e-WOM does lead to purchase intention among consumers. Based on results in Table 5.1 above, H1 was confirmed as it achieved a coefficient value of 0.653 at 0.01 confidence level, which suggests that e-WOM influences purchase intention positively.

Based on the above findings, various researchers' findings that WOM (e-WOM in this case) has positive effects on consumer behaviour can be confirmed (Engel, Kegerreis and

Blackwell, 1969); Feldman and Spencer, 1965); Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). This was compared to personal selling, promotions and advertising. Dehghani and Tumer (2015) cited social media (e-WOM) as a powerful platform for organisations to move away from push advertising, towards customer relationship management.

Cheung and Thadani (2012) and Berger (2014) also argued that WOM (e-WOM in this case) showed twice the impact of advertising in influencing consumer purchase behaviour. A study confirming that attesting to Facebook as the main driver of traffic to recently visited in the United States of America also proves the hypothesis to be true (Hermida et al., 2012).

5.2.2   Hypothesis 2 outcomes

H2 hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between engagement on social media and the intention to purchase soccer tickets. A coefficient of 0.164 confirmed that engagement on social media (Facebook) influences Orlando Pirates FC fans' intention to purchase match tickets. This relationship was confirmed at 0.01, as represented by the three stars on the p-value.

Engagement has been discussed in chapter 2 as an important predecessor of purchase intention. An important opportunity form brands and organisations is the use of brand communities, as suggested by Habibi and Richard (2014), to develop consumer relationships between brands and consumers. This comes in handy as members of such communities tend to be loyalists and engage with the brand. Various forms of engagement (functional, emotional and communal) offer marketers an opportunity to understand the drive for consumers to engage on social media. This enables organisations or brands to develop consumer engagement strategies, as suggested by Shan, Panagiotopoulos, Regan, De Brún, Barnett, Wall and McConnon (2015) who viewed social media platforms as highly influential way to engage with certain audiences for consumer awareness campaigns (e.g. against obesity, food safety on budget food labelling awareness, and so on).

5.2.3　Hypothesis 3 outcomes

The third hypothesis (H3) stated that there is a positive relationship between brand image and the intention to purchase soccer tickets. This was confirmed by the positive coefficient value of 0.254 at a 0.01 confidence level, as represented by the three stars on the p-value.

Researchers have argued that a good brand reputation plays an important role in developing and maintaining positive consumer perceptions among consumers (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). A good brand perception helps organisations with consumer retention, thus creating financial stability for the organisation Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011).

Thomson et al.'s (2005) definition of emotional brand attachment distinguished this concept from brand love, arguing that the former involves consumer emotions, affection and passion towards a brand while the latter does not necessarily have to illustrate strong bonds between the consumer and brand. Non-consumers or non-customers can have brand love for any brand, which not guarantee any emotional connection between the two subjects. Based on the literature above and the test results, hypothesis 3 has been confirmed.

5.2.4　Summary of the results

The results above confirm that there are indeed positive relationships between Brand Image and Purchase Intention (0.254), Engagement and Purchase Intention (0.163) as well as E-Word-of-Mouth and Purchase Intention (0.653). These positive relationships imply that all three latent variables impact the soccer fans' decisions positively, although in varying degrees.

With respect to the second research question which sought to investigate which of the three independent variables carry the most weight in terms of influencing purchase intention, the path coefficient values proved e-WOM to have most influence on Purchase Intention while Engagement showed the least.

5.3 Implications of the findings

Bearing in mind the outcomes of the findings as discussed in 5.2 above, managerial and academic implications of the findings are discussed in this section.

5.3.1 Hypothesis 1 implications

Hypothesis 1 results confirmed a positive relationship between e-WOM and Purchase Intention, which laid the foundation for the implications for Orlando Pirates as a brand. The fact that e-WOM has the most influence on Purchase Intention implies that Orlando Pirates should devote more effort towards this mode of communication as it is the most viable to reach its consumers. This also implies that Orlando Pirates should initiate and facilitate topical issues in a way that will get the best out of e-WOM.

5.3.2 Hypothesis 2 outcomes

The outcomes of the relationship between engagement on Orlando Pirates FC's Facebook page and purchase intention confirmed that using this platform will yield positive results for Orland Pirates. The strength of the relationship, however, was the lowest, implying that the respondents in this study ranked this platform at the bottom of the hierarchy.

5.3.3 Hypothesis 3 outcomes

Hypothesis 3 confirmed that Orlando Pirates FC has a strong enough brand to influence its soccer fans to purchase match tickets. Although this variable had a coefficient lower

than that of e-WOM, it still proves that maintaining a positive brand perception will be beneficial to the football club. This variable was still higher than engagement.

5.3.4   Academic implications

As much as prior research has been done on various factors which influence consumer behaviour, very few studies have been done in sports. Besides limited literature on sports as academic area of study, fewer studies have been done specifically to the South Africa sports environment. Existing literature has explored factors that influence purchase drivers among consumers in various fields, with very limited work done in the sporting field. With sport growing in terms of providing business and marketing opportunities for brands, it is important to understand sports fans and how marketing strategies can be developed to reach them. Academics should generate more literature to develop this field of research.

5.4   Overall summary

Overall, this chapter was formed by three main sections. The introduction laid out the structure of the chapter. The conceptual model was then presented together with results from the hypothesis tests. Each hypothesised relationship between the latent variables was discussed and its implications to the study highlighted. Chapter 6 will conclude the study and provide recommendations based on the objectives as set out in Chapter 1 as well as the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 6.   CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the outcomes and discussions of the results as presented throughout the study. The implications of the hypotheses on both academics and the industry will also be discussed and further recommendations on future research studies suggested.

The hypotheses discussed proved to have differing levels of importance based on the weights they carry. These levels and their implications will be discussed, taking into consideration the limitations of the study.

6.2   Conclusions of the study

Results from the hypotheses tests are presented in Table 6.1 below, which is followed by the conclusion of the study based on the results.

Table 6.1: Hypothesis development results

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	P value	Rejected/Supported
EWOM>>> PI	H1	0.653	***	Supported and significant
ENG >>>PI	H2	0.164	***	Supported and significant
BI>>>PI	H3	0.254	***	Supported and significant

As presented in the above table, E-WOM has been proven to be the most influential in PI (H1 = 0.653) Engagement has the least influence based on its value (H2 = 0.164). The three stars for the P vales indicate that all the values are acceptable at 0.01 confidence level. The recommendations in 6.3 are based on the results table in Table 6.1 above.

6.3   Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the study, the recommendations below were suggested based on each hypothesis findings, to benefit both academia and the marketing discipline outside academia.

6.3.1   Recommendations on the e-Word-of-Mouth's (e-WOM) influence on Purchase Intention (PI)

With social media on a rise, consumers have shown to be interested in using these social networks to engage on various issues, including discussing products, services and brands. The literature above has shown that word of mouth has huge impact on purchase intentions for consumers. This has been proven by the results as detailed in the tables above. Out of all the variables, e-WOM has proven to be the most influential based on its coefficient value of 0.635.

This outcome suggests that putting more emphasis on promoting e-WOM in communication strategies targeting their fans would provide Orlando Pirates FC with better results in terms of influencing their purchase intention decisions. This argument was supported by studies which proved showed that 61% of consumers had consulted online sources for information before deciding to purchase a product or service (Cheung et al, 2012). In this case, Hermida et al.'s study showed Facebook to be driving more traffic to some of the websites which were recently studied (Hermida et al., 2012).

6.3.2   Recommendations on the Engagement's (ENG) influence on Purchase Intention (PI)

H2 hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between engagement on social media and the intention to purchase soccer tickets. A coefficient of 0.164 confirmed that engagement on social media (Facebook) influences Orlando Pirates FC fans' intention to purchase match tickets. This relationship was confirmed at 0.01, as represented by the three stars on the p-value.

For any organisation or brand to measure its success on their online platforms, measuring their customers' online engagement is part of the important tasks. According to Lim et al. (2015) Facebook posts and likes, tweets, re-tweets, and so on, form part of online engagement which organisations and brands may use to measure the success of their online public platforms (Zaglia, 2013). Orlando Pirates FC as a brand, therefore, needs to encourage their fans to actively engage with their Facebook page, which Pirates can do by uploading content that will spark and facilitate discussions involving their fans. Interactivity by the brand will also be very crucial to ensure that fans remain engaged throughout the conversations.

6.3.3 Recommendations on the Brand Image's (BI) influence on Purchase Intention (PI)

The third hypothesis (H3) stated that there is a positive relationship between brand image and the intention to purchase soccer tickets. This was confirmed by the positive coefficient value of 0.254 at a 0.01 confidence level, as represented by the three stars on the p-value.

Various researchers had already identified various factors which influence consumers' relationships with brands and organisations. Consumer perceptions towards a certain brand will influence the nature of the relationship between the two parties. Brand experience (satisfaction and trust) and emotional brand attachment have proven to be some of the influencers of consumer behaviour (Chinomona, 2013; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). Brands, Orlando Pirates in this case, therefore owe it to themselves to create and maintain healthy relationships with their customers through managing their consumers' perceptions about their brand.

Taking the above recommendations into account, Orlando Pirates FC, especially its marketing division, are encouraged to use social media as a crucial part of their marketing. Social media strategies need to be strengthened and more investments need to be made in order to realise their impact. Word of mouth has been made easier through social media as they are cheaper and can connect numerous people in various places at a single

moment. This allows information sharing to be quicker and easier. Putting more emphasis on e-WOM does not mean that the brand should ignore the other latent variables, as they also play a role in building and maintaining the brand.

6.4   Suggestions for further research

The literature and results in the chapters above have proven that social media have evolved so much that organisations cannot afford to ignore them when developing their marketing strategies. This has been confirmed by the results which proved that, besides traditional word of mouth being an effective tool in marketing, social media have increased the effectiveness of this form of marketing.

Having conducted this study from soccer fans' perspectives, it will be interesting to do the same with marketing practitioners in the sporting environment to get the views on the same issue. Equally important would be to do the same study from the sponsors' viewpoint in order to gauge consistency of the results. This would help all the parties involved in sports to understand what is required of them to take advantage of social media in their favour. This would range from sharing important information among consumers or fans, using social media to reach target consumers by marketers and sponsors, as well as developing new knowledge by academic researchers.

It would also be interesting to conduct a similar study using demographics to select respondents. This would include gender, geography, social class, income levels, education levels, and so on. This would help researchers understand those demographics which are most influenced by social media. These details would help marketing practitioners and researchers to further narrow their focus when developing marketing strategies around social media. This would enhance accuracy in terms of consumer targeting, thus increasing consumer centricity of the organisation or brand.

6.4.1 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide closing remarks on the study by drawing linkages between the study objectives, finds as well as the recommendations based on the results. The recommendations were based on each of the hypothesised relationships between the variables under examination. The implications of the research findings were also provided in relation to the academic and corporate environments. Based on the study limitations, possible future studies were suggested in this chapter.

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APPENDIX A

Research Questionnaire

The University of Witwatersrand
Graduate School of Business Administration
Cell: 0826263824
Email: Mthobisi_nhlabathi@yahoo.com
Date: July 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a post graduate student at the University of Witwatersrand – Graduate School of Business Administration, undertaking a Master of Management in the field of Strategic Marketing.   The topic of my research is:

 "e-Word of mouth (e-WOM), engagement and brand identity influence on purchase intention"

In order to accomplish my research objectives, a questionnaire has been prepared to gather information regarding the following:

- Online Word of Mouth
- Engagement on Social Media (Facebook)
- Brand Identity
- Intention to buy soccer match tickets

This is to kindly request you to complete the attached questionnaire. Your response will be of great value to the research. Please be advised that your identity and feedback will be kept in utmost confidence.

YOUR VIEWS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR THIS STUDY!

Yours Sincerely

Mthobisi Nhlabathi

STUDY SUPERVISOR

PROF. R. CHINOMONA

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate answer(s) with an X. This questionnaire is strictly for research purpose only.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

The section is asking your background information. Please indicate your answer by ticking (X) on the appropriate box.

1. **Please indicate your gender**

Male	
Female	

2. **Please indicate your marital status**

Married	
Single	

3. **Please indicate your age category**

17 years or less	
18 – 25 years	
26 – 35 years	
36 - 45 years	
46 years upwards	

4. Please indicate your highest academic level

High School	
Diploma	
Degree	
Post graduate degree	
Other (specify)	

5. Please indicate your occupation

Student	
Employed	
Self-employed	
Unemployed	
Other (specify)	

6. **Please indicate what recent sport you watched**:

Sport watched:

Below are statements about viewer decision making styles:

- Engaging on Facebook is important to me

- I share and look for information on Facebook

- I trust advices from my connections on Facebook

- Good Facebook discussions trigger my interest to watch Orlando Pirates matches

- Orlando Pirates is a string brand

You can indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 7-point scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

SECTION B:

1. **Brand Image (BI)**

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements								
		Strongly disagree	disagree	Slightly disagree	neutral	Slightly agree	agree	Strongly agree
BI1	The products of this brand have high quality							
BI2	The products of this brand have better characteristics than competitors							

BI3	The products of the competitors' brand are usually cheaper						
BI4	This brand is nice						
BI5	This brand has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors						
BI6	This brand does not disappoint its customers						
BI7	This brand is one of the best brands in the sector						
BI8	This brand is very consolidated in the market						

2. **Engagement**

		Strongly disagree	disagree	Slightly disagree	neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements								
ENG1	I'm interested in using Facebook to get updates about Orlando Pirates							
ENG2	I'm interested in using Facebook to browse my information about Orlando Pirates							
ENG3	I'm interested in using Facebook for browsing upcoming Orlando Pirates matches							
ENG4	I am interested in utilizing Facebook for searching Orlando Pirates news							
ENG5	I am interested in using Facebook to refer to consumer							

		Strongly disagree	disagree	Slightly disagree	neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	reviews about Orlando Pirates							

3. Electronic Word Of Mouth

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements								
		Strongly disagree	disagree	Slightly disagree	neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
E-WOM1	I recommend Orlando Pirates to my connections							
E-WOM2	I speak of Orlando Pirates' good side							
E-WOM3	I'm proud to be say I'm an Orlando Pirates supporter							
E-WOM4	I recommend people to watch Orlando Pirates at stadiums							
E-WOM5	I often say positive things about the Orlando Pirates							
E-WOM6	I have said positive things about Orlando Pirates							

4. Purchase Intention

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements

		Strongly disagree	disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
PI1	Given the chance, I intend to watch Orlando Pirates matches at the stadium							
PI2	It is likely that I will watch Orlando Pirates matches in future							
PI3	I expect to watch Orlando Pirates matches at the stadium							

APPENDIX B

Consistency matrix

To investigate the influence of e-word-of-mouth, engagement and brand image on the intention to purchase soccer tickets for Orlando Pirates FC games.

Sub-problem	Literature Review	Hypotheses or Propositions or Research questions	Source of data	Type of data	Analysis
With social media viewed as a new and improved form of the previous media types, only with added functionalities, what are the reasons for the use of these communication platforms by soccer fans?	Some of the authors from whom the literature was drawn. (Lim et al, 2015); (Johns, 2012); (McNealy, 2010);(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010); (Castranovo and Huang, 2015);	H1 ⇒ There is a positive relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention H2 ⇒There is a positive relationship between engagement and purchase intention H3 ⇒There is a positive relationship between brand image	Survey questionnaire	Primary	• Code data on excel • Import data to SPSS and AMOS software • Descriptive statistics analysis • Path modelling

To investigate the influence of e-word-of-mouth, engagement and brand image on the intention to purchase soccer tickets for Orlando Pirates FC games.					
Sub-problem	**Literature Review**	**Hypotheses or Propositions or Research questions**	**Source of data**	**Type of data**	**Analysis**
With Orlando Pirates FC being one of the three biggest teams in South Africa (the other two being Kaizer Chiefs and Mamelodi Sundowns), what is the impact of its brand image, engagement and the word-of-mouth generated on club's Facebook page on their fans' intention to purchase match tickets?	Some of the authors from whom the literature was drawn. (Castranovo and Huang (2015); (Balakrishnan et al, 2014); (Nadeem et al, 2015); (Jin, 2012); (McConnon et al, 2015); etc.	H1 ⇒ There is a positive relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention H2 ⇒There is a positive relationship between engagement and purchase intention H3 ⇒There is a positive relationship between brand image	Survey questionnaire	Primary data	• Code data on excel • Import data to SPSS 22 and AMOS 22 packages • Descriptive statistics analysis • Path modelling

Appendices C: Research Results

Figure 5.1: Demographic profiles graph

Demographic Profiles

■ Frequency ■ %

	Gender		Marital status		Age					Qualification					Occupation				
Category	Male	Female	Married	Single	17yrs/less	18-25 yrs	26-35yrs	36-45yrs	45yrs+	High School	Diploma	Degree	Postgrad	Other (specify)	Student	Employed	Self-employed	Unemployed	Other (specify)
Frequency	147	113	112	148	5	66	133	27	29	74	63	85	35	3	10	172	64	12	2
%	57	44	43	57	2	25	51	10	11	29	24	33	14	1	4	66	25	5	1

Table 5.2: Brand Image results

Scale	BI1 Frequency	%	BI2 Frequency	%	BI3 Frequency	%	BI4 Frequency	%	BI5 Frequency	%	BI6 Frequency	%	BI7 Frequency	%	BI8 Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	3	1	5	2	8	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Disagree	7	3	3	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	1
Slightly disagree	3	1	1	0	12	5	1	0	0	0	54	21	2	1	1	0
Neutral	4	2	2	1	201	77	5	2	2	1	101	39	5	2	4	2
Slightly agree	1	0	11	4	9	4	3	1	4	2	17	7	6	2	7	3
Agree	209	80	212	82	16	6	170	65	195	75	50	19	186	72	153	59
Strongly agree	33	13	26	10	13	5	80	31	57	22	35	14	58	22	92	35
Total	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**

Figure 5.2: Brand Image results

Table 5.3: Engagement results

	ENG1		ENG2		ENG3		ENG4		ENG5	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	10	4	5	2	6	2	6	2	8	3
Disagree	13	5	16	6	16	6	18	7	13	5
Slightly disagree	12	5	11	4	7	3	7	3	10	4
Neutral	16	6	16	6	19	7	18	7	17	7
Slightly agree	38	15	35	14	41	16	39	15	30	12
Agree	148	57	160	62	153	59	149	57	145	56
Strongly agree	23	9	17	7	18	7	23	9	37	14
Total	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**

Figure 5.3: Engagement results

Table 5.4: E-Word-of-Mouth results

	EWOM1		EWOM2		EWOM3		EWOM4		EWOM5		EWOM6	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	6	2	4	2	4	2	2	1	3	1	3	1
Disagree	4	2	3	1	6	2	6	2	4	2	4	2
Slightly disagree	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0
Neutral	3	1	3	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	1
Slightly agree	0	0	6	2	2	1	5	2	9	4	2	1
Agree	166	64	164	63	70	27	152	59	160	62	160	62
Strongly agree	80	31	79	30	175	67	91	35	81	31	87	34
Total	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**
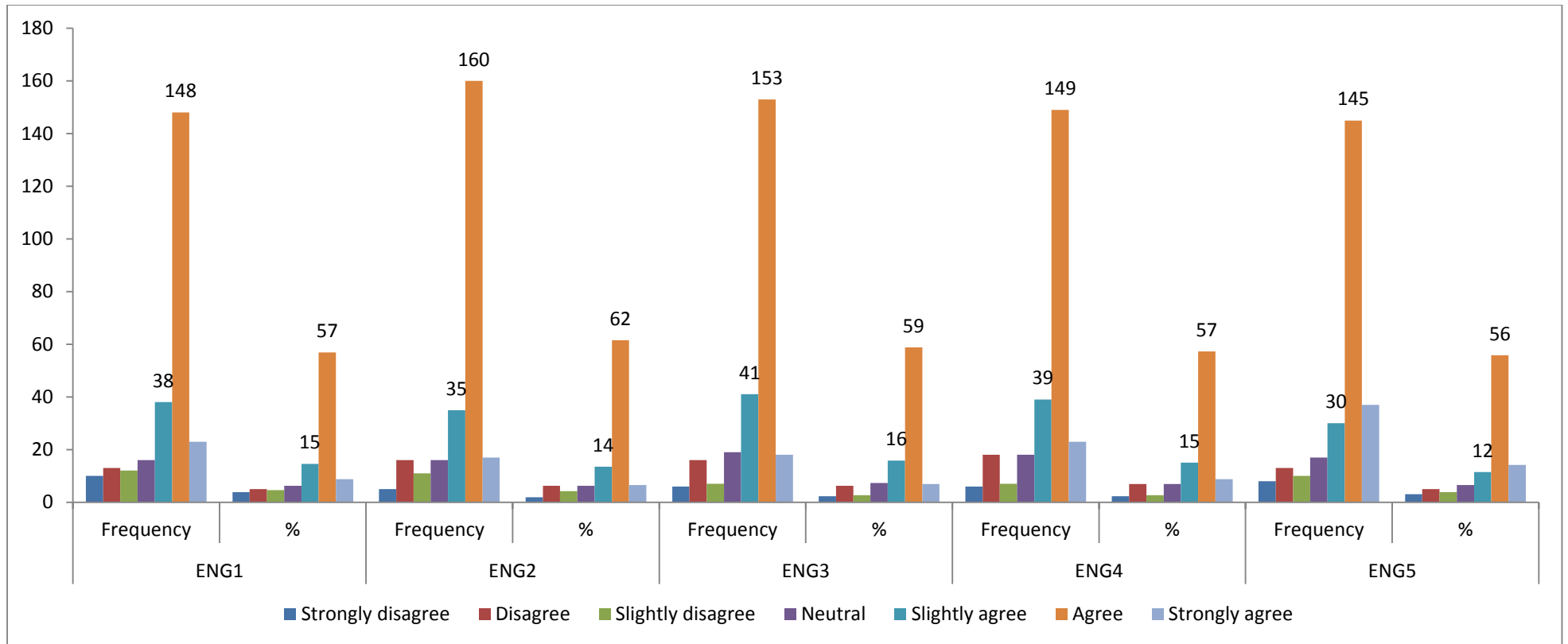
Figure 5.4: E-Word-of-Mouth results

Table 5.5: Purchase Intention results

|	PI1		PI2		PI3	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Strongly disagree	4	2	4	2	7	3
Disagree	4	2	4	2	3	1
Slightly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	0
Neutral	2	1	4	2	4	2
Slightly agree	3	1	1	0	4	2
Agree	151	58	153	59	138	53
Strongly agree	96	37	94	36	103	40
Total	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**	**260**	**100**

Figure 5.5: Purchase Intention results

Table 1.1. World Internet Users

Year	Internet Users**	Penetration (% of Pop)	World Population	Non-Users (Internetless)	1Y User Change	1Y User Change	World Pop. Change

Year	Value 1	%	Value 2	Value 3	%	Value 4	%
2016*	**3,424,971,237**	46.1 %	7,432,663,275	4,007,692,038	7.5 %	238,975,082	1.13 %
2015*	**3,185,996,155**	43.4 %	7,349,472,099	4,163,475,944	7.8 %	229,610,586	1.15 %
2014	**2,956,385,569**	40.7 %	7,265,785,946	4,309,400,377	8.4 %	227,957,462	1.17 %
2013	**2,728,428,107**	38 %	7,181,715,139	4,453,287,032	9.4 %	233,691,859	1.19 %
2012	**2,494,736,248**	35.1 %	7,097,500,453	4,602,764,205	11.8 %	262,778,889	1.2 %
2011	**2,231,957,359**	31.8 %	7,013,427,052	4,781,469,693	10.3 %	208,754,385	1.21 %
2010	**2,023,202,974**	29.2 %	6,929,725,043	4,906,522,069	14.5 %	256,799,160	1.22 %
2009	**1,766,403,814**	25.8 %	6,846,479,521	5,080,075,707	12.1 %	191,336,294	1.22 %

2008	1,575,067,520	23.3 %	6,763,732,879	5,188,665,359	14.7 %	201,840,532	1.23 %
2007	1,373,226,988	20.6 %	6,681,607,320	5,308,380,332	18.1 %	210,310,170	1.23 %
2006	1,162,916,818	17.6 %	6,600,220,247	5,437,303,429	12.9 %	132,815,529	1.24 %
2005	1,030,101,289	15.8 %	6,519,635,850	5,489,534,561	12.8 %	116,773,518	1.24 %
2004	913,327,771	14.2 %	6,439,842,408	5,526,514,637	16.9 %	131,891,788	1.24 %
2003	781,435,983	12.3 %	6,360,764,684	5,579,328,701	17.5 %	116,370,969	1.25 %
2002	665,065,014	10.6 %	6,282,301,767	5,617,236,753	32.4 %	162,772,769	1.26 %
2001	502,292,245	8.1 %	6,204,310,739	5,702,018,494	21.1 %	87,497,288	1.27 %

| 2000 | 414,794,957 | 6.8 % | 6,126,622,121 | 5,711,827,164 | 47.3 % | 133,257,305 | 1.28 % |