



Effective ways South African brands can market on Instagram to influence purchase intentions – A user’s perspective

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 the field of Strategic Marketing.

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ABSTRACT

Background - Although Instagram is one of the fastest growing social network sites, research dedicated to this platform has been limited.

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to investigate how South African brands could optimally utilise Instagram as a marketing channel that positively influences consumer buying behaviour.

Research Methodology/Approach – A quantitative approach was used for this study. Research data was collected using an online survey, with a total of two hundred and seventeen South African Instagram users who made up the final sample.

Findings – The outcomes confirmed that all hypothesised statements were significant and thus, accepted. The main findings further revealed that user perspectives played a valuable role in the co-creation process and reiterated that types of content (on Instagram) positively affected the study's constructs; customer engagement, brand awareness and electronic-word-of-mouth. In addition, these constructs proved to positively impact consumer purchase intentions.

Research limitations – The present study focuses on a niche sample which consists of South African Instagram users only. It is recommended that future researchers incorporate a global user perspective from Instagram users across the world, to determine other key factors that might positively impact consumer purchasing behaviour.

Managerial implications – Marketing practitioners spend a significant amount of time in determining the driving forces that boost sales. The verified relationships between types of content, brand awareness, customer engagement and electronic-word-of-mouth reiterates the need for all stakeholders to incorporate Instagram as a powerful channel of marketing in their social media strategies.

DECLARATION

I, Simone. N. Rambarun, 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 the field of Strategic Marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.



Simone. N. Rambarun

Signed at: Johannesburg on the 22nd day of June 2018

DEDICATION

To my Grandparents - Parthab & Rubina Rambarun and Dennis & Bomey Pillay, whose passion for education and legacy I will continue to pass down for generations to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Master's journey has been challenging and has stretched me in ways I never knew existed. Yet through it all, this has proven to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

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“In every victory, let it be said of me, my source of strength, my source of Hope is Christ Alone.”

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CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

As a rapidly evolving phenomenon, social media has revolutionised the way in which businesses operate daily. Furthermore, companies have made significant changes in their marketing initiatives which have transformed the way messages are delivered to consumers. The development of Web 2.0 has enabled digital platforms like social networking sites to facilitate communication and interaction amongst individuals in ways that were previously not possible (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have allowed companies to market and advertise at relatively low costs, creating a more customer-centric approach. Essentially, businesses are now able to tailor their messages and enter into dialogue with users of these networks, using principles such as word-of-mouth (WOM) (Hansson, Wrangmo, & Solberg Søylen, 2013). Furthermore, companies have the opportunity to involve consumers in the decision and/or design process of product development and service enhancement, whilst gaining an understanding of various markets (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).

One of the latest platforms to emerge in the digital space is Instagram. This increasingly growing social network is accessible via mobile and desktop and provides individuals with a means of interaction and self-expression via creative visual content. As such, companies have begun capitalising on this growing trend, by utilising the platform as a cost-effective marketing channel. Despite its popularity, there has been limited research undertaken on how companies could efficiently market their brands on Instagram, in comparison to channels such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace (Ginsberg, 2015). To contribute to this direction, this study investigates how Instagram could optimally be utilised by South African companies, as a marketing tool that positively influences consumer buying behaviour.

1.2 Context of the Study

Over the past two decades, the media landscape has seen a drastic shift and has taken over a significant proportion of the internet. Furthermore, these changes in technology and media have impacted communication patterns between people, businesses and organisations globally. Social media has significantly altered the dynamics of individual and/or business relationships, by removing previous barriers of communication, such as location, time and space (Madianou, 2014). For years, companies have been striving to find innovative ways of promoting their brands, products

and/or services, increasing their engagement with consumers, and the number of individuals who follow their activity. Social media marketing has enabled businesses to achieve these objectives by cost efficiently establishing connections with users (Bolton *et al.*, 2013; Larivière *et al.*, 2013; LeeFlang, Verhoef, Dahlström, & Freundt, 2014). Furthermore, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace have assisted brand owners and companies in reaching out to millions of consumers instantaneously. These platforms have provided a massive advantage to consumers, enabling them to communicate their needs and wants directly to companies. Moreover, when a business and/or a brand markets via social networking sites, they can stay connected with market trends, since consumer feedback and input can be obtained in real-time and this influences the quality of a company's service to its customers.

Leading social media platforms have monetised some of their services to empower companies and brands to target segmented audiences through affordable paid advertisements that are linked to customised analytics. As such, social media has become a multibillion dollar industry and it is anticipated that by 2019 social networks will have generate approximately 70 billion dollars in income annually, from paid advertisements only (Hajarian, Bastanfard, Mohammadzadeh, & Khalilian, 2017). Facebook continues to dominate the social media hierarchy and boasts over 2 billion active users monthly. It is also one of the first network's to support advertisements and in 2017, exceeded the US\$500 billion milestone in market value (Egan, 2018). Twitter, also known as the internet's short message service (SMS) comprises an average of 319 million monthly active users who engage with other users through the platform's social networking and microblogging services. In 2016, Forbes valued Twitter at US\$15.7 billion (Zimmer & Proferes, 2014; Team, 2016). Pinterest is relatively new within the social media sphere and allows users to pin their content on bulletin boards that are digital. In 2017, Pinterest reached 200 million monthly active users and was valued at US\$12 billion (Huet & Frier, 2017).

Since the introduction of image and video sharing social networks such as Instagram, new opportunities have been established for companies and/or organisations to successfully gain exposure. Since its inception in 2010, Instagram has grown to achieve a user base of approximately 800 million monthly active users in 2017, in comparison to the one million users who registered as at December 2010. In addition, Facebook's acquisition of Instagram in 2012 increased the value of this platform from US\$19 billion to its current value of US\$35 billion, surpassing that of Twitter and Pinterest. In this regard, it is evident that Instagram has become the fastest growing social network of this era (Al Nashmi, 2018).

Brands are now able to communicate and express themselves on Instagram in ways that are both visually unique and convenient. Additionally, this social network provides users with an immediate way of capturing visual stories through images and short video clips that can be edited and shared with large audiences (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). According to a Pew report conducted by Hu et al., (2014), Instagram's booming development and success can be contributed to the fact that visual content has become significant online social currencies, in relation to engagement, interaction and creating awareness around specific topics (Ginsberg, 2015). However, Sheldon and Bryant (2016), assert that Instagram has indeed facilitated high levels of engagement amongst users, which makes it imperative for brands and/or organisations to investigate why people use this social network to fulfil their various needs.

In South Africa, social media is widely becoming an indispensable tool for many individuals including marketing practitioners, political figures, celebrities, reporters and several activists. According to the South African (SA) Social Media Landscape report conducted in 2018 by the Brand Intelligence company, Ornico and the leading Business Technology Research company, World Wide Worx, it was found that 16 million South Africans currently use Facebook to engage with other users as well as their favourite brands. This increased in comparison to the 14 million that were registered in 2016 and further indicated that Facebook is still the first choice for many users in the country. Despite experiencing a slow growth, Instagram users increased from 3.5 million users in 2016 to 3.8 million users in 2017, whereas Twitter's growth was reported to have stagnated both globally and locally, due to its inability to respond to threats from competing social network platforms (Patricios & Goldstuck, 2018). The overall report concluded that although growth across all social networks had slowed down in 2018, interaction intensified amongst consumers as well as between users and brands.

Given that Instagram is a growing social networking platform in South Africa, this study evaluates the relationships between variables such as user perspectives, categories of content, brand awareness, electronic word-of-mouth and consumer engagement, to understand how they impact Instagram users, and thereby their purchasing behaviour.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Main problem

There has been significant research done on social media and/or social networking marketing and the impact it has had on consumer buying behaviour. In addition, several studies have largely focused on brand evaluations and user purchase intentions in social media settings, user engagement and its effect on purchase intentions, the impacts of user interactions on social media, its effects on brand awareness and thereby purchase intent, as well as the impact of social networks on consumers' behavioural patterns. These studies have predominantly focused on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012; Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, & Füller, 2013; Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu, & Tichindelean, 2013; Akar & Nasir, 2015; Alsubagh, 2015; Khatib, 2016; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

However, it remains unclear whether studies have been conducted on effective Instagram marketing and how it affects purchasing intentions. Furthermore, it is uncertain if such studies have been carried out in the South African context. According to Paul and Goldstuck (2018), the number of South African brands who were active on Instagram increased significantly from 42% to 62% in 2018 and as such, the main problem identified in this research is to determine the effective ways South African companies can utilise Instagram to impact positive purchasing behaviour.

1.3.2 Sub problem 1

To investigate what types of content (messages) users consider important when marketing on Instagram.

1.3.3 Sub-problem 2

To examine the relationship between types of content, brand awareness, electronic-word-of-mouth and consumer engagement and, its influence on purchasing intentions.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore how South African brands could optimally utilise Instagram as a marketing channel that positively influences consumers buying behaviour. By analysing Instagram user responses, the researcher demonstrates how specifically tailored posts (content) could contribute to value creation for both companies and the consumer, whilst raising

the marketing effectiveness of a brand. Furthermore, Instagram's powerful ability of capturing users' attention and connecting them through visual elements is perceived to be beneficial for entrepreneurs, start-up businesses and other enterprises who wish to capitalise on growing their brands, whilst successfully learning how to sell their products and/or services on this social platform.

1.5 Research Objectives

This section lists the theoretical and empirical objectives that were formulated for this study.

1.5.1 Theoretical objectives

To obtain an understanding of the existing knowledge of the constructs of this study, the following theoretical objectives were established:

- To explore literature on social media marketing;
- To explore literature on Instagram; and
- To review literature on value creation, types of content, brand awareness, electronic-word-of-mouth and customer engagement, as factors that positively affect user buying behaviour.

1.5.2 Empirical objectives

The following empirical objectives were formulated:

- To investigate what types of content South African brands should post on Instagram;
- To determine what types of content influences customer engagement;
- To ascertain what types of content influences brand awareness;
- To establish what types of content influences electronic-word-of-mouth; and
- To investigate how customer engagement, brand awareness and electronic-word-of-mouth positively influences purchasing intentions of consumers.

1.6 Research Questions

Given the purpose of this study, the following research questions and sub-questions were established.

1.6.1 Research question

What types of content do users consider important on Instagram?

1.6.2 Sub-question 1

Which forms of message content influences customer engagement?

1.6.3 Sub-question 2

Which forms of message content influences brand awareness?

1.6.4 Sub-question 3

Which forms of message content influences electronic-word-of-mouth?

1.6.5 Sub-question 4

How do customer engagement, brand awareness and electronic-word-of-mouth positively influence user purchase intentions?

1.7 Research Gap and Justification of the Study

The emergence of social media and the rapid growth in smartphone usage has increasingly bridged the geographical gap of communication amongst vast numbers of individuals. This has impacted the way people communicate with each other, and with companies who provide products and/or services on these platforms (Habibi, Hamilton, Valos & Callaghan, 2015).

As a rapidly growing photo and video sharing application, Instagram serves as a cost-effective marketing channel for companies. Furthermore, businesses have a massive advantage when adopting this platform into their marketing strategies, given its popularity in increasing traffic towards branded content and generating high engagement levels. In spite of this fact, Instagram has not received adequate attention from the research community (Hu *et al.*, 2014). Since its launch in 2010, research carried out on this social network site has been limited (Ginsberg, 2015; Salleh, Hashima, & Murphy, 2015; Ting, Wong, de Run, & Lau, 2015; Ting, de Run, & Liew, 2016; Muñoz & Towner, 2017).

Instagram enables businesses to share their daily experiences with many users, and sets the foundation for creating emotional connections and personalised user experiences. Furthermore,

there are a variety of tools available to enhance a brand's profile, such as paid advertisements and/or sponsored posts in different formats. Companies can also learn how to tailor their content to achieve their business objectives, which include (but are not limited to) increasing video views, traffic to a company's website and other forms of engagement (Ting *et al.*, 2016).

Considering the above, this study explores the key drivers that motivate Instagram users to purchase a brand's product and/or service offerings. Additionally, results may provide guidance to marketing managers and other practitioners on what categories of content and Instagram features users consider important when marketing their brands on this social network.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Previously, companies relied on traditional marketing initiatives such as personal selling, direct marketing and public relations, to create brand awareness and showcase their products and/or services. In essence, information flowed in one direction, that is from the producer to the manufacturer and finally to the consumer (Chirumalla, 2013). However, with the rise of social media, a two-way flow of information has been established, whereby users have the freedom of obtaining information directly from company profiles; whilst providing instant feedback to them, without any restrictions (Lipizzi, Iandoli, & Marquez, 2015).

Considering the growing popularity of social media marketing and its importance in academic literature, the researcher believes that it is vital to explore the factors that contribute to effective Instagram marketing, within the South African context. The findings from this study could also provide companies, brands, scholars and future researchers with insights into the relationships between these factors and how businesses could adopt this information into their own branding and advertising initiatives. In addition, outcomes could guide the researcher in developing cost effective marketing strategies for start-up businesses and/or entrepreneurs who are currently inactive on Instagram and may not have sufficient marketing budgets for their promotional initiatives. Furthermore, this research could provide brands that are active on Instagram with guidelines on how to enhance their content to impact user buying power, and repeat purchases.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations were identified in this study:

The scope of the research topic focuses on a specific niche sample, that is, South African Instagram users only. This is because registered Instagram users in this region are easier for the researcher to access.

A quantitative research design was utilised. Ideally, a triangulation research design comprising both qualitative and quantitative methods would have provided a broader understanding of the research topic, however, since this study is cross-sectional by nature, time served as a constraint in adopting this methodology.

South Africa comprises eleven official languages. The research instrument used in this study is limited to the English language only. As such, only users who are proficient in English were eligible to participate in the survey.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Hash-tags - Codes or labels that enable web search engines to find and categorise messages with specific content and/or themes. These labels are generally words that feature the hash ‘#’ symbol at the beginning of the specific word. For example, the hash-tag for water will be written as ‘#water’ (Giannoulakis & Tsapatsoulis, 2016).

Follower - Once a specific profile is searched for and opened on Instagram, users have the opportunity of clicking on the “follow” button featured under the profile. This enables them to receive updates and notifications from that profile (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011).

Following - When a user subscribes to the content of another user’s Instagram profile, he or she is considered to be following that user (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011).

Like/Likes/Liked – If a user wants to show appreciation for a specific post, he or she can select the heart icon that appears beneath the post. This also generates a number that is displayed under the image or video clip and indicates how popular the post is on the social network (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012).

Filters - These are photo editing tools that enable Instagram users to enhance and/or manipulate their visual content. For example, the Earlybird filter incorporates a vintage feel with earthy coloured tones that can be applied to the original appearance of an image or video on Instagram (Zappavigna, 2016).

Selfie – This term refers to an image taken of oneself taken by him or herself, typically via a smartphone or digital camera (Frosh, 2015).

Geotags - This feature enables users to tag their current location on content posted. If a user grants Instagram permission, this data is extracted from the Global Positioning System (GPS) facility on the individual's smartphone or tablet (Huang, 2016).

Instagram Stories – Using this feature, users can share images and/or videos with followers or other users. However, this is only viewable for a limited period of twenty-four hours since the time of posting (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015).

Hyperlapse - This refers to a time-lapse photography technique that enables users to capture long video footage in motion shots. For example, by manually moving a camera over a short distance between each shot, a hyperlapse is achieved (Abdulrazzaq, Hamad, Ali, Mohammed, & Kamal, 2016).

Boomerang – A video application feature that takes a burst of images and collates them into a single mini video, enabling the footage to move in two directions. For example, back and forth, upwards and downwards and vice versa (Chen, 2017).

1.11 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made by the researcher prior to the commencement of this study:

- The study's sample population are all active Instagram users;
- All survey participants are proficient in the English language;
- Participants can clearly articulate their answers to survey questions, without any misinterpretations;
- All survey questions will be answered truthfully; and
- The feedback from South African Instagram users could provide insight that would be vital for companies and/or brands globally.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a literature review that provides a foundation for the key areas of focus in this study. Additionally, the researcher presents theoretical insight into the rise and evolution of social media, and an in-depth analysis of relevant theories that pertain to this research. An empirical review of the constructs; value co-creation, types of content, customer engagement, brand awareness and electronic-word-of-mouth will be discussed as a vital portion of this chapter. Finally, the researcher presents the conceptualised model and hypothesis statements that were developed for this study.

2.2 Theoretical Grounding

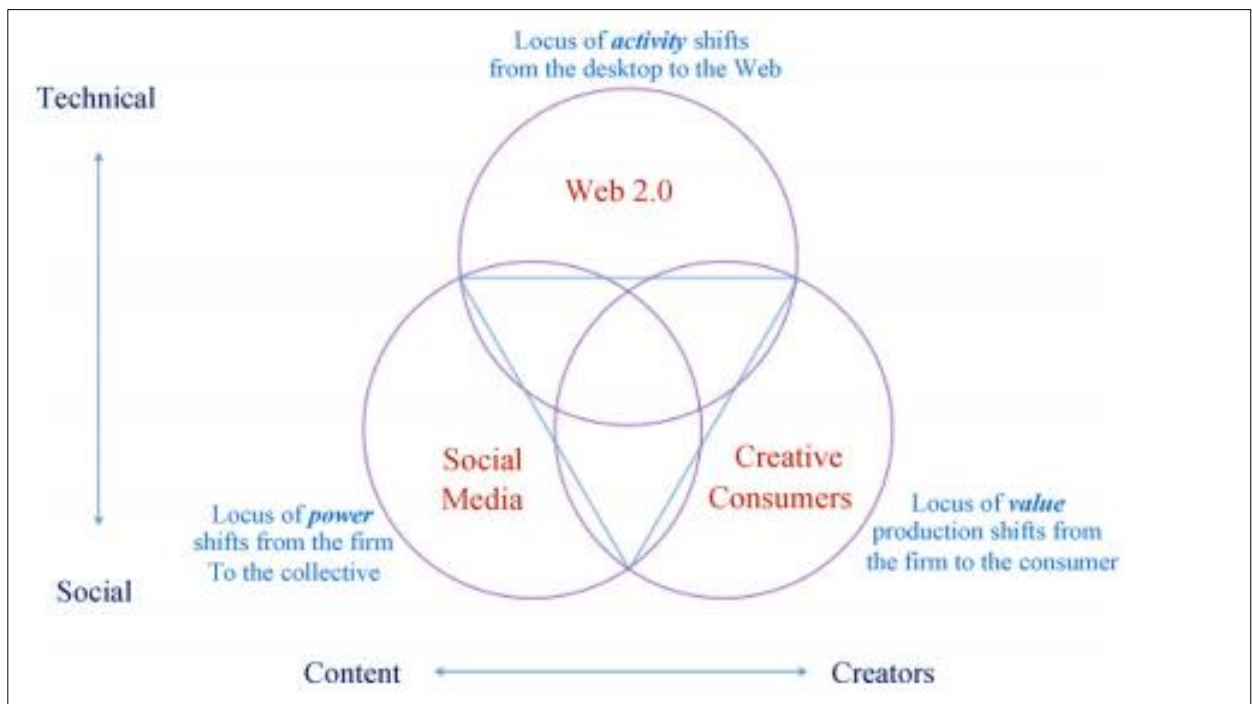
2.2.1 The rise of social media

For centuries, overlapping and interrelated networks in communication have been continually evolving. Prior to the introduction of mass and/or social media, people interacted in their own cultural environments with limited interaction from individuals outside these settings and across the world. The mid-ninetieth century saw the emergence of the electronic age, which included inventions such as the telegraph, newspaper, radio, television and cinema and as time progressed, newer technologies in communication were developed. This gave birth to a new era known as the digital age (Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004).

Toward the latter 1960s, the first digitally based communication network was created, that is, Web 1.0. Despite its establishment, this new phenomenon was only made available to the public in the 1990s. Web 1.0 (also known as the internet) centred on an approach that was one-way, where content flowed from top to bottom. Companies could publish information about their products and/or service offerings and consumers could then read this and respond accordingly. In essence, Web 1.0 was static and somewhat mono-directional. Content creators were relatively limited, with a larger proportion of these individuals being content consumers (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh, & Farsani, 2012). Furthermore, the main aim of websites was to establish a presence online and provide information that could easily be accessed at any given time. Interactivity was not seen as a priority and as such, website visitors were unable to contribute or impact decision-making procedures.

Advancing technology brought about the origin of Web 2.0 and this enabled a two-way flow of information in the communication process. Web 2.0 brought about a series of innovative services and/or tools that transformed media monologues into social media monologues and made it possible for the management of large crowds with common interests on a global scale. Moreover, these tools facilitated social interactions and included weblogs (also known as blogs), wiki pages, Real Simple Syndication (RSS) and social networks (Cooke & Buckley, 2008). As such, this enabled a higher proportion of individuals to create and distribute their own content and/or feedback. In comparison to Web 1.0, Web 2.0 was seen as advantageous, due to its user friendly and flexible web design, real-time updates, creativity, interactive support in creating content and modifying content, and gaining insight into user intelligence. Figure 1 below shows one way in which the technical differences between Web 2.0, social media and user-generated content can be illustrated (Cooke & Buckley, 2008; Aghaei *et al.*, 2012).

Figure 1: Web 2.0, social media, and creative consumers (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012, p. 262)



As shown above, Web 2.0 is viewed as the technical structure that enables users to create and distribute content through social media (Berthon *et al.*, 2012).

Social media refers to the “mobile and web-based technologies that creates highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-

generated content” (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011, p. 241). Since their introduction, social media have been regarded as a consumers’ product and have facilitated interactions between individuals on various platforms. These platforms consist of electronic mail (e-mail), instant messaging, chat and social network sites. Simply stated, social media is built on the foundations of Web 2.0 and is regarded as the by-product of applications that are internet-based. Furthermore, this phenomenon has significantly changed how people network with one another and the rest of the world (He, Zha, & Li, 2013; Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013).

2.2.2 Social media marketing

The widespread adoption of social media has provided companies in search of diverse ways of marketing their brands, with a new platform for leveraging a competitive advantage. This growing trend has enabled businesses to explore innovative methods of achieving objectives, such as creating brand awareness, building a reputation, customer loyalty and retention, engagement, positive purchase intentions, and repeat purchases, and enhanced customer service (He *et al.*, 2013). According to Hansson *et al.*, (2013), speed is a vital aspect in online marketing and through social media, millions of people can be reached in a matter of seconds. Moreover, businesses can connect directly with consumers, build relationships and receive instantaneous feedback in ways that were previously not possible (Vinerean *et al.*, 2013).

Social media marketing is a critical component of business in the 21st century. As an impactful marketing tool that creates synergistic effects, it comprises many benefits such as reduced promotional costs, a stronger online presence (which enhances the perceived reliability of a company), increased traffic to online platforms, user interaction and brand credibility. According to Monica and Balaş (2014), consumers who used social media to obtain new brand, product and/or service information comprised 33%. In addition, it was found that 82% of users experienced increased levels of confidence in a brand if it had an active online profile on social media. Finally, 86% of marketers acknowledged that social media marketing was an important tool for their business (Monica & Balaş, 2014; Chang, Yu, & Lu, 2015).

Brands can also use social media marketing in a way that is reactive. Interactions and/or social dialogue can be monitored and analysed online to determine how users perceive companies and the way they conduct themselves on social platforms. On a strategic level, it is seen as a cross-functional concept that utilises a combination of channels, to achieve business goals, by creating optimal stakeholder value (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017).

2.2.3 Instagram

Instagram is a free social network application that enables users to share visual content from a desktop or smart device, and to other social network sites (SNS). This online platform was created by Kevin Systrom and co-founder Mike Krieger, and officially launched in October 2010. It is regarded as one of the most powerful SNS that has seen tremendous growth since its inception. Furthermore, it continues to attract a global audience of 800 million users and has become first choice for users, when considering photo and video-sharing on the internet (Zolkepli, Hasno, Mukhiar, & Nadiah, 2015; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

Instagram's user-friendly design enables individuals to communicate their visual content in an uncluttered manner, which does not affect the viewing experience. This is beneficial to content creators, given that, photos have the ability to trigger human emotion, which subsequently prompts a desired action (Salleh *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, this SNS consists of distinct features that give users the opportunity to manipulate their visual content. These include hash-tags, geotagging, profile and location search engines, and personal tagging of users. Instagram also offers users approximately forty different filters and photo editing tools that can be applied to transform the mundane appearance of an image and/or video into a compelling reality. This prompts followers to like, comment, engage and share the content with other users (Instagram, 2017a).

In a recent update, new camera formats such as Boomerang, Rewind and Hands-free were introduced. Boomerang captures mini-videos that loop in various directions, whereas Rewind allows footage to be replayed in the opposite direction from that which it was recorded. In Hands-free mode, users do not have to hold down the record button whilst taking a video, instead, they are only required to press the record button once (Instagram, 2017a). Other pertinent features include direct messaging, that is, the ability to send photos, videos, shared posts, hash-tags and/or locations to one or more individuals (Instagram, 2017b). Instagram stories allows users to share moments of their day, via multiple images and videos. These appear together in a slideshow format and disappear after twenty-four hours (Instagram, 2017c). Live video, a widely used feature on Instagram, allows content to be viewed as it occurs (Instagram, 2017d). In addition, push notifications, give users the option of activating the "turn-on notifications" button on an Instagram profile, to receive updates whenever new content is posted from that specific profile (Instagram, 2017e).

Instagram's popularity has made this social network an ideal choice of platform for practitioners, due to its emotive storytelling capabilities and versatile nature which contributes to several strategic marketing initiatives for companies, brands and/or organisations. As such, visual communications are made seamless and are available to various audiences across several platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr (Jang, Han, Shih, & Lee, 2015; Zolkepli *et al.*, 2015). Instagram engagement levels are also noted to be "10 times higher than platforms such as Facebook, 84 times higher than Twitter and 54 times higher than Pinterest," making it a storytelling application that is second to none (Mittal, Kaul, Gupta, & Arora, 2017, p. 139). Furthermore, this SNS inspires individuals to discover things they care about, such as content from their favourite brands, and other important messages.

According to Mittal *et al.*, (2017), the percentage of business profiles on Instagram grew from 11.5% in 2013 to 32.3% in 2015. Additionally, over 2 million advertisers around the world claimed that they used Instagram to communicate their stories and achieve their business goals. One in three of the most viewed Instagram stories were from brand's profiles, with over 200 million users confirming that they visited a minimum of one business profile daily. Moreover, 60% of users claimed that they discovered new products and/or services via this social platform (Instagram Business, 2017). Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin (2017), further noted in their research that sales conversions were boosted by a factor of seven, when brands posted Instagram images next to a sale item.

2.2.4 Social cognitive theory

This theory is regarded as a highly influential conceptual framework when considering the analysis and determining factors through which symbolic communication impacts human thought, development and the acquisition of a behavioural pattern. Essentially, this theory argues that people can learn new behaviours by replicating other individuals' behaviour patterns, and the consequences of the observed behaviours. The author further posits that communication systems operate in two conduits, that is, a direct pathway and a socially mediated pathway (Bandura, 1986). Through the direct pathway, changes are encouraged through information, motivation and by guiding individuals, whereas in the socially mediated pathway, people are influenced, and behaviours are shaped, due to personal determinants, behavioural determinants and environmental determinants as indicated in Figure 2 (see Appendix A1). The factors that are perceived to influence human thought, could include personal cognition, literature, music, radio, television, and/or the internet. This

provides further assistance into a desired change and encourages people to adopt a specific pattern of behaviour, including the social platforms through which they are disseminated and reinforced. Essentially, through observational learning the knowledge and/or advantages experienced by other individuals enables people to broaden their understanding of the information conveyed and further impacts their adoption of such behaviours (Bandura, 1986).

Social cognitive theory suggests that people can comprehend their environments and establish events around these environments that link to most areas of their lives. This is achieved by according a central role to four key procedures, that is, cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and/or self-reflective processes (Bandura, 1986). External influences impact behavioural patterns via cognitive procedures and as such, enable people to determine what environmental factors will be observed, the meaning that will be associated to them, the effects they might have, the impact they will have on their emotions and the key information presented that will be beneficial to them for future purposes. These symbols turn ephemeral experiences into a form of meaning and continuity, which assists people in their judgement and/or action (Bandura, 2001). By observing other people's actions and the outcomes thereof, almost all cognitive, behavioural and affective learning from direct experiences can be attained. However, extensive information regarding people's values, methods of thinking and patterns of behaviour can be obtained from the widespread adoption of symbolic modelling within mass media.

When considering the structures of social networks, it is important to note the multiple virtual communities of relationships that people belong to. These include friendships, family, work relationships and acquaintanceships. In addition, new ideas, innovations and other pertinent messages are disseminated via multilinked relationships that overlap across platforms. Furthermore, individuals share knowledge and associate meaning through feedback regarding the exchanged knowledge and thereby gain an awareness of other perspectives, which, in turn, may influence each other (Bandura, 2001).

Considering the above, the social cognitive theory is seen as relevant to this research. The popularity of an Instagram post is determinant on the reactive nature of users and is displayed by the number of likes and comments on the post. The researcher argues that if followers observe what other users say about these posts on Instagram, this could influence their behaviour either positively or negatively. In retrospect, users are seen to follow activities which are self-gratifying and will reject those that they personally disapprove of. For example, an image featuring a new product could

generate a large number of comments and likes from users. Other users could be interested in this feedback before purchasing the product and as a result, their observations result in positive or negative buying behaviour. Consequently, this information could be vital for businesses on Instagram, who desire to market their brands effectively.

2.2.5 Uses and gratifications theory

This theory is grounded in a positivist approach and seeks to understand why people pursue media and how they go about it, to satisfy their different needs. These include cognitive (obtaining new knowledge and understanding), affective (emotional and pleasurable), personal and social integrative (status and credibility and interaction with friends and family) and escapism (diversion and formulating one's own reality). Consequently, the fulfilment of these needs leads to a great sense of self-gratification. The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory is considered important, due to its origins in communications literature and its applicability to any mass medium of communication. Traditional applications of this theory centred on conventional mass media and media content, for example television, radio and print media. However, in recent years many researchers such as Grant (2005), Whiting & Williams (2013), Joo and Sang, (2013), Ifinedo (2016) and Han (2018) have incorporated this approach in contexts of emerging media such as smartphones and the internet to predict specific user behaviour patterns on social platforms (Grant, 2005; Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Dolan, Conduit, Fahy, & Goodman, 2016).

The U&G theory has also received much criticism and has been perceived as an approach that merely lists reasons why individuals engage with the media. In addition, it presumes that audiences are active and afford their full attention to media. Nonetheless, with the rise of new mass media such as the internet, most researchers believe that the U&G theory has certainly been revived and this is partly due to its interactivity (Dunne *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, this approach postulates that social media users will continue to actively choose and engage on these networks if they are able to achieve self-gratification and fulfil their needs by utilising these platforms (Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013). Research carried out by Whiting and Williams (2013), identified ten benefits of the U&G theory that users receive when utilising social media, which were previously non-existent. These include interactivity, pursuing content, sharing content, passing time, entertainment, relaxation, expressing their opinions, observation, surveillance/knowledge about other users, convenience and communication utility. Additionally, Sheldon and Bryant (2016) reiterated new gratifications for

social media use that comprised playing games, posting updates about daily occurrences, meeting people, maintaining relationships and/or fulfilling professional needs.

When considering the visual nature of Instagram, it is possible that the fulfilment of new gratifications may be aligned with its use. For example, users may not necessarily use Instagram to meet new people, but for virtual exploration. Users on social media generally desire instant gratification and yet, at the same time, may be searching for new ideas, updates on current affairs and knowledge about new products and/or services (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Moreover, brands with a social media presence aim to attract users by providing value for them through messages posted on these platforms. Thus, it is imperative that companies design content strategically so that users find value, which would lead to higher engagement rates, enhanced relationships and favourable outcomes for both parties (Dolan *et al.*, 2016).

2.2.6 Relationship marketing theory

Relationship marketing saw significant changes since the mid-1990s, moving away from an approach that was predominantly single and characterised by one-way transactions (company to consumer), and instead, to incorporate a two-way approach that was facilitated by human relationships, alternative ideas, and networking (Hastings & Saren, 2003). According to Murphy, Maguiness, Pescott, Wislang, Ma and Wang (2005) and Williams and Chinn (2010), relationship marketing enhances business performance, and this is a critical factor for achieving success. As such, the main objectives of relationship marketing are to develop lasting relationships with consumers, create future business and obtain an overall profit. Furthermore, this approach is a key contributor to customer loyalty, strengthened brand awareness, a greater understanding of customer needs and added customer value. Relationship marketing reiterates the importance of attracting new customers whilst retaining existing ones, and further stresses that engagement between companies and consumers should reciprocate effort for a mutually beneficial relationship (Williams & Chinn, 2010; Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014).

To ensure that business-to-customer relationships are constantly enhanced and maintained, it is necessary for companies to communicate with consumers regularly, whilst guaranteeing that communications are of high quality. Consequently, this leads to favourable marketing outcomes (Malthouse *et al.*, 2013). However, literature centring on relationship marketing is often criticised for being biased in the company's favour. This is mainly because consumers' trust and privacy are often abused by the large amount of consumer data collected by these companies. As such,

businesses bombard consumers with unnecessary communication that offers limited benefits, or which are of no real value to them. On the other hand, social media has transformed the way consumers interact with companies and has given individuals a stronger and active voice in their relationships with brands (Clark & Melancon, 2013).

For social media to fulfil its responsibilities as a channel that creates marketing value, businesses should invest in their followers and this can be achieved through consistent engagement. Furthermore, it is vital for companies to understand how consumers perceive them, by prompting them for adequate feedback which would in-turn, enhance their interactions and social media marketing strategies (Clark & Melancon, 2013; Zhang, Watson IV, Palmatier, & Dant, 2016). As such, this research provided insight into user perceptions that pertain to Instagram marketing, which the researcher believes could guide companies in determining how to maximise engagement and thereby overall user satisfaction.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 Value co-creation/user perspective

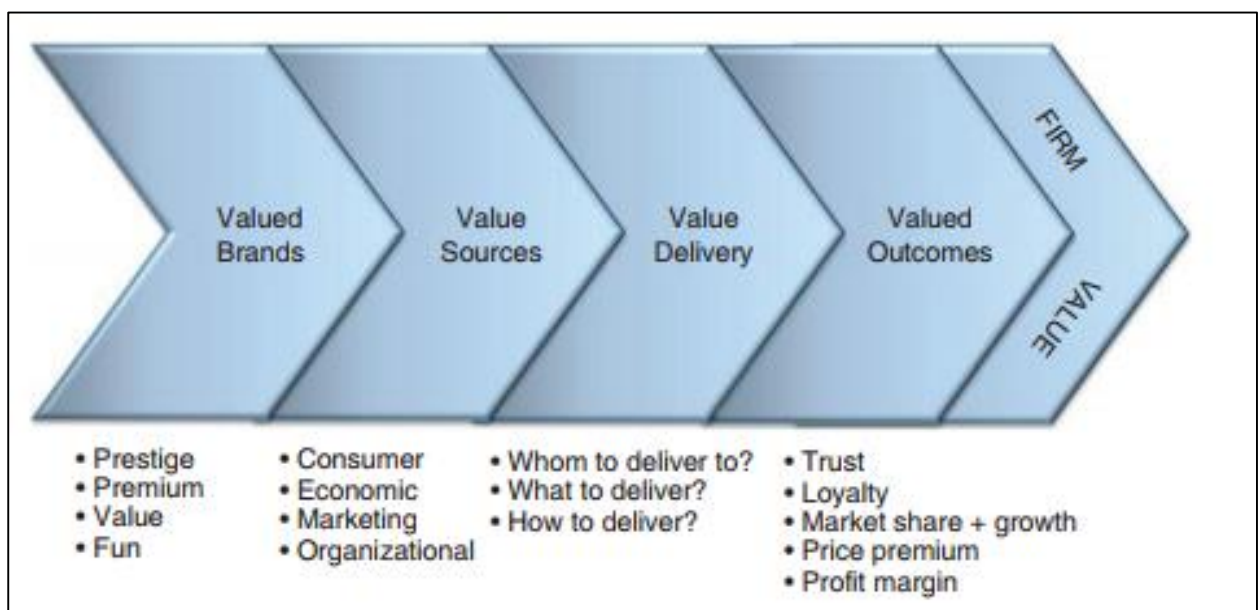
Since the rise of social media there has been an immense shift in consumers bargaining power including a new business paradigm known as value creation. The traditional value creation process did not involve the consumer and in addition, companies and consumers held distinctive roles of production and consumption. Armed with new tools of communicating, consumers are now equipped to extract information which has accelerated their role in actively, efficiently and freely participating as co-creators in the value creation process. Furthermore, high quality communications facilitate an enhanced and personalised customer experience and are a key component in identifying new areas of competitive advantage (Zwass, 2010; Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016).

According to Laroche, Habibi, Richard, and Sankaranarayanan (2012), there are four main areas in which consumers can co-create value with a company. These include social networking, engagement, brand use and brand impression. The internet enables organisations and users to engage in ongoing dialogue, so as to obtain shared knowledge from groups of people with similar interests. This reach and scope of interaction is usually extended to target a company's competitors or to attract potentially new customers. Moreover, consumers are seen as brand ambassadors as a

result of them co-creating content, providing feedback, and distributing this information via word-of-mouth to their peers (Sashi, 2012; He *et al.*, 2013).

The value creation process provides tangible outcomes for both the brand and its customers. Essentially, the collaboration between companies and consumers enables the sharing of innovative concepts and strategic thinking, which is important for product and service creation and enhancement (See-To & Ho, 2014). In a study conducted by Steenkamp (2014), the author incorporated the 4V model to determine how global brands created value for their companies. The model displayed four sets of activities pertaining to value creation. These included “valued brands; second, value sources; third, value delivery; and fourth, valued outcomes,” as seen in Figure 3 below (Steenkamp, 2014, p. 6).

Figure 3: 4V model (Steenkamp, 2014, p. 6).



The interrelations between the 4Vs as seen above, highlight the various activities that reinforced value and were conceptualised as a value chain. Valued outcomes were classified into three main categories, that is, consumer outcomes (trust and loyalty in a brand), market outcomes (increased market share and growth) and financial outcomes (price, premium and profit margin).

In addition, the author postulated that trust is perceived as an attitudinal construct and is based on a customer’s belief in a brand’s promises. Brand trust also serves as a critical component to customers’ loyalty in a brand, their acceptance of price premiums and increased market share. Consequently, when brand trust is greater, consumers are less sensitive to competitors and are more

inclined to purchase a brand's offerings (Steenkamp, 2014). A strong brand usually commands higher price premiums, and this usually impacts a company's cash flow positively. Subsequently, a higher market share equates to higher cash flows and this is advantageous for growing brands (Steenkamp, 2014; Veloutsou, 2015). In this study, the researcher showcases the importance of a user's perspective in the value co-creation process on Instagram, which is believed to increase consumers trust in a brand whilst further leading to brand loyalty, greater brand awareness, electronic-word-of-mouth and customer engagement. Consequently, consumer buying power may be influenced positively.

2.3.2 Types of content

The 21st century has witnessed a major boom in the distribution of internet messages through various platforms such as social networking sites. This has increasingly contributed to various factors that include brand awareness, the acquisition of knowledge, attitude changes, positive purchasing behaviour, and enhanced communication between companies and consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Despite this new era of communicating, the authors argue that most managers do not understand the importance of social media and its role in an organisation's marketing and/or promotional initiatives. As a result, for companies to be successful in their marketing efforts on social media it is vital for them to maintain an online presence that enables them to consistently communicate and engage with users. This in-turn leads to a long lasting consumer-company relationship (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Furthermore, there has been a significant shift in companies' investment into marketing budgets, whereby the focus has changed to storytelling and richer content, as opposed to previous investments that simply centred on mundane advertising (Kim, Spiller, & Hettche, 2015).

Effective content enables users to participate in decision-making processes with firms and gives people the opportunity to provide solutions to brands. It also builds credibility and helps businesses stay competitive (Kim *et al.*, 2015). In this study, types of content is defined as the categories of messages that could be of increased interest to users. These include (but are not limited to) images and/or video clips of products, services, events, competitions and other attributes that centre on a company's brand. In this regard, brands may gain insight into the content that followers consider to be important drivers of positive purchasing behaviour. As such, the researcher derived the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: User perspective positively impacts types of content.

2.3.3 Customer engagement

The concept of engagement is not a new notion when considering relationships in business but has grown in significance for marketing practitioners during recent years. Through increasing developments in social media, a greater portion of consumers are spending more time online and, whilst the focus has shifted to content, these platforms have also introduced new ways of engaging consumers and companies. However, firms still struggle with the challenge of determining what kinds of messages attract increased levels of interaction, and in what ways (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011; Kabadayi & Price, 2014).

Customer engagement is referred to as the “psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative experiences with a focal agent/object (that is a brand) in a focal service relationship” (Brodie *et al.*, 2011, p. 260). This study defines customer engagement as the intensity through which users interact with a company’s Instagram posts. This can be in the form of likes, comments, reviews, and/or tagging other users, which may encourage active participation.

Engagement empowers consumers to be involved in the process of value-creation, as co-creators of content and other business activities. These include the development of products, feedback into experiences, and/or service delivery. As such, this assists businesses in understanding customer needs better, and enhances the value that individuals receive from a brand. According to Sashi (2012), customer engagement harks back to the foundations of marketing, from theories such as marketing concept and relationship marketing, which are also focused on the consumer and which reiterates the importance of satisfying their needs whilst providing value. Trust and commitment are the focal points of relationship marketing and this facilitates interaction – a prerequisite for establishing any relationship. In the same way, engagement establishes the foundation of trust and commitment, and the maintenance of these components, which is a critical factor in the enhancement of stronger relationships including users remaining engaged with a business and/or brand. Furthermore, prior research has indicated that engagement enhances the quality of interactions between consumers and brands by providing increased levels of relationship satisfaction (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012; Sashi, 2012).

Research carried out by Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2015) and Kizgin, Jamal, Dey, and Rana (2017), indicated that social media is a critical component in influencing changes in culture and that customer engagement positively influenced the buying behaviour of consumers. Additionally, it was confirmed that engagement with online brand groups and companies resulted

in a higher level of loyalty towards the brand and this was evident in the experiences of participants. Furthermore, findings suggested that the opinions and reviews of other users played a vital role in the purchasing process of consumers, despite them being familiar with a specific brand. Moreover, this support and information could be easily located in brand communities online. Consequently, users could also spread this information through their interactions with other users, which could further impact the purchasing process. As such, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 2a: Types of content is positively related to customer engagement.

Hypothesis: 2b Customer engagement on Instagram positively impacts purchasing intentions.

2.3.4 Brand awareness

In recent times, the increasing consciousness of consumers has led them to purchase products and/or services from familiar brands. In this regard, firms need to ensure that their offerings appeal to customers if they wish to remain competitive (Chi, Yeh, & Yang, 2009). Brand awareness refers to the ability to recall or recognise the identity of a company and/or business in any given environment. Furthermore, brand awareness can be understood from two distinct categories, that is, brand-depth and brand-width. Brand-depth guides consumers in recalling or easily identifying a brand, whereas brand-width suggests that when an individual decides to purchase a product, a specific brand comes to mind. As such, there is a higher brand awareness that is associated with that specific product (Chi *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, if a product and/or service has a high level of brand awareness, brands are perceived as having a good reputation, thereby increasing consumer preferences (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012; Malik *et al.*, 2013; Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

Social media has proved to be an essential driving force in brand awareness and has enriched how users and businesses engage with one another on a number of platforms (Malhotra, Malhotra, & See, 2013). Research conducted by Malhotra *et al.*, (2013) identified 98 global brands which were investigated for factors that increased or decreased the chances of Facebook user activity on a company's profile page. The researchers of the study aimed to identify the various types of content that created high levels of brand awareness and engagement on Facebook, in comparison with other platforms. Results from their study enabled the researchers to attain an in-depth understanding of how various brand posts impacted the amount of likes and comments received, and the number of times these posts were shared with other users.

The intent to purchase a product and/or service is largely dependent on consumers' recall of a brand, confidence in a brand, and their loyalty towards the specific brand. In this regard, consumers must be provided with information that enables them to identify their need, evaluate substitutes and thereafter purchase the product and/or service. Furthermore, extensions of brand awareness and strong company-customer relationships are perceived to increase revenues and save on marketing costs. Thus, generating higher profits than those of less favoured brands (Chi *et al.*, 2009; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Malik *et al.*, 2013; Hakkak, Vahdati, & Nejad, 2015; Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). From this, the following hypotheses were established:

Hypothesis 3a: Types of content are positively related to brand awareness.

Hypothesis 3b: Brand awareness on Instagram will positively influence purchasing intentions.

2.3.5 Electronic word-of-mouth

Simply stated, word-of-mouth (WOM) initiatives enables individuals to disseminate information from one individual to another. The purchasing behaviour of consumers is largely influenced by conventional WOM practices and this has progressed through to social media. As such, businesses have begun utilising this knowledge by marketing to influence user buying behaviour through their online profiles, whilst further encouraging user ratings and reviews on social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Hansson *et al.*, 2013).

In contrast, electronic-word-of-mouth (EWOM) is seen as a two-way process through which individuals informally communicate company information such as usage, reviews and attributes of products and/or services through online communities. This two-way flow of communication may include chat groups, one-to-one emails, blogs, recommendations and/or instant messaging. One of the more recent types of EWOM is visual experience products, that is, users who capture themselves through consumption-related experiences, or whilst using a specific service. A detailed account is provided to viewers at each step of the process. Thereafter, this content is uploaded onto social media and serves as a guidance for consumers who wish to review products and/or services experienced by a real customer, before making their own purchase (Lin, Lu & Wu, 2012).

EWOM is seen as an impactful approach for individuals in search of quick, user-friendly and credible product and/or service information. Furthermore, if a business fails to deliver its promises as per a customer's expectations, a gap between both parties may occur and thus affect consumer perceptions about the company. Moreover, since the development of Web 2.0 customers have the

liberty of posting both negative and/or positive reviews about a company with minimal restriction (Lin, Lu, & Wu, 2012; Cantalops & Salvi, 2014; King, Racherla, & Bush, 2014).

This study also utilises the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) as encapsulated in Figure 4, to explain how consumers accept and use EWOM (see Appendix A2). In the ELM, proficiency is synonymous with the ability to understand content, whereas involvement is associated with people's willingness to understand content. Essentially, proficiency enables people to process messages with ease and involvement gives them the drive to process messages (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006). As such, the model suggests that if people are able and willing, they will use central concepts in response to content that is persuasive. In contrast, the ELM states that people who are unable and not willing to process content are more likely to use exterior concepts (mental shortcuts) to contemplate persuasive messages. Furthermore, individuals who are perceived as highly proficient have increased levels of confidence when making decisions to purchase products and/or services, in comparison to those who are highly involved. Simply, these individuals are seen to have more motivation in their understanding of a brand's offerings and often refer to external opinions before purchasing a product or service (Fan & Miao, 2012).

EWOM can further impact brand awareness, given that customers formulate opinions about companies not only through direct communication with them on their online profiles, but also via other sources such as user engagement. Hansson et al., (2013), noted that 64% of customers visited a brand's online profile page if they had witnessed a friend doing the same. Furthermore, people are encouraged to participate in online reviewing, to understand what is new on the market and the response and/or approval received by others. For example, if a follower of a brand's profile comments on a specific post or function on the page, this information can be viewed by the user's followers and thereby affect their attitudes towards the brand, its products and/or services. Moreover, when people view EWOM information that is visually stimulating this creates more interest and thus, influences positive buying behaviour (Lin *et al.*, 2012; Al Mana & Mirza, 2013; Kwok & Yu, 2013). As such, the following hypotheses were derived:

Hypothesis 4a: Types of content is positively related to EWOM.

Hypothesis 4b: EWOM on Instagram will be positively associated with purchasing intentions.

2.3.6 Purchase intentions

2.3.6.1 Purchase decision-making process

For several years, researchers from a variety of disciplines have investigated the ways in which people make decisions. As such, several studies and behavioural models have contributed to the body of literature in relation to the process of consumer purchase decision-making, to obtain a clear understanding of what prompts individuals to purchase a particular product and/or service (Kollat, Engel, & Blackwell, 1970; Webster Jr & Wind, 1972; Narayana & Markin, 1975; Gupta, Su, & Walter, 2004; Comegys, Hannula, & Väisänen, 2006; Frambach, Roest, & Krishnan, 2007; Darley, Blankson, & Luethge, 2010). Consumers are faced with many daily decisions and as such, must cope with an overload of information. Many decisions are facilitated by companies and/or brands who offer reassurance, whilst linking present and future knowledge, awareness, experiences and fulfilment. Considering this, companies should understand the importance of their role in influencing purchase intent ((Hutter *et al.*, 2013).

The framework for understanding the consumer decision-making process can be found in the Hierarchy of Effects (HOE) model, which stems from literature grounded in communications and advertising, and focuses on the cognitive phases of consumer-product and/or brand relationships. This is illustrated in Figure 5 (see Appendix A3). The model encompasses several steps that consumers pass through prior to buying a product and/or service. Step one is known as the cognitive stage and sees the consumer migrating from a place of unawareness to awareness. Essentially, it is the phase where consumers obtain knowledge about a product and/or service. To attract customers at the initial stage of this process, companies should ensure that content is effective in getting their message to consumers. The second step is the affective stage and highlights the formation of the consumer's attitude and feelings towards a company's offerings. This can be either positive or negative (Barry & Howard, 1990). The third and final step is known as the conative stage and prompts an action from the consumer that is to either purchase, avoid or reject the product and/or service. If consumers have made the decision to purchase, it is believed that this will lead to increased loyalty in the specific brand (Hutter *et al.*, 2013).

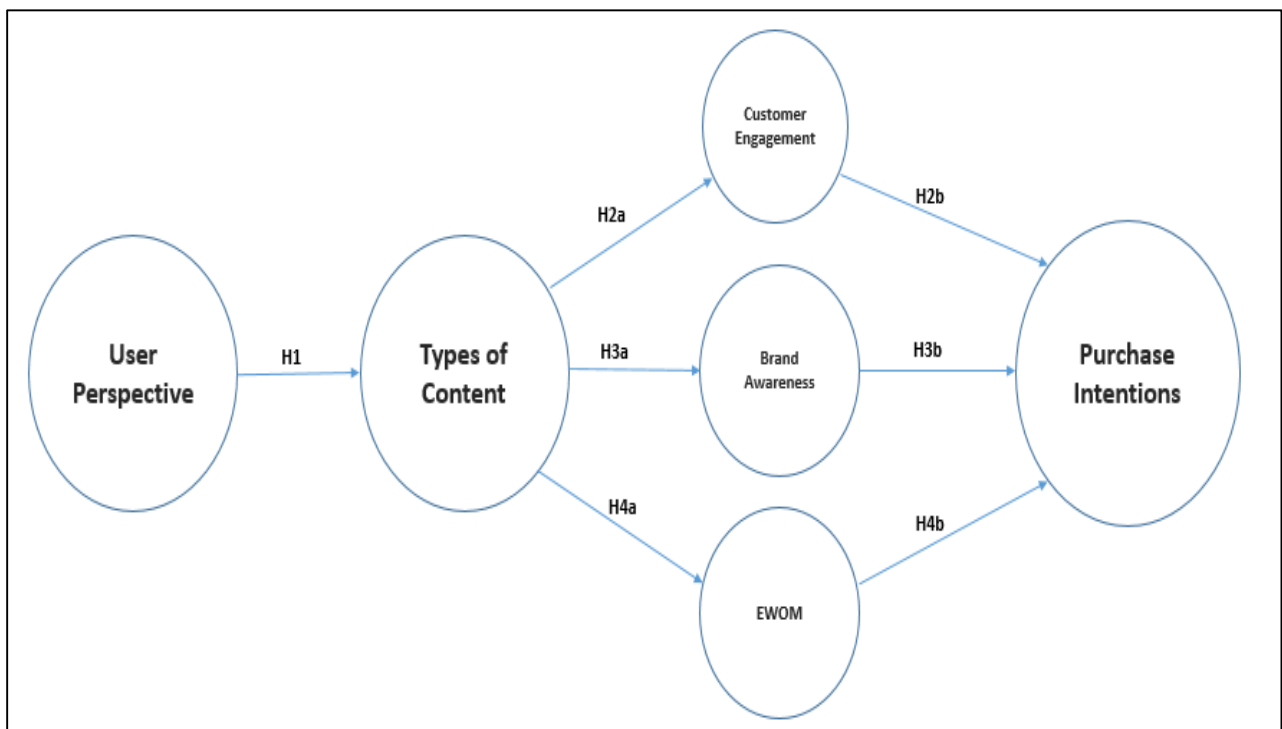
From the above, we can conclude that the HOE model strongly impacts consumer's decision-making in the earliest phases of the process. Furthermore, the sequence and/or flow of these phases is largely dependent on consumer involvement (Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Wijaya, 2015). In this study, the researcher reveals how types of content influence consumer buying behaviour at every stage of

the HOE model, that is, the cognitive stage (effective content that communicates significant brand attributes in order to create brand awareness), the affective stage (messages that promotes brand values including other factors that affect change in consumer attitudes, such as engagement) and finally, the conative stage (content that encourages EWOM by persuading consumers of their need for the brand’s products and/or services).

2.4 Conceptualised Model

The conceptualised model that was developed for this study is shown in Figure 6 below and highlights the correlation between constructs; user perspective, types of content, customer engagement, brand awareness and EWOM, which is believed to have positive associations with purchase intentions.

Figure 6: Conceptual model



2.5 Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, the hypotheses that was developed from the literature above will be listed in Table 1 below and includes the key references that pertained to the constructs of this study.

Table 1: Hypotheses with key references

	Hypotheses	Key References
1	User perspective positively impacts types of content.	(Zwass, 2010; He <i>et al.</i> , 2013; See-To & Ho, 2014; Steenkamp, 2014; Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016).
2a	Types of content are positively related to customer engagement.	(Bandura, 2001; Dunne <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Sashi, 2012; Ku <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Whiting & Williams, 2013).
2b	Customer engagement on Instagram positively impacts purchasing intentions.	(Williams & Chinn, 2010; Malthouse <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Monica & Balaş, 2014; Dolan <i>et al.</i> , 2016; Kizgin <i>et al.</i> , 2017).
3a	Types of content are positively related to brand awareness.	(Chi <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Kim <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016)
3b	Brand awareness on Instagram will positively influence purchasing intentions.	(Hutter <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Malik <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Hakkak <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015).
4a	Types of content are positively related to EWOM.	(Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Lin <i>et al.</i> , 2012; King <i>et al.</i> , 2014).
4b	EWOM on Instagram will be positively associated with purchasing intentions.	(Barry & Howard, 1990; Fan & Miao, 2012; Al Mana & Mirza, 2013; Alhidari, Iyer, & Paswan, 2015).

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insight into the methodology that was used to conduct research. A quantitative research design was utilised to test the hypotheses and the conceptualised model that were developed for this study. In addition, several statistical techniques were employed to analyse the research data and will further be discussed in detail. The outcome of this chapter presents an in-depth understanding of the reliability and validity factors that pertain to the relationships between the constructs user perspective, types of content, brand awareness, customer engagement, EWOM and how it impacts purchase intentions.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The epistemology of this study is positivist, whereby the focus centres on explaining and predicting casual relationships between variables and constructs. Auguste Comte, a French philosopher founded the concept of positivism and believed that reality can be observed. Essentially, positivism implies that the researcher is the observer of an objective reality. Furthermore, this approach gives emphasis to scientific methods, statistical analysis, and generalisable findings (Mack, 2010).

The ontological perspective of this study can be considered objectivist, through which the social world can be objectively viewed and/or studied with minimum interference (Cooper, Schindler, & Sun, 2006). The overall goal of this approach is to obtain results which can be generalised to other situations. As such, the researcher maintained independence from other global observations, by sourcing data from South African Instagram users only. This was carried out by utilising a predetermined research instrument. The ontological and epistemological assumptions in the positivist paradigm tend to overlap and are divided into two broad categories as shown in Table 2 (see Appendix A4). In addition, this study can also be considered as deductive research, that is based on logic and focuses on hypotheses that were developed based on existing theory (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2015).

According to Creswell (2014), there are three methodological processes through which research can be conducted in the social sciences. These include qualitative, quantitative and triangulation approaches. This study adopts a quantitative research methodology which the researcher uses to gather and evaluate data from the closed-ended questions incorporated in the research instrument.

The main goal of quantitative research is to determine the relationship between variables within a specific population (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, this method is appropriate for this study since it enables objective theories to be tested by examining the relationships between variables. Consequently, these variables are measured on instruments that generate numerical data which are analysed through statistical measures (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Quantitative research is advantageous, given that, it is clear and precise, follows the original set of research goals, identifies all constructs that are being examined, tests hypotheses and arrives at more objective conclusions.

Additionally, this method eliminates subjectivity of judgment and attains high levels of reliability as a result of controlled observations, mass surveys and/or other forms of manipulations in research (Bryman, 2015). The disadvantages of this methodology is that it does not provide information on the context of an occurrence where the studied phenomenon occurs, and has the inability to control the environment in which cohorts provide the researcher with feedback. An assumption of the quantitative approach is the ability to determine whether purchase intentions are positively associated with the constructs of this study, by testing the relationships between variables and examining the results (Brannen, 2017).

3.3 Research Design

This study can be considered as explanatory research since it investigates the causal relationships between constructs that pertain to the research problem. Furthermore, this approach analyses a specific social phenomenon, examines the impact of change on variables and measures these changes to provide systematic evidence of the patterns in their relationships (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

In addition, a cross-sectional research design was adopted and entailed the collection of data from the sample population, at a specific time. This data was quantifiable, pertained to the variables of the study and was examined for relevant patterns of association (Creswell, 2014). As such, the researcher explored the relationships between user perspective (independent variable), types of content, customer engagement, brand awareness, and EWOM (mediator variables) for its cause-and-effect relationship on purchase intentions (outcome or dependant variable).

A survey-type research instrument, that is, a structured online questionnaire was administered to the cohorts of this study and comprised demographical and close-ended questions. This method of gathering data is essentially used in cross-sectional research to investigate several topics, ideologies and/or traits where feedback can be generated by survey participants. The advantages of using this research instrument are that it is easy to obtain data, since the survey can be deployed faster through the internet, thus resulting in increased response rates. Moreover, it comprises a user-friendly and flexible design and is also a cost-efficient data collection tool. Disadvantages of this approach include issues with accessibility, for example difficulties in opening the survey link, which are perceived to lead to annoyance and thus failure to participate in the survey. The most severe disadvantage is known as questionnaire fraud, where participants answer surveys generically or to receive the incentive. In addition, respondents may be biased in their responses by indicating what they think may be a correct answer as opposed to what they believe in reality (Wright, 2005; Kalof, Dan, & Dietz, 2008; Sue & Ritter, 2011).

3.3.1 Sampling design

3.3.2 Target population

Population can be defined as the mass collection of elements in a study, from which the researcher can draw conclusions (Cooper *et al.*, 2006; Bryman, 2015). The target population of this research is all South African Instagram users, who were selected based on characteristics that pertained to the population of this study. The researcher considered this to be the actual population from which the sampling frame could be drawn, and results could be generalised.

3.3.3 Sampling frame

The sample frame utilised in this study consisted of all South African users who followed a South African brand and/or business profile on Instagram. Survey participants were identified from the researcher's personal followers list and included referred respondents who fitted this study's sample demographic profile. Thereafter, the cohorts were contacted via the SNS instant messaging service (see Appendix A5). Due to the web-based nature of online surveys, there were no constraints in collecting data from sample units across South Africa.

3.3.4 Sample size

To obtain an accurate representation of the target population, the researcher used a sample size calculator to determine the sample size of this study. In addition, a 95% confidence level was inferred with a potential population of 500 participants. The estimated sample size amounted to 250 participants (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998; O'Rourke, Psych, & Hatcher, 2013; Hatcher & O'Rourke, 2014). Due to the voluntary nature of respondents in survey-based research, the probability that the return rate would be lower than anticipated was taken into consideration. This could be due to the time constraints and the uncooperative nature of individuals (Cooper *et al.*, 2006). As such, the final sample return totalled 217 respondents. According to Hair et al., (1998), this figure is suitable for generalising results, given that the preferred sample size should not be below 100 survey participants. The demographic profile of the sample cohorts is encapsulated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

Description of respondent type	Gender	Location	Number sampled
South African Instagram user	Male and Female	Nationally (South African)	217

3.3.5 Sampling method

The preferred sampling strategy for this study would have been the probability sampling strategy, also known as stratified sampling. Using this method, the target population is segmented into homogeneous subgroups and thereafter, a probability sample is selected from the various subgroups. Furthermore, this method improves the accuracy of the sample by ensuring that no element of the population is omitted and thus, reduces errors in sampling (Cooper *et al.*, 2006). However, due to constraints such as time and accessibility it was not feasible to adopt this strategy in this research.

Considering the above, this study employed two non-probability sampling strategies, that is, the convenience and snowball sampling methods. The convenience sampling strategy was used to conduct the pilot study, due to the availability, accessibility and willingness of respondents from the target population to participate in the survey. An assumption of this sampling method is the homogeneous nature of cohorts from the target population, given that there are no variances in the

results obtained from random, nearby and/or co-operative samples (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The snowball sampling method is a widely used strategy in the social sciences discipline (Noy, 2008). This strategy was used when administering the finalised survey to the sample cohorts of this study and yielded respondent information through recommendations that were made by other individuals, who either possessed or knew of others who possessed the characteristics required for participating in this research. Furthermore, the snowballing method is known for its uniqueness since it draws sample units that are organic and interactive (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Dusek, Yurova, & Ruppel, 2015). This sampling strategy addressed the accessibility and time constraints which were initially faced by the researcher. The online survey was disseminated via electronic mail (email) and the researcher's Instagram profile, where followers could interdependently share the link that was posted to their personal profiles and with their followers, thus creating a snowball effect.

3.3.6 The research instrument

A structured questionnaire which consisted of 16 predetermined and/or close-ended questions was administered to the sample of respondents and completed online, to obtain the necessary data for this study (see Appendix A6). Close-ended questions are essentially used in quantitative studies and are beneficial for web surveys since response rates are generally higher. Users do not have to go through lengthy procedures of inputting data and are able to select answers from drop-down lists of choices, for example; "yes", "no" and "all of the above". Furthermore, close-ended questions are less complex and can be easily analysed (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, & Vehovar, 2003; Kalof *et al.*, 2008). The survey was compiled using the Qualtrics software which was provided by the Wits Business School.

The advantages of using this research instrument includes its inexpensive nature, simplicity in analysing data, quick turnaround time in administering the survey and the flexibility experienced by participants when responding to questions (Wright, 2005). On the other hand, the disadvantage of this instrument is the fact that respondents cannot be prompted to clarify or elaborate on an answer if it is unclear (Bryman, 2015). The questions drafted in the survey were adapted from several studies (Gillenson & Sherrell, 2002; Chatterjee, 2011; Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011; Spry, Pappu, & Bettina Cornwell, 2011; Wallace, Wilson, & Miloch, 2011; De Vries *et al.*, 2012; Lin *et al.*, 2012; Sashi, 2012; Hansson *et al.*, 2013; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Malik

et al., 2013; Osarenkhoe & Komunda, 2013; Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, & Pauwels, 2013; Schlinke & Crain, 2013; Swani, Milne, & P. Brown, 2013; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014; Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014; Monica & Balaş, 2014; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014; Ginsberg, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2015; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Gafni & Golan, 2016; Giannoulakis & Tsapatsoulis, 2016; Highfield & Leaver, 2016; Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2016), and were tailored to specifically meet the features and characteristics of Instagram.

In addition, the survey was administered in the English language, since it is the official business language in South Africa and is widely spoken and understood across the world. This will allow future researchers and/or scholars to review the outcomes of this study and pursue further research within this field.

The questionnaire was divided into three portions, with the opening and/or general section featuring questions that pertained to Instagram usage and the nationality of the participants (see Appendix A6). These questions used a nominal scale (control variable) and comprised a drop-down list of “yes” or “no” options (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). If respondents answered “no” to any of these questions, they were not permitted to complete the survey.

The second half of the questionnaire comprised sections A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H, with each section comprising of an average of five to ten questions. Section A examined users Instagram activity, whereas Sections B to G pertained to the variables user perspective, types of content, customer engagement, brand awareness, EWOM and purchase intentions, which were aligned to the research objectives of this study. Section H consisted of demographical questions that required respondents to input their relevant background information. Subsequently, the in-depth literature review covered in Chapter 2 enabled the researcher to provide extensive insight in each section of the questionnaire to validate these constructs.

A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the research instrument and scientifically analysed the combination of statements that revealed respondents’ attitudes, perceptions and behavioural patterns. The advantage of selecting this measurement was that it offered respondents a wider range of options in comparison to a five-point Likert scale, whereby respondents have limited options to select scales that best express their emotions towards a specific statement. Survey participants were prompted to show their level of agreement by selecting a single Likert item which ranged from agreement (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree) to disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree and

somewhat disagree). The participants who were unsure about a statement had the option of selecting the neither agree nor disagree scale item. This provided respondents with more nuance in scale and thus, enhanced the analytical ability for better results (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

3.4 Data Collection Technique and Procedure

There are several methods that are available for gathering data and these include structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups, respondent observations, documents that include newsletters, databases and/or reports and questionnaires and surveys (Trochim *et al.*, 2015). This study used an online data collection technique that took the form of a structured questionnaire.

Once the researcher received approval from the faculty's panel of assessors, a pilot study was conducted via the Qualtrics software application, to test the research instrument. The survey link was distributed to several cohorts within the researcher's access, to identify any challenges that might have been overlooked by the researcher, and to provide criticism and feedback for improvement. The pilot study was conducted over a period of ten working days. Thereafter, the necessary alternations were made, and the finalised survey was disseminated to respondents, which included a confidentiality clause, assuring respondents that all information documented would not be distributed without their consent. Data obtained from the questionnaires was collated through Qualtrics in preparation for analysis and interpretation.

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The process of analysis entailed the documentation of data on Microsoft Excel software, which was statistically analysed using the IBM social package for social scientist (SPSS) analysis of moment structures (AMOS) version 22 software. SPSS AMOS enabled the researcher to accurately utilise structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the hypotheses and gain insight into the complex relationships of the constructs of this study. Furthermore, this powerful software extends to methods such as factor analysis (Arbuckle, 2010). In addition, SPSS statistics was used to run descriptive statistics to measure the demographic variables such as age and gender, which assisted the researcher in understanding the characteristics of each variable.

As part of multivariate statistics, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the causal relationships between the variables that were measured and to test the validity of these variables. Validity refers to the extent to which a scale or set of measurements accurately represents

the concept of interest (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Factor loadings that were less than 0.4 were considered insignificant and hence removed from the model. Scholars such as Hair et al., (1998) have also further reiterated this in their research. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was used to measure the suitability of data to run factor analysis. This statistical measurement tests the adequacy of the sample that pertains to each construct in the model, including the completed model. KMO values that were greater than 0.5 confirmed the adequacy of the sample in this research. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was used to evaluate the interdependence between items within the same construct. A p-value that was less than 0.05 was the minimum requirement for the Barlett test and indicated the usefulness of factor analysis with the data collected (Hyuncheol, 2013).

Cronbach's Alpha is one of the most widely used reliability measures within the field of social sciences and was used to test the internal consistency of all multiple Likert items that formed this study's scales. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all correlations between the items in a multiple item scale measure the same concept or construct and produces scores that are similar. Cronbach's Alpha ranges from zero to one and the closer the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is to 1 the greater the reliability (Bonett & Wright, 2015). In this study, values that were greater than 0.7 were considered acceptable.

Pearson's correlation analysis measures the strength of the relationship between two variables and was applied in this study. Pearson correlation coefficients are considered weak if values range from 0 and 0.29, moderate if values are between 0.3 and 0.49, and strong if values range from 0.5 and 1. The sign of the correlation coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship. A positive correlation implies that as one variable increases the other variable increases. On the other hand, a negative correlation coefficient indicates that when one variable increases the other variable decreases and vice versa. A p-value of Pearson's correlation that was lower than 0.05 implied that the relationships were significant, whilst a p-value that was greater than 0.05 indicated an insignificant relationship (Murphy, Myors, & Wolach, 2014; Kenett, Huang, Vodenska, Havlin, & Stanley, 2015).

3.6 Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were identified in this research:

- This study focused on Instagram users who are South African and did not consider users from other countries
- The sampling strategies that were adopted for this study included the convenience and snowball methods. As such, the results obtained may not be completely accurate in their representation of the population
- Only one SNS channel (Instagram) was explored for effective ways of marketing to influence consumer behaviour.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the quality of the research procedure and the precision of results (Cooper *et al.*, 2006).

3.7.1 Convergent validity

As a subtype of construct validity, convergent validity measures the extent to which constructs that are theoretically related to each other are in fact, related to each other. (Hajli, 2014). Convergent validity was determined by measuring the strength of the relationships between the constructs of this study, namely; user perspective, types of content, brand awareness, customer engagement, EWOM and purchase intentions. This was achieved using the correlation coefficient and chi-square. Based on the hypotheses that were developed from the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, results confirmed that all hypothesis statements had positive associations with their corresponding construct and proved that the theories pertaining to these constructs were indeed related to the same construct.

3.7.2 Discriminant validity

Construct validity can be ensured by evaluating both convergent validity and discriminant validity. Both work together to achieve construct validity and neither is sufficient on its own to establish construct validity. Discriminant validity measures whether variables identified in theory to have no correlation are confirmed to have no correlation. As such, measurements should indicate relationships with other constructs and/or influencing factors. Furthermore, correlation values need

to be low which suggests the distinctness of variables in order to confirm discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). In this study, discriminant validity was established by testing the inter-correlation between constructs using chi-square and Pearson's correlation analysis among all constructs in the conceptual model.

3.7.3 Internal validity

Internal validity is the estimated truth in relation to the conclusions drawn from causal relationships. As such, internal validity is regarded as the primary consideration when ensuring whether studies which establish cause-effect relationships have made a difference to research. Essentially, internal validity confirms that the evidence of what was done in the study resulted in what was observed to occur (Kayes, 2005; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). To ensure that the measured correlations between constructs were reliable, the research instrument was first tested by conducting a pilot study which identified and clarified any existing issues, challenges or misinterpretations, to reduce common method variance. The pilot survey was disseminated to industry experts to technically assess the consistency and validity of the research instrument. As such, the feedback indicated that the statements pertaining to sponsored posts and celebrity endorsements were confusing for some respondents and thereby needed clarification. These phrases were then edited by the researcher to better fit the scale and thereafter, the full-scale survey was distributed to the sample cohorts.

3.7.4 External validity

External validity investigates the degree to which causal relationships can be replicated across various settings, contexts and/or a larger population. Furthermore, when internal validity has been established, external validity can be evaluated (Calder, Phillips, & Tybout, 1982; Krupnikov & Levine, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the sampling frame of this study was calculated from a greater population of Instagram users who represented several categories of age groups, education levels, occupation levels, income brackets and gender groups across South Africa. The researcher captured a total of 217 completed survey responses, which Hair et al., (1998) notes as an accurate representation of the population through which results can be generalised. From an industry perspective, the conclusions that were derived from the relationships between the constructs of this study can be applied across various business settings and is as an important factor for practitioners who wish to determine how to positively impact consumer purchasing behaviour.

3.7.5 Reliability

Reliability can be defined as the extent to which research data repeatedly and consistently yields the same results (Stacey, 2005). When several efforts are made to measure the same research data and it yields the same outcomes, this indicates that the reliability of the research is high. This study used Cronbach’s Alpha to measure the reliability coefficients of the research instrument across various contexts, with a benchmark score of 0.7. Scores that are lower than 0.7 indicates the unreliability of the research instrument. Any score that reflects a 0.7 to 1.0 is indicative of a highly reliable instrument (Cooper *et al.*, 2006; Bonett & Wright, 2015).

3.8 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, a summary of the survey questions that pertain to the constructs of this study will be presented in the Tables 4 to 9 below.

Table 4: User Perspective

Statement	User Perspective
1	I am more likely to follow a brand that I usually use.
2	I am more likely to follow a brand’s profile if they post timeous and relevant content.
3	Posts offering a product or service are enticing.
4	I enjoy attributes of humour in a brand’s posts.

Table 5: Types of Content

Statement	Types of Content
1	I prefer brands that post content in a variety of formats.
2	I prefer video content only.
3	I prefer content with images only.
4	I prefer brands that showcase lots of live content.

Table 6: Brand Awareness

Statement	Brand Awareness
1	Following a brand on Instagram makes me consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real time.
2	Posts that contain information about a company enable me to remember the brand.
3	Call for purchase posts such as special offers enhances my knowledge about the brand.
4	A sponsored post that randomly appears on my timeline, positively influences me to follow a brand’s profile.

Table 7: Customer Engagement

Statement	Customer Engagement
1	The total number of followers on a brand's profile prompts me to follow that profile.
2	The number of video clip views on a post indicates that the post is important.
3	The number of likes on a post indicates that a post is interesting/popular.
4	The number of comments on a post indicates that a post is worth paying attention to.

Table 8: EWOM

Statement	EWOM
1	Enticing comments and reviews made on posts prompt me to share it with others.
2	Posts that are shared by others, prompt me to follow that brand's profile.
3	Brand campaigns prompt me to share the brand's posts.
4	Negative brand experiences such as failure to respond to queries or poor service delivery in real time, prompts me to share this knowledge with other users.

Table 9: Purchase Intentions

Statement	Purchase Intentions
1	The number of likes and comments on a brand's posts influences my decision to acquire their products or services.
2	A post displaying prices is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.
3	A post with clear selling intentions such as "shop now", "click to buy" and/or the brand's website link, will prompt a purchase from me.
4	Content showcased via Instagram stories is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. First, the internal validity and reliability of the measurement scale are presented, which displays the Cronbach Alpha scores for each listed factor. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was undertaken to validate the variables relevance, whilst highlighting the construct it formed part of. Next, the descriptive statistics generated for each variable are presented in a table format. Lastly, the researcher presents the results that pertain to the research question, sub-questions and hypothesis statements.

4.2 Results Pertaining to the Internal Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Scale

4.2.1 Scale validity

Validity of the constructs was assessed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). For the Brand Awareness construct, the item Q9_6 – “A sponsored post that randomly appears on my timeline, does not influence me to follow a brand’s profile” was removed, since it had an anti-imagery correlation less than 0.4 and a communality less than 0.3. As per the guidance from Hair et al., (1998), factors that were below 0.4 were deleted accordingly.

The scale for the Types of Content item Q7_13 - “A celebrity endorsing a brand has no impact on me buying a product/service” was reversed before factor analysis (i.e. 1 = 7,2 = 6,3 = 5,4= 4,5 = 3,6 = 2,7 = 1) since it was negatively correlated to the rest of the items in the construct.

Table 10 encapsulates the KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. All the KMO values were greater than the minimum required value of 0.5. This implies that the sample was adequate to conduct factor analysis. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity had significant p-values less than 0.05, as required for factor analysis to be appropriate.

Table 10: KMO and Bartlett's Test for all the Constructs

User Perspective		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.721
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	509.504
	df	45
	Sig.	.000
Types of Content		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.620
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	462.824
	df	36
	Sig.	.000
Customer Engagement		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	563.757
	df	15
	Sig.	.000
Brand Awareness		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.757
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	295.665
	df	6
	Sig.	.000
EWOM		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.779
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	447.617
	Df	10
	Sig.	.000
Purchase Intentions		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.840
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	590.538
	Df	28
	Sig.	.000

The results in Tables 11 - 16 show the final construct composition, factor loadings for the items within each factor and explain the total variance.

The factor analysis pertaining to the construct User Perspective yielded three interpretable sub-construct factors as seen in Table 11. These three factors were labelled as: Creativity (Factor 1),

Usage (Factor 2) and Activity (Factor 3). Similarly, the construct Types of Content comprised the following three factors: Features (Factor 1), Endorsements (Factor 2) and Technical (Factor 3) which are found in Table 12. These factors were adapted from Hansson et al., (2013), Whiting and Williams (2013) and Roncha and Radclyffe-Thomas (2016).

Table 11: User Perspective: Factor analysis

Construct	Sub-construct	Items	Loadings	Loadings	Loadings	Total variance explained
User Perspective	Creativity	Brands that run competitions interest me.	.728			24%
		Posts with trending hash-tags are considered important.	.722			
		Companies that showcase behind-the-scenes posts about their brands interest me.	.668			
		Brands offering incentives are important.	.652			
		The quality of the image or video post is critical.	.544			
	Usage	I am more likely to follow a brand's profile if they post timeous and relevant content.			.832	19%
		I am more likely to follow a brand that I usually use.			.829	
		Posts offering a product or service are enticing.			.665	
	Activity	I am more likely to unfollow a brand if they post more than 4 times a day.			.901	16%
		I enjoy attributes of humour in a brand's posts.			.825	
	Total					60%

The EFA results in Table 11 indicated that the User Perspective construct which included the three sub-constructs, made up 60% of the total variance in the items within the three constructs. The items within each of the three sub-constructs loaded highly onto the two factors.

Factor 1 was labelled Creativity and contained five items; “Brands that run competitions interest me.” “Posts with trending hash-tags are considered important.” “Companies that showcase behind-the-scenes posts about their brands interest me,” and “Brands offering incentives are important.”

Factor 2 was labelled Usage and contained three items; “I am more likely to follow a brand’s profile if they post timeous and relevant content.” “I am more likely to follow a brand that I usually use” and “Posts offering a product or service are enticing.”

Factor 3 was labelled Activity and contained two items; “I am more likely to unfollow a brand if they post more than 4 times a day” and “I enjoy attributes of humour in a brand’s posts.”

The factor loadings were very high and ranged from 0.544 to 0.901. All items within the original hypothesised construct were retained within the construct, but were split into the three sub-constructs.

The Types of Content construct retained three factors / sub-constructs which explained 63% of the total variation in the items within the scale.

Table 12: Types of Content: Factor analysis

Construct	Sub-construct	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Total variance explained
Types of Content	Features	Brands that creatively integrate Instagram features such as stickers, location tags, and/or boomerang interest me.	.729			26%
		I prefer brands that post content in a variety of formats.	.698			
		I prefer brands that showcase lots of live content.	.668			
		A brand that is prompt in responding to my queries is more likely to increase my loyalty in the brand.	.664			
		Posts with captions are vital.	.629			
	Endorsements	A celebrity endorsing a random brand has no impact on me buying a product/service.		.906		19%
		I would buy into a brand if a celebrity that was relevant to the brand endorsed it.		.874		
	Technical	I prefer content with images only.			.886	18%
		I prefer video content only.			.864	
	Total					63%

Factor 1 was labelled Features and comprised five items namely; “Brands that creatively integrate Instagram features such as stickers, location tags, and/or Boomerang interest me.” “I prefer brands that post content in a variety of formats.” “I prefer brands that showcase lots of live content.” “A brand that is prompt in responding to my queries is more likely to increase my loyalty in the brand” and “Posts with captions are vital.”

Factor 2 was labelled Endorsements and comprised two items; “A celebrity endorsing a brand has no impact on me buying a product/service” and “I would buy into a brand if a celebrity that was relevant to the brand endorsed it.”

Factor 3 was labelled Technical and consisted of two items; “I prefer content with images only” and “I prefer video content only.”

The items within each of the three sub-constructs loaded highly onto their relevant factors.

In Tables 13 to 16, Customer Engagement, Brand Awareness, EWOM and Purchase Intentions constructs retained one factor for each construct. The retained factors explained 58%, 64%, 60%, and 48% of the total variance.

Table 13: Customer Engagement: Factor analysis

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	Total variance explained
Customer Engagement	The number of comments on a post indicates that a post is worth paying attention to.	.823	58%
	The number of likes on a post indicates that a post is interesting/popular.	.819	
	The number of video clip views on a post indicates that the post is important.	.819	
	The total number of followers on a brand’s profile prompts me to follow that profile.	.765	
	Positive comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post/call for action on a post.	.742	
	Negative comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post/call for action on a post.	.587	

Table 14: Brand Awareness: Factor analysis

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	Total variance explained
Brand Awareness	Following a brand on Instagram makes me consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real time.	.844	64%
	Posts that contain information about a company enable me to remember the brand.	.834	
	Call for purchase posts such as special offers enhances my knowledge about the brand.	.796	
	A sponsored post that randomly appears on my timeline, positively influences me to follow a brand’s profile.	.711	

Table 15: EWOM: Factor analysis

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	Total variance explained
EWOM	Brand campaigns prompt me to share the brand's posts.	.856	60%
	When a brand that I follow posts new product or service information, I will share the post with others.	.841	
	Enticing comments and reviews made on posts prompt me to share it with others.	.815	
	Posts that are shared by others, prompt me to follow that brand's profile.	.767	
	Negative brand experiences such as failure to respond to queries or poor service delivery in real time, prompts me to share this knowledge with other users.	.539	

Table 16: Purchase Intentions: Factor analysis

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	Total variance explained
Purchase Intentions	Positive reviews and statements on a brand's posts, positively influences me to acquire their products or services.	.764	48%
	Sponsored posts that are aesthetically appealing and/or attention grabbing, will prompt a purchase from me.	.752	
	A post with clear selling intentions such as "shop now", "click to buy" and/or the brand's website link will prompt a purchase from me.	.748	
	Content showcased via Instagram stories is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.	.704	
	The number of likes and comments on a brand's posts influences my decision to acquire their products or services.	.692	
	A post displaying prices is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.	.627	
	Negative statements and reviews on a brand's posts, negatively influences my acquisition of their products or services.	.609	
	Companies who regularly interact with their followers, increases my loyalty toward the brand.	.604	

4.2.2 Scale reliability

The reliability of the scale for the various constructs and/or sub-constructs was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results are shown in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Reliability

Construct / Sub-Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Level of reliability
User Perspective_Creativity	5	.715	Acceptable
User Perspective_Usage	3	.711	Acceptable
User Perspective_Activity	2	.710	Acceptable
Types of Content_Features	5	.705	Acceptable
Types of Content_Endorsements	2	.721	Acceptable
Types of Content_Technical	2	.780	Acceptable
Customer Engagement	6	.855	Very good
Brand Awareness	4	.781	Acceptable
EWOM	5	.822	Very good
Purchase Intentions	8	.840	Very good

The results above show that all constructs and/or sub-constructs had an acceptable level of reliability (all α values were greater than 0.7). Since all Cronbach's Alpha values were greater than 0.7, the items within each of constructs and/or sub-constructs could be combined to form a

summated scale for each scale. The summated scale was computed by calculating the average of the items within the scale as shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson’s Correlation

	Descriptive Statistics		Pearson’s Correlation									
	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.UP_Activity	5.82	1.062	1									
2.UP_Usage	5.69	1.058	.125	1								
3.TOC_Features	5.43	.876	.231**	.361**	1							
4.UP_Creativity	5.39	.968	.173*	.383**	.653**	1						
5.Brand Awareness	5.19	1.069	.134*	.505**	.575**	.611**	1					
6.Purchase Intentions	5.14	.981	.229**	.348**	.460**	.536**	.643**	1				
7.Customer Engagement	4.78	1.271	.157*	.147*	.383**	.436**	.413**	.552**	1			
8.EWOM	4.74	1.228	.159*	.425**	.548**	.527**	.552**	.612**	.502**	1		
9.TOC_Endorsements	4.54	.713	.182**	.150*	.257**	.213**	.275**	.244**	.167*	.236**	1	
10.TOC_Technical	4.10	1.325	.146*	.044	.153*	.194**	.176**	.274**	.316**	.155*	.361**	1

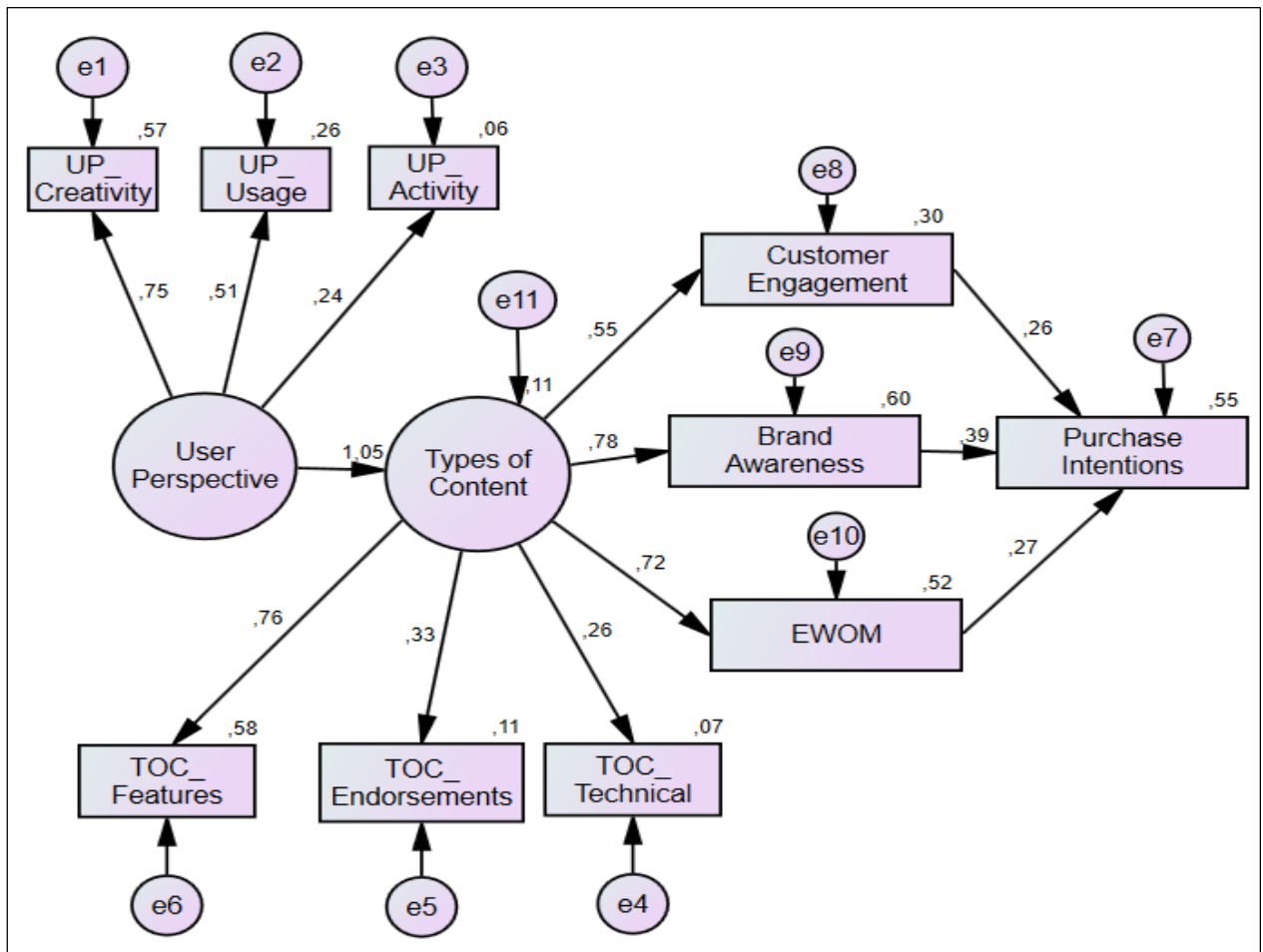
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

M: Mean. SD: Standard Deviation. UP: User Perspective. TOC: Types of Content

According to Table 18, respondents agreed the most with the UP Activity sub-construct (mean = 5.82, standard deviation = 1.062), followed by the sub-construct UP_Usage (mean = 5.69, standard deviation = 1.058). They however, agreed the least with the TOC_Technical sub-construct (mean = 4.10, standard deviation = 1.325). In addition, Pearson’s correlation results showed a significant and positive correlation between Purchase Intentions and all the other constructs, since the correlation coefficients were greater than zero and the p-values were less than 0.05. SEM was used to illustrate the relationships between the various constructs of this study and, given that the User Perspective and Types of Content constructs had more than one sub-construct, they were presented as latent variables. The SEM model of the hypotheses results is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: SEM Model



*UP – User Perspective ** TOC – Types of Content

The fit indices are shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Fit Indices

Absolute Fit Indexes	Acceptable Value	Value	Outcome
GFI	>0.9	0.942	Acceptable
AGFI	>0.9	0.898	Slightly below acceptable range
RSME	0.5 <RSME <0.8	0.076	Acceptable
NFI	>0.9	0.911	Acceptable
NNFI (TLI)	>0.9	0.925	Acceptable
CFI	>0.9	0.948	Acceptable

It was concluded that the model was good given that, most of the indices were within the acceptable range except for AGFI, which was slightly below acceptable range.

4.3 Results Pertaining to the Research Question and Sub-Questions

4.3.1 Research Question – What types of content do users consider important?

Tables 20 and 21 below reflect the survey questions that formed part of the foundation in establishing the various categories of content that users felt were important. As such, these questions pertain to the variable User Perspective and list the percentages of responses that correspond to their relevant scale and survey question.

Table 20: User Perspective response rate

User Perspective	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am more likely to follow a brand that I usually use.	1.8%	3.2%	1.4%	5.1%	15.2%	33.2%	40.1%
I am more likely to follow a brand’s profile if they post timeous and relevant content.	1.8%	2.8%	0.9%	3.7%	13.4%	43.8%	33.6%
Posts offering a product or service are enticing.	1.8%	3.7%	5.5%	9.2%	27.2%	37.3%	15.2%
I enjoy attributes of humour in a brand’s posts.	0.5%	1.4%	1.4%	2.8%	12.4%	38.7%	42.9%
I am more likely to unfollow a brand if they post more than four times a day.	0.9%	2.8%	1.4%	19.8%	17.5%	30.4%	27.2%
Posts with trending hash-tags are considered important.	3.7%	12.4%	8.3%	22.1%	21.7%	19.8%	12.0%
Brands offering incentives are important.	0.9%	6.0%	2.3%	11.5%	19.4%	38.7%	21.2%
Brands that run competitions interest me.	3.2%	9.7%	3.7%	12.0%	19.4%	31.3%	20.7%
Companies that showcase behind-the-scenes posts about their brands interest me.	0.9%	2.8%	1.8%	9.2%	26.7%	35.0%	23.5%
The quality of the image or video post is critical.	0.5%	0.9%	1.4%	2.3%	8.3%	32.3%	54.4%

From Table 20, we find that 40.1% of respondents strongly agreed that they would likely follow a brand that they usually used, 33.2% agreed and 15.2% somewhat agreed with this statement. Respondents who strongly disagreed comprised 1.8%, whereas those who disagreed comprised 3.2%. A total of 1.4% of respondents somewhat disagreed and 5.1% neither agreed nor disagreed.

The respondents who strongly agreed that they were more likely to follow a brand's profile, if the brand posted timeous and relevant content comprised 33.6%. In addition, 43.8% of the respondents agreed, whereas 13.4% somewhat agreed with this statement. A total of 2.8% of the respondents disagreed, in comparison to the 1.8% who strongly disagreed. The respondents who somewhat disagreed that they would follow a brand's profile if significant content was posted timeously, resulted in 0.9%. Additionally, 3.7% neither agreed nor disagreed.

A total of 1.8% of survey participants strongly disagreed that Instagram posts offering a product or service are enticing, whereas those who neither agreed nor disagreed comprised 9.2%, 5.5% somewhat disagreed and 3.7% disagreed. Comparatively, 15.2% of the participants indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement, 27.2% somewhat agreed and 37.3% agreed.

Respondents who somewhat agreed that they enjoyed attributes of humour in a brand's posts, totalled to 12.4%, 38.7% agreed and 42.9% strongly agreed. The respondents who disagreed and somewhat disagreed with this statement comprised 1.4%. A total of 2.8% respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, in comparison to the 0.5% who strongly disagreed.

The results from the responses that pertained to unfollowing brands that posted more than four times a day, showed that 27.2% of respondents strongly agreed, 30.4% agreed and 17.5% somewhat agreed. Additionally, 19.8% respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, whereas 1.4% somewhat disagreed. Disagreement came from 2.8% of the respondents with 0.9% that strongly disagreed.

Survey participants who neither agreed nor disagreed that Instagram posts with trending hash-tags are important, resulted in 22.1%. A total of 8.3% somewhat disagreed, 12.4% disagreed and 3.7% strongly disagreed. Comparatively, 21.7% respondents somewhat agreed with this statement, 19.8% agreed and 12% strongly agreed about the significance of trending hash-tags on this social network site.

A total of 21.2% of respondents strongly agreed that brands offering incentives (via their Instagram posts) were important. In addition, 38.7% agreed and 19.4% indicated that they somewhat agreed. Disagreement resulted in 6.0%, with 0.9% of respondents strongly disagreeing and 2.3% somewhat disagreeing. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement totalled 11.5%.

The respondents who agreed that they were interested in brands that run competitions on Instagram, totalled 31.3%. In addition, 20.7% respondents indicated that they strongly agreed, whilst 19.4%

somewhat agreed. A further 12.0% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. In contrast, 3.7% of respondents somewhat disagreed, 9.7% disagreed and 3.2% strongly disagreed.

Results pertaining to companies that showcased behind-the-scenes posts about their brands, indicated that 35.0% of participants agreed that this was of interest. Participants who somewhat agreed comprised 26.7%, whilst 23.5% were in strong agreement. Additionally, 9.2% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, whereas 2.8% confirmed disagreement. A total of 0.9% strongly disagreed and 1.8% somewhat disagreed with this statement.

Participants who strongly agreed that the quality of images or videos posted is critical, comprised 54.4%, 32.3% agreed and 8.3% somewhat agreed. A total of 0.5% strongly disagreed, 0.9% disagreed and 1.4% somewhat disagreed with this statement. Lastly, 2.3% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed that the quality of visuals on Instagram is important.

In Table 21, we find the survey questions and scale percentage of responses that were relevant to the variable Types of Content.

Table 21: Types of Content response rate

Types of Content	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I prefer brands that post content in a variety of formats.	0.9%	0.5%	0.9%	12.9%	12.9%	50.7%	21.2%
I prefer video content only.	1.8%	22.1%	12.4%	32.3%	16.1%	11.5%	3.7%
I prefer content with images only.	1.8%	17.5%	6.0%	26.7%	23.5%	18.0%	6.5%
I prefer brands that showcase lots of live content.	3.7%	13.4%	5.1%	24.9%	22.6%	23.0%	7.4%
A brand that is prompt in responding to my queries is more likely to increase my loyalty in the brand.	0.5%	0.5%	1.4%	4.1%	5.5%	30.9%	57.1%
I would buy into a brand if a celebrity that was relevant to the brand endorsed it.	5.5%	15.2%	6.9%	24.9%	22.1%	18.4%	6.9%
A celebrity endorsing a random brand has no impact on me buying a product/service.	1.8%	9.7%	13.8%	18.0%	14.3%	21.2%	21.2%
Posts with captions are vital.	0.5%	1.8%	3.7%	12.9%	18.4%	41.5%	21.2%
Brands that creatively integrate Instagram features such as stickers, location tags, and/or Boomerang interest me.	3.2%	5.1%	5.1%	19.8%	19.8%	34.6%	12.4%

From Table 21 we can conclude that 50.7% of respondents agreed that they preferred brands that post content in a variety of formats, 21.2% strongly agreed and 12.9% somewhat agreed. In contrast, 0.5% of respondents disagreed, whereas those who strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed comprised (0.9%). A further 12.9% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

The results from the participants who agreed that they preferred video content only, comprised 11.5%. In addition, 3.7% participants strongly agreed, whilst 16.1% somewhat agreed. A total of 22.1% disagreed, 12.4% somewhat disagreed and 1.8% were in strong disagreement. The participants that neither agreed nor disagreed totalled 32.3%.

The respondents who strongly agreed that they preferred content with images only, totalled 6.5%. In addition, 18.0% indicated that they agreed and 23.5% were found to somewhat agree. Comparatively, 1.8% of respondents strongly disagreed, 6.0% somewhat disagreed and 17.5% disagreed. A total of 26.7% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

The results from the participants who disagreed that they preferred brands showcasing lots of live content, made up 13.4% of this study's sample. Strong disagreement came from 3.7%, with 5.1% that somewhat disagreed. A further 24.9% of the 217 survey participants, neither agreed nor disagreed about preferring brands that frequently posted live content. In contrast, 22.6% of the respondents somewhat agreed with this statement, 7.4% strongly agreed and 23.0% agreed.

Participants who strongly agreed that brands with a prompt response rate would increase their loyalty in a brand, comprised 57.1%. Additionally, 30.9% agreed and 5.5% somewhat agreed with this statement. Respondents who somewhat disagreed were 1.4% and those who were both in strong disagreement and disagreement comprised 0.5%. A further 4.1% confirmed that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

A total of 24.9% of survey participants neither agreed nor disagreed about buying into a brand, if a celebrity that was relevant to the brand endorsed it. Additionally, 22.1% were found to somewhat agree, 6.9% strongly agreed and 18.4% agreed. In contrast, 6.9% somewhat disagreed with this statement, 15.2% confirmed their disagreement, and 5.5% participants strongly disagreed.

Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed about random celebrity endorsements impacted their buying behaviour, comprised 18.0%. In addition, 14.3% somewhat agreed and respondents who both strongly agreed and agreed were equal (21.2%). Participants who strongly disagreed totalled

to 1.8%, with 9.7% who disagreed and an additional 13.8% who somewhat disagreed with this statement.

From the results in relation to the importance of posts with captions, 21.2% strongly agreed, 18.4% somewhat agreed and 41.5% confirmed agreement. Participants who neither agreed nor disagreed, totalled to 12.9%. In contrast, 0.5% of respondents strongly disagreed, 1.8% disagreed and 3.7% somewhat disagreed with this statement.

Respondents who strongly disagreed about their interests in brands that integrated Instagram features such as stickers, location tags, and/or Boomerang, comprised 3.2%. Additionally, those who disagreed and somewhat disagreed comprised 5.1%. Similarly, respondents who somewhat agreed and neither agreed nor disagreed comprised 19.8%. Comparatively, 12.4% of respondents strongly agreed, whilst 34.6% agreed.

4.3.2 Sub-question 1 - Which forms of message content influences customer engagement?

The questions relevant to the variable Customer Engagement assisted the researcher in determining sub-question 1 and can be found in Table 22. Additionally, the percentages of responses are indicated next to their corresponding scale.

Table 22: Customer Engagement response rate

Customer Engagement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The total number of followers on a brand’s profile prompts me to follow that profile.	4.6%	17.1%	10.1%	18.0%	18.4%	19.4%	12.4%
The number of video clip views on a post indicates that the post is important.	5.1%	18.9%	9.7%	16.6%	20.3%	20.3%	9.2%
The number of likes on a post indicates that a post is interesting or popular.	2.8%	8.3%	6.0%	12.0%	15.7%	36.9%	18.4%
The number of comments on a post indicates that a post is worth paying attention to.	3.2%	11.5%	7.4%	14.3%	18.9%	26.3%	18.4%
Positive comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post or call for action on a post.	1.8%	8.3%	3.7%	12.9%	19.8%	37.3%	16.1%
Negative comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post or call for action on a post.	1.4%	12.9%	6.0%	12.9%	23.5%	31.3%	12.0%

From Table 22, we find that 4.6% of respondents strongly disagreed about following a brand’s profile, based on its total number of followers, 17.1% disagreed and 10.1% somewhat disagreed. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, comprised 18.0%. Subsequently, 18.4% somewhat agreed with this statement, whereas 19.4% agreed and 12.4% strongly agreed.

Participants who strongly agreed that the number of video clip views on a post indicated the importance of the post, comprised 9.2%. Additionally, those found in agreement and somewhat in agreement comprised 20.3%. In contrast, 18.9% disagreed with this statement, 9.7% somewhat disagreed and 5.1% strongly disagreed. Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed made up 16.6% of the study’s sample.

The results from respondents who agreed that the number of likes on a post indicates that a post is interesting or popular, totalled 36.9%. Strong agreement came from 18.4% and 15.7% somewhat agreed. Comparatively, 2.8% strongly disagreed, 8.3% disagreed, and 6.0% somewhat disagreed. A further 12.0% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

A total of 11.5% of participants disagreed that the number of comments on a post indicates that a post is worth paying attention to. In addition, 3.2% strongly disagreed and 7.4% somewhat disagreed with this statement. Participants who strongly agreed were 18.4%, with 26.3% agreeing and 18.9% somewhat agreeing. Participants who were found neither in agreement nor disagreement made up 4.3%.

Respondents who strongly agreed that positive comments on a post influenced their decision to react to a post or call for action on a post, comprised 16.1%. Additionally, 19.8% somewhat agreed, whilst 37.3% agreed. Disagreement resulted in 8.3%, with 1.8% strongly disagreeing and 3.7% somewhat disagreeing. Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed made up 12.9% of the 217 individuals who participated in this survey.

The results from participants who agreed that negative comments on a post influenced their decision to react to a post or call for action on a post, totalled 31.3%, 12.0% strongly agreed and 23.5% somewhat agreed. Strong disagreement came from 1.4%, with 12.9% disagreeing and 6.0% somewhat disagreeing. An additional 12.9% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

4.3.3 Sub-question 2 - Which forms of message content influences brand awareness?

The survey questions that pertained to the variable Brand Awareness can be found in Table 23 below. As such, the basis of sub-question 2 was developed and addressed accordingly.

Table 23: Brand Awareness response rate

Brand Awareness	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Following a brand on Instagram makes me consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real time.	0.9%	1.8%	0.0%	12.0%	18.4%	45.6%	21.2%
Posts that contain information about a company enable me to remember the brand.	1.4%	0.5%	2.3%	9.2%	20.3%	48.8%	17.5%
Call for purchase posts such as special offers	2.3%	2.3%	3.2%	12.0%	22.1%	40.1%	18.0%

enhance my knowledge about the brand.							
A sponsored post that randomly appears on my timeline, positively influences me to follow a brand's profile.	11.5%	11.5%	14.7%	19.4%	16.6%	18.9%	7.4%

From Table 23, it was found that 21.2% of respondents strongly agreed that following a brand on Instagram makes them consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real time. In addition, 45.6% agreed and 18.4% somewhat agreed. Respondents that neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement made up 12.0% of the 217 participants. In contrast, 0.9% strongly disagreed and 1.8% disagreed. No participants somewhat disagreed.

Participants who strongly disagreed that posts containing information about a company assisted them in remembering the brand, comprised 1.4%. Additionally, 2.3% somewhat disagreed and 0.5% disagreed. Strong agreement came from 17.5%, with 48.8% agreeing and 20.3% somewhat agreeing with this statement. Participants who neither agreed nor disagreed comprised 9.2%.

A total of 40.1% of respondents agreed that call for purchase posts, such as special offers, enhanced their knowledge about the brand. A further 22.1% somewhat agreed and 18.0% strongly agreed. In contrast, 3.2% somewhat disagreed, whilst those who disagreed and strongly disagreed comprised 2.3%. Additionally, 12.0% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

From the results in relation to sponsored posts randomly appearing on a user's timeline and positively influencing them to follow a brand's profile, 7.4% strongly agreed, 18.9% agreed and 16.6% somewhat agreed. Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed totalled to 19.4%. Those who strongly disagreed and disagreed comprised 11.5%, whilst 14.7% were found somewhat disagreeing.

4.3.4 Sub-question 3 - Which forms of message content influences electronic-word-of-mouth?

Table 24 highlights the survey questions and responses that pertain to the variable EWOM. As such, the basis of sub-question 3 was established.

Table 24: EWOM response rate

EWOM	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Enticing comments and reviews made on posts prompt me to share it with others.	2.3%	10.1%	6.0%	13.8%	26.3%	28.1%	13.4%
Posts that are shared by others, prompt me to follow that brand's profile.	1.8%	10.1%	5.1%	17.1%	26.7%	28.6%	10.6%
When a brand that I follow posts new product or service information, I share the post with others.	2.8%	19.4%	6.9%	17.1%	21.7%	24.4%	7.8%
Brand campaigns prompt me to share the brand's posts.	1.8%	18.0%	8.8%	18.9%	24.4%	21.7%	6.5%
Negative brand experiences such as failure to respond to queries or poor service delivery in real time, prompt me to share this knowledge with other users.	1.8%	10.6%	4.1%	12.0%	14.7%	32.7%	24.0%

From Table 24, we find that 28.1% of participants agreed that enticing comments and reviews on posts, prompted them to share them with others, 13.4% strongly agreed and 26.3% somewhat agreed. Strong disagreement came from 2.3% of participants, whilst 6.0% somewhat disagreed and 10.1% disagreed. A further 13.8% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Respondents who strongly agreed that posts shared by others prompted them to follow that specific brand's profile, comprised 10.6%. In addition, 28.6% agreed and 26.7% were found in somewhat agreement. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, totalled 17.1%; in comparison to the 1.8% who strongly disagreed, 10.1% who disagreed and 5.1% that somewhat disagreed with this statement.

A total of 24.4% of the respondents agreed that when a brand which they followed posted new product or service information, they would share the post with others. A further 7.8% strongly agreed and 21.7% somewhat agreed with this statement. The participants who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, comprised 17.1%. Disagreement came from 19.4% of the participants, with 2.8% strongly disagreeing and 6.9% somewhat disagreeing.

From the results that pertained to brand campaigns which prompted users to share the brand’s posts, 24.4% somewhat agreed, 21.7% agreed and 6.5% strongly agreed. In contrast, 1.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 18.0% disagreed and 8.8% somewhat disagreed with this statement. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement made up 18.9% of the study’s sample.

Participants who somewhat disagreed that negative brand experiences prompted them to share this knowledge with other users, totalled 4.1%. Additionally, 1.8% strongly disagreed and 10.6% disagreed. The participants who agreed made up 32.7% of the study’s sample, with 24.0% strongly agreeing and 14.7% somewhat agreeing. A further 12.0% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

4.3.5 Sub-question 4 - How do customer engagement, brand awareness and EWOM positively influence user purchase intentions?

Tables 25 below lists the survey questions and responses in relation to the variable Purchase Intentions. As such, sub-question 4 was addressed.

Table 25: Purchase Intentions response rate

Purchase Intentions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The number of likes and comments on a brand’s posts influences my decision to acquire their products or services.	1.4%	13.4%	8.8%	22.1%	20.7%	18.4%	15.2%
A post displaying prices is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.	0.5%	4.1%	1.4%	5.1%	14.7%	42.4%	31.8%
A post with clear selling intentions such as "shop now", "click to buy" and/or the brand's website link, will prompt a purchase from me.	2.3%	11.5%	6.0%	15.2%	17.1%	31.3%	16.6%
Content showcased via Instagram stories is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.	3.2%	15.7%	6.5%	28.6%	21.2%	18.0%	6.9%
Positive reviews and statements on a brand’s posts, positively influences me to acquire	0.0%	4.6%	5.5%	14.7%	22.6%	35.5%	17.1%

their products or services.							
Negative statements and reviews on a brand's posts, negatively influence my acquisition of their products or services.	1.4%	4.6%	3.2%	13.8%	24.0%	39.2%	13.8%
Sponsored posts that are aesthetically appealing and/or attention grabbing, will prompt a purchase from me.	2.3%	6.0%	6.9%	18.9%	23.0%	30.0%	12.9%
Companies who regularly interact with their followers, increase my loyalty toward the brand.	0.5%	0.9%	0.9%	7.8%	20.3%	39.2%	30.4%

From Table 25, we find that 15.2% of respondents strongly agreed that the number of likes and comments on a brand's posts influenced their decision to acquire the brand's products or services. Additionally, 18.4% agreed and 20.7% somewhat agreed. Disagreement resulted in 13.4%, with 1.4% strongly disagreeing and 8.8% somewhat disagreeing. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement compromised 22.1% of the study's sample.

A total of 42.4% of the participants agreed that a post displaying prices was more likely to prompt a purchase from them. In addition, 31.8% of respondents strongly agreed and 14.7% somewhat agreed. In contrast, 4.1% disagreed and 1.4% somewhat disagreed with this statement. Only 0.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that posts with prices would positively influence his or her buying behaviour. A further 5.1% were found to be neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

In determining if a post with clear selling intentions (such as shop now, click to buy and/or the brand's website link), would prompt a purchase from users, it was found that 17.1% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 31.3% agreed and 16.6% strongly agreed. Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed made up 15.2%. Comparatively, 11.5% disagreed, 2.3% strongly disagreed and 6.0% somewhat disagreed with this statement.

Respondents who strongly agreed that content showcased via Instagram stories was more likely to prompt a purchase from them, resulted in 6.9%, with 18.0% agreeing and 21.2% somewhat agreeing. Disagreement came from 15.7%, with 3.2% strongly disagreeing and 6.5% somewhat disagreeing. A further 28.6% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

When establishing whether positive reviews and statements on a brand’s posts, positively influenced users to purchase the brand’s products or services, 35.5% agreed, 17.1% strongly agreed and 22.6% somewhat agreed. Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement made up 14.7% of this study’s sample. Disagreement came from 4.6% and 5.5% were found to somewhat disagree. No respondents were found in strong disagreement.

A total of 39.2% of the respondents agreed that negative statements and reviews on a brand’s posts, negatively influenced them to purchase the brand’s products or services. Additionally, 13.8% strongly agreed and 24.0% somewhat agreed. In contrast, 4.6% disagreed with this statement, 1.4% strongly disagreed and 3.2% somewhat disagreed. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed amounted to 13.8%.

Participants who disagreed that aesthetically appealing and/or attention grabbing sponsored posts would prompt a purchase from them, made up 6.0% of this study’s sample. Those who strongly disagreed totalled 2.3%, whilst 6.9% somewhat disagreed. Agreement came from 30.0% of the participants, with 12.9% who strongly agreed and 23% who somewhat agreed. In addition, 18.9% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

From the results pertaining to companies who regularly interact with their followers and whether it increased loyalty toward the brand, 39.2% agreed, 30.4% strongly agreed and 20.3% somewhat agreed. In contrast, 0.5% strongly disagreed, whilst respondents who disagreed and somewhat disagreed resulted in an equal percentage of 0.9%. Finally, those who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, totalled 7.8% of this study’s sample.

4.4 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 1

The results are tabulated in Table 26, which shows both the unstandardised and standardised regression weights.

4.4.1 Hypothesis 1 - User perspective positively impacts types of content

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
Types of Content	←	User Perspective	,491	1,053	,146	3,364	***
Customer Engagement	←	Types of Content	2,050	,547	,610	3,362	***
Brand Awareness	←	Types of Content	2,447	,776	,691	3,543	***

EWOM	←	Types of Content	2,602	,718	,741	3,512	***
UP Creativity	←	User Perspective	1,000	,752			
UP_Usage	←	User Perspective	,739	,508	,100	7,354	***
UP Activity	←	User Perspective	,346	,237	,103	3,368	***
TOC_Technical	←	Types of Content	1,000	,256			
TOC_Endorsements	←	Types of Content	,697	,332	,240	2,900	,004
Features	←	Types of Content	1,977	,765	,559	3,538	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Customer Engagement	,198	,259	,040	5,023	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Brand Awareness	,356	,390	,052	6,846	***
Purchase Intentions	←	EWOM	,215	,271	,045	4,820	***

*UP – User Perspective ** TOC – Types of Content *** P-Value < 0.001

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
Types of Content	←	User Perspective	,491	1,053	,146	3,364	***
Customer Engagement	←	Types of Content	2,050	,547	,610	3,362	***
Brand Awareness	←	Types of Content	2,447	,776	,691	3,543	***
EWOM	←	Types of Content	2,602	,718	,741	3,512	***

The results show that the relationship between Types of Content and User Perspective ($B = 0.491$, $\beta = 1.053$, $t\text{-value} = 3.364$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$) is significant and positive. The relationship is significant because the p-value was less than 0.05 and it is positive because the coefficient of User Perspective was greater than zero ($B = 0.491$). Thus, H1 is supported. It is concluded that User Perspective positively impacts Types of Content.

4.5 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 2

4.5.1 Hypothesis 2a - Types of content is positively related to customer engagement

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
Types of Content	←	User Perspective	,491	1,053	,146	3,364	***
Customer Engagement	←	Types of Content	2,050	,547	,610	3,362	***
Brand Awareness	←	Types of Content	2,447	,776	,691	3,543	***
EWOM	←	Types of Content	2,602	,718	,741	3,512	***

The relationship between Customer Engagement and Types of Content ($B = 2.050$, $\beta = 0.547$, t -value = 3.362, p -value < 0.001) is significant and positive. The relationship is significant because the p -value was less than 0.05 and it is positive because the coefficient Types of Content was greater than zero. Thus, H2a is supported. It is concluded that Types of Content is positively related to Customer Engagement.

4.5.2 Hypothesis 2b - Customer engagement on Instagram positively impacts purchasing intentions

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
TOC_Technical	←	Types of Content	1,000	,256			
TOC_Endorsements	←	Types of Content	,697	,332	,240	2,900	,004
TOC_Features	←	Types of Content	1,977	,765	,559	3,538	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Customer Engagement	,198	,259	,040	5,023	***

The relationship between Purchase Intentions and Customer Engagement ($B = 0.198$, $\beta = 0.259$, t -value = 5.023, p -value < 0.001) is significant and positive. The relationship is significant because the p -value was less than 0.05 and it is positive because the coefficient Customer Engagement was greater than zero. Thus, H2b is supported. It is concluded that Customer Engagement on Instagram positively impacts Purchasing Intentions.

4.6 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 3

4.6.1 Hypothesis 3a - Types of content is positively related to brand awareness

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
Types of Content	←	User Perspective	,491	1,053	,146	3,364	***
Customer Engagement	←	Types of Content	2,050	,547	,610	3,362	***
Brand Awareness	←	Types of Content	2,447	,776	,691	3,543	***
EWOM	←	Types of Content	2,602	,718	,741	3,512	***

The relationship between Brand Awareness and Types of Content ($B = 2.447$, $\beta = 0.776$, $t\text{-value} = 3.543$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$) is significant and positive. The relationship is significant because the p -value was less than 0.05 and it is positive because the coefficient Types of Content was greater than zero. Thus, H3a is supported. It is concluded that Types of Content is positively related to Brand Awareness.

4.6.2 Hypothesis 3b - Brand awareness on Instagram will positively influence purchasing intentions

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
TOC_Features	←	Types of Content	1,977	,765	,559	3,538	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Customer Engagement	,198	,259	,040	5,023	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Brand Awareness	,356	,390	,052	6,846	***
Purchase Intentions	←	EWOM	,215	,271	,045	4,820	***

The relationship between Purchase Intentions and Brand Awareness ($B = 0.356$, $\beta = 0.390$, $t\text{-value} = 6.846$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$) is significant since the p -value was less than 0.05. Thus, H3b is supported. It is concluded that there is a positive relationship between Brand Awareness on Instagram and Purchase Intentions.

4.7 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 4

4.7.1 Hypothesis 4a - Types of content is positively related to EWOM

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
Types of Content	←	User Perspective	,491	1,053	,146	3,364	***
Customer Engagement	←	Types of Content	2,050	,547	,610	3,362	***
Brand Awareness	←	Types of Content	2,447	,776	,691	3,543	***
EWOM	←	Types of Content	2,602	,718	,741	3,512	***

The relationship between EWOM and Types of Content ($B = 2.602$, $\beta = 0.718$, $t\text{-value} = 3.512$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$) is significant and positive. The relationship is significant because the p-value was less than 0.05 and it is positive because the coefficient of Types of Content was greater than zero. Thus, H4a is supported. It is concluded that Types of Content is positively related to EWOM.

4.7.2 Hypothesis 4b - EWOM on Instagram will be positively associated with Purchasing Intentions

Table 26: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	Standardised Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value
TOC_Features	←	Types of Content	1,977	,765	,559	3,538	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Customer Engagement	,198	,259	,040	5,023	***
Purchase Intentions	←	Brand Awareness	,356	,390	,052	6,846	***
Purchase Intentions	←	EWOM	,215	,271	,045	4,820	***

The relationship between Purchasing Intentions and EWOM ($B = 0.215$, $\beta = 0.271$, $t\text{-value} = 4.820$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$) is significant and positive. The relationship is significant because the p-value was less than 0.05 and it is positive because the coefficient of EWOM was greater than zero. Thus, H4b is supported. It is concluded that EWOM on Instagram will be positively associated with Purchase Intentions.

4.8 Summary of Results

Based on the above results, Hypotheses 1, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b were supported and considered significant. As such, the constructs; Customer Engagement, Brand Awareness and EWOM had positive impacts on Purchase Intentions.

Table 27: Summary of Hypotheses

	Hypotheses	
1	User perspective positively impacts types of content.	Supported
2a	Types of content is positively related to customer engagement.	Supported
2b	Customer engagement on Instagram positively impacts purchasing intentions.	Supported
3a	Types of content is positively related to brand awareness.	Supported
3b	Brand awareness on Instagram will positively influence purchasing intentions.	Supported
4a	Types of content is positively related to EWOM.	Supported
4b	EWOM on Instagram will be positively associated with purchasing intentions.	Supported

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an interpretation of the results and literature that was reviewed in the previous chapters, namely; User Perspective, Types of Content, Customer Engagement, Brand Awareness, EWOM and Purchase Intentions. First, the demographic profile of respondents is presented, which is followed by an in-depth discussion of the research questions, sub-questions and the correlations that were found between constructs. Lastly, the researcher provided insight into the hypothesis statements that were established in accordance with the conceptualised model developed for this study.

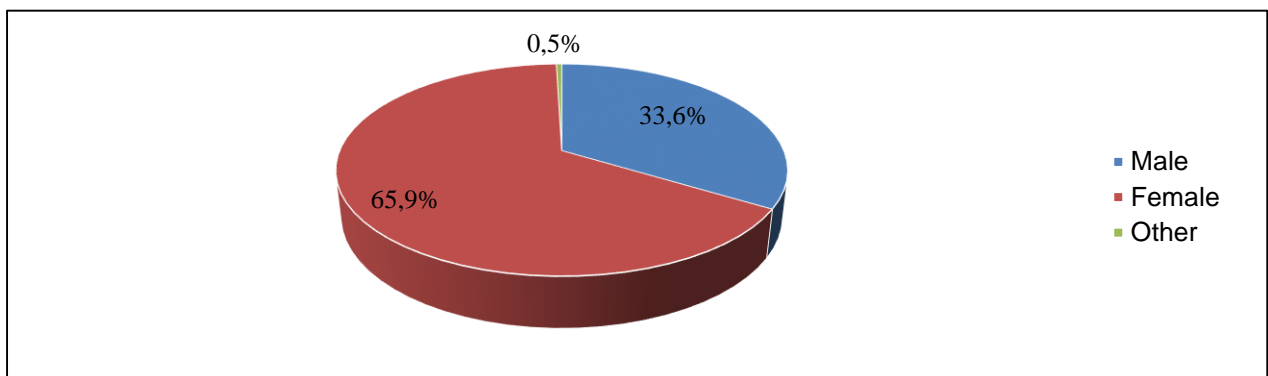
5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

From the 500 respondents that were contacted, 340 Instagram users participated in the survey. The final sample made up a total of 217 respondents. A few missing values were replaced by the mode for that specific variable. Participants were required to provide some background information by answering a series of demographically related questions which can be found below.

5.2.1 Gender

The gender distribution of the sample is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Gender

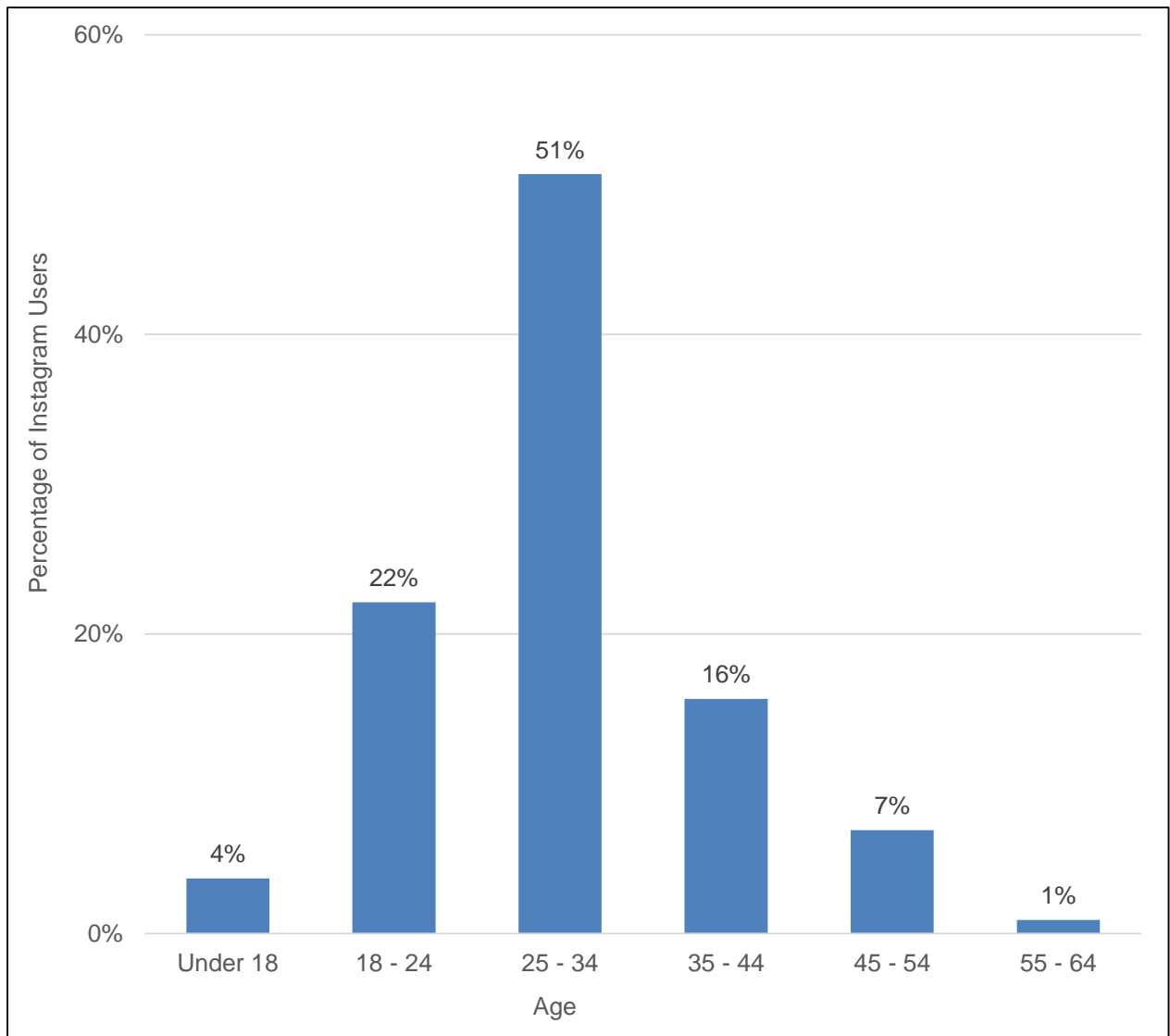


According to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), females make up the majority of Instagram users. As a result, Figure 8 indicates that a large part of the gender distribution in this study was made up of female respondents (65.9%). Male Instagram users comprised 33.6% and 0.5% other.

5.2.2 Age

Instagram users between the ages of 25 and 34 years old, made up more than half of the sample. There were very few users who were younger than 18 or older than 25 years old. Their age distribution is summarised in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Age of Instagram users



5.2.3 Other Demographics

Table 28 shows the sample distribution pertaining to Education level, Occupational status and Annual household income.

Table 28: Other Demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Highest degree or level of education	No schooling completed	6	2.8%
	High school Diploma	22	10.1%
	Diploma	40	18.4%
	Technical Diploma	5	2.3%
	Bachelor's Degree	69	31.8%
	Honour's Degree	49	22.6%
	Master's Degree	24	11.1%
	Doctorate Degree	2	0.9%
Occupational status	Student	35	16.1%
	Currently Employed	174	80.2%
	Unemployed	7	3.2%
	Retired	1	0.5%
Annual household income	Less than R100,000	39	18.0%
	100,000 to 200,000	40	18.4%
	200,00 to 300,000	40	18.4%
	400,000 to 500,000	36	16.6%
	More than 500,000	62	28.6%

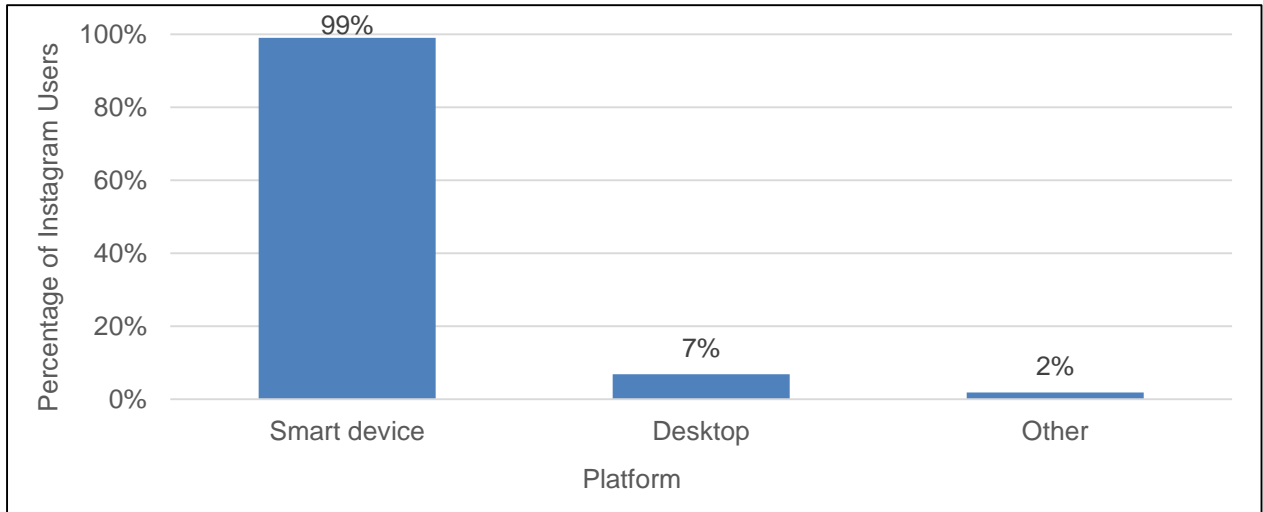
Most sample cohorts had a Bachelor's Degree or higher (66.4%). Only 2.8% had completed no schooling. Four out of every Instagram users in the sample were currently employed.

There was a wide spread of household income with 18% having an annual household income of less than R100,000, the other 18.4% had an annual household income of R100,000 to R200,000 and a further 18.4% comprised an annual household income of R200,000 to R300,000. Additionally, 16.6% had an annual household income of R400,000 to R500,000. Respondents who had an annual household income of more than R500,000, totalled 28.6%.

5.2.4 Instagram usage

The bar graph in Figure 10 below summarises the devices that were used to access Instagram.

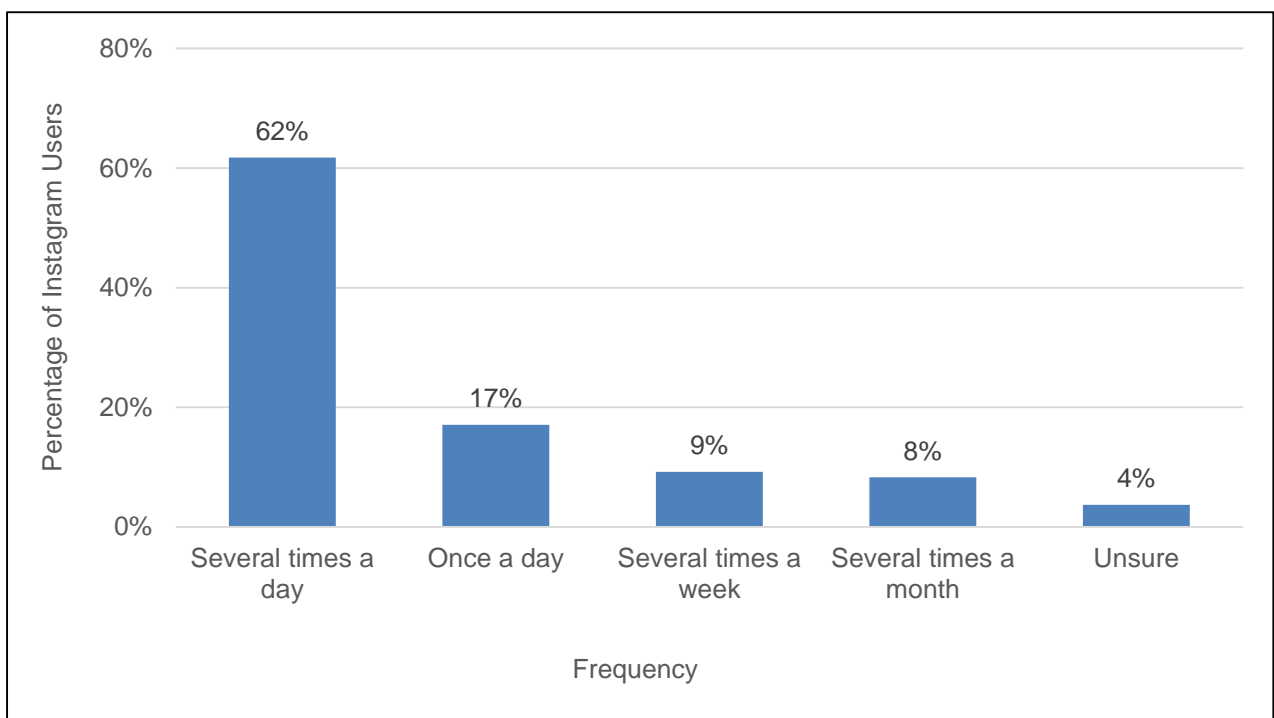
Figure 10: Devices used to access Instagram



Most users indicated that they logged onto Instagram using a Smart device (99%). Users who accessed the platform via their desktops were 7%, whereas some users used other platforms (2%).

The frequency through which users accessed Instagram is shown in Figure 11 below.

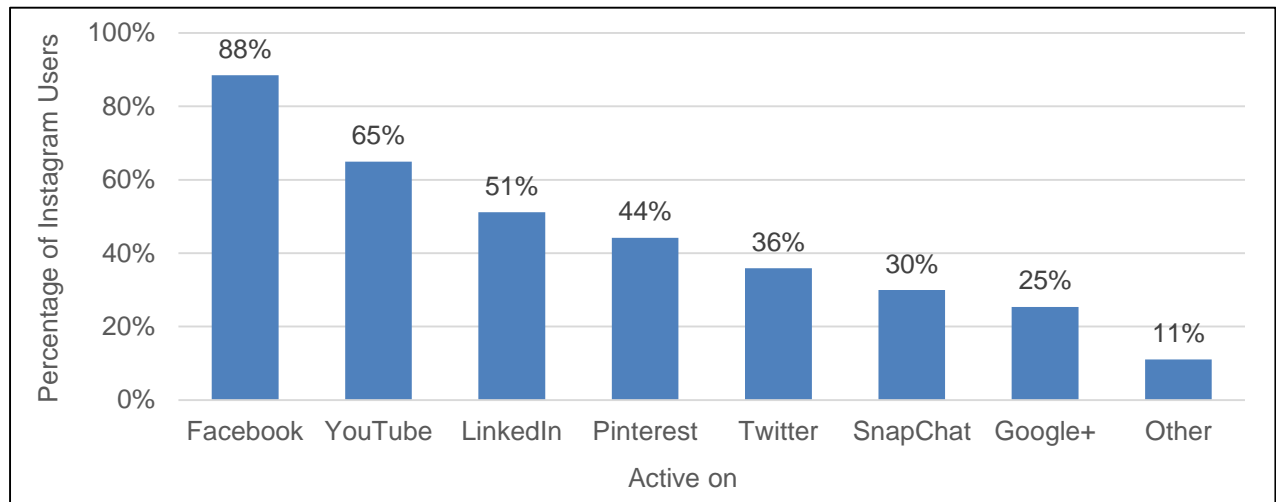
Figure 11: Frequency of accessing Instagram



A proportion of 62% of Instagram users accessed the SNS several times a day, 17% once a day and 9% several times a week.

Figure 12 below indicates the frequency distribution of other social media platforms that the sample of Instagram users were active on.

Figure 12: Other social media accessed



Besides Instagram, respondents were also active on Facebook (88%), YouTube (65%), LinkedIn (51%), Pinterest (44%), Twitter (36%), SnapChat (30%) and Google+ (25%). A proportion of 11% also used other social media platforms in addition to the mentioned ones.

5.3 Discussion Pertaining to the Research Question

Defining the role that stakeholders play in the creation of value for a company and/or organisation is essential in understanding the key role that SNS play in their interactions with individuals. To ensure that brands are effective in their dialogues with consumers, they must have an in-depth understanding of the value creation process (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011). Furthermore, consumers who are emotionally connected to a brand are perceived to have a shared brand identity. Consequently, they are more likely to participate in activities such as the development of products, services and/or shared experiences (Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

The main problem identified in this research was the limited knowledge of the effective ways in which South African companies could use Instagram to market their brands and impact consumers' purchasing behaviour. To understand this, the researcher formulated research questions which investigated what categories of content users considered important. The validity and reliability of

the model was tested using SEM modelling, which utilised fit testing and various statistical measures such as chi-square, KMO, Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson's correlation analysis, and CFI. The model showed an acceptable fit across all indexes except for AGFI, which was slightly below acceptable range. Lastly, EFA was carried out to determine whether constructs pertaining to each factor could be used in a single item which represented that specific factor. Once the model was tested and accepted, the research question could be addressed.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there were six sub-constructs that were created for the main constructs User Perspective and Types of Content namely; Creativity, Usage, Activity (User Perspective) and Features, Endorsements and Technical (Types of Content). With reference to Table 18, the sub-construct Activity was what users agreed with the most. This sub-construct reiterated the fact that users were highly likely to unfollow a brand if they posted more than four posts a day. This notion confirms that although people use social media for several reasons which include engaging with brands to obtain more knowledge about them (Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016), they do not want to be inundated with content. Furthermore, users emphasised the importance of humour in brand posts. By incorporating humour into content, brands can evoke an emotional response, such as pleasant and/or happy feelings, which consumers might associate with the brand, thereby making the company and/or organisation memorable. However, humour should be integrated smartly, so as not to position the brand and/or business negatively.

The sub-construct that pertained to Usage (on Instagram) was the second most important factor that respondents agreed with. As such, Table 11 indicated that users were more likely to follow a brand's profile if they posted timeous and relevant content. Considering this, companies should ensure that they stay current by selecting topics that are pertinent to their business and/or industry. However, companies need not feel pressured to post random content about their brands, especially if it has no relevance for consumers. Furthermore, companies should ensure that they have scheduled content on Instagram, so that Instagram posts are timeous and messages are significant (Schlinke & Crain, 2013). Secondly, users indicated that they would follow a brand that they usually used (in real-time). This signifies the importance of brands having a presence on social media such as Instagram (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011; De Vries *et al.*, 2012; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Ginsberg, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2015; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Finally, respondents noted that brand posts which offered a product or service were considered to be enticing (Gillenson & Sherrell, 2002; Vij, 2017).

When considering the construct Types of Content, Table 12 confirmed that the sub-construct that users agreed with the most was Features. Respondents felt that brands who posted content in a variety of formats and creatively integrated Instagram features such as posts with captions, live content, stickers, location tags and camera formats such as Boomerang, were of greater interest to them. In this regard, for businesses to set themselves apart, it is necessary for marketing practitioners to align themselves with these features in a way that will capture user interest (Wallace *et al.*, 2011). According to Osarenkhoe and Komunda (2013) and Stathopoulou and Balabanis (2016), customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty. As such, users confirmed that brands that were prompt in responding to their queries were more likely to increase their loyalty towards the brand, which would thereby lead to positive purchase intent (Sashi, 2012; Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014).

The results pertaining to Creativity indicated that this was the second most important sub-construct in relation to the construct Types of Content. Users agreed that brands that held competitions and offered incentives on Instagram were of great interest to them. Furthermore, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014), asserted that the most important social media activities for all managers were competitions that offered an array of prizes, which ranged from monetary rewards to product and/or service related gifts. Additionally, respondents considered trending hash-tags to be imperative when posting Instagram content. Photo owners/creators sometimes wish to accurately express their visual content with trending hash-tags to increase visibility, annotate visual elements and/or retrieve content from others. Moreover, many hash-tags have been created to carry descriptive and emotional information that could be of significance to those in search of a particular topic (Giannoulakis & Tsapatsoulis, 2016).

Users further agreed that companies that showcased their behind-the-scenes (brand culture) were appealing. A brand culture is what brings an organisation together as a whole. Social media platforms have afforded audiences a glimpse into company culture, thereby creating customised user experiences. Essentially, when users are given insight into a company's mission, values, employee contributions and other inspirational content, this may result in brand attachment since followers are able to establish emotional connections with a company, which further promotes engagement and enhanced relationships (Dasgupta & Kothari, 2018). Lastly, participants confirmed that quality visual content was a critical factor for brand posts on Instagram. High quality visual content builds credibility and sketches specific stories in the minds of users, enabling them to recall information faster and easier. Furthermore, visual elements that are carefully and strategically

designed may spark emotions which may be advantageous to companies that wish to use emotive marketing techniques to achieve various objectives (Highfield & Leaver, 2016).

The items pertaining to Endorsements and Technical sub-constructs were considered least important. Users noted that celebrity endorsements had little or no impact on their purchasing behaviour, which might be a key insight for companies who wish to invest in celebrity endorsement brand posts with the aim of promoting their brand. Additionally, most users confirmed that they neither preferred brand posts that showcased only images or only videos. Simply stated, Instagram content should feature a combination of visual elements that have creatively integrated the features of this SNS.

5.4 Discussion pertaining to the sub-questions

5.4.1 Sub-question 1

One of the key issues that marketers face is the challenge of knowing how to market effectively on social media. Content strategies need to be carefully designed, in order to establish connections and increase engagement rates between individuals and brands (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). As such, the first sub-question was to determine which forms of message content influences customer engagement the most.

With reference to Table 13, users mostly agreed that the number of comments on an Instagram post indicated that the post was worth paying attention to. In addition, participants noted that the number of likes on a post suggested that the post was interesting and/or popular. Users also agreed that the number of video clip views on a post implied that the post was important. Furthermore, users indicated that positive and negative comments on a post impacted their decision to react to the post and/or call for action on a post. According to De Vries et al., (2012), likes and comments on social media are perceived to be key drivers in social media marketing. Nonetheless, this does not guarantee that brands will receive high quality business from their followers. To enhance the number of likes and comments, brands should consider content such as videos and competitions (to obtain more likes) and posts that ask questions or prompt an action from followers (to generate comments). This is because the outcome of responding to a question, can only be achieved by making a comment. Moreover, positive comments on brand posts are associated with the number of likes on the post; which further implies that followers are influenced by other followers and are also willing to follow a brand's profile based on number of their followers. Subsequently, positive

comments increases the appeal of brand posts, which could further increase the number of likes on posts (De Vries *et al.*, 2012; Peters *et al.*, 2013).

5.4.2 Sub-question 2

The second sub-question was to explore the different forms of message content that influenced brand awareness. Hutter *et al.*, (2013) reiterated the importance of brands having a presence on social media and as such, respondents agreed the most that following a brand on Instagram made them consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real-time. Additionally, posts that contain information about a company enabled users to remember the brand. When a user has an emotional connection to a brand, this implies that brand recall in real-time is higher. Furthermore, this attitude foresees user behaviour patterns which are perceived to be of interest to companies (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Call for purchase posts such as special offers were confirmed to enhance followers' knowledge about the brand, further leading to engagement and thereby the positive intent to make a purchase (Swani *et al.*, 2013). Finally, users indicated that they were likely to follow a brand's profile if sponsored content appeared on their newsfeeds. Sponsored posts are tailored to suit the interests of users, based on their Instagram activity. As such, brands and content that are relevant to these interests may appear on their timelines which could prompt them to follow a company's profile. Sponsored posts are cost-effective and for this reason, it is important that brands investigate sponsoring their best content, to attract users to their profiles.

5.4.3 Sub-question 3

Consumers are motivated by EWOM activities, given that they generally seek easy access to information before making a decision, looking to reduce risk or for the best possible prices. Essentially, EWOM is often unintentional and unsolicited information, yet is perceived to have a strong impact on a brand's reputation, user attitudes regarding products and/or services, decision-making, sales, and differences that may exist across cultures (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014). Thus, the third sub-question formulated was to identify the forms of message content that influences EWOM.

In Table 15, it was found that the greatest motivation for sharing a post was determinant on brand campaigns. TOM's #withoutshoes marketing/brand campaign proved to be a dynamic event that re-emphasised the establishment of brand communities, the effectiveness of leveraging Instagram and the key role stakeholders play in the co-creation process. Essentially, the authors found that co-

creating value through this campaign involved all company stakeholders and resulted in the success of the company's communication initiatives, thus, leading to increased growth and consumer loyalty (Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016). Participants in the survey confirmed that when a brand that they followed posted new product or service information, they would share this post with others. In addition, if comments and reviews were enticing this would also prompt users to share the post. However, it is important to note that for product visibility, content needs to have a signature look and feel that will be set apart from other posts. Brands could also partner with social media influencers who are regarded as credible sources. As such, users agreed that this would further motivate them to follow the profile of the respective brand. (Chatterjee, 2011; Lin *et al.*, 2012; Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014). Finally, the item that featured the lowest in the factor analysis was the fact that if negative brand experiences (such as failure to respond to queries or poor service delivery in real-time) occurred, users would be prompted to share this information with others. Despite being a low-level threat, brands should be aware of how to handle customer complaints on social media, to maintain their reputation. This can be achieved by timeously and appropriately responding to queries, acknowledging an error, going the extra mile for the consumer and by following up with them to ensure that customers are satisfied (Balaji, Jha, & Royne, 2015).

5.4.4 Sub-question 4

In recent times, researchers and various marketing practitioners have been more motivated than ever to understand the effective ways of impacting people's preferences, and buying behaviour (Guesalaga, 2016). Thus, the final sub-question of this study aimed at identifying how factors such as customer engagement, brand awareness and EWOM positively influence consumer purchase intentions.

From the results in Table 16, users agreed the most with the fact that positive reviews and statements encouraged their buying behaviour. According to Spry *et al.*, (2011) products and/or service reviews are perceived to be valid on Instagram and as such, evoke attitudes of positivity towards a brand. Furthermore, Moore (2010) asserts that online reviews reduce the risk that is associated with buying decisions. When considering aesthetically appealing posts, product information and content that integrated features such as Instagram stories; "Shop Now" and "Click to buy" buttons, users confirmed that these attributes would likely prompt a purchase. As discussed previously, the determining factor behind this is rich content which leads to an enhanced competitive advantage (Khatib, 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

The items that appeared on the lower scale of the factor analysis included the fact that the number of likes and comments on brand posts influenced users' decisions to acquire their products or services, as well as the notion that negative statements and reviews on posts, negatively influenced one's acquisition of a brand's products or services. However, research carried out by Gafni and Golan (2016), established that potential consumers based their purchase decisions on the recommendations of other consumers. Finally, users agreed that customer loyalty increased if brands maintained regular contact with them and this was further reiterated by Malik et al., (2013), who asserted that brand loyalty had both strong and positive associations with purchase intent.

5.5 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 1

5.5.1 Hypothesis 1 - User Perspective positively impacts Types of Content

Based on literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2, the value creation process between consumers and brands has proved to be a vital factor in achieving tangible results for both parties. High-quality interactions exist at multiple points of this process and enable consumers to actively engage with brands, provide ongoing feedback, contribute to the customisation of products and services and co-create unique experiences. Consequently, this is advantageous when discovering sources of competitive advantage and leads to joint problem definition and problem solving (Zwass, 2010; Laroche *et al.*, 2012; Sashi, 2012; See-To & Ho, 2014; Steenkamp, 2014). As such, Hypothesis 1 was accepted, as results confirmed that User Perspective is significant and positively impacts Types of Content.

5.6 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 2

5.6.1 Hypothesis 2a - Types of Content is positively related to Customer Engagement

According to Albert Bandura (1986), the social learning theory suggests that the acquisition of new behavioural patterns is dependent on the observation and/or replication of another individual's behaviour and the outcomes of this behaviour. It is also perceived that these patterns are shaped through cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences. Furthermore, the author posits that people are motivated to adopt new behaviour patterns by learning from each other, and this further impacts their final decision.

Thus, Hypothesis 2a was supported and proved to have a significant relationship between Types of Content and Customer Engagement. It is important to note that the competition to attract users'

attention across social media platforms is rife and as such, brand content serves as a key differentiating component for companies who wish to market themselves effectively on Instagram. In essence, the design and development of rich content achieves a wider reach and a higher engagement rate amongst Instagram followers (Monica & Balaş, 2014).

5.6.2 Hypothesis 2b - Customer Engagement on Instagram positively impacts Purchasing Intentions

There are several reasons why people use social media – some of which include; conversing, connecting with others and for the gratification of specific needs. The U&G theory highlights the fact that users are motivated to seek outlets of communication and media to fulfil their various needs and this leads to increased levels of self-gratification. As such, the relationships between customers and businesses on social media need to be constantly maintained and enhanced through regular engagement and communications that are relevant and of high quality. Consequently, this results in favourable marketing outcomes and a mutually beneficial relationship for both company and consumer (Grant, 2005; Dunne *et al.*, 2010; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Dolan *et al.*, 2016).

In this regard, Hypothesis 2b is supported, since the results confirmed a positive relationship between Customer Engagement and Purchase Intentions. Furthermore, by facilitating engaging dialogue, positive user experiences, providing exceptional service and designing creative techniques of capturing user insight, a high engagement rate can be achieved. This in-turn leads to increased brand advocacy, brand loyalty and thus, positive purchasing behaviour (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Sashi, 2012; Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014).

5.7 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 3

5.7.1 Hypothesis 3a - Types of Content is positively related to Brand Awareness

According to Hutter *et al.*, (2013), consumers increasingly rely on social media to make a number of daily decisions. Not only does it expose them to a particular brand, but it is also suggested that the higher the degree of consumer engagement in activities on social media, the higher the awareness of the brand concerned. Furthermore, brand awareness has an impact on the strength of brand associations whereby, the degree of involvement with brands on social media is critical when considering the required conditions for users to create associations with brands. In addition, these interactions facilitate a strong brand presence in users' minds. As mentioned previously, there are a number of Instagram features and/or tools that are available for brands to utilise when designing

creative content for the right posts; that will engage target audiences and positively influence users (Abdulrazzaq *et al.*, 2016). As such, Hypothesis 3a was supported, given that the relationship between Types of Content and Brand Awareness was proven to be positive and significant.

5.7.2 Hypothesis 3b - Brand Awareness on Instagram will positively influence Purchasing Intentions

Based on the discussion above, we find that brand awareness is one of the central determining factors when establishing brand associations. However, in order to achieve brand success over a long period of time, it is imperative to consider other key driving forces such as brand relationships, brand attachment and brand satisfaction, as influencers of purchasing behaviour (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Previous research has provided evidence and confirmed the positive impact of brand awareness on consumer purchase intent (Naylor *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Malik *et al.*, 2013) and as such, Hypothesis 3b was supported and confirmed a positive relationship between Brand Awareness and Purchasing Intentions.

5.8 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 4

5.8.1 Hypothesis 4a - Types of Content is positively related to EWOM

Consumers' increasing reliance on e-commerce and information seeking, reiterates the significance of social media and EWOM communication. Prior WOM studies focused on text and verbal-based communications. However, since the emergence of visually rich content, the concept of EWOM has become more attractive and has also proven to be an important feature for users, in search of enhanced consumption-related experiences (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014; Erkan & Evans, 2016). Social media has also enabled information to be shared at a viral rate, empowering users to leverage their power more than ever before. This can be achieved by incorporating various Instagram features and characteristics to facilitate EWOM campaigns and/or initiatives. Thus, Hypothesis 4a was supported, as a result of the positive relationship between Types of Content and EWOM.

5.8.2 Hypothesis 4b - EWOM on Instagram will be positively associated with Purchasing Intentions

For several years, researchers have been aware of the effect of EWOM on consumer buying behaviour (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Senecal & Nantel, 2004; Kumar & Benbasat, 2006; Park, Lee, & Han, 2007), which has been largely influenced by the personal preferences of others and the

willingness to act on the expectations or recommendations of others. Social media have been increasingly used by consumers in search of brand information and as such have resorted to EWOM, which has been perceived to have higher credibility in comparison with other modes of communication. In this way, companies play a vital role in facilitating EWOM initiatives on Instagram, which further impacts user purchase intentions (Chi *et al.*, 2009; De Vries *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Al Mana & Mirza, 2013; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; See-To & Ho, 2014; Alhidari *et al.*, 2015). As such, Hypothesis 4b was accepted. This is because the results indicated a positive relationship between EWOM and Purchasing Intentions.

5.9 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, the itemised wording and descriptive statistics in accordance to the research question will be encapsulated in Table 29 to 34 below.

Research Question – What types of content do users consider important?

Table 29: User Perspective: M & SD values

	N	M	SD
The quality of the image or video post is critical.	217	6.31	1.006
I enjoy attributes of humour in a brand's posts.	217	6.13	1.055
I am more likely to follow a brand's profile if they post timeous and relevant content.	217	5.90	1.265
I am more likely to follow a brand that I usually use.	217	5.88	1.361
Companies that showcase behind-the-scenes posts about their brands interest me.	217	5.57	1.238
I am more likely to unfollow a brand if they post more than 4 times a day.	217	5.50	1.341
Brands offering incentives are important.	217	5.43	1.397
Posts offering a product or service are enticing.	217	5.29	1.359
Brands that run competitions interest me.	217	5.12	1.672
Posts with trending hash-tags are considered important.	217	4.53	1.653

N - Sample number. M - Mean. SD - Standard Deviation.

Table 30: Types of Content M & SD values

	N	M	SD
A brand that is prompt in responding to my queries is more likely to increase my loyalty in the brand.	217	6.35	.994
I prefer brands that post content in a variety of formats.	217	5.73	1.085
Posts with captions are vital.	217	5.56	1.212
Brands that creatively integrate Instagram features such as stickers, location tags, and/or boomerang interest me.	217	5.01	1.492
A celebrity endorsing a random brand has no impact on me buying a product/service.	217	4.82	1.714
I prefer brands that showcase lots of live content.	217	4.48	1.584
I prefer content with images only.	217	4.32	1.539
I would buy into a brand if a celebrity that was relevant to the brand endorsed it.	217	4.26	1.644
I prefer video content only.	217	3.88	1.458

Table 31: Brand Awareness M & SD values

	N	M	SD
Following a brand on Instagram makes me consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real time.	217	5.67	1.139
Posts that contain information about a company enable me to remember the brand.	217	5.63	1.115
Call for purchase posts such as special offers enhances my knowledge about the brand.	217	5.41	1.335
A sponsored post that randomly appears on my timeline, positively influences me to follow a brand's profile.	217	4.04	1.801

Table 32: Purchase Intentions M & SD values

	N	M	SD
Companies who regularly interact with their followers, increases my loyalty toward the brand.	217	5.86	1.073
A post displaying prices is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.	217	5.84	1.246
Positive reviews and statements on a brand's posts, positively influences me to acquire their products or services.	217	5.30	1.319
Negative statements and reviews on a brand's posts, negatively influences my acquisition of their products or services.	217	5.27	1.335
Sponsored posts that are aesthetically appealing and/or attention grabbing, will prompt a purchase from me.	217	4.96	1.482
A post with clear selling intentions such as "shop now", "click to buy" and/or the brand's website link, will prompt a purchase from me.	217	4.94	1.668
The number of likes and comments on a brand's posts influences my decision to acquire their products or services.	217	4.64	1.633
Content showcased via Instagram stories is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.	217	4.30	1.566

Table 33: Customer Engagement M & SD values

	N	M	SD
Positive comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post/call for action on a post.	217	5.17	1.523
The number of likes on a post indicates that a post is interesting/popular.	217	5.14	1.627
The number of comments on a post indicates that a post is worth paying attention to.	217	4.87	1.728
Negative comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post/call for action on a post.	217	4.86	1.593
The total number of followers on a brand's profile prompts me to follow that profile.	217	4.36	1.777
The number of video clip views on a post indicates that the post is important.	217	4.26	1.761

Table 34: EWOM M & SD values

	N	M	SD
Negative brand experiences such as failure to respond to queries or poor service delivery in real time, prompts me to share this knowledge with other users.	217	5.21	1.670
Enticing comments and reviews made on posts prompt me to share it with others.	217	4.89	1.573
Posts that are shared by others, prompt me to follow that brand's profile.	217	4.85	1.509
When a brand that I follow posts new product or service information, I will share the post with others.	217	4.40	1.686
Brand campaigns prompt me to share the brand's posts.	217	4.37	1.594

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings that were presented and interpreted in this study, and includes a set of recommendations that pertain to these findings. Thereafter, the research problem and sub-problems will be addressed followed by a proposed Instagram content marketing strategy which highlights the categories of content that are perceived to be drivers of positive purchasing behaviour. Lastly, this chapter is concluded with suggestions to researchers and other stakeholders for future areas of research within this field.

6.2 Conclusions of the Study

The proliferation of social media has revolutionised the way in which consumers engage with brands on a massive scale. Prior studies have focused on understanding how this social phenomenon has affected the decision-making process and influenced consumers in their purchasing intent. (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011; Naylor *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Malik *et al.*, 2013; Vinerean *et al.*, 2013; See-To & Ho, 2014; Akar & Nasir, 2015; Khatib, 2016).

Yet, there has been a significant gap in academic research dedicated to Instagram marketing (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Furthermore, some previous research explored Instagram in relation to building customer relationships, brand advocacy, motivations for use, user self-esteem and/or self-representation (Hu *et al.*, 2014; Olszanowski, 2014; Gong, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2015; Smith & Sanderson, 2015; Zolkepli *et al.*, 2015; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). However, this study contributes to digital marketing literature by providing an in-depth understanding on Instagram usage and how this SNS could be optimally utilised to positively impact consumer buying behaviour. This was achieved by obtaining insight from a theoretical framework that was grounded in relationship marketing and the social cognitive and U&G theories, as well as an empirical review that identified and investigated the correlation between constructs namely; User Perspective, Types of Content, Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement, EWOM and their influence on Purchase Intentions. The ELM model was adopted to understand how consumers accept and utilise constructs such as EWOM, whereas the HOE model confirmed how consumer's decision-making is impacted in the earliest phases of the process, emphasising the need for active involvement by the consumer.

To examine these relationship patterns, the researcher developed a conceptualised model from which the hypothesis statements were derived.

The choice of research instrument (an online survey) served as advantageous, since a larger sample of the target population could be reached, across national geographical regions and in a relatively short time period. Research data indicated that more than half the sample of Instagram users were between the ages of 25 and 34 years old, with a larger proportion of the sample being female respondents. In addition, 80.2% of participants were currently employed, with 28.6% indicating that they earned an annual household income of more than R500,000. The majority of the respondents (62%) confirmed that they accessed Instagram several times a day.

Roncha and Radclyffe-Thomas (2016), reiterated the importance of consumers as active stakeholders in the value co-creation process. As mentioned previously, value creation as an antecedent of brand loyalty enables the sharing of innovative concepts, ideas and other pertinent information which provides tangible outcomes for both the brand and consumer (See-To & Ho, 2014). In context of this study, the sample of South African Instagram users participated in co-creating value by providing insight (responding to the research survey) into what they perceived as important characteristics in Instagram content (development of an enhanced user experience). Furthermore, this information is imperative for brands who wish to explore new alternatives for maintaining relationships and providing value to followers, to ensure user satisfaction. As such, the results indicated that there was a positive association between the constructs User Perspective and Types of Content. Subsequently, Types of Content reflected a positive relationship with Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement and EWOM.

The research findings further indicated that Customer Engagement had a positive impact on Purchase Intentions. In this way, companies can use Instagram to influence the way users think and interact by creating emotional connections and on-going dialogue through high quality communications, whilst constantly inspiring them to be brand advocates. This in-turn leads to brand loyalty and thus, positive purchasing behaviour (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Sashi, 2012; Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014; Gong, 2015). The EWOM phenomenon has been noted as a powerful social factor within the marketing discipline especially when considering the influence it holds in impacting purchase decisions (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014; Erkan & Evans, 2016). As such, the association between EWOM and Purchase Intentions indicated a significant and positive relationship.

Prior research results indicated a positive association between Brand Awareness and Purchasing Intentions (Naylor *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Hutter *et al.*, 2013; Malik *et al.*, 2013; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Considering this, the research results from this study also confirmed a positive relationship between these constructs.

Finally, this research successfully establishes that User Perspective as an empirical construct, presents great insight for all stakeholders who wish to obtain an in-depth understanding of how to enhance a user's experience on Instagram and thereby positively influence their purchasing behaviour.

6.3 Recommendations

This study provides a framework for the effective ways that South African brands can market on Instagram, to impact purchase intent. The recommendations provided could be significant to strategic marketing practitioners, marketing managers, business owners, and/or upcoming entrepreneurs who may not have large-scale budgets for their marketing initiatives. Furthermore, this research proves that Instagram is a valuable SNS in relation to its applicability and practicality. Considering this, the following content marketing strategy was developed to understand the dynamics of how to effectively market on this platform.

6.3.1 Instagram marketing strategy

Strategies focused on user-generated content and content marketing have enabled companies to achieve a higher return on investment (ROI) in comparison to conventional marketing approaches. Additionally, this method of marketing is cost efficient and assists brands in positioning themselves within industry (Zolkepli *et al.*, 2015). The managerial implications of this study's findings will provide all stakeholders with the tools to create meaningful conversations, build brand awareness in target audiences, increase brand knowledge, foster stronger relationships and identify potential leads. Quality content leads to brand trust and thereby higher credibility. In this regard, the researcher developed an Instagram content marketing strategy in accordance to the research question that was derived for this study. Essentially, this could unlock a new level of competitive advantage for all enterprises, upcoming entrepreneurs and/or other businesses who wish to strategically integrate Instagram into their social media marketing strategies.

Research question: What types of content do users consider important on Instagram?

6 Effective Ways to Maximise Instagram

For your Business

Humour Me Please

Want to humanise your brand and build an emotional appeal with your target audience? Then try adding humour to your Instagram posts - a fantastic way to grab people's attention!

Emotional appeal will give you that competitive advantage that makes you stand out. It enables customers to remember you, understand what you're about, and share your content.

Here are a few tips to get you started: -

1. **Authentic humour** works best. **Encourage** your employees/followers to provide you with content by incorporating resources that are unique to your brand.
2. **Apply some fun**, quirky and witty thinking to your company's daily situations, product and/or service offerings.
3. **Be sensitive** to your target audience. Certain types of humour may not appeal to everyone. The best way to know this is by first testing it internally, before posting it on Instagram.

Behind-the-Scenes

Showcasing your brand's culture offers users a compelling glimpse into what happens backstage. This is an important marketing tactic that can be incorporated into your company's social media strategy.

So, what's next?

Get started by delving behind the scenes. Showcase visual content that highlights how your products and services are uniquely made. You can also identify and include other interesting aspects of your company culture, especially if your customers have often requested it. This will not only enhance your content and create variety, but will also inspire your followers to engage with you on Instagram.

Be Wise – Incentivise

Incorporating incentives into your social media strategy is a great way of keeping followers encouraged, interactive and interested in your products, services and what you have to say.

Let's face it. Who doesn't like free stuff?

Here are a few ways of how you can get creative with your incentives:

1. **Post a creative visual** that advertises a giveaway, competition or sale. Ask your followers to include a hash-tag with their posts, so that these shares will be easy to locate. Promotional initiatives enable followers to market your company for you, by talking about your advertisement, which leads to increased traffic on your profile.
2. **Partner with bigger brands** on collectible reward competitions.
3. **Offer online coupons** and/or exclusive deals.
4. **Encourage content contribution contents.** Followers submit content they've created such as slogans or taglines for a free prize. In return, your brand gets free publicity!

Know Your Brand

Your profile on Instagram is a perfect way of showing off what products and/or services you have to offer. Creative posts that offer sneak peeks, exclusive deals, regular updates - drives awareness, higher interactivity and ... more sales!

Here are some tips of how you can enhance your product/service visibility:

1. **Include the prices** of your products or services on the post.
2. **Emphasise scarcity.** This highlights the limited time available to purchase the product or service due to a limited supply.
3. **Use filters** to give your visual content a **cutting-edge** look and feel.
4. **Highlight social evidence.** Get your followers to rate and review their user-related experience of your product or service.

Ratings and reviews via electronic-word-of-mouth initiatives are powerful marketing tactics, especially if they are recommended by family and friends. This approach is more likely to influence others to purchase what's on offer, in comparison to straightforward product descriptions from your company.

The Power of a Caption

Despite Instagram being a visual platform, one might well wonder if captions are necessary at all. Nonetheless, captions have proven to be a vital component for a successful social media strategy.

As a brand, you need to sell YOU.

Captions provide that added exposure, which gives you a voice to share your brand's story. It may also be one of the very first touch-points that followers encounter when interacting with your brand.

Captions will help you to engage better with your followers. Take the time to think of some enticing phrases that are crisp, clever and highlight what your Instagram post is about. This will facilitate a stronger brand presence in the minds of your followers, which further creates an emotional connection with them. In return, you can expect followers who are brand loyal!

A well-thought-out caption can be sure to draw the attention you need to stand out against your competitors. Incorporate the purpose of your post in a few phrases, whilst using Instagram features, such as trending hash-tags or even GIFs. Essentially, connecting with your followers creates awareness and this drives greater engagement with your posts.

Feature That

You can get the best business results from the customers who care, by designing intriguing inspirational posts that drive action.

Since its launch, Instagram Stories has seen immense growth and has enabled users to share content in real-time. To put videos at the focal point of this SNS, developers created new features such as Stories Archive and Highlights. These features allow users to maximise the use of Instagram Stories, by allowing content to be saved under the profile section of an account.



If you want to stand out, make sure that you have a visual strategy that is clear. Create imaginative images and videos that with available tools such as Boomerang and Rewind and Live Video to ultimately boost your performance on Instagram. You can even have use live polls to get instant feedback from your followers and connect with them and their followers via a shared live video feed. Figure 13 below encapsulates the Instagram content marketing strategy above in an infographic format.

Figure 13: Instagram content marketing strategy



6

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO
MAXIMISE
Instagram
FOR YOUR BUSINESS

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">1</div> <div> <h3>Humour Me Please</h3>  </div> </div>	<p>Want to humanise your brand and build an emotional appeal with your target audience? Then try adding humour to your Instagram posts - a fantastic way to grab people's attention!</p> <p>Emotional appeal will give you that competitive advantage that makes you stand out. It enables customers to remember you, understand what you're about and share your content.</p> <p>Here are a few tips to get you started:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authentic humour works best. Encourage your employees/followers to provide you with content by incorporating resources that are unique to your brand. 2. Apply some fun, quirky and witty thinking to your company's daily situations, product and/or service offerings. 3. Be sensitive to your target audience. Certain types of humour may not appeal to everyone. The best way to know this is by first testing it internally, before posting it on Instagram.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">2</div> <div> <h3>Behind-the-Scenes</h3>  </div> </div>	<p>Showcasing your brand's culture offers users a compelling glimpse into what happens backstage. This is an important marketing tactic that can be incorporated into your company's social media strategy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">So what's next?</p> <p>Get started by delving behind the scenes. Showcase visual content that highlights how your products and services are uniquely made. You can also identify and include other interesting aspects of your company culture, especially if your customers have often requested for it.</p> <p>This will not only enhance your content and create variety, but will also inspire your followers to engage with you on Instagram.</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">3</div> <div> <h3>Be Wise - Incentivise</h3>  </div> </div>	<p>Incorporating incentives into your social media strategy is a great way of keeping followers encouraged, interactive and interested in your products, services and what you have to say.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Let's face it. Who doesn't like free stuff?</p> <p>Here are a few ways of how you can get creative with your incentives:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post a creative visual that advertises a giveaway, competition or sale. Ask your followers to include a hashtag with their posts, so that these shares will be easy to locate. Such promotional initiatives enable followers to market your company for you by talking about your advertisement, which leads to increased traffic on your profile. 2. Partner with bigger brands on collectible reward competitions. 3. Offer online coupons and/or exclusive deals. 4. Encourage content contribution contests. Get followers to submit content they've created such as slogans or taglines for a free prize. In return, your brand gets free publicity!
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">4</div> <div> <h3>Know Your Brand</h3>  </div> </div>	<p>Your profile on Instagram is a perfect way of showing off what products and/or services you have to offer. Creative posts that offer sneak peeks, exclusive deals and regular updates leads to greater awareness, higher interactivity and...more sales!</p> <p>Here are some tips of how you can enhance your product/service visibility:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include the prices of your products or services on the post. 2. Emphasise scarcity. This highlights the limited time available to purchase the product or service due to a limited supply. 3. Use filters to give your visual content a cutting-edge look and feel. 4. Highlight social evidence. Get your followers to rate and review their user-related experience of your product or service. <p>Ratings and reviews via electronic word-of-mouth initiatives are powerful marketing tactics, especially if they are recommended by family and friends. This approach is more likely to influence others to purchase what's on offer, in comparison to straightforward product descriptions from your company.</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">5</div> <div> <h3>The Power of a Caption</h3>  </div> </div>	<p>Despite Instagram being a visual platform, one might wonder if captions are necessary at all. Nonetheless, captions have proven to be a vital component for a successful social media strategy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As a brand, you need to sell YOU.</p> <p>Captions provide that added exposure which gives you a voice to share your brand's story. It may also be one of the very first touch-points that followers encounter when interacting with your brand.</p> <p>Captions will help you to engage better with your followers. Take the time to think of some enticing phrases that are crisp, clever and highlight what your Instagram post is about. This will facilitate a stronger brand presence in the minds of your followers, which further creates an emotional connection with them. In return, you can expect followers who are brand loyal!</p> <p>A well-thought out caption can be sure to draw the attention you need to stand out against your competitors. Incorporate the purpose of your post in a few phrases, whilst using Instagram features, such as trending hashtags or even GIFs. Essentially, connecting with your followers creates awareness and this drives greater engagement with your posts.</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">6</div> <div> <h3>Feature That</h3>  </div> </div>	<p>You can get the best business results from the customers who care. By showcasing Instagram's aspirational goals that drive action.</p> <p>Since its launch, Instagram Stories has seen immense growth and has enabled users to share content in real time. To put videos at the focal point of this social network site, developers created new features such as Stories, Reels and Highlights. These features allow users to maximise the use of Instagram Stories, by allowing content to be saved under the profile section of an account.</p> <p>If you want to stand out, make sure that you have a visual strategy that is clear. Create imaginative images and videos with available tools such as Boomerang, Reels and Live Video to ultimately boost your performance on Instagram. You can even use live polls to get instant feedback from your followers and connect with them and their followers via a shared live video feed.</p>

Instagram Tips

To achieve the best results from this platform, you should keep the following tips in mind:

Response is everything. When users comment, direct message or make queries on your posts, respond to them. This must be done timeously and implies that you care about what they have to say. If users feel like they are important to you, they are likely to interact frequently and will continue to follow you.

First impressions matter. Ensuring that your content is professional and of high quality will set you up for success. This is because people usually make decisions on whether to follow your profile or not, within seconds of encountering your posts. So, if you want to be remembered and have users regard you as credible, invest adequate time into the design and layout of your images and videos.

Keep it relevant. People are always in search of relevant information which they can share with others. To capitalise on this opportunity, search for trending topics that you can centre your content on. Creating an editorial calendar with important events and holidays which will keep you abreast of current trends and enable you to engage followers through campaigns, polls, content and so forth. This in turn, will create a buzz around your brand, attract more followers and promote engagement.

Don't wait till it's too late. Scheduled posts will save you time and energy when considering how to incorporate current trends and other important events into your marketing calendar. Preparing content and uploading it for future dates, gives you the flexibility to schedule any unpredicted occurrences that may arise. Furthermore, timeous content is great for boosting engagement.

Get personal. Customise your brand's profile to incorporate your brand identity, by promoting your logo and/or customer name. This will stimulate a stronger brand presence in the minds of your existing and potential followers, so that whenever they need specific products and/or services, your brand is recalled. This will be profitable for your company in the long term.

Too much of anything isn't good. In short, don't inundate your followers with too many frequent posts. An acceptable limit is not more than four posts per day.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

This study consists of limitations that provide an avenue for future scholars who wish to expand on research within the same field. To improve the generalised outcomes, a longitudinal study which investigates the global perspectives of users across the world can be explored. Furthermore, researchers could incorporate a triangulation research design by adopting both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This will provide an in-depth understanding and allow respondents to provide greater insight into their user experience on Instagram. A purposive sampling strategy known as stratified sampling can also be utilised in future research strategies, to further segment sample cohorts into distinct homogenous groups. This would be useful when considering how to optimally utilise Instagram to influence the purchase intentions of Generation X and/or Millennials. Additionally, researchers could examine the relationship patterns between other constructs and/or factors to determine if they have similar effects on purchase intent.

Technology is evolving at a rapid pace and for this reason, newly introduced Instagram features can also be studied in relation to enhanced content design and the strategic implementation thereof. Finally, research conducted on multiple social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and/or Snapchat and their impact on consumer buying behaviour, can also be explored to identify unexplored perspectives that draw stronger conclusions within social media marketing.

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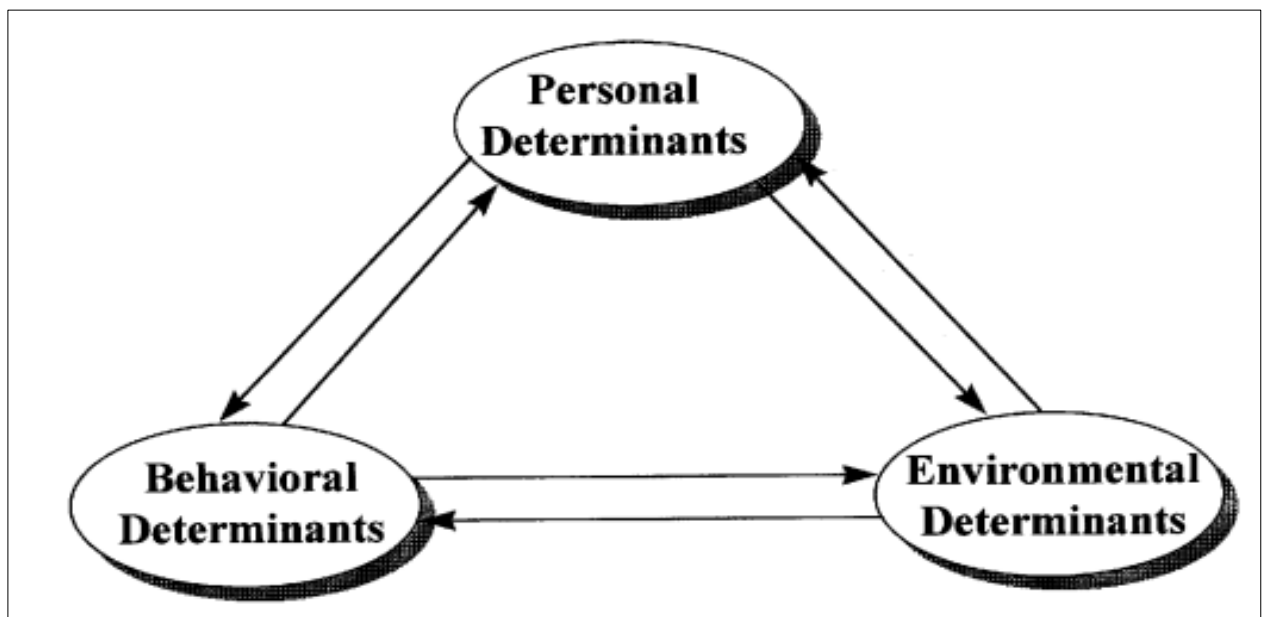
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

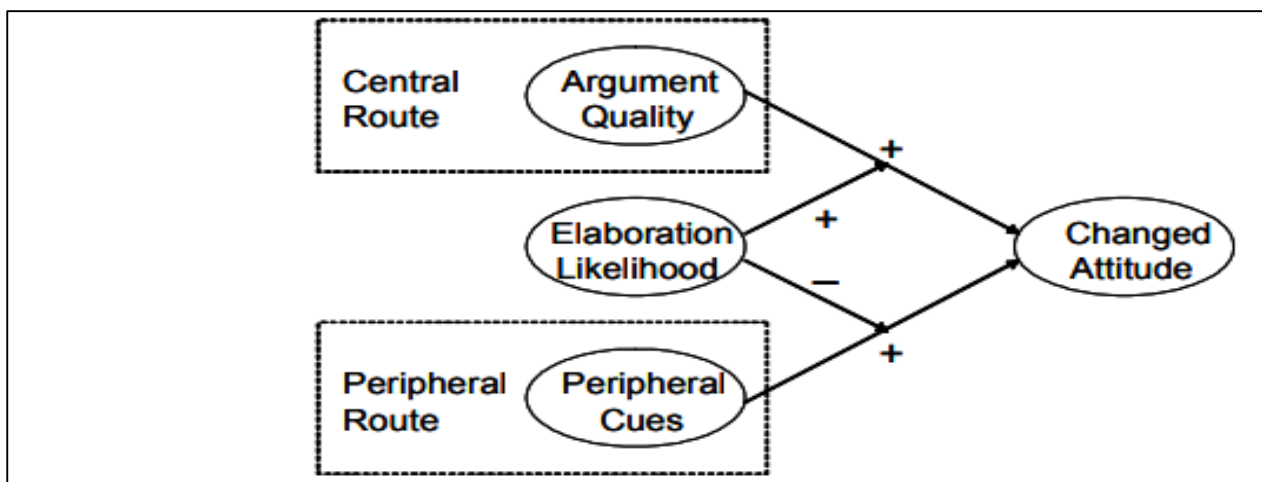
Appendix A1: Schematisation of triadic reciprocal causation in the causal model of social cognitive theory

Figure 2: Schematisation of triadic reciprocal causation in the causal model of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001, p. 266)



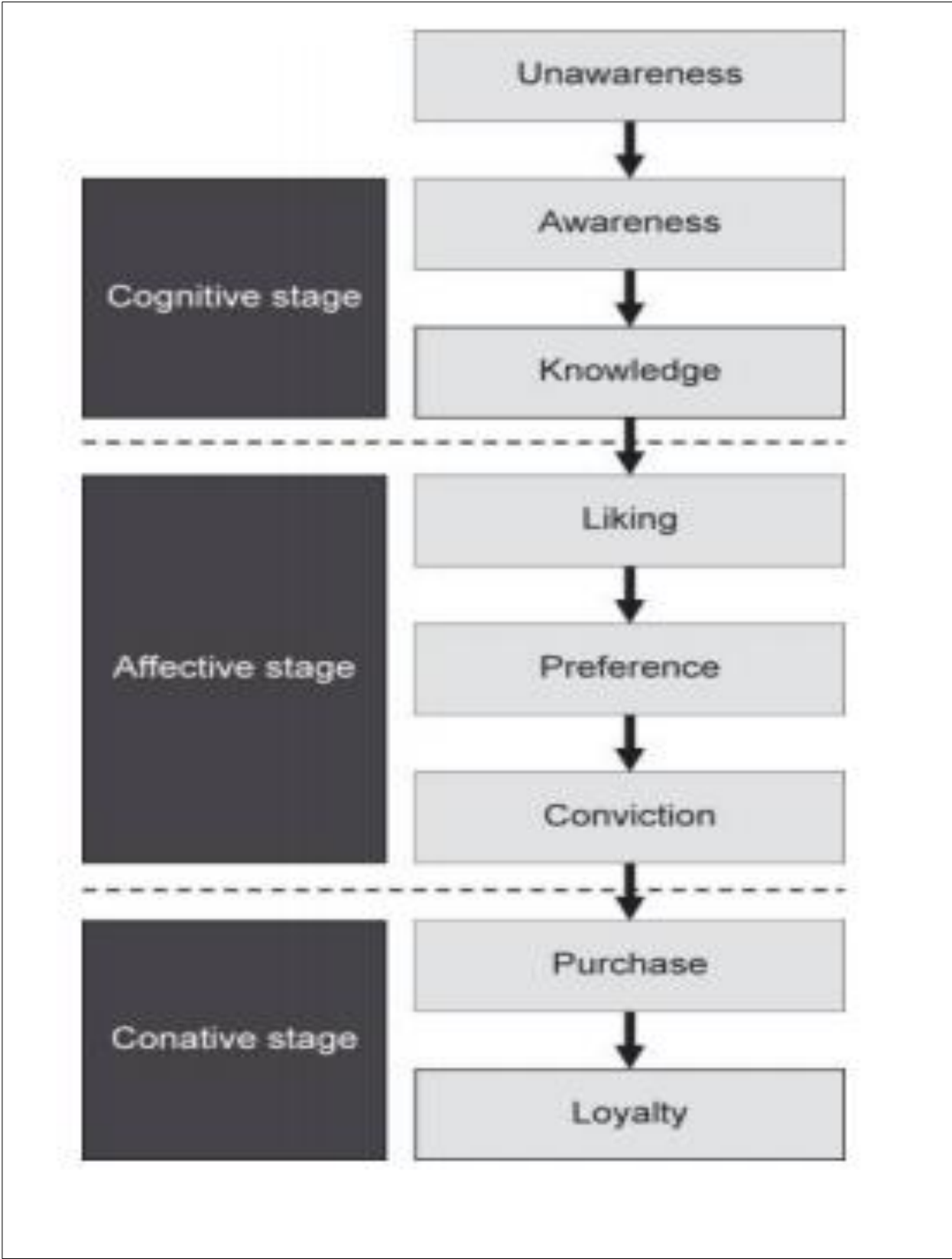
Appendix A2: Elaboration Likelihood Model

Figure 4: Elaboration Likelihood Model (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006, p. 809)



Appendix A3: Hierarchy of effects (HOE) model

Figure 5: Hierarchy of effects (HOE) model (Hutter et al., 2013, p. 344)



Appendix A4: Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

Table 2: Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions (Mack, 2010)

Epistemological Assumptions	Ontological Assumptions
Reality is external to the researcher and represented by objects in space.	Knowledge is objective.
Objects have meaning which are independent of any consciousness of them.	Knowledge is generated deductively from a theory or hypothesis.
Reality can be captured by our senses and predicted.	The methodology of the natural sciences should be employed to study social reality.

Appendix A5: Survey Letter

University of Witwatersrand

Wits Business School

Date: 4 November 2017

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey.

I am presently a post graduate student at the University of the Witwatersrand – Graduate School of Business Administration, enrolled in the Master of Management degree in the field of Strategic Marketing. My research topic is entitled: “Effective ways South African brands can market on Instagram to influence purchase intentions – A user perspective”. Please note that your participation is voluntary, and all responses will remain anonymous. Your feedback will be of great value to this study!

Thank you in advance for your valued time.

Yours Sincerely,



Simone Rambarun

Email: 319392@students.wits.ac.za

Tel: 061 158 4525

Research Supervisor: Neale Penman

Email: neale@confluence.co.za

Appendix A6: Research Instrument – Questionnaire

General Information

This section consisted of drop-down menus for each question, where respondents selected the most appropriate option.

Q1	Are you a South African citizen?	Yes	No

Q2	Are you an Instagram user?	Yes	No

Section A: Instagram Activity

Users had the option of selecting more than one platform.

Q3	Which digital platform do you use to access Instagram?
	Smart device
	Desktop
	Other

Q4	How often do you log onto Instagram?
	Once a day
	Several times a day
	Several times a week
	Several times a month
	Unsure
None of the above	

Q5	What other social media platforms are you currently active on?
	Facebook
	Twitter
	LinkedIn
	YouTube
	Google+
	SnapChat
	Pinterest
	Other
None of the above	

Section B

Q6. User Perspective

Users indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

User Perspective	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am more likely to follow a brand that I usually use.							
I am more likely to follow a brand's profile if they post timeous and relevant content.							
Posts offering a product or service are enticing.							
I enjoy attributes of humour in a brand's posts.							
I am more likely to unfollow a brand if they post more than 4 times a day.							
Posts with trending hash-tags are considered important.							
Brands offering incentives are important.							
Brands that run competitions interest me.							
Companies that showcase behind-the-scenes posts about their brands interest me.							
The quality of the image or video post is critical.							

Section C

Q7. Types of Content

Users indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Types of Content	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I prefer brands that post content in a variety of formats.							
I prefer video content only.							
I prefer content with images only.							
I prefer brands that showcase lots of live content.							
A brand that is prompt in responding to my queries is more likely to increase my loyalty in the brand.							
I would buy into a brand if a celebrity that was relevant to the brand endorsed it.							
A celebrity endorsing a random brand has no impact on me buying a product/service.							
Posts with captions are vital.							
Brands that creatively integrate Instagram features such as stickers, location tags, and/or Boomerang interest me.							

Section D

Q8. Customer Engagement

Users indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Customer Engagement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The total number of followers on a brand’s profile prompts me to follow that profile.							
The number of video clip views on a post indicates that the post is important.							
The number of likes on a post indicates that a post is interesting or popular.							
The number of comments on a post indicates that a post is worth paying attention to.							
Positive comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post or call for action on a post.							
Negative comments on a post influences my decision to react to a post or call for action on a post.							

Section E

Q9. Brand Awareness

Users indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Brand Awareness	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Following a brand on Instagram makes me consciously aware of its presence, product and/or service offering in real time.							
Posts that contain information about a company enable me to remember the brand.							
Call for purchase posts such as special offers enhance my knowledge about the brand.							
A sponsored post that randomly appears on my timeline, positively influences me to follow a brand's profile.							

Section F

Q10. EWOM

Users indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

EWOM	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Enticing comments and reviews made on posts prompt me to share it with others.							
Posts that are shared by others, prompt me to follow that brand's profile.							
When a brand that I follow posts new product or service information, I will share the post with others.							
Brand campaigns prompt me to share the brand's posts.							
Negative brand experiences such as failure to respond to queries or poor service delivery in real time, prompts me to share this knowledge with other users.							

Section G

Q11. Purchase Intentions

Users indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Purchase Intentions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The number of likes and comments on a brand's posts influences my decision to acquire their products or services.							
A post displaying prices is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.							
A post with clear selling intentions such as "shop now", "click to buy" and/or the brand's website link, will prompt a purchase from me.							
Content showcased via Instagram stories is more likely to prompt a purchase from me.							
Positive reviews and statements on a brand's posts, positively influences me to acquire their products or services.							
Negative statements and reviews on a brand's posts, negatively influences my acquisition of their products or services.							
Sponsored posts that are aesthetically appealing and/or attention grabbing, will prompt a purchase from me.							
Companies who regularly interact with their followers, increases my loyalty toward the brand.							

Section H

Background Information/Demographics

This section consisted of drop-down menus for each question, where respondents selected the most appropriate option.

Q12. What is your Gender?

Respondents selected their gender from a drop-down menu that consisted of Male, Female and Other.

Q13. What is your Age?

Respondents selected their appropriate age bracket that ranged from under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75-84, 85 and older.

Q14. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.

Respondents selected their appropriate level of education from a drop-down menu ranging from No schooling completed, High School Diploma, Diploma, Technical Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Honours Degree, Master's Degree and Doctorate Degree.

Q15. Which of the following categories best describes your occupational status?

Respondents selected their appropriate status from a drop-down menu that ranged from Student, Currently Employed, Unemployed and Retired.

Q16. Which one of the following options describes your annual household income?

Respondents selected their appropriate income bracket from a drop-down menu with categories of options ranging between Less than R100,000 to More than > R500,000.