THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICE QUALITY ON CLIENT LOYALTY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN BANKING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The advent of the Internet during the past two decades has changed the way in which businesses operate. Social media networks such as Facebook have become an essential communication element for businesses to interact with clients. The impact and growth rates of Facebook and other forms of social media have made it imperative for all businesses to ensure they have social media strategies in place. Following social media business trends, banks across the world have included social media to market their services. Banks are now emphasising the offering of high client service quality in order to retain clients in this highly competitive environment. Thus, South African banks, as is the case with global banks, need to continuously assess the quality of the services offered to their clients in order to sustainably maintain or grow their market share or to fully utilise its commercial opportunities.

This study determined the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty in the South African banking industry. The primary objective was to examine the extent to which social media service quality influence client loyalty in the South African banking industry. The study also determined if social media system availability, efficiency, fulfilment, and privacy has influence on the overall service quality of social media in the South African banking industry. In addition, the study examined the relationship between overall service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

The study used a quantitative research approach to collect and analyse the data, and a descriptive research design was utilised for the purpose of this study. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. An online survey was conducted through Survey Monkey, via a Facebook page titled: Social media service quality in the South African banking industry. An online questionnaire was administered via the Facebook page. The study used a sample of 377 respondents who are Facebook users of the five major banks in South Africa. Analysis and interpretation of findings was done using both the descriptive and inferential statistical measures, with the help of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) 24 and Lisrel (version 9). The electronic social media service quality (E-S-SERVQUAL) scale which consist of five constructs, namely; social media system availability, efficiency, fulfilment, privacy and overall service quality; and client loyalty intentions were the

scales that were adopted for this study. All the scales used in this study were found to be reliable and valid.

Findings of the research study proved that social media system availability, fulfilment, and privacy has a significant influence on the overall service quality of social media in the South African banking industry. In addition, findings of the research revealed that social media efficiency does not significantly influence overall service quality of social media in the South African banking industry. Furthermore, findings of the research also proved that the overall service quality of social media positively influences client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. The study recommended that managers and marketers should constantly evaluate, monitor, and improve the overall service quality of social media offered to their clients, as it leads to a corresponding increase in overall client satisfaction, which in turn leads to client loyalty in the South African banking industry. However, further research studies may be conducted in other developing countries to gain a wider understanding on the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty in the banking industry.

DECLARATIONS

Declaration

By submitting this Business Management Master's dissertation at the University of Fort Hare, I declare that this work is entirely my own and has not been previously submitted elsewhere for any other qualification.

Name: …B.K. Gavaza………………

Signature: ……………..……………

Date: ………15 June 2017……………

Declaration on Plagiarism

I, Bramwell Kundishora Gavaza, student number 201516122, hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on plagiarism and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations.

Name: …B.K. Gavaza…………………..

Signature: ....

Date: …15 June 2017…………………..

Declaration on Research Ethics

I, Bramwell Kundishora Gavaza, student number 201516122, hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on research ethics and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations. I sought and obtained an ethical clearance certificate (attached in Appendix B) at the University of Fort Hare Research ethics so as to comply.

Name: …B.K. Gavaza……………………

Signature: ....

Date: …15 June 2017………….............

Language Editing Declaration

I hereby confirm that I have proofread and edited the following master's thesis using the Windows "Tracking" system to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the student to action: Social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry, by Bramwell Kundishora Gavaza, a master's thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce (Business Management) at the University of Fort Hare.

Ilse Lotz

10 June 2017

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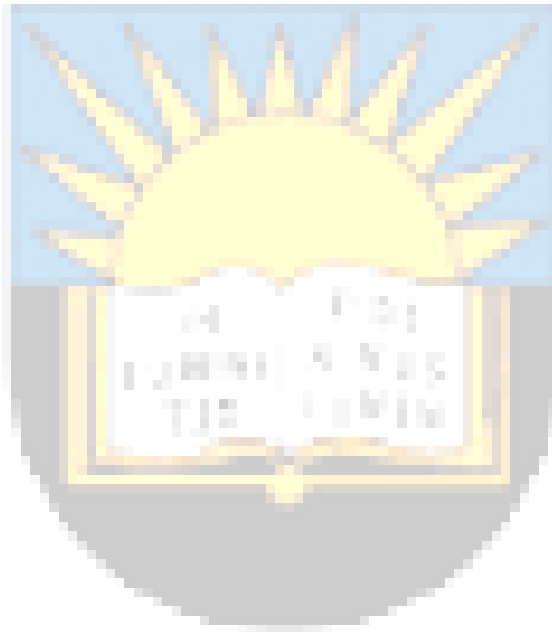
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To my family members, you are my pillar of strength and you are the reason I kept on going. You inspire me in so many different ways. Thank you for the support you have given me throughout the study, and may the Almighty bless you abundantly. To all the friends and colleagues who assisted me by sharing my Facebook page posts on daily basis, I greatly appreciate your contribution as well, this study wouldn't be possible without you. Lastly, special thanks to my brother Takayedzwa Gavaza for his guidance and support since the time of my pursuit of an undergraduate degree; and not forgetting my other friends who made this academic journey a successful one.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother who has always been supportive to my education ever since the death of my father more than a dozen years ago. She has always been a pillar of strength and determination, as she has done everything in her power to make sure that this day of me becoming a success became a reality. She always wanted me to be a University postgraduate, in order to fulfil her husband's wishes, and it is her ambition that motivated me to get to this point. Mom, I'm still determined to be the person you wanted me to be, and this is just the beginning. I will always make you proud.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICE QUALITY PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction and Background

The advent of the internet during the past two decades has revolutionised the way in which businesses operate (Mladen & Mladen, 2014). In today's market-driven system, almost all businesses are embracing the economic benefit of digital transformation (Braendle, Sepasi, & Rahdari, 2014). This era has made it easier for businesses to strategically position and differentiate themselves (Amin, 2016). The internet has made communication with clients simpler, more efficient, and, most importantly, it has eliminated geographical barriers between businesses and their clients (Ariff, Yuna, Zakuana, & Jusoha, 2012). Internet transformation has resulted into Web 2.0 technology, which is the phase of internet development that is characterized by the change from static web pages to user-generated content and subsequently the growth of social media (McNutt, 2014).

Social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter have become an essential communication element for businesses to interact with clients (Owusu-Ansah, Gontshi, Mutibwa, & Ukwoma, 2015). Facebook has almost a billion users worldwide and over a million users in South Africa (SA) alone (Goldstuck, 2015; Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). This wide base of Facebook users makes it an ideal social media representative sample for this study. Thus, retail clients are the target of this study. All the South African retail banks have Facebook pages, which they use to interact with their clients (Moodley & Govender, 2016). The impact and growth rates of Facebook and other forms of social media have made it imperative for all businesses to ensure they have social media strategies in place (Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010; Kim, 2015).

Following social media business trends, banks across the world have included social media to market their services (Lariviere, Joosten, Malthouse, Van Birgelen, Aksoy, Kunz, & Huang, 2013). Many international retail banks have included Facebook in their marketing and client service quality strategies (Wittlinger, 2013). The Facebook era is not only changing the client's behaviour, but also their expectations for the services delivery in various industries, including the banking industry (Dalziel, 2014). Facebook

is allowing clients to access information about their banks and raise any complaints they may have on a public forum (Wesselman, 2014). Concerns raised by clients through Facebook are thus firmly in the public domain, and need to be handled appropriately. If the bank does not have a strategy to deal with these complaints, it may negatively impact the bank's reputation and perceived service quality (Young & Ernst, 2014). Thus, this negative impact may lead to a decrease in the bank's profitability (Setó-Pamies, 2012).

Due to various technological advancements, clients are now anticipating high service quality from businesses (Kim, 2015). Service quality is defined as the ability to offer a standardised service consistently and reliably, resulting in client satisfaction (Yarimoglu, 2015). Excellent service quality has been identified by business researchers as a competitive strategy which positively differentiates banks, enhances client satisfaction, and can, in turn, lead to client loyalty (Khan & Fasih, 2014). Banks are thus now emphasising the offering of high client service quality in order to retain clients in this highly competitive environment (Lariviere et al., 2013).

In developed countries such as the United States of America (USA), Britain and Australia, the use of social media has improved the standards of service quality in the banking system (Amin, 2016). Under the same trajectory, the South African banking industry is a well-regulated and developed system which compares favourably with the rest of the world's banks (Moodley & Govender, 2016). Thus, South African banks, as is the case with global banks, need to continuously assess the service quality offered to their clients in order to sustainably maintain or grow their market share (Coetzee, Van Zyl, & Tait, 2013). If bank marketers lack the knowledge to measure and evaluate client service quality from the client's perspective, they risk not understanding their clients' needs, which may lead to dissatisfied clients switching over to competitors (Pearson, Tadisina, & Griffin, 2012). Therefore, retail banks in SA need to anticipate evolving client preferences (Meyersfeld & Kinley, 2015). Section 1.2 provides the problem statement of this study.

1.2 Problem Statement

Service quality is an intangible construct that is difficult to define and measure; however, it is an important aspect that could determine the success or failure of businesses including large retail banks (Rao & Rao, 2013). Lariviere et al. (2013) concur that assessing service quality constructs and client loyalty intention in retail banks is useful to identify service problems and improve service levels. The retail clients are of importance in this study as they are the subject under study. Furthermore, the interaction of clients and banks' personnel through social media is becoming an essential aspect in the banking industry, therefore South African retail banks needs to examine continually how clients perceive service quality so that they can improve it in a meaningful way (Kim & Nitecki, 2014).

Research studies state that more than 90% of the South African banks use social media to interact with their clients (Ramavhona & Mokwena, 2017). The use of social media in the South African banking industry continues to grow, with Facebook leading the trend (BusinessTech, 2016; Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Statistics on social media shows that in SA there are fourteen million Facebook users, eight million YouTube users, seven million twitter users, five million LinkedIn users and two million Instagram users (BusinessTech, 2016; BlueMagnet, 2017, Internet Usage Statistics for Africa, 2017). On a daily basis there are more than eight million Facebook users in South Africa (BusinessTech, 2016; Internet Usage Statistics for Africa, 2017). There are a combined total number of more than three million Facebook users on the five South African major banks' Facebook pages. The wide use of Facebook indicates that it has gained substantial popularity in the South African banking industry (Dootson, Beatson, & Drennan, 2016; Duffet, 2015a).

The South African banking industry has significantly expanded in recent decades to incorporate social media such as Facebook, which offers online service to clients (Mwencha, Muathe, & Thuo, 2014); Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). It is important for banks to have a tool available to monitor service levels related to this new offering in order to enhance its benefit (Corneliu & Maria, 2013; Mackay, Mostert, & Petzer, 2015). Social media service quality in the service industry is not a new concept in business and academic studies (Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015). However, research studies focusing on social media service quality and client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry context has not been conducted to date (Nel & Boshoff,

2014; Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). This study seeks to investigate social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry context. Section 1.2.1 provides the objectives of the present study.

1.2.1 Primary objective
The objective of this study is to measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry.

1.2.2 Secondary objectives
- To determine the influence that system availability has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.
- To determine the influence that efficiency has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.
- To determine the influence that fulfilment has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.
- To determine the influence that privacy has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.
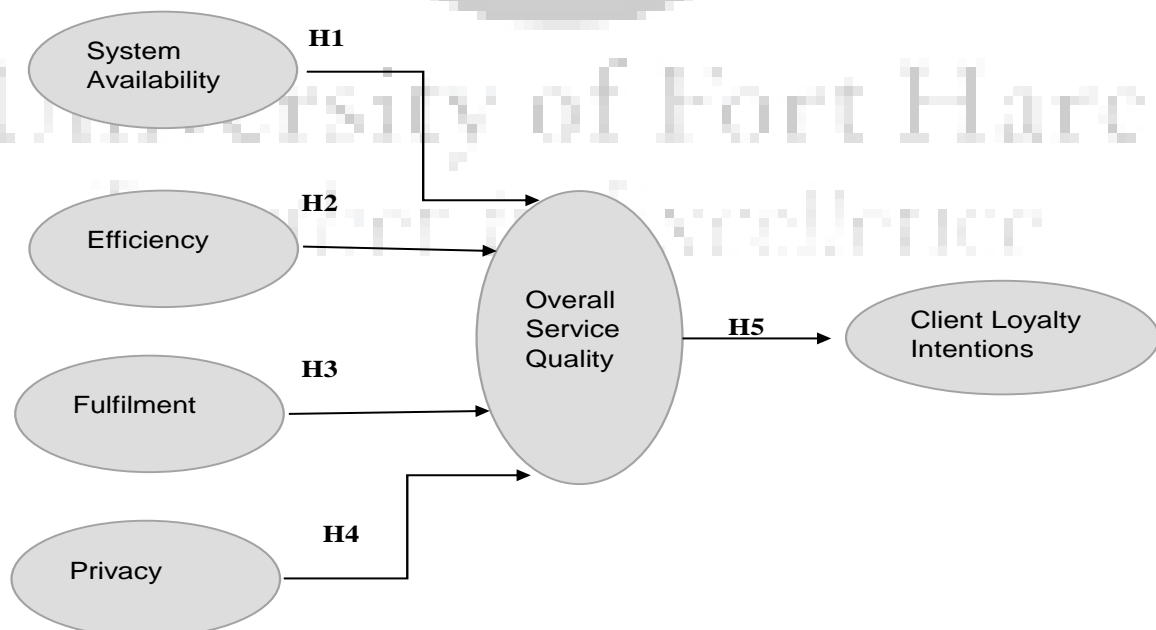
Figure 1.1: The Empirical Model (Source: developed for this study).

The study model leads to the hypotheses in the following section.

1.2.3 Hypotheses

H$_{01}$: Social media system availability does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_1$: Social media system availability significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_{02}$: Social media efficiency does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_2$: Social media efficiency significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_{03}$: Social media fulfilment does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_3$: Social media fulfilment significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_{04}$: Social media privacy does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H$_4$: Social media privacy significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H0$_5$: Social media's overall service quality does not significantly influence clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

H$_5$: Social media's overall service quality significantly influences clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Consulting firms across the world have recognised and have started reporting on the importance of social media in the banking industry (Auerbach, Argimon, Hieronimus, Roland, & Teschke, 2012; Wittlinger, 2013). Several studies on service quality and client loyalty have been conducted in developed countries, while limited studies have

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been conducted in developing countries (Braendle et al., 2014; Duffett, 2015a; Khan & Fasih, 2014). Within the South African context, studies by scholars such as Matthew (2014); Chetty (2012); and Masinge (2010) focused on various banking services aspects, but did not focus on the relationship between the impact of social media and service quality in the South African banking system. Therefore, this study will contribute towards bridging the existing knowledge gap on the impact of social media on service quality and client loyalty in the South African context.

In addition, the findings of this study will provide empirical evidence which contributes to the body of marketing knowledge in a South Africa banking context. The South African banking industry has traditionally been a high-contact service offering. The lack of direct human interaction in e-Service settings accentuates the need to examine the service quality offered and how clients perceive it, specifically utilising the E-S-SERVQUAL instrument.

Even though clients are satisfied with traditional banking, their expectations are continuously growing, due to enhanced technology including social media tools (Ernst & Young, 2014). This has forced South African banks to become more client-centric through responding to changing client needs (Mladen & Mladen, 2014). This study will help to improve e-Service quality offered by South African banks in order to keep pace with global trends. The effective measurement of service quality in the banking industry will assist in improving operational efficiency and client satisfaction thus leading to customer retention. Van Schalkwyk and Steenkamp (2014) posit that all the benefits of e-Service quality may be in vain if they are not managed and measured correctly. This study will provide insight into the South African banking industry's social media client service quality and loyalty intentions. Section 1.4 provides the preliminary research methodology of the study.

1.4 Research Methodology Summary

Research methodology refers to the various steps undertaken to investigate the problems at hand, along with the logic behind them (Berndt & Petzer, 2011). Research methodology considers the reasons behind the use of certain methods in an attempt to find answers to the research problem (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Malhotra (2014) concurs that research methodology involves comprehensive plans that complement

one another in facilitating data collection and analysis so as to find answers to the questions at hand. Section 1.4.1 provides a brief discussion on research paradigm.

1.4.1 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a broad view or perspective of something which explains the patterns of beliefs and practices that standardise inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames, and processes through which investigation is fulfilled (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). This research project made use of a positivist paradigm as it enabled the study to use scientific, quantifiable methods to investigate, evaluate, and explain the social media service quality and client service quality in the South African banking industry (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The positivist paradigm ensured that the study provided a rational explanation on social media service quality in the South African banking industry (Engel & Schutt, 2013). The positivistic paradigm lends itself to a quantitative research approach which is discussed in section 1.4.2.

1.4.2 Research Approach

The quantitative approach involves objective measurement, statistical or numerical analysis of data collected through a questionnaire to produce facts and statistics to a phenomenon (Malhotra, 2014). In this study, a quantitative research approach was utilised because the data can be statistically tested (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This research approach helped to find the study facts through minimal interaction with respondents. In addition, it is highly structured, which makes it easier to measure and scrutinize responses (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Given that numerical data was collected, a descriptive research design was the most suitable one for this study, and section 1.4.3, elaborates on the study's research design.

1.4.3 Research Design

A research design provides a framework that integrates the different components of a study in a logical way, thereby effectively addressing the study problem (Malhotra, 2014). It constitutes the blueprint to collect, measure, and analyse data (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). A descriptive research design was used for this study. The descriptive design helped to generalise the study findings to the broader population and related service industries. Section 1.4.4, provides the sampling and data collection strategy that this present study employed.

1.4.4 Sampling and Data Collection Strategy

The population of this study was Facebook users, who use their accounts to interact with banks in South Africa. The study only focused on the five major banks in SA. To date, there is a combined total of 3 909 782 users on these banks' Facebook pages, with 1 698 610 users for FNB; 675 305 users for Capitec; 580 241 users for ABSA; 519 867 users for Standard Bank, and 435 759 users for Nedbank. This wide base of Facebook users makes it an ideal social media representative sample for this study. A research population is the universe of unit or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic (Engel & Schutt, 2013). The population of the study at hand was carefully chosen because it is believed to be a technologically active generation that utilise Facebook most often (Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016).

Making use of the Raosoft calculator, a sample of 377 respondents was used, as a generalisable result can be obtained with that sample size (confidence level 95% and margin of error 5%) (Engel &Schutt, 2013). A larger sample size was not considered to have any meaningful impact on the results of the study. The study sample size compares well with other recent studies that were conducted in the banking industry. The sample size ranged from 350 to 450 in these studies (Hasiri & Afghanpour, 2016; Kaura, Durga, Prasad, & Sharma, 2015). A snowball approach was adopted, as per sampling strategies used in similar studies (Bhutta, 2012; Sibona & Walczak, 2012). Snowball sampling is an approach used when samples of a special population are needed (Wiid & Diggines, 2015), as the case of this study requires a specific bank's clients.

This study made use of Survey Monkey to carry on an online survey. Survey Monkey is an online survey development cloud-based software which provides customizable surveys. Online surveys are easy to administer, inexpensive, and can reach a wider geographical audience in a shorter period of time (Nel & Boshoff, 2014). In addition, data collected through online surveys can easily be imported into data analysis software. Online surveys are research techniques used to assemble primary data from respondents through the use of online questionnaires so that the data can be statistically analysed (Nel & Boshoff, 2014; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The survey was administered through a Facebook page specifically set up by the researchers for the purposes of the study. Data obtained via social networking sites

is regarded as inexpensive, fast, accurate and convenient (Kosinski, Gosling, Matz & Stillwell, 2015; Wilkinson & Thelwall, 2011). Respondents were directed to the study's Facebook page in several different ways. Firstly, public posts on banking-related Facebook pages regarding the study were designed, requesting clients to participate in the study. Secondly, respondents were encouraged to advise other potential respondents to visit the study's Facebook page and complete the questionnaire. No incentives were offered, as previous research provides evidence that social networking respondents are more concerned with the topic under discussion than being rewarded monetarily (Kosinski et al., 2015). Other studies have used a hybrid combination of the recruitment techniques posed here and response rates have proved to be high (Bhutta, 2012; Kosinski et al., 2015). The instruments that were used in this study are discussed in section 1.4.5.

1.4.5 Data collection instruments

The questionnaire was based on the constructs of E-S-SERVQUAL (Kim, 2015). The E-S-SERVQUAL scale is a valid and reliable one that has been tested in various studies across service industry settings (Kim, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015; Wesselman, 2014). The constructs of the E-S-SERVQUAL scale utilise five-point Likert scales in order to denote correlated dimensions. The E-S-SERVQUAL scale has five different constructs, namely the System Availability dimension, which consists of four items; the Efficiency dimension which is made up of eight items; the Fulfilment dimension, which is comprised of seven items; the Privacy dimension, which consists of three items; and the Overall Service Quality dimension, which is made up of four items. For the purpose of this study, a dependent construct of Client Loyalty Intention which consists of five items was also adopted. Section 1.4.5.1 provides the scale and constructs operationalisation.

1.4.5.1 Scale and constructs operationalisation

The operationalisation of the constructs entails selecting suitable items for the measurement scale, as well as the type of measurement scale. An E-S-SERVQUAL scale, developed by Kim (2015), in her study investigating the use of social media service quality in libraries, was used as the primary source to generate items to measure the constructs in this study. Table 1.1 graphically illustrates the operationalisation of the scale constructs.

Table 1.1 Operationalisation of the scale constructs

Factor and Operationalisation	Items	Source
Independent variables		
System Availability: Refers to the correct technical functioning of the retail bank's Facebook page.	4	
Efficiency: Refers to the extent which a website effectively facilitates bank activities such as banking service delivery.	8	Kim (2015); Parasuraman et al. (2005)
Fulfilment: Refers to the degree that the information on banks websites matches their products or service.	7	
Privacy: Refers to the state of security on the bank's Facebook page; for example how safe it is from cyber-crimes.	3	
Overall Service Quality: Refers to the information and services available on a bank's Facebook page, such as the overall convenience of using a bank's Facebook page.	4	
Dependent variable		
Client Loyalty Intention: Refers to a condition or deep commitment where clients will repeatedly visit a particular retail bank in spite of many alternatives at their disposal.	5	Kim (2015)

1.4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of determining consistent patterns and summarising the relevant details revealed in the investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The researcher analysed the data through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 24) and Lisrel (version 9) to draw conclusions. SPSS was used for the descriptive statistics and reliability and validity testing, while Lisrel was used for

structural equation modelling (SEM). Validity is the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the study are true (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The study results were correlated with other previous research work to check for external validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Both exploratory factor and confirmatory factor analysis were utilised for the purpose of testing the validity of the constructs used in this study. Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the number of factors that explain the correlations, and confirmatory factor analysis was used to predict the number of factors with specific loading (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Reliability is the consistency with which the instrument measures the target attribute (Pallant, 2013). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess if the measure of all factor items in a scale correlate with the remaining items (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

SEM is a general and powerful multivariate analysis technique that utilises specialised versions of various analysis methods as special cases (Wothke, 2010). For this study, SEM provided a framework for statistical analysis; for example confirmatory factor analysis and correlation. Both the structural and measurement models were analysed and the relevant fit indices for each was generated. SEM ensured unbiased estimates for the relations between service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry and it also permitted multiple measures to be associated with a single latent construct (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Section 1.4.8 provides delimitations of the present study.

1.4.7 Delimitations

The study only included the top five banks in South Africa: ABSA, FNB, Standard Bank, Nedbank, and Capitec. It does not include other banks that have operated in South Africa for more than a decade such as African Bank. There are various social media platforms that are popular, for example Twitter, but this study only focused on the Facebook pages of these banks.

1.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is authoritative to obtain clearance from an ethics committee when human, animal, or the earth's ecosystem issues are involved in any kind of study (Malhotra, 2014). The research proposal and other necessary documents were submitted to the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee for ethical clearance (Certificate Reference Number: VIL131SGAV01 - see Appendix B). The

researcher provided enough information about the study in order for the respondents to provide true voluntary and informed consent. The issue of informed consent being obtained from respondents in social media-related research projects is seen as the most important ethical factor to be considered (ESOMAR, 2011; Hutton & Henderson, 2015; Kosinski et al., 2015). The researcher informed the respondents that they could withdraw from the research at any phase of completing the questionnaire. The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The background of the study, the study objectives, problem statement, and the study significance will be covered in chapter one. Chapter two and chapter three will provide the study's literature review and theoretical framework underpinning the study respectively, and chapter four will be comprised of the research methodology. Chapter five will include the study findings, the analysis of the data, and the presentation of data. Chapter six of the study project will present the conclusion and recommendations.

1.7 Summary and Conclusion

The South African banking industry is a well-regulated and developed system which compares favourably with the rest of the world banks, however, banks need to continuously assess the service quality offered to their clients in order to sustainably maintain or grow their market share. The South African banking industry has significantly expanded in recent decades to incorporate social media. The primary objective of this study is to measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry. There were five hypotheses that were formulated to respond to the identified study problem. The quantitative approach was used in this study. A valid and reliable E-S-SERVQUAL scale was used to collect data for this study. The next chapter discusses the identified theories that anchor the notions developed for this study. A discussion on the South African banking industry is presented extensively in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BANKING INDUSTRY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one a brief introduction to the research topic was provided. In order to understand the context of the study, a synopsis of social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry was discussed. The theoretical framework underpinning the study, E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL, was also introduced. In addition, the research objectives, the hypotheses, the significance of the study, and the research methodology that will be used in the study was provided.

Chapter two provides an in-depth discussion on social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry. It discusses relevant research studies that have been conducted in the social media service quality and client loyalty contexts. The chapter includes a discussion on the South African banking industry. In general terms, retail banks are essential to any state economy, since they engage in every monetary transaction that takes place. This chapter provides a section on how the South African banks are using technology to maintain and grow their market share in the banking industry. The literature review provides a section on social media and how social media is used in the South African banking industry context. The chapter concludes with a summary of findings assembled from previous service industry studies. Section 2.2 commences Chapter two with a discussion on the South African banking industry.

2.2 The South African Banking Industry

The banking industry is the largest service industry in the world (Chahal & Dutta, 2015; Ki, 2013). The South African banking industry consists of more than 15 registered banks (Redda, 2015). From the total number of banks in SA, there are five banks, namely; Amalgamated Bank of South Africa (ABSA), Standard Bank, Nedbank, First National Bank (FNB), and Capitec, that have emerged to be the main competitors in the South African banking industry. The five major banks represent more than 80% of total banking assets (Matoti, 2014; Mlambo & Ncube, 2011;Nhundu, 2016). The South African banking industry has experienced few successful entrants since the establishment of ABSA 25 years ago, and only Capitec has managed to penetrate the

industry successfully within the last decade. Standard Bank, the largest bank in terms of assets, has a market share of 25%, followed by ABSA and FNB at 20% each, Nedbank at 17%, and 18% for Capitec combined with the rest of other small banks in SA (Matoti, 2014).

The South African banking industry has been ranked 8th in Financial Sector Development, out of 140 countries in the 2015/2016 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Survey (The banking association South Africa, 2017). This means that the South African banking system compares favourably with other developing countries (Matoti, 2014). The banking industry contributes more than 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and plays a significant role in the creation of employment in the South African economy (Maphakisa, 2014; Ramavhona, 2014).

The major retail banks in SA provide services to both individual and corporate clients. According to Maphakisa (2014), the South African banking industry offers five main categories of services, namely cash accessibility, asset security, money transfers, loans, and financial advice. These banking services are offered via a substantial distribution network of branches and agencies. In addition, banking services are also provided via telephone, mobile phone, and internet banking options.

The South African banking industry has developed into a mature industry that is well managed and which incorporates the most advanced banking systems to conduct its daily business (Hundre, Kumar & Kumar, 2013). This transformation over the past years is as a result of mergers, consolidations, technological advancement, and changes in legislation. Nevertheless, the banking industry, like many other service industries, is now faced with unprecedented challenges to sustain its growth rate (Mlambo & Ncube, 2011; Nhundu, 2016). Some of the most significant challenges the South African banking industry is facing include technological innovation, client acquisition and retention, financial innovation, fierce global competition, the reduction of transaction costs, rapidly changing markets, risk management, and more demanding clients (Redda, 2015).

From a South African perspective, the banking industry has become a highly competitive one; especially in this era were many traditional banking operations can be undertaken by non-banking financial institutions and other financial institutions (Hundre et al., 2013; Redda, 2015). A non-bank financial institution refers to an

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establishment that does not have a full banking license or is not supervised by a national or international banking regulatory agency, but facilitates bank-related financial services such as investment, risk pooling, contractual savings, and market brokering (Hundre et al., 2013). "Financial institution" refers to an establishment which is engaged in the business of dealing with monetary transactions, such as deposits, loans, investments, and currency exchange (Redda, 2015).

The entry of international banks such as Barclays bank into the South African market, and the breakthrough of small banks such as Capitec, which targets low-income clients and the previously unbanked markets, have intensified the competition (Redda, 2015; MarketLine Industry Profile, 2015). Capitec managed to penetrate the aforementioned banking segments (major five position) because it overcame clients' reluctance to switch, a key barrier to entry in retail banking, by developing a simple product that is easily understood (Nhundu, 2016).

South African banks should invest in the robustness of technology to protect themselves from losing clients to competitors. Technology has become the impetus of change in the banking industry, as is the case in other service-related industries (Hundre et al., 2013; MarketLine Industry Profile, 2015). This is because technology enables banks to better serve their clients and derive enormous benefits for themselves (Fisk, Grove, & John, 2014). Section 2.2.1 provides the introduction of e-Service in the banking industry.

2.2.1 The introduction of E-services in the banking industry

The emergence of the digital technologies of today has given rise to many alternative ways of conducting banking, allowing clients to have access to all major banking services (Nitescu, 2015). Worldwide, the banking industry, including the banks in developing countries such as SA, have adopted the latest technology as it enables sophisticated product development, the reduction of cost, the improvement of service quality, the maintenance of a flexible banking system, and allows banks to reach geographically distant and diversified markets (Gupta & Chanana, 2013; Ramavhona, 2014). Technology has provided an opportunity to open new markets, new services and efficient delivery channels for the banking industry (Gupta & Chanana, 2013). Most recently we have seen the explosion of technology (internet) resulting in a host of new services such as e-Services (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). e-Services are internet-

based services offered by an organization to provide facilities to its clients (Martin, 2016). These services include client support, e-commerce transaction services for handling online orders, and any processing capability that is obtainable on the website. With reference to banking, e-Services are the electronic facilities available via the internet which complete banking tasks and solve banking problems in a client-friendly way (Redda, 2015). In this study, "e-Services" specifically focuses on the interaction between clients and bank services on websites (Chahal & Dutta, 2015; Fisk et al., 2014; Redda, 2015). Fisk et al. (2014) asserts that e-Service has become so successful that service organisations are now shifting their strategies and budgets towards it.

An e-Service is considered to be a website-based client service that is driven by the clients and integrated with an electronic channel offered by businesses to build client relationships (George & Kumar, 2014; Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015). The examples of the electronic channels used in business service industry include emails, mobile, social media and telecommunications (Khurana, 2014; Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015). The banking industry shifted from service delivery systems to the web-based business-client relationship which includes an effective determinant of perceived e-Service quality (Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Therefore, the banks' personnel should be aware of the technological shift and readily deliver e-Services to their clients.

The banks in South Africa, like their counter parts worldwide, now also offer electronic banking services to their clients (Ramavhona, 2014; Redda, 2015). This offering of new, innovative e-Service in the South African banking industry made banking easier for the clients but, on the other hand, it also created a competition strategy for retail banks (Redda 2015; Young & Strelitz, 2014). The e-Service sector is currently the fastest growing banking segment in SA (Redda, 2015). The introduction of e-Services in South Africa reduced operating costs for retail banks in terms of labour, rent, and back office paper work (Bakare, 2015; Nhundu, 2016). Generally, banks are differentiated through various service quality offerings that range from service-fee charges, loan interest rates, lending limits, notice periods for withdrawing, and client convenience (MarketLine Industry Profile, 2015). In addition, these services helped the South African banks to access a bigger client base, lowered the cost of acquiring new clients, enhanced perceived bank image, and make use of an alternative communication channel which, in turn, increases client knowledge.

As what has been noted from others studies, the introduction of e-Services in banking could make the monetary control policy less effective (Ramavhona, 2014). However, in the case of the SA context, Maphakisa (2014) argued that e-Services in the South African banking industry will only reduce the ability of the Reserve Bank to influence output and price. However, with a new offering (e-Services) available, South African banks are now competing to provide e-Service quality to clients. Thus, there is need for South African banks to design appropriate marketing strategies in selling these e-Services to their clients, since some of the South African bank clients are sceptical to adopt them due to lack of adequate information on their benefits (Ramavhona, 2014). Section 2.2.1.1 provides e-Banking, which is a subcomponent of e-Service.

2.2.1.1 E-banking

Modern clients have redefined the banking industry through the acceptance of new devices and the overwhelming reliance on technology (Johnston, Chen, & Hauman, 2013). The banking industry has devised and deployed various forms of self-service technologies such as e-Banking to increase profit and gain a competitive advantage in the industry (Tarhini et al., 2015). E-banking is a process by which clients may perform banking transactions electronically without visiting a particular bank (Bakare, 2015; Tarhini, Mgbemena, Trab & Masa'deh, 2015). For the purpose of this study, "e-Banking" refers to the self-service transactions of a client (Bakare, 2015; Tarhini et al., 2015; Mthembu, 2013; Ramavhona, 2014). The examples of these e-Banking service offerings include Auto Teller Machines (ATMs), mobile banking, e-Money and Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs). These electronic banking services have resulted in increased competition in the South African banking industry.

A combination of regulatory and competitive reasons has led to increasing the importance of ATMs in the South African banking industry (Redda, 2015). An ATM is an electronic banking outlet which allows clients to complete basic transactions without the aid of a branch representative or teller (Mthembu, 2013). The use of ATMs provides clients with easy access to some banking services such as withdrawing and depositing money, printing bank statements, checking balance s and even making use of cardless services (Mthembu, 2013).

A more simple and easy form of e-banking access, mobile banking, was also adopted in the South African banking industry. Mobile banking is a service provided by a bank

that allows its clients to conduct financial transactions using a mobile device such as a mobile phone (Chahal& Dutta, 2015). "Mobile banking" includes the use of cell phones in banking transactions. The use of cell phones in banking established a direct channel connecting bank clients with the bank services (Redda, 2015; Mthembu, 2013; Ramavhona, 2014). Almost all banking services can now be accessed via a cell phone, and this has helped to reduce long queues in banks. Mobile phones have become indispensable tools to socialise, monitor work emails, browse the internet (banking services) and communicate with the bank (Sunday Times ZA, 2016). On the other hand, the use of cell phones has helped more than a million clients on a daily basis to engage with bank information via internet (Wronski & Goldstruck, 2013).

- ***Advantages of e-Services in banking***

Even though the use of e-services in banking has been in existence for more than a decade, the challenge facing the South African banking industry is ascertaining how to extract useful information from the vast amount data it holds (Bezbaruah & Rajkonwar, 2016; Wright, 2016). Mohapatra and Das (2013) are of the view that the use of technology in banking combined with refined client experience is the answer when it comes to modern banking and its simplicity. In SA, technology (e-Service) has provided the banking industry with the much needed technique and solutions to deal with the challenges the economy poses (Ramavhona, 2014).

The internet has improved the efficiency of the bank systems of collecting and transmitting orders for execution, regardless of the location of the client (Mthembu, 2013). Maphakisa (2014) concurs that e-Service has transformed the way banks conduct their business in SA since its introduction, which led to a significant growth in banking services. Statistics show that SA's internet usage cost is over 100% more as compared to other developing countries in Africa (Moodley & Govender, 2016). According to Ramavhona (2014), ABSA bank was the first to offer e-Services in late 1996 and was followed by Nedbank in early 1997; Standard Bank in July 1997; and FNB in August 1997. These retail banks embraced technology by innovatively creating an aggregate banking initiative which develops financial products through bundling the banking services (Wright, 2016).

Through the use of e-Services, banks in SA can now reduce their operating costs through better efficiencies. That is, they can streamline operation systems and

eliminate manual errors (Bakare, 2015; Tarhini et al., 2015). With the aid of technology, South African banks saw the opportunity to serve their existing clients and attract new clients through offering innovative banking services as well as enhancing the convenience and value of existing banking services (Redda, 2015). Young and Strelitz (2014) concur on the opportunities created by the use of e-Services in the banking industry when they assert that, with highly powerful data storage and analysis technologies, banks are now able to develop and implement sophisticated information management systems and techniques.

The increased use of e-Services will be beneficial to both banks and clients (Mthembu, 2013). There are many benefits that can be driven from e-Service facilities in the banking industry. Some of the major benefits are its convenience for clients, its ability to attract high-value clients, the enhancement of the banking image, increased revenue, easy bank expansion, and increased banking efficiency (Omoniyi & Omoniyi, 2015).In addition, banks will be able to reduce expenditure such as opening more branches, since bank clients are able to conduct their banking from the comfort of their homes (Wright, 2016).

A number of scholars agree that with the continued growth of e-Service in banking and the digitisation of commerce, e-Services can be profitably used in businesses (Coote & Coetzee, 2012; Harris, Cox, Musgrove, & Ernstberger, 2016; Tarhini et al., 2015; Wright, 2016). In South Africa, e-Service provides another layer of security in the banking industry (FNB, 2011; Ramavhona, 2014). In this context it can be argued that the e-Service provided by the South African banking industry is secure and can be trusted by clients. The most significant advantage which is attributed to e-Service in the banking industry is its ability to connect with a large market segment on social media. Section 2.3 will specifically focus on social media in the South African banking industry.

2.3 Social Media in South African Banks

Social media systems are web-based services that allow clients to create a public profile within a limited system, articulate a list of other users (clients) with whom they share a connection, and view their list of connections (Young & Strelitz, 2014). Social media incorporates user-generated content and information sharing online (Murray, Durkin, Worthington, & Clark, 2014). According to Rajaobelina, Brun and Toufaily

(2013), social media sites are valuable service platforms in the banking industry where information can be shared and interactions with clients can be improved. There are many types of social media platforms, including LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Messenger, Twitter and Facebook (Goldstuck, 2015).

The use of social media in the South African banking industry has built up rapidly over the last decade and continues to grow, with Facebook leading the trend (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Facebook has gained substantial popularity in the banking industry worldwide, and it has on average more than eight million daily active users (Dootson et al., 2016; Internet Usage Statistics for Africa, 2017). The 2017 SA Social Media Landscape report, conducted by business technology research firm and social network analytics company World Wide Worx found that 91% of major banks in SA use Facebook, 88% use Twitter, 66% YouTube, and 63% LinkedIn.

Facebook in particular has witnessed phenomenal growth and, in SA, the site is especially popular among the Generation Y (Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). "Generation Y" refers to the people born in early eighties to early nineties (Duffett, 2015b). Generation Y are the most economically active age group, and the fact that they have never experienced life without using technology is of interest to bank managers (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Since this Generation Y group is techno-savvy, the use of Facebook by banks is able to draw their attention, thereby allowing the banks to reach them (Detaling & Bick, 2013). One of the reasons why Facebook has gained popularity among this generation and in SA as a whole is because it primarily used to connect, interact, and stay in touch with contacts that the user (client) knows personally, such as friends, family, and colleagues (Johnston et al., 2013; Narayanan, Asur, Nair, Rao, Kaushik, Mehta, Athalye, Malhotra, Almeida & Lalwani, 2012). Section 2.3.1 provides information on the use of Facebook by South African banks.

2.3.1 The use of Facebook by South African banks

Facebook has become an important platform for global banking communications and is commanding a larger share of advertising budgets to reach almost all market segments (Duffett, 2015b). Therefore, the value of interacting with clients on Facebook is of great interest to banks, managers, and academics. Facebook is an attractive platform for banks to target clients, particularly indecisive and unpredictable clients,

with relevant marketing communications strategies and tactics (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016; Wronski & Goldstruck, 2013). The use of Facebook in the banking industry is an opportunity for banks to penetrate social network systems and interact with clients who were poorly engaged by traditional online banking (Garczyński, 2013; Wright, 2016).

Retail banks are compelled to manage Facebook updates in order to identify client problems and actively create needed solutions, while creating a perception for clients that their voice is being benchmarked as the bank's main advisors (Nițescu, 2015). Client reviews, comments, and references which are on a bank's Facebook site can be used to attract new clients, gain insight into clients' needs, and personalise messages to reach a specific age group (Wright, 2016). Facebook provides banks with an insight into their existing client relationship management systems, opening opportunities for building social client relationship management systems. In Poland, Garczyński (2013) defined the role of Facebook in shaping the relationship between the bank and the client in the context of value creation for both parties. In America, a number of surveys revealed that Facebook has helped retail banks to market information, deliver e-banking services, and improve client relationships (Bakare, 2015). Most leading retail banks around the world, for example the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) and the National Australia Bank (NAB), have included Facebook in their marketing and client service quality strategy (Senadheera, Warren, & Leitch, 2011; Wittlinger, 2013).

As Africa's banking client base grows, the need to coordinate and manage the growth and development of Facebook pages representing banks becomes increasingly important. Facebook enable banks to solicit instant client feedback and allow sourcing of ideas for dedicated offerings according to client needs and aspirations (Nițescu, 2015). As part of the African community, South Africa possesses knowledge and an understanding of the needs, capabilities, and unique problems and obstacles facing various developing countries and, in particular, Africa. This understanding gives the South African banking industry a definite competitive advantage in identifying, designing, manufacturing, customising, and developing low-cost products, suited to developing market needs (Coote & Coetzee, 2012). Therefore, this study seeks to

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examine innovative means that can be applied to the South African banking industry which cannot easily be copied.

Some studies have reported widespread usage and adoption of Facebook across SA and service industries (Viljoen, Gavaza, & Dube, 2016; Young & Strelitz, 2014). The widespread adoption of Facebook by clients, combined with opportunities to engage clients in a social way has made Facebook a key component of South African banks marketing strategy (Nel & Halaszovich, 2015). The rapid growth of Facebook has permanently altered the way that numerous clients interact with each other and banks in SA (Duffett, 2015a). Following world trends, South African banks have reconsidered their marketing communication strategies in order to remain relevant and to interact with all clients in an ever expanding digital arena (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). In SA, like the rest of the world, marketers quickly realised the influence of Facebook in terms of interactivity that is comprised of personalised messages, better banking experiences, greater convenience, and more widespread information search (Duffett, 2015b). Section 2.3.1.1 provides information on the links between Facebook and service quality in South African banks.

2.3.1.1 Facebook and service quality in South African banks

Facebook is one of the prominent communication tools used by South African banks (Wronski & Goldstruck, 2013; Duffett, 2015a). South African banks are promoting their business via Facebook marketing in order to gain visibility, viability, and sustainability in order to survive in the current competitive era (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Although the use of Facebook is prevalent among South Africans, its impact has remained largely unexplored (Mbinjama, 2013). The South African banking industry embraced the use of Facebook due to the fact that it contributes to the overall client experience that is analysing sentiment and trends across banking Facebook platforms, improving client care, and streamlining of client research (Nel & Halaszovich, 2015). South African banks are using Facebook as a key differentiating factor that represents the service quality and adequacy of the content by offering relevant and useful information (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Since bank clients visit bank's Facebook page to seek banking-related information, banks are advised to present the banking information in an easy and educational way which will leads to a satisfactory service quality (Detaling & Bick, 2013; Redda, 2015).

Through Facebook posts, banks can interact with different client segments in a timely and personalised manner in order to shape the clients behaviour and possibly solve any misunderstanding, thus enhancing the service quality offered to clients (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Clients are likely to be loyal and engaged if they are provided with a chance to design their own banking services via Facebook posts (Nel & Halaszovich, 2015). The key to a successful banking industry relies in clients' creation of their own desired service quality (Nel & Halaszovich, 2015; Maphakisa, 2014). This can be achieved if clients create their own solutions through solicited answers, complaints, personalised surveys, pools, and any other comments and feedback on a bank's Facebook page (Maphakisa, 2014). Thus, most South African banks have simplified their banking business models while providing clients the opportunity to realign the bank offerings with their needs. Retail banks should actively seek out clients who are dissatisfied on their Facebook page and provide efficient resolution before the complaints escalate (Nițescu, 2015). When clients are dissatisfied with the bank's service quality, they can register (post) their dissatisfaction on the bank Facebook page and it is likely to become viral in a matter of minutes (Okeke, Ezeh & Ugochukwu, 2015).

Dissatisfied clients usually switch to competitors after a negative experience and spread negative Word-of-Mouth Marketing (W-O-MM), which in turn impacts on market share (Martin, 2016). To understand the impact of unresolved client complaints, in Australia there is a case a "Facebook hate page", created by disgruntled clients making negative comments about their banking experiences (Senadheera, Warren & Leitch, 2011). Even though the creators were not able to attract more fans to their respective pages, their presence for a long duration without respective banks taking any action to stop them could have negative effects on the banks, considering the viral nature of social media based activities. This highlights the need for South African banks to have a social media service quality monitoring mechanism incorporated into their social media strategy.

As has been discussed in section 2.3, the wide growth and use of Facebook in terms of South African banking requires close attention in order to fully utilise its commercial use. There are 3 909 782 Facebook users on the five major South African banks, with 1 698 610 from FNB, 675 305 from Capitec, 580 241 from ABSA, and 519 867 from

Standard Bank. All these bank Facebook users either directly or indirectly interact with their respective banks via Facebook page on regular basis. With this client-bank interaction on a daily basis, monitoring and improving the level of service quality offered on these Facebook pages becomes of utmost importance in the South African banking industry (Detaling & Bick, 2013; Venugopal & Priya, 2015). The South African banks responded to the new service offering with various service quality initiatives, with the most interesting one being from FNB. FNB created their online persona "RB Jacobs" who interacts with clients on social media platforms (MyBroadband, 2014; Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014, & Bezuidenhout, 2014). These various service quality related initiatives by banks indicate the necessity of monitoring Facebook and the overall service quality of the South African banking industry.

Studies on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, in SA are not a new concept. However, many of them did not focus on service quality and client loyalty intention in the banking industry. Some studies focused on the use of social media platforms like Facebook in South African universities (Johnston et al., 2013), thereby leaving the use of social media in SA banking industry unexplored. Furthermore, other studies, Bevan-Dye and Akpojivi (2016); Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro, and Solnet (2013); and Duffett (2015b) focused their studies of social media and its effect on Generation Y, which exclude other population groups, which this study is also surveying. Duffett and Wakeham (2016) posit that several surveys were used to investigate the effect of Facebook marketing communications in SA. Detaling and Bick (2013) focused their study on the impact of social media on the marketing strategy of South African business. Therefore, this study investigates the missing gap; that is, social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Section 2.4 provides the summary and conclusion for chapter two.

2.4 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter two discussed the findings of other research studies that have been conducted in the South African banking industry. The main emphasis was on the service studies that primarily focused on banking industry. It provided insights on the use of technology in the banking industry. The South African banking industry has developed into a mature industry that is well managed, and which incorporates the most advanced banking systems in order to conduct its daily business. However, the

banking industry, like many other service industries, is now faced by unprecedented challenges to sustain its growth rate. Facebook has become an important platform for global banking communications. Retail banks are now compelled to manage Facebook updates in order to identify client problems and actively create needed solutions. This enhances high level service quality, which is likely to lead to client satisfaction in the banking industry. The next section provides chapter three of the present research study.
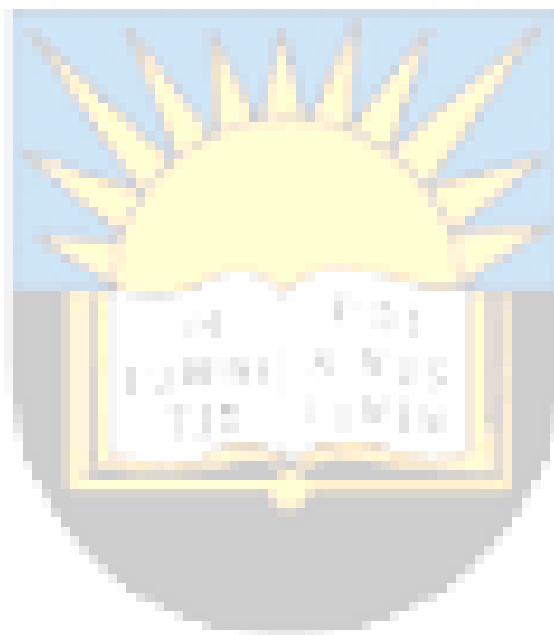
CHAPTER THREE

E-SOCIAL-SERVICE QUALITY AND CLIENT LOYALTY IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two discussed the current state of the South African banking industry. In order to understand the South African banking industry environment, the introduction of e-Services and e-Banking in the South African banking industry was provided. In addition, a discussion on the role social media plays in the South African banking industry was also given.

Chapter three provides an in-depth discussion of the theoretical concepts used in this study, for example social media, service quality, and client loyalty intention, specifically in the South African banking industry. Understanding these theoretical concepts will help to improve the service quality offered by the South African banking industry. The chapter includes a section on overview and importance of service quality as found by previous researchers when surveying banking clients in various studies. The three theoretical frameworks underpinning the study are discussed in detail, namely; SERVQUAL, E-SERVQUAL and E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL. Through these theoretical lenses, the relationship and gaps between social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry will be discussed. Section 3.2 commences the chapter with the discussion on an overview of service quality.

3.2 Overview of Service Quality

Academics agree that there is no precise definition of "service quality" possible, as it is a broad concept which varies per individual and within the study context (Garga & Bambale, 2016; Kwok, Jusoh, & Khalifah, 2016; Liu & Lee, 2016; Murali, Pugazhendhi, & Muralidharan, 2016; Su et al., 2016; Razminia et al., 2016; Redda, 2015). "Services" in general can be defined as any intangible performance, deeds, and process that can be offered by an individual or bank to a client (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003; Garga & Bambale, 2016). According to Redda (2015), "services" are usually described by clients as an experience of trust, feeling, and security.

"Quality" refers to the degree in which an individual or businesses satisfies client requirements (George & Kumar, 2014). Afridi, Khattak and Khan (2016) assert that both functional quality and technical quality is important to clients, because clients value both when assessing overall service quality. "Technical quality" refers to the relatively measurable outcome of the service act provided by a bank in their dealings with clients (Ismail, Zaki & Rose, 2016; Okeke et al., 2015). The technical quality can range from the client waiting time at the bank to how reliable the banking services are. "Functional quality" is concerned with the retail banks' environment factors such as clients' perception of the bank personnel on the handling of queues; it refers to the interactions that take place when a bank delivers services to the bank's clients (Ismail et al., 2016; Khurana, 2014).

"Service quality" denotes the ability of the service provider to satisfy client needs, that is, client satisfaction (George & Kumar, 2014). "Service quality" is a client's focused evaluation on the perception of service elements, for example interaction quality and outcome quality (Khurana, 2014; Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Most academics described "service quality" as an abstract and elusive concept that involves unique features such as variability, perishability, intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability of production (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007; Fisk et al., 2014; Ismail et al., 2016; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Zungu (2012) posits that service quality concerns the uniformity with which client's expectations are met, and the overall perceived service quality compared to that of competitors. Therefore, perceived service quality is the client's evaluation or judgement of the overall service received, resulting from the difference between client expectations about the service and their perceptions about the actual service (Kranias & Bourlessa, 2013; Liu & Lee, 2016).

"Service quality" is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept, and it varies from one particular service industry to another (Okeke at el., 2015). In some banking studies, "service quality" refers to the understanding of client's expectations and concerns, and the bank's responses to their needs (Kwok et al., 2016). For this study, "service quality" refers to the bank's ability to offer a standardised service consistently and reliably, resulting in client satisfaction (George & Kumar, 2014; Fisk et al., 2014; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007; Martin, 2016; Khurana, 2014; Kwok et al., 2016; Rao & Rao, 2013; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Venugopal & Priya, 2015; Yarimoglu,

2015; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Clients are more educated and informed about the banking system, and as a result they demand high quality services (Rathee, Rajain & Isha, 2015). The modern marketplace has emerged to be a global one, with clients exposed to international businesses that offer new, innovative services (Liu & Lee, 2016). Therefore, clients anticipate similar client service offerings in their own local market context (Chopra & Arora, 2013). In any competitive market environment, client service quality is a top priority and a driver of any successful service-based business (Thaichon, Lobo, Prentice, & Quach, 2014; Quach, Thaichon, & Jebarajakirthy, 2016). Rao and Rao (2013) concur that service quality is an important aspect or differentiator that could determine the success or failure of businesses. Failure to prioritise service quality in any business will result in its closure. Many clients have ended business relationships as a result of perceived poor client service (Thaichon et al, 2014).

Extensive studies in academia and business has been conducted on client service quality and will be discussed in section 3.4. Clients evaluate service quality based on both service outcomes and the process of service delivery (Bose & Gupta, 2013; Rathee et al., 2015). Martin (2016) indicated that service quality is positively related to client satisfaction in the service industry. Venugopal and Priya (2015) pointed out that a good business performance and timeous handling of client complaints as an essential element of service quality. Initiatives to offer superior client service qualities are crucial to keep clients satisfied (Kwok et al., 2016). In the case of clients that are dissatisfied, they are more likely to share their bad experiences with other clients. Damage control, such as repairing a business' reputation which has been tarnished on social media is very costly when compared to satisfying clients and maintaining the relationship (Razminia et al., 2016).

Clients understand that banks sometimes make mistakes and, in these cases, all they require is for the error to be rectified (Su, Swanson & Chen, 2016   Okeke et al. (2015) assert that services quality depreciates when there is lack of communication between the frontline personnel who render the service and the management of the business. These authors further pointed out that service quality also decreases if management fails to establish client service expectations. The nature of the exact relationship between service quality and client satisfaction is shrouded in uncertainty (Khurana, 2014; Kwok et al., 2016). Most successful businesses emphasise the need to maintain

a client relationship (Razminia et al., 2016). Section 3.2.1 provides an indication of the importance of service quality.

3.2.1 The importance of service quality in the services sector

In spite of the ever changing dynamics of the business world, client service quality is vital to business survival (Su et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2016). Venugopal and Priya (2015) posit that, with the current hyper competitive environment, businesses are obliged to resort to service quality as a key factor to attain a competitive edge. Businesses can only achieve this significant position (competitive edge) in the global competition market if the quality of service offered is above the client's expectations (Neshat & Dehghani, 2013).

The world economy is witnessing tremendous changes as a result of globalization which comes with opportunities for service industries (Chopra & Arora, 2013; Soodhun, Khan & Chutoo, 2014). In general, service quality has become an inseparable component of the economy, so much so that academics are now considering it as the dominant economic activity around the world (Bose & Gupta, 2013; Fisk et al., 2014). The service sector has become the highest contributor to the economic growth in SA and other developed countries (Fisk et al., 2014; Nyoka, 2013). In these countries, especially the USA, the service sector has superseded manufacturing as the driving force of economic growth and international trade, and it positively contributes to 76.8% of the GDP. With this huge contribution to economic growth, the service industry becomes an important aspect for many businesses and countries.

Clients have more choices today, and if they receive bad service they will go to a competitor. Thus, businesses are competing heavily, and differentiating themselves via service quality. Service quality enhances client satisfaction which is positively related to market share, productivity, value, and profitability (Martin, 2016). In this era of global economy and turbulent markets, client satisfaction helps banks to upgrade the bank image, enhance the bank's reputation and improve competitiveness (Neshat & Dehghani, 2013; Ismail et al., 2016). Apart from building client loyalty and reducing

marketing costs, offering superior service quality also protects the bank by creating competitive barriers (Razminia et al., 2016).

Previous academic studies have pointed out that service quality also boosts the performance of the business (Fisk et al., 2014; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Therefore, improvements in service quality will procure long-term success for banks (Okeke at el., 2015). Razminia et al. (2016) posit that superior service quality increases the business' efficiency and efficacy in realising client-oriented objectives, which, in the long run, help to secure a vast loyal client base. Service quality does not only lead to client retention but also attracts new clients who are lured by a business' good reputation (Vera & Trujillo, 2013).The principal objective of all businesses is maximising profits through offering superior service quality, and banks cannot be an exemption (Soodhun et al., 2014; Okeke at el., 2015). In retail banking, service quality helps to lower the operating costs through the bank personnel's ability to offer high quality service, and avoid wasting time and efforts on mending relationships with clients that have been dissatisfied (Khurana, 2014; Okeke at el., 2015; Razminia, Mirsardoo, Shabani, & Shafiee, 2016).

It is noteworthy that superior service quality is a key to many business aspects, namely: business differentiation, strategic business positioning, competitive advantage, business performance, economical benefit, positive W-O-MM, good image, business reputation, client satisfaction, client loyalty, market share gaining, and business profitability (Chopra & Arora, 2013; Su et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2016; Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Undoubtedly, service quality is an essential banking aspect and thus there is a need to constantly assess clients' view of service quality in order to identify causes of service quality defects, control these, and take appropriate measures to improve service quality (Neshat & Dehghani, 2013). Section 3.2.2 provides service quality in the South African banking industry.

3.2.2 Service quality in the South African banking industry

Globally, service quality in the banking industry context has recently become an area of interest in research studies (Bakare, 2015; Razminia et al., 2016; Redda, 2015). The banking industry today is recognised as an international market offering different

sets of services under one roof (Chopra & Arora, 2013). For retail banks to deliver unique client service, the bank needs to know and understand the clients' profiles (Maphakisa, 2014). Thus, the more banks know about clients, the more effective the bank will become in delivering relevant banking services to that specific client. In fact, once a bank has a thorough knowledge of its client, it is important that the bank tries to personalise every interaction of the client with the bank (Bakare, 2015). Retail banks should involve their clients in their marketing campaigns in order to enhance the brand and gain competitive edge (Niţescu, 2015).

South African banks need to adopt and implement innovative client relationship management strategies to maintain and increase the bank's client base in a competitive marketplace (Maphakisa, 2014). The five major banks that are the focus of this study are well represented in the nine South African provinces (Ramavhona, 2014). The intense competitive environment of the South African banking industry is making it a difficult task for banks to retain existing clients and at the same time acquiring newer clients (Redda, 2015). As a result, South African banks resorted to becoming more client oriented. Undoubtedly, client-oriented banks offer service quality that is likely to satisfy clients. The level of service quality offered by retail banks is able to act as a relationship catalyst between the banks and their clients (Razminia et al., 2016).

Naturally, clients of the bank recognise slight distinctions on the service quality offered by retail banks (Zungu, 2012). Khurana (2014) explained that this trend is triggered by the banking industry's ever increasing use of aggressive marketing techniques. Bakare (2015) findings indicated that all service quality dimensions influence client satisfaction in retail banks. Coetzee et al. (2013) found that clients' expectations of the retail bank's ability to fulfil promises and bank personnel's ability to offer clients personal attention contribute to the overall service quality experience and has a positive impact on client satisfaction. Maphakisa (2014) suggest that client experience in banking should be about how the client goes through all the interactions with every bank segment. Bakare (2015) is of the view that providing more feasible training to bank personnel could further enhance the effectiveness of service delivery in the South African banking industry.

Bank clients are now educated and more aware of the latest market developments in the South African banking industry, and they demand the full banking product or service range to maximise their satisfaction (Chopra & Arora, 2013). This increased level of awareness among bank clients and the trend of bank clients keeping pace with current technology has led to service quality being a crucial attribute of the South African banking industry (Nyoka, 2013; Rathee et al., 2015). Therefore, in order for a bank to satisfy its clients, the bank needs to know what factors will satisfy or dissatisfy them. In order for banks to satisfy clients, banks personnel must be in a position to know and provide both technical and functional service quality offered by their banks (Okeke et al., 2015).

However, it is also important to acknowledge that service quality in the banking industry has consequences. Although superior service fosters favourable client experience and reduces client dissatisfaction, an important issue to consider is the service quality level that banks must target to have the desired impact on client experience (Maphakisa, 2014). The service quality level that is sufficient to retain bank clients must be determined. Mbise and Tuninga (2016) posit that there is limited evidence that directly addresses the questions that ultimately determine the consequences of service quality. Chopra and Arora (2013) pointed out that the South African banking industry is highly competitive and thus, banks face dynamic challenges of both retaining their client base and maintaining performance levels. The most important facet of service quality in the banking industry is the constant evaluation of quality through regular information collection and analysis from clients and internal sources (Garga & Bambale, 2016; Martin, 2016). Therefore, this study seeks to examine social media service quality and client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry context. Section 3.3 will provide proposed service quality evaluation models that will be used to assess the South African banking industry.

3.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework commences with section 3.3.1 which provides an overview of Social exchange theory that robustly explains the knowledge-sharing process on social media. Furthermore, the theory of planned behaviour is discussed in section 3.3.2. In addition, section 3.3.3 provides the gaps model which is the service quality model upon which the SERVQUAL theory is based. The other theoretical framework for this study consists of the SERVQUAL theory in section 3.3.4, which was later

developed to E-SERVQUAL theory in section 3.3.5 in order to accommodate advanced technology applications. The last part of the theoretical framework underpinning this study is the E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL in section 3.3.6, which was developed to suit the use of Web 2.0 technologies in the service industry.

3.3.1 Social exchange theory

The origins of the social exchange theory (SET) can be traced back to hundred years ago. SET proposes that social behaviour is the result of an exchange process (Tsai & Cheng, 2012). Academics have described SET as a theory of social interactions and interpersonal relations (Blau, 1964; Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2009; Tsai & Cheng, 2012). SET is concerned primarily with the social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties (businesses and clients) (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1972; Nammir, Marane & Ali, 2012). The theory is based on the assumption that humans are sometimes influenced with different value-oriented elements such as emotional values and traditional values.

In this study context, SET posits that individuals (clients) make decisions based on subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Nammir et al., 2012). Every social exchange decision can be a complex decision that requires the client to evaluate different costs, rewards, profit, long-term benefits, security, social approval and independence (Robbins et al., 2009). The theory suggests that resources, whether they are tangible or intangible, are exchanged between two parties (banks and clients), with the goal of improving or sustaining relationship (Tsai & Cheng, 2012). Depending on the objective of the relationship, participant might modify their resources in order to satisfy each other's expectations (Blau, 1964). Thus, banks can modify their service in order to satisfy clients' expectations which in turn leads to client loyalty.

Even though, SET is not a unified or standardized theory, most scholars generally agree on basic assumptions about human's nature such as clients generally seek rewards and simultaneously try to avoid penalties (Blau, 1964; Nammir et al., 2012; Tsai & Cheng, 2012). The basic assumption is that human beings strive for a positive outcome when considering rewards and costs of a relationship, this in turn would lead to maximising their satisfaction level (Young, 2015). The theory is popular within the business environment in explaining and analysing commercial transactions.

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Therefore, SET is central to the business concepts of relationship marketing as it helps to understand human interaction and decision making. Thus, SET is significant in explaining social media service quality in the South African banking industry. From this perspective, the client is an investment that businesses (banks) must properly manage and cultivate in order to maximise the profit (Young, 2015).

SET makes two relevant assumptions that is regarding human nature and regarding the quality of relationships (Nammir et al., 2012). Regarding the quality of relationships posits that clients are mutually dependent on each other (Tsai & Cheng, 2012). This help to understand and explain the way clients behave on social media platforms for banks in SA. Furthermore, SET assumes that we can accurately anticipate the payoffs of a variety of interactions. In essence, clients only take part in exchange relationships, when expecting rewards from the relationships (Robbins et al., 2009). There is no guarantee that there will be reciprocal rewards in return for the costs invested, however, within SET the assumption is that the other party (either bank or client) will have cooperative intentions. Section 3.3.2 provides theory of planned behaviour.

3.3.2 Theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is an extension of the theory of reasoned action which dates back to five decades ago (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980). TPB was made necessary by the Theory of reasoned action model's inability to deal with behaviours over which individuals have incomplete volitional control (person must have the resources, opportunity and support available to perform a specific behaviour), (Ajzen, 1991). At the heart of TPB is the client's intention to perform a given behaviour. The TPB is based on the assumption that if we can understand the intention of clients, we can easily predict their behaviour (Cheng, Lam & Hsu, 2006). In addition, it assumes that most human (client) social behaviour is under faculty control and, it can be projected from intentions alone (Cameron, 2010). These intentions eventually translate into client behaviour when clients have actual control such as knowledge, skills and resources to overcome barriers to action.

The TPB is built on three conceptually independent antecedents of attitude towards behaviour, perceived behavioural control and subjectivity norms, thus, an understanding of social media service quality on client loyalty in the South African banking industry can be assessed through this theory (Ajzen, 1991; Cameroon, 2010;

Viljoen et al., 2016). These three antecedents are major determinants of clients' behavioural intentions and actual behaviour. Attitude toward the behaviour measures the degree to which clients have on either a negative or positive evaluation toward their performance of the behaviour which will be under study for example clients behaviour on a bank's social media platforms in SA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Cheng et al., 2006).

Perceived behavioural control is the extent to which client believe that they are capable of, or have control over performing a given behaviour (Alleyne & Broome, 2011). Perceived behavioural control can impede the formation of favourable intentions to perform the behaviour. Academics general agree that the inclusion of perceived behavioural control in the TPB has increased its influence and predictive power for client's intention and behaviour (Cameron, 2010).

Subjective norms are clients' perceptions about whether or not other clients especially referents (client's peer, family, social media friends) think he/she performs the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Cheng et al., 2006). Descriptive norms are usually based on clients' perceptions of what behaviours people normally do (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Behavioural intention is an essential condition for voluntary action, which is motivated by clients' attitudes, social pressure and perceived opportunities or obstacles (Alleyne & Broome, 2011). The more favourable the attitude and subjective norm in terms of behaviour and greater perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be a client's loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

Past actions is the best predictor of future behaviour (Alleyne & Broome, 2011), thus, clients' behaviour on social media might be used to determine their likelihood to associate themselves with a certain bank in SA. The TPB suggests that client intention leads to client's action which allows for an assumption of a significant relationship between client loyalty intentions and actual behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Cheng et al., 2006). TBP manages and assess emotional variables such as threat, fear, mood and feelings in clients (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Based on these assessment, one can understand the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Section 3.3.3 provides gaps analysis of the service quality.

3.3.3 Gaps analysis of service quality

To date, various researchers have developed a number of models to test service quality; however, academic scholars have proved that the Gaps model is the most used (Afridi et al., 2016; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Van Schalkwyk & Steenkamp, 2014). Therefore, the focus of this study will be on the Gaps model of service quality, which is the most cited framework and used widely in businesses, banking, and academic circles (Ariff at el., 2012; Chopra & Arora, 2013; Kim, 2015; Ismail et al., 2016; Maharana & Panda, 2016; Neshat & Dehghani, 2013; Khurana, 2014; Rathee at el., 2015; Singh, 2016). It is therefore considered to be highly applicable to this study. Conceptually, the foundation of the SERVQUAL scale is the Gaps model proposed by Parasuraman et al., 1988. The Gaps model was developed to understand the difference between actual and perceived service quality provided by a business (Afridi et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2016). There are five different gaps that usually arise between service business and clients, which will be illustrated in Figure 3.1 and further discussed briefly.
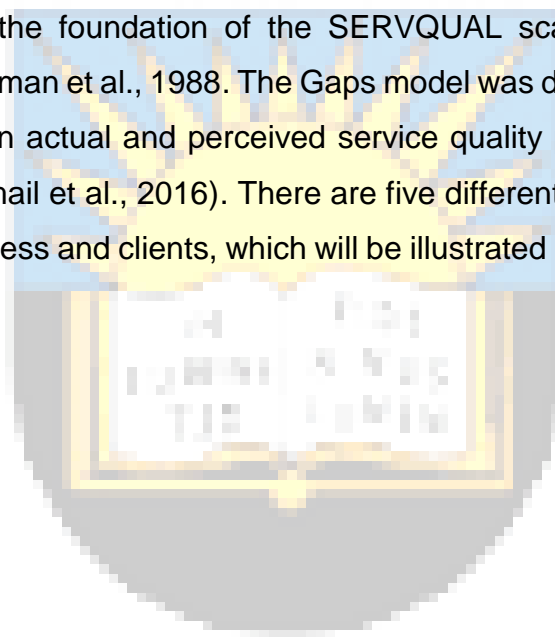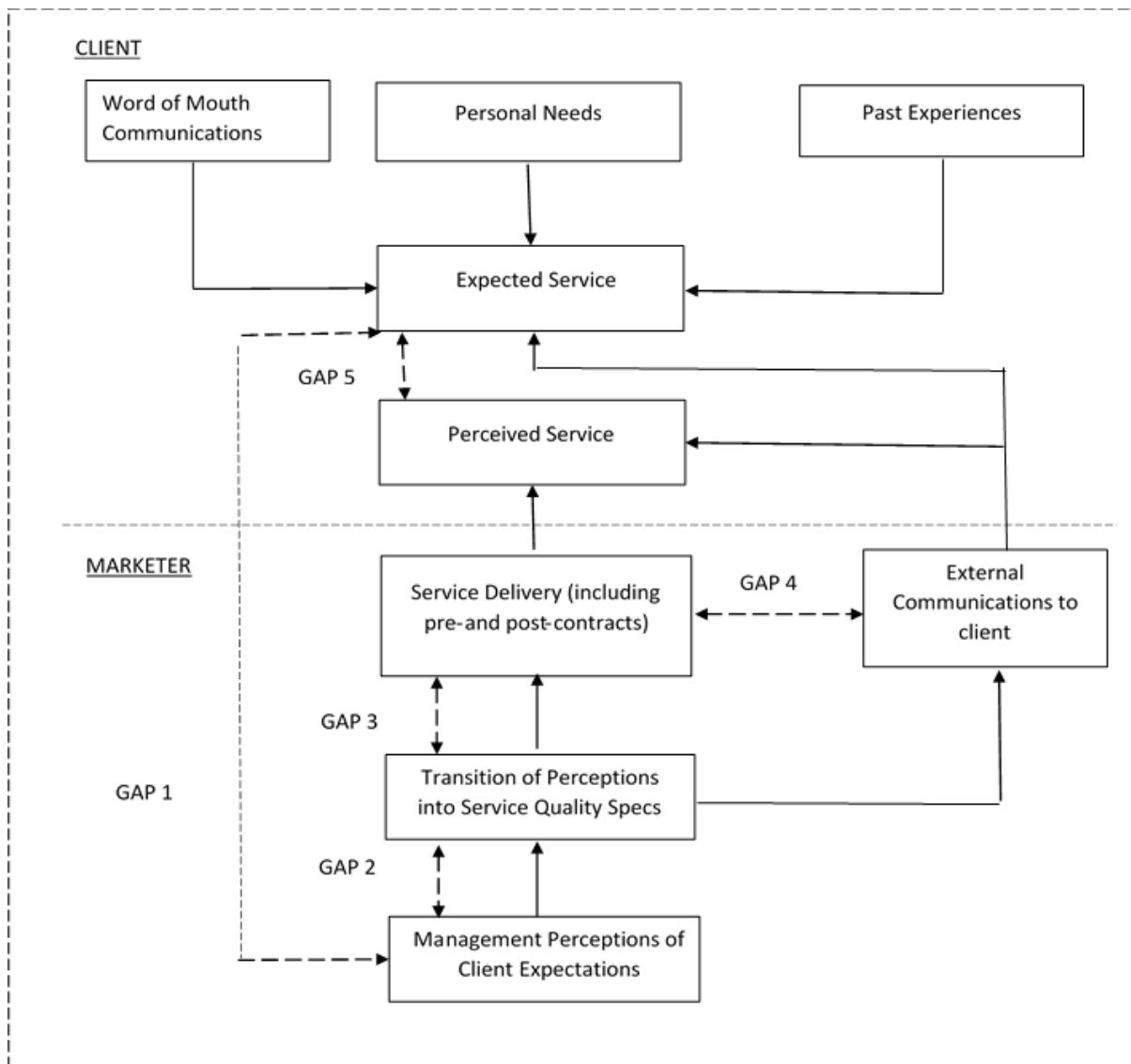
Figure 3.1 Service quality gaps model (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

As indicated in Figure 3.1, the five gaps consist of the following:

Gap 1: The gap between clients' expectation of bank service and bank management perceptions of clients' expectations (Afridi et al., 2016; Kim, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Gap 2: The gap between bank management perceptions of clients' expectations and the bank service quality specifications (Afridi et al., 2016; Kim, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Gap 3: The gap between the bank service specifications and actual bank service delivery (Afridi et al., 2016; Kim, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Gap 4: The gap between the bank service delivery and the bank's communications to clients. The discrepancy is usually caused by inadequate communications between senior bank managers and frontline managers, and the propensity to over-promise by bank personnel (Afridi et al., 2016; Kim, 2015, Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Gap 5: The gap between clients' expected bank service and client perceived service performance of service delivered by the bank. The discrepancy is as a result of the influences exerted from the client (personal needs, W-o-M recommendation and past service experiences) and the bank's failure to deliver the expected service quality (Afridi et al., 2016; Kim, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

In order to measure and bridge the above mentioned gaps in service quality, Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model which is discussed in section 3.3.4

3.3.4 SERVQUAL

From the literature in section 3.3.3, one can conclude that there should be proper dimensions against which service quality should be measured (Afridi et al., 2016). Parasuraman et al. (1988) designed the SERVQUAL tool for measuring the service delivery gaps in service industries. The conceptualisation of the SERVQUAL measurement instrument originated from prior research studies conducted on service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Using the SERVQUAL model as an instrument allows service quality evaluation, but at the same time it can be used as a tool for improvement and comparison with the rest of the service industry (Corneliu & Maria, 2013). The SERVQUAL model builds on the disconfirmation paradigm and maintains that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of disconfirmation of a client's service experience in comparison to the client's expected experience (Afridi et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2016).

The SERVQUAL model has been used in multiple service industry studies to measure service levels in diverse settings such as university, library and banking services (Afridi et al., 2016; Ananthi, 2016; Braendle et al., 2014; Coetzee et al., 2013; Kaura et al., 2015; Kim 2015; Khurana, 2014; Van Schalkwyk & Steenkamp, 2014). The wide usage of the SERVQUAL instrument in service industry studies proves that its

reliability and validity has been widely accepted by academics and practitioners alike (Bose & Gupta, 2013; Coetzee et al., 2013; Khurana, 2014; Kim, 2015; Munir, 2016). According to Bose and Gupta (2013), the SERVQUAL dimensions measure the quality of the service as envisaged by the client. Over the years, the SERVQUAL model has evolved; it was originally ten dimensions and was then reduced to five dimensions. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) determined five generic dimensions for the measurement of service quality in different service oriented industries. The five generic dimensions of the SERVQUAL model are as follows: (R) responsiveness, (A) assurance, (T) tangibles, (E) empathy, and (R) reliability (Afridi et al., 2016; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005; Untaru, Ispas, & Dan, 2015; Wang, Luor, Luarn, & Lu, 2015). The five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument are discussed below within the context of the banking industry.

- **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness involves the willingness of bank personnel to help clients and deliver prompt service (Kranias & Bourlessa, 2013; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2015). Afridi et al. (2016) described "responsiveness" as the extent of the bank personnel's readiness to provide clients with satisfactory service, and also the employee's devotion to the bank. It involves attending to clients in a timeous manner, reducing their waiting times, and responding to their queries, needs, complaints, and problems effectively. The way bank personnel act in fulfilling this dimension (responsiveness) to the clients constitutes behavioural factors such as courteousness, appearance, and knowledge (Chopra & Arora, 2013). In the case of banking, Chopra and Arora (2013) found that banks should interact with the clients consistently and take their feedback seriously with regard to their problems.

Better responsiveness to clients through taking action regarding their queries, needs, and complaints in a timeous manner will benefit the bank in a number of ways (Coetzee at el., 2013; Munir, 2016). Chopra and Arora (2013) suggested that businesses, especially banks, should have an enquiry counter in every branch irrespective of its size, so as to provide convenient banking services to the clients. In their study, Rathee et al. (2015) ranked client's responsiveness as the most important dimension of service quality. In other service industries, clients concurred that

responsiveness dimension is an essential service quality facet (Ananthi, 2016; Maharana & Panda, 2016).

- **Assurance**

Assurance is related to the behaviour and expertise of the bank employees (Kranias & Bourlessa, 2013). "Assurance" specifically refers to the ability of the bank personnel to convey trust and confidence through their knowledge (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Untaru et al., 2015). Through displaying trustworthy behaviour, bank personnel are likely to enhance service levels, and thus client satisfaction levels will improve significantly (Afridi et al., 2016; Persad & Padayachee, 2015).

- **Tangibility**

"Tangibility" refers to the physical aspect of the bank and its facilities, including written materials and the appearance of bank personnel (Afridi et al., 2016; Kaura et al., 2015; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Kranias and Bourlessa (2013) define "tangibles" as the client perceptions about the physical evidence component of the bank service. Through tangibility, banks can create positive, long-lasting impressions on clients (Braendle et al., 2014; Kaura et al., 2015).

In his study, Khurana (2014) found that client expectations regarding banks' physical facilities such as equipment and materials have a significant impact on client satisfaction. Retail banks should focus on improving the tangibility dimension in order to maximise client satisfaction (Coetzee at el., 2013; Khurana, 2014). Maharana and Panda (2016) concur on the importance of the assurance dimension when they assert that clients are likely to positively associate themselves with a bank that has a more tangibility components.

- **Empathy**

Empathy refers to the abilities of the bank personnel to care for and deliver individual level attention to clients (Corneliu & Maria, 2013; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Afridi et al. (2016) concur that empathy reflects the degree of a retail bank's understanding of a client's exact requirements, and the ability of the bank to fulfil these needs accordingly. Kranias and Bourlessa (2013) are of the view that empathy is linked to the client's perceptions about the attention they receive from bank personnel. Researchers have established that clients treated empathetically are likely to visit the bank repeatedly and will more easily forgive any mistakes that may occur (Khan &

Fasih, 2014; Redda, 2015). Khurana (2014) suggested that if bank personnel commit themselves to efficiently delivering quality services and skilfully handling complaints, it will result in clients 'satisfaction with service encounters.

- **Reliability**

"Reliability" is the ability of the bank and its personnel to provide all services dependably, consistently, and in an accurate manner (Braendle et al., 2014; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Afridi et al. (2016) concur that reliability involves bank employees consistently providing a high service quality and ensuring that the client can rely on the bank and its personnel. Kranias and Bourlessa (2013) found that reliability is related to the accurate performance of the banks personnel in terms of delivering the required financial service. Martin (2016) asserts that reliability in relation to all of the other SERVQUAL dimensions is the most important attribute to client satisfaction in the banking industry.

Several service industry studies concur on the importance of the reliability dimensions (Afridi et al., 2016; Bose & Gupta, 2013; Kim, 2015, Munir, 2016). Kim (2015) revealed the usefulness of the reliability dimension in identifying the areas where a business (bank) needs to improve. When it comes to a bank's reliability, clients expect to receive reliable banking service all the time (Bose & Gupta, 2013). In the case of a client not receiving the anticipated reliable banking service, the bank risks losing that client to its competitors. Afridi et al. (2016) assert that a bank service can only be reliable if the employees are competent in providing the expected service quality, and if the client can be able to count on the bank's delivery of service quality. Maphakisa (2014) suggests that banks should ensure that they empower bank personnel to provide reliable client service. The author argues that when clients find that the banking service is offered to their satisfaction the first time and then every subsequent time, they gain confidence in the bank and in the abilities of the bank personnel.

3.3.4.1 Limitation of SERVQUAL in a technological environment

Most of the studies that have used the SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality delivered results through traditional banking channels (Martin, 2016; Okeke et al., 2015; Redda, 2015). With globalisation, technological advancement, financial innovation, changing information systems and deregulation, an alternative avenue has opened up through electronic technologies such as the internet with a view to providing

superior service in comparison with competitors. This necessitated a new approach that includes electronic service quality dimensions (Çırpın & Sarica, 2014). As discussed in chapter two, in search of a technologically-related competitive advantage, many banks have focused on shifting their service delivery towards self-service channels such as e-Banking services. These developments have changed the way banks and clients interact in conducting business as highlighted in section 2.2.1.1. As banks compete in the market place with generally undifferentiated services, the focus on e-Service quality has become a primary competitive strategy in an attempt to win and retain clients (Redda, 2015). This means that an adaption to SERVQUAL is required to accommodate technological innovative service channels.

Some scholars criticise the SERVQUAL model's reliance on two scales measuring perceptions and expectations rather than using a more easily understandable scale which focuses solely on either perceptions or expectation measure (Afridi et al., 2016; Martin, 2016; Tshin, Tanakinjal, & Sondoh, 2014; Untaru et al., 2015). Even though the SERVQUAL model is popular with academics and practitioners, it is believed that it still requires more empirical evidence in different service oriented industries (Afridi et al., 2016). It has been stated that SERVQUAL in its current form is insufficient to measure e-Service quality because it does not embrace the unique features of e-Service quality, such as the interaction between clients and the website or other online mediums (Kim, 2015; Tshin et al., 2014). In addition, the SERVQUAL instrument is not suitable for measuring service quality in computer-mediated self-service provisions, and does not provide a sound foundation for research into e-Service quality (Martin, 2016). Since SERVQUAL as an evaluation instrument that assesses service quality of bank's services is only limited to address face-to-face interactions, there has been a need to develop an instrument that addresses aspects beyond this physical interaction (Cırpın & Sarıca, 2014). To fulfil this gap, the E-SERVQUAL model as discussed in section 3.3.5, was developed.

3.3.5 E-SERVQUAL

The dimensions of the traditional SERVQUAL instrument as stated in section 3.3.4.1, only focuses on the human elements which are in contrast to the technical aspects of the e-Services that banks are now offering (Ariff et al., 2016). To accommodate the electronic services offered in service industries, a need to develop a scale for e-

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Service quality assessment became necessary to better improve online service quality (Yarimoglu, 2015). As stated in section 2.2.1, an "e-Service" is considered to be online-based client service that is driven by the clients themselves, and integrated with any electronic channel offered by businesses to build client relationships (Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015). Some of the examples of these electronic channels were mentioned in chapter two and include emails, social media, and telecommunications.

It is believed that e-Service quality is difficult to conceptualise and to measure (Redda, 2015; Thaichon et al., 2014). The banking industry, like any service industry, has integrated electronic service delivery channels to provide banking services to clients, and this has influenced how banks interact with their clients in the market space as stated in section 2.3.1 (George & Kumar, 2014; Tshin et al., 2014). When assessing e-Service quality in the banking industry, the focus should be the electronic interaction process that is encountered before, during, and after a client interacts with the bank (Amin, 2016).

The E-SERVQUAL was developed by Parasuraman et al (2005) as an attempt to capture the measurement of e-Service quality in the new information age (Thaichon et al., 2014). Academics welcomed the development of the E-SERVQUAL scale as they hoped that it would better assess and improve e-Service quality offered (Blut, Chowdhry, Mittal, & Brock, 2015; Piercy, 2014; Yarimoglu, 2015). E-SERVQUAL dimensions are different from the traditional service quality (face-to-face interactions) constructs due to their unique ability to measure both human and technological interactions (Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015). Parasuraman and other authors developed a 22-item scale in 2005, and identified four dimensions applicable to organisations websites, namely: system availability, efficiency, fulfilment, and privacy (Kim, 2015; Kim & Nitecki, 2014). E-SERVQUAL has been tested previously and it was considered to be more applicable to the online retail context, however, it can still be adapted to the service context, particularly of interest in this study is the banking context (Kalia, 2017; Ramavhona & Mokwena, 2017). These dimensions formed the basis of developing the E-SERVQUAL measurement instrument and the item attributes which now constitute E-SERVQUAL (Kim, 2015; Wesselman, 2014). These four dimensions are discussed within the context of the banking that is banking websites, in the following sections.

- **System Availability**

"System availability" is the ability to get on the site quickly and to reach the organisation when needed (Parasuraman et al., 2005). The increasing reliance of the banking industry on web-based services requires a high systems availability to perform daily banking activities (Persad & Padayachee, 2015). "System availability" refers to the accessibility of the bank's website for business purposes, for example to seek banking service information (Neshat & Dehghani, 2013). If clients cannot access the bank's website, it is termed 'system unavailability'. The system unavailability indicates the failure of the bank's service, which in turn leads to clients becoming dissatisfied. Therefore, a banks website should be actively up and functional in order to assist clients with their online banking requirements.

A functional bank website is convenient to clients, which in turn appeals to clients to re-visit that bank online on a regular basis (Kranias & Bourlessa, 2013). Durkin at el. (2014) applied the E-SERVQUAL to social commerce websites, and these authors found that system availability is akin to responsiveness dimension of the SERVQUAL instrument, and it significantly influences the client's perceived value and client loyalty. A survey done in relation to a university library website found that system availability is the most important dimension for the online environment of library services (Kim, 2015). Persad and Padayachee (2015) assert that clients are likely to return to client-friendly e-Services as the perceived ease of use reduces performance risk concerns in the banking industry.

- **Efficiency**

"Efficiency" is the extent to which a website effectively facilitates bank activities such as banking service delivery (Amin, 2016; Parasuraman et al., 2005). "Efficiency" refers to the website usability. It is the measure of how well a bank website executes its intended use (Thaichon et al., 2014; Segoro 2013). Kranias and Bourlessa (2013) revealed that the efficiency of a business website positively influences service quality and impacts on the level of clients' loyalty. Neshat and Dehghani (2013) posit that, through an efficiency website, banks can expand their service quality to improve the client perception of that bank.

The efficiency of a retail banks website in meeting client requirements is just as important as the presence of skilled bank personnel in order to assist in face-to-face interactions (Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Clients are likely to visit a bank website if they feel the website has rational, sequential, and logical banking processes in place in order to satisfy their needs (Thaichon et al., 2014). A clear and simple website which provides quick responses encourages clients to interact with the banks website. However, if clients don't perceive the bank website as efficient, they are likely to feel inconvenienced, which might result in them ending their relationship with that particular bank (Tshin et al., 2014).

- **Fulfilment**

Even though E-SERVQUAL can be used effectively in various e-Service industries, the dimension of fulfilment appears to be specific to business web sites selling physical products (Kim, 2015). According to Parasuraman et al. (2005), fulfilment dimension involves accurate orders and product representation and on-time delivery. In a services industry setting, if clients are transacting online and do not perceive the fulfilment dimension as adequate, it will create a service gap (fulfilment gap), that is a discrepancy between clients' requirements and experiences (Thaichon et al., 2014). In some cases, the process of marketing a bank, especially on a website, creates this discrepancy as a result of banks over-promising (Einasto, 2014). If banks over-promise in their marketing of product or service ranges, clients will have high expectations of the service being offered and, in the event of the service failing to meet their expectations, a fulfilment gap is created (Segoro, 2013).

The way the business website is designed also contributes to the fulfilment dimension. Clients anticipate experiencing the service quality or seeing the exact products as they appear on websites in order to fulfil their needs or expectations (George & Kumar, 2014). The information on bank websites must match their products or service. Failure to match the website information will see banks consequently suffering from the impact of fulfilment gap. The fulfilment gap has a negative effect on perceived e-Service quality, perceived value, and purchase and client's revisit behaviour (Kim, 2015).

- **Privacy**

"Privacy" refers to the state of security on the bank website, for example how safe it is from cyber-crimes (Kim 2015; Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Parasuraman et al. (2005) described "privacy" as the degree to which the clients believe the site is safe from intrusion and that personal information is protected. It is worth noting that not only does the attractive content of the website draw clients to the bank, but also the reputation gained through interaction with a bank website (Mladen & Mladen, 2014).

Clients must be assured that their confidential information relating to e-Services entered via the bank website is encrypted and that the site cannot be easily breached (Persad & Padayachee, 2015). Clients are obviously attracted to websites where they feel safe, and they are likely to visit those websites on a regular basis. Bevan-Dye and Akpojivi (2016) produced findings in their South African study that suggest that privacy concerns of a bank website predict client trust, which, in turn, predicts the client loyalty. Failure to properly manage a bank website's privacy can easily spiral out of control and cause risk to the reputation of the bank and negatively impact banks, resulting in a loss of clients and negative W-O-M (Datta, 2010; Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

There is no doubt that the possibilities of cybercrime are a threat to retail banks' business (Okeke at el., 2015). Since establishing client's trust via e-Services is difficult as compared to doing so by means of face-to-face interactions, Tshin et al. (2014) recommended that the e-Service businesses develop should have strict policies in place, and adopt advanced security technologies. In his study, Amin (2016) posits that privacy is an important determinant of client loyalty intentions. Tshin et al. (2014) concurred when they identified privacy as the most influential e-Service quality dimension in achieving a higher level of overall service quality as perceived by clients. The findings of Tarhini et al. (2015) confirmed that privacy is the main concerning factor that influences clients' decision to adopt e-Banking services.

3.3.5.1 Limitation of E-SERVQUAL and new online platforms

E-SERVQUAL was originally designed for online platforms, but has been adapted to services as mentioned in section 3.3.5 (Kalia, 2017). However, with an increase in the use and popularity of social media (stated in section 2.3), many service industries have shifted their marketing and communication strategies from being just web-based to becoming a more specific business social media site (Venugopal & Priya, 2015;

Potgieter & Naidoo, 2017). This shift has resulted in academic researchers from various service industries being faced with the challenge of evaluating social media services in order to cope with the ever-changing marketing environment (Amin, 2016; Kalia, 2017).

The traditional website metrics for linear communication in marketing are not applicable when evaluating social media's level of interactive communication (Kim, 2015). This is because E-SERVQUAL is designed to address websites in general, not a specific type of website like Web 2.0, which constitutes social media. Rafiq at el. (2012) suggest that E-SERVQUAL can be constantly refined to suit various e-Service industries. For this study, E-SERVQUAL dimensions were adapted and further developed to include service quality in social media (E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL) as discussed in section 3.3.6.

3.3.6 E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL

The banking industry embraced the use of social media by developing a number of alternate delivery channels aiming to attract tech-savvy clients, improve client service quality, and ensure client loyalty (George & Kumar, 2014). As discussed in section 2.3 the use of social media in the South African banking industry has gained wide acceptance among clients (Dootson at el., 2016). It should be noted that clients are stipulating which platforms they want to engage on (Potgieter & Naidoo, 2017). Even though there are many popular social media platforms among South Africans such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram (Goldstuck, 2015), Facebook is leading the trend, having a combined total of 3 909 792 active users on the five major South African bank's Facebook pages. This large number of users indicates both a fundamental and potential business aspect that cannot be ignored. Thus, there is a need to measure the service interactions that are ongoing on banks' Facebook pages. For the purpose of this study, Facebook will be used as a representative sample of social media because it is the most used social media site in SA.

As discussed in section 2.3, Facebook brought a unique advantage to electronic services which include enhanced branding and improved receptiveness to the banking industry (Okeke at el., 2015). As clients embrace e-Services, banks are becoming more exposed to greater levels of competition from within the industry, and also from non-bank financial service businesses. Thus, the intense competition and ever-

changing client demands necessitated a specific instrument to measure, evaluate, and improve the e-Services offered via social media platforms in order to maintain or gain the market share (Petnji, Yaya & Marimon, 2012). In response to the necessity, an E-S-SERVQUAL scale was developed to accommodate the evaluation of the quality of e-Services offered via social media sites (Kim, 2015; Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Although banking transactions are not being conducted on social media platforms, clients are turning to these platforms to engage on a host of issues such as client inquiries, handling of complaints, advertising of new banking services, and dissemination of banking information (Coote & Coetzee, 2012; Kwok et al., 2016; Maphakisa, 2014; Okeke et al., 2015; Senadheera et al., 2011).

E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL is the e-Service instrument that accommodates the evaluation of e-Service quality offered via social media sites (Petnji Yaya & Marimon, 2012). The E-S-SERVQUAL has similar dimensions to those of E-SERVQUAL namely; System Availability, Efficiency, Fulfilment, and Privacy; however, it primarily focuses on the services offered on social media (Kim, 2015). For the purpose of this study, the dimensions of E-SERVQUAL have been adapted to incorporate a different context. This unique context is evaluating the service offered in the South African banking industry via social media. Thus, this study focuses on evaluating the South African banking industry with the E-S-SERVQUAL.

Social media sites facilitate efficient and effective bank-client service interaction (Amin, 2016; Nyoka, 2013; Zungu, 2012). This has directed many banks in SA to offer social media services and constantly strive to improve their service quality in order to offer superior levels of this to clients (Amin, 2016; Salehnia at el., 2014). The success of e-Banking does not depend on the presence of an attractive Facebook page and low banking rates, but rather on superior e-Service quality (George & Kumar, 2014).

However, it has become increasingly difficult for banks to compete making use of e-Services in order to attract and retain clients (Redda, 2015). Thus client loyalty has been a key goal for banks (Salehnia, Saki, Eshaghi, & Salehnia, 2014). For this study, the dependent variable of loyalty intention was added to an E-S-SERVQUAL model to evaluate the service quality and its impact on the South African banking industry.

South African banks need to know the social media service quality dimensions that have higher levels of client expectations so that they can create a more conducive e-Service environment and deliver experiences that exceed clients' expectations. For this study, the E-S-SERVQUAL will be utilised to measure banking clients' social media experiences in a South African context. The clients' overall service quality perceptions will then predict a client's loyalty intentions towards their respective banks (Kim, 2015; Mwencha et al., 2014). The five dimensions of the E-S-SERVQUAL scale in terms of the social media context (particularly Facebook) of this study are discussed below and, against the background of these dimensions, five hypotheses were formulated to test the relationships proposed in this study.

- **Social Media System Availability**

System availability is regarded as the correct technical functioning of the retail bank's Facebook page and this definition is therefore relevant to the context of this study (Kim, 2015). Clients expect Facebook brand pages to be always available, client friendly (intuitive) and fast in terms of downloading useful and relevant content (Durkin, McGowan, & Murray, 2014). Through system availability, there has been an increase in the accessibility of the bank's Facebook page through the feature of client self-service (Okeke at el., 2015). This aids in reducing the bank's operational costs and, from the client's perspective, saves time and is cost-effective (reduction) because they can access the bank information anytime and at any place. Ariff et al. (2012) likened system availability to SERVQUAL's responsiveness dimension, as it acts as the banks' online representative and assists through effective and prompt handling of clients' e-Banking transactional problems and requests. George and Kumar (2014) emphasised the importance of banks having a highly responsive Facebook site that can respond quickly and professionally to the client requirements and complaints. This quick professional response can only be achieved if bank personnel who are responsible for handling client requirements and complaints are actively involved and engaged on the bank's Facebook site (Ariff et al., 2012; Durkin et al., 2014). Therefore, this study focused on measuring the quality of service delivered by these bank personnel via Facebook pages.

In their findings, Quach et al. (2016) stated that, Facebook page design is a determinant of client loyalty in e-Services in SA and Australia. Social media site

characteristics such as ease of use and information are significant influencers of client loyalty in e-Service-based business. Even though system availability influences client loyalty towards a bank, it should be noted that retail banks rely on the technology provided by the social media companies, and this is beyond banks' control. With regard to system availability, Redda (2015) recommended that banks attend to the following practical every day issues: promptly resolving problems that clients encounter with regard to e-Services, providing timely feedback to client requests, and carefully handling client complaints. The following hypothesis is thus formulated:

H[1]: Social media system availability significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

- **Social Media Efficiency**

The efficiency dimension of E-S-SERVQUAL focuses on two separate elements, namely the Facebook page and the bank service on that Facebook page. "Efficiency" refers to the ease, speed, and convenience with which clients can access a retail bank's Facebook page (Petnji-Yaya et al., 2012). Efficiency evaluates the speed of accessing and using the bank's Facebook site to facilitate completion of all required interaction in a convenient way (Ariff et al., 2012). Social media can boost a bank's performance if both the client and the bank personnel enhance the traditional personnel-client relationship with an efficient technological knowledge-based relationship as well (Venugopal & Priya, 2015).If the bank's Facebook page is efficient, clients can easily access banking information and carry out an evaluation of the required service, and the experience of service may lead to the client visiting and re-visiting (client loyalty) the bank (Okeke at el., 2015). In their study, Venugopal and Priya (2015) stated that clients are more likely to use a bank's Facebook site if it has flexible banking content which is accessible.

There is a need for retail banks to respond to clients' requests on Facebook in an efficient manner and provide the relevant information required (Mwencha et al., 2014). Quick responses to clients' needs and queries are imperative to improve the service value of e-Banking (Okeke at el., 2015). This will lure clients to taking part in the process of upgrading the service quality, learning about the service and performance, and having a pleasant experience thanks to two-way communication. Bank clients are

likely to be satisfied with a bank's Facebook site when it matches or exceeds the abilities of an experienced member of the bank's personnel (George & Kumar, 2014). This client satisfaction can only be met if bank personnel combines client service with technology (Kalia, 2017). A client service combined with technology provides a unique banking service offering to the client, thus it is necessary to research and assess how well bank personnel responds to queries on Facebook pages.

Studies on Facebook suggest that the bank's Facebook page is likely to attract more clients if the banking service offered via the page is perceived as efficient (Murray et al., 2014). As has been established, Rafiq et al. (2012) affirm that efficiency is related to client satisfaction which in turn leads to client loyalty. To enhance the efficiency of e-Service, Redda (2015) recommended that South African banks should ensure that the service delivered through the bank's social media page is quick to access from any location and at any time. Thus, bank personnel should not only design a Facebook page that is simple to use and requires a minimum of information to be inputted by the clients (Parasuraman et al., 2005), but they (bank personnel) should also be quick to respond to clients' queries. The following hypothesis was formulated against this background:

H₂: Social media efficiency significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

- **Social Media Fulfilment**

Fulfilment focuses on the service accuracy and availability of relevant information provided on a bank's Facebook site (Yarimoglu, 2015). The fulfilment dimension consists of measures pertaining to the requirements of clients in terms of the promptness of a bank's Facebook page and the confirmation of the selected service (George & Kumar, 2014). Clients expect the Facebook page to be displayed within the promised time frame (Thaichon et al., 2014). Through fulfilment dimension, retail banks create user-generated content which is the most significant predictor of client loyalty intention in the banking industry (Einasto, 2014). Fulfilment is akin to the refined assurance measurement of SERVQUAL, and focuses on the confidence the client feels when using the bank's Facebook site and the extent to which client requirements are fulfilled in the social media interaction (Ariff et al., 2012). These requirements can

be queries, problems, or any information useful to the client. Fulfilment has a positive and significant effect on client satisfaction, and it sometimes predicts client retention or loyalty (George & Kumar, 2014). Based on the discussion presented above, the following relationships are hypothesised:

H₃: Social media fulfilment significantly influences overall social media quality in South African banking industry.

- **Social Media Privacy**

Research studies in Britain ranked the privacy of banks' social media sites as an important attribute of e-Banking service quality (Datta, 2010). "Privacy" deals with the degree to which a bank's social media platform is safe and how it protects client details (Kim, 2015). In order for banks to maintain clients' trust, clients must be assured that they are not vulnerable to the leaking of sensitive personal identifiable information, account numbers, and credit card information (Darmayanti & Cahyono, 2014). There is a need to present an attitude of confidence to bank clients that their personal information is secured and protected on the bank's Facebook page, and that the bank will not misuse their personal information (George & Kumar, 2014). Thaichon et al. (2014) posit that trust is the foundation of building a long-term relationship (client loyalty) between the banks and clients. Clients search for different attributes, for example honesty, professional conduct, responsibility, ability, integrity, and generosity in a retail bank (George & Kumar, 2014; Thaichon et al., 2014). As a result of positively perceived social media privacy, retail banks can build new relationships with clients based on mutual trust (Mladen & Mladen, 2014). Venugopal and Priya (2015) asserted that gaining client trust and client commitment is related to client loyalty intention in the banking industry.

Privacy is related to trust and violation of privacy norms might backfire, with banks experiencing a loss of clients and negative word-of mouth (Datta, 2010). Unfortunately, the ease at which information may be disclosed and shared on Facebook has raised serious privacy concerns among scholars and social critics (Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). Maintaining the privacy of a bank's Facebook page remains a real challenge for the banking industry (Nitescu, 2015). The main challenge is the fact that it is difficult to manage and control uploads on the Facebook site (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Indeed, low privacy settings of Facebook sites may expose clients to privacy

invasion and even make them vulnerable to criminal activities such as identity theft. There have been several cases of cloned social media profiles, for example, in SA in May 2013, Facebook accounts were cloned by criminals who targeted the friends of the owners of the cloned accounts and solicited money from them (Bevan-Dye &Akpojivi, 2016).

Undoubtedly, banking business involves risks, and with the integration of Facebook into banking service channels, the degree of danger widens. However, if banks have a proper risk assessment and risks management programme in place, which is managed correctly, the Facebook banking experience could indicate pending jeopardy and mitigate the impact when peril occurs (Nel & Halaszovich, 2015). Bank personnel attending to Facebook queries should not allow clients to provide their banking details on the bank's Facebook page, but rather encourage separate electronic communication with clients in order to protect client details. In his study, Amin (2016) posits that privacy is an important determinant of client loyalty intentions. Based on the discussion above, the following relationships are hypothesised:

H4: Social media privacy significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

- **Social Media Overall Service Quality**

The measurement of social media quality in the South African banking context has received little attention (Redda, 2015). There is a general agreement among scholars that banks must consider the overall social media service quality dimension in order to satisfy clients and enhance their performance profitability (Khan & Fasih, 2014; Martin, 2016; Tshin et al., 2014). It is worth noting that when clients are satisfied with the overall social media service quality attributes, the service experienced by a client is satisfactory and will contribute to the intention of the client to commit to a consistent relationship with the bank (Kim, 2015). The ongoing relationship between banks and clients is the primary goal of client satisfaction and it is called client loyalty. Yarimoglu (2014) asserts that social media quality has a significant positive effect on overall service quality experienced, and as a result it increases clients' loyalty intention.

The improvements in social media quality in the banking industry lead to a corresponding increase in overall client satisfaction which leads to client loyalty (Martin, 2016). In their study, Quach et al. (2016) proved that social media overall service quality has a positive and significant impact on client loyalty in technology-based banking services. Kranias and Bourlessa (2013) further found a direct positive link between overall service quality and client loyalty. Given the assertion from the other E-S-SERVQUAL variables, the following hypothesis will be subjected to empirical testing in this study:

H5: Social media's overall service quality significantly influences clients' loyalty intention in South African banking industry.

Section 3.4 discusses the client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry, a dependent variable which was adapted for the purpose of this study.

3.4 Client loyalty intention

Many service businesses have developed client loyalty programs as a part of relations-development activities. The challenging business environment has propelled banks to be innovative and use eSocial service quality with a view to attracting more clients, improving clients' perceptions and instilling client loyalty (Redda, 2015). The banks rely on service quality that leads to client satisfaction which is an indicator of client loyalty intention. Client satisfaction is a decision made or an inner view, which results from the client's own experience of the service (Mosahab, Mahamad, & Ramayah, 2010; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Research studies have shown that the costs of retaining clients are cheaper in comparison to the costs of the marketing effort to find new ones (Hasiri & Afghanpour, 2016; Seth & Garg, 2015; Rao & Rao, 2013; Peng & Moghavvemi, 2015; Ozguven, 2012; Okeke et al., 2015; Su et al., 2016).

Clients extend robust loyalty to banks when they believe the bank prioritise their interests (Khan & Fasih, 2014). When all the E-S-SERVQUAL dimensions are satisfactory, clients can perceive superior overall service quality, which leads to the client's loyalty intention (Untaru et al., 2015). Maphakisa (2014) revealed that bank personnel commitment to offering superior service, building trust with clients, communicating with clients in a timely manner, and proactive conflict handling are important for the bank's image, and these ultimately influence bank client loyalty.

Client loyalty is a complicated concept. The literature suggests that client loyalty consists of two dimensions, namely behavioural loyalty and attitudinal loyalty (Amin, 2016; Martin, 2016). The behavioural aspect of loyalty focuses on a measure of the proportion of purchase of a specific brand, while attitudinal loyalty is measured by a psychological commitment to a bank (Darmayanti & Cahyono, 2014; Quach et al., 2016). Behavioural client loyalty is a condition or deep commitment where clients will repeatedly visit a particular retail bank in spite of the many alternatives at their disposal (Darmayanti & Cahyono, 2014). Attitudinal loyalty reflects the client's emotional and psychological willingness to recommend other potential clients to the bank (Darmayanti & Cahyono, 2014). According to Quach et al. (2016), banking service quality influences both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty, hence, this study focused on both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty.

There are several benefits that are generally associated with clients' loyalty intentions in the banking industry, for example decreasing clients' price sensitivity, banks' survival and sustainability, positive W-O-M, reduced costs and protection against competition (Mackay et al., 2015; Salehnia et al., 2014). Therefore, in this study, client loyalty becomes an important aspect for South African banks to consider in order for them to be able to yield optimal economic benefit. Client loyalty intention indicates more success in terms of bank profitability than traditional financial measures, for example market share and cost structure (Seto´-Pamies, 2012).Redda (2015), recommended that periodic measurement of the levels of eSocial service quality through valid and reliable scales should become an integral part of any bank's effort to improve service quality levels which is a key determinant of client loyalty. Research findings show that client satisfaction plays the role of a mediator in the effects of service quality on client loyalty (Mosahab at el., 2010). Service quality plays a major role in building long-term bank-client relationships (Martin, 2016).

Loyal clients can improve a business' sales and improve its reputation through spreading positive word to others (Rao & Rao, 2013; Seto-Pamies, 2012). Retail banks should focus on the determinants of client loyalty that are more intangible and not easily copied, for example premium overall service quality (Ozguven, 2012; Persad & Padayachee, 2015). Clients' commitment to a retail bank is directly influenced by

clients' perceived value and service quality (Thaichon et al., 2014). A significant and positive relation between superior overall service quality and client loyalty is found in various service studies conducted by Amin (2016); Darmayanti and Cahyono, 2014); George and Kumar, (2014); Hasiri and Afghanpour (2016); Kwok et al. (2016); Mackay et al. (2015); Martin (2016); Mbise and Tuninga (2016). Nyoka (2013); Seth et al. (2015); Okeke at el. (2015); Peng and Moghavvemi (2015); Rao and Rao (2013); and Venugopal and Priya (2015). Section 3.4.1 provides the conceptual model which is proposed to be tested for the present study.

3.4.1 Conceptual Model

Given the discussion from sections 3.3 and 3.4, it is necessary for the present study to test all five dimensions of E-S-SERVQUAL and their resultant impact on client loyalty. Figure 3.1 illustrates the relationships proposed in this study and the resultant model.
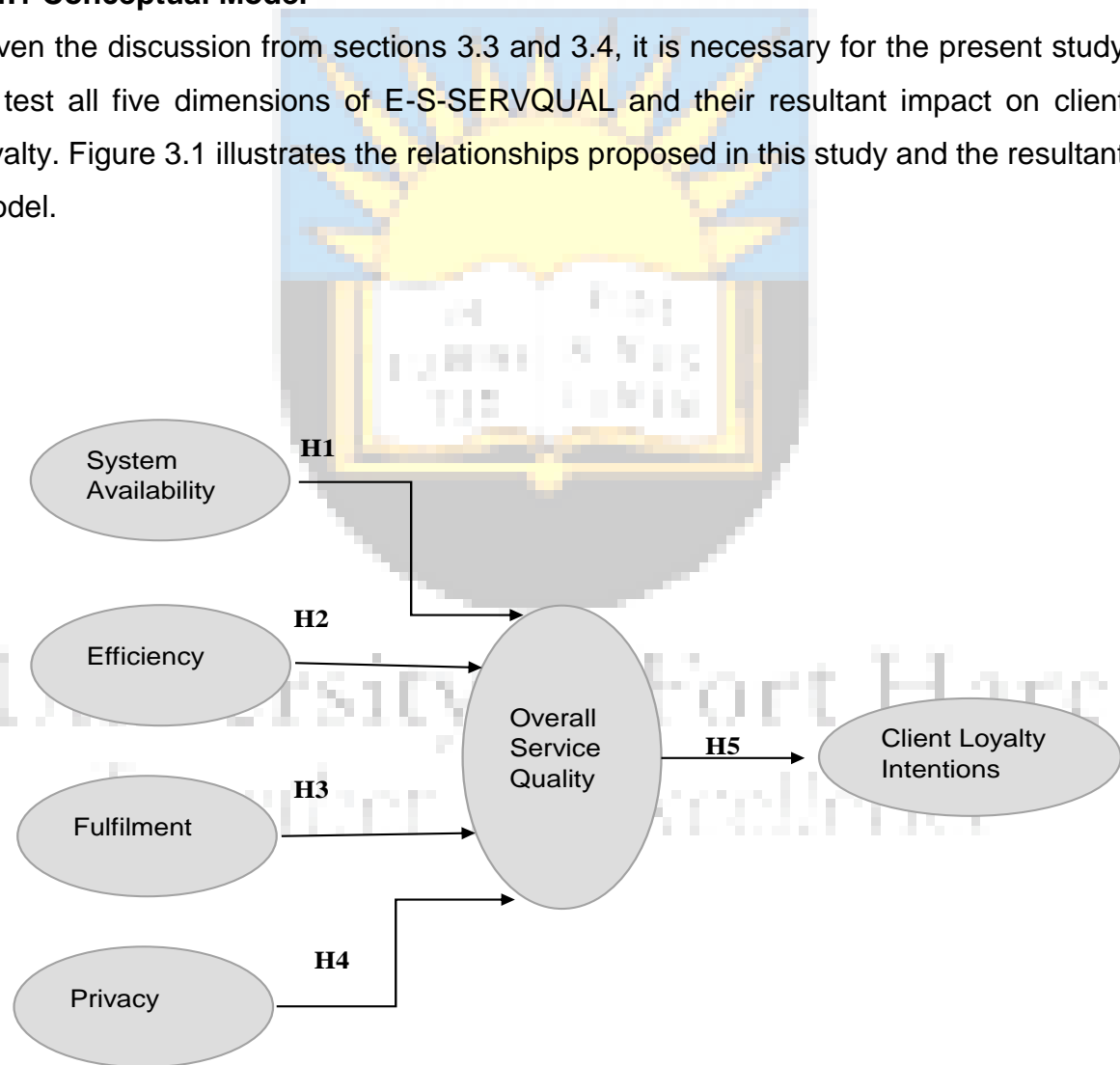
Figure 3.2 The Conceptual Model (Source: developed for this study).

As discussed in section 3.3.6, literature has established the link between social media system availability, efficiency, fulfilment, privacy and overall service quality which influences client loyalty intention. Section 3.5 provides the summary and conclusion for this chapter.

3.5 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter three discussed the findings of other research studies that have been conducted to establish the relationship between service quality and client loyalty in service industries. Service quality is a fundamental aspect of any business including those in the retail banking industry. The most important facet of service quality in the banking industry is the constant evaluation of quality. All the five major banks that are the focus of this study have Facebook pages and are well represented in South Africa. There are a number of models that were developed to test service quality but the focus of this study was on the Gaps model.

The main emphasis was on the service studies that primarily focused on the banking industry. The SERVQUAL model builds on the disconfirmation paradigm; however, it does not embrace the unique feature of e-Service quality. As a result, E-SERVQUAL was developed as an attempt to capture the measurement of e-Service quality in the new information age. Furthermore, the theoretical framework underpinning this study was also discussed; E-S-SERVQUAL. When clients are satisfied with all the E-S-SERVQUAL dimensions, the overall service quality experienced is satisfactory and will contribute to client loyalty towards the bank. Research findings show that there are several benefits that are generally associated with the clients' loyalty intention in the banking industry.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters served as the foundation for the model to be tested in this study. Chapter one introduced the study at hand, chapter two provided a general discussion of the banking industry in South Africa while chapter three discussed the underpinning theories that were used for this study; namely E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL. In addition, chapter three provided an overview of the importance of service quality in the South African banking industry.

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in this study. The research process is a scientific method used to gather and analyse information so as to increase one's understanding of the problem and process used to find results that are in turn used to accomplish intended objectives (Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel, & Kotze, 2012). The research process, in the view of Tadic and Mami (2011) plays a crucial role in research studies as it used to gather and analyse information so as to increase one's understanding of the problem and process used to find results that are in turn used to accomplish certain standards.

There are different research philosophies that researchers can use when conducting a research study. To aid in the decision making process, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) have identified six research steps represented as a 'research onion'. The six steps include the philosophy, approaches, methodological choice, strategies, time horizons, and techniques and procedures that the researcher can choose to complete their research study. For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted the research onion steps which are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.1.
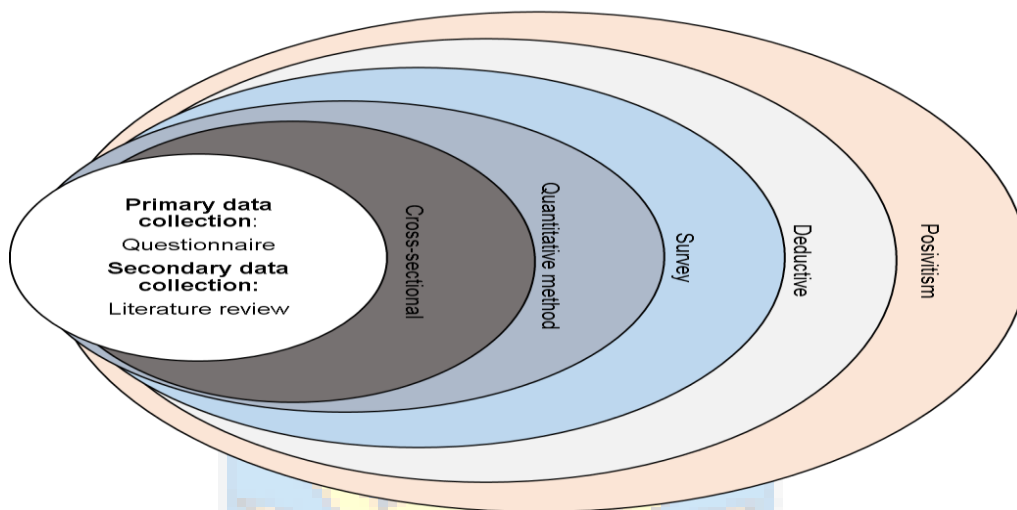
Figure 4.1: The Research Onion (adapted from Saunders et al., 2012)

Through the 'research onion' approach, chapter four outlines the research process which has been utilised for this study purpose. The chapter provides the research paradigm, research design, research approach, study population and sampling techniques, data collection techniques, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Section 4.2 discusses the positioning of the research study according to the main philosophical research paradigms.

4.2 Positioning of the Research Study

Researchers need to understand the philosophical choices they use for their studies, as they influence the subject under study (Sanders et al 2012). Collis and Hussey (2013) posit that the research study should be philosophically informed and the researcher should be able to explain the concepts and choices followed, and defend them in relation to the alternative philosophy. The continuum of core ontological assumption that the researcher used to position the research study is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

POSTIVISM					INTERPRETIVISM

Approach To Social Science

←————————————————————————————————————→

Reality as a concrete structure	Reality as a concrete process	Reality as a contextual field of information	Reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a projection of human imagination
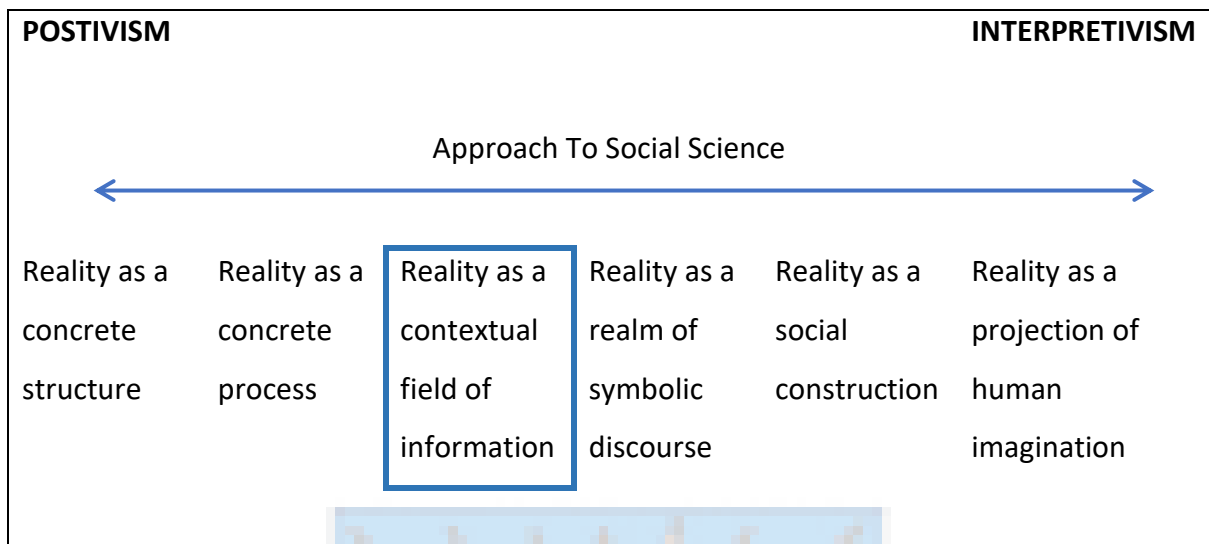
Figure 4.2 - Continuum of Core Ontological Assumptions (Adapted from Collis & Hussey, 2013)

As illustrated by Figure 4.2, the continuum of core ontological assumptions indicates that the study is aligned with the third stage of the continuum: Reality as a contextual field of information. Therefore, this research study lends itself to a positivist approach, as the collected quantitative data can be used deductively to investigate how social media service quality impacts on client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Section 4.3 provides the research paradigm adopted in this study.

4.3. Research Paradigms

A "research paradigm" is a broad view or perspective that explains the patterns of beliefs and practices that standardise inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames, and processes through which investigation is fulfilled (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Collis and Hussey (2013) defined a research paradigm as a framework that guides the research study according to the philosophies and assumptions of the world and the nature of knowledge. The use of an accepted paradigm contributes to the credibility of the research study (Hallebone & Priest, 2009; Zimerman & Blaythe, 2013). There are two main paradigms, namely; the interpretive approach and the positivist approach (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Creswell, 2014). The interpretivist paradigm and positivist paradigms are discussed in section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 respectively.

4.3.1 The interpretivism paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm refers to the way humans (in this study, bank clients) attempt to make sense of the surroundings and the world (Saunders et al., 2012). The interpretive approach involves an in-depth study of a certain phenomenon as result of specific circumstances (Creswell, 2014). The interpretivist paradigm rests on the assumption that social reality is highly subjective rather than objective, as it is influenced by the client perceptions (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The main concern of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand the fundamental meanings attached to a business' daily activities in order to explain the happenings thereof.

However, academics criticise the subjective bias of the interpretivist paradigm, as they argue that the assumptions, beliefs, values, and actions of the researcher are likely to influence the research process (Cant et al., 2012; Collis & Hussey, 2013, Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Due to its nature, the findings of an interpretivistic study are not derived from statistical analysis, hence is best suited for a qualitative research design as illustrated in Table 4.1, where a comparison of the interpretivistic and positivistic paradigms are presented.

4.3.2 The positivism paradigm

The positivism paradigm originated in natural science studies, and is based on the assumption that social reality is singular and objective and is not affected by the act of its investigation (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Engel & Schutt, 2013). The positivism paradigm emphasises the objectivity and independence of the researcher, and often involves the manipulation of reality using independent variables (Okeke et al., 2015). In most business research situations, such as the banking industry as per the study focus, the positivism paradigm narrows into theories that seek to explain trends and predict social phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2013). As illustrated in Table 4.1, a positivistic research study produces results that can be generalised to other similar industry settings (Cilliers, 2010; Collis & Hussey, 2013). Table 4.1 provides a comparison between a positivism paradigm and an interpretivist paradigm.

Table 4.1: Assumptions of Positivism and Interpretivism (Collis & Hussey, 2013)

Philosophical Assumption	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological assumption	A single reality, knowable, probabilistic	Multiple realities, socially constructed
Epistemological assumption	Objective, dispassionate, detached observer of truth	Subjective, and includes the values and knowledge of the researcher in the researcher process
Axiological assumption	Truth is universal and beautiful, predictions can be made	Understanding and description of context provided
Rhetorical assumption	Formal writing style, use of passive voice, accepted quantitative words	Informal writing style, accepted qualitative terms
Methodological assumption	Observation, quantitative, statistical approach	Participation, qualitative, hermeneutical, dialectical approach

Making use of the comparison presented in Table 4.1, the positivist approach was adopted for the purpose of this study due to its compatibility with the study's set objectives. Using this approach, the study controlled the researcher's subjective bias and the objective reality being studied. This approach also helped the researcher to test hypotheses on whether social media service quality influences client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Furthermore, these hypotheses were used to provide recommendations to South African banks industry. The use of a positivist paradigm enabled the research study to use scientific, quantifiable methods to investigate, evaluate, and explain the social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry context (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

A positivistic paradigm philosophy usually implements a deductive approach to data analysis, and relates to the view point that the investigator needs to concentrate on facts; hence the goal of the researcher being independent from the research is achieved as propounded by Wiid and Diggines (2015). The positivist paradigm ensured that the study provided a rational explanation (Engel &Schutt, 2013). The positivistic paradigm goals therefore require the adoption of a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research involves the use of questionnaires and surveys as data collection instruments. Section 4.4 provides insight into the research approach used in the study.

4.4 Research approaches

The research approach can be classified as either inductive or deductive (Collis & Hussey, 2013). It is worth noting that a research project can be described in various ways, as it has a purpose, a process, logic and outcome. Section 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 provides details regarding the inductive approach and the deductive approach respectively.

4.4.1 The inductive approach

The inductive approach pertains to a study in which a theory is developed from the observations of empirical reality to draw out general inferences (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The inductive approach involves moving from theory to hypothesis development, and observations result in either the confirmation or disconfirmation of predicted reality. The purpose of the inductive approach therefore is to understand the nature of the problem and is concerned with the context in which events were taking place (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach is most suitable for a qualitative research design.

4.4.2 The deductive approach

The deductive approach refers to the study in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed and then tested by empirical observations; thus, particular instances are deducted from general inferences (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The deductive approach involves the development of theories that are subjected to a rigorous testing process through a series of propositions (Saunders et al., 2012). The deductive approach is composed of observation, pattern, tentative hypothesis and theory. In the deductive approach, concepts need to be operationalised in a way that

enables facts to be measured, often quantitatively. For the purpose of this study, a deductive approach was used to present the basis of explanation, allow anticipation of phenomena, and predict their occurrence.

The principle of reductionism holds that problems are better understood if they are reduced to the simplest possible elements (Malhotra, 2014; Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Furthermore, this approach uses hypotheses to establish the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Ismail et al., 2016). In this study, the deductive approach helped to explain the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African baking industry context. Thus, it can be said that, in line with reductionism, a quantitative approach to the collection of primary data was employed which made use of a questionnaire (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Conclusions from the findings of the questionnaire were drawn that were used to explain the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry. The research design is discussed in section 4.5.

4.5 The research design

A research design provides a framework that integrates the different components of a study in a logical way, thereby effectively addressing the study problem (Malhotra, 2014). Cooper and Schindler (2011) concur that a research design is a framework for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Duffet (2015b) defined "research design" as a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation, which guides the researcher to collect data for the research problems and analyse it. The research design is usually adopted in order to answer questions validly, objectively, and accurately (Wiid & Diggines, 2015).

A research design expresses either the structure of the research problem, the framework or configuration of the relationship among variables of the study and the plan of investigation used to obtain the empirical evidence used on the relationship (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). A number of different research designs exist, but the most common research designs that business or marketing researchers use are exploratory, causal, and descriptive research design. These research designs are fully discussed in section 4.5.1, 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 respectively.

4.5.1 An exploratory research design

Exploratory research design focuses on discovering insights, and generally provides clarity and an understanding of a particular problem (Creswell, 2014). Cant et al. (2012) defined exploratory "research design" as marketing research that is used to gather preliminary information that assists in paraphrasing the marketing problem or opportunity. It is normally used when knowledge of a business is scant, or nothing is known about a particular concept or field of study, or when the research problem is vague (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Through exploration, researchers institute concepts more clearly, establish priorities, develop operational definitions, and improve the final research design (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Moreover, an exploratory research design is used to acquire insights or ideas in a particular field of study. It makes use of informal and flexible research techniques, for example qualitative research methods (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Exploratory research designs can be used to progressively narrow the scope of the research topic and collect data that contributes to meaningful research questions (Cant et al., 2012). In the case of the present study, an exploratory research design can be used to gather information or establish if social media service quality leads to client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Exploratory research includes literature searches, experience surveys, and the in-depth individual interview and/or focus group interview (Labocci & Churchill, 2010; Saunders et al., 2012). According to Cooper and Schindler (2011), an exploratory research design is linked to qualitative research bias on representativeness and non-systematic design.

4.5.2 The casual research design

The causal research design is conducted when it is necessary to establish evidence of a cause-and-effects relationship between dependent (social media service quality) and independent (client loyalty intention) variables (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Causal research design is more concerned with determining if there is a causal relationship between variables or occurrences, for example explaining the client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry and what leads to or causes client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The purpose of causal design is to delineate factors that are causing the problem (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The causal research design reveals and explains certain phenomena in terms of particular causes (Cant et al., 2012). Causal research is usually conducted through

laboratory and field experiments. This type of design is directly linked to predictive studies which can be used to estimate future values, such as sales income and market share (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Descriptive research design usually precedes this type of study, as more information is needed about the research variables.

4.5.3 The descriptive research design

A descriptive research design is a method used to identify trends in a situation but which disregards the cause of the research problem (Sekaran & Bouggie, 2011; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The descriptive design attempts to observe and document naturally happening behaviour which cannot be readily ascribed an objective value (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). In the view of Duffet (2015b) descriptive research is concerned with establishing the current status of phenomena in order to acquire a better understanding of the existing situation. The purpose of implementing the descriptive research design is to provide an accurate picture of a phenomenon that occurs in a specific market environment (Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Descriptive research answers the "what" question. In doing so, it seeks to determine the relationship that exists when two or more variables are involved. According to Malhotra (2014), the major objective of this design is the description of something typically occurring in the marketing environment (South African banking industry) or functions, and also commonly used to define segment features through sample surveys.

Descriptive information includes demographics; client attitudes; intentions; preferences and behaviours (Cant at el., 2012). Descriptive research typically takes a cross-section of a population, in this instance a bank's client who resides in SA, and reveals their predisposition at a given point in time (client loyalty intention towards retail banks) on which the research can be built (Saunders et al., 2012). Survey methods are typically associated with descriptive research design (Duffett, 2015b). Given that quantitative data was collected, a descriptive research design was the most suitable design for this study which focused on retail banks in SA that use social media as their service quality strategy. Apart from the research objectives dictating choice of design to use, factors such as ethical issues (provided in section 4.10), cost, feasibility, and accessibility to the study population (discussed in section 4.6.1) also influenced the choice of this research design.

4.6 Research population, sample and sampling technique

Section 4.6.1 discusses the study population the researcher used in this study, and section 4.6.2 provides a description of the sample and the sampling techniques which was employed in selecting the sample.

4.6.1 Research population

The research population consists of every individual case that possesses the characteristic that is of interest to the researcher (Saunders et al., 2012). Engel and Schutt (2013) defined a "research population" as the universe of units or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic. Wiid and Diggines (2015) described "population" as a group of objects, subjects, events, or cases which the researcher wishes to explore in order to institute knowledge. As illustrated in Figure 4.3, the population of this study was drawn from Facebook users who use their accounts to interact with retail banks in SA. The study focused on the five major banks in SA, namely; ABSA, Standard Bank, Nedbank, FNB and Capitec. To date, there is a combined total (population) of 3 909 782 users on these five major banks' Facebook pages.

There are 698 610 users on the FNB Facebook page; 675 305 users on Capitec's; 580 241 users on the ABSA Facebook page; 519 867 users on Standard Bank'sand 435 759 users on the Nedbank Facebook page. As the design of the study makes use of a survey approach as stated in the research onion in Figure 4.1, all the bank clients (3 909 782) who use their Facebook accounts to interact with the bank were considered the population of the research study. From the total study population of users of the various banks Facebook pages it can be stated in percentage terms that FNB contributed to 18% of the population, Capitec contributed to 23.3% of the total population, ABSA contributed with 18.8%, followed by Standard bank, which contributed 23.3%, and lastly Nedbank, which contributed 16.2% of the study population. This population is regarded as the most suitable group to measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry. Figure 4.3 clarify the target population, sample units, sample size and actual sample size of the study.
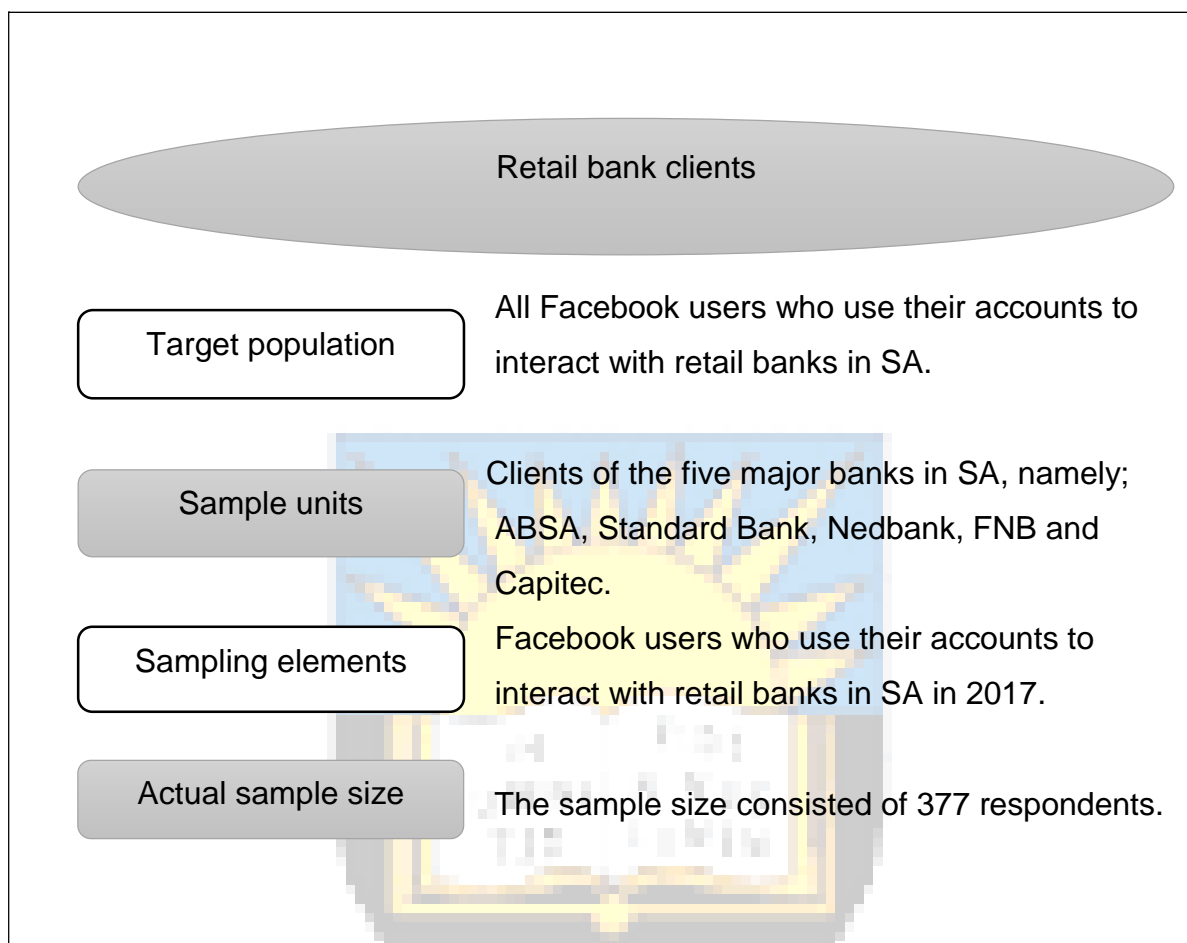
Figure 4.3 Target population, sample units, sample size and actual sample size of the study.

Figure 4.3 illustrate the target population of the present study. In addition, it also provides the sample unit, sample size and actual sample size of this study which is further discussed in-depth in section 4.6.2.

4.6.2 Sample and sampling technique

A "sample frame" is a record of all the sample units that are available for selection at a given stage in the sampling process (Duffett, 2015b). A "sample" is a subset of elements taken from large group of objects (Creswell, 2014). Using the correct sample size in a research avoids errors that may result in invalid data, and it is the key to obtaining high quality data. Determining sample size is essential to a good research

project because samples that are too large may waste time and resources while samples that are too small may lead to inaccurate results.

For this study, the sample size consisted of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents (as illustrated in Figure 4.3). Making use of the Raosoft calculator, a sample of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents was considered to be a fair and sizeable representation of the study population, which is 3 909 782 bank clients active on the various banks Facebook pages. A generalisable result will be obtainable with this sample size, with a corresponding confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 5% (Engel & Schutt, 2013). A large sample was used in order to detect the smallest meaningful effect and correlation between the social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. The study sample size compares well with other recent studies that were conducted in the banking industry. The sample size ranged from 350 to 450 in these studies (Hasiri & Afghanpour, 2016; Kaura et al., 2015). Sampling can either take the form of probability sampling or non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling is a process that reduces systematic and sampling bias; it provides all the subjects under study an equal chance of being selected (Cant et al., 2012). Probability sampling relies on random selection and every known element of the population has a chance of being selected in the sample (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). When using probability sampling, the researcher starts by identifying the sampling frame, which consists of geographical areas, demographic characteristics, institutions, type of industry, and type of client (Neuman, 2012). There are several probability sampling methods, namely: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified sampling.

From a total study sample of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents, sixty-eight (68) respondents were FNB clients, eighty-eight (88) respondents were Capitec clients, seventy-one (71) respondents were ABSA clients, eighty-eight (88) respondents were Standard bank clients, and sixty-one (61) respondents were Nedbank clients. Probability sampling enabled the researcher to easily access respondents, and it is associated with less cost as compared to other methods.

Non-probability sampling involves the researcher's choice of decisions on which elements to include in the sample (Cant et al., 2012). Non-probability sampling strives

to construct a sample that can obtain the most useful insights that can be gained by the researcher into the study's main focus (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Non-probability sampling does not assure an equal likelihood of participation of all population elements (Viljoen, 2014). The non-probability sampling method arbitrarily chose elements to participate in the research study. Therefore, there is no probability for any element of the population to be included in the study. Key to this sampling method is that, there is an assumption that population is evenly distributed within the scope of the study (Neuman, 2012). Consequently, every element of the population is representative (Creswell, 2014). There are many non-probability sampling methods, namely; convenience sampling, judgemental sampling, quota sampling and snowballing sampling.

The researcher adopted snowballing sampling. Snowballing sampling is an approach used when samples of a special population is needed (Cant et al., 2012; Wiid & Diggines, 2015), as the case of this study requires a specific bank's clients. The researcher contacted friends and colleagues that he was aware were using Facebook banking information and encouraged them to invite other Facebook users to the Facebook page where the link to the online questionnaire was available. Snowballing sampling allowed the study to access the rightful respondents that were targeted in this study. As stated in the research onion in Figure 4.1, this study follows a quantitative research approach. The researcher used both probability sampling and non-probability sampling for study, because the technique provides estimates of precision as required in studying the South African banking industry.

4.7 Research methods

After the researcher has designed the study, the next step is to identify data collection methods to use for the study. There are three types of research methods, namely; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In choosing a research method for a study, it is essential for researchers to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the three different research or data collection methods and choose the most suitable one (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Jackson, 2012; Ritchie & Lewis, 2012; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). These research methods are discussed as follows: qualitative data collection method sections 4.7.1; quantitative data collection method section 4.7.2; and mixed methods section 4.7.3.

Table 4.2 Summary of quantitative research; qualitative research and mixed research methods

Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research	Mixed methodology
Inductive approach.	Deductive approach.	Use both Inductive approach and deductive approach.
Produces qualitative data.	Produces quantitative data.	Produces both qualitative data and quantitative data
Uses small samples.	Uses large samples	Uses large samples
Concerned with generating theories.	Concerned with hypothesis testing.	Concerned with generating theories and hypothesis testing
Data is rich and subjective.	Data is highly specific and precise.	Data is rich, highly specific and precise.
Reliability is low.	Reliability is high.	Reliability is high
Validity is low.	Validity is high.	Validity is high
Generalises from one setting to another.	Generalises from sample to population.	Generalises from one setting to another and from sample to population.
Focuses on process of the research.	Focuses on the outcomes of the research.	Focuses on both the process and the outcomes of the research
Unstructured data collection technique requires subjective interpretations.	Structured data collection technique requires objective ratings.	Uses both a structured data collection technique and an unstructured data collection technique

Source: (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Jackson, 2012; Ritchie & Lewis, 2012; Wiid & Diggines, 2015)

Table 4.2 depicts a summary of quantitative research; qualitative research and mixed research or data collection methods. All the data collection methods have their own their advantages and disadvantages. In fact, given the advantages and disadvantages

of these data collection methods, it is clear that the weaknesses of the one can be considered the strengths of the other. Section 4.7.1 provides the qualitative data collection method.

4.7.1 Qualitative data collection method

Qualitative research is a data collection method that is interpretative in nature, and academic researchers usually associate it with the interpretivism paradigm as stated in section 4.3.1. The qualitative research method refers to a naturalistic approach which is concerned with understanding the meanings which clients attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values) within their social world (Ritchie & Lewis, 2012).Yin (2011) defined qualitative research as studying the meaning of clients' lives in the real market environment, representing the views and perspective of the clients through investigating the contextual conditions within which clients live and contribute insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain client social behaviour. Qualitative research involves breaking down the data and relating particular items of data to one or other categories (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The researcher develops an explanation of events so that theories and generalisation about the cause, reason and processes of any piece of social behaviour can be developed (Berndt & Pertzer, 2011).

When using the qualitative research method, emphasis is placed on specialised skills when studying cases, such as interviewing skills, tape recording skills, the projection device, video, pictures, and the discussion guides (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Thus, qualitative research method makes very little use of numerical data. As a result, the researchers rely heavily on verbal data and subjective analysis. The nature of qualitative research includes observation; in-depth individual interviews; focus groups; biographical methods, for example life histories and narratives; and analysis of literature (Ritchie & Lewis, 2012). Researchers usually adopt an interpretive paradigm with this type of approach (Saunders et al., 2012). As stated in Table 4.2, small sample sizes are used, due to the nature of data needed to be collected (Yin, 2014). However, the approach lacks wider application and generalisability. Section 4.7.2 provides information on the quantitative data collection method.

4.7.2 Quantitative data collection method

Academic researchers generally agree that quantitative research methods have their foundations in the positivistic paradigm, as stated in section 4.3.2 (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Guthrie, 2011; Willis, 2014). The quantitative data collection method encompasses objective measurement, and statistical or numerical analysis of data collected through a questionnaire (close-ended questions) to produce the facts and statistics related to a phenomenon (Malhotra, 2014). Quantitative research involves asking people for their opinions in a structured way so as to produce the hard facts and statistics relevant to a phenomenon (Willis, 2014). Okeke at el. (2015) concur that quantitative data collection method is naturally structured, and therefore empowers the researcher to examine the precise concepts and issues that are the focus of the study.

Quantitative research studies make use of samples and population, thus relying heavily on numerical data and statistical analysis as stated in Table 4.1. Cant et al. (2012) propound that quantitative research involves an investigation of phenomena by testing theories that can be measured numerically and analysed statistically. Quantitative research methods often include written surveys, questionnaires, experiments, methods, and theories (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The quantitative research approach was used in this study as the data can be statistically tested (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Quantitative techniques were needed to measure the extent to which social media service quality influences client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

The quantitative approach is highly structured, which makes it easier to measure and scrutinise responses (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Thus, the researcher opted to use the quantitative approach for this study, as it breaks down data to isolate elements that can be tested to demonstrate the correlation between social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry (Guthrie, 2011). This data collection method helped to gather data for this study through a minimal interaction with bank clients in SA. The quantitative data collection method also helped to achieve high levels of gathered data due to controlled observations, and eliminated subjectivity of judgement as supported by Cresswell (2014). In addition, the quantitative research method aided in the generalisation of the study outcomes to include the whole population of the South African banking industry from the selected study sample of

377 bank clients who are Facebook users and have interacted on their respective banks Facebook page. Section 4.6.3 provides the mixed method research design.

4.7.3 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research is a multi-methodology system that includes the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a research study (Creswell, 2014; Collis & Hussey, 2013; Guthrie, 2011). Since the mixed methods research uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches, as highlighted in Table 4.2, it often provides a better understanding of the research problem as compared to what just one research approach can achieve (Creswell, 2014). Academics find this approach more valid, as they believe variation in data collection leads to greater validity and the ability to answer the study questions from various perspectives (Cilliers, 2010; Saunders et al., 2012; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The use of the mixed methods approach eliminates gaps in the data collected in a study, and further reduces bias in the study by lessening the researcher's pre-existing assumptions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Following the identification of research methods for this study, section 3.8 discusses the specific data collection method that was used to conduct the study.

4.8 Data collection techniques

Data collection is the process of gathering information for study purposes in an established and logical way (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Data collection techniques allow the researcher to gather information that answers the study questions and assesses findings. There are two main sources of data, namely; primary and secondary (Okeke at el., 2015), which are discussed in section 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 respectively.

4.8.1 Secondary data collection technique

Secondary data refers to data that is already available for other purposes that can still be useful to guide the study at hand (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Malhotra (2014) defined secondary data as the data that already exists and can be gathered from external and internal sources such as bank publications, libraries, and the internet. The researcher used secondary data sources such as the bank's Facebook pages (internet), journals, textbooks, annual reports and other relevant literature in order to explore the problem at hand. The main disadvantage of secondary data is the difficulty in searching for and retrieving sources of data that would be useful to the current research problem (Okeke at el., 2015). For this study, the researcher searched the

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relevant information in order to address the research problem from the following databases: Academic Search Complete, eBook collection (EBSCOhost), Business Source Complete, Business Searching Interface, South African Nation ETD, Regional Business News, ScienceDirect, ResearchGate, SEAL, and SA ePublications.

4.8.2 Primary data collection technique

Primary data refers to data that is collected for the first time to find solutions to specific research objectives (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Primary data is raw, collected from the targeted sample in order to answer the research problem (Guthrie, 2011). Primary data can be gathered through surveys, observations, interviews, and experiments (Okeke at el., 2015). For the purpose of this study, a survey was chosen to collect data, and the researcher conducted an online survey, which is described more in section 4.8.2.1. The pilot study paved way to effectively conduct a survey as discussed in section 4.8.2.3

4.8.2.1 Online survey

A self-administered survey allows respondents to complete a questionnaire on their own, thus eliminating researcher bias; reach large research populations; and attain an acceptable response rate (Duffett, 2015a). For the purpose of this study, an online survey was conducted to collect primary data. Online surveys are research techniques used to assemble primary data from respondents through the use of online questionnaires so that the data can be statistically analysed (Nel & Boshoff, 2014; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The survey was administered through a Facebook page specifically set up by the researcher in order to reach the population under study. This study population was Facebook users; therefore, administering a survey through a Facebook page was the most convenient way in which to administer the questionnaire.

Respondents were directed to the study's Facebook page through public posts on banking-related Facebook pages regarding the study which was designed to request clients to participate in it. In addition, respondents were also directed through a snowballing technique, as the researcher also contacted respondents who were accessible to him and encouraged them to share the questionnaire link with their friends and colleagues. Other studies have used a hybrid combination of the recruitment techniques posed here, and response rates have proved to be high (Bhutta, 2012; Kosinski et al., 2015). The researcher used online surveys in this study

as they are easy to administer, inexpensive, and can reach a wider geographical audience in a short period of time (Nel & Boshoff, 2014). In addition, data collected through online surveys can easily be imported into data analysis software (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Data obtained via Facebook sites is regarded as inexpensive, fast, accurate, and convenient (Kosinski et al., 2015; Wilkinson & Thelwall, 2011).

Other authors propose that in social networking respondent recruitment drives, private messages can also be sent to attempt to increase the number of people who visit the Facebook study page and, ultimately, the response rate (Balfe & Doyle, 2012). This is possible due to public pages being open and accessible to all internet users with no 'friends' listings. 'Friending' individuals on Facebook to obtain details of other friends for marketing or research purposes is known as 'harvesting', and is fraught with complications and regarded as unethical (Polakis, Gessiou, Kontaxis, Petsas, Antonatos & Markatos, 2010). It is also imperative to note that Facebook users have complete access over how others choose to communicate with them in terms of the administration of their privacy settings. However, if this method is used, it is important to remember that the messages must be private and personalised, and should not be sent more than twice, to avoid being categorised as SPAM (Balfe et al., 2012; Sibona & Walczak, 2012).

It is widely agreed that, with respect to recruiting respondents and capturing research content via social media and other electronic platforms, the issue of informed consent from respondents is the most important one (Beninger, Fry, Jago, Lepps, Nass & Silvester, 2014; Kosinski et al., 2015; Zevenbergen, Brown, Wright, & Erdos, 2013). This aspect of the study is also alluded to in section 4.10, which relates to the ethical considerations of the study. Section 4.8.2.2 provides the data collection instrument that was used for this study.

4.8.2.2 Online questionnaire

It is essential that a good research instrument addresses the research objectives, provides suitable and sufficient data for analysis, and further provides consideration for the respondent's situation (Viljoen, 2014; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Online questionnaires translate the required information into specific questions that the respondents can answer (Cant et al., 2012). Primary data was collected for this research through the use of the E-S-SERVQUAL research instrument, and was

gathered from a sample of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) bank clients in SA. The questionnaire was administered online, through a Facebook page titled 'Social media service quality in the South African banking industry'. This page was created by the researcher specifically for the purposes of this study. A link with a set of questions was posted on the page, which bank clients then used to access the questionnaire.

According to Saunders et al. (2012), questionnaires tend to be used in a descriptive study, as they enable the researcher to identify and describe the variability in different phenomena. Thus, this study followed a descriptive research design as stated in section 4.5.3. A self-administered questionnaire was employed to take a snapshot of independent dimensions (E-S-SERVQUAL) and overall social media service quality, as well as the dependent variable (client loyalty intentions) of the research study population (Duffett, 2015a). Saunders et al. (2012) defined a "self-administered questionnaire" as a set of questions send electronically to respondents by means of the internet (web based).

The E-S-SERVQUAL scale is a valid and reliable one that was tested in various studies across different service industry settings (Kim, 2015; Parasuraam et al., 2005; Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015; Wesselman, 2014). The questionnaire also included a five-point Likert scale ranking in order to denote correlated dimensions. A Likert scale is an ordinal scale that requests participants to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of belief statements about a given variable (Wilson, 2010; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The study objectives were the primary bases used to decide relevant items that were emphasised and included in the questionnaire (Kim, 2015). A pilot study was conducted prior to the administering of the final online questionnaire as provided in section 4.8.2.3. Following the pilot study, the tested constructs were then approved to be included in the final online questionnaire. Table 4.3 provides the initial measurement constructs adapted for use in this study.

Table 4.3: Adapted measurement constructs

DIMENSIONS	ITEMS	E-S-QUAL (Parasuraman et al., 2005) MODIFIED STATEMENT FOR E-LIBRARY(Kim, 2015)	MODIFIED STATEMENT OF THIS STUDY	CRONBACH'S APLHA (Adapted from Kim, 2015)
SYSTEMS AVAILABILITY	SYS1	The Twitter site is always available for this service.	My bank's Facebook page is always available to access.	
	SYS2	This Twitter site launches and runs right away.	My bank's Facebook page launches and runs right away.	
	SYS3	This Twitter site does not crash.	My bank's Facebook site does not crash.	**0.83**
	SYS4	Pages at this site do not freeze after I enter my comments.	Facebook pages on my bank's site do not freeze after I enter my comments.	
EFFICIENCY	EFF1	This service makes it easy to find library information that I need.	My bank's Facebook banking service makes it easy to find bank information that I need.	
	EFF2	It enables me to get to library information quickly.	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	
	EFF3	Library postings on Twitter are well organized.	My Bank postings on Facebook are well organised.	
	EFF4	The site loads its pages fast.	My bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast.	
	EFF5	Library information at the Twitter site is simple to use.	My bank's information on the Facebook site is simple to use.	**0.94**
	EFF6	The Twitter site enables me to get to library information quickly.	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	
	EFF7	The organization of posts on Twitter site works well for using library information.	My bank's posts on Facebook work well for using bank services	
FULFILMENT	FUL1	It quickly provides information that I seek. It provides information that I expect in a timely manner.	My bank's Facebook page quickly provides information that I seek.	
	FUL2	It provides information that I'd like to receive	My bank's Facebook page provides information that I'd like to receive.	
	FUL3	It has information about what is going on in the library.	My bank's Facebook page has information about what is going on in the bank.	**0.89**
	FUL4	It delivers accurate information.	My bank's Facebook page delivers accurate information.	
PRIVACY	PRI1	The library does not share information about my behaviour (browsing pages, clicking links, etc.) on its Twitter account with others.	My bank does not share information about my behaviour (browsing pages, clicking links, etc.) with others on its Facebook account.	
	PRI2	The library does not share my personal information on Twitter with other sites.	My bank does not share my personal information on Facebook with other sites.	
	PRI3	The Twitter site protects information about my personal data.	My bank Facebook page protects information about my personal data.	**0.83**

CLIENT LOYALTY INTENTIONS	LOYALTY1	Say positive things about this service to other people.	I would say positive things about a bank's Facebook service to other people.	
	LOYALTY2	Recommend this service to someone who seeks your advice.	I would recommend a bank's Facebook page to someone who seeks my advice.	0.62
	LOYALTY3	Encourage friends and others to follow this service.	I would encourage friends and others to follow a bank's Facebook page.	
	LOYALTY4	Consider this service to be your first choice for future library information.	I would consider a Facebook page to be my first choice for future banking information.	
	LOYALTY5	Keep following this service in the coming months.	I think I would keep following a bank's Facebook page in the coming months.	
OVERALL SERVICE QUALITY	OSQ1	The information and services available at this library's social media.	Rate the information and services available on your bank's Facebook page.	
	OSQ2	The overall convenience of using this service.	Rate the overall convenience of using your bank's Facebook page.	0.82
	OSQ3	The extent to which the library's social media service gives you a feeling of being in control of what you intend to do.	Rate the quality of the service that the bank provides on their Facebook page.	
	OSQ4	The overall value you get from this service for your efforts.	Rate the overall value you get from your bank's Facebook site.	

Table 4.3 illustrates the scale that was used for this study with the Cronbach Alpha's of the scale used in this study ranging from 0.62 to 0.94. The scales used was modified to suit this study to accurately reflect the banking context of this study. As is depicted in Table 4.3, there is a left column depicting the original constructs and a right hand column denoting the modified constructs for use in this study. When the scale was tested for both reliability and validity in previous studies, it was found to be reliable and valid, as discussed in section 4.9.2 (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Kim, 2015). Prior to the online survey, a pilot study was conducted, as is discussed in Section 4.8.2.3.

4.8.2.3 Pilot study

A pilot study provides the researcher with an advance caution about where the research project may be unsuccessful, where the research procedures may not be followed, and whether anticipated procedures or tools are inappropriate (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). For the purpose of this study, both the reliability and validity of the constructs were pre-tested, and modifications were made based on these results. Cronbach's alphas coefficient was used to test and measure the reliability of the constructs, while an Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted to test the validity of

the scale. The pilot study helped to eliminate shortfalls that might have been encountered during the collection of data. In addition, the pilot study helped to determine the number of measurement constructs and respective items for this study. The tested measurement constructs are depicted in Table 4.3.

A total number of 38 questionnaires (10% of the actual sample size) were distributed. The pilot study was conducted to ensure that respondents all understood the questionnaire statements. After conducting the pilot study, minor modification and improvements to the questionnaire were made, as provided in Table 4.4 and 4.5, before continuing with the survey. The results of the pilot study guided the amount of questions that were most likely to yield meaningful results. The following paragraphs discuss the changes that were made to the questionnaire in more detail.

With respect to the first scale tested, the social media efficiency scale of the E-S-SERVQUAL measurement instrument (discussed in section 3.3.6) initially had eight items, and one of these (Social Media Efficiency- EFF2) was discarded from the final questionnaire, as shown in Table 4.4. This is possibly due to the fact that actual transactional banking services are not available on social media despite a multitude of service related activities taking place on the platforms.

Table 4.4 Initial and final Social Media Efficiency items

	Social Media	Efficiency	
Initial code	**Initial statement**	**Final code**	**Final statements**
EFF1	My bank's Facebook banking service makes it easy to find bank information that I need.	EFF1	My bank's Facebook banking service makes it easy to find bank information that I need.
EFF2	My bank's Facebook page makes it easy to get bank information.	EFF2	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.
EFF3	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	EFF3	My Bank postings on Facebook are well organised.
EFF4	My Bank postings on Facebook are well organised.	EFF4	My bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast.
EFF5	My bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast.	EFF5	My bank's information on the Facebook site is simple to use.
EFF6	My bank's information on the Facebook site is simple to use.	EFF6	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.
EFF7	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	EFF7	My bank's posts on Facebook work well for using bank services.
EFF8	My bank's posts on Facebook work well for using bank services.		

The Social Media Fulfilment was the second scale E-S-SERVQUAL measurement instrument to be adjusted. Initially it had seven items, and three items were discarded from the final questionnaire. The discarded items are depicted in Table 4.5, under initial statements as FUL 1, FUL 2 and FUL 6. All the items that were removed from

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the E-S-SERVQUAL measurement instrument were done so because they loaded separately from the rest of the items indicating lack of uni-dimensionality of the construct. This is possibly because respondents might have misunderstood the questions being asked them.

Table 4.5 Initial and final Social Media Fulfilment items

Social Media Fulfilment			
Initial code	**Initial statement**	**Final code**	**Final statements**
FUL1	My bank's Facebook page delivers timely information.	FUL1	My bank's Facebook page quickly provides information that I seek.
FUL2	My bank's Facebook page gives responses for my questions within a suitable time frame.	FUL2	My bank's Facebook page provides information that I'd like to receive.
FUL3	My bank's Facebook page quickly provides information that I seek.	FUL3	My bank's Facebook page has information about what is going on in the bank.
FUL4	My bank's Facebook page provides information that I'd like to receive.	FUL4	My bank's Facebook page delivers accurate information
FUL5	My bank's Facebook page has information about what is going on in the bank.		
FUL6	My bank's Facebook page is truthful about the information it provides.		
FUL7	My bank's Facebook page delivers accurate information		

The items in the social media system availability scale SYS 1, OSQ 3 and OSQ 4 were also rephrased, as shown in Table 4.6. The pilot study results proved that respondents might have slightly misunderstood these questions, so, in order to get more valid and accurate data, the questions were rephrased in order to meet the respondents' understanding. The rephrased questions are illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Rephrased statements for Social Media System Availability and Social Media Overall Service Quality variables.

Codes	Initial statement	Rephrased statement
Social Media System Availability		
SYS1	My bank's Facebook page is always available for this service.	My bank's Facebook page is always available to access.
Social Media Overall Service Quality		
OSQ3	The extent to which your bank's Facebook service gives you a feeling of being in control of what you intend to do.	Rate the quality of the service that the bank provides on their Facebook page.
OSQ4	Rate the overall value you get from your bank's Facebook site for your effort.	Rate the overall value you get from your bank's Facebook site.

A demographic question asking about the location where the respondents resided was also added after the pilot study. The added demographic question asks, "In which province do you currently reside?" This demographic question was added to check and ensure if the data collected represent all the South African provinces. After restructuring the questionnaire, 33 questions, including demographic questions from the initial 36, made up the final questionnaire for this study (see Appendix A). Section 4.8.3 provides the scale operationalisation.

4.8.3 Scale operationalisation

The scale operationalisation states the particular features of the object being defined, as well as how these features are to be observed in a research study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The process of operationalisation starts by defining the constructs

concerned, thus providing a foundation for selecting the individual indicator items as has been exercised in section 4.8.2.1. The actual operationalisation of the construct then entails selecting suitable items for the measurement scale, as well as the type of measurement scale. The measuring scale developed by Kim (2015), in her study investigating the use of social media service quality in libraries, was used as the primary source to generate items to measure the constructs in the present study. Table 4.7 presents operational definitions for both independent and dependent variables for this study. These definitions are based on an interpretation of secondary sources as well as existing empirical studies. In addition, the source of the items used to measure the selected variables will be provided.

Table 4.7: Operationalisation of the scale

Factor and Operationalisation	Items	Source
Independent variables		
System Availability: Refers to the availability of a bank's Facebook page, and the ability of the bank's Facebook page to launches and runs right away, without crashing or freezing after a client enters his/her comments.	4	Kim (2015); Parasuraman et al. (2005)
Efficiency: Refers to the bank's Facebook banking service's easiness to quickly provide the banking information that a client needs. Whether the bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast and the information on the Facebook site is simple to use for banking services.	7	
Fulfilment: Refers to the degree the information on banks websites match their products or service. The bank Facebook page's ability to deliver accurate and relevant information that clients seek on the bank's daily activities.	4	
Privacy: Refers to the degree the bank's Facebook page protects information about client's personal data such behaviour, browsing pages and clicking links.	3	
Overall service quality: Refers to the information and services available on a bank's Facebook page such as the overall convenience of using a bank's Facebook page and the overall value client gain from a bank's Facebook site.	4	
Dependent variable		
Client loyalty intention: Refers to the extent a client will recommend, encourage and say positive things about a bank's Facebook service to other people who seeks his/her advice. The extent to which a client would	5	Kim (2015)

consider a Facebook page to their first choice for future banking information.		

For the purpose of this study, all the independent variables were measured using E-S-SERVQUAL, an already existing scale adapted from the study by Kim (2015). The Social Media System Availability construct in this study focused on the aspects that bank personnel can control, such as the availability of banking content on the bank's Facebook page. The Social Media Efficiency took into consideration two aspects, as discussed in section 3.3.6. It focused on how quick the bank personnel were to respond to client requirements, and how quick the Facebook page is in terms of basic functioning such as processing banking information. The Social Media Fulfilment dimension was employed to measure the ability of bank personnel to deliver satisfactory banking service to clients as provided in section 3.3.6. The Social Media Privacy aspect reflected on the ability of bank personnel to protect the clients' confidential information.

In this study, a five-item scale was used to measure both the independent and the dependent variable Client Loyalty Intention in the South African banking industry. For this study, the Likert scale ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", whilst the Social Media Overall Service Quality was rated from "strongly dissatisfied" to "strongly-satisfied", as depicted by the questionnaire in Appendix A. The dependent variable scale was also adapted from the study by Kim (2015). Section 4.9 provides the data analysis that was used in the study.

4.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of determining consistent patterns and summarising the relevant details revealed in the investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Wiid and Diggines (2015) defined "data analysis" as the process of streamlining the collected data into sensible and coherent evidence. Duffett (2015a) is of the view that data analysis will typically entail the editing and reduction of information into more manageable portions in order to create summaries, detect patterns, and apply statistical methods with the express purpose of using the interpreted data to answer the research question of the study. For the purpose of this study, both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were analysed. The researcher analysed the data through the use of the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 24) and Lisrel 9 to draw conclusions. The SPSS was used for descriptive statistics and reliability and validity testing. The Lisrel 9 was used for SEM. Since raw data is meaningless, it needs to be prepared first in order to be properly analysed. Section 4.9.1 provides data preparation.

4.9.1 Data preparation

Data preparation is the conversion of data into an appropriate format for further analysis or the practice of translating data collected from the field into information that can be read by computer software programs (Bryman & Bell, 2015). There are four stages of the data preparation process, namely: questionnaire checking, editing, data coding, and data cleaning (Wiid & Diggines, 2015).

4.9.1.1 Questionnaire Checking

Questionnaire checking is the practice of removing incomplete questionnaires, i.e. those with little variance and missing pages (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). In this study, errors in collection of data were minimised through the use of a well-prepared electronic questionnaire. When checking a questionnaire, it was essential for the researcher to check that the responses were readable, whether or not the important questions were answered, and if all the responses had been completed.

4.9.1.2 Data editing

Data editing is an initial screening process (Wiid & Diggine, 2015). The researcher checks the correctness and completeness of all the E-S-SEVRQUAL questionnaires that were used to conduct the survey. There are two types of editing, namely field editing and central editing. Field editing helps to detect the most obvious inaccuracy in the gathered data, and it takes place just after the questionnaire has been completed (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Central editing helps for a more thorough scrutiny and adjustment of the completed questionnaire (Wiid & Diggine, 2015). Central editing usually takes place in the central office, where all the remaining editing occurs, after that which was conducted in the field has taken place. For the purpose of this study, both field and central editing was carried out.

4.9.1.3 Data coding

Data coding is the classification and the assigning units of meaning to descriptive or inferential information gathered during the study (Malhotra, 2014). Collis and Hussey (2013) concur that data coding is a systematic practice whereby data in both

quantitative and qualitative forms is categorised to simplify analysis. Data coding comprises of three steps, namely; specification of categories, allocation of code numbers, and compilation of code manual (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). For this study, a data coding process was used to classify raw data for analysis purpose through software application such as SPSS (version 24) and Lisrel (version 9), as discussed on section 4.9.2 and 4.9.3 respectively. The data was categorised according to responses and values were assigned to each class.

4.9.1.4 Data cleaning

Data cleaning is the process of detecting, substituting, and modifying incorrect data from a set of records (Malhotra, 2014). There are two stages of data checking, that is, the handling of missing data and the checking of illogical entries (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). For this study purpose, the process of data cleaning was used to check and rectify errors. The checks that the researcher carried include those for consistency, recording, and missing values.

Missing data is a result of incomplete questionnaires (Hair et al. 2014; Jackson, 2012). When respondent's complete questions through an online survey, it is always difficult to attain the missing information. There were only a few questionnaires that had missing information. Various methods of imputation exist to solve the problem of missing data (Hair et al. 2014). However, in this study, Listwise deletion under Lisrel was used to compute the missing data. Listwise deletion is when a case with missing value is disregarded in all calculations (Hoyle, 2012). Listwise deletion is used in a study where there are relatively large samples, as is the case with the present study. A rule of thumb is to use listwise deletion when this would lead to elimination of 5% of the sample or less (Jackson, 2012). All the characteristics of listwise deletion were suitable for this study; hence it was used to compute for missing values. Section 4.9.2 provides the trustworthiness of measurement instrument and data.

4.9.2 Trustworthiness of measurement instrument and data

Trustworthiness of quantitative data refers to the reliability, validity, and generalisability of the data (Babbie, William, & Zaino, 2015). The discussion on how trustworthiness of the quantitative data was preserved in this study is provided in section 4.9.1, 4.9.2, 4.9.3, 4.9.4 and 4.9.5 respectively.

4.9.2.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability is the consistency or stability with which the instrument measures the target attributes (Pallant, 2013). Okeke at el. (2015) described reliability as the degree to which measurement scale is free from random error and, therefore, provides consistent data. The reliability of an instrument entails its adequacy and accuracy as a tool of measurement (Babbie et al., 2015). If reliable, the administration of the same instrument by various researchers under the same environment should give the same results. Wiid and Diggines (2015) assert that survey research is usually high in reliability. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) posit that there are many types of reliability, namely test-retest reliability, parallel-form reliability, interitem consistence reliability, split-half reliability and an internal consistency of measures.

As stated in the research onion in Figure 4.1, this study employed a survey and administered a questionnaire which was based on the constructs of E-S-SERVQUAL (Kim, 2015). As discussed in section 3.3, the E-S-SERVQUAL instrument was developed from the E-SERVQUAL instrument which originates from SERVQUAL instrument (Kim, 2015). The SERVQUAL scale is a reliable scale that was tested in various studies across service industry settings (Coetzee et al., 2013, Kim, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015; Van Schalkwyk& Steenkamp, 2014; Wesselman, 2014). The usage of the E-S-SERVQUAL instrument in other social media related studies indicates that consensus has been reached in terms of its reliability (Kim, 2015, Kim &Nitecki, 2014; Van Schalkwyk& Steenkamp, 2014).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess if the measure of the scale is reliable (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient varies between 1 and 0, where 1 denotes perfect internal reliability and 0 denotes no internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of more 0.7 are considered to reflect satisfactory reliability levels, whereas a Cronbach's alpha coefficient between 0.6 and 0.7 reflect fair reliability, and coefficients less than 0.6 are considered poor and unreliable (Kalia, 2017; Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2013).

For the factors of this study to be considered reliable, they were calculated and found to have a Cronbach's alpha coefficients score of 0.70 and above. The reliability estimates of 0.7 and above are deemed to be acceptable (Babbie et al., 2015; Kalia,

2017; Wiid & Diggines, 2015; Pallant, 2013). Internal consistency reliability test was used in this research study because of its applicability to a multiple-indicator measure such as the five-point (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) Likert scale employed in the E-S-SERVQUAL questionnaire (Okeke at el., 2015; Kim, 2015). Section 4.9.2.2 provides a discussion on the study's validity.

4.9.2.2 Validity analysis

Validity is the ability of an instrument to measure the construct the researcher intends to measure, that is, the extent to which the questionnaire provides adequate coverage of the investigative question/s (Saunders et al., 2012; Okeke at el., 2015). Validity is the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the research study are true (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To ensure validity, the existing measurement scale (E-S-SERVQUAL), as mentioned in section 4.8.2.2, was adopted and then tested before being utilised to assess the constructs in the conceptual model (Kim, 2015).

There are several ways of assessing or measuring the validity of a scale, namely the validity of the criterion, construct, and content. "Criterion validity" measures the ability of a measure to correlate with other standard measures of similar constructs or established criteria (Zikmund et al., 2013). "Construct validity" determines whether a scale measures or correlates with the theoretical construct that it is supposed to measure. "Construct validity" involves two types of validity, namely discriminant and convergent validity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). The content validity refers to the extent which the content of the items provides sufficient representativeness of all relevant items or questions guiding the study (Wiid & Diggines, 2015).

For this study, construct validity was the method used to assess the validity of the scales measuring the independent and dependent variables. Construct validity relies on how well the results that the researcher obtains when using the measuring instrument fit with theoretical expectations (Hair et al., 2014; Wiid & Diggines, 2015; Zikmund et al., 2013). The percentage variance explained and the factor loadings obtained in both the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were considered when assessing the validity of the measuring instrument. For the independent variables factor, a loading of greater than 0.4 was considered significant for this study. The factor loading readings of greater than 0.4 can be considered significant for a sample size above two hundred (200) (Hair et al., 2014).

Factor analysis testing was employed to assess internal consistency in relation with the multidimensional qualities. There are two methods under factor analysis, that is, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The researcher performed exploratory factor analysis to determine if the individual questions contributed to the constructs in the questionnaire. In addition, exploratory factor analysis was used to find the number of factors that explain the correlations (Guthrie, 2011). As stated in section 1.4.6, the software SPSS (version 24) was utilised to conduct the exploratory factor analyses in this study.

The confirmatory factor analysis was used to predict the number of factors with specific loading. As highlighted in section 1.4.6, SEM was used as a form of confirmatory factor analysis and the software Lisrel (version 9) was utilised to draw conclusions with SEM. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) suggest various measures such as: selecting appropriate methodology and time scale, picking a suitable sample, and the independence of the respondent in choosing specific answer sets so as to ensure validity of the research study. Section 4.9.2.3 provides the generalisability of the study.

4.9.2.3 Generalisability

Generalisability relates to the applicability of the research findings in one e-Service industry (banks) to other e-Service settings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). According to Guthrie (2011), generalisability is the ability to predict accurately from a study sample to the whole study population. The researcher is concerned with whether the patterns, concepts and theories generated in a particular setting can be applied to other environments (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The scores obtained from the E-S-SERVQUAL questionnaire should be consistent irrespective of the time of the measurement, thus, the test used or the person who administered the test. Wiid and Diggines (2015) indicate that the generalisation process can only obtain reliable results research studies if the study sample is a true reflection of the study population in all relevant respects. The sample of this study is a true reflection of the South African banking industry as discussed prior in section 4.6.1. Section 4.9.2.4 provides a discussion on mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis.

4.9.2.4 Mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis

The research study utilised the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis for testing the trustworthiness of the measurement scale. Mean is the average of a set of

numbers, while standard deviation is a statistic that indicates how tightly all the various examples are clustered around the mean in a set of data (Williams, Sweeney, & Anderson, 2012). In this study, the standard deviation was beneficial as it helped to evaluate the worthiness of the study at hand. Skewness and Kurtosis are numerical measures of shape whereby skewness outlines the extent to which the skew lies at and kurtosis which determines how sharp a central peak is (Westfall, 2014). In addition, skewness measures and highlights if data is symmetrical and Kurtosis determines the peakness of a data's distribution. If skewness is = 0 it means the data is perfectly symmetrical (Westfall, 2014). The other descriptive statistics that were used in this study are discussed in section 4.9.2.5.

4.9.2.5 Other descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to organise and present numerical data in a clearer and concise manner (Jackson, 2012). Descriptive statistics define the simple features of observed information after data analysis in the research study (Williams et al., 2012). The results of the demographics were regarded as descriptive data in this study and were described according to: gender, age, timeframe on Facebook, Facebook usage, client's bank, and the province which the client currently resides in.

4.9.3 Structural equation modelling

Structural equation model (SEM) was the main statistical technique used in this study. SEM is a statistical method that takes a confirmatory (hypothesis-testing) approach to data analysis (Byrne, 2010). Wothke (2010) defines SEM as a general and powerful multivariate analysis technique that utilises specialised versions of various analysis methods as special cases. The main purpose of SEM is to find a model that has a good enough fit with the collected data to serve as a representation of the real situation under investigation (Byrne, 2010; Viljoen, 2014).

SEM conveys two fundamental aspects of the procedure: that the processes under study are represented by a series of structural (regression) equations, and that these structural relations can be modelled pictorially to enable a clearer conceptualisation of the theory under study (Shiu, Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2009). The hypothesised model can then be tested statistically in a simultaneous analysis of the entire system of variable to determine the extent to which it is consistent with the data (Wuensch, 2013;

Wiid & Diggines, 2015). In addition, SEM demands that the pattern of inter-variable relations be a specified prior model.

There are four main structural equation models (Path analytic models, Confirmatory factor analysis models, Structural regression models and Latent change models) used in research and are adopted accordingly to suit the research situation (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). In this study the measurement model was estimated by a structural equation modelling program known as LISREL (version 9). The model estimated structural model through CFA which examined correlations between latent variables. For this study, SEM provided a framework for statistical analysis, for example confirmatory factor analysis which was used to compute the structural model and measurement model (Byrne, 2010). Prior to this, the study took the following SEM seven steps into consideration;

Step 1: Developing a theoretical model

For the present study, a conceptual model of factors influencing the client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry was presented for empirical testing (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). Based on theoretical support, hypotheses concerning the relationships between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry were formulated.

Step 2: Constructing a path diagram of dependence relationships

When constructing a path diagram of dependence relationships, the hypothesised relationships between the constructs incorporated in the theoretical models, are depicted. According to Hair et al. (2014), path diagrams provide a 'handy way of depicting models in a visual form'. SEM through path analysis, investigates paths to estimate significance and then evaluates the strength of the paths using standardised path coefficients (Hasiri & Afghanpour, 2016). Path coefficients are the effect sizes calculated by the model estimation program. Often these values are displayed above their respective arrows on the arrow diagram specifying a model (Suhr, 2006). Statistically significant path coefficients range between -1 and + 1, generally with a p-value of 0.05 (Hasiri & Afghanpour, 2016; Suhr, 2006; Wuensch, 2013). The value of t-test statistics generated should exceeds 1.96 in order for the null hypothesis to be rejected (Hair et al., 2014; Suhr, 2006).

In this study, path coefficients estimates are used to compare the direct effects on study variables. Results of significance tests reflect not only the absolute magnitudes of path coefficients but also factors such as the sample size and intercorrelations among the variables (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). According to Suhr (2006), path coefficients with values less than 0.10 indicate a weak effect; values close to 0.30, a median effect and values greater than 0.50, a strong effect. Therefore, the closer the path coefficients value is to 1, the stronger the effect of variables. The higher the path coefficient, the greater the strength of the correlation and/or relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable will be (Hair et al., 2014; Suhr, 2006; Wuensch, 2013).

Step 3: Converting the path diagram into a set of structural equations and measurement models

A conventional model actually consists of two models, the measurement model and the structural model (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). Specifying the measurement model involves assigning indicator variables to the constructs that they represent. When the structural and measurement models are estimated, the loading coefficients offer estimates of how reliable the indicators and the overall construct are. For this study, the software package of LISREL version 9 was used to convert the path diagrams into structural equations (structural models) and measurement models.

Step 4: Choosing the input matrix type and estimating the proposed model

For this step, the input matrix type must be chosen, and the proposed model estimated. Following the specification of the structural and measurement models and the selection of the input data type, estimates of free parameters from the observed data must be obtained (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). In the present study, the researcher analysed the data through the use of the Lisrel (version 9) for the estimations and to draw conclusions.

Maximum likelihood estimation (ML) is the most common method of estimation employed as it estimates the parameters of the whole system using all of the data (Wuensch 2013). Maximum Likelihood was used as the method of estimation to approximate the free parameters as identified for the study. ML makes estimates based on maximizing the probability (likelihood) that the observed covariances are drawn from a population assumed to be the same as that reflected in the coefficient

estimates. The ML picks estimates which have the greatest chance of reproducing the observed data.

Step 5: Assessing the identification of model equations

The software programme must be assessed to determine if it has produced any insignificant results for the structural model (Wuensch, 2013). There is no single rule to establish the identification of a model, but guidelines are available (Hair et al., 2014). These guidelines were used to specify the structural model for the purpose of this study.

Step 6: Evaluating the results for goodness-of-fit

When evaluating the goodness of fit results, a researcher must consider the extent to which the data and the theoretical models meet the assumptions of SEM. Goodness of fit tests establish the extent to which the structural equation model fits the sample data (Hair et al., 2014; 2006; Wuensch, 2013). The validity of the measurement model is dependent on the goodness of fit for the measurement model, together with detailed proof of construct validity. To determine whether the model should be rejected or not, goodness of fit tests were used to indicate how well the data fit the model, as it is the main tenacity of SEM. However, these general fit tests do not determine if the specific paths in the model are significant.

In the present study, to ensure that the overall fit of the proposed model of factors influencing the client loyalty intention in the south African banking industry is satisfactory, the following measures were employed: Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square; Normal Theory Weighted Least Square Chi-Square ; Chi-Square Corrected for Non-Normality; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); 90 % Confidence Interval for RMSEA ; P-Value for Test of Close Fit (RMSEA < 0.05); Normed Fit Index (NFI); Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI); Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) ;Comparative Fit Index (CFI); Incremental Fit Index (IFI); Relative Fit Index (RFI); Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI). Table 4.8 summarises the criteria and cut off points a model must meet in order to be a good fit.

Table 4.8 Criteria for goodness of fit indices

Goodness of fit measure	Criteria
Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square	P=0.000
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	RMSEA < or = to 0.05 indicates a good fit (Farrington, 2009) 0.10 < indicate acceptable models (Rootman, 2011)
90 % confidence interval for RMSEA	Lower 90 % confidence interval limit must be close to 0 whilst upper limit must be .08 indicating a well-fitting model
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	RMR = 0 indicates a perfect fit, RMR < 0.05 is a good fit and RMR below 0.08 is an adequate fit
P-Value for Test of close Fit (RMSEA< 0.05)	<0.05
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	NFI values above 0.95 are good; between 0.90 and 0.95 is acceptable. The cut-off point is 0.80.
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	NNFI close to 1 is a good fit; Below 0.90 the model must be re-specified.
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	< 0.05. Good models have small RMR
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	Between 0 & 1
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	Between 0 & 1
Comparative fit index (CFI)	CFI > 0.9
Parsimony fit index: Parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI)	A better model has a higher PGFI which is close to 1

Step 7: Making the indicated modifications to the model if theoretically justified, and interpreting the results

The last step of the SEM analysis involves readjusting hypotheses and proposed model modification in search of a better fit and an understanding of the outcomes (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). However, in the case of the present study, the model was not subjected to the model modification. The ethical considerations which were abided to, are discussed in section 4.10.

4.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is authoritative to obtain clearance from an ethics committee when human, animal or the earth's ecosystem issues are involved in any kind of study (Malhotra, 2014). Research ethics are principles that govern the activities of both the researcher and his or her subjects; it is a code which researchers are expected to conform to in order to protect them and the subjects involved in the research study (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Wiid and Diggines (2015), the rapid development of the internet and the subsequent growth in its use to conduct marketing research presents the researcher with a number of additional issues to address to ensure that respondents are properly treated. In order to ensure that ethical principles were fully observed and participants were properly treated, the researcher abided to the following ethical considerations:

- An Ethical Clearance certificate was granted to the researcher on the 11th of August 2016 by the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (Certificate Reference Number: VIL131SGAV01 - see Appendix B).

- Informed consent: The issue of informed consent being obtained from respondents in social media related research projects is seen as the most important ethical factor to be considered (ESOMAR, 2011; Hutton & Henderson, 2015; Kosinski et al., 2015). The participants were provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision on whether to take part in the research study or not. In addition, the respondents signed the informed consent form before participating in the research study.

- Anonymity and confidentiality: The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed. All the study participants were allowed to remain anonymous.

- Wilful participation: The researcher provided enough information about the study in order for the respondents to provide a true voluntary participation. The respondent participation was entirely based on voluntary participation.

- Withdrawal: The researcher informed the respondents that they could withdraw from the research study at any phase of completing the questionnaire.

- Protection of privacy, protection against harm, and protection against identity: The researcher guaranteed the privacy of the participants and that there would not be any harmful (physical and mental) or damage caused by participating in the research study.

- Misuse of results: The researcher informed the respondents that the research is being conducted for solely educational purposes.

- Data held in confidence: The raw data from respondents was securely stored and proper access control measures were put in place.

The researcher was aware and abided to the above-mentioned ethical considerations, and all reasonable efforts were taken to conduct the research study without prejudice to the respondents. Section 4.11 provides the summary and conclusion of the methodological chapter.

4.11 Summary and conclusion

Chapter four focused on the research design and research process which was used for this study. Within the context of this study, the process has adopted the research onion's six steps. The steps range from the research paradigm adopted to the research findings. A positivistic paradigm and a quantitative research approach were employed. The research methodology addressed several aspects of how the researcher drew the study population and the sample which was used in the research study. The study was conducted in the Republic of South Africa. A sample of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents was used and an E-S-SERVQUAL questionnaire was administered to collect primary data. The chapter also discussed the validity and reliability of the online questionnaire used, data analysis and presentation procedures, and ethical considerations. Chapter five presents the findings that were derived from the present study.
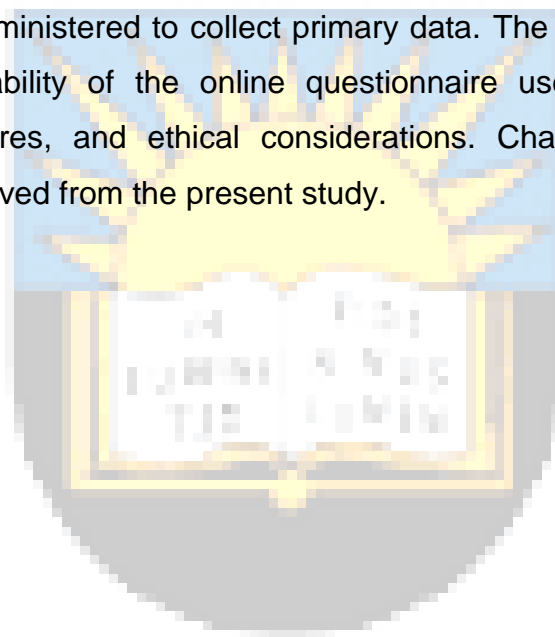
CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry were discussed in the preceding literature chapters. Chapter four provided the research methodology and the research design that was used in this study. A positivistic paradigm was selected to enable the study to use scientific, quantifiable methods to investigate, evaluate and explain the social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry. The positivistic paradigm lends itself to the application of quantitative research for primary data collection, analysis, and presentation. Given that numerical data was collected, a descriptive research design was the most suitable for this study in order to generalise the study findings to the broader population and related service industries. The results of the pilot study were used to restructure the study questionnaire and to eliminate short falls that might have been encountered during the data collection process. In addition, the data analysis methods to be employed were discussed in section 4.9.2 and 4.9.3 of chapter four, namely descriptive statistics reliability, validity, and SEM.

Chapter five presents the outcomes of the data collected through an online survey. This chapter is divided into various sections, which includes a discussion and presentation of descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency tables, and graphs in section 5.2; and reliability and validity analysis is discussed in section 5.3. The inferential statistical results such as confirmatory factor analysis and SEM are provided in section 5.4. This chapter commences with a discussion on the descriptive statistics and respondents' biographical details.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics define the simple features of observed information after data analysis in the research study, as discussed in section 4.9.2 (Williams et al., 2012). Thus, the results of the demographics have been categorised as follows: gender, age, timeframe on Facebook, Facebook usage, client's bank, and the province which the client currently resides in. Section 5.2.1 provides the sample profile of applicants.

5.2.1 Sample Profile

The first section of the questionnaire is comprised of six biographical questions concerning the demographic information of the respondent. The biographical questions which were taken into consideration for this study includes client gender, client age, and client's timeframe on Facebook (period since joining), client's Facebook usage, client's bank, and client's province of residence. A summary of all of the demographic information gathered from the 377 questionnaires is presented in Tables 5.1.

Table 5.1 Demographic information

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	172	45.6
Male	201	53.3
Missing	4	1.1
Total	**377**	**100**
Age (Years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
>24	96	25.5
25-34	174	46.2
35-44	66	17.5
45+	40	10.6
Missing	1	0.3
Total	377	100
Time frame on Facebook (Years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
>2	56	14.9
3-5	131	34.7
6+	188	49.9
Missing	2	0.5
Total	377	100
Facebook information usage	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Daily	158	48.5
Weekly	58	15.4
Monthly	47	12.5
Occasionally (When cannot avoid it)	86	22.8
Missing	3	0.8
Total	377	100
Bank details	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
ABSA	71	18.8
Capitec	88	23.3
FNB	68	18.0
Nedbank	61	16.2
Standard Bank	88	23.3
Missing	1	0.3
Total	377	100
Province were respondents currently resides	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Eastern Cape	146	38.7
Free State	30	8.0
Gauteng	43	11.4
KwaZulu Natal	23	6.1
Limpopo	32	8.5
Mpumalanga	24	6.4
Northern Cape	17	4.5
North West	23	6.1
Western Cape	38	10.1
Missing	1	0.3
Total	377	100

Table 5.1 reveals the summary in the form of frequency and percentage of all the demographic data collected during the study. Section 5.2.1.1 presents the demographic findings related to gender.

5.2.1.1 Gender

A total of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents responded to the survey as revealed in Table 5.1. There were one hundred and seventy-two (172) female respondents, which constitute a 45.6% of the total sample, and there were two hundred and one (201) male respondents, constituting a majority sample of 53.3%. This depicted a fair representation of both genders in the study, although males were slightly more represented than their females' counterparts by 7.7%. Section 5.2.1.2 provides the findings on the age of respondents.

5.2.1.2 Age

The sample size was made up of respondents which ranged from the age of eighteen (18) years and above. As illustrated in Table 5.2, there were a total of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents and, out of that total, ninety six (96) respondents that 25.5 % were less than twenty-four (>24) years. The age group between twenty-five and thirty-four (25 and 34) years had one hundred and thirty-four (134) respondents, constituting 46.2% of respondents. This age group constituted the majority respondents of the study. The last two age groups were thirty-five to forty-four (35-44) years with 17.5%; and forty five and above (45+) which reported a 10.6% of respondents. In relation to age, 0.3% of the total respondents are classified under the missing information component. Section 5.2.1.3 provides information on the period the respondents have been on Facebook.

5.2.1.3 Time frame on Facebook

The majority of the respondents have been using Facebook for over six years, as depicted in shown in Table 5.2. This dominant segment constituted 49.9% of the total sample. Since these respondents have been on Facebook for more than six years, it's likely that they are familiar with Facebook usage and how helpful it is for various purposes, hence the higher the number of respondents who answered the questionnaire. This segment was followed by a total of 34.7% respondents who have been on Facebook for a period of between three to five years. The last segment is made up of respondents who have been on Facebook for less than two years, who

constitutes 14.9 % of the total respondents. On this biographical question, a 0.5% of the information was missing. A discussion on how often respondents used Facebook for banking information is provided in section 5.2.1.4.

5.2.1.4 Facebook usage for banking purposes

This study found that 48.5% of the respondents use Facebook to search for banking information on a daily basis. This usage rate of Facebook confirmed studies conducted by Dootson et al. (2016); and Goldstuck (2015), who found that most of SA citizens (bank clients) use these Facebook sites on a daily basis. As illustrated in Table 5.2, there are 15.4% of respondents that make use of Facebook for banking information on a weekly basis and 12.5% who do so on a monthly basis. However, in spite of the higher amount of the SA population using Facebook for banking information on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, a significant number of respondents, constituting 22.8%, use it only occasionally. About 0.8% of the information regarding this question was missing. Section 5.2.1.5 provides the information on the exact South African bank which the respondents use.

5.2.1.5 Bank details

As summarised in Table 5.2, Capitec bank and Standard Bank had the most number of participants in this study, with each contributing 23.3 % of the total sample size. This was followed by ABSA, which constituted 18.8% of the respondents. FNB and Nedbank contributed 18.0% and 16.2% respectively for the total respondents. However, a 0.3% of this biographical question was missing. Section 5.2.1.6 provides the province which the respondent currently resides in.

5.2.1.6 Province

The respondents were drawn from all nine provinces in SA, as is depicted in Table 5.2; this means there was some representation of SA as a whole. However, most of the respondents were from Eastern Cape (EC) province, which housed approximately 38.7% of survey participants. Gauteng province was the second highest province in terms of the number of representation, which was 11.4% of respondents. The rest of representation of South African provinces were as follows: Western Cape 10.1%; Limpopo 8.5%; Free State 8%; Mpumalanga 6.4%; KZN and North West both at 6.1%, and the Northern Cape with 4.5%. A 0.3% proportion of the information on the provinces in which these respondents were currently residing was missing. Section

5.2.2 provides the mean deviation, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis statistics findings of this study.

5.2.2 Mean, Standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis statistics

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis statistics were determined in order to describe the sample data for this study. The normality of data was tested using the mean, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. Table 5.2 illustrates the descriptive statistic scores that were obtained for the purpose of this study.

Table 5.2 Mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis for scales (n=377)

Variable	Factors	Mean statistic	Standard Deviation statistic	Skewness statistic	Kurtosis statistic
E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL	System Availability	3.92	3.258	0.255	0.757
	Efficiency	4.00	4.666	-1.181	1.224
	Fulfilment	4.02	2.842	-1.083	0.980
	Privacy	4.12	2.184	-1.358	2.411
	Overall service quality	5.14	3.279	-1.456	3.083
Client loyalty Intention	Client loyalty intention	3.25	2.647	-1.430	2.606

Table 5.2 summarised the descriptive statistics of the independent variables (Social media service quality) and the dependent variable (client loyalty intention) using mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. From the five independent variables that were tested, the Social Media Efficiency variable reported the highest mean score of 28.05 and a standard deviation score of 4.666. The Social Media overall service quality variable reported the second highest mean score of 20.54 and a standard deviation of

3.279. This was followed by the Social Media Fulfilment variable that recorded a mean score of 16.08 and the standard deviation of 2.842. The Social Media system availability variable had the second lowest mean score of 15.68 and a standard deviation score of 3.258. Out of all the independent variables, the Social Media Privacy variable reported the lowest mean score of 12.37 and a standard deviation score of 2.184. The only dependent variable of the study, client loyalty intention, reported a mean score of 16.25 and a standard deviation score of 2.647.

Table 5.2 also highlighted the skewness and kurtosis of the data for this study. From all the independent variables, Social Media System Availability was the only variable with a positive skewness score of 0.255 and kurtosis score of 0.757. The Social Media Fulfilment variable reported a skewness score of -1.083 and kurtosis score of 0.980. As stated in section 4.9.4, if skewness is = 0 it means the data is perfectly symmetrical, therefore in this study ranking the independent variable from the high perfectly symmetrical, Social Media Efficiency variable was ranked third, with a skewness score of -1.181 and a kurtosis score of 1.224. This was followed by the privacy dimension which reported a skewness score of -1.358 and a kurtosis score of 2.411. The last independent variable for this study was Social Media Overall Service quality which recorded a skewness score of -1.456 and a kurtosis score of 3.083. For the only dependent variable of this study, client loyalty intention reported a skewness score of -1.430 and a kurtosis score of 2.606. Table 5.2, illustrated that there is a high variance in data distribution. This was indicated in all of the items tested in this study as they all reported a standard deviation above one. Section 5.3 presents the study's reliability and validity analyses of the constructs.

5.3 Results of the reliability and validity analysis

As stated in section 4.9.2.1, this study made use of Cronbach's alpha to test reliability of the constructs, and both exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were employed to determine the validity of the study. The measuring instruments must be both reliable and valid in order for researchers to have confidence in the data they have collected from respondents (Andrew, Pedersen, &McEvoy, 2011). Section 5.4.1 presents the statistical findings of the reliability and validity analyses.

5.3.1 Reliability and Validity results

As indicated in chapter four, reliability refers to the extent to which measures are error-free and therefore yield consistent results (Pallant, 2013). Validity is concerned with the ability of a scale or measuring instrument to measure that which it is intended or developed to measure (Wiid and Diggines (2015). Exploratory factor analysis seeks to establish relationships between factors while confirmatory factor analysis focuses on affirming these relationships (Sekaran and Bougie (2013). To assess the validity of the measuring instrument, an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken. Principal Axis Factoring and Oblimin with Kaizer Normalization were specified as the extraction and rotation method respectively. Table 5.3 commences this section by providing a reliability summary for the study's constructs, thereafter (from table 5.4 to table 5.9) each construct is examined individually in terms of item reliability and factor loadings.

Table 5.3 Reliability summary for the constructs

Construct	Number of cases	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
System availability	377	4	.814
Efficiency	377	7	.824
Fulfilment	377	4	.746
Privacy	377	3	.727
Overall service quality	377	4	.777
Client loyalty intention	377	5	.771

Table 5.3 indicates that all the constructs of the E-Social-SERVQUAL scale have a good degree of reliability, as it reveals that each construct was computed as obtaining Cronbachs Alpha's above 0.70, which is acceptable as stated in section 4.9.2.1. Table 5.4 to table 5.9 analysed the validity and reliability results of the both the independent

(social media service quality) and the dependent (client loyalty) variables. The items expected to measure the Social Media System Availability constructs were assessed for discriminant validity by means of an exploratory factor analysis. The factor structure and reliability alpha reported for the social media system availability is therefore provided in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Social media system availability validity and reliability results

% of Variance : 64.409		Cronbach's alpha : 0.814		
Item	Social Media System Availability	Factor Loading	Item- total correlation	CA after deletion
SYS1	My bank's Facebook page is always available for this service.	.750	.565	.797
SYS2	My bank's Facebook page launches and runs right away.	.838	.686	.740
SYS3	My bank's Facebook site does not crash.	.849	.703	.733
SYS4	Facebook pages on my bank's site do not freeze after I enter my comments.	.768	.582	.790

Four items were used to measure the construct for Social Media System Availability as depicted in Table 5.4, which summarised the variable's validity and reliability scores. All of the four items for Social Media System Availability (SYS1, SYS2, SYS3, and SYS4) loaded onto one construct as expected. Social Media System Availability's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.750 to 0.849, and a variance of 64.409 % which demonstrates a satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for this construct. A Cronbach-alpha coefficient of 0.814 was found for this construct, suggesting that the measuring instrument used was efficient and reliable for the measurement construct as stated in section 4.9.2.1. It was therefore not necessary to remove any items from this scale. Table 5.5 presents the Social Media Efficiency validity and reliability results for this study.

Table 5.5 Social Media Efficiency validity and reliability results

% of Variance : 40.485		Cronbach's alpha : 0.824		
Item	Social Media Efficiency	Factor Loading	Item- total correlation	CA after deletion
EFF1	My bank's Facebook banking service makes it easy to find bank information that I need.	.553	.484	.816
EFF2	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	.700	.610	.795
EFF3	My Bank postings on Facebook are well organised.	.746	.597	.798
EFF4	My bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast.	.669	.577	.800
EFF5	My bank's information on the Facebook site is simple to use.	.582	.592	.798
EFF7	My bank's posts on Facebook work well for using bank services.	.539	.544	.806

The items expected to measure the Social Media Efficiency variable were assessed for discriminant validity by means of an exploratory factor analysis. Table 5.5 provides the validity and reliability results of the Social Media Efficiency dimension. There were seven items used to measure the Social Media Efficiency dimension (EFF1, EFF2, EFF3, EFF4, EFF5, EFF6 and EFF7), however, six items for efficiency dimension loaded onto one factor and one item (EFF6) kept overlapping across two factors and was thus eliminated from further analysis for the purpose of this study. The researcher can decide whether to discard cross-loading or problematic items from the analysis provided there are several adequate items left (Pallant, 2013). The Social Media Efficiency dimension had factor loadings ranging from 0.539 to 0.746 and a variance of 40.485%, which indicates a satisfactory evidence of construct validity. After removing the overlapping item (EFF6), the Social Media Efficiency dimension had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient score of 0.824. This Cronbach's alpha coefficient score is above the accepted minimum value of 0.7 as stated in section 4.9.2.1., thus

indicating a good and reliable measuring instrument for the construct. There would have been no further improvement in the scale reliability if any other items were to be removed hence the rest of the items were retained. Table 5.6 is the summary and explanation of the validity and reliability results of the Social Media Fulfilment dimension.

Table 5.6 Social Media Fulfilment validity and reliability results

% of Variance : 56.836		Cronbach's alpha : 0.746		
Item	Social Media Fulfilment	Factor Loading	Item- total correlation	CA after deletion
FUL1	My bank's Facebook page quickly provides information that I seek.	.735	.517	.701
FUL2	My bank's Facebook page provides information that I'd like to receive.	.815	.622	.638
FUL3	My bank's Facebook page has information about what is going on in the bank.	.767	.554	.680
FUL4	My bank's Facebook page delivers accurate information.	.693	.470	.724

Table 5.6 illustrates the Social Media Fulfilment dimension (FUL1 to FUL4) which loaded together onto one factor during the exploratory factor analysis. Social Media Fulfilment dimension recorded a variance of 56.836%, and factor loadings of between 0.693 and 0.815 were reported for this factor, which were all above 0.4 as stated propounded by Hair et al. (2014). The Social Media Fulfilment factor loadings and the variance indicated adequate evidence of the construct validity. The Social Media Fulfilment dimension had a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.746, which is above the minimum accepted value of 0.7, indicating a reliable measuring instrument as stated in section 4.9.1. Once again no items were removed from the scale as the scale could not be improved further in terms of reliability alphas. Table 5.7 is a summary and explanation of the validity and reliability results of the Social Media Privacy dimension.

Table 5.7 Social Media Privacy validity and reliability results

% of Variance : 64.426		Cronbach's alpha : 0.727		
Item	Social Media Privacy	Factor Loading	Item- total correlation	CA after deletion
PRI1	My bank does not share information about my behaviour (browsing pages, clicking links, etc.) with others on its Facebook account.	.777	.512	.675
PRI2	My bank does not share my personal information on Facebook with other sites.	.818	.566	.610
PRI3	My bank Facebook page protects information about my personal data.	.813	.558	.619

The Social Media Privacy dimension items (PRI1, PRI2, and PRI3) also loaded onto one factor during the factor analysis. The factor loadings had scores ranging from 0.777 to 0.818, which were all above 0.4, and a variance of 64. 426%, which provides sufficient evidence of the construct validity as stated in section 4.9.2. The construct had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.727, which indicates that the Social Media Privacy construct is reliable as per the stated scores in section 4.9.2.1. The scale could also not be improved beyond 0.727 thus all three items were retained. Table 5.8 is summary and explanation of the validity and reliability results of the social media overall service quality dimension.

Table 5.8 Social Media Overall service quality validity and reliability results

% of Variance : 60.305		Cronbach's alpha : 0.777		
Item	Social Media Overall Service Quality	Factor Loading	Item- total correlation	CA after deletion
OSQ1	Rate the information and services available on your bank's Facebook page.	.710	.508	.764
OSQ2	Rate the overall convenience of using your bank's Facebook page.	.791	.602	.718
OSQ3	Rate the quality of the service that the bank provides on their Facebook page.	.821	.641	.696
OSQ4	Rate the overall value you get from your bank's Facebook site.	.781	.590	.724

The last independent variable factor extracted by the exploratory factor analysis in this study is identified as Social Media Overall Service Quality dimension. As shown in Table 5.8, the social media overall service quality dimension items (OSQ1, OSQ2, OSQ3, and OSQ4) loaded under one factor. The factor loadings for social media overall service quality ranged from 0.710 to 0.821, and a variance of 60.305% was recorded. These factor loadings and the variance recorded indicates an adequate evidence of construct validity as stated in section 4.9.2.2. The instrument showed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.777, which is above the 0.7 accepted value as stated in section 4.9.2.1. This indicated a reliable measure of the social media overall service quality construct. Further to this it was noted that scale could not be improved in terms of reliability by removal of items thus all items were retained. The dependent variable construct for this study was also tested for validity and reliability, the scores obtained are provided in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Client loyalty intention validity and reliability results

% of Variance : 52.400		Cronbach's alpha : 0.771		
Item	Client loyalty intention	Factor Loading	Item- total correlation	CA after deletion
LOY1	I would say positive things about a bank's Facebook service to other people.	.700	.508	.739
LOY2	I would recommend a bank's Facebook page to someone who seeks my advice.	.801	.633	.696
LOY3	I would encourage friends and others to follow a bank's Facebook page.	.707	.523	.734
LOY4	I would consider a Facebook page to be my first choice for future banking information.	.700	.518	.738
LOY5	I think I would keep following a bank's Facebook page in the coming months.	.708	.531	.731

Table 5.9 illustrated that all the five items which measure the client loyalty intention (LOY1, LOY2, LOY3, LOY4 and LOY5) loaded onto one factor. The client loyalty intention factor loadings ranged from 0.699 to 0.801 which is above the 0.4 score as stated in section 4.9.2.2. The client loyalty intention construct had a variance of 52.400 %. Therefore, as a result of both the scores of variance and the factor loadings, the client loyalty intention dimension confirmed an adequate evidence of the construct validity. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the client loyalty intention dimension was 0.771, above the minimum accepted value of 0.7, which concludes that the instrument measuring the construct is a reliable measure as stated in section 4.9.2.1. It was not deemed necessary to remove any items from this scale as the reliability results could not be improved further.

5.4 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics determine the probability of characteristics of population based on the characteristics of the sample. This section discusses the statistical tests that were applied in this study. In order to assess the relationships hypothesised for this study, the main inferential statistical method adopted was that of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings were presented in this chapter, while the discussion of the results will be presented in chapter six. Section 5.4.1 provides the results of the structural equation modelling analysis that was used for this study.

5.4.1 Structural Equation Modelling Analysis

As stated in section 4.9.3, SEM tests statistical models and estimates a series of interrelated dependence relationships through confirmatory analysis and path analysis (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). The use of SEM in a research study is possible when the research study has a clear set of hypotheses which are represented in a model whereby the constructs are operationalised using a measurement model which is then tested (Wuensch, 2013; Wiid & Diggines, 2015). In this study, SEM was significant in estimating the values of the free parameters.
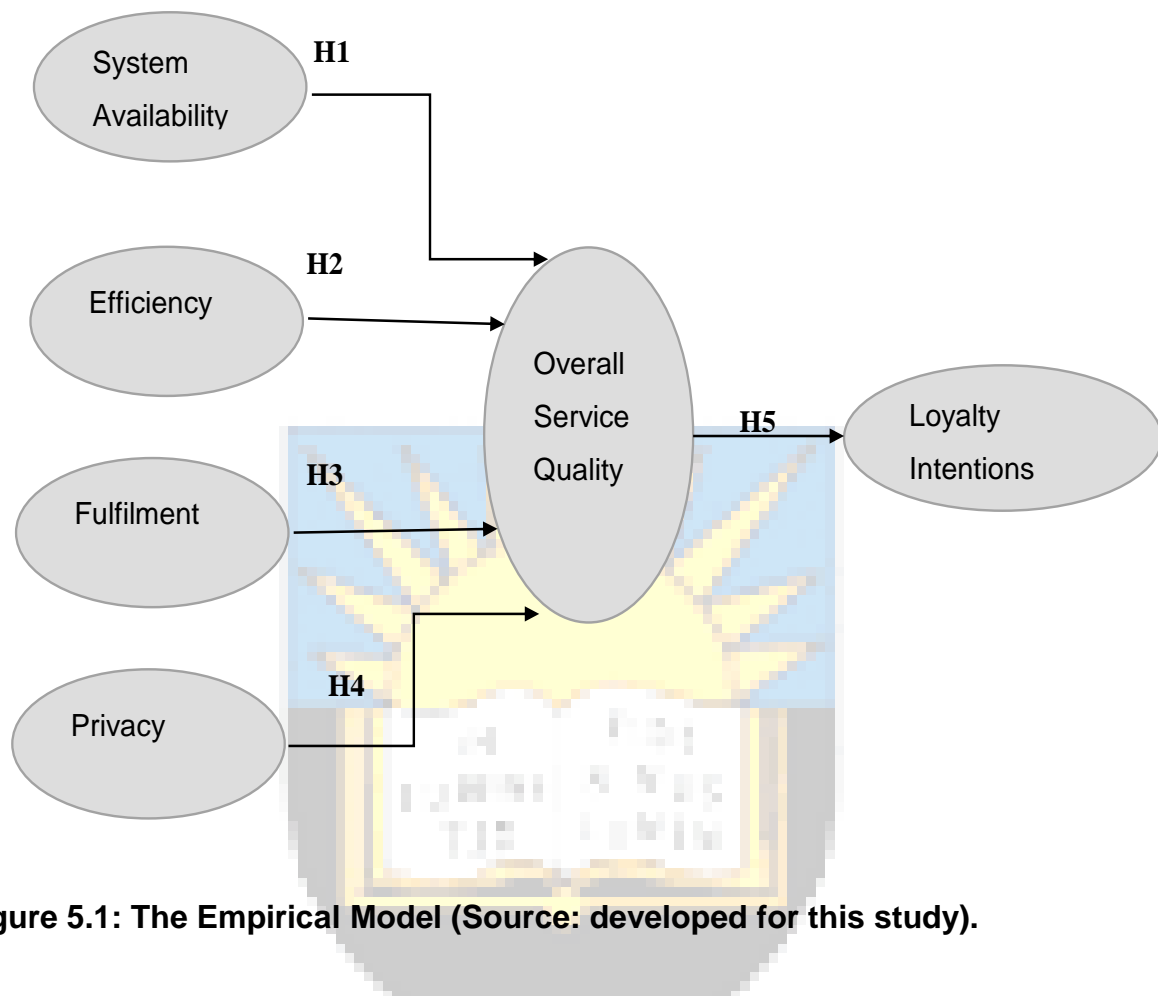
Figure 5.1: The Empirical Model (Source: developed for this study).

Generally, the SEM process involves two steps: validating the measurement model and fitting the structural model for a proposed study. For the purpose of this study, the empirical model proposed is illustrated in Figure 5.1. The process starts by identifying a model based on the theory of a particular study, whereby the variables in the model are conceptualised as latent variables measured by several indicators. Confirmatory factor analysis is then used to determine if the indicators measure a latent variable hence validating the model. If the aforementioned variables have been validated, the model can then be subjected to fitness testing. SEM as a methodological tool for the study started with validating the measurement model as detailed in section 5.4.2.

5.4.2 Measurement model

The measurement model as part of the SEM model indicates latent variables and their indicators as stated in section 5.4.1. Statistically one cannot proceed to evaluate and analyse the structural model of a particular study unless the measurement model has

proved to be valid. The validity of the measurement model is tested and analysed by using goodness of fit measures as stated in section 4.9.3. The various goodness of fit indices have cut of points which state whether the model is a good fit or not. The acceptable levels of fit indices or threshold levels were presented in Table 4.8. in chapter four. Figure 5.2 below depicts the output of the measurement model which is followed by an explanation of the diagram.
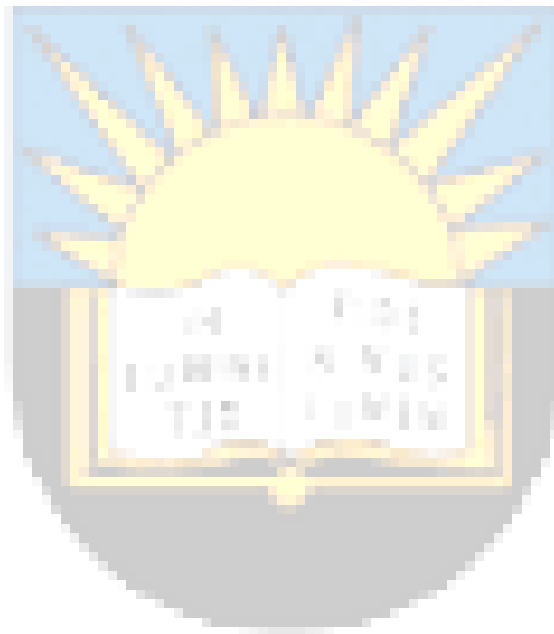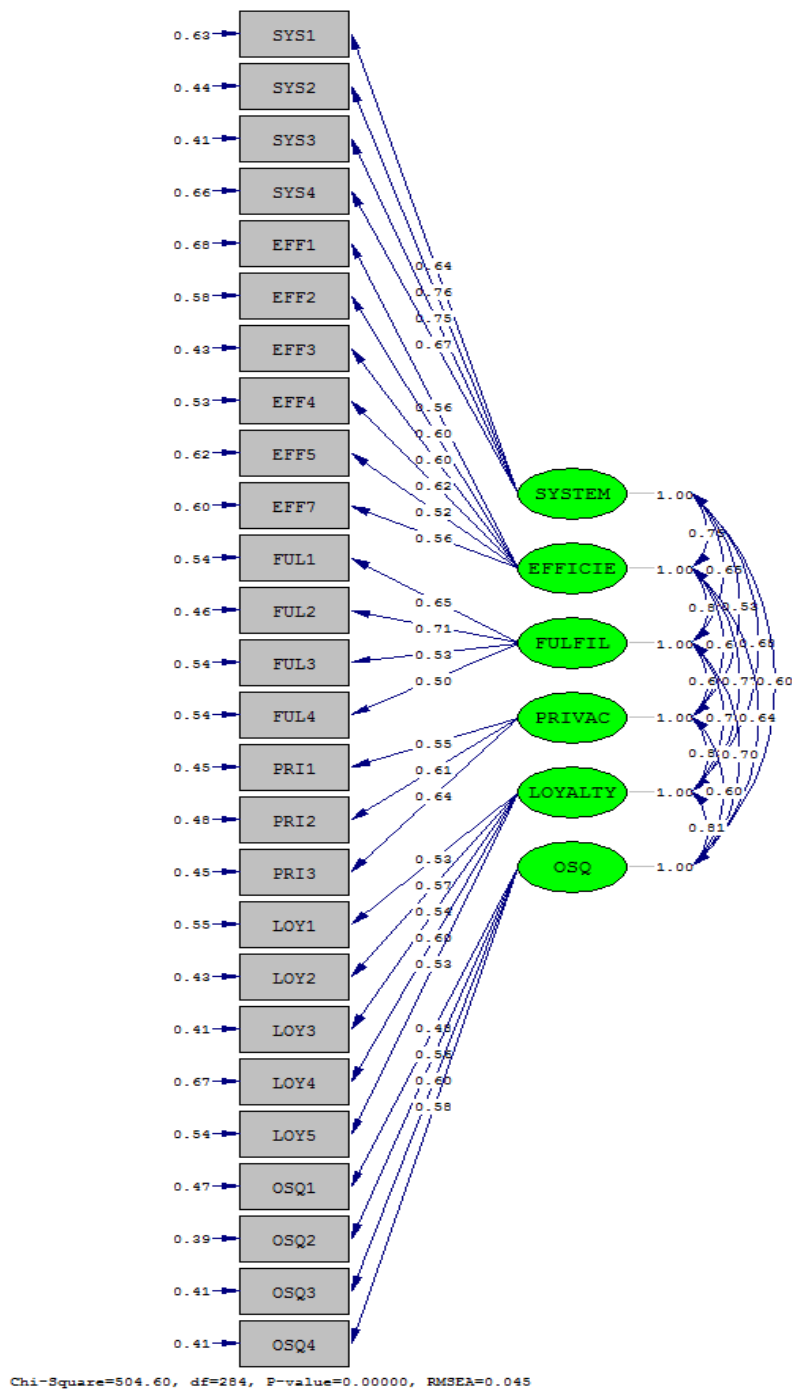
Figure 5.2 Measurement model

The measurement model illustrated in Figure 5.2 reported a Chi-Square of 504.60, with a degree of freedom of 284 and an RMSEA of 0.045. This indication proved that the measurement model is a good fit of the variables under study. The RMSEA of 0.045 reported for this study is below the maximum required RMSEA of 0.5 as stated

in Table 5.11. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.000, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. In addition to this explanation, Table 5.10 presents other fit indices which are relevant in measuring the fitness of the measurement model for this study.

Table 5.10 Goodness of fit statistics for the measurement model

Fit index	Value
Degrees of Freedom	284
Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square	687.953 (p = 0.000)
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.045
Chi-square corrected for Non-normality	1770.601 (p=0.000)
90 Percent Confidence Interval for RMSEA	(0.0389 ; 0.0519)
P-Value for Test of close Fit (RMSEA< 0.05)	0.876
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.958
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.978
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.981
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.981
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.952
Critical N (CN)	256.112
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	0.0433
Standardized RMR	0.0490
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.877
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.848
Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI)	0.691

All of the indices presented in the Table 5.10 reported an absolute fit for the model. The normal theory weighted least Chi-Square of 687.953 (P = 0.000) for this study, depicting that the model is a perfect fit. The RMSEA figure score of 0.045 reported was below the 0.05 maximum, which suggests a close fit between the data and the model. From Table 5.10 it can be seen that Chi-Square corrected for Non-Normality value is 1770.601 (P=0.000) which suggests that there is an acceptable fit between the data and the model. The 90% confidence interval of the RMSEA reported a value of (0.0389; 0.0519) which proved that the data is a perfect fit of the model and as a

result it is acceptable for this study. The study findings reported a Normed Fit Index value of 0.958 and a Non-Normed Fit Index value of 0.978, which is a good fit of the data and model as illustrated in Table 4.8 in chapter four.

The Comparative Fit Index reported a value of 0.981, which is above the recommended value of 0.9, thus, there is a perfect fit between the data and the model. An Incremental Fit Index value of 0.981 and a Relative Fit Index value of 0.952 were reported, which shows a good fit of data and the model. An absolute fit of the model for acceptable values was also established for the following: Goodness of Fit Index value of 0.877; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index value of 0.848; Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index value of 0.691. All of these values were between the required range of 0 and 1. The Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index reported a value of 0.691, which is also regarded as a good fit of the data and the model. The aforementioned indices stipulate that the measurement model was valid; hence the researcher proceeded to the next phase, which is structural model, and is provided in section 5.4.3.

5.4.3 The structural model

The main purpose of SEM is to find a model that has a good enough fit with the collected data to serve as a representation of the real situation under investigation. Lisrel (version 9) was employed to draw conclusions on the structural fit of the structural model with Robust Maximum Likelihood as the estimation method in this study. For the purpose of this study, the structural model focused on estimation of parameters and model fit. Therefore, the goodness of fit criteria that was used to analyse the measurement model and latter parameters was also used to analyse the structural model fitness. Figure 5.3 illustrates the path diagram of the model for five independent variables (E-S-SERVQUAL) and the dependent variable of the study which is client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

Chi-Square=537.58, df=288, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.048
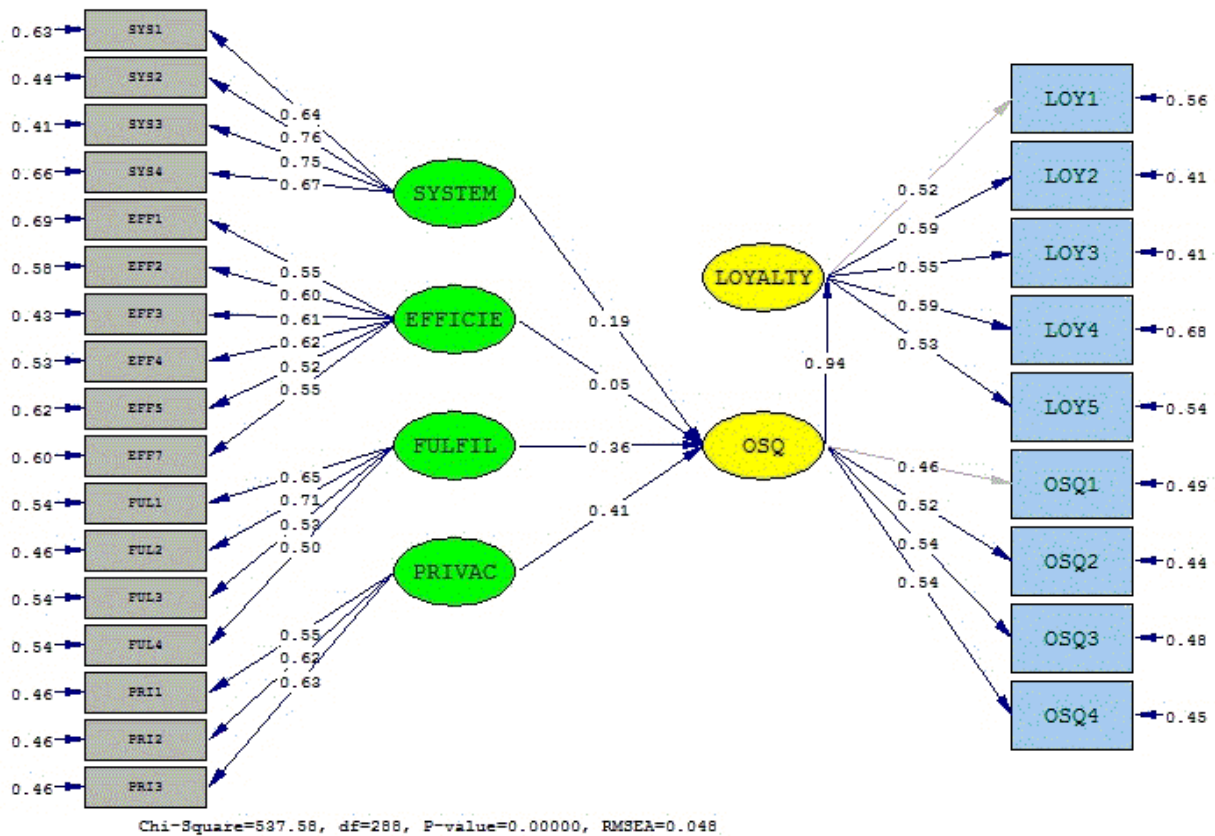
Figure 5.3 Structural model

The structural model depicted in Figure 5.3 reported a Chi-Square of 537.58 with a degree of freedom of 288 and an RMSEA of 0.048. This indication proved that the measurement model is a good fit with the data. The RMSEA of 0.048 reported for this study is below the maximum required RMSEA of 0.05 as stated in Table 4.8 in chapter four. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.000, which indicates that the model is statistically significant in terms of its structural fit. However, there are other fit indices which are relevant and sufficient to measure the fitness of the model. Table 5.11 provides the Goodness of Fit Statistics of the structural model.

Table 5.11 Goodness of Fit Statistics of the structural model

Fit index	Value
Degrees of freedom	288
Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square	739.069 (P= 0.0)
Normal Theory Weighted Least Square Chi-Square	731.016 (P = 0.000)
Chi-square corrected for Non-Normality	1940.353 (0.0)
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.0480
90 % Confidence Interval for RMSEA	(0.0417; 0.0543)
P-Value for Test of Close Fit (RMSEA < 0.05)	0.093
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.955
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.976
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.847
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.979
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.979
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.950
Root Mean square Residual (RMR)	0.0461
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.870
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.841

Table 5.11 summarises the goodness of fit statistics of the structural model for this study. In summary, the degrees of freedom were reported to be 288 with a normal theory weighted least square Chi-Square P-value of (0.000). Therefore, it can be concluded that the model is significant and regarded as a perfect fit. In addition, a Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square 739.069 (P= 0.0) and Chi-square corrected for Non-Normality of 1940.353 (0.0) was reported in this study. A close or very good fit of 0.0480 on RMSEA of the model was recorded. The values of the 90% confidence Interval for RMSEA ranged between 0.0417 and 0.0543, indicating that the structural model is a good fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) reported 0.955 and 0.976 respectively, which are also regarded as good fits for a structural model.

The other reported statistics also proved to be a good fit for the structural model and were recorded as follows; Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) 0.847; Comparative Fit

Index (CFI) 0.979; Incremental Fit Index (IFI) 0.979 and Relative Fit Index (RFI) 0.950. The Root Mean square Residual (RMR) reported a score of 0.0461, which is also a good fit for the structural model. As stated in Table 5.11, this study reported an acceptable fit for a good structural model, that is goodness of fit index (GFI) and the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) of 0.870 and 0.841 respectively. The above structural statistics of GFI indicates the structural model as a perfect fit. As the model is deemed fit, the researcher identified the parameter estimates focusing on the path coefficients outlining the strength of the relationships between the dependent variables and the independent variable. Section 5.4.4 provides the estimation used in this study.

5.4.4 Estimation

For the purpose of this study, the Maximum Likelihood estimation method was employed to estimate the path coefficients of the structural model. The path coefficients as graphically presented in Figure 5.3 are indicated by the arrows of the diagram from latent variables to indicators and from latent variables to the independent variable. These path coefficients explain the correlation strength between variables. In this study, the variables' correlation strength was analysed using a Beta matrix.

The path parameters through estimation analysed the findings of the data collected, and determined that three variables (Privacy, Fulfilment and System Availability) were strongly correlated (as discussed in section 4.9.3) to social media overall service quality. However, it also determined that social media efficiency has weak influence to social media overall service quality in the South African banking industry as stated in section 4.9.3. In addition, through estimation the path parameters also determined the degree of influence which social media overall service quality has on client loyalty in the South African banking industry. T-values and path coefficient values depicted the degree of association between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. Table 5.12 provides the Beta Matrix and Gamma Matrix.

Table 5.12 Beta Matrix and Gamma Matrix

Variables	Path co-efficient	t-Value	p-Value
Privacy to overall service quality	0.41	4.126	0.0001
Fulfilment to overall service quality	0.36	2.751	0.0063
System Availability to overall service quality	0.19	1.990	0.0475
Efficiency to overall service quality	0.05	0.290	0.7720
Overall service quality to client loyalty intention	0.94	7.944	0.0001

Table 5.12 illustrates a summary of path coefficients that were used for this study. As shown in Table 5.12, from all independent variables, the Social Media Privacy dimension reported a highest path coefficients value of 0.41, which indicates a stronger influence to Social Media Overall Service Quality as compared to other independent variables' strength of influence on social media overall service quality. The Social Media Fulfilment dimension recorded a path coefficient value of 0.36, placing the variable as the second highest in terms of strength of influence on Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry.

The Social Media System Availability reported a path coefficients value of 0.19, which positioned it as the third highest independent variable in terms of its strength to influence Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry. The last independent variable was Social Media Efficiency dimension; it recorded a weaker path coefficient value of 0.05. This weaker path coefficient value ranks Social Media Efficiency dimension as having the least influence on Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry as compared to other E-S-SERVQUAL variables. Out of all the independent variables, three of them (Privacy, Fulfilment and System Availability) have a significant effect on Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry, whilst Efficiency does not have a significant effect on Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry. The Social Media Overall Service Quality variable reported a high path coefficient score of 0.94 which is close to 1. As stated in section 4.9.3, the closer the path coefficients value is to 1, the stronger the effect of variables. In other words,

the higher the path coefficient, and the greater the strength of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable will be. Therefore, the Social Media Overall Service Quality has a strong influence on Client Loyalty Intention in the South African banking industry.

In addition, the path coefficients were also used to test and analyse the significance of the hypotheses for this study. The path coefficients and t-values from the Gamma matrix were employed to draw conclusions on whether accepting or refuting the null hypotheses. As depicted in Table 5.12, the t-values were converted into P-values which were then used to statistically test the hypotheses. Social Media Privacy dimension recorded a t-value of 4.126 which was converted to a P-value of 0.0001. The Social Media Fulfilment variable reported a t-value of 2.751 which was converted to a P-value of 0.0063. The Social Media System available recorded a t-value of 1.990 which was converted to a P-value of 0.0475. The Social Media Efficient dimension had a t-value of 0.290 which was converted to a P-value of 0.7720. The Social Media Overall Service Quality variable reported a t-value of 4.126 which was converted to a p-value of 0.0001. Section 5.4.5 provides the final operationalisation of variables.

5.4.5 Operationalisation of Variables

As defined in previous chapters, the variables that were hypothetically tested in this study are operationalised as shown in Table 5.13. Due to the fact that the theorised model did not undergo any major re-specifications, the variables remain operationalised as originally specified.

Table 5.13 Study variable operationalisation

Factor and Operationalisation	Items	Source
Independent variables		
Social Media System Availability: Refers to the availability of a bank's Facebook page, and the ability of the bank's Facebook page to launches and runs right away, without crashing or freezing after a client enters his/her comments.	4	Kim (2015); Parasuraman et al. (2005)
Social Media Efficiency: Efficiency focuses on two separate elements namely; the bank Facebook page and the bank personnel's rate of response on Facebook page. It refers to the bank's Facebook banking service's easiness to quickly provide the banking information that a client needs. Whether the bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast and the information on the Facebook site is simple to use for banking services.	7	
Social Media Fulfilment: Refers to the degree the information on banks websites matches their products or service actually offered. The bank Facebook page's ability to deliver accurate and relevant banking information that clients seek.	4	
Social Media Privacy: Refers to the degree the bank's Facebook page protects information about client's personal data such behaviour, browsing pages and clicking links.	3	
Social Media Overall Service Quality: Refers to the information and services available on a bank's Facebook page such as the overall convenience of using a bank's Facebook page and the overall value client gain from a bank's Facebook page.	4	

Dependent variable		
Client Loyalty Intention: Refers to the extent a client will recommend, encourage, and say positive things about a bank's Facebook service to other people who seek his/her advice. The extent to which a client would consider a Facebook page to their first choice for future banking information.	5	Kim (2015)

The results of these tests are summarised statistically in Table 5.13 which outlined whether this study's variables were to be accepted or rejected.

5.5 Assessment of Hypotheses

The purpose of hypotheses is to bring clarity, specify, and focus to research (Yin, 2014). For this research study, E-S-SERVQUAL was the independent variable used, while client loyalty intention was the dependent variable. This study tested hypotheses using T-values and P-values as depicted in table 5.16. When hypotheses are assessed, the null and alternative hypotheses are either accepted or rejected depending on the significance level of variables tested on the hypotheses. As stated in section 4.9.3, a path coefficients range between -1 and + 1, with a p-value of 0.05 was deemed a significant path coefficient score and accepted in this study. Table 5.16 provides a relationship between the E-S-SERVQUAL variable and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.
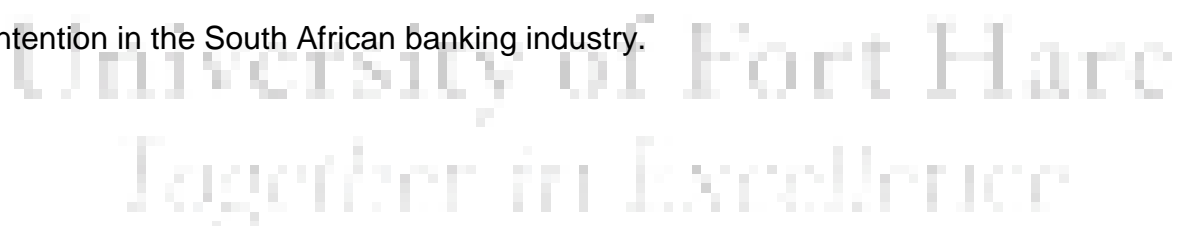
Table 5.14 Relationship between E-S-SERVQUAL variable and Client loyalty intention

Statement	Path coefficients	t-value	p-value	Reject hypotheses
Social Media System Availability				
H0₁: Social media system availability does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.				✔
H₁: Social media system availability significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.	0.19	1.990	0.0475	
Social Media Efficiency				
H0₂: Social media efficiency does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.				
H₂: Social media efficiency significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.	0.05	0.290	0.7720	✔
Social Media Fulfilment				
H0₃: Social media fulfilment does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.				✔
H₃: Social media fulfilment significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.	0.36	2.751	0.0063	
Social Media Privacy				
H0₄: Social media privacy does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.				✔
H₄: Social media privacy significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.	0.41	4.126	0.0001	
Social Media Overall Service Quality and Client Loyalty Intention				
H0₅: Social media's overall service quality does not significantly influence clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.				✔
H₅: Social media's overall service quality significantly influences clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.	0.94	7.944	0.0001	

Table 5.14 provide a relationship between E-S-SERVQUAL variable and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

5.5.1 Social media efficiency hypothesis result

When Social Media efficiency was tested against Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry as depicted in Table 5.16, it revealed that Social Media efficiency does not significantly influence the Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry with a T-value of 0.290 and a P-value of 0.7720, resulting in the rejection of the alternative hypothesis. This P-value of 0.7720 is above the accepted significant level of 0.05 score, which shows an insignificant correlation coefficient and is therefore, rejected in this study as stated in section 4.9.3. The Social Media Efficiency variable attained the lowest path coefficient score of 0.05 as compared to other variables. The smaller the path coefficients the weaker the strength of the correlation between two variables. The Social Media Efficiency variable has the weakest influence to Social Media Overall Service Quality and is not significantly related to Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry.

5.5.2 Social media system availability hypothesis result

T-value and P-value tests were used to measure the relationship between social media service quality variables and social media overall service quality in the South African banking industry. As illustrated in Table 5.14, the Social Media System Availability's null hypotheses were rejected as the T- value of 1.990 and a P-value of 0.0475 was recorded. This concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between Social Media System Availability and Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry. The path coefficient of 0.19 indicated that Social Media System Availability is significantly related to Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry as stated in section 4.9.3, and also shown in Table 5.14.

5.5.3 Social media fulfilment hypothesis result

There is a positive relationship between Social Media Fulfilment and Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry as the T-value of 2.751 and a P-value of 0.0063 was reported in table 5.14. Therefore, the Social Media Fulfilment's null hypotheses were rejected in this study. The Social Media fulfilment dimension scored a path coefficient of 0.36, which is second-highest as compared to other independent variables. This proves that Social Media Fulfilment dimension is

strongly correlated to Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry.

5.5.4 Social media privacy hypothesis result

The null hypothesis was rejected, which stated that Social Media Privacy does not significantly influence Social Media Overall Service Quality in South African banking industry. The alternative hypothesis stating that Social Media Privacy significantly influences Social Media Overall Service Quality in South African banking industry was accepted. It is evident from Table 5.14 that there are significant correlations that exist between Social Media Privacy and Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry, as revealed by a T-value of 4.126 and a P-value 0.0001. The highest path coefficient value of 0.41 was reported on the Social Media Privacy variable, which suggests a strong correlation with Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry.

5.5.5 Social media overall service quality and client loyalty hypothesis result

There is a significant correlation between Social Media Overall Service Quality and Client Loyalty Intention in the South African banking industry. This is shown by a T-value of 7.944 and a P-value of 0.0001, as indicated in table 5.14. As stated in section 4.9.3, the higher the path coefficient, the greater the strength of the correlation and/or relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable will be. Social Media Overall Service Quality has a strong influence on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry, as it showed a higher path coefficient score of 0.94, which is close to 1 as stated in section 4.9.3. Section 5.6 provides how the objectives of the study was achieved.

5.6 Achieved study objectives

For the purpose of this study, there were five objectives, one primary and four secondary objectives as provided in section 1.2.1 and section 1.2.2 respectively. However, all of the objectives were achieved in chapter two, three, four and five. These objectives were determined through literature from other related studies and hypotheses testing. Table 5.15 indicates how the main objectives of the study were achieved.

Table 5.15 Summary of objectives

Objective	Results
To determine the influence that system availability has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.	Social media system availability significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry and thus, this objective was achieved.
To determine the influence that efficiency has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.	Social media efficiency does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry and therefore, the objective was achieved.
To determine the influence that fulfilment has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.	Social media fulfilment significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry. As a result, this objective was achieved.
To determine the influence that privacy has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media.	Social media privacy significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry, and thus, the objective was achieved.
To measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry.	Social media overall service quality proved to have a significant influence on clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry and therefore, this objective was achieved.

Table 5.15 depicts the objectives of this study matched against the outcome of the study. Section 5.7 presents the summary and conclusion.

5.7 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter five presented the data analysis results for this study. Descriptive statistics revealed both genders were fairly represented in this study, and more males participated in the study as compared to the female counterparts. The age of respondents between 25- and 34-years was the study's dominant group. The E-S-SERVQUAL scale used for this study was found to be reliable and valid. SEM was the main analytical tool used to draw conclusions for this study. The confirmatory factor analysis under the measurement and structural models indicated fitness of the model based on the calculated goodness of fit statistics. Four of the null hypotheses for this study were rejected and only one alternate hypothesis, the one relating to social media efficiency was rejected. Therefore, social media service quality was reported to have a significant influence on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry. Chapter six will provide a summary of the study as well as the final conclusions and recommendations.
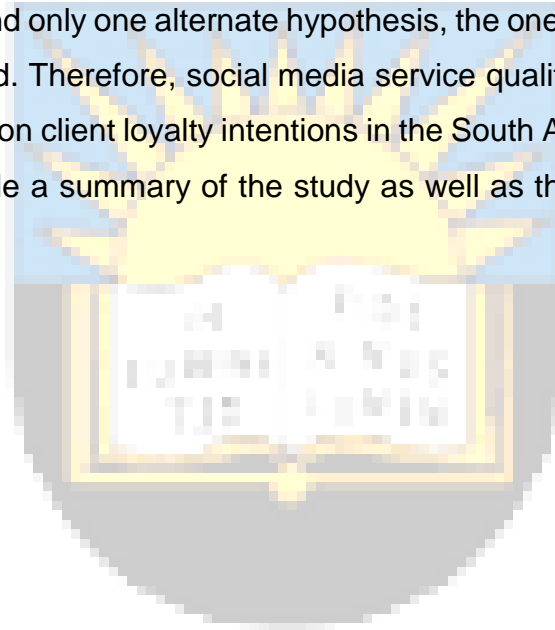
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

In chapter one, the researcher provided a brief introduction to social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Furthermore, chapter one also highlighted an outline of the methodology that was followed in this study. Chapter two focused on the literature review, which covered an in-depth discussion on the concepts under study such as social media and the context of the South African banking industry. Chapter three outlined relevant research studies that have been conducted on E-social-service quality and client loyalty in the banking industry, as well as the E-S-SERVQUAL theoretical framework. Chapter four discussed the research paradigm, design and techniques used in the study. Chapter five presented findings of the data analysed for the study. Information gathered from the data analysis revealed the influence of the social media service quality on client loyalty in the South African banking industry.

Chapter six encompassed the final summary and conclusions for the study, as well as the recommendations which are based on the key findings. Based on the research findings, the researcher offered his own opinions in explaining the study outcomes. The conclusion of the research study objectives and hypotheses were stated and addressed in this chapter. In addition, this chapter also provided a discussion on the contribution of the study to the field of marketing, specifically electronic marketing. The limitations of the study were stated, and suggestions on potential future research directions were indicated. Chapter six commences with section 6.2 which states the research problem identified in Chapter one.

6.2 Research problem

Service quality is an intangible construct that is difficult to define and measure; however, it is an important aspect that could determine the success or failure of businesses including large retail banks (Rao & Rao, 2013). Lariviere et al. (2013) concur that assessing service quality constructs and client loyalty intention in retail banks is useful to identify service problems and improve service levels. Furthermore, the interaction of clients and banks' personnel through social media is becoming an

essential aspect in the banking industry, therefore South African retail banks needs to examine continually how clients perceive service quality so that they can improve it in a meaningful way (Kim & Nitecki, 2014).

Research studies state that more than 90% of the South African banks use social media to interact with their clients (Ramavhona & Mokwena, 2017). The use of social media in the South African banking industry continues to grow, with Facebook leading the trend (BusinessTech, 2016; Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Statistics on social media shows that in SA there are fourteen million Facebook users, eight million YouTube users, seven million twitter users, five million LinkedIn users and two million Instagram users (BusinessTech, 2016; BlueMagnet, 2017, Internet Usage Statistics for Africa, 2017). On a daily basis there are more than eight million Facebook users in South Africa (BusinessTech, 2016; Internet Usage Statistics for Africa, 2017). There are a combined total number of more than three million Facebook users on the five South African major banks' Facebook pages. The wide use of Facebook indicates that it has gained substantial popularity in the South African banking industry (Dootson, Beatson, & Drennan, 2016; Duffet, 2015a).

The South African banking industry has significantly expanded in recent decades to incorporate social media such as Facebook, which offers online service to clients (Mwencha, Muathe, & Thuo, 2014); Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). It is important for banks to have a tool available to monitor service levels related to this new offering in order to enhance its benefit (Corneliu & Maria, 2013; Mackay, Mostert, & Petzer, 2015). Social media service quality in the service industry is not a new concept in business and academic studies (Paschaloudis & Tsourela, 2015). However, research studies focusing on social media service quality and client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry context has not been conducted to date (Nel & Boshoff, 2014; Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2016). This study seeks to investigate social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry context. Section 6.3 provides the conclusion on the research study objective.

6.3 Research objectives conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry. The results presented in chapter five led to the achievement of this objective. However, even though the primary objective was achieved in chapter five, in order to attain it the following secondary research objectives were also identified:

Secondary objective one: To determine the influence that system availability has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media. The study findings presented in chapter five led to the achievement of this objective.

Secondary objective two: To determine the influence that efficiency has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media. The results presented in chapter five led to the achievement of this objective.

Secondary objective three: To determine the influence that fulfilment has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media. The study findings presented in chapter five led to the achievement of this objective.

Secondary objective four: To determine the influence that privacy has on South African banking clients' overall assessment of service quality on social media. The results presented in chapter five led to the achievement of this objective.

In order to achieve these objectives, five hypotheses were formulated and subjected to testing, and the conclusion of these hypotheses are presented in section 6.4.1.

6.3.1 Hypotheses

The five hypotheses for the study were presented as follows:

H_{01}: Social media system availability does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H_1: Social media system availability significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H_{02}: Social media efficiency does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H_2: Social media efficiency significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H₀₃: Social media fulfilment does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H₃: Social media fulfilment significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H₀₄: Social media privacy does not significantly influence overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H₄: Social media privacy significantly influences overall social media quality in the South African banking industry.

H₀₅: Social media's overall service quality does not significantly influence clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

H₅: Social media's overall service quality significantly influences clients' loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.

These hypotheses were developed based on the E-S-SERVQUAL which is the theoretical framework underpinning the present study. Section 6.4 contains a brief recapitulation of the literature on which the study is based.

6.4 Literature overview

The South African banking industry consists of more than 15 registered banks (Redda, 2015). The South African banking system matches favourably with other developing countries in regards to size and functionality (Matoti, 2014). The banking industry contributes to the Gross Domestic Product, and plays a significant role in the creation of employment in the South African economy (Maphakisa, 2014; Ramavhona, 2014). The banks in South Africa, like their counterparts worldwide, now also offer electronic banking services to their clients (Ramavhona, 2014). The introduction of e-Services in South Africa reduced operating costs for retail banks and these services helped South African banks to access a greater client base by lowering the cost of acquiring new clients (Redda, 2015). In addition, these e-services enhanced the perceived images of the banks, and was used as an alternative communication channel, which in turn increased client knowledge (Young & Strelitz, 2014).

Technological based services enable banks to both better serve their clients and derive enormous benefits themselves (Bakare, 2015). The internet has improved the

efficiency of the bank systems regardless of the location of the client (Mthembu, 2013). As a result of technology advancement and growing client demand, the South African banking industry introduced interactive services which provide a range of services extension through the internet called e-Service (Maphakisa, 2014). There are many benefits that can be driven from e-Service in the banking industry such as its convenience for clients, its ability to attract high-value clients, the enhancement of the bank's image, increased revenue and easy expansion (Bakare, 2015). In addition, banks will be able to reduce expenditure such as that need for opening more branches, as clients are able to conduct their banking from the comfort of their homes (Coote & Coetzee, 2012).

Retail banks need to constantly validate and differentiate their e-Service quality offerings to ensure they maintain a superior service quality which guarantees efficient and effective banking operations and, in turn, assists in reducing the cost of bank operations (Redda, 2015). The use of social media in the South African banking industry has gained momentum, with Facebook leading the trend (Duffett, 2015b). The value of interacting with clients on Facebook is of great interest to banks, managers, and academics. The use of Facebook in the banking industry is an opportunity for banks to engage on a continuous basis with their existing clients, penetrate markets further and to attempt to attract new clients (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016).

As South Africa's banking client base grows, the need to coordinate and manage the growth and development of banks social media spaces and particularly Facebook pages has become increasingly important (Coote & Coetzee, 2012). The widespread adoption of Facebook by clients combined with opportunities to engage clients in a social way has made Facebook a key component of South African banks' marketing strategy (Nel & Halaszovich, 2015). In SA, marketers quickly realised the influence of Facebook in terms of the interactivity that comprises personalised messages, banking experiences, and widespread information searches (Duffett, 2015b).

As client demands increases on a daily basis, banking experts are focused on how to integrate banking services and social media in the traditional banking network (Detaling & Bick, 2013). Studies on social media, particularly Facebook, in SA is not a new concept, however, most studies did not focus on service quality and client loyalty intention in the banking industry. This study investigated this missing gap in the

literature, and addressed the social media service quality and client loyalty concerns in the South African banking industry. Section 6.4.1 provides an overview on E- Social-SERVQUAL theory.

6.4.1 Theoretical framework

The study adapted the E-S-SERVQUAL model to identify appropriate service quality aspects that influence client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Previous literature has been published making use of this model in other service related industries (such as hospitality, tourism, hospitals, universities and library services) that can be used to support the results of this study (Amin, 2016; Kalia, 2017; Kim, 2015). However, few research studies were found regarding the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intent in the South African banking industry.

The intense competition in the South African banking industry necessitated a specific instrument to measure, evaluate, and improve the e-Service offered via social media platforms in order to maintain or gain the market share (Kim, 2015; Venugopal & Priya, 2015). In response to the necessity, an E-SERVQUAL scale was developed by Parasuraman et al. (2005) and later modified to E-S-SERVQUAL scale by Kim (2015) to accommodate the evaluation of e-Service quality offered via social media sites. The E-S-SERVQUAL has four dimensions namely; Social Media System Availability, Social Media Efficiency, Social Media Fulfilment and Social Media Privacy (Kim, 2015), and these dimensions except Social Media Efficiency proved that they all have a positive influence on Social Media Overall Service Quality, which in turn is positively related to client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. For the purpose of this study, these dimensions were adapted to measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intent in the South African banking industry in order to identify market needs and requirements.

Social Media System Availability is an important aspect that acts as the banks' online representatives and assists through effective and prompt handling of clients' e-Banking transactional problems and requests (Ariff et al., 2012; Durkin et al., 2014). Therefore, in this study it was positively related to Social Media Overall Service Quality. Social Media Efficiency is essential in this study, as it helps clients to easily access banking information, even though it does not significantly influences Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry. Social Media

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Fulfilment was also positively related to Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry, as clients expect the Facebook page to be displayed within the promised time frame. Most emphasis should be placed on the Social Media Privacy dimension (Redda, 2015), as the results of the present study proved that Social Media Privacy strongly influence Social Media Overall Service Quality in the South African banking industry. The findings of this study proved that Social Media Overall Service Quality significantly influence client loyalty intent in the South African banking industry. Thus, the ultimate goal in the South African banking industry should be focusing on improving the Overall Service Quality which is offered via social media services.

In the present study, the E-S-SERVQUAL was utilised to measure clients' social media banking experiences in a South African context. The clients' social media overall service quality perceptions were then used to predict client's loyalty intentions towards their respective banks. There is a significant relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. Section 6.5 provides an overview of the methodology followed in this study.

6.5 Research Methodology

A positivistic paradigm was adopted for the purpose of this study due to its compatibility with the set objectives. The positivistic paradigm helped the researcher to test hypotheses on whether social media service quality influence client loyalty in the South African banking industry (Collis & Hussey, 2013). In addition, it also helped to produce results that can be generalised to other similar industry settings (Engel & Schutt, 2013). A deductive approach was used to present the basis of explanation on the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African baking industry context. A quantitative research approach was used to collect primary data making use of an online questionnaire from which conclusions were drawn to explain the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Given that quantitative data was collected, a descriptive research design was the most suitable design for this study (Wiid & Diggines, 2015).

The study focused on the five major banks in SA. The population of this study was drawn from Facebook users who use their accounts to interact with retail banks in SA.

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The sample size consisted of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents. A large sample was used in order to detect the smallest meaningful effect and correlation between the social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The researcher adopted a snowballing sampling approach.

The quantitative data collection method was used in this study as it helped to gather information for this study through minimal interaction with bank clients in SA (Willis, 2014). In addition, quantitative research methods aided in the generalisation of the study outcomes to the whole population of the South African banking industry (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The researcher used secondary data sources from various databases to search for the relevant information to address the research problem. For the purpose of this study, an online survey was chosen to collect data. To eliminate shortfalls that might be encountered during the collection of data, the researcher conducted a pilot study (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The results of the pilot study guided the amount of questions that was likely to yield meaningful results.

An online survey was conducted to collect primary data, through the use of an E-S-SERVQUAL questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered online through a Facebook page titled: Social Media Service Quality in the South African Banking Industry. A link with a set of questions was posted on the page, which bank clients would use to access the questionnaire. Respondents were directed to the study's Facebook page through public posts on banking-related Facebook pages regarding the study which was designed to request participation. The E-S-SERVQUAL scale is a valid and reliable scale that was tested in various studies across different service industry settings (Kim, 2015). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess if the measure of the scale was reliable and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of more 0.7 was considered significant for this study (Babbie et al., 2015). To ensure validity, an existing measurement scale (E-S-SERVQUAL) was adopted and then tested before being utilised to assess the constructs in the conceptual model (Saunders et al., 2012).

In this study, errors in collection of data were minimised through the use of a well-prepared electronic questionnaire (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The researcher checked the correctness and completeness of all the E-S-SEVRQUAL questionnaires that were used to conduct the survey (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Both field- and central-editing was

carried out. The data coding process was used to classify raw data for analysis purposes through software (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The process of data cleaning was used to check and rectify errors (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The checks that the researcher carried out included those for consistency and missing values.

The researcher analysed the data through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 24) and Lisrel 9 to draw conclusions. SPSS was used for the descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing. SEM was the main statistical technique used in this study. In this study the measurement model was estimated by a structural equation modelling program known as LISREL 9. For this study, SEM provided a framework for statistical analysis, for example confirmatory factor analysis which was used to compute the structural and measurement models, and correlation, which tested hypotheses (Byrne, 2010). SEM ensured unbiased estimates for the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry (Hair et al., 2014). An Ethical Clearance certificate for this research study was granted by the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (Certificate Reference Number: VIL131SGAV01 - see Appendix B). The researcher was aware of and abided to the ethical considerations. Section 6.6 provides a summary of the main findings for this study.

6.6 Summary of the main findings

All the six scales used in this study were reliable and valid. Both the independent and depend variables scale reported a Cronbach Alpha that is above the accepted level of 0.7 for this study as stated in section 4.9.2.1. The Cronbach Alpha scores for the independent variable scale were as follows; social media efficiency 0.824; social media system availability 0.814; social media fulfilment 0.746; social media privacy 0.727, and social media overall service quality 0.777. The only depend variable scale for this study, client loyalty intention scale was also reliable with a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.771. These high Cronbach Alpha confirmed that both scales that were used for data collection were highly reliable. The factor loading for both the independent and depend scales, and the variance of these scales demonstrated a satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for the scales. Therefore, the scales that were employed for this study were valid as there was adequate evidence of the constructs validity on all the scales.

The validity of the measurement model for this study was tested and analysed using goodness of fit measures. All the fit indices in this study proved that the measurement model is a good fit of the variables under study. The goodness of fit measures which were reported in this study are as follows; Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square 687.953 (p = 0.000); Root Mean Square Error of Approximation 0.045; Chi-square corrected for Non-normality 1770.601 (p=0.000); 90 Percent Confidence Interval for RMSEA (0.0389; 0.0519); P-Value for Test of close Fit 0.876; Normed Fit Index 0.958; Non-Normed Fit Index 0.978; Comparative Fit Index 0.981; Incremental Fit Index 0.981; Relative Fit Index 0.952; Critical N 256.112; Root Mean Square Residual 0.0433; Standardized RMR 0.0490; Goodness of Fit Index 0.877; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index 0.848; and Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index 0.691. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.000, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant.

The SEM was utilised to find a model that has a good enough fit with the collected data to serve as a representation of the real situation under investigation. For the purpose of this study, the structural model was measured using various fit indices which are relevant and sufficient to measure the fitness of the model such as; Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square, Normal Theory Weighted Least Square Chi-Square, Chi-square corrected for Non-Normality, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, 90 % Confidence Interval for RMSEA , P-Value for Test of Close Fit, Normed Fit Index, Non-Normed Fit Index, Parsimony Normed Fit Index, Comparative Fit Index, Incremental Fit Index, Relative Fit Index, Root Mean square Residual, Goodness of Fit Index, and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.000, which indicates that the model is statistically significant in terms of its structural fit.

The social media efficiency dimension does not significantly influence the overall service quality in the South African banking industry as proved by a t-value score of 0.290 and a p-value of 0.7720 which is above the generally accepted significance p-value of 0.05 as stated in section 4.9.3. Even though social media efficiency does not influence the overall service quality in the South African banking industry, clients still expects a Facebook page that executes its intended use. Based on the findings, that is a t-value score of 1.990 and p-value of 0.0475 shows that social media system availability significantly influences the overall service quality in the South African

banking industry, which means that clients expect to conveniently access the bank's Facebook page at all times.

This studys findings proved that social media fulfilment variable significantly influence social media overall service quality in the South African banking industry with a score of (t<2.751; p<0.0063). In other words, in order for South African banks to ensure satisfactory social media overall service quality, they should fulfil their promises. Furthermore, clients in the South African banking industry value the social media privacy dimension as it proved to have a strong positive influence on social media overall service quality with a high t-value of 4.126 and a p-value of 0.0001. Of all the factors examined in this study, social media privacy indicated the greatest influence on overall service quality in the South African banking industry. The social media overall service quality significantly influences client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. This influence is evident in the study results which reported a t-value score of 7.944 and a p-value of 0.0001 which is within the generally accepted significance level of a p-value of 0.05. Figure 6.1 provides a summary of the key findings of the present study.
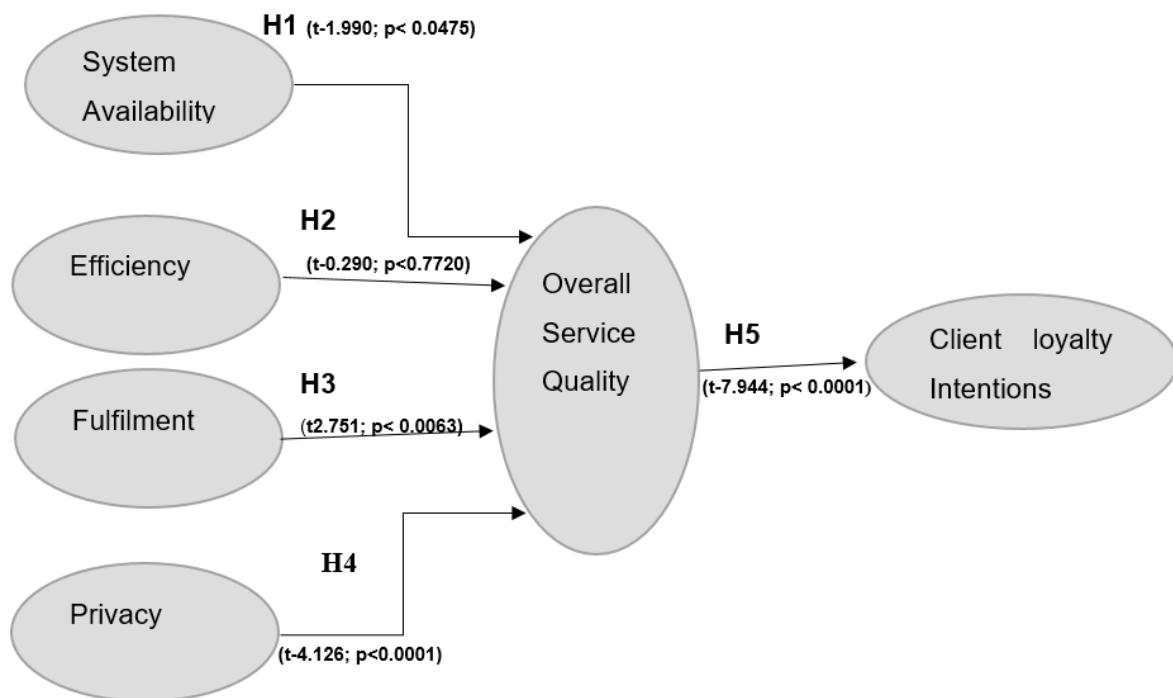

Figure 6.1 Summary of significant relationships (Source: developed for this study).

The conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study will be presented in the sections 6.7.

6.7 Final conclusions and recommendations

The final conclusions and recommendations are set out according to the key constructs incorporated in the study. Section 6.7.1 to 6.7.5 provides the conclusions and recommendations based on the results of this study, commencing with the construct relating to social media efficiency.

6.7.1 Social media efficiency conclusions

The results of this study show that there is an insignificant relationship between social media efficiency and overall service quality in the South African banking industry. Thus, social media efficiency has the least influence on social media overall service quality in comparison to other E-S-SERVQUAL variables. The social media efficiency's inconsequential influence on overall service quality in the South African banking industry might be as a result of client' perception that there is nothing much being done by banks in terms of improving efficiency on their social media platforms. It should also be noted that banking transactions cannot take place on Facebook hence this conclusion is one that is conceivable. This possibly explains why these findings within the context of the banking industry contradict the findings of other studies which confirmed the positive relationship between social media efficiency and overall service quality in other industries (Kim, 2015 and Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Even though, there is an insignificant relationship between social media efficiency and overall service quality in the South African banking industry, clients still expect to use a simple, speedy and conveniently accessible bank's Facebook page. Section 6.7.1.1 provides recommendations regarding social media efficiency.

6.7.1.1 Recommendations regarding social media efficiency

Basing on the findings of the present study that demonstrated an insignificant relationship between social media efficiency and overall service quality in the South African banking industry, it is recommended that:

- Bank should have more bank personnel working on social media accounts to ensure that clients are responded to within a short space of time.
- South African banks should ensure that all queries on their social media platform are followed up timeously in order to check if they were resolved.

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- Bank managers and marketers in SA must create an efficient technological knowledge-based relationship with their clients, as this will help to build client loyalty.

- South African banks should strive to improve social media efficiency and instil its importance in client perception so that they can be loyal to the bank. They can do this by increasing the awareness of the service. The first step to do this is to better inform the bank personnel about all the aspects and benefits of social media services.

- Banks in SA should focus on both social media efficiency aspects (the Facebook page and the bank services on that Facebook page), as they both contribute to the ultimate overall service quality.

- Managers and marketers must place more emphasis on social media efficiency and focus on improving their role in social media service quality, as it reported the weakest path coefficient, this will help to enhance the overall service quality.

- Notifications of any bank service being down should be timeously communicated on that bank's social media platforms to enhance client satisfaction.

- South African banks should not use the same personnel to handle both social media services and telephone services as this will slow the problem solving process especially on social media platforms.

- Bank personnel should exercise maximum courteousness when attending to client complaints on their bank's Facebook page.

- Managers should strive to build an efficiency social media platform to boosts bank performance which in turn contributes to client loyalty.

- Banks should have a social media service which matches and enhances the abilities of experienced banking personnel, as it will enhance client satisfaction.

Section 6.7.2 provides the final conclusions and recommendations regarding social media system availability.

6.7.2 Social media system availability conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that social media system availability significantly influences overall service quality in the South African banking industry. This finding of social media system availability's positive influence on social media overall service

quality replicates research studies conducted by Kim (2015); Persad and Padayachee (2015); Quach et al. (2016), who revealed the same findings. Therefore, the study concludes that a bank's Facebook page availability plays a major role in shaping clients' experiences on social media sites.

The social media system availability was the second weakest dimension in terms of its influence on overall service quality in comparison to the other variables. This might be as a result that clients felt that even though they need the bank social media platforms to be always available, banks cannot control the technical aspects of these sites. The total control of these social media website rest with the mother company for these social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and others. Section 6.7.2.1 Recommendations regarding social media system availability.

6.7.2.1 Recommendations regarding social media system availability

In light of the social media system availability's significant influence on overall service quality in the South African banking industry, it is recommended that:

- Banks should constantly upgrade their systems, networks, servers and storage capacity system to support the growing demand of e-social media services.
- South African banks should use different network providers, in case if one of these network is down, they can switch to the other. In addition, there should be a bank personnel available or on standby all the time to make these network adjustments.
- South African banks should put more emphasis on the correct technical functioning of their Facebook page (social media system availability). This will help them to have a highly responsive Facebook site that can react professionally to the client requirements and complaints.
- Bank managers and customer service agents should promptly resolve problems that clients encounter with regard to social media services, provide prompt feedback to client requests, and carefully handle client complaints.
- The bank's Facebook page should always remain up and available, and in cases of maintenance, such information should be promptly communicated in advance.
- The bank's Facebook site should be easily navigable as it reduces performance risks in the South African banking industry.

Section 6.7.3 provides final conclusions and recommendations regarding social media fulfilment.

6.7.3 Social media fulfilment conclusions

For the present study, social media fulfilment reported a significant influence on overall service quality in the South African banking industry. The findings of a positive relationship between social media fulfilment and overall service quality is also supported in the literature (George & Kumar, 2014; Kim, 2015; Yarimoglu, 2015) discussed in chapters two and three. Clients in the South African banking industry anticipate a lot from social media fulfilment as it was reported the second-strongest path coefficient as compared to other social media service quality variables. Marketers should therefore emphasis social media fulfilment since it has the second-strongest influence on overall service quality in the South African banking industry. In this study, the social media fulfilment showed this strong influence because clients expect retail banks to fulfil their promises regardless of circumstances or platforms used. Clients utilise the social media fulfilment component to measure the bank's reliability, that is if they can count on the bank information supplied or trust the bank's service or product offerings conveyed via social media. Thus, social media fulfilment's high influence on overall service quality in the South African banking industry shows the degree to which clients expect accurate and reliable information to be delivered via social media. This can also be interpreted as customers turning to social media for product and service information as they count on this information to be up to date and consistent. Recommendations regarding social media fulfilment are provided in section 6.7.3.1.

6.7.3.1 Recommendations regarding social media fulfilment

The study results proved that social media fulfilment significantly influence overall service quality in the South African banking industry, therefore, it is recommended that:

- It is recommended that the information on banks' Facebook pages should always match their products or services, since clients anticipate experiencing the service quality or seeing the exact products as they appear on social media platforms, in order to fulfil their expectations.

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- South African banks should constantly train their employees so that they can deliver the service or product offering in a satisfactory way as advertised on social media platforms. This will enhance overall service quality satisfaction which in turn leads to client loyalty.

- Complaints raised on social media platforms should be addressed promptly, and in case of a query that needs the client to visit the bank, such clients should not queue with other clients but should be prioritised if possible.

- Banks should employ personnel who focus on social media after service follow ups. These personnel can probe on social media platforms regarding a certain service or product offering, so that clients would comment basing on their experience of the service or product offering.

- South African banking industry managers and marketers should ensure that client requirements are fulfilled within the promised time frame, as this will help to build and strengthen the bank and client relationship.

- Mangers and marketers must always fulfil their promises in line with delivering accurate information, this too will help in eliminating the fulfilment gap (fulfilment gap discussed in section 3.3.3).

Section 6.7.4 provides final conclusions and recommendations regarding social media privacy.

6.7.4 Social media privacy conclusions

The relationship observed between social media privacy and overall service quality in the South African banking industry revealed a significant influence on the variables. In this present study, the findings revealed that clients highly value the social media privacy dimension in the South African banking industry, as it reported a stronger path coefficient score as compared to other social media service quality variables. This confirmed research studies that were conducted in other countries such as in Britain by Datta (2010); Amin (2016); Kim (2015), which ranked the privacy of banks' social media sites as the most important attribute of social media service quality.

In this study, social media privacy had the strongest influence on overall service quality, this might be as a result of the increase in cybercrimes, therefore, clients consider it as their priority for practising safe banking. In addition, privacy (safety) is among the Maslow hierarch of needs, so clients opt for safer banking practises

whether online or offline. Furthermore, the degree of privacy on social media, reduces client's vulnerability thus its (privacy) provision is associated with satisfactory overall service quality. Recommendations regarding social media privacy are provided in section 6.7.4.1.

6.7.4.1 Recommendations regarding social media privacy

Given that social media privacy positively influences the overall service quality in the South African banking industry as was concluded in this study, it is therefore, recommended that:

- The South African banks should constantly educate clients on social media banking rules, which is clients must never give banking details on public platforms as this will make them vulnerable to criminal activities.
- Banks must take complains of a serious or invasive nature offline, that is the bank contacts the client directly when there is a problem with his or her account. This will reduce the risk of privacy invasion and enhance satisfaction of the client which in turn leads to client loyalty.
- South African bank personnel should encourage clients to send private messages on social media regarding banking problems, this will foster a direct and personalised interaction between clients and their banks.
- Bank should contact the client directly when there is a problem with his or her account.
- Banks should create a customised social media platform which can be attended to by senior bank personnel so as to ensure confidentiality of clients who raise complaints about bank personnel.
- South African banks should have expert personnel who constantly research cybercrime trends to protect clients from potential frauds and scams. These experts should be visible on bank social media platforms to mitigate risk, and educate clients about privacy. The banks should in fact market the use of these expert personnel.
- The South African banking industry should develop strict policies and adopt advanced technologies in relation to social media protocol and usage, as this will help clients feel safe on their social media sites and contribute largely to overall client satisfaction.

- South African banks, managers, and marketers should focus on the safety and protection of client details (in general not only bank account information) on social media platforms, as this maintains clients' trust.

- Managers and marketers must constantly assure clients that they are not vulnerable to the leaking of sensitive personal information, as this helps to gain their trust and promotes confidence.

- To address the question of social media overall service quality in the South African banking industry, managers should focus on improving the social media privacy variable on a daily basis.

- Managers and marketers should strive to create a positively perceived social media privacy aspect, which in turn will help South African banks to extend relationships with clients further based on a mutual online trust context.

- Banks in SA should strive to gain a positive reputation in terms of their social media privacy as it draws clients to the bank.

Section 6.7.5 provides final conclusions and recommendations pertaining to social media overall service quality.

6.7.5 Social media overall service quality and client loyalty conclusions

The empirical findings of this study revealed that social media's overall service quality significantly influences client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. This finding corresponds with the literature (Kim, 2015; Kalia, 2017; Martin, 2016; Potgieter & Naidoo, 2017; Quach et al., 2016) as discussed in chapter two and three. The reported social media overall service quality's strong influence on client loyalty intent in the South African banking industry shows that South African clients active on social media carefully evaluate social media service quality when considering the level of loyal they assign to their respective banks.

In addition, this study concludes that, as is evident from the study findings, the primary goal of this study, client satisfaction attained through social media overall service quality, which in turn leads to client loyalty in the South African banking industry. In order for banks to enjoy the benefits of client loyalty in the South African banking industry, they should be concerned about all the social media service quality underpinnings and dedicate themselves to ensuring satisfactory overall service quality.

The observed social media overall service quality's strong influence on client loyalty in the South African banking industry is as a result of clients' desire to obtain satisfactory banking services experiences in a social media (specifically Facebook) context. The social media overall service quality is an umbrella to all service quality variables, therefore, clients prefer a bank that offers them an experience that is comprised of all their service requirements/needs. The improvement of banks overall service quality is of high importance. Overall service quality increases clients' perceptions with regard to the efforts made by banks in their relationships with clients, which ultimately leads to an increase in relationship satisfaction and thus client loyalty. Section 6.7.5.1 provides recommendations regarding social media overall service quality and client loyalty.

6.7.5.1 Recommendations regarding social media overall service quality and client loyalty

Basing on the empirical findings of this study, which established that social media overall service quality significantly influences client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry, it is therefore, recommended that:

- South African banks should have personnel who are determined to build social media culture that is attending to, and creating social media as a vital component for banking and the marketing of banks as this will enhance client satisfaction. In fact, it can be said that banking marketers should make more efforts to drive clients to utilise social media platforms considering the strong relationship that exists between social media service quality and client loyalty, provided however that the respective banks can satisfy the social media service quality requirements (especially those of privacy and fulfilment).
- South African banks should create social media loyalty programmes for clients in order to attract more clients to use social media sites, in particular Facebook due to its multi-functionality.
- In line with the above suggestions, South African banks should then increase sufficient personnel in order to cope with e-social media services and the expansion of service offerings in this regard.
- South African banks should innovatively create their own social media persona/s who can interact with clients as FNB has done with the creation of RB Jacobs which was alluded to in chapter three.

- Proper and continuous staff training in the South African banking industry should be conducted in order to achieve and maintain high level of competency and service reliability in the ever fast changing technological landscape, in particular with relation to social media trends.

- Banks should have different personnel who deals with a specific e-social media service dimension in order to enhance specialisation which will result in higher client satisfaction on social media sites and will in turn leads to client loyalty.

- South African banks should hire social media research personnel who will focus on analysing client's interaction on social media and create compatible services or product offering that suit clients' lifestyle. This can be achieved because social media creates a platform for feedback and dialogue with clients which can help the banks to understand new needs regarding products and services. Social media sites present novel interactional platforms which banks need to take maximum advantage of to improve their marketing efforts.

- Banks should present the banking information in an easy and educational way under the bank's brand name. This will satisfy most of the clients who doesn't have much time to spend searching banking related information, and these clients are likely to be loyal to the platform which they find easy and informative for them.

- Marketers should launch promotions on social media platforms to increase awareness and client participation on their platforms.

- South African banks should use their social media platform inbox as a suggestion box which will involve clients' suggestions in creating services and product offering. The client with the best suggestion of that week for example can be given transactional discounts on their bank accounts.

- Bank personnel should incentivise 'active' social media clients through buying them data bundles in a bid to increase client involvement. Client involvement in banking activities leads to a special attachment to that bank (client loyalty).

- Managers and marketers should build a competitive advantage (protection against competition) by offering a superior and satisfactory social media overall service quality to clients which will help the South African banking industry compete with international banks.

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- South African banks should prioritise all social media service quality attributes in their marketing mixes because they significantly influence client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry, and clients consider every aspect of the social media service offered to them before considering being loyal to banks.

- Managers and marketers should constantly evaluate, monitor, and improve the social media overall service quality offered to their clients, as this leads to a corresponding increase in overall client satisfaction, which is a determinant of client loyalty in the South African banking industry.

Section 6.8 follows on the final conclusions and recommendations of the study to provide the contribution that the study has made.

6.8 Contribution of the study

The investigation of social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry has contributed immensely to the banking industry at large. This study has made a contribution to the theoretical and empirical body of knowledge in both the fields of Business Management, Marketing Management and the banking industry by investigating the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty in the South African banking industry. This study contributed towards bridging the existing knowledge gap in the current literature with specific reference to the impact of social media on service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry context.

The findings of this study provided empirical evidence which contributes to the body of marketing knowledge in a South Africa banking context. The present study provided new knowledge regarding the influence and contribution of E-S-SERVQUAL variables on social media overall service quality in the South African banking industry. In addition, it also contributed the knowledge that social media overall service quality has a strong influence on client loyalty intentions.

The South African banking industry has traditionally been a high-contact service offering. The lack of direct human interaction in e-Service settings accentuates the need to examine the service quality offered and how clients perceive it, specifically utilising the E-S-SERVQUAL instrument. This study has addressed this gap and can

be used by other academic researchers as reference in the future studies that are to be carried in the same context or framework of study. From a managerial point of view, the study will help marketers to shape their strategies when utilising social media service quality and improving client loyalty in the South African banking industry.

Furthermore, the study will help managers to better understand the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty in the South African banking industry. In addition, it aids managers in better understanding the exact or specific social media service quality dimensions (social media system availability, efficiency, fulfilment and privacy) to focus on when trying to address client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry. South African banks need to know the service quality dimensions that have higher levels of client expectations so that they can create a more conducive social media service environment and deliver experiences that exceed clients' expectations. The present research study, therefore, enlightens the South African banking industry on the service quality dimensions that have higher levels of client expectations with respect to social media.

Since the South African banking industry has become more client centric through responding to changing client needs, the present research study will help to provide an updated measuring or evaluation tool to manage, control, and improve the social media service quality offered by South African banks in order to keep pace with global banking trends. The effective measurement of service quality in the banking industry will assist in improving operational efficiency and client satisfaction in general.

The study indicated the best demographic category (market niche) for marketers to target when conveying banking information on social media platforms in South Africa. The study proved that social media service quality does significantly influence client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. The research clarified the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. It revealed that social media overall service quality positively influences client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry. Section 6.9 provides limitations and direction for future research.

6.9 Limitations and direction for future research

The present study only focused on the top five banks, ABSA, FNB, Standard Bank, Nedbank and Capitec, in South Africa. The research study does not include other

banks that have operated in South Africa for more than a decade. Future research might attempt to conduct a survey on other South African banks or rather survey more than these five banks, as this would develop a theoretical rationale to better understand social media service quality and client loyalty intent in the South African banking industry.

There are various social media platforms that are popular, but the present research study only focused on the Facebook pages of these banks. This means only a single social media platform was surveyed, whereas future studies could examine other widely used platforms, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Messenger. The present study was conducted in SA, therefore it is recommended that further research studies not be limited to South African banks only, but extend to other developing countries within the region.

Like this study, surveys, which constituted a cross-section of South African banking industry, were previously used in other research studies. Therefore, it is recommended that further research studies use a longitudinal approach which would yield more complete results. The present study was based on a quantitative research method, and, even though the data could be generalised to a large population (the South African banking industry), it reflects less on client's personal insights on loyalty intention in South Africa. Therefore, it is recommended that a qualitative method or a mixed methodology method study be conducted in order to understand the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intent in the South African banking industry. In addition, the present study only used a sample of 377, therefore it is recommended that future research studies should include bigger study samples and population groups, as this would lead to greater precision and reduced uncertainty and result in an increase in confidence in estimate, as well as enhancing the power to detect differences.

The study was theorised in terms of measuring the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. This limits the present study to this type of social media service quality only, and there are other factors that influence client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. It is recommended that future research studies should include these other factors. However, despite the commercial potential of social media service quality, there are

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very few studies that have been conducted in developing countries to understand what motivates client loyalty intention in the banking industry, thus there are many more avenues that can be sought for future research studies. Section 6.10 summaries the whole research study.

6.10 Final Summary

The study's aim was to establish if social media service quality has influence on client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry. Chapter one of this research study briefly introduced the research project. Evidence from the literature reviewed in chapter two of the study showed that there is a positive relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the banking industry. The theoretical framework underpinning this study; E-SOCIAL-SERVQUAL was thoroughly discussed in chapter three of the present study. The methodology that this research study followed was provided in chapter four.

The present study adopted a positivist research paradigm and utilised a quantitative research approach to collect and analyse the data. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. An online survey was conducted in order to collect primary data, while literature from other studies and mostly academic journal databases were utilised as secondary data. A total of 377 online questionnaires were administered on a Facebook page titled: Social Media Service Quality in the South African Banking Industry. Analysis and interpretation of findings was done using both the descriptive and inferential statistical measures with the aid of software such as Statistical Package for Social Scientists 24, which assisted on reliability and validity tests; and Lisrel 9, which assisted on the Structural Equation Model. The E-S-SERVQUAL questionnaire that was employed to collect data for this study was found to be valid and reliable.

Chapter five presented the findings of the present study. The findings of this study proved that there is a positive relationship between three E-S-SERVQUAL dimensions (social media system availability, fulfilment, and privacy) and the overall service quality in the South African banking industry. In addition, the study findings also revealed that social media efficiency dimension does not significantly influence overall service quality in the South African banking industry. The social media overall service quality does significantly influence client loyalty intentions in the South African banking

industry. Bank managers and marketing managers are encouraged to formulate strategies that focus on social media service quality in order to enjoy the benefits of client loyalty in the South African banking industry. Chapter six, therefore, concluded the research study with a summary of findings; recommendations that can be used by academics, managers, and marketers; as well as the possible future recommendations and contributions of the study.

In essence, this chapter marks the end of the research study, and it provides a summary of the study. It recapped the literature review, the research problem, the study objectives and hypotheses, and possible recommendations that can be used to address the problem statement. This chapter also provided recommendations for further studies which can help to understand the relationship between social media service quality and client loyalty intention in the banking industry. Lastly, based on the present study findings, the researcher concluded that social media service quality significantly influences client loyalty intention in the South African banking industry.
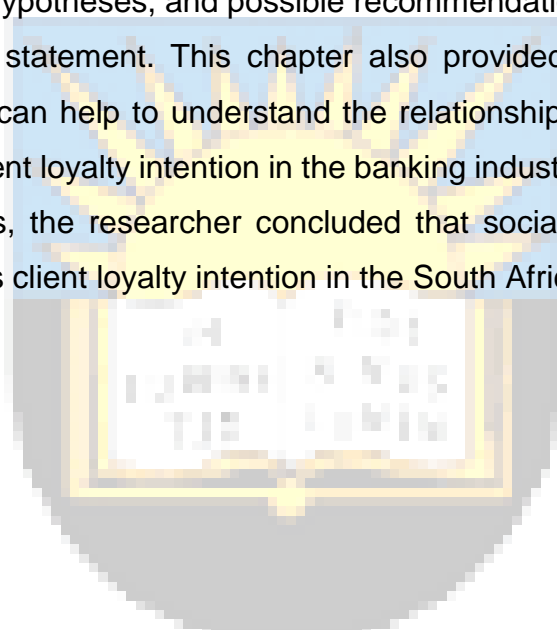
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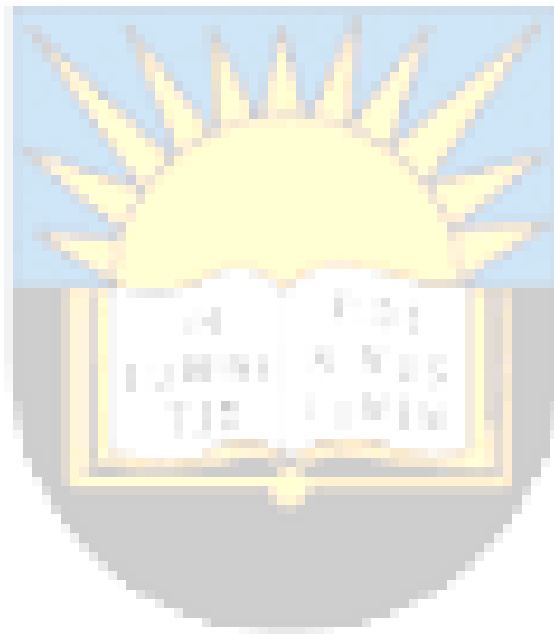
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UFH Department of Business Management

Masters Research Questionnaire February 201

Social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry

Ethical Reference Number: VIL131SGAV01

Dear Respondent

I am a student in the Business Management Department at the University of Fort Hare (East London Campus), currently conducting research for my MCom (Management) degree under the supervision of Dr. Kim Viljoen and Dr. Liezel Cilliers. The focus of the research project is on **Social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry**. The objective of the research project is to measure the influence of social media service quality on client loyalty intentions in the South African banking industry.

Instructions on the completion of this questionnaire will follow before each section. The questionnaire is designed to make completion as easy and fast as possible. All of the questions can be answered by simply clicking on the appropriate option and the questionnaire can be accessed by clicking on the following hyperlink:

Note the following important points:

• This is an independent research study and participation is voluntary. Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential and the anonymity of respondents is assured.

• No person or firm will have access to your completed questionnaire.

We look forward to your response.

If you have any questions regarding this study please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Dr. Viljoen (KViljoen@ufh.ac.za) or Dr. Cilliers (LCilliers@ufh.ac.za) or myself (bkgavaza@gmail.com). Thank you very much for your contribution to this study.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bramwell K. Gavaza

PLEASE INDICATE WITH A TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX

Section 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your gender?

Female Male

2. Indicate your age

>24 years   25-34 years   35-40 years   < 40 years

3. How long have you been on Facebook?

2 years   3-5 years   < 6 years

4. How often do you use Facebook for banking information?

Daily basis   Weekly basis   Monthly basis   Occasionally (When cannot avoid it

5. Which bank do you use?

ABSA   Capitec   FNB   Standard Nedbank

6. In which province do you currently resides?

Eastern cape   Free state   Gauteng KwaZulu Natal Limpopo

Mpumalanga   Northern Cape   North West Western Cape

Section 2: Factors influencing social media service quality in the South African banking industry

Statement number	Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to social media service quality in the South African banking industry:	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
7	My bank's Facebook page is always available for this service.	1	2	3	4	5
8	My bank's Facebook page launches and runs right away.	1	2	3	4	5
9	My bank's Facebook site does not crash.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Facebook pages on my bank's site do not freeze after I enter my comments.	1	2	3	4	5
11	My bank's Facebook banking service makes it easy to find bank information that I need.	1	2	3	4	5
12	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
13	My Bank postings on Facebook are well organised.	1	2	3	4	5
14	My bank's Facebook site loads its pages fast.	1	2	3	4	5
15	My bank's information on the Facebook site is simple to use.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My bank's Facebook page enables me to get to bank information quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
17	My bank's posts on Facebook work well for using bank services.	1	2	3	4	5
18	My bank's Facebook page quickly provides information that I seek.	1	2	3	4	5
19	My bank's Facebook page provides information that I'd like to receive.	1	2	3	4	5

20	My bank's Facebook page has information about what is going on in the bank.	1	2	3	4	5
21	My bank's Facebook page delivers accurate information.	1	2	3	4	5
22	My bank does not share information about my behaviour (browsing pages, clicking links, etc.) with others on its Facebook account.	1	2	3	4	5
23	My bank does not share my personal information on Facebook with other sites.	1	2	3	4	5
24	My bank Facebook page protects information about my personal data.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I would say positive things about a bank's Facebook service to other people.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I would recommend a bank's Facebook page to someone who seeks my advice.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I would encourage friends and others to follow a bank's Facebook page.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I would consider a Facebook page to be my first choice for future banking information.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I think I would keep following a bank's Facebook page in the coming months.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Rate the information and services available on your bank's Facebook page.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Rate the overall convenience of using your bank's Facebook page.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Rate the quality of the service that the bank provides on their Facebook page.	1	2	3	4	5

33	Rate the overall value you get from your bank's Facebook site.	1	2	3	4	5

RESPONDENTS INFORMED CONSENT:

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding what local and international celebrity endorsements. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally. I have received the contact details of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential. I also understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to me if I so wish once the research is complete.

……………………………..   ……………………………….

Signature of respondent   **Date**

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: VIL131SGAV01

Project title: **Social media service quality and client loyalty in the South African banking industry.**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Bramwell Kundishora Gavaza

Supervisor: Dr K Viljoen

Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.